



WELCOME TO HELL

# PYRO



AUTHOR OF THE GOLDEN SKULLS M.C. & VALENTINETTI CRIME FAMILY

# REBECCA JOYCE

# Contents

[Pyro](#)

[DEDICATION](#)

[Blurb](#)

[PYRO](#)

[Special Request:](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

[Chapter Nineteen](#)

[Chapter Twenty.](#)

[Chapter Twenty-One](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Two](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Three](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Four](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Five](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Six](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Seven](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Eight](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Nine](#)

[Chapter Thirty.](#)

[Chapter Thirty-One](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Two](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Three](#)

[Chapter Thirty- Four](#)

[Sons of Hell Characters](#)

[Ol' Ladies](#)

[Residents of Rosewood](#)

[Rebecca Joyce Books](#)

[Other Books by Rebecca Joyce](#)

[Social Media & More.](#)

# Pyro

Sons of Hell MC

Rebecca Joyce

**ABOUT THE E-BOOK YOU HAVE PURCHASED:** Your non-refundable purchase of this e-book allows you to only ONE LEGAL copy for your own personal reading on your own personal computer or device. **You do not have resell or distribution rights without the prior written permission of both the publisher and the copyright owner of this book.** This book cannot be copied in any format, sold, or otherwise transferred from your computer to another through upload to a file sharing peer to peer program, for free or for a fee, or as a prize in any contest. Such action is illegal and in violation of the U.S. Copyright Law. Distribution of this e-book, in whole or in part, online, offline, in print or in any way or any other method currently known or yet to be invented, is forbidden. If you do not want this book anymore, you must delete it from your computer.

**WARNING:** The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is

punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison  
and a fine of \$250,000.

## **Pyro**

Sons of Hell MC

Copyright © November 23, 2023-Rebecca Joyce

PROOFREADER: Jenni Spalding, Tracy Harvey

EDITOR: Kelly Wyvell

COPYRIGHT EDITOR: Rose Fong

Cover Model: iStock image-589540770

First E-book Publication: November 2023

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED:** This literary work may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including electronic or photographic reproduction, in whole or in part, without express written permission.

All characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead is strictly coincidental.

## DEDICATION

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes grief as a deep and poignant distress caused by or as if by bereavement or a cause of such suffering. There are many words to describe grief, such as anguish, sorrow, heartbreak, dolor, to name a few. But in my opinion, grief is pain. A pain so deep, the soul weeps for what it lost and will never have again.

It is that pain that got me through this book. While cathartic, my grief remains and will for the rest of my life. I consider myself fortunate that at my age, I could still call and talk to you. I could still hear your voice, laugh with you, hug you, smell you. Now that you are gone, I've realized what I am going to miss. I will miss our morning conversations on the phone while we drank our coffee together and just talked.

While you are not on this earth anymore, you are with me in my soul. You taught me well, raised me to be the woman I am today and for that alone, I will have a part of you everywhere I go.

I am going to miss you, Momma.

I love you.

June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1954 - June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023



# Blurb

## **Skylar:**

I never thought I'd be a young mother at nineteen. After the sudden death of my parents, I didn't think twice. I dropped everything to care for my obnoxious six-year-old brother. Working odd jobs, I did what I could to survive after I learned a former family friend took everything our parents left us.

We were surviving but not living until my brother found a drunk biker in the woods close to where we lived. I didn't know how it happened or why, but my parents raised me to never look a gift horse in the mouth.

When trouble strikes, my brother calls his new friend for help, and I learn that through the pain of grief comes something I never knew I needed. Family.

## **Pyro:**

Five years ago, I lost the love of my life and never recovered. I go through my days doing what needs to be done but never really living. I live in a colorless world with no laughter, no love, nothing left for me to care about.

On the anniversary of her death, I do what I always do. I ride.

Only this time, my ride turns into a chain of events I never saw coming when a brat calls my honor into question.

When my actions cause an innocent more pain, my brothers forced me to face my pain and grief before I lose the one thing, I never thought I needed.

In the depths of grief, two people learn that forgiveness, patience and compassion are what the soul needs to move on.

This installment of the Sons of Hell is an emotional journey of love, acceptance and moving on as two people learn to face grief head on before they lose everything.

PYRO

Sons of Hell MC

Rebecca Joyce

## Special Request:

**Incoming voicemail:** *Uh, mister? It's Cameron Hobbs. You met me in the woods when I was hiding from my sister, remember? You said to call if I needed anything. Well, I need ya to come back here and kick someone's ass. Don't know who it was, but someone beat the hell out of Sky. I ain't big enough to take them on. I'm figuring you owe me 'cause I could have left ya in the woods for the critters to get ya. Plus, Sky hitched up the wagon and took ya to town. So, I'm calling in your debt. Sky said a man's word is all he has. Anyway, see ya when you get here. Bye.*

## Prologue

*Five years ago,*

*“Chasie!” Ellie shouted as she ran towards me from inside the clubhouse. Bounding down the stairs in a very short pair of shorts and a damn near see-through tank top. I smiled, barely having time to get off my bike before my girl jumped into my arms, wrapping her long legs around me.*

*Fuck, I loved coming home to her.*

*Born and raised in Rosewood, Eleanor Eugenia Matthews, or as everyone called her, Ellie, was the only daughter of Jake and Maggie Matthews. There wasn't a decent, wholesome, wonderful memory I had of Ellie since she looked at me with her big, soft blue eyes. Her parents called her their surprise baby. Older than most parents, Jake and Maggie already had four older boys by the time Maggie realized she was pregnant with Ellie.*

*Ellie's youngest brother, Brian, and I were thirteen years old when the whole town learned that Maggie was going to be a mom again. While everyone was happy for the Matthews, Brian not so much. But like most siblings, when his mother presented the boys and the town with the small pink bundle, no one could help but fall in love with her.*

*Myself included.*

*Watching her grow up was an adventure.*

*Ellie was a free spirit, always smiling, enjoying life to the fullest. From ballet classes to fishing on the lake, Ellie was ready to experience life to the max. As she grew, there wasn't a person alive who didn't know that Ellie was going to be a looker. With her long sun-kissed hair, big blue eyes, and when she hit puberty, a fucking knockout body.*

*Ellie was the perfect package.*

*I could still remember the exact night I knew my life had changed forever. The night I caught her skinny dipping with her girlfriends out at the lake. She was just sixteen, had her whole life ahead of her, but when I watched as she emerged*

*from the water, something shifted inside me. I knew she was going to be mine. Of course, my brothers thought I was fucking crazy, but I couldn't explain it.*

*There was a fourteen-year age gap between us.*

*I knew it was wrong.*

*I was a grown ass man. I could have anyone, but I wanted her.*

*For months I avoided her, doing everything I could to get her out of my head. Delving deep into my business, I took on more clients, more builds, anything to keep my mind busy and off the one woman I wanted.*

*Then the junior prom happened, and her date hit her.*

*My brothers and I were there to chaperone, to ensure that all the kids had a good time and got home safe, but when I saw that motherfucker slap her, I lost it.*

*After that, everyone gave Ellie a wide berth.*

*None of the fucking pubescent boys in town even looked at her. I waited two long years for her. I wanted her to have a childhood, to experience every teen drama, to experience life as best she could, because when she turned eighteen, I was there on her father's porch asking for her hand in marriage.*

*There were still days I couldn't believe my good fortune and some days I wondered if I was holding her back. She was so young to be shackled to a man like me. But every time I thought she would be better off without me, that she could do better, my selfish nature refused to let her go. I couldn't do it.*

*My girl had my heart and soul within her.*

*She was fucking perfect in every way.*

*My brothers chuckled as Ellie planted kisses all over my face, wiggling and squirming in my arms as I tried to hold on to her. My girl could be exuberant on a good day. Full of life and excitement, I never once tried to quell her lust for life.*

*If anything, I encouraged her. I didn't want to change a damn thing about her. Her energy was infectious. There was*

*not a single person who met my girl that didn't fall in love with her.*

*She was just pure joy, and she was all mine.*

*"Ellie, take him upstairs. None of us want to see his small pecker," my oldest brother Callum Montclair, also known as King, the President of the Sons of Hell, said, shaking his head, chuckling as he walked past me towards the clubhouse.*

*"My man doesn't have a small pecker, Callum Montclair."*

*"Sure about that, Ellie?" Cord snickered. "Because it looked rather small when he walked out of that pond."*

*"Fucker," I growled, trying to hit my other brother as he walked past, only to sidestep, causing my grip to loosen on my girl. Growling, I tightened my arms around her as I added, "That water was twenty fucking degrees, asshole. It's called shrinkage."*

*"No, it's called pencil dick," Cord laughed boisterously as he and Callum headed inside the clubhouse. We'd been gone for only three days, but it felt like three years. I hated being away from Ellie.*

*With my hands firmly cupping her ass, I walked her inside and upstairs to our bedroom, kicking the door closed behind us.*

*"Alone at last," I sighed, walking her over to our bed and dropping her unceremoniously onto it, watching her tits bounce. My girl had a great rack. Full and pert, with hard nipples that begged me to suck them. Yanking off my shirt, I kicked off my boots before reaching for my jeans. "Get. Naked. Woman."*

*Ellie giggled, stripping out of her clothes. I had just kicked my jeans away to find my girl laying on the bed, her legs splayed as she fingered her glistening clit. "Hurry up, Chasie. I need you."*

*Growling, I shucked my boxers off and dove onto her as she squealed.*

# Chapter One

## Pyro

*Present day,*

I wanted this fucking meeting over.

Like right fucking now.

Out of all the motherfucking days of the year, this was the one day of the year that was mine. Mine to forget about everything. No club business, no club runs, nothing.

It was my fucking day to just ride.

Mainly, I wanted everyone to leave me the fuck alone. But where was I? I was sitting in church listening to King blabber on about shit that I didn't give a crap about. To make matters worse, Gunner was egging him on.

If that fucker didn't shut up, King was going to fucking blow and then all hell would break loose, and I wasn't going to stop it.

Not this time.

Not today.

Today, I didn't give a fuck if Gunner got his ass handed to him. He was a big boy. He could take a beating. I just wanted to get the fuck out of this room and disappear for the day. I had planned on taking my bike out for a long ride. I wanted to go anywhere, do anything instead of being here where I couldn't feel her.

Today was the day I lost her.

The day she died.

I had seven wonderful, amazing months with my girl. In those short months, I lived a lifetime of memories with her. My last memory of her was kissing her goodbye as she rushed off to meet her parents. Only she never arrived. They found her car later that night when some hikers spotted it down a ravine on one of the back mountain roads. When the rescue teams arrived

and managed to get her car back on the road, her car was barely recognizable, but more than that, it was empty.

For the next several days, volunteers and para-rescue teams scoured the whole mountainside, only to recover her blood-soaked clothing three days later. As the minutes turned into hours and the hours turned into days, the authorities' assumption was that the force of the accident ejected Ellie from her vehicle as it tumbled down the treacherous slopes of the mountainside. As more time passed, it was the prevailing belief amongst them was that the wildlife in the area had finished everything else.

That was the day my life changed.

The day I died inside.

Since that day, I avoided everyone on this day. Any other day and I wouldn't care, but not today. Today was my day to spend with her. My day to cry, to scream, to fight, to do whatever the fuck I wanted. Instead of doing just that, I was sitting in church.

"Pyro!" King bellowed.

Angrily, I shouted back, "What the fuck do you want?"

"Whoa," several brothers whispered as King and Gunner looked at me like I had lost my fucking mind.

Maybe I had.

Who the hell knew?

Today was the one fucking day I got a pass.

The day everyone knew to leave me the fuck alone.

They say grief gets better with time. For me, it pissed me off more and more. There wasn't a day that went by that I didn't think of her, see her beautiful face, hear her melodious laugh, smell her sweet scent. What I didn't get was to feel her arms around me anymore. I didn't get to taste her cherry lips, run my hands through her silky hair, touch her soft skin. That was what I missed.

"What? What the fuck could you possibly want from me today?"

"Dude," Gunner questioned. "Are you okay?"



“Do I fucking look okay, Cord?”

“Sorry I asked,” my brother murmured, scooting his chair away from me. King narrowed his eyes but said nothing.

Everyone in the room stared at me, unsure of what to think.

I never yelled at my brothers. I was generally the one to keep the peace, to bring laughter to these meetings. So, I got why they were all shocked at my outburst.

I couldn't do this today.

“Shit,” King eventually muttered, shaking his head. “Fuck, Chase, I'm sorry. I forgot.”

Of course he did.

It wasn't his woman that died. He didn't have his heart ripped out of his chest. He wasn't walking around a shell of the man he used to be. He had the love of his life upstairs. He had everything he wanted.

“Oh fuck,” Gunner sighed, finally catching on. “Damn it.”

“Whatever. Just finish so I can leave.”

King nodded, as he continued on with whatever was so fucking important. Sitting in this meeting was killing me. I wanted to feel the wind in my hair, the sun on my face, the cool breeze sliding across my body as I rode into the wind. I needed to hear her laughter as I revved my engine and sped down the highway, her arms tightening around me. I needed to smell the honeysuckle in her golden hair, to look up at the sun and see her soft blue eyes in the sky.

This was my day to spend with her, to imagine for just one day that she was still alive and with me.

That's all I wanted.

One day.

My day.

The longer I sat, the more agitated I got.

Nope. Fuck this.

Getting to my feet, I didn't ask for permission. I just fucking left, slamming the door behind me as I headed for my bike and freedom.

I didn't know where I was going.

All I knew was that the sun was shining, and the road never stopped.

Getting on my bike, I took off and never looked back.



“Mister?” someone said, nudging my leg.

Moaning, I opened my eyes and stared at a filthy little boy, no older than six, maybe seven years old. “Yeah?”

“Wa-cha’ doing down there, mister?”

Moaning, I blinked a few times and sat up. Rubbing my eyes, I looked around, trying to figure out where the hell I was. Being raised in the Shenandoah Valley, I was used to sleeping out in the wild with my brothers. It was nothing new for us to camp and sleep under the stars. Only when I looked around, the area didn't look like any place I knew.

Nothing looked familiar.

“You smell funny,” the kid said, wrinkling his nose.

Inspecting the little boy, I noticed he wasn't wearing any shoes. His shorts were threadbare, his shirt caked with so much dirt, it could stand on its own. Dirt marred his face as he sniffed, wiping his nose with the back of his dirty hand.

“You're one to talk,” I muttered, wondering how in the hell I ended up where I was.

Which begged the question, just where in the hell was I?

More importantly, how in the hell did I get here?

“Cameron!” a woman shouted off in the distance through the trees.

The little boy turned and sighed. “That's my sister, Skylar.”

I nodded. “Sounds like she’s worried.”

“Naw. It’s my bath time. Don’t need one cause I’m gonna get dirty later, anyway.”

Hiding my smirk, I got to my feet and dusted off the leaves and dirt stuck to my body. “Nothing wrong with getting dirty, kid. But baths are a must. Don’t want to get sick, do ya?”

“Cameron,” a young woman sighed, walking out from behind the trees. “Boy, what am I going to do with you?”

“Don’t want no bath!” the kid shouted before running off into the woods. Watching him bolt, I chuckled as the young woman sighed.

Typical boy. I remembered those days fondly as I too ran from my mother when it was bath time. Had to admit, the kid made a point. Why get cleaned up when he knew he was going to get dirty again? Then again, that was child logic. As an adult now, I understood the need for cleanliness. Which I planned on taking care of as soon as I found my bike and got the hell out of here.

Wherever here was?

“Great. Sorry about that. He can be a handful.”

“I can imagine,” I muttered, looking around for my bike. “I guess I better get going.”

Where the hell was my bike?

I knew damn well I was riding it when I left the compound yesterday. It had to be around here somewhere because there was no way I would leave my bike.

“If you’re looking for your bike, it’s over there. Don’t think you’ll be able to ride it, though. It’s pretty messed up,” the young woman offered.

That stopped me short.

In all my years, I’ve never laid down my bike. I was a safe rider. Obeyed all the rules. I maintained my bike religiously, never wanting to chance anything happening.

Messed up how?

“What?”

“Yeah,” she said, turning away from me. “Come on, I’ll show you.”

“What about your brother?” I asked, not really caring, but figured I should mention the vagrant, since she was just yelling for him a few seconds ago.

“Oh, he knows his way home.”

Following the young woman, I tried to find anything that told me where the hell I was, but all I saw were trees for miles. Lots of fucking trees. How in the hell did I end up in the middle of a goddamned forest?

More importantly, what forest was I in?

I knew every trail, every camping site, every mountain path surrounding Rosewood, Virginia, but nothing around me looked familiar.

“Uh, could you tell me where I’m at?”

“Juniper Hollow. You’re about five hours from Charleston, West Virginia. You are deep in the Smokey mountains, mister. There are no paved roads out here, so I’m not sure how you even got out here.”

“Me either,” I muttered, rubbing my neck as I looked around the area. I never even heard of Juniper Hollow. I knew West Virginia was full of small towns where people kept to themselves and just existed. Just simple country folks living as they wanted.

Nothing wrong with that.

Still, I had no idea how I ended up here.

“Well, there’s your bike,” the young woman said, pointing to my mangled bike. That is, what remained of it, if anything did remain. My beautiful bike lay in pieces surrounding a large oak tree. If I didn’t know any better, it looked as if I hit the tree head on.

Shit.

Reaching into my cut, I searched for my cellphone to find it missing. Patting my jeans, I looked around the area, only

finding parts of my bike.

“Damn,” muttered, rubbing my face. “Don’t suppose you have a phone I can use?”

“I’m sorry no. We don’t get cell service out here.”

“A vehicle?”

“Got a donkey and a wagon. You’re welcome to it. The nearest town with a phone is about an hour trip by wagon, that way,” the woman said, pointing towards the east.

I had to have heard her wrong.

Did she just say a wagon and donkey?

“Skylar!” a kid screamed bloody murder.

The hairs on my neck standing up.

That wasn’t just any scream.

That was trouble with a capital ‘T’.

The young woman took off running like a bat out of hell. Following her, I had no problem keeping up with her when we came to a clearing, skidding to a stop. Her little brother kicked and fought as hard as he could as a big burly man held him up by the scruff of his shirt, shaking him like a rag doll.

“Let the boy go,” I growled, taking a step forward. “Now.”

“Ain’t none of yer business, mister. So, fuck off,” the man said, shaking the kid more.

“Clive, stop!” Skylar yelled.

“Want my money or I’m taking the kid. Unless you want to make other arrangements,” the man sneered, grabbing his crotch as he licked his lips.

The woman shivered. “I’d rather eat shit, asshole. Now, let my brother go before you really piss me off.”

“Ain’t leaving without my money.”

“What’s he talking about?” I asked the now angry woman.

“Asshole thinks I jipped him. He wants compensation.”

“Don’t you use those fancy words? You know I don’t know them!”

“That’s because you are an in-bred hillbilly hick!”

“Sissy, he’s tearin’ up my shirt!” her brother yelled, trying to kick the fat fucker.

Skylar bent down and picked up a large branch. Snapping it in half, the young woman held both pieces tightly, as she approached the hulking man as if he were nothing. “Let my brother go before I beat your ass.”

The fat fucker dropped the kid to the ground and took a step back. The kid ran straight for me, grabbing my leg, hiding behind me as he shouted. “Kick his ass, sissy!”

“Now Sky, I meant no harm. Just want what’s owed.”

“I don’t owe you anything but an ass beating for touching my brother. Now get the fuck off my land before I do just that!”

The fat bastard hightailed it fast as he ran from the clearing.

Dropping the branches, Skylar sighed, bending over as she rested her hands on her knees as she tried to calm herself.

The kid let go of my leg and walked over to her, hugging her.

“It’s okay Sky. He’s gone now.”

Skylar turned to look at her brother and growled, “Home. Now.”

The kid flinched, then nodded before he ran.

If he knew what was good for him, he better run for home because the look his sister gave him even scared me.

Standing my ground, I asked, “You, okay?”

“I’m fine,” she said, standing back up. “Follow me and I’ll hitch up the wagon for you.”

Not wanting to be on the receiving end of her ire, I did just that.

The sun was high in the afternoon sky when the wagon came to a stop in the middle of a street. Jumping down from the wagon, I looked at the young woman and her brother. “Thanks for the ride.”

“The general store will have a phone for you to use and the bus picks up over at the post office no later than five.”

Reaching for my wallet, I took out a few hundred bucks and handed them to her. The woman just looked at it. “Don’t want your money, mister. You had best get on over to the General Store and get in line. It’s the only phone around for miles, so everyone uses it. Just take a number from Patty when you go inside and wait your turn.”

Looking over my shoulder, I saw the store she was talking about and the line of people waiting.

Turning back to the young woman, I handed her the money along with my card. “You ever need anything. Just call that number.”

Skylar picked up the card and read, “Sons of Hell Motorcycle Club. Montclair Construction. Chase Montclair. Owner.”

“That’s me. But my club brothers call me Pyro.”

“Well, Mr. Montclair. It was nice meeting you.” She smiled, extending her hand.

“You too, Skylar,” I replied, quickly shaking her hand, before I looked at her brother, extending my hand again. Cameron looked at it before placing his dirty hand in mine. “Young man, you take care of your sister, okay?”

“Yes, sir.” The kid smiled, shaking my hand.

## Chapter Two

### Pyro

*Two weeks later.*

“Pyro!” Scribe shouted as he pulled into the construction site. As one of the top Architectural Drafting and Design firms in the area, my company was always in demand. Add to the fact that I also owned my own construction crew, I was constantly busy building fancy log homes for the uber rich who frequented our little area of the world.

Rosewood, Virginia was a tourist hotspot. With the beautiful Shenandoah Mountains, scenic trails, seasonal skiing and just about any outdoor activity around to tickle anyone’s fancy, those who had money wanted a small piece of my heaven and I had no problem helping them spend their money.

Looking up from the house plans I was currently building, I watched as my brother got off his bike and walked over to me. While I generally didn’t mind when a brother interrupted me, Scribe was becoming a daily nuisance. I didn’t know what trouble he got himself into this time, but I was too busy to care.

“What?”

“King wants you at the clubhouse. Now.”

“Why?” I asked, turning back to the plans, making a few notes. Fuck me. If it wasn’t Scribe, it was King. What the hell was wrong with them? Didn’t they know I had a deadline to meet?

“He wouldn’t say. Just told me to find you, tell you he wants you at the clubhouse and he also said turn your fucking phone on.”

Sighing, I muttered, “I’m busy. Tell him I’ll be there when I get done here.”

“Uh,” Scribe muttered, backpedaling. His eyes widened as he shook his head. “I’m not telling him that. He’s still pissed at me for fucking with Bailey.”



“Guess you shouldn’t have hidden her birth control pills then, huh?”

“It was a fucking joke! How many times do I have to say it?”

“Scribe, do I need to have the talk about the birds and bees with you? Were your parents incapable of giving a coherent explanation about the process of conceiving babies? You’re just lucky Venom didn’t end up pregnant.”

My whole body shivered as I thought about Bailey being pregnant.

Yeah. That wasn’t a pretty thought.

“Asshole,” Scribe groaned. “I know how they’re made. Just turn on your phone and call King. I’ve got to go find a place to crash for a few days. Bailey’s out for blood.”

“Serves you right,” I chuckled as Scribe walked away. Though best buds, Bailey and Scribe had an ongoing war between the two.

It started when Scribe lied to Bailey about being gay, just so he could get the information the club needed to help her, and it just steamrolled on from there. Their latest friendly feud had Scribe walking around with fading pink hair and Bailey safeguarding her birth control pills as if they were the Holy Grail. Of course, when my brother Gunner found out that he impregnated his woman Sarah with triplets, well, Bailey went off the rails and made Dr. Claudia prescribe her a second set of birth control pills as a secondary precaution, a diaphragm, which Scribe got ahold of and painted the face from *Scream* on after he poked several holes in it, and now there were rumors of a possible IUD.

In retaliation, Bailey slashed all the tires on Scribe’s VW Van after she had it impounded and painted black with varying sizes of dicks all over it. But she hit it out of the ballpark when she talked one of the brothers into putting training wheels on Scribe’s custom Harley Lowrider.

Reaching for my phone, I turned it on.

Ignoring the incoming text messages, I called my brother.

The second the call connected, I muttered. “What?”

“Club’s got another special request. Call came in on the landline an hour ago.”

“So, hand it off to a brother.”

“Thought you might want this one.”

“Nope. I’m busy.”

“A kid named Cameron called in. Asked for you specifically.”

I smirked, remembering the filthy little varmint. Since my return to Rosewood, I hadn’t given the young boy or his sister a single thought. “Let me guess. Kid’s sister is trying to give him a bath again, and he wants me to save him.”

“No,” King said carefully. “Kid found his sister beaten. Said she’s hurt pretty bad.”

“I’m on my way.” I immediately hung up, yelling, “Enigma! I’m heading to the clubhouse. Finish up here, then send the boys home.”

“Will do!” my brother shouted back.

Heading for my new bike, I started it up and kicked dirt as I peeled out of the site.

I had to admit I didn’t give the kid and his sister much thought after I left Juniper Hollow. All I cared about was getting home. I still can’t remember how I ended up in their neck of the woods. Not that I really cared. I just chalked up the experience to being drunk off my ass and thankful I was still alive.

By the time I made it back to Rosewood, I was exhausted, hungry and I needed a shower badly. Since then, I just tried to forget about my missing time and my experience in Juniper Hollow.

I wasn’t like the rest of my club brothers.

While they went about their days happy and carefree, I carried a heaviness within me. Sometimes the weight of what I lost bogged me down, almost crippling me. The nights were

the worst. It was then, when I was alone in my room, surrounded by her things, that the weight of what I lost crushed me, making it impossible to breathe sometimes.

There were many nights where I would just lie in bed, staring at her picture, imagining her lying beside me. I counted myself lucky at times because, for a short few months, I lived a lifetime with her. Then reality would come crashing back and the pain of losing her started all over again.

My brothers tried for the longest time to help me move past my grief. Hell, King even insisted I see a counselor. I didn't know how talking about someone I would never see again would help, but for them, I tried. Now, I was just a shell of the man I used to be. I rarely laughed anymore. I never took part in anything unless a brother begged me to. I just existed. Now, my life was like a broken record. Get up, go to work, go home, eat and sleep.

Rinse and repeat.

My only deviation was when King called church.

Even then, I tuned out most of what he said.

The fact was, I no longer cared about anything.

Not the club.

Not my business.

Not my brothers.

Nothing.

I was just existing.

Pulling into the compound, I parked my bike and cut the engine before walking into the clubhouse, to find Priest sitting at the bar.

Asshole has been sitting at the bar a lot lately, unless he was with Frankenstein out at the distillery. I could tell something was bothering him. I thought about asking him a few times but stayed silent. If a brother wanted to talk, then he would.

Nodding to him, I headed for King's office.

Knocking twice, I opened the door and took a seat.

“Took you long enough to get here. What you’d do? Take the scenic route?”

Not in the mood for small talk, I popped some gum in my mouth and asked, “I’m here. What?”

King shook his head, saying nothing as he leaned forward and hit the play button on the old answering machine the club kept when I heard. “Uh, mister? It’s Cameron Hobbs. I found you in the woods when I was hiding from my sister, remember? You said to call if I needed anything? Well, I need ya to come back here and kick someone’s ass. Don’t know who did it, but someone beat the hell out of Sky. I ain’t big enough to take them on. I’m figuring you owe me ‘cause I could have left ya in the woods for the critters to get ya. Plus, Sky hitched up the wagon and took ya to town. So, I’m calling in your debt. Sky said a man’s word is all he has. See ya when you get here. Bye.”

When the message ended, I leaned back in the chair, covering my smile.

Kid knew how to hit below the belt.

Fucking cheeky brat called my honor into question.

King grinned. “I like this kid.”

“He’s a pain in the ass.”

“That may be, but he called and asked for help, Chase. You specifically. You know the club rules.”

“Yeah, I know.”

“Take Priest with you. He’s been hitting the bottle lately.”

Yeah, I noticed that too.

Nodding, I got to my feet.

“And take one of the club’s vehicles. I’m not replacing anymore bikes.”

Taking my leave, I headed towards the bar, slapping Priest on the back. “Pack for a few days. We’re going on a

road trip.”

“Where too?”

“Juniper Hollow.”

“Where the fuck is that?”

“West Virginia.”

“You don’t want me to go?” Frankenstein sulked mulishly as he walked out of the kitchen with a big sub sandwich in his hands. “I understand. No one wants me around.”

Oh, for crying out loud.

Frankenstein was the biggest fucking baby in the damn club. Standing over six-foot eight and weighing close to three hundred pounds of wall-to-wall muscle, the brother was nothing more than a big ass teddy bear with a brain even if he didn’t know what to do with it sometimes. Fucker was probably smarter than the whole town combined. While we all appreciated and respected the man for what he did for the club, he tended to act like a petulant child when we ignored him. It wasn’t that we did it intentionally, because the mountain of a man was hard to miss.

Thinking his height wouldn’t be a problem this time, I sighed. “You can come, Frank. Go grab one of the SUVs. We leave in thirty.”

I didn’t wait for a response. With Frank, I never knew what he was going to say or how he was going to react.

It was best to just tell him flat then walk away.

So that’s what I did.

Heading up to my room, I grabbed a bag from my closet and started packing what I needed when Gunner walked in, plopping down on my bed, eating an ice-cream cone. “Where ya going?”

“Juniper Hollow.”

“Where the fuck is that?”

“You don’t want to know. Why aren’t you at the auto-body shop?”

“Sarah had another ultrasound visit today. Got to see my kids swimming around in her belly. It was so cool, man. I can’t wait for them to get here.”

“I’m happy for you,” I said, stuffing an extra pair of jeans into my bag. I really was happy for Gunner. Being married and impending fatherhood suited him. No longer the man whore of Rosewood, Gunner took to married life as if he were born for it.

Which shocked the hell out of everyone who knew him.

“Where is Sarah?”

“Left her at the coffee shop with her mom. They are planning a baby shower. Sarah said we’re gonna need three of everything. Don’t see why we can’t just throw them all in the same crib. You know, let them fight for dominance like we did.”

Shaking my head, I groaned. “Because they each deserve their own beds, you moron. Don’t be a cheap asshole. Just do what Sarah says.”

Gunner huffed. “Fine. Did you know men aren’t allowed at a baby shower? I love a good party. They are my kids, too.”

I couldn’t with him today. He was all over the map. Fucker wasn’t happy unless he was the center of attention. Had news for the former man whore. He would never be the center of attention ever again. “Gunner, the baby shower is for the mother.”

“Well, that’s not fair.”

“Get used to it. Life isn’t fair.”

“God, you’re in a mood. What’s wrong?”

“I’m going to Juniper Hollow. That should explain everything.”

Gunner shrugged his shoulder, getting to his feet. “Okay. Well, have fun!”

Fucking idiot's head was so far up his own ass he was shitting pink and blue streamers. The second he learned he knocked Sarah up, it was game over. The fucking man whore of Rosewood grew a pair of balls and finally manned the fuck up and did the right thing. Who would have thought it possible? Not me. I expected to wake up one day to learn some husband or father shot my brother's dick off.

Then again, Sarah's father, Mike, almost did just that.

Zippering up my bag, I headed back downstairs to find King in the club's armory. Walking over, I slung my bag over my shoulder. "What are you doing in here?"

King grabbed a few Glocks and a box of ammo before handing them to me. "Take these."

"King, it's Redneckville, USA. Not a demilitarized war zone."

"Just take them. Better to be prepared than finding yourself with your pants around your ankles. And here is a satellite phone. Pretty damn sure a place called Juniper Hollow doesn't have cell reception."

I chuckled. "Got that right. The nearest phone was an hour away."

"Call when you get there and then keep me posted."

"Yes dad," I smiled, stuffing the guns and the satellite phone in my bag. "Anything else before I go?"

"Just play nice with the natives." King smirked.

I huffed. "No promises."

## Chapter Three

### Skylar

The sun was setting when I heard the front door open and close. Rolling over, I winced, holding my side. I wasn't positive, but it felt as if I broke a rib. Not that it mattered. I didn't have money for the doctor, anyway. Hell, I barely had enough left of what Mr. Montclair gave us and I rationed that down to a penny.

"Sky? You awake?"

Nodding, I reached for my brother. "Where have you been, Cam?"

"Taking care of manly business. Do you need anything?"

"No," I muttered, looking at my baby brother.

He was filthy again.

From the moment he was born, Cameron Hobbs found happiness in the mud. He was so like Dad. Part of me knew that when Cameron got older, he was going to end up just like our dad, in the military, serving his country. Our father was a Marine Gunnery Sergeant, home on leave, when the accident happened. Dad wanted to take Momma out to dinner. Only they never returned.

I was lucky I had just turned nineteen when it happened, because when the sheriff showed up, he was going to take Cameron. I flat out refused. No one was taking my baby brother away from me.

He was mine now.

After we buried our parents, I didn't give school a second thought. Cameron needed me and I did what I had to. I found a part-time job in a neighboring town, working while Cameron was in school.

My only problem was when summer hit.

I couldn't leave my baby brother alone.



Now, without a job, I spent my days doing odd jobs for the mountain folks. Everything from washing laundry to running errands. It was a shit existence, but we were making it work.

“Dad would be so proud of you, Cam. Taking care of me like you have been. Momma too.”

“I miss them,” my brother whispered, his bottom lip wobbling. It had only been six months since the accident. There were times I woke expecting to hear Momma singing in the kitchen as she got breakfast ready or see Dad hug Momma as he sweet-talked her.

But I would never see or hear that again.

Nobody ever told me what life would be like when a parent died. Let alone both at the same time. Talk about a double whammy. I still had a hard time processing their passing.

They were just going to dinner.

For me, it was the knowing that I would never see them again. Never hug them, hear their laughter, see them smile. It felt as if someone ripped a part of my soul out. They were still young. Had many years ahead of them. I remembered them making plans for when dad would retire. They wanted to sell the cabin and buy an RV and travel the world. There were still brochures on the kitchen counter that dad was looking at.

Now, everything was gone, as if a void had taken root with no way out. I tried to keep my grief to a minimum around Cameron. He was so young, and I knew in time he would lose the memory of our parents. But not me. I would always remember them.

I would remember everything.

“Me too, buddy, but we’re gonna make it, aren’t we? It’s Sky-Cam all the way.”

Cameron smirked at that. “Just you and me, sis. Forever.”

“So, what manly business did you take care of today?”

“Well, I helped Mrs. Shelly with her chickens. She gave me a jar of her fresh strawberry jam. Then I helped Mr. Orville mend his fence. He gave me fifty cents. And Mr. Jones needed my help finding his television remote. It was under his fancy chair. We watched the Price is Right.”

“Wow. Sounds like you had a busy day.”

“Yep. And Mr. Peter took me into town so I could make a phone call.”

“A phone call?” I questioned. “Who did you call?”

“Mr. Montclair. He’s coming to kick some ass for you.”

“Oh, Cameron,” I groaned. “Tell me you didn’t.”

“I had to. He owes me a debt and you always said a man always pays his debts.”

“Cameron, he gave us money. He paid his debt.”

“Not to me it ain’t paid. I could have left him in the woods, but I didn’t. I saved his life. He owes me.”

There was no arguing with the six-year-old.

I knew that.

Especially Cameron Hobbs.

My brother was more Dad than Mom. Reason flew out the window with the Hobbs men. Once they put their mind to something, nothing would stop them.

Stubborn as a mule, Momma would say.

I moaned. “Cam, Mr. Montclair has his own life. He doesn’t want to be bogged down with our problems too. I wish you hadn’t called him.”

“Well, I did,” my brother stubbornly said. “He owes me and now he’s gonna pay up. Um, sissy?”

“Yeah?”

“When I was in town, I saw that man again.”

Slowly sitting up, I winced. “Where?”

“He was talking with Clive over at the hardware store.”

“Shit,” I moaned, lowering my feet to the floor.

So much for taking another day to heal. If that son of a bitch was in town again, I had to be ready for him.

When Mom and Dad died, I didn't know what to do. I was in shock when the sheriff told me the news. I didn't see Gunnery Sergeant Hiller standing next to him. The moment the sheriff said what he came to say, Wade Hiller told me he would take care of everything, that he was here to visit Dad and felt bad for not arriving in time. Because I was in shock, I accepted his help.

And boy did he help.

More than I realized.

Before I knew it, he made calls, and everything was being taken care of. I was grateful for his help. I didn't know anything about a full military burial or how to even go about making the arrangements. Hiller told me he would take care of it and stupidly, I let him.

The funeral was something out of a movie. Though Hiller told me that the Marine Corps could bury Dad at Arlington Cemetery, I wanted my parents buried together.

They would have wanted that.

After the funeral, Hiller was with me when two Marine Corps officers arrived at the house with paperwork. I didn't know what they were talking about and when I went to ask, Hiller once again told me he would handle it.

I should have known something was wrong then, but I was more concerned with Cameron who, at the time, had taken to sleeping out in the forest. My brother took our parents' death hard at first, refusing to speak to anyone and preferring to sleep out under the stars. As the weeks passed, Cameron eventually returned to his old self. Now, when he had moments of sadness, he would say what he needed, then moved on. The kid was resilient that way.

