

PART 2

*Onie*  
**Confessions**

BESTSELLING AUTHOR

AMBER NICOLE  
JENN BULLARD

# *Quiet Confessions*

## PART 2

AMBER NICOLE

JENN BULLARD

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**Nicole, Amber & Bullard, Jenn**

**Quiet Confessions Part Two**

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*This book is dedicated to all of you, our readers. For all the hardships you have ever had to overcome. You're amazing, strong and beautiful.*

## *Author's Note*

So I owe everything to Jenn for jumping into this with me and finishing this series. I never expected to be hospitalized, but these things happen. That said, this is now going to be three parts, and we are hoping to get the final book out to y'all early spring of next year.

As with all of our books individually and co-writes, this is dark. Please check the warnings listed below before reading. This also has **MM** scenes in it as Part one did, so if you do not like MM, or group scenes, please do not read.

That said, we really hope you love Patience and her broken men.

Also as with all my books, I can't forget my disclaimer.

We are not liable for any broken husbands or significant others, devices being thrown, or therapist bills. But we do permit being messaged and yelled at.

Thanks so much for reading another one of our books.

Love you all,

Xoxo

Amber & Jenn

# *Contents*

[Trigger Warnings](#)

[Blurb](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[The End...? Or not...](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About Author Amber Nicole](#)

[More From Amber Nicole](#)

[About Author Jenn Bullard](#)

[More from Jenn](#)



# *Trigger Warnings*

Triggers - drugs, sexual assault, human trafficking, physical abuse, degradation, BDSM dynamics, mentions of cannibalism, kidnapping, mafia references, non-con touching, dub-con, and PTSD. There is also a scene with some homophobic slurs and accusations of incest.

Your mental health is important to us, so please don't continue reading if any of this content will disturb you.

This book is darker than book one, but just as spicy. That said, this does have MM as well as group scenes in it.

# *Blurb*

*Confessions that were meant to stay in the dark come to light.*

*My life is thrown into a tailspin.*

*I don't know who to trust anymore.*

*I'm being watched. Hunted.*

*They are coming for us, and I'm not sure if anyone will survive this war.*

*But I won't give up. I was born to fight.*

*And with my men by my side, I'm unstoppable.*

*Watch out, boys...*

*It's time for a new queen to rule.*

**“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.”**

**-Dolly Parton-**

## *Prologue*

People say that life only gives you challenges that you can handle or overcome. If that's true, then what the fuck am I supposed to do now? Standing here on this hot stage as the lights beat down on my naked flesh, I feel raw and exposed.

I feel broken and destroyed. I feel hurt and betrayed. If this is meant to be a lesson or something, then someone better tell me what the fuck I'm supposed to learn from this. Because right now, all I want to do is crawl into a hole and disappear.

# *Chapter One*



### THREE WEEKS EARLIER

I wake up locked in a cage with other people. I can't see anyone, but I can hear them crying. My head is throbbing and I have crusted blood drying along my skin. My arms are shackled and I'm freezing. I wait for someone to come, or to tell me what's going on, but no one does. When the room stops spinning, I open my mouth.

"Where am I?" I ask, and someone immediately shushes me.

"Please, they will hear you," a cracked voice says from behind me.

"Who?" I whisper back, and the person crying next to me starts to sob.

"I just want to go home. I want my mommy," another girl says and I feel sick. Heavy boots thump down some metal stairs and a light flicks on. I gasp in horror at what's revealed.

"You," one of the guards shouts, pointing at a young woman. She can't be older than sixteen. She's naked, like we all are, and her skin is filthy, as though she hasn't showered in weeks.

I take in everything that I can see before they leave and the light is extinguished again.

"Where did they take her?" I ask, and the person behind me laughs, but it's hollow.

"To the auction. Young thing like her will fetch them a pretty penny."

My stomach rolls and I vomit down the front of myself, wincing at the pain in my temple.

What the fuck is happening? How did I get here?

I know I need to ask more questions, but my head is heavy and my eyes start to close once more.

I don't know why the hell Mr. Reynolds kidnapped me and brought me here. I need to find a way to escape and warn my family. They are all in danger.



“WAKE UP, BOY!” someone grunts, before kicking me in the side. I groan and open my eyes. The pain in my head is worse and I feel lethargic. My stomach rolls, but it's empty now. I smell sour and I feel sorry for whoever is trapped beside me.

There is a dim light by the stairs and I can see shadows. All these poor, innocent people, trapped here for God only knows how long.

“What do you want with me?” I croak, and the guard laughs. He gives me a smile, but I can tell it's fake. He's looking all around him and it's hard for him to mask his disgust at what he's seeing.

Interesting. Maybe he's also being held here against his will. “The Boss wants to meet you, but first we need to hose all this shit off of you,” he grumbles, and pulls some keys out of his pocket.

My wrists are still secured, but I'm no longer attached to the wall. I allow him to guide me up the stairs and over to a locked door. I try to count how many women and children are down here with me, but it's too dark.

“What is this place?” I mumble, and I'm shocked when the guard answers me.

“Hell. I suggest keeping your mouth shut and doing everything the Boss asks of you. It's better that way, trust me.”

I scoff and wince as the pain in my head worsens. “I'll never trust someone like you,” I grumble and he sighs, but nods.

“Good, you may just make it out of here alive, then.” The door opens and the bright lights make me curl into myself and stumble.

“Fuck, my head. Turn off the damn lights,” I shout, and the man drags me quicker down the hall and into a shower room. He turns the lights off and I’m once again surprised by his kindness. I don’t think this guard is really a guard.

“Make it quick and don’t try anything. I’d rather not have your blood on my hands,” he grumbles, then chains me to a hook on the shower wall and leaves me. I rest my head against the cool tile for a moment, then turn the water on.

It’s ice cold, but it helps numb the pain of my ribs from his kick and my head. I have a feeling that Mr. Reynolds might have given me a concussion, but it’s not the first one I’ve had thanks to sports and my father, and I doubt it’ll be my last.

There is some soap on a shelf in the wall and some shampoo. I try to wash my hair, but the lethargy isn’t helping. The water starts to turn warm and I relax for a moment, letting it ease my sore muscles and the tension.

I know I need to be on my guard here, but I’m taking these few moments to imagine that I’m home or back at Patience’s place, showering. I’m ignoring that there is a strange man, who is more my age than I think he wants me to know, watching me.

I manage to soap my body, though it takes more energy than I currently have right now, then rinse myself off. When I shut the water off, that man is there, handing me a scratchy towel. “Thanks,” I grumble and take it from him.

He averts his eyes, but the top of his ears are pink. “I can’t give you any clothes until the Boss examines you, but you can keep the towel.”

“This doesn’t make any fucking sense,” I grumble, but wrap the material around my waist as he removes my chains from the wall and starts moving toward the door. “Is Mr. Reynolds the Boss? What the fuck is going on?” The guy looks me over, and his eyebrows are furrowed. It seems like he wants to tell me something, but he takes a breath and then scowls.



“This way. Keep your mouth fucking shut and listen,” he snaps and I sigh, shivering. It’s fucking freezing and my toes are turning purple by the time we walk up some more steps and into a nicer part of... wherever we are.

There are marble columns and a deep red, plush carpet. “Can I know your name?” I ask the guy quietly and he bites his bottom lip. I’d say he was attractive if I wasn’t head over heels in love with Cal and Patience.

I would never cheat on them, even if someone put a gun to my head, but I don’t mind flirting if it will get me some answers.

“You can call me Spider, but only when we are alone,” he mutters, and I smile at how easy that was.

Shouting reaches my ears as I’m led to large, wooden French doors. We stop and he knocks. The voices escalate before there’s a pop and some cursing. I know my skin is pale. That was an obvious gun shot.

I try to back away and Spider holds my chains tighter. He looks at me with pity and I think I may hurl. Clad in nothing but a towel and chains, I feel weak. I don’t know what’s next for me, but I will do anything and everything to get back to my family.

## PRESENT DAY

I'm exhausted. Isabella has been running me ragged with all the solo videos and performances I have had to do. I hate it, and I feel exposed and ashamed, but as long as they leave me alone and no one tries to touch me again, I'll be okay.

Spider snuck me in a chocolate bar last night and I didn't even want it. I gave it to Mila and Traci to share. I wish I could break out of these chains and save all these innocent people, but the truth of the matter is I'm just as trapped here as they are.

They may treat me better since I bring them in a lot of money, but I'm still tossed back into this cage day and night. The light flickers on and boots stomp down the stairs. It's dark, but I can see a naked woman, bruised and bloody with dark hair that reminds me of my girl, being chained and shoved in the corner next to me.