Too bad I didn't have that superpower.

It wasn't until after Hiller left, I received another letter from the Marine Corps and realized that something was very wrong. I didn't know my dad had a life insurance policy, or my mom, for that matter.

Apparently, dad had a sizeable policy with the Marine Corps. And when he and Mom died, Cameron and I became the beneficiaries. When I called the number on the letter, I was told that they had dispersed the policy to Gunnery Sergeant Hiller as I requested.

Only I requested nothing.

I didn't even know Daddy had a life insurance policy.

When I asked about the amount, their response astonished me.

One million dollars.

Gone.

Stolen by my dad's friend.

I tried calling everyone I could think of to stop Hiller from taking what my dad left us, but so far no one could help me because apparently, I signed some piece of paper giving Hiller access to the money.

Only I didn't remember signing shit!

When I tried contacting Hiller again, the number he gave me was out of service. I tried calling the military again, only to learn that the Marine Corps dishonorably discharged Gunnery Sgt. Hiller many years ago after the Marine Corps found him guilty and incarcerated him for theft of military property.

When that reality sank in, I knew that bastard was living comfortably on the money that was meant for me and my brother.

That's when I tried contacting my dad's other friends. His military friends. Only I hadn't heard from them yet. My dad only kept in contact with a few good men, but since we didn't live near a base, it was hard for them to take leave and visit. In all honesty, out of the men I contacted, I only remembered two of them, because they were my godfathers. But they had long

since left the military, and I didn't know how to locate them now.

It didn't matter, anyway. Hiller was my problem, and I would get back what he stole. I didn't know why that son of a bitch was back in Juniper Hollow, but if he showed his thieving ass around my home, I was going to kill him where he stood.

No one stole from a Hobbs and lived.

Not on my watch.

"Cameron, go into Momma and Daddy's room and get me Dad's gun and a box of ammo."

"Why?"

"Because I said so. Now go," I grimaced, getting to my feet. I wasn't taking any chances where that thief was concerned. He may have taken Daddy's money, but it would be over my dead body before I allowed him to take anything else.

## Chapter Four

### Pyro

Making my way through the small town, I groaned.

Of all the places in the world, this hillbilly town was the last place I ever wanted to see again. Not that anything was wrong with the town or the people. It was that I had better things to do than check-up on an errant child who refused to take a damn bath.

I admitted I was a tad concerned about Skylar.

It didn't sit well with me knowing someone hit a young woman who was only trying to take care of her brother. Though that begged the question of where their parents were? Even when Skylar took me to their small cabin, there was no sign of adults and at the time, and I didn't think to ask. All I wanted was to get the fuck out of dodge.

"Jesus," Priest muttered lowly as we passed a man on a horse.

"That's nothing," I added, pointing at the growing line of folks who needed to make a phone call. "The General Store has the only working landline phone in town. I stood in that line for close to two hours before I got a turn. Even then, it was only a five-minute call because it wasn't considered an emergency."

While driving past, every fucking one of the natives glared and eyed the vehicle. Not that they could see inside, thanks to the tinted windows.

"How much longer to the kid?" Priest asked, looking around the small town.

"Well, it was an hour by buggy, so I'm thinking ten, maybe fifteen minutes, maybe more."

"How ya doing back there, Frank?" Priest asked, turning around.

The big brother huffed, unbuckling his seatbelt. “Something keeps jabbing me in the butt.”

Looking in my rearview mirror, I watched as Frank bent over to look under the seat, when he sat up, quickly twisted around, then punched something.

A loud grunt filled the cab of the vehicle. “You fucker!”

Slamming on the brakes, Priest and I turned just as Scribe’s head popped up from the back of the SUV. “That hurt!”

“Then stop poking me in the butt!”

“What the fuck are you doing here, Scribe?” Priest asked.

“Getting my ass beat by Frank, that’s what!” Scribe moaned, rubbing his nose.

“Really?” I sighed. “You chose a Club SUV to hide out in?”

“It worked,” Scribe replied, climbing over the seat as if him tagging along was no big thing. “Until the big man started poking around. So, Juniper Hollow, huh? King and I have a Marine buddy from this place. Maybe I’ll look him up.”

“This isn’t a fucking vacation,” I growled. “We’re finding out what happened. Fix what we can, then we are getting the fuck out of this place. Got it?”

“Geez, Pyro,” Scribe sighed, leaning forward between the seats that separated me and Priest. “Are you out of bubble gum? I have some Hubba Bubba in my bag. What flavor do you want? I got watermelon, cherry, grape?”

“I don’t want any damn gum, you ass!”

Before Scribe could reply, I watched as Frank grabbed Scribe by the back of his poncho he was wearing and flung him back into his seat. “Safety first, asshole.”

“Easy, Frank,” Scribe yelped. “My mom made me this poncho!”

Ignoring my idiot brother in the back, I concentrated on where I needed to go. The area wasn’t anything like

Rosewood. Not one bit. Small shacks lined the surrounding hills. Folks milled around, doing nothing as they just lived their lives carefree. Other than the small town and a few stores, I was knee deep in *Deliverance* country.

There were no modern conveniences. Nothing to say the town, or the folks, knew of the world outside the small hollow they lived in. I still couldn't believe I was back in this town. When I left, I promised myself I would never return. That and I promised myself never to get so damn drunk that I forgot time and space.

I still hadn't recalled my missing time. Not that it mattered. As long as there wasn't a warrant out for my arrest, I figured whatever I did couldn't have been that bad. It still rattled me. I missed my time with Ellie. The one time of year, when I got to be with her, and I got so damn drunk I missed it.

What did that say about me?

I knew my brothers were worried about me. I knew they wanted me to move on and start living again. A small part of me did as well, but I couldn't let go of her. I wasn't ready to. She was the love of my life. For one brief moment in time, she was mine. Like a dream, she disappeared. While two of my brothers were starting their lives, mine was over. I would never have the laughter, the love, the coy looks or the woman of my dreams in my arms again.

Ellie was the love of my life.

There would never be another.

I knew that. Accepted that.

All I cared about was my business and the club. That was enough for me. I didn't want or need any complications in my life. I liked it just the way it was. Drama free. If I wanted drama, I'd hang out with my club brothers.

Hell, Scribe alone was a drama demilitarized zone.

Fucker couldn't blink without creating havoc wherever he went.

Nope. My life was exactly how I wanted it.



Simple and uncomplicated.

Seeing the turnoff for the Hobbs place, I slowed the SUV and made a right-hand turn when the sound of gunfire echoed all around. Stepping on the gas, I didn't need to tell my brothers to gear up. Priest was already popping a clip into his gun, while Frank was pulling back the chamber to load a bullet. Scribe had his trusty knife in his hand and the second I slammed on the brakes he was out of the vehicle and moving fast through the trees.

Killing the engine, I spotted Cameron's sister, leaning against the post on the deck of her house, with a shotgun in her hand, aiming at someone fleeing through the forest.

"Frank, go," I ordered as the big man got out of the vehicle, running after the fleeing intruder. Getting out myself, I walked over to the young woman and asked, "Where's the kid?"

"I don't know. He took off as soon as that asshole showed up."

"Priest, go see if you can find the kid. Six years old, blonde hair and probably covered in dirt."

Turning back to the young woman, I stowed my gun. "Got the kid's message."

"He shouldn't have called you. I can handle this myself."

"Woman, you can barely stand," I said, shaking my head as I approached her. Holding out my hand, I ordered, "Give me the damn gun before you hurt yourself more and sit down before you fall down."

The young woman did as ordered.

"LET ME GO!"

Turning, I smirked as Frank walked towards me with the brat himself. Carrying the kid at arm's length from the back of his dirty overalls, the kid dangled in the air, kicking and swinging at Frank, trying to get free. "I'm gonna kick your ass, mister!"

Frank rolled his eyes. "Lose something, ma'am?"

Whistling loudly in the air, I sat down on the porch before turning to the kid. “Alright, you dirty varmint. I’m here. What kind of trouble are you two really in?”

“Mr. Montclair, my brother, shouldn’t have called you. I have everything under control,” the sister said, looking put out and exhausted. I could clearly see the bruises on her face and the way she was favoring her side. I knew she had some bruised ribs.

“I can see how well you have this handled, but I’m here now. So, what’s the problem, kid?” I asked, ignoring the sister as I looked directly at her brother, who gulped.

“That asshole stole our money!”

Turning to his sister, I asked, “The money I gave you?”

The young woman shook her head. “No. Our parents’ life insurance money. Look Mr. Montclair. I really appreciate you coming all this way for my brother, but this isn’t your business.”

“I’m here now, anyway,” I muttered as Priest and Scribe walked over.

“Fucker got away, Pyro,” Priest cursed, looking around the area.

“There are survey markers everywhere surrounding this land. Are you planning on selling?” Scribe asked, sheathing his knife.

“No. This house and land are all we have left of our parents. I will never sell it.”

“Who was the man you were shooting at?” I asked, trying to move this conversation along. I didn’t want to be here any longer than I had to. This fucking area was giving me the willies.

“You owe me, mister,” the filthy brat growled, walking straight up to me. “I saved your life. Now, what are you going to do about that asshole?”

“Cameron!” his sister shouted.

“This is between men, sissy. Stay out of it. It’s man’s business.”

Frank, Scribe and Priest chuckled at the impertinent little imp.

Grabbing the kid by the scruff of his dirty shirt, I hauled him close until we were nose to nose. “First off, you don’t ever talk to your sister that way. You always show women respect, even when they are annoying you. Second, I got your damn message and arrived as soon as I could to help your degenerate ass out of a jam. And thirdly... Boy, if you don’t take a damn bath, I will hose you down myself. Understood?”

The kid gulped, nodding his little head.

“Mr. Montclair,” the sister carefully muttered. “Please let go of my brother. He’s just a child.”

“He’s a pain in the ass,” I muttered, doing as she asked as the kid ran up the porch steps to hide behind her.

Getting to my feet, I faced the young woman and asked, “What is your name?”

“Skylar Hobbs and this is my brother Cameron.”

“Hobbs?” Scribe and Priest looked at each other, when Priest stepped forward and asked, “Any relation to Gunnery Sergeant Kevin Hobbs?”

“Yes. That was our dad,” the woman muttered.

Priest walked over to me and whispered, “We have a problem, Pyro. Scribe and I knew Gunnery Sergeant Hobbs. He was a good man. Got word about five months ago from a Marine buddy of mine that Hobbs and his wife, Brenda, died in a single vehicle car accident. I knew Kevin. That man was a beast behind the wheel. He taught defensive driving to all the tactical drivers that were heading downrange. There is no fucking way he lost control of his vehicle.”

“Priest is right, Pyro,” Scribe added. “King and I deployed with Hobbs. The man was good. Better than any NASCAR driver on the circuit. Hobbs was all about his family. There is no fucking way he’d leave his kids penniless.”

Looking at Priest, I asked, “That why you’ve been hitting the bottle lately?”

Priest nodded. “Hobbs was the best at what he did, brother. Career service man. Decorated and revered. Hearing him die like that was a shock. I knew even back then, it was impossible. That man saved my ass a time or two. I owe him.”

“What are you saying?”

“I don’t think it was an accident.” Priest whispered.

“That’s not all.” Scribe muttered, looking at the young woman, then at her brother. “King and I are the godparents to the kid. This whole situation just became personal.”

Well... shit!

## Chapter Five

### Skylar

“You are First Lieutenant Malpas and Chaplain Dalton,” I stated, looking at the two of the men I’d been trying to get a hold of for months. I couldn’t believe my good fortune. I had found their names in some of my father’s paperwork. I also found paperwork that stated that Lt. Malpas and Cpt. Montclair were the godparents to Cameron.

I couldn’t believe I didn’t put two and two together.

Mr. Montclair, my Mr. Montclair, was the younger brother of one of my dad’s best friends. Looking at the man himself as he paced back and forth on a satellite phone, I had to admit my first observation of him was spot on. The man was something special to look at. Tall, muscular in all the right places. Even his broody face was exceptional. Too bad for me the man didn’t give me a second glance. It was probably for the best. He wasn’t interested and I had my brother to care for. No one wanted a relationship with complications.

“You can call me Scribe,” the one with long hair said, smirking. “And this grumpy bastard is Priest. We were really sorry to hear about your mom and dad. If we had known sooner, we would have made ourselves available.”

“It’s okay,” I muttered, turning away from the man who held my attention. “After Mom and Dad died, everything moved so fast. Then Seargent Hiller showed up and I thought everything would be fine. Only it wasn’t.”

“Wait a minute,” the one called Priest interrupted. “Sgt. Wade Hiller? Tall, skinny as a beanpole, laughs like a hyena. That Hiller?”

I nodded.

“Jesus Christ,” Priest cursed, crossing himself immediately before kissing the gold cross that hung around his neck. “Hiller is a snake. A leach. Hiller, who I can only describe as a fucking weasel, had the unfortunate experience of being dishonorably discharged from the Corps just a few

months prior to my last deployment. They caught Hiller selling military issued supplies on the side. The Corps sentenced Hiller to seven years in Leavenworth for his crimes. Hiller vowed payback for all involved. If Hiller showed up after the accident, it's no wonder the kids are penniless. It was Gunnery Sergeant Hobbs who turned him in."

"Fucker wanted payback," Frank muttered, munching on a sandwich before he quickly swallowed and blushed. "Sorry, ma'am."

Cameron laughed. "She ain't no ma'am. She's sissy!"

Trying to snag him, Cameron moved too quickly, causing me to wince and cry out. Mr. Montclair stopped pacing and immediately turned to me, frowning as Cameron bumped into him. I watched as Mr. Montclair stared down at Cameron, who gulped, slowly backing away from him before turning back towards me. "Sorry sissy."

Smirking, I nodded.

"Okay everyone," Mr. Montclair growled. "Just got off the phone with King. He wants the kids packed and ready to travel by morning. He doesn't want them left here while Hiller is on the loose. He's calling in some favors with some old military friends of his to find out what Hiller is up to. Until then, he wants the kids secured."

"What? Wait just one minute," I said, shaking my head, getting to my feet, holding my side. "We can't leave. This is our home. This place is all we have left of our mom and dad. We can't just up and leave because you say so."

"Look kid..."

Taking a step closer to the handsome, albeit annoying, man, I stood my ground. "Mr. Montclair, I am nineteen years old. I'm an adult. Not a kid, and my name is Skylar Rose Hobbs."

"Ms. Hobbs," Mr. Montclair grumbled, stepping closer to me. "You can't stay here with Hiller on the prowl. Whatever he's doing here, it's not good. Didn't you hear my brothers?"

The man's a snake. There are property markers all around your property. Someone's been here, scouting your property without your knowledge."

"That may be, but this is my home and I'm not leaving." I held firm, refusing to back down. I didn't know what it was about the man, but something about him called to me deeply. I could see pain and anguish in his eyes. The man was hurting like me and a small part of me felt compelled to help ease his pain.

Too bad for him his next words pissed me off.

"Oh honey, you'll go, even if I have to haul you out of here myself."

I narrowed my eyes.

"Wanna bet?"

"Oh, this is gonna be good," one of his friends said.

"'Bout time someone gave Pyro a run for his money."

"And another one bites the dust," another said.

Ignoring the men, I carried on. "My father left this house for me and Cameron. We are not leaving."

"It's not safe. Besides, you barely have any food in this place. Your brother runs around like a hooligan, while you do what? Sit around tweeting or talking to your friends? You should have used the money I gave you for food, not stupid girlish things. Do you even care that your brother has nothing to eat?"

Before I could stop myself, I hauled off and slapped the man across the face.

When I realized what I had done, I backed away, my hand going to my mouth as tears pooled in my eyes. Refusing to utter another word, I walked away and headed to my room, quietly shutting the door behind me.

Oh God. What did I do?

He came to help, and I just slapped him.

Covering my face in shame, I tried to stem the tears threatening to fall. This was all too much. I didn't know what to do. Who to trust. I knew those men were friends with my dad, but so was Sergeant Hiller and he stole my ability to care for my brother.

Everything was so messed up.

I wanted to trust Mr. Montclair, but he didn't want to help me. I could see that clearly. He didn't want to be here. There was something about the handsome man that intrigued me, drew me to him, but all he saw was a silly teenager.

Not the real me.

The person who I truly was.

As hard as I tried to stay cordial, I allowed my temper to get the best of me and I slapped him. If my mother were here, she would be angry with me. She raised me to treat a guest with dignity and respect.

I got that Mr. Montclair and his friends were only here to help me and Cameron, but we were doing fine. Yeah, we didn't have a lot, and the cabinets were almost empty, but I was managing the best I could. Mom never taught me what to do if both of them died.

I was figuring out this whole mess the best I could.

Maybe Mr. Montclair was right.

Maybe Cameron would be better off with an adult.

Someone who could parent him the correct way.



## Chapter Six

### Pyro

“Way to go, dickhead,” Scribe cursed. “You just made her cry.”

“Not cool!” Cameron shouted as he kicked me in the shin, before running out of the cabin.

Frank followed quietly, shaking his head.

Fucking great.

“Pyro,” Priest spoke up. “That young woman has been to hell and back. She recently lost both of her parents and instead of going to college, she’s raising her younger brother. Somehow, she’s paid the bills, kept this place clean and managed to put food on the table, all the while some jackass stole the money her father left for her. You know damn well that kid isn’t lacking in meals. I get you don’t want to be here, but that doesn’t give you the right to take your frustrations out on her.”

“She isn’t listening.”

“Because you are not talking to her. You are ordering her. For the last six months, Skylar has been the provider, the parent, and the sister. She hasn’t been able to be herself, Pyro. She’s been the one to make grown-up decisions she should never have had to make. Instead of treating her like an equal, like an adult, you are treating her no better than how you treat Cameron. She’s not a child, Pyro.”

“I know that.”

“Do you?” Scribe questioned. “Because from the moment we arrived here, you’ve paid her no mind. Hell man, you barely look at her. She’s a beautiful young woman. She’s scared to death. She’s been beaten black and blue and instead of showing compassion, you treat her like shit.”

“You need to apologize to her,” Priest stated, clearly angry with me.

Saying nothing more, I went in search of the girl.

I told King I wasn't any good at this shit.

He should have left me alone and come himself.

I got that the kid asked for me, but there was nothing more I could do for them. I had my own life to live. I didn't have time for some dirty brat and his stubborn sister.

Knocking on the door, I waited impatiently for any kind of response. When after a few seconds, I still hadn't heard anything, I slowly opened the door to find Skylar sitting on the bed, looking out the only window in her room. Looking about the room, it was a typical teenage girl's room. All pink, purple and soft greens. A delightful assortment of pictures covered the walls. Snapshots of family gatherings, achievements from school, unforgettable times with friends and countless moments of pure joy, all meticulously attached to the walls using either tape or thumbtacks. Schoolbooks, neatly stacked against the wall, next to worn soccer shoes.

For a teenager, it was rather clean and tidy, which surprised me.

My room, at her age, looked as if a tornado had gone through it. My mom was always yelling at me to clean the damn thing. My dirty clothes were strewn everywhere. I don't think I ever made my bed in the four years of high school. In the corner of my closet, a pile of schoolbooks sat still in their original packaging. Instead of sports achievements on my walls, I had posters of beautiful women and rock album covers. I never cared about keeping anything organized or cleaned. All I cared about was hanging out with my friends and seeing what trouble we could get away with and fuck me, did we get into trouble.

Stepping in, I didn't go any further, not wanting to invade her privacy. From my understanding, teenage girls today were really picky about shit like that. Not that I would ever know. My Ellie never cared about privacy where I was concerned. But Skylar wasn't my Ellie and never would be, so what did I care?

“I’m sorry.” I blurted out, eager to get this shit over. I wanted to get them packed and the fuck out of here. I didn’t know what it was about the place, but it made me nervous, which puzzled me because that was unlike me. Typically, nothing rattled me, especially after I lost Ellie. It was like nothing really mattered anymore.

So why was I suddenly feeling nervous?

That’s when I realized it wasn’t a something, but a someone.

She made me nervous.

“Okay,” she sniffed, her back still facing me.

Huffing, I let out a deep breath, raking my hands through my hair. I didn’t know how to do this. I never apologized. Ever. Not even when I knew I was wrong. Not that I was often like Gunner. Now that idiot was proficient at apologizing.

Still, I said I would apologize, and I would.

“It was wrong of me to say what I did.”

“Okay.”

Jesus Christ.

There was no talking to her.

Stubborn woman.

“Skylar Rose, look at me.”

Slowly, she turned to face me, and for the first time since I met the woman, I saw genuine pain in her eyes. Pain that I caused and something inside me rebelled, making me sick to my stomach.

Disgusted with myself, I continued on. “I was wrong to accuse you of those things. You are doing your best and I threw it all in your face. You didn’t ask for any of this and I am deeply sorry for the loss of your parents. They would be proud of how you managed everything so far. While your brother is a...handful, I’m sure it’s not easy corralling him. My brother, King, along with Scribe, are the godfathers of Cameron. We only want to help you and your brother. King

believes we can keep you and Cameron safer in Virginia until we take care of this matter with Hiller. It doesn't have to be permanent. Will you allow myself and my brothers to help you set things, right?"

Finished, I stood there, watching her as she got to her feet.

Wiping her eyes, she walked over to me and before I could stop her, she hugged me.

"Thank you," I heard her whisper as her arms tightened around me. Unable to move, I stood there as I felt her tender, soft body pressed up against mine. It had been five years since anyone hugged me like this. The last person was my Ellie.

While it wasn't entirely uncomfortable, it was unnerving and something else I couldn't describe.

I was about to move away from her when she lifted her head and frowned, scrunching her nose.

"What?" I grumbled.

"Do you smell that?"

"Are you saying I stink?"

"SHIT!" I heard Priest shout from the other room. "Everyone out!"

Not needing to be told twice, I grabbed Skylar's hand as we both ran from the house towards the vehicle, just as the house exploded. Covering her with my body, I held her close to me as her family home rained down around us in fiery pieces.

"CAMERON!" she screamed, trying to break free from my hold.

"Find the kid!" I yelled, wrapping my arms around her, preventing her from entering the burning home. "Where's Frank?"

"He took off after the kid. They weren't inside," Scribe immediately said, watching the last vestige Skylar had of her parents as it burned hotly, destroying everything she had left.

“What the hell is going on here?” Priest asked.

“I don’t know, but we need to get Skylar Rose and her brother out of here. It’s not safe.”

“Here comes Frank with the kid!” Scribe said, pointing towards the surrounding forest. Upon seeing his sister, Cameron broke free of Frank’s hold and ran to Skylar, who immediately wrapped him in her arms, hugging him tightly.

“Did you hear that big boom, sissy? It shook the mountain!”

“Are you okay? Are you hurt?” Skylar asked, checking her brother over from head to toe.

“It was so cool!” Cameron stood there watching his home burn. “The big guy was chasing me when we heard it. I was winning when we felt the boom. It knocked me on my butt sissy. Then we saw the smoke.”

Sighing, I shook my head as I looked at my brothers. “The kid is okay.”

“Scribe, call King and tell him what happened, then call the fire department. Not that I think they need calling. I’m pretty sure everyone for miles heard the explosion.”

## Chapter Seven

### Skylar

Sitting in the front seat of the black SUV, I watched as the local volunteer fire department worked tirelessly to stem the raging flames that engulfed my family home.

I could have told them that there was nothing to be done.

It was gone.

I had nothing left of my parents.

It all went up in smoke.

Not one single picture, not one memento, not even momma's handkerchief I kept under my pillow at night.

It was all gone.

Mr. Montclair and his friends stood talking with the local sheriff, watching the cabin burn.

What was I going to do now?

Where were we going to live?

How was I going to take care of Cameron? He was just a little boy. The only clothes he had left he was wearing, and they were filthy. He didn't even have shoes on his feet.

"Skylar?"

Turning, I saw Scribe leaning against the driver's side door. "They're almost done here. Pyro is giving the sheriff the club's information so he can get hold of you if needed. We will be leaving soon. Do you need anything?"

I shook my head. "I wouldn't know what to ask for, Scribe."

"It's going to be okay, sweetheart. Bailey, Sarah and Beth are buying everything you two might need. King has already got rooms set up for the both of you at the clubhouse. Everything is going to be okay. I promise."

"You can't promise that," I whispered. "No one can."

“True, but I can promise that it will get better. I know it doesn’t seem like it right now, but everything happens for a reason, Skylar. Don’t give up yet, sweet girl. Good things are coming your way.”

I smirked at that. “You are the optimist of the group, aren’t you?”

Scribe grinned, then winked before heading back to the others.



The drive from Juniper Hollow to Rosewood, Virginia, took about six hours. It was a beautiful drive and long, thanks to Cameron’s refusal to shut up. My brother talked the whole way, driving not only me, but Mr. Montclair crazy. Of course, it didn’t help that Scribe and Frank encouraged my brother. Priest seemed to be the only one immune to Cameron’s jibber-jabber, because he slept the entire way.

“Does he ever shut up?” I heard Mr. Montclair mutter.

Looking over at him, I shook my head.

“Only when he’s sleeping.”

“And how do we make him do that?”

I shrugged. “No clue. My mom was wonderful at making him sleep.”

“Too bad she didn’t tell you her trick.”

Turning around to face my brother, I smiled. “Cameron, let’s play the quiet game. The one who can be quiet the longest will win a special prize.”

“What prize?”

“I don’t know. Something special.”

“Ain’t playing until I know what I’m gonna win,” my brother huffed, crossing his arms across his chest.

“Kid’s got a point, Skylar. Can’t play unless we know the prize. Got to have something good to fight for.” Scribe grinned mischievously.

Narrowing my eyes at the instigator, I took a deep breath and said, “Okay. The winner gets an ice-cream.”

“That ain’t no prize, sissy. Scribe already said he was gonna take me to town when we get to our new home. Said a smoking hot chick made the best ice-cream in town. Scribe said I could get whatever flavor I wanted.”

“Okay, what about a new book?”

My brother gawked at me in horror.

“Okay, no books. What about a free day? No rules and you can do whatever you want?”

“No baths?”

“Hell no!” Mr. Montclair spoke up. “No matter what, you are getting a bath.”

“Then I ain’t playing this stupid game!” Cameron shouted back.

“Scribe,” Mr. Montclair growled, gripping the steering wheel tighter.

“Uh, how about the one who is the quietest gets a ride on my bike?”

My brother gasped, turning to his new best friend. “A real motorcycle?”

“Yep.” Scribe smiled, puffing up his chest like he was the cat’s meow or something. I could have told him that Cameron had already been on a bike before. Our dad had a Harley and frequently took Cameron out for rides to give Mom a break.

“Can I drive it?”

“Uh...”

“No!” Mr. Montclair said before Scribe could utter another word. “You’re too young. Take the deal, kid. Scribe doesn’t let just anyone on his bike.”

“Fine,” my brother huffed. “But I get to say for how long.”



For three blissful minutes, the cab of the vehicle was utterly quiet, until we all heard Frank mumble. “My apologies.”

Before anyone could ask, the most horrendous, god-awful smell permeated the cabin of the SUV. Quickly covering my mouth and nose, I reached for the button next to me and lowered the window, as did everyone else. Leaning closer to the window, I tried to breathe in the fresh air as my eyes watered.

“My God,” Scribe gasped, hanging his head out the window. “I can taste it!”

“Jesus Christ, Frank,” Priest coughed, hiding his face in his shirt, trying desperately to lower his window.

Cameron laughed boisterously, turning in his seat to high five Frank, who looked repentant. “That was a good one, man!”

“Never again,” Mr. Montclair muttered from behind his hand as he slowed the vehicle and made a left-hand turn into a large compound surrounded by an eight-foot-tall chain-link fence. Slowing the vehicle further, Mr. Montclair parked the vehicle in front of a large two-story cabin, before quickly jumping from the vehicle and taking his own deep breath.

Unbuckling my seatbelt, I got out of the SUV as did everyone else, even Frank, who blushed and apologized once more just as Scribe and Priest jumped on him, taking him to the ground. Thinking it was a free for all, my brother Cameron ran and jumped on Scribe’s back, laughing.

“Hit him again, Scribe!” my brother yelled.

“Skylar Rose?”

Turning, I stared at a large man, who looked similar to Mr. Montclair, just older. He had kind eyes and when he smiled, it softened his face. Next to him was a stunningly beautiful woman with jet-black hair and eyes so green they looked like emeralds. “My name is Callum Montclair. I knew your dad. I am so sorry for your loss. Kevin was a damn good Marine. It was an honor to know him.”

“Thank you, Mr. Montclair,” I said, shaking his hand as I heard Cameron scream, then immediately laughed as Frank picked him up and threw him over his shoulder.

“Call me King,” he smiled. “And this is my woman, Bailey.”

Greeting the beautiful woman, I smiled, “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“How was the trip?” she asked.

“It was an experience.” I smirked.

“I bet,” the pretty woman chuckled. “I’m surprised you survived it. Chase can be moody on a good day. Speaking of which, where is the grumpy bastard?”

Looking around the compound, I couldn’t find him.

“Let’s get you both inside the clubhouse and settled,” King ordered as Frank, Scribe, Priest and Cameron were already heading inside the clubhouse.

Following, I wondered where the other Mr. Montclair ran off to.

## Chapter Eight

### Pyro

Slamming my door shut behind me, I leaned against it and sighed.

It was done.

Over.

I did what I could and now she was King's problem. It had been the longest six hours of my life sitting next to her as I drove all of us from West Virginia back home to the Shenandoah Valley. Never thought I'd be so happy to see these damn mountains again. But the second I pulled into the compound, a relief unlike I never felt washed over me. Watching as my brother and Venom greeted the young woman, I slipped inside the clubhouse and never looked back.

I had fulfilled my obligations and now I was free to return to my life. Pulling off my shirt, I unbuckled my jeans while kicking off my boots. I desperately needed a shower and a good night's sleep. I wanted to wash the last forty-eight hours away and forget it ever happened.

Mainly I wanted to forget about her. Everything about her rattled me. From the way she softly spoke to the smell of her seeping into my pores. Most importantly, I wanted to forget the feeling of her as she hugged me. Almost as she imprinted herself into my skin, I could still feel her against me, holding me tightly.

Heading to my bathroom, I turned on the shower then stepped in, allowing the hot water to wash the stink off me. Placing my hand on the wall, I hung my head, closing my eyes and my Ellie's sweet face appeared, as the tension I was feeling evaporated. Taking my time, I washed and enjoyed the hot water. After more time than I generally allowed, I turned off the water, reaching for a clean towel. Wrapping it around me, I stepped out of the shower and walked back into my room to find King sitting in the only chair I kept in my room.

"How did it go?"

“You already know. Priest and Scribe kept you updated,” I said, heading for my dresser for a clean shirt and sweatpants.

“I’m asking you, Chase.”

Dropping the towel, I quickly dressed. “We got there just in time. When we arrived, someone was on the property. Frank, Scribe and Priest gave chase but returned empty-handed. Which reminds me, call Claudia and see if she can check Skylar Rose out. She’s favoring her right side. It is possible she fractured one or two ribs.”

“Claudia is here tending to her. I saw her face, Chase. Whoever beat her intended to hurt her badly.”

“I know,” I muttered, sitting on my bed looking everywhere instead of at him. I knew what he was looking for. He wanted some semblance of emotion from me. Anything to let him know I was still there. Since Ellie’s death, I bottled myself up and sank deep inside myself, where I never allowed myself to get attached to anything or anyone again.

I did what was required of me.

That was it.

The bare minimum.

If King or anyone else wanted more, they would never get it.

I was dead inside and I planned on keeping it that way.

“I’ve called a few former military friends of mine who all worked with Hiller at one point or another. All of us ran our own special forces unit. They all want in on this. None of them liked Hiller.”

“So, you have everything handled, then?”

King slowly shook his head. “No, Chase. As long as Hiller remains a threat, Skylar’s safety is still at risk. Just because you took her out of a dangerous situation doesn’t mean the danger to her and Cameron is over. Until I know exactly what this club is dealing with, I want Skylar protected.”

“So ground her. Don’t let her leave the clubhouse. Should be easy enough.”

“She’s nineteen Chase. An adult. I can’t ground her.”

“Don’t see why not. She has a brother she needs to look after. By the way, good luck with that hellion. That little shit is fast, has a mouth on him, never shuts up and refuses to bathe.”

“Cameron is a six-year-old little boy, Chase. He’s supposed to be that way. You are acting weirder than usual. Why?”

Getting to my feet, I paced. “I don’t want her or that kid here. She makes me nervous.”

“She?”

“Both of them,” I quickly amended.

“How so?”

I was about to respond when an ear-piercing scream reached my ears, only to be followed by the sudden crash of my door being flung open and the subsequent tackle from a muddy, mischievous six-year-old.

I was going to throttle this kid.

I swear I was.

“You’ve got to be kidding me!” I yelled as I tried to peel the varmint off me. Covered in mud from head to toe, Cameron clung to me tightly. So much for being clean. Now, I was as dirty as him! Getting a good grip on him, I held the brat at arm’s length and scowled. “Jesus Christ, kid. What in the hell is that smell?! Boy, just what in the hell did you get into this time? Do you purposefully find the most disgusting shit to play in or are you just gifted?”

“The mean one is chasing me!”

“What?”

Just then, Bailey rushed in, her too covered in mud as fire shot from her eyes. King leaned back in my chair, quickly covering his mouth to hide his laughter. Me on the other hand, took a step back, yanking the kid behind me. “Now Bailey, he’s just a little boy. You can’t kill him even if he deserves it.”

“He’s a demon!”

I nodded. “Yes. That is true, but he’s a harmless demon. A dirty, aggravating demon that means no harm.”

“He found Scribe’s manure for the greenhouse and thought it was a dirt pile. Before we could stop him, he started running for it. When I tried to grab him, that little shit threw manure at me!”

Groaning, I pulled the brat out from behind me and glared down as I growled, “You played in shit!?”

“Thought it was a gigantic pile of dirt. Didn’t smell the shit until I was in it. Could happen to anyone.”

King lost the plot and roared boisterously.

Bailey narrowed her eyes at him, then me, before she silently threatened violence before storming away.

“Kid, if she retaliates, you are on your own.”

Cameron gulped. “She’s scary.”

“You have no idea,” I quipped.



It took me, King and Scribe to wash the brat. In the end, we just hosed him down and called it a day. Cameron Hobbs really didn’t enjoy getting wet. At all. My gut was telling me there was something deeper rooted in the why, but until I got myself clean again, I really didn’t care.

By some miracle, by the time I stepped out of the shower again, the brat was finally out like a light. I threatened death to anyone who dared wake him before morning. That kid was a menace to society, and I just knew this club wouldn’t survive him.

Taking my seat in church, I reached into my clean sweatpants for a pack of gum. Popping the small cube into my mouth, I sighed.

I’d always loved gum. Didn’t know why.

I didn't care much for sweets but give me a good pack of gum and I was happy.

"Alright everyone," King said, walking in closing the door behind him. "Let's make this quick. Don't know how long the kid will sleep. From what Skylar told me, he doesn't sleep for long. Maybe six or seven hours at a time."

Looking at my watch, I groaned.

That meant the brat would be up by sunup at the latest, ready to create havoc... Great.

"He's just a little boy, King," Frank stated. "He's a good kid."

"You volunteering to take him to the distillery?" King challenged as Frank paled, slowly shaking his head.

"Didn't think so. I've put in a call to Beth. She will be here in the morning, as she is the only mom we know that has experience with unruly heathens. If she can handle Gunner, then the kid should be a piece of cake."

"Hey!" Gunner piped up. "I'm not that bad."

"No, you're worse," King groaned. "Whatever Beth wants or needs, she will get."

"Skylar okay? She has everything she needs?" Scribe asked.

Looking at my brother, I growled, "Why do you care?"

"Because I like her. She got dealt a shitty hand and you know it. Just making sure she has everything she needs."

"She's fine. Leave her alone," I lowly barked.

Everyone in the room stared at me as if I'd lost my damn mind. I rarely said shit in church, preferring to listen. Even King looked curiously at me before he asked. "There something you want to add, Pyro?"

"Nope. Just want my life back. Can you move this along? It's late and I have work in the morning."

King scowled at me before turning back to the others. "We have guests arriving in the next day or so. Most of you will

know them on sight, but for those who won't, Gunner and Pyro, Matthew Law from Harbor Security in New York City and Lucifer Hawk, president of Disturbed MC, will be our guest until we find and take care of Hiller. I'm only going to say this once. Do not piss either man off. You will not like what happens if you do. They are coming as a favor to me. You should also know that Law and Hawk are Skylar's godfathers. When they heard what happened to Hobbs, they wanted in."

"Damn, King," Priest said, rubbing the back of his neck. "What the hell is going on? You and Scribe are the kid's godfathers. Now Hawk and Law are Skylar's. Something isn't right here?"

"I know. It shocked me when I heard that too. Kevin Hobbs covered his bases. The military community is a close-knit family. We all knew that. But to have four high-ranking men as godfathers to his children speaks volumes."