Some of the little ones whimper, but thankfully it's Spider delivering the new person. I still haven't figured him out, but if I had to guess, I would think he's here undercover, but I don't think he works for the FBI or CIA.

He's tough, but he has no military training, and I can tell he fucking hates being here.

We've bonded in a way, and I'm close to having him send a message to my family to warn them. I don't care what happens to me, but I need them to be safe. If Cal's dad will do this to me, then no one is safe.

He's evil and manipulative and he's not the only snake hiding in the grass. I've seen a few more people here that I've recognized.

Esme starts to cry as Spider leaves, and I move over to hold her. She's only eight and thankfully no one has touched her yet, but she's scared and she doesn't speak English very well. Rebecca told me before she was sold that they keep the little ones for training. They won't do anything to harm them,

which I guess is a small mercy in a place like this. At least I know she'll survive this Hell.

“Shhh, little one, it's okay,” I whisper softly and start to hum a tune from the radio. She calms and Mina moves closer and huddles her other side. Since I've been working, I was able to convince Isabella and Snake to give us clothing.

It felt wrong being exposed to children and made me sick. We weren't given much, but at least now my dick is covered and the kids are wearing pajamas. I'll have to ask Spider to give the new woman clothing when she wakes.

It's not much, but it gives us back a little of our dignity. “What's going on?” the girl slurs, and Esme starts to cry harder. “Is someone there?” She starts to move around and her chains are making a lot of noise.

Spider and Snake are pretty lenient when it comes to us talking, but the other guards are vindictive and like to hear screams of terror and pain. I don't know who is standing watch at the top of the stairs right now.

I need to get her to stop being so loud. “Quiet or they will hear you,” I hiss. My throat is sore and I know I sound awful. She gasps and lifts her head, but the shadows hide her face.

“Rooke?” she whispers, and my heart stops.

All that I've been doing for the time I've been here, and I failed. “Pay,” I croak, and then she begins to sob, breaking my heart even more. I can't reach her. The chains keep us separated, and I wonder if they did that on purpose knowing that we knew each other.

I fight to move. Mila takes Esme, and Hunter keeps trying to shush me, but I don't fucking care. My girl needs me right now, and I will break my fucking wrists to slip off these chains if I have to.

## Chapter Two



“Nate, wake the fuck up! Why are you sleeping? What the fuck happened?” Cal shouts, shaking me. I groan and open my eyes. Something isn’t right. I feel nauseous. Why the hell am I sleeping on a lounge chair?

“Cal? What’s going on? Fuck, my head hurts,” I grumble and try to sit up. The sky is dark and the stars are shining, but it’s blurry. I try to remember what I was doing before passing out, but it’s fuzzy.

I think my dad brought me some food. Was Patience here? “No fucking clue. I got a phone call from Rooke’s dad. He was screaming at me for the past hour about his son. He sounded high or something, and then I came out here and you’re drooling on the cushions.”

“Wait? What? What was his dad saying?” Cal sighs and sits beside me as I try to sit up more.

“He said that Rooke ran away and it’s my fault. This whole time I thought he just needed some time from me. Some space, but fuck, bro, I’m worried. I need to find him. Make sure he’s okay. I don’t know what I did to make him run off.”

“Okay, let me get dressed and we can grab Patience and go find him. Did his dad say when he left?” Cal wipes his eyes and groans.

“That’s the thing I don’t understand. He said he’s been gone for weeks. The last he heard of him, he’d left a note saying he was coming to stay here.”

“Okay, yeah, that doesn’t sound right. Help me up,” I grumble, then take his hand and try to stand. Something isn’t right here. I feel weak and my legs wobble as I move inside. The air conditioner makes me shiver and I rush to grab some clothes.

“You okay, Nate? Did Patience wipe you out or something?” he jokes, but you can tell he’s not in the mood to kid. I wave him away and stumble down the hall and up the stairs to my room.

“Call Pay and ask her to come over. Maybe try and reach out to Ki, too. I have a bad feeling about this,” I mumble and he sighs, but nods. Entering my room, I walk over to the shower and rinse off the chlorine and sex from earlier.

The water feels great, but it doesn’t help my head. I feel foggy and disoriented. What the fuck happened? Leaving the shower, I grab some boxers, shorts, and a T-shirt. Cal is waiting for me in the hall as I exit my room.

“Patience didn’t pick up. Maybe she’s asleep. Let’s just go over there. Ki is busy, but he said he would make some calls in the morning.” He yawns and I can’t help but follow. I’m exhausted, but something just feels wrong.

Moving down the stairs, we leave out the side door and walk over to Patience’s house.

Her mom and step-dad are away again, so I know they won’t catch us. Even if they did, technically Cal is Pay’s fiancé, so he has the right to pop by in the middle of the night.

I try the kitchen door and groan when it opens. “Doesn’t she know she needs to lock her doors?” I grumble and Cal laughs at me, shaking his head.

“You can bitch at her later. Right now, I just want to go find my guy,” he huffs and I sigh.

“You’re right. I’m sorry.” I walk through the kitchen and take the stairs up to her room. Her door is wide open and the bed is still made. “Maybe she’s in the living room?” Cal grunts and stomps down the steps. I follow him at a slower pace.

“Patience,” Cal shouts, and I check the other rooms, but they are all empty.

“Maybe she went for a run?” I pull out my phone and try calling her again, but it just goes to voicemail. I dial Ki and he answers with a grumble.

*“Listen, I know that you’re worried about Rooke, but he’s been away for a few weeks now, another night will be okay.”*

“Is Pay with you?” I interrupt him and he scoffs.

*“No, Nate, last I heard she was going over to your place.”* Cal meets me in the kitchen and shakes his head.

“Something is going on, Nate. I have a sick feeling in my stomach,” he says, and I have to agree with him.

“Listen, Ki, Pay isn’t home. She’s not at our place either. We haven’t seen her in a few hours. I woke up groggy outside, too. I think you need to get over here,” I say, then end the call.

Honestly, he’s pissing me off right now.

“Call Dad, maybe he knows something?” I ask Cal and he throws his head back and laughs.

“Dad is fucking clueless, Nate. The only thing he cares about is ruining my life. Watch, he paid off or threatened Rooke to leave. Had to have been a threat or something. I know he wouldn’t just up and leave me. He told me he loved me,” he chokes out before starting to cry.

I pull him into a tight hug and hold him. He may be an asshole at times, but Cal loves hard and he loves Rooke,

fiercely.

“We will find him and our girl. Don’t give up just yet, brother. We got this,” I swear to him, and fuck, I hope I’m not lying.

KIAN

The moment Nate hangs up, I call my dad. He doesn't answer, so I try Patience's grandfather next.

He's been acting shifty as fuck, and if Patience is missing in the middle of the night, I know he's the culprit.

*"Kian, what is the meaning of this? Do you know what time it is?"* Richard James barks and I have to laugh. There is a lot of noise on his side of the phone. Seems he's at a party or something.

"Yes, well, I thought it was pertinent that we chatted. You wouldn't happen to know where your granddaughter is, would you?"

*"Excuse me? She should be at home, asleep. She has classes in the morning."* I roll my eyes and stand from the couch. Mouse is rubbing against my ankles, calming me, but I'm still raging.

Even after all this time, the lies and little errands he's made me do for him, he still tried to fuck me over. I have been doing everything I could in my power to keep my girl safe.

"She's missing, and if you don't know where she is, I have a feeling your little partner does." I end the call before I piss him off any further. He will call me back. He always has to have the last word.

Walking into my kitchen, I grab a bottle of tequila and pop the top. Today was a fucked up day, and I have a feeling that I won't be getting any sleep tonight either. I move over to the tall windows and stare at the dark city.

"Where are you, Baby Girl," I mumble, then groan when someone starts pounding on my door. Mouse bolts under the coffee table as I make my way to answer the idiots.

"Have you heard anything?" Nate says the moment I let him in. Cal looks distraught and my heart aches for him.



“No, nothing, but I called Richard.” Cal moves over to the couch and plops down with a huff. Mouse pops her head out from under the table and then slowly jumps onto his lap. She begins to purr as he pets her, and I roll my eyes.

“I have a bad fucking feeling, Ki, and I think my dad may be the reason. It’s fuzzy, but I remember him bringing me something to eat and wanting to have a chat about Silvia. Next thing I know, Cal is waking me up...” he trails off before groaning. “I think he might have fucking drugged me, but that’s crazy, right?”