"You're thinking Hobbs knew something?" Scribe carefully whispered.

King nodded. "That's my assessment as well. Now we need to figure out what Hobbs knew. Once we solved that puzzle, the answer to why Hiller killed Hobbs and his wife will become clear to us."

"You thinking this had something to do with while you were in the military?" Gunner asked.

"Possibly. We all ran our own teams. Hobbs was our munitions and transport expert. If we needed anything, Hobbs made sure we got it. Hobbs had his hands in a lot of pots. Everyone who knew Hobbs would say he was a stand-up guy."

"And Hiller?" I asked.

"Sgt. Hiller was under Hobbs," King stated.

"Hiller is a slimy bastard. Hated that we all went to Hobbs," Priest added. "Hiller was always looking for a way in. One thing you learn quick in the military is who to trust, and no one trusted Hiller."

"Then how in the hell did Skylar Rose get his number?" I asked. "If what all of you are saying is true, then when her



parents died, she should have called us or this Law or Hawk guy. Why call Hiller?”

“I didn’t call him,” Skylar said, standing in the doorway. “He showed up after the accident. He was there when the sheriff came to tell me the news. I’m sorry to interrupt, but I knocked.”

Getting to my feet, I walked over to her, escorting her to my seat.

No one said a word as she continued. “The night my parents died, the local sheriff came and told me what happened. That’s when I saw Hiller. He jumped in and told me he worked with Dad and would stay to help me with whatever I needed. I didn’t know what to do. Mom and Dad never told me what to do if they died. Over the next week or so, Hiller took care of everything, just like he said he would. Before I knew it, Cameron and I were standing in a cemetery as we watched our parents being buried. A few days later, he was gone. I didn’t know about the insurance policies until a week later, when I received a letter from the Marine Corps. That’s when I knew something was wrong. I found Dad’s address book and started calling names I remembered him mentioning. You were one of those names, King.”

My brother reached over and covered her hands with his. “You were in shock, Skylar. You just lost your parents. Like you just said, you didn’t know. But it doesn’t matter now because you are here with us, and we will make it right.”

“King’s right, Skylar,” Scribe smiled. “Everyone here knew your dad. We all liked him. He was the best of us.”

“Thank you for that,” she sniffed. “I’m sorry I barged in here, but I needed to ask you something.”

“What is it, sweetheart?” King asked softly.

However, when Skylar turned to look at me, I stiffened. “Sarah and Bailey told me you run your own construction company.”

I frowned, narrowing my eyes.

“Yeah. That’s right. Why?”

“I’ve got some experience with filing and office work. Bookkeeping really. Do you need an office manager?”

Before I could respond, my fucking brother said, “Chase would love to have you work for him, Skylar. He’s not the most organized and I, for one, would love to receive his invoices on time and filled out correctly.”

WHAT. THE. ACTUAL. FUCK!

Affronted, I growled, “I don’t need an office chick.”

“Wasn’t asking you,” King smirked.

Leaning back in his chair as he stared between me and Skylar. “Skylar offered and I accepted her help.”

“A construction site is no place for her.”

“That’s why you will keep an eye on her. Skylar, why don’t you get some sleep? You’ve had an eventful few days. Chase likes to leave early in the morning. He will give you a ride to the site and show you what needs to be done.”

Skylar nodded, getting to her feet before quickly hugging me again, before saying “I never thanked you for getting me out of the house before it exploded. Thank you, Mr. Montclair.”

I huffed, peeling her off me.

I refused to say another damn word as I glared at my brother. The second she shut the door behind her, I yelled. “What the fuck, Callum! I don’t want or need her working for me. I like things the way they are. Uncomplicated.”

“And unorganized, messy and in complete chaos. I’ve been waiting for the invoices for the new build for over a month now, Chase, and every time I ask for them, you tell me you will take care of it. I’ve got distributors calling wanting to know when they are going to get paid. I get that your job is to design and build shit, but brother, you suck at everything else. Give Skylar a chance. Who knows, maybe she can organize your ass.”

“I don’t want her around me.”

“Why?” Gunner questioned. “She’s pretty to look at. Seems to know what’s required of her and for some god-awful reason, she wants to be around you. What’s not to like?”

“Because I don’t want her around me!” I shouted again, my frustration getting the better of me.

Out of both of my brothers, Gunner had the distinct, innate ability to get on my last nerve faster than when he bolted after hearing Lorianne’s parents pull up when she was supposed to be watching her little sister. Yeah, teenage Gunner wasn’t the smartest of teens. My brother logged more miles than our high school cross-country track team.

“My decision is final,” King ordered firmly, getting to his feet. “While the club works to resolve the situation with Hiller, Skylar will accompany you to the construction site and you will keep an eye out for her.”

Fuck!

## Chapter Nine

### Skylar

His voice carried as I walked away and as much as it hurt to hear him say it, I knew he was right. A construction site was no place for someone like me. I knew I could do the job. I wasn't worried about that. I couldn't explain why, but there was something about Chase Montclair that felt familiar. Almost as if we were kindred spirits.

Unlike most girls my age, I never got into boys, social status or cliques. I didn't care who the latest fashion icons were or who was trending on every social media site. What I cared about was my brother, knowing he had everything he needed.

My parents wanted me to go to college. They talked at length about what schools would be best for me, but I never could choose. I wasn't against continuing my education, it just didn't align with my aspirations. I tried talking to mom about it once or twice, but she was of the mind that I was young and my ideals would change as I grew. She believed I would miss out on a rite of passage or something and tried relentlessly to get me to go to college.

The fact was, all I wanted was someone to love and who would love me back.

Simple, I know, but that's what I wanted.

To be a wife and mother has been a dream of mine since I was a child. I loved watching my mom with dad, as she worked tirelessly to ensure he had everything he needed and how dad loved and adored her. They were my heroes. Two people I aspired to become. The older I got, the more I became resolved in my place in the world. When they died, a part of me knew I would never get my dream. By taking care of my brother, I would get some aspect of my dream, but never have one of my own.

When I met Chase Montclair in the woods that day and saw the pain in his eyes, I didn't know what to think of the

man. He was handsome, yes, but snarky and kind of rude. I let his attitude slide, because he seemed to be overwhelmed and confused. When he left, I thought that was it. I would never see him again.

Then, a few weeks later, he was there.

When I needed someone badly.

I guess I will have to thank Cameron for that, because I really didn't know what to do when I got jumped and beaten. I still didn't know who attacked me, or why Hiller was back in the area, but I was thankful for Chase Montclair and his friends.

Now that Cameron and I were in Virginia with the Sons of Hell MC, my main concern was finding a job so I could provide properly for my brother. While I wanted to work, I was more interested in the man who came to my rescue twice.

There was something about the man I couldn't shake.

I knew Chase Montclair wanted nothing to do with me, yet he stood up for me when Cameron got lippy. Then he saved me right before the house blew. Even tonight, when I entered their meeting room, I saw how he immediately stood and offered me his seat.

The man was a contradiction.

A puzzle.

However, my gut was telling me that Chase Montclair was much more than that. That deep down, he was like me.

Alone.

Scared.

In pain and I was determined to find out why.

After checking on my brother, I walked across the hall to see Chase enter his room and solidly shut the door, locking it behind him. Entering my room, I changed into something comfortable, mindful that I needed to thank Bailey and Sarah again in the morning for everything they purchased. Those two women went above and beyond for me and my brother.

Thanks to them, we had everything we could possibly need, from new clothes to toiletries. Even a new laptop, phone and make-up sat untouched on a desk and dresser, waiting for me to explore.

Donning a comfortable pair of sweats and fuzzy socks, I left my room, not knowing where I was going.

The clubhouse was massive, with several rooms upstairs for all the brothers and guests. The downstairs was open, with the main room taking up much of the space where pool tables, a few card tables and chairs sat. A large bar that ran along the far wall. There were old arcade games like *Pac-Man*, *Frogger* and *Galaga*. Of course, the one I was itching to play was *Tetris*. Dad and I would play all the time, challenging each other for the highest score.

It surprised me to see how clean the clubhouse was. With several men and a few women living here, I thought it would be messier. Then again, they weren't a six-year-old boy who thrived on finding dirt and rolling around in it. Taking my time looking around, familiarizing myself with the place, I easily found the kitchen and the dining hall. When I stepped into a rec room that had comfortable chairs and a large projection screen, I stopped short when I saw a baby grand piano in the corner. Looking over my shoulder, I made sure no one was around as I entered.

Running my fingers along the beautiful black piano, I pulled out the bench and sat. Lifting the key lid, I smiled.

"You play chopsticks and we're gonna have a talk," someone said, making me jump as I turned to find Scribe watching me from one of the comfortable chairs.

"I thought I was alone."

"Not in this place," he groaned, sitting up. "Do you play?"

I nodded. "Yes."

"Let me hear. I'm the only one in this place that uses the piano. King makes sure all of us have what we need to

decompress. Don't know why he bought that monstrosity. I have my keyboard in my room."

"Maybe he thought you would play something for everyone."

Scribe laughed. "The hell I will. These ingrates wouldn't know fine music if it busted their eardrums."

"You play classical music?"

"Nope. Hip-hop. I'm breaking into the DJ business. Got a new soundboard and an auto tune."

I chuckled at that. "Didn't peg you for hip-hop. Blues, maybe some soft jazz, but not hip-hop."

Scribe tilted his head, his face void of anything. "You see everything, don't you?"

"More than I should," I muttered, then added, "Like I know you are trying to get me to open up. You blend. You become what someone needs and if I'm right, you believe I need a friend right now and you are using your knowledge of music to find common ground with me."

Scribe blushed. "You are right. I want to be your friend, Skylar, but not why you think. I just want to help. If you will allow me."

Turning back to the white keys, I placed my fingers over them and started playing. Before I knew it, I was also singing. I couldn't remember the last time I could just play and enjoy the music.

Halfway through my playing, I watched Scribe get to his feet, pick up an acoustic guitar that was near the piano, and started playing with me. He played beautifully and coupled with my notes, we got lost in the music. By the time the song was over, I looked up at him and smiled as he winked.

"That was fucking awesome, girl," Gunner said, walking over with a plate of food piled high as he took a bite of a sandwich. "Do you know any other songs?"

"A few more." I blushed.

“Gunner, why in the hell are you eating this late?” Scribe asked, placing the guitar back in its rack. “You know damn well you are going to be complaining in the morning when King runs your ass ragged on the obstacle course.”

“My kids are starving, man.”

“They need to eat, not you. Fuck man, just because Sarah is eating for three doesn’t mean you have too as well. You are getting fat!”

“AM NOT!”

“Oh yes, you are. We can all see it, only everyone is too fucking nice to say shit. I’m not. You are turning into the Pillsbury Dough Boy!”

“Take that back, asshole!” Gunner growled, placing the plate of food on the piano along with the sandwich he was eating. Moving out of the way, I watched as Gunner got in Scribe’s face. When Gunner grabbed Scribe around the neck and put him in a headlock, I backed up further into someone.

Turning quickly, I gulped as Chase Montclair glared angrily down at me and spoke, “You should be asleep, not causing problems with my brothers.”

I frowned, not knowing how to respond to that.

I didn’t do anything. I was minding my own business. I had nothing to do with Gunner and Scribe fighting.

“I wasn’t...”

“I don’t want to hear it. You’ve been trouble from the first moment I met you.”

“I’m not...”

“Skylar,” King said, walking over, moving me away from Chase, who never took his eyes off me. He was mad at me. He thought I caused the fight between his brothers. “It’s okay Skylar. You did nothing wrong. Go on up to bed, sweetheart. You have a busy day tomorrow.”

Turning to Chase once more, whispered, “I’m sorry if I bothered everyone. Good night.”



The second I left the room, I heard King shout, “What the hell was that, Chase?!”

## Chapter Ten

### Pyro

My stomach curdled as I watched her leave, dejected and hurt. All because I couldn't hold my tongue. I was a fucking grown ass man, and I was treating her like shit.

What the fuck was wrong with me?

I knew she did nothing wrong.

Gunner and Scribe were always picking at each other and fighting.

“What the hell was that, Chase?!” King growled, getting in my face. Sighing, I raked my hands through my hair.

“I don't know. I'll apologize to her. I promise I will.”

“I get you don't like change, but she and her brother are staying. They are family. We owe it to her father to look after her. That girl has lost everything that meant anything to her, and you shit on her. Our parents raised us better than that and you fucking know it.”

“I know.”

“What is going on with you? Why are you so hostile towards her?”

“I don't know. Every time I'm around her, something about her rubs me the wrong way. She makes me feel things. Things I have no right feeling.”

“What things?” Scribe asked curiously.

Shaking my head, I didn't know how to answer them. “I can't explain it because I don't know. It's just whenever I'm around her, I get so angry. She's so damn innocent and when she smiles...”

“What?” Gunner smirked, leaning against the piano. “What about her when she smiles?”

I couldn't respond. I couldn't find the words.

Nothing made sense.

“King, Gunner, may I please have the room?”

My brothers looked at Scribe, then nodded before leaving.

“Take a seat, Chase.”

Doing as he said, I sat in one of the comfortable chairs. I didn't know what Scribe wanted to talk to me about, but he rarely got serious like this. When he did, he meant business and was known to be decisive and cunning. The man saw way too much, in my opinion.

Taking a seat himself, Scribe began. “I've been a close friend to King since our time in the Marine Corps. We've survived a lot of shit in our time in the military. Seen some shit too. We don't talk about the military because the memories are too close to the surface most of the time. We all have nightmares, Chase. Shit we can't shake. Most of my dreams are from a mistake I made. I won't go into detail, but I can't forgive myself. I don't know if I will ever be able to, and I think you are feeling the same thing.”

“I sleep just fine.”

“Do you?” Scribe countered. “It's close to midnight and you are awake. For the last five years, I've seen you frequently walking the clubhouse or grounds alone at night. I've said nothing because you never took your anger out on anyone.”

“I'm not angry.”

“Yes, you are,” Scribe stated. “You are very angry. Have been for a while now.”

Feeling my temper rise, I snarked, “Well, tell me, Obi-Won, why am I angry?”

Scribe smirked. “I think you know that answer, but if you want to be a dick about it, then I will tell you. I think you are angry that Ellie is dead. I think you are angry at yourself because you blame yourself for not driving her that day. Instead of going with her so you could protect her, you stayed at the clubhouse.”

Balling my fist tightly, I growled, "I'm not talking about her with you."

"That's just it, Chase. You've never talked with anyone about Ellie. We all mourned Ellie. We all miss her, but Ellie is dead. She isn't coming back. This anger you are feeling is normal. It's part of the grieving process, but for some reason you can't get past the anger to acceptance."

"Shut up," I sneered angrily. "Stop talking about her."

"Her? Her name is Ellie. Eleanore Eugenia Montclair. Ellie."

"Stop it." My fist tightened until I saw the white on my knuckles.

"Say her name, Chase. You haven't said Ellie's name since the funeral."

Before I could stop myself, I launched myself from the chair I was sitting in, slamming my fist into Scribe's face. Hitting him over and over again, I released an anger I didn't know I kept bottled up, until someone hauled me off him. Held tightly by powerful arms, I sneered, "Don't you ever mention her name again!"

"What the fuck is going on here?" I heard King say angrily.

Scribe wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, smirking. "Nothing, King. Just having a friendly conversation. That's all."

"Enough of this bullshit. Scribe, go get cleaned up," my brother ordered, before turning me around to face him. "I don't know what the fuck is going on in your head, Chase, but if I ever see you beating on a brother like that again, I will have your ass running the obstacle course until you collapse. You hear me?"

"I hear you."

"Get the fuck out of here before I lose my temper."

I didn't need to be told twice. King's temper was legendary and I was in no mood to face it tonight. Heading

upstairs, I was just about to open my door when I heard her whimper. Turning, I saw the door was ajar. Carefully, not to disturb her, I peeked inside her room to find her curled up on her bed as she hugged a pillow, crying softly.

At that moment, a crack opened in my heart.

A heart I thought long dead, void of any emotion.

Standing there, listening to her quietly cry, I hated myself for hurting her. From the moment I met her, I treated her like crap. Instead of showing her compassion, I ridiculed her, berated her, and accused her of shit that she didn't do.

I was the asshole everyone thought.

Sliding down the wall near her door, I listened to her cry herself to sleep. God help me, I was everything Scribe thought of me.

Holding my head in my hands, I wished I could take it all back. The anger, the frustration, the indecision. I should have gone with her. She asked me to, but I wanted to watch the game with my brothers.

A fucking game.

Instead of being with her, I was drinking and laughing it up with my brothers as we watched Virginia Tech take on Tennessee. It was a rivalry game. The club and town had been gearing up for this game for over a week. It was all anyone could talk about and right before kick-off she got a call that her mother needed her. My girl never told her mother no. It was one of the things I loved about her. She was all about her family. If my mom was still alive, I would have been the same way, so I encouraged her to keep the relationship she had with her parents.

So instead of going with her, I stayed.

It was a decision that cost me the love of my life.

A decision that I still warred with myself over.

Now, I was taking my anger out on the one person who had nothing to do with my pain. Instead of treating Skylar

Rose with kindness, I treated her as if she were to blame for my wife's death.

Tightly clutching my hair, I banged my head against the wall, ashamed of myself and my actions.

Hearing a soft sob, I turned to look inside her room once more.

Still laying on her bed, with her long blonde hair spread out around her, she slept restlessly. Her face was soft, like porcelain. Her eyes were so green, they looked like an Irish clover field. Her lips were so pink and full, just begging to be kissed. Skylar Rose was a stunningly beautiful woman. Too good for this life. There was a gentleness about her. A kindness that shone through when she smiled, but there was something else about her that drew me to her. Skylar Rose wasn't like other women her age. Unlike my wife, Skylar was content with life. Almost as if she knew where she belonged, what she wanted.

In the short time I'd known Skylar Rose, I'd only seen her angry once, when she rightfully slapped me. It was when I accused her of neglect and selfishness.

I was wrong then, just as I am now.

## Chapter Eleven

### Skylar

Despite my early morning preparedness, I discovered Mr. Montclair waiting for me in the kitchen, drinking a cup of coffee before the sun had even fully risen.

“You’re late,” he grumbled. He looked tired, almost as if he didn’t sleep. I could see the dark rings under his eyes.

“No one told me what time you left. It won’t happen again.”

Throwing a granola bar at me, I fumbled to catch it as he got to his feet. “I don’t have time to wait around for you to eat. You can eat on the way there.”

Saying nothing more, he left the kitchen with me closely following. I didn’t know where we were going, but I was eager to get started at my new job. Sarah assured me that her mother Beth would be around to help Cameron, who was still sleeping when I left my room. I just prayed that my brother behaved today.

Everything was riding on this job.

If I did a good enough job, I hoped to save enough money to find me and Cameron a nice apartment or maybe a little house. After leaving the rec room last night, I had trouble getting to sleep, trying to figure out what it was I did that angered Chase so much. In the end, I couldn’t think of a single thing. Instead, I unboxed the new laptop Bailey and Sarah got me and started searching for places to live in Rosewood.

I quickly learned that Rosewood was a tourist town, and the availability of seasonal jobs would be a plus if things didn’t work out with Chase at the construction site. While I was going to give it my best, I wasn’t banking on him letting me stay.

Last night confirmed my suspicions.

Chase Montclair did not like me.

One bit.

Pulling in front of a single-wide trailer, he quickly got out of the truck and stomped the entire way inside the trailer. Stepping out of the vehicle, the symphony of clanging metal and rumbling engines captivated me, signaling the bustling construction site as men moved slowly about. A large, A-framed house stood before me. The sheer scale of the house dwarfed the construction workers, indicating its massive size once completed.

“I don’t have all day!”

Jumping, I ran for the trailer and entered, coming to a complete stop.

Oh. My. God!

The place was a pigsty!

Boxes piled upon boxes. Papers strewn everywhere. Trash billowed out of three trash cans. As I looked down, I saw a layer of rocks, dirt and grime covering the floor. It was going to take me days, possibly weeks, to clean and organize this place. How in the world did he get anything done?

“Well, what are you waiting for?”

Looking up, I gaped at the man who stood in the middle of the room glaring at me. Gulping, I said nothing as I rolled up my sleeves and got to work.

The first thing I did was remove the trash cans from the trailer. I didn’t know what was in them, but it smelled as if something died a horrible death. Tackling the boxes took a bit longer. I was going through one of them when Chase walked into the trailer, huffed and walked back out. Ignoring the man, I continued until I found a box with a single name written on it...Ellie.

Looking around, I opened it and saw it filled with hundreds of pictures. All of a young, beautiful woman smiling happily. Some were of just her, while most of them were of her and a younger-looking Chase. In all of them, he looked adoringly at her as she smiled or laughed. Carefully looking at each one of the pictures, I noticed how happy Chase looked.



As if the woman in his arms was his moon and stars. He looked at her just like my dad looked at mom.

I didn't know how long I sat there on the floor of that dirty trailer, looking at picture after picture of a life Chase once had, wondering where the woman was now. I got my answer when I looked at the bottom of the box. There, under all the pictures, was a Ravenwood newspaper, with Ellie's beautiful face plastered on the front page.

My heart broke into pieces as I read about the beautiful woman who died in a horrible accident. It seemed the whole town mourned, none more so than her husband, Chase Montclair.

"Today is a sad day for the residents of Rosewood as we mourn and celebrate Eleanor Eugenia Montclair or affectionally known as Ellie. Always eager to greet anyone with a smile, Ellie was a native-born resident of Rosewood, growing up and then marrying the love of her life, Chase Montclair. Ellie loved everything about her hometown. She was the first to volunteer and eager to help. She touched the lives of many who knew her. All who loved her will mourn her departure. She is survived in death by her husband, Chase Montclair. Parents, Jake and Maggie Matthews and her three brothers. Eleanor Montclair had no children. Funeral service is today at noon at the Rosewood Cemetery."

Wiping the tears that ran down my face, I picked up another newspaper. Like the one before, Ellie's face was on the front page.

"Para-rescue and first responders call off the search for a missing local woman. It was three days ago when hikers came across Eleanor Montclair's car on the south facing slope of Rosewood Mountain. The authorities have been unable to find Montclair, leading them to suspect that she did not survive the crash."

Lowering the paper, I cried for a woman I never knew.

My heart was breaking all over again. The pain was still fresh from my own parents' death. I could only imagine how

Chase felt. To lose the love of his life like that had to weigh heavily on him.

A pain he still suffered through.

Picking up both papers, I placed them back in the box, and carefully returned the pictures as well when someone banged on the door. Moments later, I heard him shout, "It's five o'clock! I'm not waiting for you! Let's go!"

Quickly wiping my eyes, I closed up the box and pushed it behind the others. Leaving everything else as it was, I rushed from the trailer just as he started the truck. Jumping in, I barely had time to shut the door before he put his truck in drive and sped out of the construction site.

Like this morning, he said nothing on the ride home and I was thankful. I wanted so much to ask him about her but I didn't know what to say to him. Part of me wanted to learn everything I could about the woman who captured the attention of the gruff man I found myself drawn to.

I now understood the pain in his eyes.

The same pain I still felt when I thought of my parents.

We were both in mourning.

I knew grief affected everyone differently. While it seemed Chase closed himself off to it, I embraced it, letting it swamp me, allowing my emotions to spill over at times. Healing from death wasn't easy. Some people never got over the loss of a loved one, while others found a way to move on.

For me, I had no choice.

My brother needed me. And while I wanted to curl into a ball and forget the world, I couldn't. As for Chase, he had his brothers and the club, but I knew he kept his grief hidden under layers of pain that had now become a part of him, like a second skin.

Laying my head against the window, I silently prayed for a man who wanted nothing to do with me. I prayed he found peace and solace. That one day he would open his heart to the

world again and let joy back in. Because even in the bleakest of times, I knew it was joy that would prevail.

It had to.

Because if it didn't, I didn't know what I was going to do.

I was bone tired when he pulled into the compound. All I wanted was to soak in a hot bath, eat something and then sleep. Because come morning, I knew I would be back at it again. Mr. Montclair wasted no time shutting the engine off and escaping inside.

If I didn't know any better, I'd say the man didn't want to be around me. Too tired to care, I slowly exited the vehicle, stumbling a bit before reaching for the side of the truck to stabilize myself. It was then I realized that the only thing I'd eaten today was the breakfast bar he threw at me this morning.

I worked through lunch so absorbed in learning everything I could about his former wife.

Heading towards the entrance, I barely made it a few steps before I got lightheaded and stumbled again.

"Whoa there, Skylar," Priest said, catching me before I face planted. "You okay, sweetheart? You look a little pale."

"Just hungry. I didn't eat today."

"What do you mean?"

"I forgot to eat lunch. That's all. I'll eat something after I take a bath and check on Cameron."

"The brat's with Beth and Bailey in town. Come on, Skylar, let's get some food in you."

Not wanting to argue, I followed him inside.

Sitting me at the kitchen table, Priest headed for the fridge when King, Gunner and Scribe walked in.

"Hey, Sky. How was your first day at work?" Scribe asked happily, taking a seat next to me.

"Fucker didn't feed her," Priest growled, placing a bowl of fruit in front of me before scavenging the fridge again.

“What do you mean, he didn’t feed her?” Gunner asked. “I dropped off lunch for everyone at the site today around one.”

Priest slammed the fridge shut, placing cold cuts, lettuce, a fresh tomato, and pickles on the table. Turning for a loaf of bread, he added, “I don’t know what to tell you, Gunner. All I know was I was closing up the garage when I saw Skylar almost collapse. She was pale. Her blood sugar dropped. When I asked, she said she forgot to eat lunch.”

“Skylar?” King said, looking at me.

“It’s my fault. I lost track of time. It won’t happen again.”

I didn’t like the way all four of them were looking at me. If they thought for one second, I was going to blame Mr. Montclair for my failure to watch the time they were going to be waiting for a long time. The fact of the matter was I was so busy trying to make a dent in the work that I let time pass me by. Then I got consumed with Ellie’s box. It wasn’t Mr. Montclair’s responsibility to watch over me every second of the day.

If I had gotten up earlier, I could have made myself lunch.

My failure to eat was on me.

Not him. He already had enough to deal with.

It wasn’t his responsibility to feed me as well.

The man of the hour chose at that moment to walk into the kitchen. “Got visitors pulling in.”

“Did you give Skylar the lunch I brought to the site today?” Gunner asked.

“No. As soon as you left, I got a call from a client. I had to leave. I was gone for the rest of the day. Why?”

“She didn’t eat lunch today,” Priest growled, throwing some ham onto a slice of bread.

Chase looked at me and frowned. “Did you take a break at all today?”

“No,” I whispered, refusing to look at him.

“Why not?”

“Because you need the trailer cleaned and organized. It’s a mess. It’s going to take me at least a week or more to clean it and organize everything.”

“Skylar Rose, federal law states I’m required to give all employees two twenty-minute breaks and an hour lunch. I thought you knew that.”

I shook my head. “No. I didn’t know that.”

“What do you mean? I thought you said you’ve worked before.”

“I have, just not in the capacity like I did today.”

“Fix this. Now!” King ordered angrily as he and Gunner left the kitchen. “Scribe, Priest. Follow.”

Alone with him, I kept my eyes on the fruit bowl in front of me. I didn’t want to anger him anymore. When he didn’t move, I slowly looked up to find him glaring at me.

He was always glaring at me.

“It won’t happen again. I’m sorry.”

Saying nothing, he finished making the sandwich Priest started, then placed it on a plate before sliding it over to me. Taking a seat before me, he waited as I picked up the sandwich and took a bite.

“I want to apologize for last night. I wasn’t myself and I took it out on you. It won’t happen again.”

Swallowing, I lowered my sandwich. “Mr. Montclair, you don’t have to apologize to me. I understand.”

He cocked his head and furrowed his brow in confusion.

“I found Ellie’s box in the trailer. I’m sorry for your loss.”

He stiffened.

“She was a beautiful woman. You must have loved her very much.”

Jumping to his feet, he glared at me. Only this time, he said absolutely nothing before he stormed from the kitchen, leaving me to eat alone.

Sighing, I pushed my plate away.

Great.

I made him angrier.

Leaving the kitchen, I walked into the main room when I spotted two very familiar men smiling at me. Not thinking, I ran to them, as one of them caught me, hugging me tightly.

Holding on to him as if my life depended on it, I cried.

“It’s okay, Sky. I’m here now,” my uncle Luc said, before releasing me. Turning, I hugged my uncle Matt.

“How are you both here? I sent messages, even tried to call. I couldn’t reach you.”

“We didn’t get any messages, sweetie. If we’d known, you know damn well we’d both have been there. We are so sorry you had to go through that all by yourself,” Uncle Luc stated.

“Where is the brat?” Uncle Matt asked, looking around.

“In town with my woman and Beth. They should have him home soon,” King said.

A low growl from behind me had me turning to find Mr. Montclair glaring at my two uncles. Releasing my uncle Matt, I took a step back as King introduced them. “Hawk, Law, this is my brother Chase. Goes by Pyro. He’s been watching over Skylar since she arrived.”

Uncle Luc looked Chase up and down before extending his hand. “Name’s Lucifer Hawk. President of Disturbed MC. Sky is my goddaughter.”

“And I’m Matthew Law, owner of Harbor Security in New York City. I’m also Sky’s godfather. Thank you for watching out for her and Cameron.”

Smiling at my uncles, I didn’t dare move when Mr. Montclair stepped up behind me, placing his hand on my hip,

slowly pulling me back against him, until my back was flush with his chest.

“You here to help King find this Hiller?”

My uncles both nodded as they saw what I didn't understand.

My uncle Matt smirked, while uncle Luc frowned.

King cleared his throat. “Pyro, take Skylar back into the kitchen. I know damn well she didn't finish eating. Stay with her and make sure she does. Then come find us. We'll be in church.”

Chase didn't wait to be told twice as he turned me, keeping his hand on my hip as he escorted me back into the kitchen.

## Chapter Twelve

### Pyro

The second I had her alone in the kitchen, I grabbed her and pushed her up against the wall, caging her in. Holding her close to me, my heart pounded furiously in my chest.

I didn't know what the hell I was doing, but I felt right.

She opened her delectable mouth to say something.

"Not a word," I growled as I held her closer, leaning my head against hers. I didn't know what the fuck I was doing but I couldn't stop myself and when her hands came up and wrapped around me, for the first time in five years, I could breathe again.

But like all the good things in my life, it was short-lived when the back door swung open and Cameron raced in.

Jumping away from her, cold descended around me again as I heard the little varmint shout. "Hey, Sky. Look what I got!"

Kneeling before her brother, Sky smiled warmly at him. "Wow. Is that a new truck?"

Looking at the door, I saw Bailey smirking at me as she slowly shook her head. Glaring at her, she kept whatever she was going to say to herself as she walked out of the kitchen, leaving me alone with Skylar and her brother.

"Were you good today?"

"Yep. Beth let me stock with Jamie. He's so cool, Sky, and fun. We ate lunch together. He likes Harleys like I do. He told me that Scribe was helping him build his own bike. Can I have a bike too?"

"Maybe when you get a little bigger."

"Sky?" her brother whispered.

"Yes."

"I like it here. Can we stay?"

"I don't know, Cameron. Our home is back in Juniper Hollow."



“But the house blew up, sissy. Where we gonna live?”

“I haven’t figured that out yet.”

“You are staying here, Cameron. This is your home now,” I said, interrupting. Her brother grinned, then quickly hugged me. “Knew you were the right man for the job.”

Narrowing my eyes at the little shit, I said, “You called my honor into question, kid. That’s not how you ask for help.”

The little shit winked at me. “Worked, didn’t it?”

“Why you little shit!” I growled, reaching for him as he bolted from the kitchen, laughing as he ran for freedom.

Alone again, Skylar Rose got to her feet and faced me. “You shouldn’t have told him that, Mr. Montclair. I haven’t decided where we are going to live yet. This is only temporary.”

“Stop calling me that.”

“What?”

“My name is Chase. When you call me Mr. Montclair, I feel like an old man.”

“Alright,” she smirked. “Chase it is, then.”

“And you are not leaving. This is your home now. So, get used to it.”

“While I appreciate what you and everyone else have done for me and my brother, the fact of the matter is that our home is in Juniper Hollow. Our parents are buried there. It’s home.”

“You don’t want to stay?”

“It doesn’t matter what I want anymore,” Skylar firmly said. “Cameron is my responsibility now and I have to do what’s best for him. Besides, I have no reason to stay.”

She turned and left before I could utter another word. I balled up my fist, wanting so much to chase after her.

After everything I’ve done for her, she was just going to leave.

Fuck it. If she wanted to leave, I wasn’t going to stop her.

She didn’t belong here, anyway.

She was better than all of us. She needed to be with kids her own age. In college, starting her life and making new friends.

Living, not going through the motions like I was.

“You know, staying angry isn’t doing you any favors.”

“Why the fuck are you lurking in the shadows, Scribe? Do you need me to beat your ass again?”

“Just observing,” he smirked, leaning against the counter. “Gotta say, brother, thought for sure you two were gonna melt paint before a little six-year-old kid cockblocked you.”

“You need your eyes checked,” I huffed.

“Still got twenty-twenty vision, brother. Maybe if you weren’t so damn bossy with her, she might actually talk to you.”

“I don’t want anything to do with her. You heard her. She’s leaving.”

“No. She said she has no reason to stay. Give her a reason, Chase,” Scribe said, walking out of the kitchen.

Turning, I roared, punching a hole in the wall.



Church was full when I walked in.

Finding my seat, I said nothing as Matthew Law looked at me before he continued. “My boys have found nothing, King. Hiller has gone underground. I reached out to a few of the active teams and none have heard anything. Not even a rumor.”

“Same here,” Hawk gruffy added. “When I heard Kevin and Brenda died in an accident, I got Indigo on it fast. No fucking way Hobbs lost control of his car. That man could have driven professionally. His old man was a stock car racer in his younger years. Taught Kevin everything he knew. Indigo is of the mind that the accident was a hit.”

“My boys agree,” Law nodded. “They want payback. We all owe Hobbs. That man saved all of our asses at one time or

another.”

“Shit,” my brother sighed, leaning back in his chair. “Could this have something to do with downrange? ‘Cause if it does, we’re screwed. None of us are active anymore. We’re out of the loop. Does anyone know what Hobbs was doing before the accident?”

“No,” Hawk stated. “They deemed his jacket classified due to its sensitive nature. Indigo couldn’t get into it and you know that fucker can get into anything. Whatever Hobbs was doing was top secret.”

“Has Skylar said anything?” Law asked. “She and her dad were close. Girl has keen eyes. Sees shit that others overlook.”

“She knows nothing,” I muttered as all eyes looked at me. “She’s mourning the loss of her parents and raising her six-year-old brother. She’s been through enough. I won’t allow any of you to involve her with this shit.”

“Allow?” Hawk growled.

“I said what I said.”

King stiffened. “What my brother means is...”

“Don’t need you to clarify for me, King. They heard me clearly. Skylar Rose is off limits. Leave her the fuck alone.”

Matthew Law grinned, leaning forward, placing his arms on the table. “Is that so? Are you claiming my goddaughter?”

“No.”

“Then if I want to talk to her, I have every right.”

“Leave her alone,” I sneered as Gunner and Priest got to their feet. Walking over to me, Gunner tapped me on the shoulder. “Come on, Chase. Let’s go for a walk.”

Shrugging my brother off, I growled “Not leaving, so back off.”

“Chase,” King carefully said, trying to get my attention. “Get that you helped Skylar and Cameron and you feel obligated to protect them, but if Skylar knows something, we need to talk to her.”

I glared at Hawk and flatly said, “No.”

Hawk grinned, crossing his arms over his massive chest. “Better put a leash on your boy, King. Don’t like how he’s looking at me.”

“Fucking deal with it.”

“Gunner,” King snapped angrily.

The next thing I knew, Gunner, Priest and Scribe dragged me from church. Throwing me against the wall, Gunner got in my face and sneered, “What the fuck is wrong with you?! You know damn well you don’t challenge a fucking president of a major club and in our house. Whatever bug has crawled up your ass, you better get rid of it fast because if you ever pull that shit again, I will have you on cleaning duty for a fucking month. Got me?”

“Yeah.”

“Not good enough, Pyro!” Gunner growled. “I’m the fucking VP of this club and you just fucking disrespected our Prez and the fucking Sons of Hell with that show in there. Do you fucking get me?!”

“YES!” I shouted. “I fucking get you, VP.”

“Get him the fuck out of here. I don’t want to see him for the rest of the day.”

Shaking off Priest and Scribe, I stormed out of the clubhouse, heading for my bike. Hopping on, I started the engine as Skylar Rose rushed over to me.

“You, okay?”

Before I could stop myself, I growled, “Get on.”

The second she wrapped her arms around my waist, I peeled out of the compound.

## Chapter Thirteen

### Pyro

I couldn't breathe.

I couldn't concentrate.

She was everywhere I looked.

From the moment I met her, her captivating smile consumed my thoughts. She even started haunting my dreams, her presence lingering long after I woke up. I desperately tried to push thoughts of her out of my mind. I couldn't bear the sight of her any longer. I yearned for her to be gone from my life. Being in her presence made me feel like I was drowning, struggling to take in even the smallest breaths.

Now, I was fucking up and making stupid mistakes. I knew not to challenge another president in church. It was suicide. I heard what King said about Hawk and Law, but I disregarded everything and let my temper get the better of me.

Revvng the engine, my bike took off as her arms tightened around me. It irked me to have her on the back of my bike, as if it was where she naturally belonged. It felt wrong, but oh, so right. Riding, with no end in sight, I didn't know where I was going. All I knew was that I needed the wind in my face, the freedom of the open road, and yes, her on the back of my bike with me.

It was a strange feeling. After so long, to have someone riding with me, holding me tightly as I took curve after curve. It felt natural, almost as if everything was once again right in this fucked up world.

Seeing the lake up ahead, I slowed my bike.

If I couldn't keep her away from me, then maybe if she met some kids her own age, she would want to spend time with them. The lake was always a hotbed for teenage kids.

I was willing to try anything.

Pulling into a parking spot. I cut the engine and waited as she stayed glued to my back. Lightly touching her hands, I tapped her fingers twice before she released me and got off my bike.

Following, I walked her towards the lake.

Only there was no one here.

Shit.

Looking around, I remembered reading in the Rosewood Gazette that there was a high school football game tonight.

Damn it. How could I forget?

It was fall.

Football season.

Of Course. All the kids would be at the game.

“It’s beautiful here,” she whispered, looking out towards the lake tugging her sweater around her. “Why did you bring me here?”

“Thought you could meet some kids your own age.”

“I see,” she whispered, walking further towards the lake.

Following her, I said nothing, as my eyes never left her.

She was beautiful under the moonlight.

Almost ethereal looking.

“I never had many friends in school. Those who were, had a hard time understanding me. They weren’t like me. I didn’t care for pep rallies, football games, dances, anything a normal teenager cared about. I was the only one in high school who didn’t have a phone. Did you know that?”

“How is that possible? Everyone has a phone.”

She smirked, never taking her eyes off the dark water. “So, it would be impossible for me to have an Instagram account, or Facebook for that matter, because that stuff never interested me.”

I flinched at that, remembering how I blamed her for chatting it up on social media instead of watching her brother.

“What I cared about was my family. I loved being the daughter of a Marine Gunnery Sergeant and I loved being around my mother. When Cameron was born and I saw him for the first time, something inside me clicked. I just knew.”

“Knew what?”

Skylar Rose turned to look at me and smiled. “What I wanted to be when I grew up. I wanted to be a mom.”

“You never wanted to go to college?”

“No,” she whispered, shaking her head. “That was my mother’s dream, not mine.”

“I’ve heard you play the piano, Skylar Rose. You are very talented. You could go to Juilliard. You are that good.”

“But it’s not what I want. Shouldn’t I have the freedom to make my own choices and live life on my own terms?”

“Yes,” I whispered. “But you are still young. In time, you might change your mind. Going to college doesn’t mean you have to give up on your dream, it’s keeping your options open.”

“Did you give Ellie the same pep-talk before you married her? She wasn’t much younger than me. I saw the newspaper clipping of your marriage. She was eighteen. Just graduated from high school when you made her your wife.”

“This isn’t about her,” I deadpanned.

“You are right. I’m not Ellie. I am my own person of my own mind. I know what I want, just like she did. So why are you trying to change my mind?”

“I’m not. I just think you’ll be happier around people your own age.”

“And what about Cameron?”

“What about him?”

“He’s six years old, Chase. I am his legal guardian. I don’t have the luxury of choice like most people my age. I have a brother who needs me.”

“Don’t you have any other relatives who could help?”

“You mean pawn my brother off on them while I run away from my responsibilities?”

“No, that’s not what I meant.”

“Then speak clearly, Chase. No need to beat around the bush with me.”

“I’m just saying if there was someone who could watch Cameron while you went to school, it would be better for the both of you.”

“I see. You must really hate me. I don’t understand why, but from the moment you met me, you’ve tried your damndest to get away from me. Message received. I won’t bother you again,” she said, turning on a dime marching away from me.

I chased after her.

Grabbing her arm, I quickly turned to her to face me.

She had tears in her eyes again.

Fuck.

“Just leave me alone,” she whimpered.

“I don’t hate you, Skylar Rose.”

“Yes, you do. You don’t want me near you. You hate that King forced you to work with me. I see how you glare at me all the time. You despise me. You want me gone.”

“That’s not true.”

“Don’t lie to me, Chase. I know what I saw. Maybe I should just take Cameron and go home. At least there, I know we’re wanted.”

Grabbing her shoulders, I pulled her close to me. “I don’t hate you, Skylar Rose. Don’t leave. Don’t go.”

“Why would I stay when I’m not wanted?”



“Because I want you to stay,” I whispered, before crushing my mouth over hers.

The second my lips touched hers, everything evaporated.

All my anger.

All my fear.

All my regrets.

All that remained was Skylar Rose.

Holding her close to me, I devoured her mouth as she melted against me. Her arms moving up and around my back as she gripped my jacket with her fist.

Her soft moan eased a tension in my soul I didn't know was there as I allowed myself to feel the world once more. It was everything that I remembered and more. The drab gray landscape that used to define my life vanished, replaced by a world bursting with vibrant hues.

Now radiant colors shined through, illuminating everything around me. Lost in the merriment of her grace, I deepened the kiss, feeling the wind swirl around us. It was a remarkable experience to meet someone whose soul was so gentle and reverent that it responded to my every action with love and joy.

She truly was magical.

Releasing her lips, I kissed her cheeks, the tip of her nose, her forehead, before holding her close to me. She fit so perfectly in my arms, almost as if she were destined to be there.

“I knew,” I heard her whisper.

“Knew what?”

“The first moment I saw you. I knew you were mine.”

Confused, I looked down at her.

“It's okay if you don't feel it right now. It's difficult getting over someone you love. I understand. I really do. I'm still grieving for my parents.”

Taking a step back, I frowned. “What are you talking about?”

“Ellie,” she simply said, looking up at me. “You are still mourning her. I can wait. There’s no need to rush anything.”

Shaking my head, I growled. “Rush what? There is nothing between us. There never will be. I love my wife. Only her. I don’t want another one. Ever.”

“But you said you wanted me. You kissed me!”

“I want you to stay, not be mine.”

“Then what in the hell was that a minute ago? You can’t lie and say you didn’t feel something, Chase. I know you did.”

“It was just a kiss. That’s it!”

Skylar shook her head and sneered, “I should have fucking known. My dad warned me about men like you!”

“What the fuck does that mean?!”

“Why did you really bring me here to this place? Did you think I would just open my legs for you? I know I look like her. Is that why? You wanted to use me to remember her!”

“NO!”

“I don’t believe you, Chase Montclair,” she said, turning, walking away from me.

What the fuck just happened?

One minute we were talking and then kissing. Now everything had gone to shit fast. My head was spinning.

Running after her, I shouted “Skylar stop! Where are you going?”

“I’m walking home!”

“It’s a five-mile walk. Just stop. Please!”

She rounded on me. “Why? Why should I?”

“I’m sorry, okay? It was just a kiss. I can’t be what you want. I just can’t.”

“Yes, you can. You don’t want to try because you are afraid. You’ve bottled up Ellie’s death and use it to shield yourself from the world. I’ve seen how you interact with everyone. You push everyone away from you, refusing to get close. I’m sorry Ellie died, Chase, but I’m alive. I’m a living, breathing person who has feelings, who deserves to find love and to be loved. If you don’t want to be that person, then that’s your choice, but I will no longer take any more of your shit. Now take me home.”

Saying nothing more, I did just that.

## Chapter Fourteen

### Pyro

The second I pulled to a stop in front of the clubhouse, Skylar Rose bolted, jumping from my bike, never looking back. Following her, I heard King call her name as she raced up the stairs.

A moment later, a door slammed.

“What the hell happened now?” King asked, looking at me.

“Nothing. I’m going to bed.”

Ignoring all the looks, I headed upstairs, locking myself in my room. I just wanted to sleep and forget this night had ever happened.

Too bad I didn’t get that wish.

I moaned, rolling over as the sounds of notes floated up from the rec room. Rubbing my eyes, I got out of bed, wondering who was fucking around this damn early in the morning.

Leaving my room, I saw King’s door open.

“Is that the piano?” he muttered sleepily.

“Yeah.”

“Who the fuck is playing that thing at this hour?”

I had a feeling, and prayed I was wrong.

Shrugging, I walked past him, heading for the stairs. Walking down them, I realized that not only was King behind me, but so was everyone else, even Cameron.

“Why aren’t you asleep, kid?” I asked.

Cameron looked up at me and smiled as if something had dawned on him as he gasped. “Sissy.”

“What about her?” I asked as the piano keys got louder, sending the musical notes floating throughout the clubhouse as

a voice floated gently through the air.

“That’s sissy!” Cameron gasped, running towards the rec room.

Before I could stop him, Cameron bolted like lightning.

The little shit was fucking fast.

Following him, I stopped dead in my tracks as my eyes landed on Skylar sitting at the piano, her back to us as her fingers moved across the white keys. Large headphones covered her ears as she played the piano. Sighing, I shook my head and was about to tell her to keep it down when King placed his hand on my shoulder, stopping me. “Don’t.”

“I’m tired. I’ve got to get up in a few hours.”

“Chase, stop being a dick for five fucking minutes and listen to what she is singing,” King scolded as Bailey walked around him, wrapping her arms around him.

Brothers moved quietly past, not wanting to interrupt Skylar’s impromptu performance at the ass crack of dawn.

Grumbling, I leaned against the far wall, huffing as I listened to Skylar play the piano and sing as every nerve ending in my body stood up and took notice.

*If I lay here.*

*If I just lay here.*

*Would you lie with me and just forget the world?*

*I don’t quite know how to say, how I feel.*

*Those three words are said too much.*

*They’re not enough.*

Slowly pushing off the wall, I listened as her words seeped into my soul, awakening something that had long been dead for years. The feel of her in my arms, her body close to mine, her soft lips touching mine, rushed into my head. It was the perfect moment in time. And I ruined it with my hateful words.

She was never going to forgive me.

I hurt her badly this time.

I couldn't even forgive myself.

I wanted so much to walk over to her and make her pain disappear, but I couldn't get my legs to move. In the end, I stayed where I was.

"Follow me. Now," King growled lowly.

Nodding, I took one more look at the woman who had awakened something inside me and wondered if I would ever see those brilliant colors again.

Following King into church along with everyone else, he said nothing until the door was closed. The second I heard the click I knew King was about to rip into me.

And he did.

"You want to tell me what the fuck happened tonight?"

"Nothing happened."

"Bullshit," Scribe growled. "Something happened."

"I agree," Priest yawned. "I don't know much about music, but that girl just sang from her heart, and she directed that song at someone particular."

"They're right, Chase," Sarah added, curling up to Gunner, who also yawned.

"What the hell happened tonight?" King asked again. "Because when the both of you got back, Sky was upset, and you were angry. So, what the fuck happened? Did you two fight again?"

"No," I growled, not wanting to talk about this shit.

Nothing happened as far as I was concerned.

"Damn it Chase," King growled. "Don't give me that bullshit. Since you brought her here, you've been a bastard where she is concerned. You are fucking mean as hell to her. She's done nothing to you. Not one damn thing and you treat her like fucking trash. I won't stand for it anymore."

“I kissed her, okay?!” I shouted. “Is that what you want to hear? We were out at the damn lake. I thought she’d like to see where other kids hang out, thinking she could make some friends and leave me the hell alone. Only she didn’t give a damn about any of that. She talked about finding love and becoming a mom. She talked about her parents and Ellie. She wouldn’t stop talking about Ellie. Before I knew it, we were kissing. Then she had to ruin it with her dreams and shit. I got angry with her and told her I didn’t want her. That I only loved my wife.”

“You stupid fucking idiot,” Bailey sneered, shaking her head as she got off King’s lap and walked over to me. “You can’t be that fucking dumb. We all see how she looks at you. That girl is in love with you and you shit on her. I ought to kick your fucking ass.”

“Bailey’s right, Chase,” Sarah muttered as she rubbed her growing belly. “All of us have known from the moment she arrived. Why do you think she volunteered to spend time with you at the construction site? She isn’t there to learn a trade. She’s there because she wants to be close to you. To know you.”

I shook my head.

“I’m a grown ass man. Old enough to be her father. She needs to be with someone her own age.”

Bailey and Sarah laughed.

“Is that what you think when you look at me and King?” Gunner challenged.

“You guys are different.”

“How so?” King prodded. “I’m forty-three years old and about to marry a woman who just turned twenty-five. Hell, Gunner just turned thirty-nine and Sarah will be twenty this fall. Ellie was fourteen years your junior when you married her. All of us are old enough to be their fathers, but that didn’t stop us from claiming the loves of our lives.”

“Skylar Rose is not the love of my life!”

“Ellie’s dead,” I heard Scribe whisper from behind me.

Whipping around, I clenched my fist.

I wasn't having this conversation with him again.

Not with any of them.

My private life was just that.

Private.

Scribe slowly got to his feet, anger radiating off him in waves. "For the last five years, we've all given you space where Ellie was concerned. Myself more than the others because I believe everyone has the right to grieve in their own way, but when your grief hurts others, well, that I won't allow. Skylar may be young in age, but she is an old soul. She isn't like other women, and you fucking know it. We all know it. If you can't get your head out of your ass long enough to see what you are throwing away, I will claim her myself."

Before I knew what I was doing, I had Scribe up against the wall.

"You stay the fuck away from her!"

Scribe smirked. "Can't have it both ways, brother. Either you want Skylar or you don't."

"I don't want her. I want her to leave me alone," I growled, pushing off him, knowing damn well I was lying to them and myself. I didn't know what it was I exactly wanted, but I fucking knew I didn't want Scribe anywhere near her. Skylar was better than him. Better than me. She deserved everything life could give her. Not some washed up man who pined away for a woman who was never coming back.

"Then I claim Skylar," Scribe stated firmly.

"I said she's off fucking limits, asshole," I growled, taking a step towards him.

"I second," King declared loudly as my brothers all nodded and agreed.

I couldn't believe it.

They were voting against me.



Turning to King, I glared. “Why?”

My brother stood. “I love you, Chase, but I will not allow you to hurt someone because you can’t let go of the past. If you want to mourn Ellie for the rest of your life, that is your choice, but this club will protect Skylar from you. Until Skylar decides what she wants to do or moves out, I think you should stay at your place.”

“You’re kicking me out!” I roared.

“No,” King shook his head. “You still have a seat at the table and I expect you to attend all club meetings and such, but I can’t have you here as long as Skylar is under this roof.”

“Skylar can have my apartment,” Bailey stated firmly, walking towards the door only to stop, standing before me with contempt and disgust in her eyes. “I don’t want her anywhere near you. Scribe, get the van ready in the morning. You can help me get Skylar the fuck away from this chicken shit.”

“And we’ll help,” Priest said as my brothers all got to their feet, following Bailey as she left, leaving me alone with King and Gunner. Turning to my brothers, I watched as Gunner got to his feet and silently left the room without looking at me.

When he closed the door behind him, King took a seat and sighed. “I want you to see a grief counselor, Chase. This isn’t a request. It’s now an order.”

“I don’t need to talk to anyone.”

“You need to talk to someone. It’s been five years since Ellie died and you act as if it happened yesterday. It’s not healthy. Until you speak to someone, I am limiting your access to the clubhouse and the brothers. It’s time to move on and start living again. Go pack your shit. I will not grant you access to the club until I see a note from an actual licensed therapist.”

“Why are you doing this?”

King roared, slamming his hands on his desk. “Because someone has to! If you won’t protect yourself, then I will. I

love you. You are my brother. My baby brother. If dad was alive, he would kick your ass for what you've been doing to Skylar. It ends now. Get the hell out of my sight until you have your head on straight."

I left.

## Chapter Fifteen

### Skylar

My head was all over the place the next morning when I walked into the kitchen to find King, Uncle Luc and Uncle Matt sitting at the table laughing as Bailey ate a pastry leaning against the counter. The one person I didn't see was the person responsible for my sleepless night.

I could still feel his lips on mine as he held me tightly last night. When he kissed me, everything just felt right, as if I'd been kissing him my whole life. I knew I sounded crazy because I'd just met the man, but I couldn't stop how I felt. I didn't lie to him. I knew the first moment I saw him. My mom told me that some people were lucky in that regard to find their destined partner at first sight.

I never thought I'd be one of those people.

Even when he panicked and started backpedaling, I didn't worry. Did I get upset? Yes. Who wouldn't, after experiencing the most magical kiss in the world, and have your feelings rejected by the one you want the most?

So yeah, it hurt.

I knew Chase was still grieving the loss of his wife. Even after all this time, the love he felt for her must have been soul-consuming and then suddenly to have feelings for someone else. Of course, he was confused and scared. I was too. But I knew I wasn't the only one who felt something last night and while his words hurt me, I wasn't giving up on him. If he needed time, then that's what I would give him.

"Good morning, Sky," Uncle Matt smiled up at me.

Returning the smile, I replied, "Good morning."

Looking around, I asked, "Where is Chase? Did he already leave for the site?"

"He left last night, sweetie," King sobered. "You won't be working with him anymore. In fact, Bailey wants to offer you the receptionist position at her shop."

“Thank you for the offer, Bailey, but no, King. I’m not quitting that job.” I fumed, storming out of the kitchen.

How dare he do that shit to me?

If he thought I was just going to walk away and forget everything, he had another thing coming. I may be young and inexperienced in the ways of the world, but I knew what I wanted. And I wanted him. He may not be ready for another relationship right now, but that didn’t give him the right to take away the only job I had. I wanted the job at the site. I didn’t care if he couldn’t stand being around me. The money I planned to make there would set me and Cameron up so I could buy us a place. I did the math. If I worked hard and saved every penny, I would have enough for a down payment on a small house within six months. Plus, the insurance alone was worth the hassle of dealing with the man. Chase Montclair may want nothing to do with me, but he wasn’t going to get rid of me that easily.

Seeing Priest at the bar, I marched over to him. “Priest, can you give a ride out to the construction site? Apparently, my ride left without me.”

“Um,” the handsome man rubbed the back of his neck as King, Bailey and my uncles walked out of the kitchen. “I don’t think you work there anymore, Sky. Thought you were going to be working with Bailey.”

“I’m not quitting. If he wants to be a petulant child about everything, then he can tell me to my face. Now, can you take me or am I walking?”

“I’ll take you, darlin’,” Scribe grinned happily as he walked over, placing an arm around my shoulders, quickly kissing the top of my head.

“Scribe,” King growled, narrowing his eyes at the loveable goof.

“What?” Scribe chuckled. “If my darlin’ wants to work with dickhead, who am I to tell her no?”

“You’re stirring the pot, asshole.”

“And what a delicious pot it is,” Scribe replied happily. “Come on, darlin’. Let’s get you to work. You know I like fancy

and expensive things. I can shop till I drop. Remember that when my birthday rolls around.”

Confused, I looked between King and Scribe. I knew I was missing something here, but seeing Bailey hide her laughter I figured it wasn't too bad and let Scribe walk me out of the clubhouse.

Pulling into the construction site, I spotted Chase, who was standing next to a few brothers, who all looked shocked to see me. I didn't care. I was here to do a job.

That was it.

Plain and simple.

As Scribe slowed his bike to a stop, he held out his hand. Taking it, I stepped off his bike as Chase marched over to me.

“What the hell are you doing here, Skylar Rose?”

“Working.” I glared at him, giving him a taste of his own medicine. “You haven't fired me, so I am working.”

Refusing to say another word, I pushed past him as I stormed towards the trailer.

“Have a good day, darlin'!” I heard Scribe yell. “I'll miss you!”

Turning, I looked at the man, who smiled and waved happily as the brothers all laughed while Chase fumed.

I had no idea what the hell was going on, but when Chase grabbed Scribe by the scruff of his neck, I hurried back over to them, stepping between them.

“Stop!” I shouted angrily. “Right now.”

“Get out of my way, Skylar Rose, before you get hurt.”

“Oh, I think you've done enough of that already. I won't have you hurting anyone else. Leave Scribe alone. I mean it.”

“Yeah, you heard my darlin'. Leave me alone.”

“I'm gonna kick your ass,” Chase seethed, itching to get his hands on Scribe. “And stop calling her your darlin'!”

“I'll call her anything I want, brother,” Scribe taunted.

Placing both my hands on Chase's chest, I whispered, "Stop. I don't know what's going on between you two, but I won't allow you to hurt him. All he did was give me a ride to the site."

Stepping away as if I burned him, he cursed, walking away, kicking the dirt as he did so. Rounding on Scribe, I sighed. "Did you have to do that? It's bad enough he hates me and doesn't want me around. You didn't have to aggravate the situation."

"He doesn't hate you, Sky. He's confused and scared. He's hidden behind his grief for so long, he doesn't know any differently. I'm showing Chase that actions have consequences."

"What does that mean?"

"It means he needs to pull his head out of his ass before he loses a good thing."

"Scribe," I sighed. "He was crystal clear. He doesn't want me. He's still in love with Ellie. I can't compete with a dead woman."

"Not about competition, Skylar. Chase needs to understand that life moves on. That he's not only hurting himself but others with his actions. Got love for my brother, but I won't let him destroy two lives."

With that, Scribe revved his engine and slowly backed away before riding away.

I spent the better half of the morning finishing up the boxes and organizing the mounds of paperwork that were piled up, stacked high on the desk, when he entered the small trailer.

Refusing to look up, I asked, "Can I help you?"

"It's lunchtime."

"And?"

"You need to eat, Skylar Rose."

"Why do you care? You were crystal clear about how you felt last night."

"Why do I feel like I'm always apologizing to you?"

"Maybe because you are."

“I really mean it, Skylar. I am sorry about everything. I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings. I was an ass.”

“Yes, you were,” I said, finally looking up at him.

“Would you let me take you to lunch and make it up to you?”

Nodding, I got to my feet and followed him out to his truck.



Laughing as I sat across from him in Beth’s coffee shop, as he regaled me with a story from his childhood. “I’m serious. Mom was furious as she yelled at Dad, blaming him for corrupting her sons. I didn’t understand what the big deal was, because Callum and Cord always snuck into dad’s magazines.”

“What did your dad do?”

“Apologized profusely. Even promised to get rid of all of them, but he never did. He just found another place to hide them.”

“And how long did it take for your mom to find the new hiding place?”

“Three days. When she found them, she set the entire box on fire right in front of the clubhouse. Dad was furious. Apparently, some of those magazines were collector items.”

“My dad had magazines, too. Mom didn’t mind them. She told me once she would rather Dad look at a magazine than seek the real thing. I never really understood what she meant by that, but I knew Dad loved Mom and would never hurt her like that.”

“Your mom was more sensible than mine. Mom always hated the women who hung around the club. Especially when Cassie was around.”

“Your sister, right?”

Chase nodded.

“I saw a picture of the four of you in King’s office. Where is she? Does she live around here?”

Chase shook his head. “No. Cassie died several years ago.”

“Oh Chase,” I whispered, reaching across the table, reaching for his hand. “I’m so sorry. I didn’t know.”

“It’s okay,” he shrugged. “It was a long time ago. Cassie would have loved you. You are a lot like her, you know. She was sweet and gentle like you. Always trying to make everyone around her happy.”

“What happened, if I can ask?”

“Someone kidnapped her from her dorm room while she attended Virginia Tech. She was barely eighteen when a member of the Golden Skulls took her. Mom and Dad lost their shit. They looked everywhere for her. Eventually, the not knowing took its toll and five years after her abduction, Mom died. Dad followed shortly after. It wasn’t a good time back then. We eventually found out what happened to her when we learned her daughter, Jessica, was with the Golden Skulls.”

“The same club that took her?”

“Yeah. Only a different President. The new President Reaper reached out to Callum and the three of us flew to California. When we saw Jess, we knew. She is the spitting image of Cassie. Down to the spray of freckles across her nose. Jessica lives near us now. She’s married to Savage, the Sergeant of Arms for the Golden Skulls. They have four children and if I know Savage, he will make damn sure Jess is pregnant again before Christmas.”

“So, the Golden Skulls are close?”

“Yeah. They have a chapter just over the border in Tennessee. Only an hour or so away. Jess is a nurse and works part time over at the Rosewood clinic with Dr. Claudia.”

“My mom wanted to be a nurse before she married Dad. Maybe that’s why she was always trying to talk me into college. She never got to go. She and Dad got married right after high school. Dad was due to ship out and didn’t want to leave Mom with no kind of support. I think some part of her believed she



missed out. Of course, she would have never said so. She loved Dad. Loved everything about being married.”

“You ever think about joining the military?”

“No. I loved growing up in the military, but I’m too stubborn. I couldn’t stand someone yelling at me and telling me what to do all the time.”

Chase chuckled.

“I can understand that.” Looking at his watch, he added, “We should get back.”

“Thank you for lunch.”

“You’re welcome, Skylar Rose.” He smiled a genuine smile.

Getting to my feet, I heard the bell over the door.

Looking over his shoulder, I froze in my spot.

My hands started shaking as I took a step back.

“Skylar? What’s wrong?”

Saying nothing, I shook my head as Chase turned, just as Wade Hiller smiled at me.

# Chapter Sixteen

## Pyro

The second I saw Skylar Rose pale I wondered what in the hell I did this time. It seemed I was always messing up where she was concerned. Only she wasn't looking at me, but at something behind me. When I turned to see what upset her, I spotted a tall skinny man with balding hair leer at her, then smile.

The fucker walked over, heading straight for Skylar.

"There you are, sweetheart. I've been looking everywhere for you."

Moving quickly to stop the man from touching her, I stepped in front of Skylar and glared at the fucker, who stopped approaching and looked at me.

"Name's Wade Hiller. I see you know my girl, Skylar Rose."

The second he said his name, I didn't think.

Grabbing the fucker by his collar, I forcefully walked him back towards the wall, slamming his back hard against it. "You, motherfucker, are a dead man. Did you put those bruises on her face? Or are you here to get her to sign something else?"

"Whoa!" I heard Mike growl as he rushed over. "Pyro, let him go."

"Not a chance in hell. This motherfucker stole Sky's inheritance and beat the hell out of her. This fucker is mine. Call King and the others. They've been looking for this bastard."

Hiller's face paled.

"Already called him, Pyro," Beth quickly said.

"That's right, you son of a bitch. I know who the fuck you are and so does my brother, Capt. Callum Montclair, along with Capt. Lucifer Hawk and Capt. Matthew Law, all who are here, itching to get their hands on you."

“Skylar, honey,” Beth said. “Come with me, sweetie. Let the men handle this.”

“Skylar, it wasn’t me. I swear, baby!” Hiller shouted as Beth whisked her away.

Slamming him against the wall again, I sneered angrily, “You don’t get to talk to her. Ever. She is mine. My woman and under my protection now. If you even look at her, I will fucking put a bullet between your eyes.”

The bell dinged again.

“Well, well, well. Today is my lucky fucking day,” I heard Scribe say as he walked over.

Hiller gulped loudly.

“Remember me, dickwad. I’m the motherfucker you tried to frame downrange. Man, am I going to love what comes next,” Scribe said, unleashing his bowie knife, placing the cold steel against Hiller’s face.

“Boys, this isn’t the place,” Mike whispered lowly.

The bell dinged again.

“Everyone out!” King roared.

Beth’s diner quickly emptied as King, Hawk, and Law moved quickly to have my back.

“Pyro, we got him,” Law lowly said.

“He’s mine,” I growled, refusing to let him go.

King placed his hand on my shoulder and said, “Chase, Skylar is in the office, scared out of her mind. Go check on her.”

Shoving the bastard one more time, I stepped back just as Hawk chuckled menacingly. “Oh, motherfucker, this has been a long time coming.”

Turning away from the slimy bastard, I headed for the office to find Skylar crying in Beth’s arms. When Beth looked up at me, I could see the worry in her eyes. “King is taking care of it.”

Beth nodded as Skylar rushed to me, burrowing herself deep into my chest. Her body shook as I held her close, rubbing

my hands up and down her back. “It’s okay, Skylar Rose. He will never hurt you again.”

“I never told you who it was. How did you know?”

“Saw the bruises on his knuckles. Fucker is lucky to be breathing.” I muttered, walking her over to the sofa Beth kept in the office for Mike. Sitting, I placed her in my lap as she hugged my neck.

The door to the office opened as Scribe shoved Cameron in, growling, “Watch the kid. The little shit is mad as hell.”

Cameron shouted angrily, “I’m owed!”

“You’re gonna get an ass beating if you don’t stay in here and let the big boys handle this,” Scribe threatened. “Beth, King and the others are getting him out of here soon. Just as soon as King calms Bailey down. Woman lost her shit when Cameron saw Hiller and tried to attack him.”

“Oh dear. Is he still standing?”

Scribe laughed. “Barely. When Cameron ran for the fucker, Law caught him up, but no one could stop Bailey before she put a beat down on the asshole. Woman is hopping mad. Pyro, Gunner is on the way with the SUV. As soon as he arrives, you can get Skylar and Cameron out of here.”

“Thank you, Scribe.”

“You tell Bailey if she breaks anything, she will be working to pay for damages.” Beth huffed.

“Will do,” Scribe nodded before closing the door.



Gunner arrived ten minutes later and soon I had Skylar and Cameron in the vehicle headed back up the mountain. Following on my bike, I stayed close to the vehicle, not wanting to let it out of my sight. Seeing her scared like that changed something inside me. The gray colors of life I had grown accustomed to were now clearly vibrant and in technicolor. I half expected the

drab to return when I put her in the vehicle, but they were still present. Almost blinding.

Parking next to the SUV, Gunner snatched Cameron before he could run off, while I helped Skylar from the vehicle. She still looked pale and I was beginning to worry.

“Skylar, are you sure you’re okay?”

“I’m fine,” she barely whispered.

Lifting her face to mine, I took a good look at her and softly said, “Don’t lie to me now, Skylar Rose. Tell me the truth.”

Her chin wobbled before her eyes filled with tears. Throwing her arms around my neck, she cried. “I’m scared, Chase.”

Picking her up bridal style, I carried her into the clubhouse, heading straight for my room. Part of me knew I should have taken her to her room, but I wanted her with me. I was tired of trying to analyze everything regarding her. From now on, I was going to do what felt right and having her lying on my bed felt right.

Curling myself around her, I held her as she cried.

I didn’t know what to say to her and, considering lately I was damn good at putting my foot in my mouth, I kept my mouth shut and waited for her to speak.

“I trusted him, Chase,” she whispered softly into my chest.

Rubbing my hands up and down her back, I replied, “I know, baby. It’s going to be okay. I promise.”

“Why is he here? How did he find me?”

“I don’t know, but King and your uncles will figure it out. That bastard isn’t getting anywhere near you or Cameron again. I give you my word.”

“He was the one who blew up my house, wasn’t he?”

“The evidence against him isn’t good, baby. He already stole your dad’s life insurance and attacked you. So, it stands to believe that he may have gone further with his revenge.”

“Revenge?”

“Yeah. It seems Hiller wasn’t a good Marine. Your dad found out he was doing something illegal and turned him in to the authorities. Hiller spent seven years in jail for his crimes. Everyone thinks when he got out, he wanted payback.”

“He killed my parents, didn’t he?”

“Yeah, baby. I think he did.”

I didn’t know how long I laid there with her in my arms, as she eventually cried herself to sleep. I hated that this was happening to her. She did nothing to deserve it. So sweet and gentle, Skylar Rose should have had a wonderful life with parents that adored her. Instead, she had everything ripped away from her by a man who wanted payback. For that alone, I was going to make sure the motherfucker paid dearly. But he sealed his fate when he laid hands on her.

Sometime later, I heard a soft knock on my door before it slowly opened as King popped his head in.

“Chase?”

“Yeah?”

“I need you downstairs.”

Nodding, I carefully rolled away from her, getting to my feet. Reaching for the blanket at the foot of my bed, I covered her up before lightly kissing her forehead. Following my brother downstairs, I spotted all of my brothers, along with Hawk and Law, standing around, waiting.

“What’s up?” I asked, stopping to look at all of them.

“How is she?” Law asked, concerned.

“Upset, confused, angry. She just learned that a man she trusted stole her inheritance, beat the hell out of her, and possibly blew up her house and killed her parents, all because of a vendetta. I’d say she is handling it better than any of us would. Why?”

“He’s in the bunker, Chase,” King carefully said.

“And?”

“We want to know what you want done.” Hawk clearly said.

“What do you mean? You don’t need me to tell you what to do?”

“Yeah, we do Chase,” King said, rubbing the back of his neck.

“Why?”

“Because you claimed her, brother,” Scribe said, stepping forward. “In Beth’s coffee shop. Everyone heard you. I was outside, brother and I even heard you.”

“And? What’s your point?”

“Hiller hurt your woman, Chase. That means you run point on this. We need you to tell us what you want us to do.”

I looked at my brothers and clearly said for all to hear, “Kill the motherfucker.”

## Chapter Seventeen

### Skylar

Weeks had passed since Hiller showed up at the coffee shop, wanting God knows what, and during that time, Chase had done a complete one-eighty.

It wasn't an instant personality change, but subtle.

It started that night with me waking up and finding myself asleep next to him in his bed, while he held me. While it made me happy, I was leery, considering how he typically was with me. The days following, I could see him warring with himself, sometimes biting his tongue but he didn't lash out at me. Whatever was going on with him, seemed to be something he was trying to control or figure out.

I didn't know what happened or why he was suddenly being nice to me, but I liked this side of him. No longer gruff or short with me, he took the time to talk to me, letting me see a side of him he rarely showed.

He was also very affectionate. Still more reserved than I liked, he always found time to hold my hand, give me a hug or kiss me.

And dear God, did the man kiss me well!

If I thought our first kiss was spectacular, those that followed knocked my socks off. Chase was careful, methodical, and determined in his approach with me. He took his time, giving me an insight into the heart of the man. As much as I soaked up the attention, a small part of me felt as if he was still holding something back. I'd seen the fire in his eyes, felt the stiffness of his pants when he held me close. I knew he wanted me, but he never overstepped.

Then there was the sudden shift in his demeanor that confounded his brothers, as they too struggled to understand. No longer broody and wound tightly, Chase was laughing again and even joking around with his brothers. While King and Gunner took it in stride, it was the other brothers who I caught looking at him curiously from time to time.



Even Bailey had a hard time adjusting to the new and improved Chase Montclair. But what stumped me the most was his attitude towards Cameron.

I got my brother could be a handful and could easily try the patience God gave a saint, but the man took it upon himself to spend more time with Cameron. While my brother soaked up all the attention, it left me bewildered, confused and worried. While I wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth, I wondered what brought on this change.

"You okay, Skylar?" Sarah asked, taking a seat next to me on one of the sofas in the main room as I watched Chase sit with my brother, helping him with some project for school.

It took a hot minute, but I finally had Cameron enrolled at the Rosewood Elementary School. Now everyone could actually take a breather and get stuff done without my brother underfoot. Not that they minded, apparently. Frank seemed to take Cameron's absence the hardest. The big lovable teddy bear made damn sure he was at the clubhouse every day before the school bus dropped Cameron off.

"Don't you find it odd that Chase is being nice?"

"How do you mean?"

"Look at him. When Chase first met Cameron, he couldn't get away from him fast enough. Since then, Cameron has been a thorn in his side, and now I can't pry those two apart. And Cameron has even stopped fighting me during bath time. What am I missing here?"

"Maybe they finally found some common ground."

I chuckled. "There is no common ground with a six-year-old. No. Something else is going on here."

"My advice, enjoy it while you can. This club has enough drama going on to last a lifetime. Now with the babies getting bigger and Bailey's wedding to King right around the corner, I'd say this club has all the drama it can handle."

"I'm not wearing that shit!" Bailey shouted seconds later, as she stormed out of King's office, proving Sarah's point. Even

I had to admit, the drama with Bailey and King's wedding was a bit much.

It was just a wedding. I would have thought Bailey would have been happy to marry King. Only, it seemed as if King was the only one who cared about the upcoming wedding.

"Come on, Cupcake!" King followed, reluctantly. "You have to wear white. It's tradition!"

"I don't give a fuck. It itches and makes me look like a fucking Disney Princess! I hate it."

Scribe spewed beer across the bar, coughing as brothers laughed. Turning to face the fighting couple, Scribe had no problem offering his two cents. "Like anyone would think you are a Disney Princess. The evil Queen, yes, but a Princess? Hell no. You have nothing to worry about in that regard."

"See, Scribe gets it! Why can't you?"

"Because I want to watch you walk down the aisle in white!"

"Black maybe, but white? Hell no!" Scribe laughed. "Bailey in white! Are you trying to jinx your marriage before it starts? The woman is pure evil. Let her wear black. It will match her soul."

"Yeah," Bailey huffed, crossing her arms. "Why can't I wear black? Black I can handle."

King threw his arms in the air. "Fine. Wear whatever the fuck you want, but your ass better be smiling when you walk towards me. That's non-negotiable."

"Well," Bailey cooed as she moseyed closer to King. "Maybe you could persuade me to smile if you give me the right incentive."

King growled, before picking Bailey up and throwing her over his shoulder before returning to his office.

"See, drama," Sarah whispered as I nodded.

I had to admit, Sarah had a point.

Life in the clubhouse was an adventure.

I never knew what the next minute would bring. If it wasn't Bailey, it was Gunner complaining to anyone who would listen about the five extra pounds he packed on. If not them, Scribe was good at making a fool out of himself. Of course, the hijinks between Scribe and Bailey never seemed to end. From what Chase told me, it all started when Scribe lied to Bailey about being gay. After that, it was game on. From hiding birth control pills to fake tattoos, to pink hair dye. Everyone was waiting to see who would get who next.

While I enjoyed the easy-going club, a small part of me longed for something quieter. More stable, more resolute. I had been saving every dime I made and was getting closer to the down payment I needed for a cute little two-bedroom house in Rosewood. I still hadn't told anyone about it yet because everyone had done so much for me already. I wanted to show them I could take care of myself and Cameron on my own.

I was also looking for a reliable vehicle.

It wasn't easy always asking to borrow a car so I could run errands. While King and the others told me it was no big deal, it was to me.

Priest walked into the clubhouse smiling a short time later, waving an envelope in his hands while carrying a box. "King!" he shouted as everyone looked in his direction.

The President of the club walked out of his office, pulling his shirt over his head as Bailey righted her skirt, smiling.

"What?"

"It's here."

Smiling, King walked over to the man, who happily handed over the envelope. Opening it, King peeked inside and grinned broadly.

"Skylar, honey. Can you come over here, please?"

Looking at Sarah, who shrugged, I got to my feet and did as he asked, as Chase also stood, coming to stand behind me. He did that a lot lately whenever anyone wanted to talk to me.

"Honey, your uncles and I made some calls a while back and called in a few favors. We weren't sure anything would

come of it, but we had to try. This is for you,” he said, handing me the envelope.

Opening it, I took out a single piece of paper with a check attached to it from the United States Marine Corps. Gasping, I quickly covered my mouth, shaking my head. My hand trembled as I stared at a check in my name for one million dollars.

“I don’t understand. How?” I whispered, as tears rolled down my face, refusing to take my eyes off the paper.

“Your uncles and I notified a few friends of ours that are still Marine Corps. We told them what Hiller did to your parents and to you. They did their own investigation. After some talking and possibly a few threats, the Marine Corps agreed to right a wrong.”

“It’s real?”

“And all for you and Cameron.”

“Along with this,” Priest said, holding a folded American Flag encased in a mahogany glass case in his hands. “I knew you lost your dad’s original flag in the fire, so the brothers and I chipped in and got you this.”

Looking at the memory box, I saw the folded flag front and center, with my dad’s name etched on a gold placard, along with his rank, ribbons of achievements, and even a picture of him in uniform. Dropping the check, I grabbed the glass case, hugging it tightly to me, as I cried, whispering my thanks.

“I wanna see, Sissy,” my brother sweetly said.

Kneeling down to him, I showed him the case as he tenderly ran his finger over Dad’s picture. “It’s gonna be okay now, Sissy. You don’t have to cry anymore.”

Nodding, I wiped my tears. “Yeah, Cameron. Everything is going to be okay.”

Chase bent down and picked up the check, whistling as he looked at it. “That’s a lot of money, Skylar Rose. What are you going to do now?”

“I don’t care about the money. I’m thankful for it and what you and the others did, but this,” I said, hugging the glass case

again. “Means more to me than all the money in the world.”

“Well, I don’t know about you, but I think we need to celebrate.” Chase smiled warmly. “How about you go get changed and let me take you out to dinner tonight? My treat.”

“Really!” Cameron shouted joyfully. “Can I go to? We can go to the bowling alley. Oh, how about the Ice-cream shop? Sugar told me she was making a new flavor just for me.”

The brothers laughed as Chase ruffled my brother’s hair. “I think it’s best if it’s just adults tonight, kid. Maybe we can celebrate later.”

“This blows donkey dicks! I never get to do anything fun.”

Some of the brothers snickered as I gasped, “Cameron!”

Scribe picked up my brother, throwing him over his shoulder, walking away as he said, “Kid, do you and I need to have another conversation about that damn mouth of yours?”

“What do you say, Skylar Rose?” Chase asked, looking at me.

I nodded. “I’d love to have dinner with you.”

“Leave the mouth with us,” King ordered, walking away. “You two have fun!”



I was going on a date with Chase Montclair.

An honest to God, real date.

After a quick shower, I stood in front of my closet, with no idea what to wear. He said dinner, but not where.

I didn’t know if it was fancy or casual.

A knock at my door had me turning when Bailey, Beth and Sarah walked in, smiling.

“God, your brother is a pain in the ass,” Bailey huffed, plopping down on my bed. “The boys had to bribe him to

behave tonight. Apparently, he really wanted ice cream. I'm never having children. Cameron cured me of that."

I chuckled. "He is a handful."

"You don't want kids?" Sarah asked, rubbing her ever-growing belly as she sat in a comfortable, over-stuffed chair in the corner of my room. The miserable woman looked as if she was ready to pop. Even I was beginning to wonder how much bigger her belly could get.

"Maybe, much later. I like it being me and King right now. I didn't have the best mother or grandmother. Besides, I'm waiting to see how you fare with those three. If you can handle three of them, then one won't be so bad."

"Gee thanks, Bails," Sarah scoffed, rolling her eyes.

"Hey, don't get mad at me. I'm not the one who got knocked up by the man whore of Rosewood. I tried to warn you."

"You did not," Sarah smirked. "You laughed and watched the merriment like everyone else did."

"She's right, Bailey," Beth smirked. "And what a ride it was. For a hot minute, I didn't think Gunner would survive it all. But he manned up and did right by my baby girl."

"He poisoned her cervix with three of his spawns. You think Cameron is wild? Wait till those hellions get here. The town won't survive the fallout. Shit, Beth, if the man whore of Rosewood could infect Sarah with three, what the hell will King's sperm do to me? Four, five? Fuck that!"

After a lot of bickering, laughter, and Bailey insisting I dress biker chic, I was ready for a night out.

Heading downstairs, I found Chase standing by the door, talking to Scribe and King, who handed him something that Chase quickly put in his pocket before he turned, smiling brightly when he saw me. Chase turned to face me, his eyes roaming me up and down, as a slow smile appeared on his face.

"Damn," Scribe cursed lowly, slapping Chase on his shoulder. "Man, I really hate being the good guy."

Before I could ask what he meant by that, Scribe walked over to me, took both my hands in his and lightly kissed my cheek. “You look ravishing, Sky. And as much as it pains me to say this, it would never work out between us. I’m too needy and selfish. I hope you understand.”

“Huh?”

“Get away from her, you creep,” Chase chuckled, pushing him away from me. “You ready to go?”

I happily nodded.

## Chapter Eighteen

### Pyro

I'd never been more nervous in my life.

Not even when I married Ellie did I feel like this.

It was almost as if life had been preparing me for this one moment in time. I couldn't explain it. Only that it felt right.

Seeing Skylar Rose walk down those stairs, dressed in a stunning black dress that hugged her curves beautifully, I lost the ability to speak. Her long blonde hair fell around her face in waves as she smiled at me. Her face glowed under the smoky eyes and cherry red lipstick. But it was the way she looked at me. As if I were the only man in the universe that had my heart damn near shooting out of my chest.

I wanted this night to be special for Skylar Rose. She needed a wonderful memory, one she would always cherish, and I planned on giving her that tonight.

Over the last several weeks, I slowly tore down my walls.

With help from Scribe and King, I finally released all the anger and resentment I felt for failing Ellie. It wasn't easy and a part of me would always love Ellie, but I didn't want to live in the past anymore.

I wanted a new future.

A future with Skylar Rose.

And if everything worked out as planned, when we walked back into the clubhouse tonight, she would be my fiancée as the ring box King gave me weighed heavily in my suit pocket.

When I broached the subject with King, I didn't know what to expect, but when my brother hugged the air out of my lungs and wiped away a stray tear, I knew he was happy for me. While I had King's approval, getting Hawk's and Law's was different. Neither man was eager to give their permission. Law eventually agreed, but convincing Hawk was a challenge. Fucker didn't believe I was good enough for his goddaughter and with Skylar's dad gone, Hawk felt the need to step up and read me



the riot act. He still didn't like me and the feeling was mutual, but I was determined to do the right thing.

Eventually, I told the man I was going to do what I wanted to, regardless. Reluctantly, the stubborn man to agreed.

Pulling up in front of the Rosewood Country Club, I left the engine running as I walked around my truck, handing the keys to the valet before opening the passenger side door. Helping Skylar Rose out of the vehicle, I tucked her hand in the crook of my arm and escorted her inside.

There were a lot of fine dining restaurants in Rosewood, being a tourist town, but for tonight, I wanted the best and the Rosewood Country Club was the best. It had been years since I'd been here and never thought I would be again.

"Chase, I've never been to a place like this," she whispered, hugging my arm tighter. "Are you sure I'm dressed appropriately?"

"You look perfect, baby. Absolutely perfect."

"Mr. Montclair," the hostess greeted with a smile. "How wonderful to see you again. Your table is ready. Please follow me."

With a firm grip on Skylar, we followed the hostess into the dining room, where she promptly guided us to our seats. After seating Skylar, I took a seat, looking around the dining room.

It shocked me to see the place so full for a Tuesday evening.

A waiter quickly arrived, taking our drink orders.

"I thought places like this only existed in movies," Skylar whispered, looking around the room in awe.

"It's just a restaurant, baby. If they didn't have the best steaks in town, I would have taken you somewhere else."

"You didn't want to come here?"

I shrugged. "It's not that. This place isn't really my scene, but I wanted you to have a good night."

“Chase, I don’t care where we eat. If you are uncomfortable eating here, we can leave.”

“It’s not that, baby.”

“Then what is it?”

Before I could answer, a familiar voice sneered, “You have a lot of fucking nerve showing up here, asshole.”

Sighing, I sat up straighter.

“Good evening, Brian. It’s been a long time.”

“Not long enough,” my former friend and Ellie’s youngest brother scoffed. “How dare you show up here after what you did? You are not welcome here. Leave.”

“I pay my membership dues, just like you, Brian. You’ve said what you wanted to say. Now please leave.”

Slamming his hands down on the table, he growled. “You don’t belong here, murderer. Because of you, my sister is dead, and you dare parade your new whore in front of decent people. You disgust me.”

Skylar Rose slowly got to her feet. “Let’s go, Chase. I don’t want to eat here anymore.”

“Listen to the slut and leave before I make sure she ends up just like my sister.”

And that was all it took.

Jumping to my feet, I punched Brian Matthews square in the jaw. People screamed as I tackled Brian, slamming him against a table, breaking it instantly with our weight. Hitting him repeatedly, I didn’t stop. All I cared about was hurting him badly. How dare he say that shit to Skylar? She was innocent. She had nothing to do with Ellie or her accident. And that’s all it was... a horrible accident. I knew Brian blamed me for his sister’s death. I just didn’t know how much until now.

When his fist connected with my jaw, I stumbled back, shaking off the sting before I swung, hitting him in the ribs. Before I could get another shot, someone dragged me away from him forcefully. They yanked my arms behind me, placing metal handcuffs on my wrist.

“I want him arrested for assault. He hit me first!” Brian shouted, spitting blood on the floor. “He’s a murderer.”

“I’m sorry, Chase,” John McClure, the Rosewood sheriff said, standing before me. “I have to take you in.”

Nodding, I turned to see Skylar Rose, silently crying. I wanted so much to tell her how sorry I was, but I didn’t get the chance as the sheriff’s new deputy escorted me out of the club.



“You wanna tell me what that was all about, son?” John McClure asked, sitting on the bench next to me in a cell.

When I didn’t say anything, John sighed.

“Chase. I know you. Was good friends with your dad. Watched you grow up. What happened tonight?”

“Where is Skylar?”

“The young lady you were with? She is parking your truck.”

Looking at the man I’d known my whole life, I asked, “She’s here? She didn’t leave?”

“No, son. She was very insistent that Brian Matthews started the fight. She said as soon as the two of you took your seats, he came over to your table and antagonized you, creating a tense situation. Even threatened her.”

I smirked at that.

“What happened tonight?”

Sighing, I recounted everything from the moment Skylar and I entered the Country Club, leaving nothing out. When I was done, Sheriff McClure sighed heavily, as if burdened by the news. “That boy has been nothing but a pain in my ass since the accident. He can’t let it go.”

“What do you mean?”

“He believes there was foul play and keeps bugging me to re-open the case, but I keep refusing to do so.”

“Foul play? Ellie lost control of the car. We all saw the skid marks before her car went over the side.”

Sheriff McClure nodded. “Yes, we did. Even when we recovered the car, I made sure I inspected it myself. The car was in perfect running condition. But Brian doesn’t believe the report. He believes I missed something.”

“What?”

The sheriff shrugged. “I don’t know, son. Your guess is as good as mine, but I know he’s not letting up. I’ve heard that he’s running for mayor in the next election and if he wins, he can make life really hard for me and your club. You best be careful.”

“I’m not scared of Brian Matthews.”

“McClure!” I heard King roar announcing his arrival. “Get the fuck out here!”

“Guess your young lady got a hold of your brother,” the older man said, slowly getting to his feet. “Until I can get to the bottom of this, I’m gonna have to keep you, Chase. I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright, John. I understand.”

## Chapter Nineteen

### Skylar

Once the sheriff took Chase into custody, I wasted no time in getting his truck keys from the valet as I followed the squad car to the station. What was supposed to be a wonderful night turned into a nightmare.

Watching Chase being arrested and taken away in handcuffs hurt me terribly. He did nothing wrong. He was only trying to defend me and his dead wife. I still couldn't believe that it was Ellie's brother who approached us at dinner. I'd never seen a more hateful man in my life. The vitriol spewing from his mouth shocked me to my core. And the way he smiled menacingly at Chase, then me as the sheriff's deputy took Chase away, sent a shiver of unease down my spine. Whatever game this man was playing, he wasn't done.

After parking Chase's truck in front of the station, I quickly sent off a text to King and let him know what happened. I knew King would want to know and would soon be arriving. In the meantime, I planned on seeing what I could do to help defuse the situation.

Entering the station, I walked up to the counter.

"Hello. My name is Skylar Hobbs. I'm with Chase Montclair. He was just brought in."

"Take a seat, honey," an older woman with graying hair smiled. "It's gonna be a while."

"Can I see him?"

"After we get him processed in the system. Shouldn't take long. Pyro's been here before."

Doing as the woman said, I had just taken my seat when the man from the Country Club walked in, furious. "Where the fuck is he?! I want his ass charged with assault."

"Sit down, Brian, before I put you over my knee."

I smirked at that.

I liked this woman a lot.

“You can’t talk to me that way, Linda. I’m on the city council.”

“I diapered your ass. Sit down, boy.”

Huffing, the irate man did as he was told, only to smirk when he saw me sitting as well.

“If you know what’s good for you, you better stay the fuck away from Chase Montclair. He’s a killer.”

“Brian Matthews, you leave that young lady alone. Don’t make me get the duct-tape, young man.”

“She isn’t a lady, Linda. She’s a club whore.”

“I fucking know you just didn’t call my future sister-in-law a whore, asshole.”

Looking up, I saw Gunner, standing behind the man, who visibly stiffened, before slowly turning around. Moving past Gunner, I saw Mike and Beth Brewer. Both rushed over to me, Beth quickly gathering me in her arms.

“It’s going to be okay, Skylar. We’ll get Chase out soon,” Mike said, as Mr. Matthews sneered viciously. “Future sister-in-law? You’ve got to be fucking kidding me. Well, I guess when the bitch’s car goes off the cliff like my sister’s, we’ll know who to blame this time.”

Gunner grabbed Mr. Matthews by his suit jacket, slamming him against the wall, hard. “I fucking know you did not just threaten an innocent woman, dickface!”

“Not a threat if it’s the truth. Hey, maybe your fucking whore will suffer the same fate!”

Before Mike could stop him, Gunner hauled off and punched the bastard in the face, breaking his nose. “You go near my wife, and I will fucking kill you!”

“Jesus Christ,” Mike groaned, looking at the woman behind the counter and the sheriff’s deputy. “He didn’t mean it, Linda. I swear!”

“Oh, he meant it,” Priest chuckled, leaning against the wall smirking as the sound of loud pipes roared up in front of the building. I didn’t even see him enter the building.

Moments later, King and the rest of the Sons of Hell marched in, furious.

Looking around, King surveyed the area before shouting, “McClure! Get the fuck out here!”

Walking over to Gunner, who still had Mr. Matthews up against the wall, King clearly said, “Let him go, Gunner.”

“He threatened my wife and kids.”

“Now, Gunner.”

Huffing, Gunner slammed the man against the wall one more time before walking away, only for Mike to take his place as he whispered. “Anything happens to my daughter or grandchildren your family will be picking your brains up off the sidewalk.”

Mr. Matthews gulped as his face paled.

This whole mess was turning into a three-ringed circus, fast.

“Okay, Sons of Hell, move to the left. Matthews, on the right.”

“I’m pressing charges against Cord Montclair and Mike Brewer as well. Both men threatened me.”

“Oh, shut up, Brian!” McClure yelled. “I’ve had about enough of your shit tonight. Shut up and sit the fuck down before I arrest you for being a fucking nuisance.”

Linda and several of the brothers snickered.

“King, I’m sorry, but I can’t release Chase yet. I have several witnesses who say Chase swung first.”

“He only defended himself because Mr. Matthews threatened me!” I yelled, breaking free from Beth’s arms. “We had just sat down to dinner when Mr. Matthews came over drunk and spewing filth. Chase was trying to be polite until

Mr. Matthews threatened me with what happened to his sister. Chase was just defending me!”

“You fucking cunt!” Matthews roared, jumping to his feet, as Frank growled, moving in front of him.

Matthews quickly shut up and sat back down.

“That true, Matthews?” Sheriff McClure asked. “You were drinking?”

“Bitch is fucking lying. She is fucking the bastard. She’ll say anything.”

I gasped as several of the brothers turned to face Brian Matthews.

“Noah, go get the breathalyzer machine,” the sheriff said, as his young deputy quickly moved to do as he was told. After handing the machine to the sheriff, he walked over to Matthews. “Choice is yours, Brian. Take the test or drop the charges.”

“Fuck you, McClure,” Brian growled, before walking out of the station.

“Noah, go get Chase.”

Minutes later, Chase walked out of the back with his suit jacket over his arm. He looked tired and worn out. Rushing over to him, I wrapped my arms around his neck, hugging him tightly.

“I’m okay, Skylar Rose.”

“I know,” I whispered.

“Chase, you’re free to go. Just do me a favor and avoid the Country Club from now on.”

“Roger that, Sheriff,” Chase said as I released him so he could shake the man’s hand. The moment he stepped away, a small box fell to the floor, landing near my feet. Bending over, I picked it up, holding the small red velvet box in my hand as the room went deathly quiet.

Staring at the box, my hand trembled as I heard Chase say, “I wanted tonight to be special for you, Skylar. I had



everything planned. I'm sorry it didn't work out."

Keeping my eyes on the box, I asked softly, "What did you plan?"

"I wanted to ask you a question."

Looking up at him, I smiled. "What question?"

Chase rubbed the back of his neck. "It doesn't matter. I ruined everything."

Taking a step towards him, I whispered, "Ask me."

Chase sighed. "Not here, baby. I want it to be special."

"Ask me."

"You heard her, Chase. Ask," King ordered, winking at me.

"Do it, man!" Gunner bellowed as the brothers chuckled.

"He better or I'm taking back my claim," Scribe growled.

Taking the red velvet box from my hand, Chase fell to one knee and opened the box to reveal a stunning oval blue sapphire, surrounded by several diamonds in a white gold setting. "Skylar Rose. Will you marry me?"

## Chapter Twenty

### Pyro

Kneeling there in the sheriff's station, surrounded by my whole family, I waited on bated breath for her response. As the seconds ticked by, a trickle of fear seeped into my soul. I wasn't going to force her. I wanted her to want me, for me. Warts and all. I knew I still had a long way to go in proving myself to her, but I couldn't wait another minute to make her mine. Everything was so bright and wonderful when she was around. The world looked happier, more vibrant, all because of her. In the last weeks, she showed me the life I was missing with her kindness and grace. The way she loved and gave love was beyond comprehension.

She was pure joy, inside and out.

Never in my life had I met a more patient, more caring, more peaceful soul than Skylar Rose. Soft-spoken, with her gentle nature she was the embodiment of what it meant to love and be loved.

“Yes, I'll marry you, Chase Montclair.”

Grinning from ear to ear, I stood, placing my mother's ring on her finger. Reaching for her face, I brushed her long blonde hair away as I cupped her face tenderly, lowering my mouth to hers.

I could hear my family celebrating behind me, and I didn't care.

She said yes.

She was mine.

Mine to love.

Mine to cherish.

Mine to protect.

My perfect Skylar Rose.

Chastely kissing her lips, I rested my forehead against hers and whispered, “I love you, Skylar Rose.”

“I love you too.”

My family immediately engulfed Skylar and me in a chorus of laughter, tight embraces and firm handshakes before we made our way back up the mountain. She hadn't said much since we left the sheriff's station. Not that I expected her to. My Skylar Rose was a quiet soul. Only speaking when she had something to say. Reaching for her hand, I brought it to my lips as I kissed the back of her hand, happy to see my mother's ring on her finger.

“You're awfully quiet over there.”

“Just reliving the moment.”

I chuckled. “You mean my almost incarceration?”

“No. I'm thinking of how wonderful tonight was. Even with the bad stuff, it was a magical night. A night I will always remember. The only thing that would have made it better was if my mom and dad were there.”

“They were, baby. I know they were.”

“Do you really believe that?” she asked, looking at me.

I nodded. “Yeah, I do. Your parents loved you so much.”

She smiled before turning back to the window, watching the scenery fly by. Just as silence settled in the cab of my truck, Skylar's unexpected question shattered the calm, leaving me momentarily speechless.

“Chase, how come you've never tried to have sex with me? I mean, how do you know we'll be... compatible?”

My shock turned into amazement as I laughed loudly.

Fuck me, she was priceless.

“Baby, you have nothing to worry in that department. We're compatible.”

“But how do you know? All you've ever done is kiss me.”

“Because I know.”

“But how do you know? Tell me.”

Taking a deep breath, carefully said, “I knew when I kissed you the first time out by the lake. Your innocence was apparent. I was the first man you’ve ever kissed. Wasn’t I?”

“Yes.” she easily admitted.

“Skylar, I don’t think you realize just how special you truly are. It’s refreshing. Like a sunny spring morning after a thunderstorm. You see the world in beautiful colors. You accept everything with a grain of salt. Your patience and sincerity make you special, sweetheart. And when I kissed you that first time, you showed me your light. You let me see the world through your eyes. So yeah baby, I know we’re compatible.”

“That was very sweet of you to say, Chase, but I’ve never been with anyone before. I don’t know what to do.”

“Don’t you worry about that. Right now, I just want to spend time with you. Get to know you better. Allow you to know me better. The other stuff will come in time.”

“And what if I don’t want to wait? What if I want sex tonight?”

Thank God, I had a firm grip on the wheel because I damn near ran us off the road. Righting the vehicle, I turned to her quickly and asked. “You want what?”

“What I said. What if I don’t want to wait? What if I want to have sex with you tonight?”

“Tonight! You want to have sex with me tonight?!”

“Why are you answering my questions with questions of your own? Do you not want to have sex with me?”

When I didn’t respond fast enough, she whispered, “It’s alright. I understand.”

Understand what!

What the hell just happened?

“Sklyar?” I barely said, worried when she turned to look out the passenger side window, placing both her hands in her lap.

“You don’t have to say anything, Chase. I shouldn’t have pressured you like that.”

“You didn’t pressure me. You just shocked me, that’s all.”

I didn’t know what brought this on, but it worried me. Didn’t know why though. It should have made me happy, but it didn’t. The last person I had sex with was my wife.

It had been five years since I’d been with a woman. Unlike my club brothers, I didn’t dip my wick into any hole. I was never one for one-night stands and such. I wanted the experience, the emotional connection with the person I was with.

And while I wanted Skylar, she wasn’t ready.

More importantly, I wasn’t ready.

I didn’t lie to her when I told her I loved her. I do. In the weeks we’ve spent together, getting to know each other, I’ve become very fond of her. I looked forward to seeing her, talking with her and spending time with her. But to add sex to the equation?

Neither of us was ready for that.

Pulling into the compound, I parked, shutting off the engine.

Neither of us moved.

“Skylar, I need to explain something to you.”

“Why did you do it?” she barely asked, never facing me.

“Do what?”

“Ask me to marry you if you don’t want to be with me.”

“I do want to be with you. You make everything brighter, Skylar. I can see everything again.”

Slowly turning to face me, I looked into her eyes and flinched. Whatever was going on in her head, I fucking knew I would not like what she said or did next.

“When you asked me to marry you, I thought you truly loved me, but you don’t. You like how you feel when you are

with me. I thought you were being sweet when you told me I brought color back into your life, but now I understand. You don't love me for me. You love how you feel when I'm around. That's not love, Chase. You want me around because you don't have to think about Ellie. You are using me as a substitute to hold your true feelings at bay. I won't be anyone's second choice. I have too much respect for myself for that."

"Skylar, that's not..."

"Don't lie to me Chase," she growled. "You hug and kiss me into oblivion, but you've never taken it further. I thought you were being a gentleman because of my inexperience, but you weren't. You are using me to feel good about yourself. Well, not anymore."

"That's not what..."

"Just stop," she snapped as she took off my mother's ring and handed it back to me. "Thank you for the proposal, but I will not marry you."

Closing my hand around the ring, she slid from the cab and walked inside, leaving me alone wondering just what in the hell happened.

I didn't know how long I had sat in the truck before I got out and entered the clubhouse. What was supposed to be a night of celebration turned out to be a night I wanted to forget about.

Heading for the bar, I took a seat as Enigma placed a beer in front of me.

"You okay, Pyro?"

"No," I muttered, downing half of the beer in one swallow.

"Trouble in paradise already," Enigma smirked.

Refusing to answer, I sat at the bar working on my third beer when the rest of the club members entered the clubhouse, laughing and cutting up.

"Pyro!" Gunner shouted, slapping me on my back. "Where's the little woman?"

“Upstairs,” I barely said, taking another long pull of my beer.

“Happy for you, bro,” King said happily, sitting next to me as Enigma handed him a beer.

“So, have you two set a date?” Bailey asked, sliding up to King as he wrapped her in his arms. “You can have my day. King planned everything. He even has that nasty white dress in his office she can wear.”

“Nice try, Cupcake,” King growled, yanking her back towards him as she squealed happily. “We are still getting married.”

“Bailey?” Skylar clearly said from behind me.

I stiffened.

“Hey girl, what’s with the bags? You moving in with Chase already?”

I held my breath, unsure of what she was about to say.

“Is the apartment above your shop still available?”

Everyone stopped talking.

The music died down.

Gunner and King stiffened as Bailey looked from me to Skylar. I watched as my brother’s woman’s eyes narrowed, as she clearly said, “Yeah, doll. It’s still available.”

“I would like to move in tonight. I will only need it for a few weeks. I’ve already found a house in town for me and Cameron.”

Bailey slowly extricated herself from King’s embrace as she looked once more from Skylar to me, before nodding. “Come on, Skylar. I’ll take you myself.”

“I’ll help,” Scribe sneered, picking up her bags as he glared furiously at me.

“King, I didn’t want to wake Cameron. If it’s okay with you, I would like to leave him here for the night. I will be back in the morning to pack his things.”

“Skylar,” my brother barely said. “You don’t have to leave. This is your home.”

“No, it’s not. I thought it would be, but it’s not. Thank you for everything you’ve done for me and my brother.”

“You’re welcome, Skylar.”

“Mr. Montclair,” she firmly said, addressing me. “I quit!”

“Let’s go, darlin’,” Scribe said, as I clenched my beer tightly.

Motherfucker said that shit on purpose.

The second we all heard Scribe’s van pull away, King grabbed my shoulder, flinging me around to face him.

“What the fuck happened?!” he roared, as every brother in the club stood behind him, arms crossed over their chests, pissed.



## Chapter Twenty-One

### Skylar

After putting the last of my clothes away, I looked around the small studio apartment and sighed. While only temporary, it was a nice little place. There was a small kitchen-living room combo, with a bedroom and a full bath. It was perfect for a single person just starting out, but not for someone like me, who needed something a tad bigger with another room for my brother. But it would work until I could buy the house in town I was looking at.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Scribe asked, lounging on the comfortable sofa as I sat in the only chair in the apartment.

“Not really.”

“On a scale of one to do I get to take him out back and beat the hell out of him, how bad did he fuck this up?”

“Please don’t do that. I’m not worth it.”

“You’re worth it, Skylar. You are the only one who doesn’t believe that.”

“He doesn’t want me. Not like my dad wanted my mom, or like King and Gunner want Bailey and Sarah. Not like that, anyway.”

“Skylar, he does want you like that.”

“No, he doesn’t. Not like he wanted Ellie.”

“I’ve known Chase for a long time, since I got out of the military. I was there when he married Ellie. I saw how her death affected him. I thought when he started spending time with you, that he would move on.”

“You are partially right,” I sighed, raking my hands through my hair. “He spent time with me because he could feel again. His words, not mine. He’s not interested in a real relationship with me. Only how I make him feel.”

“And how does he feel when he’s with you?”

“That everything is alive. That he can see again. He talked about how vibrant the colors were. Look, Scribe, I’m tired. I don’t want to talk about this anymore. He’s made his decision and I’ve accepted that. It’s best if I just move on.”

Scribe sat up and looked at me. “Skylar, I think you misunderstood him. You know that for the last several weeks, Chase has been talking with me and King. What you don’t know is that he’s been opening up about the pain he’s kept bottled up. Ellie’s death rocked him to his core. He blames himself for her death.”

“I know that, Scribe, but he doesn’t love me. Not like he loved Ellie.”

“And he never will, sweetheart. What he felt for Ellie is different than what he feels for you. What he and Ellie had was special. He watched her grow into a beautiful woman. Ellie was a free spirit. She did what made her happy and Chase encouraged that. He never wanted to diminish the light inside her. When she died, the colors he talks about vanished. Then you arrive and the colors returned. It confused him at first, but when Hiller showed up and threatened you, Chase made a split decision that’s he’s been trying to come to terms with since.”

“What decision?”

“He claimed you, Skylar. Claimed you as his. His woman.”

“I don’t understand.”

“He never officially claimed Ellie, like he did you. There was an incident where a boy hit Ellie at a dance and Chase made it clear to everyone that she was under his protection. But he never formally claimed her. When he claimed you in Beth’s coffee shop, he knew what he was doing. Chase never does anything without thinking it through. But he also knew he’d been a dick to you, that you wouldn’t easily accept his claim. So, he courted you. Taking his time, giving you time to see a side of himself that he rarely shows. During that time, he would sit down with me and King and talk about everything from his fears, his grief, his inability to forgive himself for Ellie’s death. But also, during that time, he talked about you. About how happy you made him feel. He loves you deeply, Skylar. More

than I think he even realizes. But more importantly, he's scared of losing you like Ellie."

"He doesn't want to have sex with me."

Scribe smirked. "Trust me, Sky. He does, but he's not emotionally ready for that. Chase isn't like the other brothers in the club. He doesn't sleep around. King told me that Chase only had one girlfriend before he married Ellie. One, Skylar. Chase was thirty-two when he married Ellie. He was twenty-one when he had sex for the first time. That's unheard of in a biker club and to only have one sexual partner before getting married?"

I knew what he was saying, and it was a shock to hear.

I thought Chase was more experienced than that.

"When Ellie turned eighteen, everything happened so fast. One minute they were married, the next she was gone. He never dated Ellie. Never courted her. He's got it into his head that if he put the brakes on their relationship, took his time, she would still be here. That's what he's most angry about. He believes he stopped her from having a life she deserved."

"But he knows what I want. I've been crystal clear with him."

"I know," Scribe nodded. "And Chase wants the same thing, but you are only a year older than Ellie was when she died. He thinks if he pushes you too hard, he will make a mistake and lose you forever. So, him not wanting to have sex with you isn't about you, Skylar. It's because he's making sure you are ready."

Sighing, I looked at Scribe and whispered, "He wanted to wait until after we were married, didn't he?"

"Yeah, darlin', he did. Chase is the club romantic. King blames his mom for that. Chase and his mom were really close. She taught him that someone special is worth waiting for."

"I ruined everything."

Reaching for my hands, Scribe whispered, "No, you haven't Sky. Believe it or not, you and Chase are a lot alike. You both know what you want. You both are romantics at heart and

you both are survivors of heartbreak. You two just suck at communication.”

I chuckled at that.

“How do I fix this?”

“By talking to me.”

I twisted in my chair to see Chase standing in the doorway. He looked horrible and I was partly to blame for that. I knew that now. Instead of listening when he wanted to explain, I shut him down.

That was on me.

Slowly getting to my feet, I walked over to him.

“You look horrible.”

“Well, in my defense, someone I care for deeply just broke up with me, so I think I get a pass.”

Scribe walked over, slapped Chase on the shoulder and smirked. “You two kids behave. Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do.”

“That’s not much, asshole, considering you and Gunner ran a tight race in the bedroom department.”

“Yeah, and now I’m top dog,” the man grinned unrepentantly.

Quickly kissing the side of my head, Scribe ducked out, leaving Chase and I alone. I didn’t know what to do or say. This was uncharted territory for me. I never had a boyfriend, or a former fiancé before. How did someone move on from this?

“I don’t know what to do or say?”

“There’s nothing to say, Skylar. I should have been up front with you from the beginning,” he carefully said, looking around the small space, frowning. “Will you go somewhere with me?”

Taking his hand, I nodded.

Neither of us said anything as he drove me back up the mountain. I didn’t ask where he was taking me and was about to when he drove past the clubhouse but when he turned down a

tree covered gravel road sometime later, I finally asked, “Where are we going?”

“Someplace we can talk without interruption,” he said as he slowed his truck when a beautiful log cabin came into view. The whole front of the cabin was one solid glass window. The stunning cabin was a work of art. I’d never seen anything like it before. From the multitude of windows, to inviting stone covered porch, to the circled driveway.

Parking his truck in front of the house, he turned off the engine but didn’t get out. Unbuckling his seatbelt, he gripped the wheel tightly as he slowly turned to look at the front door.

Confused, I looked too, wondering what was upsetting him again when he said, “I designed this place. It took me four years to build because I kept changing things. I drove my brothers crazy. They said I was obsessed with this place. None of them understood. I didn’t either.”

“I don’t understand.”

“I broke ground on this place shortly after my wife died. I needed something to keep me busy. It was either that or lose my mind. My brothers were supportive, but eventually even they washed their hands of me. Scribe accused me of being obsessed. Maybe he was right, but I had to finish it.”

Looking at the large home, I smiled. “It’s beautiful, but I still don’t understand. Do you live here?”

“No. I own it, but I don’t live in it. There is a small trailer around back that I live in.”

I was even more confused now.

“Why don’t you live in it?”

“Because it’s not mine.”

“Huh?”

“It’s yours.”

“Mine?” I asked, facing him, confused. “How is that possible? We didn’t know each other four years ago.”

“After her death, I struggled to find joy in anything, sinking deeper into a state of depression. There is no other way

to describe it. My brothers thought it would be good for me to get away for a while. To leave Rosewood and just travel. You know, broadening my horizons and all. Anyway, I took their advice and spent time in Ireland. I loved it there. The history, the people, the architecture, everything. But what I really enjoyed was the historical culture of the place. I learned a lot about my heritage while I was there. Shit I don't think my dad even knew. Anyway, when I returned home, that's when I broke ground on this place. I wanted to remember my time in Ireland."

"There's nothing wrong with that. But I still don't understand why you think this house is mine?"

"I'm getting there. When I was in Ireland, I spent a lot of time visiting churches. I don't know why. I've never been a religious person. However, what really grabbed my attention was a symbol that always seemed to call to me. Every church I visited had this symbol."

"What symbol?"

"The Trinity Knot. It's a knot with no beginning and no ending. I'm sure you saw it when we pulled up to the front of the house. How it's in a triangle."

"Yes, I did. It's beautiful."

"It's not just a triangle, Skylar, it's the trinity knot. The house's layout mirrors the intricate interlocking of a trinity knot, giving it a sense of harmony and balance. There are three sections converging to the main living area. When I designed this place, I didn't realize what I was creating. I still don't understand it myself."

"It a beautiful home, Chase, that is for sure, but how does that make it mine?"

"Because of your name."

"My name?"

"I didn't put it all together until I showed up back in Juniper Hollow. Your name, this house, the symbol that's tattooed across my heart," he said, unbuttoning his shirt to show me the tattoo. "This was the first tattoo I got when I turned sixteen. My brothers thought I was stupid for getting it, that I

should have gotten something more manly as they said. Hell, Skylar, the Trinity Knot is the symbol for Montclair Construction. People think I chose it because the company is owned by me, King and Gunner. My whole life, I've been drawn to the symbol but never knew why. Until I met you."

"Chase, I still don't understand."

"Skylar, your name means eternal life. The Trinity Knot is a Celtic symbol for eternal life. I don't understand it myself and I probably sound like a crazy person, but I think I've been waiting for you for as long as I can remember. I've never believed in fate, the one true love stuff, and maybe I'm wrong, but I've never felt for anyone what I feel for you and that scares me. Because if something were to happen to you, I don't think I would survive it. So, I pushed you away. Tried to distance myself from you."

"You were trying to protect your heart from further heartbreak."

"Yes, and I am truly sorry for how I treated you."

"And when you claimed me?"

"Seeing Hiller look at you, knowing he hurt you, hit you, something inside me snapped. I knew you were safer with me. That I was the only one who could protect you, love you like you deserved. I wanted to kill him that day in Beth's coffee shop. And I would have if Mike and the others hadn't stopped me. But Skylar, when Brian said those things at dinner, when he threatened your life, I wasn't defending Ellie. I was defending you."

My breath hitched as I realized for the first time since I knew him, he said his wife's name.

He finally said... Ellie.

Unlocking the front door, Chase stepped aside as I walked in, taking in every detail. As I moved from room to room, my hand caressing detailed carvings in the wood, looking out each window, smiling as I ran my fingers over the Tennessee Limestone countertops in the state-of-the-art chef's kitchen, I said nothing, absorbing every detail.

Everything about this house seemed magical. It was perfect. A dream I never knew existed, and he did it all himself. He truly was a gifted craftsman.

I loved everything about the house, almost as if I knew where to go. The concept was simple, an open floor plan. The only walls separating anything were the bedrooms and bathrooms. No matter where I was in the main living quarters, I could see everything.

“The house has four bedrooms and a master. Two in each wing of the house, with the master in the third. All the wings converge here, at the heart of the house.

I smiled at that.

“It’s beautiful Chase. This isn’t just a house. It’s a work of art.”

“Thank you.”

“I especially love that each wing has its own panoramic view. No view is the same. I bet the view is stunning when winter hits. Does it snow a lot here in the Shenandoah Valley like it does in West Virginia?”

“Rosewood is a tourist destination point because of the snowfall we get. Sometimes it can be a hindrance and we’ve occasionally been snowed in up here.”

“I wouldn’t mind that at all,” I whispered, moving over to the enormous stone fireplace in the living room.

Walking over to me, he placed the keys to the house on the mantle before reaching for my hand. “Welcome home, Skylar.”

Shaking my head, I barely whispered in shock. “No, Chase, I can’t accept it. It’s too much. I wouldn’t know what to do with a house this big.”

“Well, I’m hoping that you’d allow me to live here too and together we could fill it up with our children. I love you, Skylar. I’ve never loved a woman like I love you. I can’t promise you I won’t mess up again or go silent occasionally, but I can promise you I will always love you. You are my eternal life. Marry me?” he sincerely said, placing his mother’s ring back on my finger as tears rolled slowly down my face.





“Are you sure this is what you want?” he asked, holding my hand in his.

“Are you?” I countered.

“I just want you.”

“Then this is what I want, too.” I smiled at him as we both heard someone say. “Montclair Hobbs party.”

Turning to the older woman, I held Chase’s hand as we walked into the little chapel. Still dressed in the beautiful black cocktail dress from earlier, and him in his suit, Chase drove us the few hours it took for us to get to Virginia Beach. They didn’t say Virginia is for lovers for nothing. With waves crashing against the sand, I married Chase Montclair as the sun rose over the Atlantic Ocean, heralding a new day.

The second the justice of the peace said, *you may kiss the bride*, Chase didn’t need to be told twice. He gathered me in his arms and kissed me as if I were the only woman in the world and I knew for him... I was.

## Chapter Twenty-Two

### Pyro

Skylar Rose was mine.

My wife.

While I knew there would be an adjustment period as we both learned what it was like to live with one another, I was up for the challenge. In fact, I looked forward to it. The feeling of everything falling into place for the first time in five years washed over me, as if my life had finally found its rhythm again.

However, nothing could have prepared me for what came next.

After the quick marriage and breakfast at one of the local restaurants on the boardwalk, so Skylar could enjoy the ocean view, I got us the honeymoon suite at one of the most exclusive hotels on the strip. With wall-to-wall windows and a balcony that faced the Atlantic Ocean, I stood on the balcony admiring the view as thoughts of what came next filtered into my head.

It had been a hot minute for me.

Five years, to be exact.

I wasn't experienced like my brothers, but I knew enough. Yet, I found myself scared. Unsure of myself, which I thought ironic, considering since meeting Skylar, all I could think about was getting her in my bed. I've dreamed of this minute since I first laid eyes on her. Remembering her in that clearing, the day her brother found me, had haunted me and left me feeling deeply confused. I battled against my desire, but eventually succumbed to its irresistible pull.

For years, I would dream of Ellie, then one fateful day changed everything. I never believed I would find love again until I tasted the sweetness of Skylar's kiss and felt the butterflies in my stomach the night I kissed her at the lake. The realization hit me hard that I had accepted a lifetime of

solitude. It was at that moment I knew I wasn't angry at Skylar, but at myself for doing exactly what my parents did when they knew Cassie wouldn't come home. My mom gave up and my dad refused to live without my mom. Like them, I gave up. I pulled away from everything that mattered to me - my brothers, the club, my work, everything. Instead of getting the help I needed, I wrapped myself in the darkness of grief, allowing it to consume me.

Then Skylar appeared and showed me what I'd been missing. I fought my desire for her until it almost destroyed not only me, but her as well. Seeing her in fear that day changed everything.

I chose to stop fighting with her and fight for her.

To fight for life.

I wanted to feel the sun on my face and see the brightness of the world once more.

My heart pounded in my chest when I heard the shower shut off, then moments later as the door handle rattled. In the next instant, she stood before me, wrapped in a fluffy white towel.

The weight of the symbolism was unmistakable, lingering in the air between us.

My Skylar Rose was a virgin.

Untouched.

I was the first man she ever kissed, and I would be the last.

She was solely mine in every way.

Stepping closer, I took her gently in my arms as I pressed myself to her. I could feel that her breasts were firm and that her nipples were hard. Aroused by the unknown, I also saw a flicker of fear deep within. I knew the feeling well.

I was feeling the same thing.

For five years, I had been alone and the idea of being with her brought a mix of excitement and paralyzing fear.

What if she wasn't really ready? What if I hurt her? What if I did something wrong?

"Stop," she whispered, her hand gently touching my face. "I'm not scared, Chase. I can't explain it, but I'm happy. I want this. I want you."

Sighing, I lowered my head to hers. "God, baby, I'm trembling."

"So am I. You know the way I figure it, technically, we're both virgins here. You will be my first and I will be your last."

Touching her face, I looked into her eyes, holding her close.

I felt her press herself into me slightly. She smirked, wanting me to feel her doing it. She wanted me to know that she was giving herself and offering herself to me.

She was inviting me to have her.

And what an invitation she was.

I gently kissed her lips, pulling her closer. My tongue darted out, lightly running across her lips as they opened, giving me the opportunity I desired. Taking the kiss deeper, I held her tight as her hands ran up and down my back.

To my surprise, I felt her hands move around my waist and up my chest as she began unbuttoning my shirt. Releasing her mouth, I watched as her eyes never left mine, as her fingers slowly and methodically removed my shirt. Bare chested before her, she finally broke eye contact as her eyes roamed over my shoulders, pecs and stomach. I wasn't muscular built like the rest of the brothers, but I was fit, strong and held my own. Also, unlike my brothers, I didn't adorn myself with a lot of tattoos. I had a sleeve tattoo on my left arm that stopped at the elbow and a few others, but when her hands gravitated to the Trinity Knot over my heart and traced the design, I stilled. Then, without warning, she leaned forward and kissed it.

That was exactly when all my fears faded and a primal need I hadn't felt in years resurfaced. I wanted her, completely,

body and soul. My body yearned for her, needed her, came alive just for her.

With one kiss, she tethered me to her for eternity.

Her lips parted as she took a step back from me.

To my surprise, she took my hand, backing herself towards the bed.

She looked right into my soul, leading me.

I felt helpless in her gaze.

She showed me she was completely in the moment. She was not apprehensive, nor did she hesitate to take me where she intended to.

She stood before me, looking me in the eyes.

She took a deep breath, without taking her eyes off mine, she let the white fluffy towel drop to the floor.

While I wanted her desperately, I refused to take control. Skylar Rose was a shy woman, timid at times. I wanted her to know that I would never do anything she wasn't comfortable with. And since this was her first time, I needed her to know that she had all the power here.

"Touch me," she whispered, taking one step towards me. Reaching for my hands, she turned my palms out, placing my hands on her breast. Her nipples were hard as ice and her breasts fit perfectly in my hands. So soft and firm, I brushed my thumb over her hardened nipples.

She sighed, closing her eyes.

I moved closer to her, kneading and circling her beautiful breasts. Not too hard and not too soft, so as not to frighten her. I kissed and lightly sucked at her neck as her head fell back. Her gorgeous mane of blonde hair fell back from her face. She reached out, grabbing my shoulders, holding tightly as my hands caressed her breasts. My mouth trailing kisses down her neck to her shoulders.

"Touch me, Skylar," I murmured, kissing her shoulder.

She moved her hands from my shoulder back to my chest. Her touch felt like a gentle breeze on a warm summer's day as everywhere she touched, I felt electrified. In her own way, she was making me feel as if this was my first time, too.

To my surprise, her hands moved around to my lower back, then further down as her soft touch caressed my ass before coming back up towards my chest.

I was letting her have her way with me. I would be anything she needed this night.

I wanted this night to be for her, about her, only her.

I couldn't believe she was comfortable baring herself to me this way. I was totally in awe of her as she gave her complete self freely, willingly, without fear.

My cock was completely rigid, desperate to be released from its confines.

Tracing the outline of her delicate body, I memorized every inch of her. Every curve, her moans, sighs, gasps, every tantalizing inch. I wanted this moment to go on forever. To live in this perfect moment of time and forget the world.

"Chase," she barely said, her voice needy, almost desperate. "I need..."

"I know, baby," I said, kissing the soft juncture of her neck, right under her ear. "I need it too."

Wrapping my arms around her, I picked her up and carried the few feet to the bed, carefully laying her down on the white sheets.

God, I was fucking nervous.

Everything about her sent my nerves racing.

I wanted her to enjoy everything. To do as she wished. I was hers to use.

Kissing her deeply and passionately, I removed my pants along with my boxers, letting them fall to the ground. Kneeling next to her, I deepened the kiss as I traced every part of her body with my hands.

I moved my fingertips to her eyelids and closed them for her. I wanted her to feel and not look for a few moments. I used my mouth and hands to kiss and touch every part of her succulent body. Every single inch, as I slowly moved her legs apart. With my arms under her thighs, I kissed my way towards her shaved pink pussy. I wanted so much to delve in and ravage her, but I held tightly to my restraint. Moving to her other thigh, I left no inch untouched before I took my first lick of the sweetest pussy I've ever tasted.

Skylar's back arched as she gasped.

Holding onto her tightly, I lowered my mouth and took a long, slow lick.

“Chase!”

“Breathe, baby,” I whispered. “I'm just getting started.”

Holding her legs open, I lowered my mouth, giving into my baser instincts as the taste of her fueled all my desires. Her sweetness had just become my new addiction as my tongue delved into her fiery core, lapping up her juices. Writhing under me, Skylar lost control of her gentle nature, clutching my hair as she squirmed, rotating her hips closer to my mouth. Ravenous now, I devoured my wife as if she were the last meal I was ever going to eat. Consuming her essence, I held firmly as she cried out, screaming as the first of many orgasms washed over her like a tidal wave.

I didn't know how long I lay between her legs, eating my fill of her, but when she gasped, begging me to stop, I took one more lick before I made my way back up her body. My cock was rock hard now and dripping with need as I touched her cheek as I kissed her tenderly.

“Tell me if I do anything you don't like, baby. I don't want you to be uncomfortable.”

She opened her eyes and smiled, touching my face with her hand. Her face was flushed as she breathed deeply. With my other hand, I took my cock in my hand, rubbing it slowly up and down her pussy, mindful of her sensitive clit.

When her hands came up to cup my face, bringing me down for another kiss, I quickly pushed into her tight core, ripping past her virginity. Fully seated inside her, my body shook, ready to release five years of pent-up energy. God, just feeling her tight walls contract around my dick made it hard for me not to cum deep. I deepened the kiss, allowing her body to adjust to mine. I knew I wasn't a small man, but feeling her pussy grip my cock, I felt as if I was huge.

She was so fucking wet.

I groaned. "Gotta move, baby. Tell me you're okay."

"I'm perfect."

And that was all I needed to hear as I pulled out and pushed back in.



## Chapter Twenty-Three

### Skylar

I thought I knew what sex was. I mean, I knew the logistics.

My mom had the talk with me.

But dear God in heaven, she left a lot out.

Like the mind-altering feeling of euphoria or the buildup of an explosive orgasm that had me seeing stars. But most importantly, she never told me what it felt like when the man I loved lost himself in my body.

Because that is exactly what Chase did.

The second he entered me, I felt a slight pinch. But then the most amazing feeling of utter joy encompassed my body, so much so that I craved, desired, needed to feel more. As he moved inside me, I was desperate for him to delve deeper.

His girth stretched me so wide that my clit was directly against his shaft, and every time he pushed in, his pelvis rubbed my already sensitive clit, eliciting moan after moan from me.

I was full, stretched, dripping with need.

Chase took his time to show me what it meant to be loved and to feel love. Everything he did, he did with forethought and consideration. Not for his needs, but for mine. He did everything in his power to keep me comfortable and to allow me to continue the ecstasy I was in. And while that was very romantic of him, I needed something more.

I couldn't explain it.

It was a feeling of desperation just out of reach, beckoning me, pleading with me to grab it. Holding him as he slowly moved in and out of my body, I was on the cusp of something big. Something so great, I could feel it gathering in the pit of my stomach.

“Please, Chase. I need...”

“What, baby? Tell me,” he grunted, circling his hips, grinding his pelvis against my clit.

I felt like crying.

It was right there. I could almost feel it.

I’ve wanted nothing so badly before.

Unable to voice my needs, Chase lifted one of my legs, placing it on his hip as he picked up his pace.

My back arched as I felt myself move closer to what I craved.

When Chase moved off me, grabbing both my legs to place them around his neck, I felt it. The first inkling of something big. Clasp my legs to him, he pumped furiously into me as the desperation I felt moments ago gave way to something so wonderful I screamed out in joy as euphoria washed over me in wave after wave.

Gone with all pretenses, Chase gripped my hips hard as he thrust several more times, before he too roared out in joy as I felt his cock pump deep into my womb. Pulse after pulse, Chase stayed rooted in my pussy until he collapsed in my arms, his cock still deeply seeded, inside of me.

Carefully rolling onto his back, Chase took me with him. His cock fully seated as he reached for the sheet to cover us both. Gasping for air, I nuzzled my cheek into his chest, placing my hands over his heart as his arms wrapped around me.

“Is it always going to be like that?” I whispered.

“God, I hope so, baby.”

Smiling, I closed my eyes and just enjoyed the man I loved and wondered when we could do it again.

Waking some time later, I found myself on my side, my leg over Chase’s hip as he held me from behind, slowly moving his cock within me. His hand, holding my breast as he kissed and nibbled on my neck.

Moaning, I arched into him as he whispered, “I woke needing you.”

“I like you needing me.”

“Glad to hear that, baby, because I think you’ve become my new addiction.”

I groaned when he removed himself, only to find myself laying on my stomach and him straddling my legs, but before I could ask anything, he hiked my hips up until I was kneeling in front of him as I felt him reenter me.

“Oh, shit,” I gasped as he began to move.

“Thought you’d like this position,” he chuckled as his hand moved down my back. “Hold on to something, baby, because this is going to be fast.”

He wasn’t joking.

The second he gripped my hips he rode my body hard and fast. With one hand on the headboard and the other gripping the sheets, I barely had time to get ready for the orgasm that ravaged my body, but when I felt a finger rubbed against my forbidden hole, I screamed out as an explosive orgasm rushed to the surface, consuming my entire body as I screamed out loudly.

I never felt him release as a blinding light swamped me and I tried to fall back to earth. When I managed to open my eyes again, I found Chase sitting at the small table in the room talking on the phone as he picked up a cup of coffee.

“Yes, we are fine, asshole. No, you can’t speak to her. Because she’s sleeping. That’s none of your business.”

Reaching for the sheet, I slowly sat up.

Chase smiled at me as he said, “And with that, I’m hanging up. Yes, we should be back later tonight. Yeah, keep the kid. We’ll pick him up in the morning. Thanks, Scribe.”

Disconnecting the call, he placed his phone on the table and said, “Good afternoon, sleepyhead.”

I blushed. “How long was I asleep?”

“A few hours. I wore you out.”

“I didn’t mind.” I grinned.

“How do you feel?”

“Still tired. I feel like I could sleep for a week, but I’m good.”

“Sore?”

Shaking my head, I blushed again, remembering everything that had happened. Chase chuckled. “God, you’re precious, baby, and as much as I would love to climb back into that bed with you, we need to get on the road soon. King is on the warpath. He knows where we are and said if I didn’t have you back at the compound by sundown, he was going to kick my ass.”

“Is everything okay?”

“Yeah. He just wants to see for himself that you are with me of your own volition. He thinks I coerced you into marrying me.”

I laughed at that.

“I’m pretty stubborn. I don’t think anyone can make me do something I don’t want to do. Not even you, Chase. How is Cameron?”

“Raising hell. The kid’s pissed at me because I didn’t ask him for your hand. Said since he is the man of the house, I owed him the respect.”

Shaking my head, I grinned. “Better watch out. Cameron may challenge you to a duel.”

“I’ll make sure my Nerf Gun is full of soap and water.” Chase laughed. “Now, I didn’t know what to order you, so I got a little of everything. I even got you a change of clothes in the shop in the lobby. So come eat before the food gets cold.”

I don’t know what made me say it, but when I said, “I’d rather eat something else,” Chase gulped, slowly got up from the table and stalked towards me before pouncing on me.

I never got to eat the food he ordered for me.



We made it back to the compound just after sundown. Parking off to the side, we could hear the pounding music from outside. Chase leaned forward, leaning on the steering wheel as he took a deep breath and sighed. “You ready for this, baby? Because the second we walk in there, our love bubble is over.”

I chuckled. “Why do you look more upset about that than I do?”

“Because I am,” he smirked. “What if I get us the hell out of here and to the house before they notice? We can have the night to ourselves, then face the firing squad in the morning.”

“Are you scared of your brothers, Chase?”

“Nope,” he said, sitting up, unbuckling his seatbelt. “Just Bailey.”

Laughing loudly, I jumped from the truck, shaking my head. Rushing around the truck, Chase grabbed my hand, kissed it, and walked us towards the clubhouse.

The second we entered, I saw everyone laughing, drinking, dancing and having a merry time.

“They’re here!” Scribe shouted loudly, rushing over, quickly congratulating Chase with a manly backslap before picking me up and twirling me around.

“Put my sister down, asshole,” King growled as Scribe released me. Facing the President of the club, a man I had come to admire and look up to, I waited on bated breath for him to say anything, when he too picked me up, hugging me. “Welcome to the family, little sister.”

Looking at him, I smiled, “Thank you, King.”

“My turn, asshole,” Gunner laughed, punching King in the shoulder. And just like Scribe and King, Gunner picked me up, hugged and passed me around to every brother in the club. By the time I got back on my feet, I was dizzy.

“To Chase and Skylar!” King roared, lifting a beer in the air.

“To Chase and Skylar!” everyone shouted as the music stopped and someone whistled loudly. Looking towards the

jukebox in the main room, Bailey stood on a table with a beer in her hand.

“There is a tradition in the Sons of Hell when a brother takes a wife. We celebrated that tradition with Gunner when he married Sarah and, in a few weeks, it will be King’s turn, but right now it’s Pyro’s night. While I’m not happy I couldn’t be there to witness their union, I still got a new sister. Welcome to the family, Skylar and Chase. I picked this song myself.”

“Shit,” I heard Chase curse as Bailey hip bumped the jukebox as a familiar song started playing. I didn’t understand why everyone was ribbing and catcalling Chase, but in the next instant, Chase took my hand and spun me towards the middle of the room before I came to a quick stop against his chest. “God, I hope you like dancing, baby.”

“Huh?”

I never got a response, as Chase winked, before spinning me away from him, and then back again as we laughed and danced to *Earth, Wind & Fire’s*, September. I’d never laughed and had so much fun in my entire life as Chase twirled, spun and passed me around to each of his brothers.

Sometime later, I was sitting at a table, catching my breath, when I leaned next to Bailey and asked as the *Runaways* Cherry Bomb pounded into the speakers, “Explain this tradition to me?”

Bailey grinned. “It’s something their grandfather started. Like our guys, Steele, the guys’ dad, was one of three boys. Their grandfather, Big Mike, instilled a strong family connection with his boys. That nothing was impossible if you had your family around. When his sons started getting married, he thought it would be nice that the new bride danced with the men who would be there, have their back as the marriage grew. So, when Steele’s older brother Boz married his wife, he shared the first dance with his brothers. After that, it just became a thing. King was married before but never got to partake in that tradition, which upset his dad and probably explains why the marriage didn’t last, if you ask me. Valerie was a bitch. She cheated on King during his deployment in Afghanistan. Anyway, when Gunner married Sarah, King brought the tradition back.”

“So, this is the second time Chase got the dance?”

Bailey slowly shook her head. “No. There was no dance for Chase when he married Ellie.”

Looking at Chase laughing with his brothers, I wondered why.

## Chapter Twenty-Four

### Skylar

“Cameron! Hurry up. We’re going to be late!” I shouted across the house for my brother, who was, as usual, dragging ass. It had been a week since I married Chase and the three of us moved into the beautiful house Chase built. Everything was perfect.

I should have known that nothing stayed perfect forever.

Placing my coffee cup in the dishwasher, I closed it and started it before grabbing my bag and the keys to the new Jeep I bought myself with the money from dad’s life insurance policy. The rest of the money, I put into a trust for Cameron. While Chase tried to tell me half of that money was mine, I just wanted the Jeep. I had a job and made good money. Cameron was still young and would need that money as he grew and whatever was left would go towards college.

Not that I believed for one second the brat would go.

Nope. It was becoming clearer every day that Cameron’s path in life was leading him towards a stint in the military and eventually becoming a brother in the Sons of Hell MC. While I knew Mom and Dad would be proud of Cameron no matter what he did, a small part of me was still hoping that my brother chose college.

“CAMERON AARON HOBBS!”

“Jeez, Sissy. No need to yell. I’m right here,” the brat said from behind me, making me jump.

“Put a bell on!” I gasped. “You scared the crap out of me.”

“Don’t see how. You can see everywhere in this house. Not one decent place to hide.”

“Get your butt in the Jeep. You are going to be late for school.”

“I want to ride the bus.”



“The bus doesn’t pick up out here. You know that.”

“Then take me to the clubhouse.”

“Boy, get in the Jeep. I’m taking you to school.”

Cameron’s shoulders slumped as he walked out of the house. Poor kid looked like he was heading off to the guillotine. Jumping into the backseat, Cameron got in his booster seat and buckled up.

Yeah, that was another source of contention with my brother. He hated that I made him sit in his safety seat. If the brat didn’t dawdle this morning, I would have dropped him off at the clubhouse so he could ride the bus with his friends. But because he did, we were both going to be running late today.

And I was right.

We were late.

After dropping Cameron off at school, I was driving through town, headed back up the mountain, when I got a call. Hitting my Bluetooth button on the steering wheel, I connected the call.

“Babe, where are you?”

“Cameron,” I growled, knowing that was all I needed to say.

Chase chuckled. “I’ll talk with him again. Hey, since you are still in town, mind stopping at Beth’s and getting everyone a coffee?”

“Nope,” I said, turning on my blinker, as I slowed the Jeep to make a U-turn. Finding a parking spot close to the coffee shop, I unbuckled. “Thanks, babe.”

“Uh-huh, you owe me,” I smirked as he laughed.

“I look forward to it. Be careful. I’ll see you when you get here.”

The call disconnected.

Grabbing my bag, I got out of my Jeep and headed inside Beth’s Coffee Shop. Chase told me that Beth and Mike were

transplants like me. Only they hailed from Rhode Island. Mike was a former Marine Sniper who recently retired. Wanting a slower pace of life, they moved to Rosewood so Beth could have her dream of owning and operating a coffee shop. The place was an enormous hit with the locals of Rosewood, and now Beth's Coffee Shop was an institution. Everyone graced the small shop daily for their cups of joe. None more than the Sons of Hell, especially King, who only drank Beth's special brew.

The bell above the door jingled as I walked in to find the place packed. Tourist season was in full swing in Rosewood. With winter just right around the corner, Chase told me the town would only get busier.

"Hi, Skylar," Beth smiled, waving at me as she helped another customer. "Be with you in a minute, sweetie."

"No rush, Beth. Chase has me picking up for everyone today."

"So, you're his fucking maid, too?"

Stiffening, I refused to turn around. I knew that voice. It was Brian Matthews, Ellie's brother. The same brother that tried to have Chase arrested for assault. The man rubbed me the wrong way from the moment I met him, and I didn't want anything to do with him.

"Heard congratulations are in order. You married the murderer."

Seeing the customer in front of me walk away with their purchase, I stepped up to the counter. "Hi Beth. Can I get seven Americanos black and one vanilla latte?"

"Any snacks?"

"Yeah, box up a dozen scones. You choose." I smiled as Beth walked away to prepare my order.

I knew he was still behind me. I could feel the heat from his body. He was close. Too close to my liking but not wanting to cause a scene, I stayed silent but when I felt his hand rub up against my ass, I spun around and slapped him across the face.

“How dare you touch me!” I shouted, causing the coffee shop to go deathly quiet as Brian Matthews smirked. “Thought a whore like you was used to being felt up. How much for an hour of your time?”

“Brian!” Beth shouted angrily. “I don’t allow that nasty talk in my shop. Get out. You’re banned!”

“This is a public place and I have every right to be here. Not my fault, the bitch backed her ass into my hand. She assaulted me.”

“I was defending myself you creep.”

“What’s going on here?” another familiar voice said, moving through the crowd as Sheriff McClure stopped before us.

When Brian Matthews grinned, I knew I was in trouble.

“Sheriff, this bitch just slapped me.”

“Mrs. Montclair?”

“He grabbed my ass.”

“She backed up into me. I didn’t do shit. Now what are you going to do about it, Sheriff? This bitch assaulted me, and there are several witnesses.”

Sheriff McClure groaned. “You are pissing me off, Brian, but he’s right, Skylar. I’m sorry, honey, but without a witness to his attack on your person, I have to arrest you.”

“Sheriff!” Beth gasped. “He’s been antagonizing her since she arrived. Saying all kinds of nasty shit. I will testify to that.”

“That may be, Beth, but Skylar slapped him. I can see her handprint on his face. The law is clear. I have no choice in this matter.”

“It’s okay Sheriff,” I whispered. “I understand.”

As the Sheriff reached for his handcuffs, Brian smirked, blowing me a kiss. A shiver of dread prickled my spine. I’d never been arrested before. I didn’t know what to expect or do.

The second the Sheriff reached for my wrist, we all heard, “Touch her and you will have a bigger problem, McClure.”

Every head in the shop turned to find Beth’s husband, standing off to the side, arms crossed against his chest as he glared at Brian Matthews. “You really think I would leave my wife alone out front without protecting her, asshole? I have every inch of this shop covered with security cameras. I see everything and I saw you sexually assault Skylar.”

The bell above the door jingled.

“Mike, I need to see that video,” the sheriff said. “Brian, Skylar, please follow me.”

Moving towards Mike, the big man stepped forward, wrapping me in his arms, holding me close as Brian Matthews stormed past and into the office.

Sheriff McClure sighed. “God, I’m getting too old for this shit.”

“Maybe it’s time for some fresh blood then,” Mike growled as Sheriff McClure looked up at the big man. “Maybe you are right, Mike.”

“What the hell is going on?” a firm, gruff voice said into the silence. Looking up, I saw King standing in front of the door, his eyes on mine. “Mike, you wanna tell me why you have your arms around my sister?”

“Just waiting on you, brother,” the big man smirked as he released me. Hurrying over to King, I wrapped my arms around his waist as he held me close.

“King,” Sheriff McClure nodded. “Might as well follow us. I’m sure you are going to want to see it as well.”

Moments later, I was standing in front of King as we all watched the security feed in the front room. When the video was over, Sheriff McClure’s shoulders slumped as he sighed. “Brian Matthews, you are under arrest for sexual assault. Turn around and put your hands behind your back.”

Only Brian Matthews wasn’t in the office.

## Chapter Twenty-Five

### Skylar

Later than I would have liked, I pulled into the construction site, parking my Jeep near the trailer as King cut the engine of his bike. While I appreciated his concern, he insisted on following me up the mountain. Getting out of the Jeep, I grabbed the box of scones and coffees when King rushed over, taking one of the boxes from me.

“You’re going to tell him. Aren’t you?”

King nodded.

“Is there anything I can say to stop you?”

King shook his head.

Sighing, I nodded, walking towards Chase who was standing at the drawing table, looking over the architectural plans, talking with Enigma.

“The electrical box needs to be on the south-facing wall. As soon as the boys install it, you can do your thing, brother. How long do you think it will take you to wire this place?”

“At least a week, Pyro. That’s if the weather holds. Heard we might get our first snowfall next week. You’re screwed if that happens, because I don’t fuck around with electricity.”

“I hear you. Let’s just hope the weather holds off,” Chase said before turning to face me. “Hey, baby. What took so long?”

Looking up at King, he softly said, “It would be best if you told him, honey.”

“What’s going on?”

Taking a deep breath, I told Chase what happened in town. While he listened and didn’t interrupt, I could see his anger rising to the surface. When I finished, Chase held me, rubbing my back. “Where is he?”

“McClure is looking for him now. Best you keep Skylar close. I’ll send Frank or Scribe into town before they release

Cameron from school. I don't know what Brian's beef is with you and Skylar, but he's not letting it go."

"He blames me for Ellie's death."

"It was an accident. We all know that. Why does he blame you?"

"No clue. I knew he was angry after the accident, but I thought that was just grief."

Looking up at Chase, I whispered, "Maybe it was because he had something to do with her death."

King stiffened as Chase growled. "What did you just say?"

"At the country club, when he was spilling his filth. He said something that stuck with me. It was an odd use of words. I forgot about it with everything that's happened between us, but seeing him again in town, I remembered."

"What did he say, baby?"

"He said, *listen to the slut and leave before I make sure she ends up just like my sister*. I thought it odd that he would phrase it that way. Maybe that's the way he speaks, but to say *before I make sure*? That's an indicator of culpability. That he had something to do with Ellie's death."

"She's right Chase. We all knew Brian wasn't exactly happy when you and Ellie married. Did he ever tell you why he was against it?" King asked.

"No. One minute we were best friends, the next he wanted nothing to do with me. Brian never really paid any attention to Ellie, you know that. Fucker thought she was a nuisance, especially when I announced she was under my protection."

"I'm gonna get a few of the brothers on this. Something isn't right here. I feel it more than I know it, but, in the meantime, Skylar and Cameron need to be protected. With that fucker roaming around, I'm not trusting anyone."

"Roger that." Chase nodded before smirking. "You ready for this weekend?"

King groaned, rubbing the back of his neck. "Fuck no. How is it I can command a squad of men and take down

jihadists with no fucking problem, but getting one woman to marry me is like nailing Jell-O to a fucking tree?”

“Well, considering who that woman is, I’d say you’ve been lucky so far. I’m surprised she hasn’t called the whole thing off.”

“Oh, she tried that shit two nights ago when I told her she couldn’t use a shotgun to destroy her bouquet as she threw it. She actually wanted to throw her bouquet in the air and blow it to smithereens.”

Chase laughed. “Oh God, that would be something to see.”

“Why not let her? I mean, it’s her wedding too, right?” I asked.

“Skylar’s got a point, Callum,” Chase grinned, backing me up. “You’ve planned this wedding down to the last detail. So far, you’ve gotten everything you wanted. What about Bailey? What is she getting?”

“Me!” King yelled, before lowering his voice. “Look, I know what this looks like. I’m the fucking president of the damn club and thanks to Scribe’s big mouth, the brothers think I’ve lost my damn mind. But damn it, Chase, I want Bailey to know that I really love her. That I’m willing to give her the wedding of her dreams. She had nothing growing up. Not a damn thing. Is it wrong for me to want to give her this?”

“No.”

“But it’s not Bailey, King,” I whispered. “Bailey isn’t about white dresses, bouquets of flowers and five tiered cakes. She couldn’t care less about that stuff. Bailey may not have had the best childhood, but she knows what she wants. What she likes. What’s the harm in letting her have the day too? In the end, all that matters is you two are married. No one is going to care about everything in between.”

“She’s really going to hate everything, isn’t she?”

“Yeah, bro,” Chase nodded. “She is.”

“Fine,” King growled. “I’ll call and cancel what I can. But I’m keeping the cake. Not giving that shit up. When I tasted the

chocolate and raspberry cake Beth made, I damn near fucking died. I'm getting that damn cake."

I smirked, shaking my head. "Just think about the woman you are marrying, King. Ask yourself what Bailey would like and then do the complete opposite."

Muttering to himself, King walked off talking about stubborn, pain in the ass women.

Shaking my head, I headed for the trailer when Chase grabbed my hand. "Where are you going, baby?"

"To work, unless you need something else."

Chase smirked. "Well, I can think of one thing."

He didn't give me a chance to ask what before he claimed my lips in a searing kiss.



Sitting at the desk, I was going over this week's invoices, getting ready to send them off to King, when the company phone rang. Picking it up, I said. "Montclair Construction. Skylar Montclair speaking."

"Mrs. Montclair, this is principal Kellerman at Rosewood Elementary School. I'm sorry to bother you, but do you have time to talk for a minute?"

Sighing, I muttered. "What did my brother do now?"

The man laughed. "Nothing as of yet."

"I'm sorry. I don't understand."

"I'm calling about another matter."

"And that is?"

"As you know, Rosewood Elementary School is a state-of-the-art Magnet School. We take pride in our ability to ensure that the children that attend receive a well-rounded scholastic education, in everything from the arts to sciences."



“Yes. Cameron loves science and is excited about the science fair before the holiday break. It’s all he talks about.”

“Yes,” the man cautiously muttered. “That’s why I am calling. I am sorry to say this, but Cameron will not be permitted to participate in the Science fair.”

“And why’s that? It’s my understanding that the fair is open to all students from kindergarten to the fifth grade.”

“It is, but it’s recently come to my attention that Cameron will be submitting a fully functioning still.”

“That’s right. I still don’t see a problem here.”

“Mrs. Montclair, I know that you just recently married a member of the Sons of Hell motorcycle club.”

“Yes. Chase Montclair. What does he have to do with this?”

“Are you aware how the Sons of Hell make their money?”

“I fail to see how the club makes their money applies to this.”

“Mrs. Montclair, while this town appreciates everything the Sons of Hell do for the community, this school does not condone the use, consumption or distribution of alcohol to minors. While your husband’s affiliation is his own business, I cannot allow your brother to showcase how alcohol is made. I’m sorry, but my decision is final. Maybe he can try again next year.”

Before I could respond, the man hung up on me.

Looking at the phone, I stared at it in shock.

“Baby, what’s wrong?” Chase said, walking into the trailer.

“That was the principal. He said Cameron can’t participate in the science fair this year.”

“Why not?”

“Because Cameron is submitting a still.”

“That’s right. He’s going to show how to convert horse manure into bio-degradable fossil fuel. He and Frank have been working on this project for weeks now. What’s the problem?”

“They think Cameron is going to show how to make, then distribute, alcohol like the club does.”

“What does the club have to do with this?”

After telling Chase everything the principal said, he reached for his phone and made a call. Before I knew it, I was sitting next to Chase as we both headed into town.

## Chapter Twenty-Six

### Pyro

I had just parked my truck in front of the school when two bikes pulled into the parking spot next to me.

Nodding to Frank and Scribe, I got out of the truck.

“Thanks for coming.”

Frank growled, stomping towards the entrance of the school.

“Should we be worried about him?” Skylar asked, rushing over.

“I’d be more worried about the principal,” Scribe muttered, racing after him.

Ushering Skylar into the school, we made a beeline for the front office just as Frank grabbed the principal and hauled him several feet off the floor.

“Frank,” Scribe cautiously said. “Hey, good buddy, why don’t you put the man down and we can talk about this?”

“No.”

“Frank, please,” Skylar quickly soothed. “This isn’t helping Cameron.”

“Kid ain’t making alcohol, Sky.”

“I know he isn’t, honey, but the principal doesn’t know that. That’s why we’re here to explain. Please, put him down.”

Frank growled once more before releasing the man, who stepped back several feet, righting his clothes. “Mrs. Montclair, we settled this matter. Please take these men and vacate the premises immediately, or I will expel your brother.”

“You do that and I will have my attorney wrap this school up in so much litigation, you will never teach again,” Chase threatened angrily. “I don’t know where you got your information, Mr. Kellerman, but Cameron is not using his science project to make or distribute alcohol.”

“Like I said when I spoke to your wife, I have removed Cameron from the science fair. He will not be able to participate this year.”

Stepping forward, Skylar asked. “Who told you that Cameron was making a still and using it to distribute alcohol?”

“The caller refused to identify himself. When I spoke to Cameron, he told me what he was making.”

“You spoke to a minor without notifying his guardian first?” Scribe questioned.

“I have every right to speak to any child in this school. I am the principal.”

“Actually asshole, no you don’t,” Scribe grinned. “According to federal law, you cannot talk to a minor without calling the parent or guardian first. As the principal, you should know that and since you called Skylar after the fact, you broke the law. Which now raises another concern. Who was in the room with you when you talked to Cameron?”

“There was no one.”

“You mean to tell me you had a minor alone in a room without a witness?”

“I don’t like what you are implying, sir.”

“Not implying anything. Just stating a fact, Mr. Kellerman.” Scribe said, grinning before adding. “In accordance with Virginia State Law, it is mandatory to have two adults of the opposite sex present in the room when interviewing or questioning any child under the age of twelve.”

“And who are you, sir?” Mr. Kellerman asked snippily.

“Names Dimeter Malpas, former Marine Special Forces, brother in the Sons of Hell MC, and licensed attorney in the State of Virginia.”

“And my attorney,” I added, just as a woman walked into the office.

“My name is Julie Meza. I’m with Child Protective Services. May I please speak with Principal Kellerman?”

“That’s me. How can I help you?”

“You have a student by the name of Cameron Hobbs. My office received a call an hour ago that he is being abused.”

“What!” Skylar gasped, then angrily turned towards the principal. “You called CPS!”

“No,” Mr. Kellerman said, shaking his head. “No, I didn’t.”

“I think we all need to take this some place private,” Scribe said quietly as Sheriff McClure walked in.

I didn’t know what the hell was going on.

“Boys, Mrs. Montclair,” Sheriff McClure frowned, walking over to us. “It’s a good thing you are here. I need to speak with your brother, Skylar.”



“So let me get this straight,” I said, rubbing my forehead before pointing at the principal, the CPS lady and then sheriff McClure. “All of you received an anonymous call regarding Cameron within the last hour.”

All three of them nodded.

“Well, I don’t know about you, but something isn’t right here. First off, Cameron is building a still, but not for what you think, Mr. Kellerman. The kid plans to demonstrate the process of converting horse manure into a bio-degradable form of fossil fuel. As for the abuse claim, my wife has never, not once, touched her brother in anger and neither have I nor any of my brothers. In fact, the kid gets away with murder half the time. And why exactly are you here, McClure?”

“Got a call that Cameron threatened to harm a classmate.”

“What is going on, Chase?” Skylar asked, as tears rolled down her face. “None of this makes sense. Cameron would never hurt anyone.”

“I know, baby,” I said, gathering her in my arms. “Someone is just playing a sick joke.”

“I understand your distress, Mrs. Montclair, but I still need to see your brother,” the CPS lady said. “I am required by law to investigate every allegation of abuse. Even if it is a false claim.”

Holding Skylar tighter, she nodded.

A few minutes later, Cameron came rushing into the conference room excitedly. “Sky, guess what?!”

Skylar smiled, hugging her brother. “What, buddy?”

“I get to bring home Fred for the night. Don’t worry, I will watch him. I promise.”

“Who’s Fred?”

“My class pet. Fred’s a bullfrog. He’s so cool.”

“Alright, but just for the night, okay?” Skylar smirked, taking his hands in hers. “Look, Cam, there are some people here that want to talk to you. I need you to be honest and answer their questions, okay?”

Cameron turned and frowned. “Ain’t talkin’ to Mr. Kellerman. He’s being a dick. He said I can’t go to the science fair.”

“I know, buddy. That’s the thing we need to talk to you about.”

Cameron sighed. “Fine.”

While I wasn’t thrilled with all the questions thrown at Cameron, and believed some of them were intrusive and had no bearing on what was happening today, the kid held his own and answered everything truthfully, albeit colorfully.

In the end, Mr. Kellerman agreed to allow Cameron to submit his science project and sheriff McClure saw no further reason for worry. However, the CPS lady was another story. While she agreed, Cameron was happy, with no signs of abuse, she had concerns about his interaction with a motorcycle gang and said so repeatedly.

As Scribe talked quietly on the phone, trying to sort out this mess, Frank sneered, “Not a fucking gang. We’re a club!”

“A club that makes and distributes alcohol for profit. A club that has scantily dressed women parading around for one

thing, to fornicate. A club that has weapons on the premises. That environment is no place to raise a child.”

Leaning forward, I sneered. “You think you know a lot about the Sons of Hell, lady? Just out of curiosity, where did you get your information from because I know you’ve never stepped foot in the clubhouse? I would know, because I am the Seargent at Arms for the club, so you would need my permission to enter.”

“How I came about the information is not relevant, Mr. Montclair. The fact is the Sons of Hell Motorcycle gang is no place for a small child.”

“You say gang one more time,” Frank growled menacingly.

“You were having dinner with him the night he attacked Chase,” Skylar whispered, looking at the woman. “I saw you there.”

“Baby?” I said, looking from Skylar to the woman sitting across from us who gulped, her face draining of all color as Scribe hung up his phone and smiled wickedly. “I just got off the phone with your boss, Diana Peters. Would you like to know what she just told me? No? Well, how about I say it anyway, but first, Skylar, honey, take Cameron out of the room. Frank, go with them.”

Nodding to her, Skylar quickly got up and carried Cameron out of the room, with Frank following. I didn’t know what Scribe just learned, but I’d only ever once seen him like this. The man may be the club’s goofball and favorite hippie, but Dimeter Malpas looked ready to kick ass and take names later.

“Diana just informed me you are on probation. That you are not working on any active cases. She also told me that all of your cases are under investigation. Would you like to tell Sheriff McClure why?”

“Ms. Meza?”

The woman said nothing as she hatefully looked at Scribe.

“Why don’t you tell sheriff McClure that you are being investigated for stealing children from good and decent families and placing them with families that pay you a handsome fee

because adoption agencies have denied their applications. Is that why you want Cameron? Do you have a family already willing to pay top dollar for him?"



## Chapter Twenty-Seven

### Skylar

I didn't know what was going on in there, but from the raised voices, it didn't sound good.

"Sky?"

"Yeah, buddy?"

"I ain't going with that mean lady."

Smirking, as my brother sat on my lap facing me, I took his hands and replied, "No one is taking you away from me. It's Sky-Cam all the way, dude. Just you and me, forever."

"And Pyro," he added.

"Yes. And Pyro too."

"Can we add Frank and Scribe? Maybe we should add the rest of the brothers, too. We're a family, ya know, and Hobbs don't leave family behind. Do we, Sky?"

Shaking my head, I grinned. "No, baby. We don't."

By the time Chase and Scribe left the conference room, I was so ready to get the hell out of this place. I didn't care if school hadn't let out yet. I was taking my brother home with me, and no one was going to stop me.

Neither Chase nor Scribe said anything as all five of us left the school, but as Chase pulled out of the parking lot, I saw Sheriff McClure escorting Ms. Meza out of the building in handcuffs. While I was curious to know why, Chase simply shook his head, stopping me from asking.

Once at the compound, Chase unbuckled Cameron from his safety seat before placing him on his feet. Before my brother could bolt, Chase grabbed him by the arm and said, "No trouble today, kid. Promise me."

Cameron looked quizzically before slowly nodding. "I'll be good."

"Good. Go play."

And like a rocket, Cameron was off running.

Walking into the clubhouse, King shouted angrily, “Church. Now!”

Sarah walked over, rubbing her stomach. “What’s going on?”

“I’m not sure.”

“Damn. I have another appointment with Claudia. Gunner was going to take me. I’m too big to sit behind the wheel.”

“I’ll take you.”

“You don’t mind?”

“No, but with the brothers in church, that means I’ll have Cameron with me. Is that okay?”

“Yep,” Sarah grinned happily. “I actually like the brat. I think he’s funny. I’ll go find him.”



“But how do the babies get in there?” my brother asked again as he poked Sarah’s belly with his finger.

“Cameron, stop poking Sarah’s belly,” I groaned, reaching for my brother. From the second we told him where we were going, my brother was persistent in learning everything about babies.

He was driving me nuts. I got that new things fascinated Cameron, and he wanted to learn everything he could, but my brother had no filter and some of his questions were a bit forward. To make matters worse, he was only six years old, and I was not ready to have the birds and the bees talk with him.

“It’s all right, Sky,” Sarah chuckled, taking Cameron’s hand and placing it lower on her stomach. “Now don’t move, Cam. Wait.”

Seconds later, my brother gasped. “Holy shit! It moved!”

“Cameron! Language!”

Sarah laughed. “That was Gunner’s reaction when he felt them kick for the first time. Would you like to feel, Sky?”

Looking at her swollen belly, I nodded.

Placing my hand on her belly, I didn’t have to wait long before I felt the rolling movement. It was a unique feeling of awe and wonderment, as I imagined myself in Sarah’s position someday. I couldn’t wait to get pregnant and carry a child of my own, remembering how happy Mom was when she learned she was pregnant with Cameron.

“When do you think you’ll be having one of these yourself?”

“I don’t know. Chase and I haven’t really talked about it. He knows I want to be a mom, but we just got married.”

“I got pregnant the night Gunner claimed my virginity. He’s really proud of that,” Sarah chuckled. “Who knows? Maybe Chase knocked you up as well.”

I didn’t think of that.

We didn’t use protection and I wasn’t on the pill.

It was a possibility.

“Sarah, you ready?” a pretty red-headed nurse smiled, walking over in pink scrubs.

“Hi, Jess. A little help please,” Sarah said, extending her hands towards the laughing woman as she helped Sarah to her feet.

“Jesus, girl. You look ready to pop.”

“I feel like it too,” Sarah snickered, rubbing her belly. “But I still have three more months. Jess, this is Skylar Rose, Pyro’s new wife, and your new aunt.”

“Why are my aunts always younger than me?” Jess smiled warmly, before hugging me. Kneeling down to Cameron, Jess grinned. “And you must be the young man everyone keeps telling me about. Cameron, right?”

My brother blushed, nodding as he stared at the pretty redhead.

“Cat got your tongue, little man?”

“You’re pretty,” he whispered, touching her red hair. “It’s like fire.”

Jess smiled. “Yes, it is. Do you like the color red?”

“I like it on you.”

Sarah covered her mouth, hiding her smile as I looked on in wonderment. Nothing ever captured Cameron’s attention for long but watching him stare at Jessica and her flaming red hair, my brother looked as if he was in a trance.

“Can I claim you?”

Sarah lost the plot and just laughed loudly as I gasped, unsure I heard him correctly.

“You know something, Cameron. One day, you will meet a beautiful young girl who will be prettier than me, and she will take you on a merry chase. But until then, I would be happy for your claim.”

My brother smiled broadly, hugging Jessica, who winked up at me.

“Not sure how Savage will take another suiter, Jess, but in the meantime, let’s get Sarah in a room.” Dr. Claudia chuckled, walking over.

“Wow!” Cameron gasped, eyeing the beautiful brunette with soft baby blue eyes. “You are hot too!”

“Hey!” Jess huffed, placing her hands on her hips. “I thought you just claimed me?”

“I want her too!” Cameron said, pointing at Dr. Claudia, who bent over laughing, holding her stomach. “My God, he’s Gunner. There are two of them!”

Sarah’s appointment went off without a hitch after Cameron claimed both women and was insistent he could care for both of them. Sarah was doing well, and the babies were slowly getting bigger by the day. Dr. Claudia reiterated the thirty-four-week goal but wasn’t ruling out early labor.

After leaving the Rosewood Clinic, we all headed for Beth’s Coffee Shop. Apparently, Sarah was Claudia’s last

appointment of the day, and she joined us. Sarah wanted to tell her mom how the doctor's visit went, and Cameron was dying for one of Beth's chocolate chip cookies. Apparently, Beth made them special with extra chocolate chips just for him. The second we entered the shop, Cameron took off towards the back, yelling for Jamison.

We were all sitting at one of the tables in the coffee shop when the bell jingled, and Bailey walked in. Upon seeing us, she walked over and plopped down in a chair, huffing.

"For a woman who is getting married tomorrow, you don't look happy, Bails. What's wrong?" Claudia asked.

"I can't do it."

"Do what?" Jessica said, sitting up straighter.

"We talked about this, Bailey. All you have to do is say I do. That's it," Sarah sighed.

"No," Bailey grumbled. "It's not that. I'm talking about the other thing."

"Oh, come on, woman!" Jessica groaned. "Are you really going to chicken out? I thought you were a badass bitch. Don't be a pussy now."

"What's going on?" I asked, confused.

"Bailey has Trypanophobia."

"The fear of needles? She's a tattoo artist. I don't understand."

"No one does," Claudia snickered, shaking her head. "Bailey, I told you I would provide a topical numbing agent. You won't feel anything."

"Nope," the scared woman shook her head. "Can't do it."

Sarah sighed, adding. "Bailey wanted to surprise King with a tattoo of her own on their wedding night. She even designed it. She's been trying to psyche herself up, but nothing works."

"Savage and Ink will be here soon, woman. What are you going to tell them?" Jessica informed.

“That I can’t do it!” Bailey yelled, causing several people to look our way. “Just gonna have to think of something else to give King.”

“What if I got one with you?” I whispered.

I don’t know what made me say it, but now that the words were out there, I knew I wanted to get one too. I never thought about inking my body before, but seeing Chase’s ink, I wondered what he would think if I got one too?

The door jingled.

“Shit, they’re here,” Jessica muttered as two very handsome men walked in, smiling. The bigger one, with dark reddish-brown hair, was very muscular and had tattoos all over both his arms. The other, with shaggy blonde hair, was slimmer but still muscular and like the other man, had several tattoos.

“Hey, babe,” the big man smiled warmly before planting a lip-smacking kiss on Jess before he said, “Ladies, this is my brother Ink.”

The man named Ink winked at all of us before greeting Bailey. “And you’re the famous Venom. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Can’t do it!” Bailey jumped to her feet, fleeing the coffee shop as if her ass were on fire.

Jessica groaned, getting to her feet. “Fuck me. Alright everyone. Plan-B. Sarah, you know what to do. Claudia, get that ointment ready. Skylar, you are with me. Babe, did you bring it?”

Savage chuckled. “Yeah.”

“Alright everyone. Operation Ink a Bitch is a go.”

Everyone groaned, getting to their feet, as I looked at Sarah. “What’s going on?”

“Bailey made us promise that if she chickened out, we would force her hand. She really wants this, but she knew her fear would override. So, we all came up with a plan. In the event that Bailey chickened out or panicked, we would administer a sedative while Ink did his thing.”

“How? If she’s afraid of needles.”

That's when Savage reached into his cut and produced a tranquilizer gun, grinning evilly as he winked. "I'm a really good shot."

## Chapter Twenty-Eight

### Pyro

Popping some gum in my mouth, I tried to calm the anger bubbling inside me. I knew that son of a bitch hated me, but I didn't think he would go this far. To take a small child from the only home he'd ever known, just to cause my woman pain, was beyond reprehensible.

"Pyro, we have no proof it's him."

"You know damn well it's him," I growled.

"Until we have proof, we can't do anything. I want everyone to stay away from Brian Matthews. Whatever quarrel he has against Pyro, he's not backing down."

"I already told you. He blames me for Ellie's death. He threatened Skylar. You all heard him."

"Pyro's right, King," Gunner said. "Fucker threatened Sarah and my babies as well. The man is mentally unstable. Now this shit?"

"Sheriff McClure is looking into it. He's already arrested the former social worker and said he will keep an eye on Matthews."

"He's fucking with my family, Callum!" I roared. "His vendetta damn near took Cameron away from Sky!"

"Chase," King carefully said. "You have to give us time to look into this. But right now, I need you to dig deep into the fucking brain of yours and think. Why is Brain so fucking angry at you?"

Sighing, I rubbed the back of my neck.

The fact was, I had no clue. One minute we were friends and the next he fucking hated everything about me. Nothing made sense. We didn't have a big blowout, nothing.

"Don't know, King. Nothing comes to mind. You all remember about as much as I do. He was fine with me watching out for Ellie, but the moment we got together, he changed. You



were there when he showed up days later, drunk, spewing filth. He upset Ellie, so I kicked him to the curb.”

“Have you talked to Ellie’s parents? Maybe they can shed some light on why their son is going off the rails?” Priest asked.

“After Ellie’s death, they moved away. I haven’t spoken to them since her funeral. Even her older brothers are gone. The only one who stayed is Brian.”

“And to make matters worse, he’s a councilman. We can’t just talk to him like we would someone on the street,” Priest added.

“King, what about what Skylar said this morning?”

My brother sighed. “Been thinking about that and while Sky is right about the phrasing, I don’t see Brian killing his sister. What motive would he have for doing that? Besides, when they recovered the car, the authorities looked it over with a fine-tooth comb. There was no tampering.”

“Don’t like this, King,” Scribe muttered. “Gut is telling me we’re missing something here.”

“I feel it too,” Frank added.

“Pyro, reach out to Ellie’s parents. See if they can remember anything from that day,” King said, then added, “In the meantime, I want Skylar and Cameron confined to the clubhouse. With the wedding tomorrow, she won’t question it.”

With church over, I headed out with the brothers, in search of Skylar to find the common room empty. Reaching for my phone, I was about to call her when Gunner cursed.

“Fucking damn-it!”

“What?”

“Missed Sarah’s doctor appointment,” he said, looking at his phone, then sighed. “All’s good. Skylar drove her. They have Cameron too. And it looks like the girls are at Beth’s Coffee Shop with Bailey. Sarah said the appointment went fine and they will be home soon. Something about helping Bailey with a problem.”

“What problem?” King asked, walking over.

“Don’t know,” Gunner muttered. “Sarah didn’t say.”

Scribe, coming up behind us, hung his arms over our shoulders. “If you two fucking pussies don’t put those phones away, you are going to miss all the fun.”

Just then, the clubhouse doors opened and in walked several girls, all scantily dressed as Priest hip-bumped the jukebox, music blasting through speakers.

“It’s party time!”

Sitting at the bar next to King, with Gunner on the other side, we watched as the brothers drank, laughed and partied with the beautiful women. Apparently, Scribe went all out for King’s bachelor party and hired a whole troupe of professional strippers from one of the best strip clubs in Knoxville. Had to admit, they were good too.

“Did you know he planned this?” King asked, taking a swig of his beer, watching the merriment.

“Nope,” I muttered, grinning. “But did you expect anything less from Scribe?”

“Why didn’t I get a bachelor party?” Gunner asked, as King and I both turned to look at the newly reformed man whore. Gunner was lucky to be standing upright after the fiasco with him and Sarah. Mike was still butthurt about how it all went down and made damn sure Gunner knew it. Fucker was still trying to get in Mike’s good graces.

“You’re kidding, right?” King asked.

“Seriously, Gunner?” I added.

“What?” my brother smirked. “Every man deserves one last hurrah!”

“Go ahead then, Ditchdigger,” King waved his hand towards the merriment. “Hurrah away.”

Gunner gulped, looking at us, then at the fun. “Never mind.”

Laughing, I shook my head and wondered what Skylar was doing at this very minute.



“Shoot her!” Jessica shouted, ducking as Bailey threw another roll of paper towels at us. All of us were stuck behind the receptionist’s desk in Venom’s Ink. The second we walked in, Bailey started hurling items at us. While I was only here for moral support, I was starting to believe that Bailey really didn’t want a damn tattoo.

“I can’t get a shot,” Savage laughed, as another roll of paper towels flew across the room.

“Maybe she really changed her mind,” I said as a pack of hand towels landed next to me. Thank God she was only throwing soft stuff. I’d hate to see what this place looked like if she started throwing her instruments or bottles of ink.

Talk about a living, breathing *Jackson Pollack!*

“This isn’t working,” Claudia huffed, leaning against the desk.

“We knew this shit would happen,” Jess growled as a roll of toilet paper bounced off her head. “We just have to wait her out. Eventually, she will get tired and then we tackle her.”

“Jesus, Jess, this isn’t a football game!” Claudia grumbled.

“No, it’s not,” Jess whispered, sneaking a peek around the corner as a can of disinfectant flew by her head, hit the brick wall, and exploded, soaking her in foam.

Growling, Jess got to her feet, pissed. “That’s it!”

Storming towards Bailey, Jessica fumed. “Enough of this shit, Bails! You want a fucking tattoo, and you are getting one! So, sit your ass down and man the fuck up.”

“I changed my mind!” Bailey shouted, ducking back into the storage closet only to reappear with a bottle of black ink. “Don’t come any closer! I will do it!”

The bell above the door jingled, and shit went sideways fast.

Jess refused to slow her approach. Bailey held tightly to the large bottle of black Indian ink and when the shop door opened, Bailey jumped, squeezing the bottle, spraying ink everywhere, hitting Beth square in the face.

Nobody moved.

Bailey dropped the bottle of ink.

Jessica gasped as we all slowly stood as Savage finally took his shot.

An hour later, Bailey was lying face down in one of her chairs, talking out of her ass, as Ink worked on her back.

“Mom, it looks cool,” Sarah said, looking at her mom, who huffed as she looked in a mirror, running her fingers through her hair. I had to admit, it looked cool. With Beth’s blonde hair and the black Indian ink streaked throughout, it gave Beth an edgy look.

“Total hot babe, Ms. Beth,” Savage said, winking at the older woman. “I’d do ya in a heartbeat.”

Jessica slapped her husband upside the back of the head.

“Ow, woman!”

“Manners, you Neanderthal!”

“I was being totally honest. Woman is hot as fuck!”

“Keep talking and Mike is gonna put a bullet in your head.”

“I’m getting married tomorrow... WOOHOO!” Bailey slurred as we all chuckled.

“Skylar, if you still want, I’m almost finished with Bailey. I can do you next,” Ink said, winking at me.

My God. Were all bikers sexy as hell?

Blushing, I gulped at his double entendre as Jessica smiled. “Go for it, Sky. Sarah has to wait until the babies are born, but you can get one now. Hell, I’m not pregnant at the moment. Maybe I’ll get some ink therapy myself.”

“And I will too,” Beth said, shocking everyone as we all gaped at her. “What? I’m hip. I can still get jiggy with it. Look

at me. I'm a total Betty!"

"Oh. My. God," Sarah groaned, hiding her face in her hands.

"Yes, you are," Savage winked.

## Chapter Twenty-Nine

### Skylar

It was late when we arrived back at the clubhouse. Cameron was out like a light as Savage carried him, following Jessica up the stairs. I had received a text from Chase saying we were staying at the clubhouse tonight with the wedding tomorrow.

Not that I minded.

I loved everything about the clubhouse.

Upon seeing us enter, Gunner ushered Sarah upstairs. Poor girl looked dead on her feet. I really felt for her. Being pregnant with three babies was taking a toll on her.

Bailey, still a little loopy from the tranquilizer, jumped on King's back and ordered him to take her to bed and fuck her senseless. Brothers hooted and hollered as their President didn't need to be told twice.

"Missed you, babe," Chase said, wrapping his arms around me from behind, kissing my neck. I could tell he was a little drunk. Knowing he must have had a good time, I turned in his arms and smiled up at him.

"You ready for bed, too?"

Chase didn't need to be asked twice.

Picking me up, he threw me over his shoulder, slapping my ass as he followed his brothers upstairs. The second we entered his room Chase was all over me.

"God, baby, I'm one lucky bastard."

My face flushed immediately. He reached up, caressing my lips with his thumb. My breath hitched in my throat as he brought his lips to mine. My knees became weak, but his hand steadied my back as he pulled me tighter against him.

God help me, my man could kiss.

I prayed it was always like this between us.

As he held me tight, I kissed him back and tasted the malt barley on his tongue. I never understood why people liked beer. It always smelled funny to me, but tasting it on Chase's lips and tongue, I saw the appeal.

His kisses became more urgent, like he couldn't get enough, as he pulled back and nipped at my lip with his teeth. His hands wandered across my hips, up my sides, making their way to my upper back before cupping each of my breasts through my shirt. His hands expertly massaging them as I moaned into his mouth. Grabbing the hem of my shirt, he pulled it off me, as he pulled back to look at my body, his eyes focusing on the taped gauze over my left breast.

"Baby?" he barely whispered, reaching to touch the area. "What happened?"

"I did something tonight," I smirked, carefully removing the gauze to show him.

His gasp said it all as he stared at the Trinity Knot right above my breast, close to my heart, his club name shaded above it.

"I wanted something that would always remind me of you." I whispered.

Chase growled, slamming his mouth against mine. Carrying me over to the bed, he laid me down, never releasing the kiss.

Nestled between my legs, Chase held my head as he kissed me senseless, his hands holding my head as he devoured my soul. I knew Chase was an attentive lover. A giver, but I'd never seen a hunger in him like this before.

Releasing my mouth, my chest heaved, rising and falling as my body panted with need.

I looked up at Chase and I could see the desire in his eyes as he held my knees apart while he slowly scanned my body, licking his lips.

Kneeling on the floor between my legs, he removed my shoes before unbuttoning my jeans, yanking them from my body. Ripping my panties from me, I gasped as he lifted my

right leg, placing it over his shoulder. Growling, he moved fast, as his mouth latched onto my clit, sucking it into his mouth.

“Chase!” I screamed, reaching for his head. My hands gripped his hair tightly as his tongue pierced my wet pussy. My man was ravenous as he licked, sucked and ate my pussy. Wiggling uncontrollably under him, his hands held me in place as he feasted.

I was delirious. Gasping for air as he took his fill. Desperate for release, he kept a ravenous, steady pace as my hips bucked against his determined mouth. Panting heavily, his tongue flicked at my clit in a steady rhythm as my whole body raced towards an explosive climax as I screamed.

“Fuck! OH. MY. GOD! CHASE!”

Chase firmly held my hips down as he licked and sucked on my sensitive lips until I begged him to stop.

Ripping his shirt off, Chase quickly removed his shoes, then dropped his jeans and boxers all at the same time, stroking his thick cock.

Without thinking, I quickly sat up, licking my lips as I reached for his dick.

Chase gasped as my hand wrapped around his girth, as my tongue licked the head, tasting the pre-cum leaking from the tip. Taking my time, I slowly licked lower until I opened my mouth, taking his cock into my mouth. Twirling my tongue against him as I sucked as much of him as I could into my mouth, bobbing my head back and forth while my hand reached up, massaging his balls, making him moan as his knees tremble slightly.

I'd never given Chase a blow job.

Hell, I've never done anything like this before, but I really wanted to.

Feeling his balls slightly tense in my hand, he growled, grabbing my head.



“Babe, love what you’re doin’ but holy fuck, I’m about to blow.”

Refusing to let go, I twirled my tongue some more and stroked his shaft with each bob of my head. His moans got louder as his hands pulled my hair, his hips thrust into my mouth. His grip tightened as he sped up his thrust. His balls tightened in my hand just as his cock jerked in my mouth releasing jet after jet of his cum into my mouth. I swallowed every drop until he pulled out of my mouth. Stumbling backwards, he gasped for air.

“Holy fuck, where did you learn how to suck dick like that?”

I smirked. “Sarah showed me a few porno videos on Gunner’s laptop. Thought I would try it.”

“First off, never mention my brother while naked again. And second,” he grinned, stalking towards me. “Baby, if you think Gunner’s porno collection is extensive, wait until you see mine.”

Grabbing my waist, he picked me up and turned me, bending me over the bed.

Positioning himself behind me, he rubbed his cock at my entrance, coating himself in my juices before he plunged in. Reaching around my waist, he bent over me, fingered my clit as he thrust deeply. Grabbing the bed sheets, I held on as Chase consumed my body.

Hungry and frantic, Chase was a man on a mission as my pussy stretched to accommodate him. While this wasn’t our first time, he was still big as his balls slapped my clit, eliciting several moans from me. Panting heavily, my breast rubbed against the soft sheets as he removed his hand from my clit, holding tight to my hips.

“Hang on, baby,” he growled, increasing his pace.

Standing in front of him, bent at the waist, his cock rammed against my cervix. I never felt so full before as my pussy gripped, clinching his cock. Moaning, I rocked my hips against his as he thrust forward. I was gearing up for another

explosive orgasm, one bigger than the last, as he increased his speed.

“Cum with me, baby.”

I screamed as his cock kept brushing against my cervix with each thrust, my orgasm resonating around me as my legs shook. His cock swelled as he roared out his own release. His cock convulsing against my womb, sending his seed home.

Collapsing on the bed, I tried to catch my breath when we both heard, “Come on, Jess. I snagged that numbing shit from Claudia. You won’t feel a thing!”

“You are not fucking my ass, Savage!”

Pyro growled as I heard Gunner and King both shout, “WHAT THE FUCK!”

# Chapter Thirty

## Pyro

“I am so glad we eloped,” I chuckled, holding Skylar in my arms as we watched the fiasco before us.

Today was King’s wedding to Bailey and it was shaping up to be a legendary day for the Sons of Hell and the town of Rosewood. From the moment we woke up, it was nothing but total chaos and pandemonium. Brothers drank and watched the merriment running for cover when their names were called out.

I didn’t blame them.

I ran too when King shouted for me.

My brother had lost his damn mind.

Why he wanted all the bells and whistles was beyond my comprehension. If I didn’t know any better, my brother grew a vagina and was riding this mess for all it was worth. His fucking bride had more balls than him at the moment and that was saying something, because Bailey was ready to kick ass and take names if anyone said shit to her.

Nope.

Elopement was the better option.

“Fifty bucks he doesn’t survive the ceremony,” Gunner whispered, coming to stand beside me with his wife Sarah, who was trying desperately not to laugh.

“I’ll take that bet and raise you a C-Note that Venom sheds blood before nightfall,” Priest clearly said, stepping closer.

“What? Are you new around here?” Gunner groaned, rolling his eyes. “Blood is on the menu. Gotta be more specific.”

“Fine,” Priest groaned. “A hundred bucks Venom kicks King’s ass before nightfall.”

Scribe, chewing on a swizzler stick, chuckled as he walked past. "I'll take that bet, Priest."

"Where is Cameron?" Skylar asked, looking around for her brother, who bolted the second I had him dressed in his Sunday best.

"Chained up in the broom closet, so he doesn't get dirty," Gunner quickly said as I looked at him.

"You're joking, right?"

"Nope. The little shit made a beeline for the cake and pissed Beth off. Took three of us to catch the fucker. He's good. Made sure he had his PSP and snacks. Frank has the door barricaded in case he makes like Houdini and disappears."

"Oh my God," Skylar groaned, stepping away from me to go rescue her brother. "You know he's just a little boy, right?!"

"No, he's not!" Gunner yelled at my woman's retreating form. "He's the Tasmanian devil sent from hell to cause death and destruction!"

"Gunner, leave Skylar alone," Sarah chided sweetly, rubbing her enormous stomach. "Damn, I need to pee again. These babies are using my bladder as a trampoline again."

Watching as Sarah waddled away, and yes, she waddled, I asked. "Still don't know the sex?"

Gunner groaned. "Fuck no. And the only person who knows isn't saying shit."

I laughed at that.

It came as a shock to everyone that Sarah allowed her father, and only her father, to see the results.

Not even Beth knew, which pissed her mother off to no end.

"Well, that's what you get for letting Claudia give Mike the results. Fucker will take that shit to the grave, man."

"He ain't even telling Beth. Just took the damn envelope, read the results, then burned the bitch right in front of me.

Asshole still hates me.”

“Well, you did knock-up his baby girl and on the first try. How’s Sarah handling everything? Honestly, Cord, she looks ready to pop right now.”

“She takes everything in stride. Got about another month of this drama. Claudia wants a C-section at thirty-four weeks, but Sarah is refusing. Stubborn woman wants to give birth naturally.”

“Everyone!” Beth shouted loudly, getting everyone’s attention. “Take your places. We are about to begin.”

Slapping Cord on the shoulder, I muttered. “Let’s go get our brother married before he starts PMS-ing.”

Gunner chuckled.

Lined up under the arch that King insisted he just had to have, me and Cord took our places at Callum’s side. For a man about to marry the most vicious woman Rosewood had ever seen, he seemed rather calm. In fact, I would say he looked a bit anxious.

“She is going to show up, right?” he whispered, his eyes glued to the back door of the clubhouse.

“Depends,” Scribe chuckled. “You gave her the daily dose of orgasmic bliss, right?”

King growled, slowly turning to Bailey’s best friend and soon to be dead brother.

“Shut up, fucker, and do as you’re told.”

“Geez,” Scribe smirked. “Maybe I should have made sure you got laid instead. Kind of grouchy for a man about to marry Venom.”

The second the music started, everyone turned as Skylar walked out the back door of the clubhouse. With a death grip on her brother, who looked pissed and cursing up a storm.

“I ain’t a chick. I’m not throwin’ shit!”

“Cameron, if you don’t shut up,” Skylar chastised, holding onto him tighter as she dragged him down the aisle.

“This blows! You said if I stayed clean, I could have cake. I’m clean. I didn’t sign up for this crap!”

Frank rolled his eyes as he scooped up the foul-mouthed brat, handing him a hostess cake to appease him. Smiling at the big brother, Skylar finished walking the rest of the way without incident. She looked absolutely beautiful in her pretty yellow dress.

Smiling at me, she took her place, as we all watched as it was Sarah’s turn to walk down the aisle. Unlike Skylar, Sarah made it down the aisle with no fanfare.

The music changed, and everyone stood.

The second the bride showed herself, I swear King damn near lost his footing and almost dropped to his knees if Gunner and I hadn’t caught him. The look on his face as the love of his life appeared was something I would remember for the rest of my life. It was the same look I knew I wore every time I saw Skylar, and when Gunner looked at Sarah.

Pure, unadulterated love.

The bride’s unconventional style shone through as she wore a white lace corset, a black leather miniskirt, and black combat boots for her wedding.

She looked fucking spectacular, as only Bailey could.

But what shocked everyone was the man walking the bride down the aisle. With her father Dog no longer with us, Montana Stone stood proudly in his place.

“Did you know he was going to be here?” Gunner whispered.

“No,” I muttered. “I thought Jamison was going to walk her.”

“King.”

“Montana.”

“I’m here,” Bailey said with a conspiratorial smirk on her face. “And I’m smiling.”

“I see that, Cupcake,” King said, looking at Montana, who was barely holding in his laughter.

“You sure about this King?” the President of the Soulless Sinners asked. “Because Venom can be a handful.”

“Aren’t you supposed to be asking her that?” King challenged.

“Nope. Not worried about Venom. You, on the other hand, are not as young as you once were.”

King growled as Montana laughed boisterously.

Kissing Venom on the forehead, he quickly handed over the bride to the groom before taking a seat next to a beautiful blonde, who happily handed over the toddler in her arms.

The ceremony went about as well as expected, with Scribe doing the honors. Well, until he went off script, that was.

“Bailey is my best girl. Was from the first moment I saw every inch of her delectable body. Gotta say, King, you are one lucky son of a bitch.”

King growled as everyone chuckled.

“Anyway, when Bails asked me to do the honors, I jumped at the chance. It’s not every day I get to give my best girl to a stand-up guy. A man I fought with, bled with, and now proudly call my Prez. But as I stand here, looking at them, I figure now is the perfect time to put all secrets to rest.”

“Scribe,” Venom growled, her eyes narrowing.

However, Scribe refused to be deterred and carried on. “As we all know, Venom is hands down the best tattoo artist in the world but doesn’t have one inch of ink on her virgin skin.”

“Scribe,” King growled lowly.

“Look what I have,” Scribe smiled, holding up a tattoo gun. “What do you say, Bails? How about letting your best bud pop your ink cherry?”

It took King and Gunner to hold Bailey back from killing her best friend as I moved quickly, dragging Scribe away

before the wedding turned into a funeral. In the end, Priest finished the ceremony, and King was officially married again.

The second King kissed the bride we all heard Cameron shout, “About damn time!” before he bolted from Frank, kicking off his dress shoes and ripping the tie and blue shirt from his little body, as brothers laughed congratulating the happy couple.

It was time to party.



## Chapter Thirty-One

### Pyro

The clubhouse was pumping with loud music, laughter, family and friends. Leaving Skylar with Sarah and Beth in the kitchen, I headed out into the main room when I noticed unwanted guests arriving.

Shit, this was not good.

Maybe I should have taken that bet Priest offered, because murder was definitely on the menu if Bailey got wind of who just walked into the clubhouse. Seeing King and Gunner, I rushed over just as Gunner said, “Dude, are you trying to have the shortest marriage on record?”

“What?”

“Look,” I pointed, as King growled.

Holy shit.

This was not good.

The entire club knew how Bailey felt about those bitches. If she saw them before we got rid of them, all hell was going to break loose.

“Fuck. What are they doing here? I thought they were told to stay away. Where is Bailey?” King asked, scanning the crowd for his wife.

“Saw her with Jess, Beth, and my woman in the kitchen” Gunner quickly said.

“Good. You go keep them occupied while I get rid of those bitches,” King whispered as a loud whistle caught everyone’s attention. We all turned to see Scribe running towards us, shouting.

“RED ALERT! RED ALERT!”

“What?”

“The ho’s are here!”

“I saw them, you idiot,” King groaned, ignoring him.

“No. Not those Ho’s,” Scribe huffed, damn nearly out of breath. Ducking behind King as he pointed at the entrance to the clubhouse. There, scanning the room, stood three determined women. “Those ho’s! Whatever they say, it’s a damn lie!”

Seeing who Scribe was talking about, even I took a step back.

Holy shit.

What the hell are they doing here?

“What did you do?” King rounded on the cowering fucker, wide-eyed.

Those women weren’t just any ho’s.

They were Scribe’s older sisters.

The three witches.

The last time they showed up, King, Gunner and I had to rebuild two fucking cabins because they burned them to the fucking ground.

“Nothing, I swear!”

“Man, grow some balls for fuck’s sake!” Gunner groaned as even he stepped back a few steps. The entire club knew of Scribe’s sisters. Beautiful, smart, and devious, Scribe’s sisters were a force to be reckoned with. If ever there was an invasion from a foreign country, those women would be the ones I stood behind.

They were mean as fuck.

“DIMETER!” one of them yelled.

“Oh God,” the pussy cowered behind King like a little bitch.

“Oh, now you believe in the lord almighty,” Priest chose at that moment to speak up. “Why is that when the end is near, even the most devout atheist seeks the Lord’s grace?”

“Shut it, fuckface.”

“We know you are in here, Dimeter. You coward!” another sister yelled.

“Scribe, this is my fucking wedding. Grow some balls and go see what those witches want.”

“Already know what they want. I told them no, but they won’t listen. They said the eight ball has spoken. They even got my parents to agree.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Gunner asked, annoyed.

“They found me a wife!”

Looking at the cowering pussy, I ignored Priest’s laughter as Gunner tapped King on the shoulder. “What?”

Unable to speak, Gunner had the fear of God on his face. Taking his cue from Scribe, he just pointed. Turning to see what the fuck was wrong now.

I froze as I watched Bailey and Jessica approach the actual ho’s.

Dear God, I silently cursed as I looked for Sarah and Skylar, praying they were still in the kitchen. I know King told the club whores to stay the fuck away because I was standing next to him when he did. To make matters worse, one of Scribe’s sisters, I didn’t know which one, saw the whores and sneered before walking over to them.

That was when shit went sideways and downhill fast.

Before we could even make it halfway across the room, King’s lovely bride was once again on top of Bridget, pounding her head into the floor, while Jess and one of Scribe’s sisters were tag-teaming Karen.

For the first time in my life, I felt sorry for the club-sluts.

“Damn it, Cupcake!” King yelled, jumping into the fray before his new wife did twenty-five to life for murder. By the time King, Gunner and I got the fight stopped, Bridget and Karen both lay on the floor, moaning and crying.

It was becoming a typical sight to see.

One we were all getting used to.

“Woman, one day,” King growled in Bailey’s ear, holding her tight.

“Today is my day!” Bailey shouted, hopping mad.

“Now she claims the day,” King muttered. “Get them out of here, Gunner.”

“Cowabunga!” a loud rebel yell sounded around us as a filthy, mud-covered varmint appeared out of nowhere before landing on Bridget, who screamed bloody murder before gagging.

The second the smell hit, everyone took several steps back, giving the screaming and gagging woman a wide berth as Cameron turned and jumped on Karen, who tried to scramble away but wasn’t quick enough.

“CAMERON!” I heard Skylar shout as she ran from the kitchen. Quickly grabbing her, I held her close to me. “Baby, don’t. I don’t know what he rolled in this time, but it’s bad.”

“That’s it, Cam!” Jess shouted. “Get it in their hair!”

“Woman,” Savage growled, holding his wife back.

“What the hell did he get into now?” Priest asked, holding his nose closed.

“Wait, a damn minute. That smells like...” Scribe muttered, his eyes bugging before he shouted. “NO!”

Running from the room, Scribe bolted out the back door, running hell for leather towards one of the cabins.

Hot on his heels, several of us stopped dead in our tracks as Scribe ran into the cabin King retrofitted for his honeymoon with Bailey. The second Scribe threw open the door, the smell hit us like a wrecking ball. Gagging, quickly covering our noses, I watched as Scribe crawled out of the cabin, retching and vomiting.

“What the fuck, Scribe?!” King roared behind his hand as more guests cautiously approached.

“That’s what you wanted the mud for!” Scribe’s sister, Freyja, shouted angrily. “I told you to handle it with care, Dimeter!”

“I did,” Scribe choked, coughing up bile before spitting it on the ground.

“Apparently you didn’t,” Athena, another one of Scribe’s sisters, said, shaking her head as Bailey asked. “What mud?”

Freyja, the oldest, simply said, “Mud from the Dead Sea. It’s supposed to be used sparingly for a blessing. Mixed with sage and lavender, it’s placed in a leather pouch. The dumbass was supposed to hang the pouch over the matrimonial bed to help with the conception of new life.”

“With what?!” Bailey screeched as everyone started laughing.

“Oh God,” Beth gasped.

It took several of us to stop King and Bailey from killing Scribe. Despite Scribe’s good intentions, the newly married couple found no amusement in his actions. In the end, King ordered Scribe to find Cameron and clean him up first, before sterilizing all the cabins. And since there were twelve of them, I knew Scribe was going to be busy for a long time.

With the drama over, King and Bailey enjoyed the rest of their reception. Walking around the clubhouse, talking with guests, I kept an eye out for Skylar. I hadn’t seen her since the mud fiasco. Thinking she was with Sarah, I headed for the kitchen in search of my bride.

Only she wasn’t there.

Sarah, Jess and Claudia sat at the table laughing about something when they spotted me.

“Hey Pyro,” Jess said. “Looking for Skylar?”

“Yeah.”

“Beth ran out of ice. So, Skylar volunteered to run to town to get more. She should be back soon.”

“Anyone go with her?”

“Yeah. Frank went with her, since Scribe’s still trying to find Cameron. You and Sky have your hands full with that kid.”

“You have no idea,” I chuckled before heading back out front when my cellphone rang. Looking at the caller ID, I quickly ducked into King’s office and answered.

“Jake, thank you for getting back to me.”

“Been a long time, Chase. What can I do for you?”

“I wanted to talk to you about the day Ellie died.”

“Why? My daughter has been dead for five years now.”

“I know that sir, but something has been bothering me.”

“What?”

“I know that Ellie and her mother were close. Ellie told me she received a call from her mother that day. That Maggie needed her for something. Do you remember what that was?”

“You must be wrong Chase, ‘cause Maggie was visiting her sister. You know Maggie didn’t care for college football, so she made plans to go shopping with her sister in Knoxville.”

“Could Maggie have called Ellie and asked her to go?”

“No. Maggie left the night before. Besides, I remember Ellie talking about how excited she was to watch the game with you.”

More confused than ever, I sighed, taking a seat.

That made no sense.

I clearly remembered Ellie telling me she received a call from her mother. That Maggie needed her.

“What’s going on Chase? Why are you bringing all this up after five years?”

“It’s just something Brian said, that’s all.”

Jake huffed. “My son is a drunk, Chase. I wouldn’t listen to anything he says.”

“What do you mean?”

“Thought you knew. He started drinking right before Ellie’s accident. He’s been in and out of rehab since then. Maggie and I tried to get him help, but he refused to give up the booze.”

“No. I never knew. Do you know why he started drinking?”

“Your guess is as good as mine. That boy always believed life owed him. I thought when he got the councilman’s position he’d turned his life around, but I was wrong. Whatever Brian told you I wouldn’t pay him any mind. It’s nothing but the ramblings of a drunkard.”

“Thanks, Jake.”

The line was silent for a few seconds before Jake added, “Heard you got remarried, son. I’m happy for you.”

“Thank you, Jake. That means a lot coming from you.”

Jake’s voice wavered, “Keep in touch, Chase.”

“You too, Jake. Bye.”

Hanging up the phone, I sat in King’s office, more confused than ever. How did I miss that one of my best friends was a drunk? For as long as I could remember, Brian was a stand-up guy. He was smart and had everything going for him. He had plans and none of them had him staying in Rosewood, Virginia.

Yet, he did.

But why?

Pocketing my phone, I headed back out front when Scribe bumped into me. “Hey, have you seen Cameron?”

“No.”

“Shit,” Scribe sighed, looking around. “King is going to kick my ass if I don’t find that brat and clean him up.”

“And I will too,” I said, crossing my arms over my chest. “He is not getting in my truck until he’s fucking sparkling. Got

me?”

“Yeah, I got you.”

“Check the manure pile. Kid enjoys playing over there.”

“Fuck,” Scribe groaned, heading towards the back.

Shaking my head, I found King and Montana talking with several others when Sheriff McClure walked into the clubhouse, heading straight for King. When my brother stiffened, I stopped dead in my tracks. My heart picked up as the noise in the room faded. Turning, my brother scanned the room, until his eyes looked at me.

Shaking my head, I took a step back.

No.

I didn't need to ask. I could see it on his face. Whatever King was about to tell me, I didn't want to hear.

“Chase.”

Someone cut the music as brothers moved closer to me, surrounding me. I saw the women walk out of the kitchen, as I whispered, “No. She's not dead. She's with Frank getting ice.”

“I'll gather everyone,” Montana clearly said, snapping his fingers at the men in the room.

“I'll go find Scribe. We're gonna need his skills,” Gunner said, running out the door.

“Callum, please don't say it,” I begged, as a lone tear rolled down my face, my body shaking.

“There was an accident. Both vehicles went over the south side of Rosewood Mountain. Rescue teams are en route, but we're closer. She's alive, Chase. So is Frank.”



## Chapter Thirty-Two

### Skylar

Laughing, I enjoyed the crisp, cool air of fall as Frank drove us back up the mountain in my Jeep, regaling me with stories of his time in the military. For such a big quiet man, I found Frank extremely funny and a joy to be around. The man was smart as hell, but no one would think that to look at him.

With several bags of ice in the back seat, I was eager to get back to the reception and Chase. I knew I should have told him I was leaving, but Beth told me she would take care of it. When Frank asked to ride along, I didn't think anything of it and welcomed the company.

“Are you happy, Skylar?”

Looking at the big teddy bear, I smiled. “Extremely happy.”

“Good,” the big man smirked. “I don't know if I ever told you, but I deployed once with your dad. I think you were around eight and man, you were all he talked about. Your father adored you, Skylar. You were the light of his life.”

“Thank you for that, Frank. I miss him.”

“We all do, honey. Kevin Hobbs was quite a man. None of us will ever forget him.”

“I think my dad and mom would be happy that Cameron and I are with you and the Sons of Hell.”

“Well, we're thrilled you are,” he said, looking in the rearview mirror, frowning.

“What's wrong?” I asked, turning to look out the back window, seeing a car speeding up fast.

“Asshole, driving reckless. Weaving all over the place. These mountain roads are not the place to act stupid.”

Before I could tell him the car was getting closer, the driver stepped on the gas and hit the back of my jeep, jolting me forward in my seat. Reaching for the dash, I quickly righted myself, tightening my seatbelt as the car behind us hit again.

“Shit,” Frank cursed, correcting the Jeep before it spun out.

The second the car rammed my Jeep again, Frank shouted, “Hang on, Skylar!” as the Jeep spun around, clipping the front end of the car. Spinning fast, Frank tried to correct the Jeep and would have if the car didn’t hit the driver’s side of my Jeep, pushing us precariously close to the edge of the mountain.

Instead of slamming on the brakes, the car revved its engine as the driver stepped on the gas.

Screaming, I held onto anything I could get my hands on as the passenger side of my jeep hit the guardrail. Looking out the window, all I saw was a steep decline and rocks as my jeep came to a halting stop. Gasping for air, I couldn’t stop myself from staring down the side of the mountain.

“Frank,” I whispered.

“Don’t move, baby,” Frank said as the car revved its engine one more time, before speeding towards us.

“FRANK!” I screamed as my jeep rolled off the side of the mountain.



“Sky? Come on, baby, wake up,” I heard Frank through my fog and confusion. Opening my eyes, I moaned. “My head hurts.”

“I know, sweetie, but I need you to wake up, ‘cause we have a situation here and I’m going to need your help.”

Doing as he asked, I opened my eyes to see a very pale Frank. Looking him over, I gasped. “Oh, my God. Is that a branch in your side?”

“Yeah. Hence the situation.”

Looking around, I couldn’t believe what I was seeing.

My jeep hung precariously between the side of the mountain and a tree, dangling dangerously several hundred feet off the ground.

A snapping branch caused me to stiffen.

“Uh Frank...”

“I know. I managed to get a call out before the jeep slid down a few more feet. Help is on the way, but this tree isn’t going to hold us for much longer. We need to get out of here.”

“Are you kidding me!”

“It’s either that or we roll down the mountain like the other car did.”

“Oh God,” I gasped. “Did the driver make it out?”

“Don’t think so,” Frank grimaced before saying. “Have you ever done any rock climbing, Skylar?”

I nodded. “Yeah. Dad and I loved the outdoors. We did all kinds of stuff together, but never without a tether. Frank, I’m not sure I can do this.”

“Yes, you can, sweetheart, because you are one of the strongest women I know. Now, I need you to unbuckle your seatbelt and climb over me. I’m near the rock face. The door is already gone, so it should be easy for you to climb out.”

Carefully doing as he said, I unbuckled my seatbelt. Moving carefully, I shifted towards Frank, climbing over him. Mindful of the branch in his side, he said nothing as I reached out towards the rock face of the mountain.

The second my hand grabbed a crevice in the rock face, the jeep shifted.

As if in slow motion, I turned to see Frank smiling sweetly at me, telling me to go. Holding on for dear life, I reached with my other hand, grabbing Frank’s wrist, just as the jeep fell away, tumbling down the side of the mountain like a matchbox car.

Screaming out as pain shot up my arm, I held on for dear life as Frank’s dead weight pulled heavily on me. Refusing to let go, I dared not move when I heard someone yelling from above.

“SKYLAR!”

Blinking through the pain, I shouted back. “Down here!”

“Hang on, sweetheart. We’re coming!”

I didn't know how long I stood there, clinging to the rock face with one hand, while holding Frank with my other. The burn in my shoulder was breathtaking as I tried not to move. My only concern was holding onto Frank. The second the jeep gave way Frank closed his eyes and hadn't opened them up since. I could see blood dripping from his boots. Hurt badly, I knew the longer we hung there, the worse off he would be, but I refused to give up.

Dust and pebbles fell from up above.

Looking up, I saw Scribe and Gunner repelling down the rock face. Scribe had a basket with him as he moved quickly.

"Please hurry!"

"Almost there, darlin'. Don't you let go of him, Skylar!" Scribe yelled frantically, repelling faster down the side of the mountain.

"Scribe, get Frank. I've got Skylar. Let me know when he's secured," Gunner ordered, stopping next to me, securing his line before smiling. "Fancy meeting you here, sweetheart."

"My arm hurts, Gunner."

"I know, baby. Scribe is doing his thing as fast as he can," he said, tying lines around me, securing me to him.

"SECURED!" Scribe yelled moments later. "PULL HIM UP!"

"You can let go now, baby," Gunner whispered, wrapping his arm around me. Doing as he said, I released Frank's wrist and collapsed against Gunner.

## Chapter Thirty-Three

### Pyro

I experienced a small wave of relief as soon as I saw Scribe's head emerging over the side of the mountain. The instant my gaze fell upon Frank, attached to a basket with a branch clearly impaling his side, a profound feeling of unease surged through my entire being. My concern for Skylar's condition intensified as I contemplated the possibility of Frank being seriously injured. As paramedics ran over with a gurney, quickly moving Frank into one of the waiting ambulances before taking off, I waited patiently for Skylar.

I didn't have to wait long.

The next up was Gunner, who held an unconscious Skylar to him. Bleeding from her head, I rushed forward to help him. Holding her lifeless body, Gunner quickly released the c-clamp, holding them together. Gathering her in my arms, I ran with her towards the other ambulance, placing her on the gurney as the paramedics quickly got to work. Once they had her strapped down and ready for transport, we were off.

Upon arriving at the hospital, doctors and nurses whisked Skylar away, leaving me to wait in the waiting room as my brothers and wedding guests began arriving.

"How is she?" Bailey ran over, hugging me.

"Just got here ourselves."

"Any word about Frank?" King asked.

Shaking my head, I muttered, "No. I was told they took immediately him into surgery."

Seeing Gunner and Scribe walk in still in their rescue gear, I walked over hugging Gunner as my body shook with relief. "Thank you. Dear God, thank you, Cord," I barely whispered, trying hard to control my emotions.

Cord hugged me back. "Anytime, brother."

Releasing him, I looked at Scribe.

“You would be so fucking proud of her, Pyro. Your woman held Frank, refusing to let him go. How she did it, I will never know. Woman is a fucking miracle. Hands down, she saved his life.”

“What do you mean?” King walked over with several others.

“Frank was unconscious. Skylar held him by the wrist as he dangled over the cliff. She never let go. If she did, Frank would have died.”

“What?” Priest gasped. “Frank is close to three-hundred pounds on a good day. Dead weight, he’s more. How the fuck did Skylar hold on to him?”

“My guess,” Scribe stated. “Adrenaline. There are many stories of women who do remarkable superhero shit when faced with danger. Gotta say, Pyro, I’m a bit jealous. No way could I have done what she did. Skylar held her own under extreme circumstances.”

“She is her father,” King muttered, shaking his head, grinning. “A true fucking hero.”

Time slowly ticked by as we all waited for any news about Skylar or Frank. While it looked as if Frank’s injuries were worse, none of us were discounting anything.

An hour later, Sheriff McClure walked into the emergency room, looking tired and worn out. Walking over to us, he simply stated. “Rescue found the jeep. It landed next to the other vehicle. Brian Matthews is dead. From the smell of him, he was drinking and driving. Preliminary reports look like Brian caused the accident.”

“What aren’t you saying, McClure?” King asked, looking at the older man.

“Chase, it was Brian who ran Ellie off the road five years ago. When the rescue team searched his vehicle, they found a note. My guess, he couldn’t take the grief anymore, and planned on going out as Ellie did. In the letter, he admitted to killing his sister. Apparently, the call Ellie received that day was from him asking her to pick him up from the tavern. Only he didn’t wait. Instead, he got in his vehicle and headed up the mountain. The

letter doesn't say why he did that, only that he was the one that accidentally hit Ellie's car."

Shaking my head, I didn't know what to say.

For so long, we all wondered what really happened that day, but to learn it was her brother, all because he was drunk.

I couldn't wrap my head around it.

This was too much.

If only he had been patient enough to wait for Ellie. She loved her family. Would have done anything for him. All he had to do was wait for her.

Why didn't he wait?

"Thank you, McClure," King said, shaking the man's hand.

As the hours ticked by, I sat anxiously waiting for any news when Claudia walked in, looking tired. Jumping to our feet, we all crowded around her. "Frank is going to be okay. The branch pierced his liver. I removed the damaged part. Frank also suffered a concussion in the accident, along with some bruising from the seatbelt. But other than that, he's going to walk out of here intact."

"What about Skylar?"

"Skylar dislocated her shoulder in the accident. The same arm she used to hold on to Frank. She's ripped several muscles and damaged several nerves that are delicately being repaired. That's why she is still in surgery. The specialist is being very meticulous, knowing what she did to save Frank. He's determined that Skylar gets full use of her arm. However, in the accident, Skylar hit her head pretty hard, causing a hematoma concussion, which caused her brain to swell. I'm keeping a close eye on that. If her brain swells more, the neurosurgeon is on standby."

"But she'll live, right?" Scribe asked, concerned.

"Look guys. You know me. I don't like giving odds. Head wounds are tricky. The littlest thing can become a major problem, but if the swelling stays down and there are no other complications, I believe Skylar will be just fine. As soon as

she's in a room, I will come find you," Claudia simply said before walking away.

"Chase?"

Shaking my head, I whispered, "She can't die too. I won't survive it."

"She's not dying. She's strong," King said, spinning me to face him. "I get you're scared. We all are. Your woman did something inhuman and survived it. She's fucking strong, Chase. Believe in her. She needs you to believe in her."

Backing away from him, I muttered, tears rolling down my face. "It's too much. I can't do this again. It hurts. Oh God, Callum, it hurts. I can't lose her too!" I gasped, trying to fill my lungs with air as my brother held me tight to him.



Two days later, I sat next to her, never taking my eyes off her, waiting for her to wake up. The specialist who worked on her shoulder said everything looked perfect and with therapy he expected her to have full use of her arm. The neurosurgeon was happy when the latest scans showed that the swelling had reduced on its own.

Now, if she would just wake up.

Frank was awake and chomping at the bit to be released. King had to order him to stay in bed until Claudia cleared him. That lasted for a whole five minutes before Frank demanded to see Skylar.

"She's gonna wake up, Pyro. She has to," Frank said, sitting in a wheelchair on the other side of her bed. "What your woman did for me? I can never repay her."

"She will just be happy to see your face, man. Claudia said it could be a couple of days before she wakes up. Why don't you go get some sleep?"

"Ain't leaving her. She never left me. I can't leave her now," Frank firmly said.



“Pyro?”

“Yeah.”

“She really saved me, didn’t she?”

“Yeah, Frank, she did,” I whispered, looking at the big man, who had unshed tears in his eyes.

“I was ready to die, brother. I knew I wasn’t going to make it, but she could. I needed to save her for you. I wanted that to be my last act on this earth. When she reached for that crevice in the rock face, I just prayed she didn’t see me fall. Then, before I could blink, she reached for me. All one hundred pounds of her held me to her, refusing to give up. I should have died.”

I didn’t know what to say to that.

I’ve never heard Frank talk so candidly before. While I didn’t know much about Frank’s past, I knew he served and seen shit that no one should ever have to see. Like King, Scribe and several others in the club that served, there were times their nightmares haunted them, rode them hard. While Frank always seemed happy and content, he preferred working at the distillery, alone, away from everyone else.

“I was on patrol one night. It was a simple assignment. There were no reports of insurgents in the area. I saw an abandoned car a few clicks ahead. I went to investigate. When I approached the car, I saw a young woman strapped to the steering wheel. She was crying, pleading with me to help her. I knew it was a trap, but I couldn’t leave her. She was no older than Skylar. She was young and had her whole life ahead of her and those sick fucks strapped a fucking bomb to her chest. I knew if I could disarm the bomb, I could get her out. I have never worked so fast in my life. I needed to save her. King tried to pull me away, but I couldn’t leave her. She kept pleading with me to help her. The seconds ticked by, and I knew I wasn’t going to be able to disarm the bomb before it blew. I was okay with staying with her, but King had other plans. While he and the rest of the team dragged me away from her, I heard her screams, begging me not to leave her. When the car exploded, something inside me died. I still hear her in my dreams, begging me to save her.”

“You did, Frank,” Skylar barely said, her eyes filling with tears as she looked at him. “You were there with her at the end. She knew she was going to die, honey. You were there for her. You tried when others didn’t. She knew that. I’ve learned that no one can stop death. As much as we want to save everyone, in the end, death always wins. It’s what we do afterwards that counts. Don’t let her death stop you from finding your happiness, because Frank... you deserve that and so much more.”

## Chapter Thirty- Four

### Skylar

Standing in the Rosewood Elementary School gymnasium, I held my breath as Principal Kellerman announced the winner of the school's science fair.

“First place goes to Cameron Hobbs for his still, showing how to convert horse manure into bio-degradable fossil fuel!”

Shouting and jumping up and down, I clapped and whistled loudly as the brothers hooted and hollered Cameron's name, none more proudly than Frank, who was smiling from ear to ear.

The accident changed things with Frank. He slowly started coming out of his shell, spending more time at the clubhouse and with the brothers, but the big teddy bear still made time for Cameron. My brother adored Frank and looked forward to regaling the big man with what he learned from school.

“Stop moving the fucking camera, Scribe. I can't see shit!” I heard Gunner shout, as Scribe grinned evilly. “Sucks to be you, donkey dicks!”

Disconnecting the call, Scribe winked at me before heading off to congratulate my brother. Since the wedding, Scribe has been plotting his revenge, because he learned it was Gunner who told Cameron about the mud and sent my brother off with the remaining tub of it, knowing Cameron would create a mess.

The second Cameron spilled the beans, Scribe was a single man on a mission. His latest venture had Gunner pissing his pants when he walked into the garage to find two donkeys fucking.

Apparently, Gunner had an aversion to donkeys.

“You ready to head home, baby?” Chase asked, kissing my neck.

Smiling, I nodded.

After the revelation of Ellie's death, Sheriff McClure handed in his badge, blaming himself for not looking further into Ellie's accident. While no one blamed him, Sheriff McClure's heart wasn't in it anymore and he handed over his badge. The town immediately held an election and when no one challenged him, Mike Brewer became the new sheriff of Rosewood.

Beth was ecstatic.

Gunner, not so much, because the first ticket Mike issued was to him for doing thirty in a twenty-five.

As for Chase, he was still having a hard time with everything that had happened. Instead of bottling it up, his talks with King and Scribe became a weekly occurrence. Even I joined him occasionally for support. I knew that in time, Chase would move past this and start to live again. The grief and pain of losing Ellie would always be with him. I knew that now and accepted it. I still had days myself when I thought of my parents. I missed them dearly, but life moved on.

I knew my parents would want that.

A few days later, I was sitting on the couch in the main room of the clubhouse when Bailey walked in, rolling her eyes as Scribe stormed in after her.

"Woman, if you don't stop saying that shit and putting it out in the universe, I'm gonna make your life hell."

"You better face the facts, Scribe. You are running out of time."

"Am not!"

"Whatever," she sighed, plopping herself down next to me on the sofa. "You were the last one to dance with me. You're just scared."

"I'm not scared of shit!"

"What's going on?" Chase asked, walking over with King, who was looking at his phone.

"Pussylips is fucking girding his loins in fear. He was the last one to dance with me at the wedding."

“And?” Chase asked, quirking his head.

“God, you guys are fucking morons sometimes.”

“Cupcake, what the hell are you going on about this time?” King groaned.

“I’m talking about the club dance. You know the tradition this club has.”

“What about it?” I asked, curious myself, as Gunner walked over with Sarah, helping her to sit next to me. Poor girl looked freaking miserable. Her belly was freakishly huge, but no one said a damn thing as Gunner threatened immediate death if they did.

“Think about it, Scribe,” Bailey smirked evilly as her best friend stiffened. “When Gunner married Sarah, who was the last person she danced with?”

“Pyro,” Sarah grimaced, rubbing her belly in one spot.

“Exactly!” Bailey smiled. “And Skylar, who was the last person you danced with when the club celebrated your marriage?”

“Uh...it was King.” I smirked, knowing where she was going with this.

“And the last person I danced with was Scribe. So, that means Mr. Pussylips is going down next.”

“I’m not getting married!”

“Oh yes, you are,” Freyja said, walking over with her sisters.

“Freyja, just stop. I don’t care what the magic eight-ball said. I don’t give a fuck if Lucille Ball showed up in a dream and told you herself. I’m not getting married!”

“Hey, no one disrespects Lucille in my presence. Take that shit back!” Freyja shouted, pointing a finger at her brother.

“Face it, Dimeter,” Athena smirked. “The universe has spoken.”

“Fuck the universe! I’m not getting married!”

“Um guys,” Sarah gasped, holding her stomach protectively with both arms.

“Babydoll?” Gunner barely said, his body stiffening just as Sarah screamed out and Scribe’s phone rang.

Nobody moved as Scribe’s sisters and Bailey all stared at Scribe while Gunner and King looked at Sarah as if they’d just seen a ghost.

“For crying out fucking loud!” Chase deadpanned loudly, slapping Gunner across the face. “Wake the fuck up, you fool, and get your wife to the hospital.”

“Answer the phone, Dimeter,” Freyja chuckled, shaking her head.

“I dare you,” Athena added, laughing as Scribe gulped loudly.

When Gunner didn’t move fast enough, I got to my feet. “Chase, go get the truck. Come on, Sarah, I’ve got you. Bailey, can you help me?”

Bailey waved me off as she narrowed her eyes, taunting Scribe. “In a minute. Go ahead, Scribe. Answer the phone. Could be the little missus.”

Answering his phone, he whispered. “Hello?”

Holding Sarah’s hand, I watched as Scribe’s body stiffened as his face drained of all color right before he bolted from the clubhouse.

Bailey laughed her ass off.

Scribe’s sister’s high-five’d each other.

Sarah’s water broke, and Gunner fainted.

What could I say? It was just another typical day for the Sons of Hell MC.

THE END

## Sons of Hell Characters

**Callum ‘KING’ Montclair:** President of the Sons of Hell Motorcycle Club. Age forty-two. The oldest son of Charlie ‘Steel’ Montclair and Regina Montclair. A former captain in the United States Marine Corps, King left the corps after he returned home from deployment to find his wife in bed with a club brother.

**Cord ‘GUNNER’ Montclair:** Vice President of the Sons of Hell Motorcycle Club. Age thirty-nine. The second son of Charlie ‘Steel’ Montclair and Regina Montclair. The horn-dog of the club, Gunner, doesn’t take his responsibilities seriously and never stays with a woman long.

**Chase ‘PYRO’ Montclair:** Sergeant at Arms of the Sons of Hell Motorcycle Club. Age thirty-six. The third son of Charlie ‘Steel’ Montclair and Regina Montclair. Pyro was the first brother to marry, only to lose his wife seven months later.

**Cassandra Regina Montclair (Deceased):** The only daughter of Charlie ‘Steel’ Montclair and Regina Montclair. Kidnapped at seventeen by William Doherty (President of the Golden Skulls MC), Cassandra, or Cassie, as her brothers called her, was held captive until she died at the hands of Toxic (President of the Florida Chapter of the Golden Skulls MC). Raped by William Doherty, Cassandra gave birth to her only child, Jessica, who is currently married to Lucas ‘Savage’ Keller, brother of the Golden Skulls MC (*To read more about Cassandra and Jessica, please read the Golden Skulls MC*).

**Shaw ‘PRIEST’ Dalton:** Enforcer for the Sons of Hell MC Priest is Thirty-Six. Former Chaplain in the United States Navy with a background in divinity who severed his resignation after he witnessed his unit committing mass murder on his last deployment.

**Dimeter ‘SCRIBE’ Malpas:** Tech & Jack of all trades for the Sons of Hell MC Scribe is thirty-two. Scribe is a former Special Ops for the United States Marine Corps. Not much is known about Scribe’s time in the military. He is the



only son of two hippies and has three sisters, Freyja, Phoebe and Athena (Also known as the three witches).

**Frank 'FRANKENSTEIN' Steiner:** Chemist and Enforcer for the Sons of Hell MC Age Thirty-three. Frankenstein, or Frank as he is sometimes called, is a former U.S. Army Biohazard Specialist who was relieved of duty after a dirty bomb exploded, killing several men in his unit. He is also uber smart, like genius level.

**Henry 'BANKS' Owens:** Treasurer for the Sons of Hell MC Age thirty-five. Banks dropped out of college when the FED's learned he hacked several banks and syphoned money. On the run, Banks found his way to the Sons of Hell MC and has been hiding out ever since.

**Calvin 'TRIP' Hall:** Road Captain for the Sons of Hell MC Age twenty-nine. Trip is a former NASCAR drive that was injured in a race when his engine seized on him, causing a mass accident, killing two other drivers. Absolved of all wrong doing's Trip refuses to get back into another car.

**Jasper 'HAWK' Michaels:** Enforcer for the Sons of Hell MC Age thirty-seven. Hawk is a former boxer who was injured the night before his big break. Unable to fight in the ring, Hawk returned home to Rosewood to be closer to his ailing mother and his sister Lacey.

**Eugene 'ENIGMA' James:** Enforcer for the Sons of Hell MC Age Thirty-six. Enigma grew up in Rosewood and went to school with the Montclair brothers. Unable to join the Marines like Callum, Enigma prospected with the club under Steel until he received his patch. He is also the older brother of the town's doctor, Claudia James.

## Ol' Ladies

**Avonleigh Rose Bailey:** Famous tattoo artist named Venom and the Ol' lady to King. Age twenty-four. Bailey, as she is called, is the youngest daughter to Dog, former Sons of Hell brother who taught her how to tattoo then died protecting her. Bailey owns Venoms Ink in the town of Rosewood.

**Jessica Montclair Keller:** The only child of Cassandra Montclair. Age: twenty-six. Jessica is the wife of Lucas 'Savage' Keller, Sergeant at Arms for the Golden Skulls MC (*Jessica and Savage's story is book 5 of the Golden Skulls Motorcycle Club*).

**Sarah Elizabeth Brewer:** The only daughter of Mike and Beth Brewer and the wife of Gunner. Age: Nineteen. Sarah is a college drop-out with a knack for any type of engine and Social Media Apps. She spends her days working at the Sons of Hell Auto Garage when she not expanding her Social Media Brand. Sarah is pregnant with her first child.

**Skylar Rose Hobbs:** Daughter of Kevin and Brenda Hobbs. Age: nineteen and the wife of Chase 'Pyro' Montclair, Sergeant at Arms for the Sons of Hell MC. Skylar has one sibling, Cameron Hobs. Skylar is the goddaughter of Lucifer Hawk, President of Disturbed MC and Matthew Law, head of Harbor Security. Skylar's father served in the military with King and several others.

## Residents of Rosewood

**Jamison Bailey:** Cousin to Avonleigh Rose Bailey. Age twenty-six. Denied oxygen at birth, because his umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck three times, Jamie, as he is sometimes called, suffers from metal deficits that make it impossible to live on his own. Jamie loves motorcycles and drawing.

**Beth & Mike Brewer:** Owners of the Main Drip, the only coffee shop in Rosewood. Transplants from Vermont, Beth and Mike wanted a slower pace of life after their two children went off to college. They have one son, Mike Jr., and a daughter, Sarah. Mike is a retired Marine Gunnery sergeant.

**Dr. Claudia James:** Childhood friend of the Montclair brothers. Age thirty-four. Currently, a doctor at Rosewood Memorial and head practitioner at the Rosewood clinic. Younger sister to Eugene '*Enigma*' James, a brother in the Sons of Hell Motorcycle Club.

**Martha Cohen:** Member of the town council and a bitch. She hates the Sons of Hell and tries to make their lives a living hell.

**Valerie Stevens:** Ex-wife to Callum 'King' Montclair. Current wife to the Rosewood Mayor. She has a sixteen-year-old son.

**John McClure:** Town Sheriff

**Sugar Potter:** Owner of Sugar's Creamery, the town's only Ice-Cream shop. Former fling of Gunner's.

**Morgan Delaney:** Owner of Heavenly Bodies & More, the town of Rosewood's only Massage and Spa Salon. A former fling of Gunner's.

**Cameron Hobbs:** Younger brother to Skylar Rose Montclair. Age six years old.

# Rebecca Joyce Books

## **GOLDEN SKULLS MC Series**

Reaper

Ghost

Bullseye

Player

Savage

The Golden Wedding

Phantom

Dylan

Ink

Vicious

Shadow

Sandman (Dec 2023)

## **VALENTINETTI CRIME FAMILY**

Giovanni

Lorenzo

Antonio

Illyria

## **SONS OF HELL MC Series**

King

Gunner

Pyro

## **DIAMONDBACK M.C. SERIES**

Kansas

Whisper (Coming 2024)

## **SOULLESS SINNER M.C. SERIES**

Sinner's Redemption

Sinner's Mercy (Coming 2024)

**BRATVA of NYC**

Maxim

## Other Books by Rebecca Joyce

The Men of Treasure Cove Series (Menage)

Celestial Nights Series (Menage)

Simple, Tennessee Series (Menage)

The Armstrong Brothers

The Alpha-Billionaire Collection

## Social Media & More.

WEBSITE: [AuthorRebeccaJoyce.com](http://AuthorRebeccaJoyce.com)

FACEBOOK: [https://www.facebook.com/rebeccajoyce.a  
uthor](https://www.facebook.com/rebeccajoyce.author)

TWITTER: [@GoldenSkullsMC](https://twitter.com/GoldenSkullsMC)

INSTAGRAM: [author\\_rebecca\\_joyce](https://www.instagram.com/author_rebecca_joyce)

TIK TOK: [@authorrebeccajoyce](https://www.tiktok.com/@authorrebeccajoyce)

EMAIL: [rebeccajoycebooks@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccajoycebooks@gmail.com)