He looks me square in the eye and I sigh. Maybe it’s time that I tell the guys what their dad is really like. I know Cal has some clue, since Nixen has begun to train him for the ‘family business’.

“It’s not that crazy, actually. Your dad has always had a penchant for sedatives,” I mumble, then walk over to the fridge and grab some beers and a piece of sliced cheese. I am not going to deal with drunk fucking teenagers.

I set everything on the table, and Cal looks up at me. His hazel eyes are red-rimmed and he looks miserable. “Did my dad kidnap Rooke?” he asks, and I honestly don’t know, but I have a feeling he did.

“I’m not sure, but I think I know someone that might. But right now we need to find Patience. There are things that you guys still don’t know, and if your dad did something to her, then he may have just started a war.”

My phone chooses to cut off their reply by ringing and I immediately answer. “*I don’t like being cut off, Kian,*” Richard growls and I huff. “*That said, you were right. Patience can’t be tracked at the moment. I don’t know where she is.*”

Cal stands and starts to pace as Nate grabs the bottle of tequila and takes a swig. I should yell at him for not using a glass, but tension is high right now.

“What do you mean you can’t find her?” I growl into the phone, but don’t listen to his response. For someone who

swears he cares about his granddaughter, he's not acting concerned. I can't handle his lack of urgency right now.

"Just find her!" I shout, then hang up. I don't care if he's going to be coming after my head for it. Patience is worth it. Cal punches the counter next to me and he's visibly shaking.

Nate is sitting on the floor with the bottle and he's on his way to passing out. We're a fucking mess, and I don't even care. Mouse comes up to offer comfort and I want to cry. But I won't.

"Make that call," Cal grunts, and I nod. I really didn't want to do this, but we both know there's no other choice. Searching through my contacts, my finger hovers. This could fuck up so many lives, but when it comes to my girl, I'll do anything.

I pace while I wait for him to pick up. "*You shouldn't be calling me, Kian,*" he answers and I grumble.

"Dragon, we need your help."

## PATIENCE

“Rooke,” I whisper, ignoring the people who keep shushing me. Ugh, my stomach hurts and I am so fucking confused.

“Pay,” he croaks, and I start to cry. I don’t know where I am, or what the fuck is going on, but he’s here. This whole time I thought he was back at home with his dad. I am the worst girlfriend in the world.

“Shhh, baby, please don’t cry,” he continues and I hiccup. Chains rattle and I know he’s trying to reach me, but I’m too far away. “Patience, you need to calm down, okay? Trust me, you do not want those people to come back,” he tries to get his point across to me, but I just don’t care.

How could someone do this to us? I wipe the tears from my eyes and look around, but it’s dark. There is a light by the stairs, but it doesn’t help much. “What is going on, Rooke?” I attempt to whisper, but it’s loud in the silent space.

“It’s hard to explain, baby, but I’ll try if you can just stop crying for me, okay?” I nod, though it’s pointless, then try and sit up. I’m naked and freezing. I’m also really sore. The men that dragged me down here were rough.

I whimper and someone beside me sighs. “Please don’t make the bad men come back,” someone whispers, and I try to be quiet. I don’t know how long I sit there and try to analyze what I can remember before waking up here, but it must have been a few hours.

Lights flicker on and boots thump down the metal staircase. A few... Oh my God, there are children here... They start to whimper and cry. I get my first real look at Rooke and gasp.

“Hi, baby,” he whispers and I try to smile, but fuck, he doesn’t look good. My mouth aches and a metallic taste hits my tongue. I probably look like shit, too.

“Get up!” a guard barks, and starts to unlock chains and pull the women up from the floor and up the stairs. No one fights or tries to get free. Yes, they are crying, but they seem subdued. Another guard comes closer to me and I flinch. Rooke tries to reassure me, but my chest tightens and my breaths quicken.

“Spider, unlock her first,” Rooke tells the guard, and he shockingly listens. When I’m able to stand, I shiver. The man frees Rooke and he pulls me tight against his chest. “Shh, baby, I got you. It’s going to be okay.” He glances at the wall and the guard tells us to start moving, but my legs are weak.

Rooke lets me lean against the concrete pillar and takes his shirt off, then slips it on over my head. I curl into the warm material and sigh. My bladder is screaming and I hope they are leading us to a bathroom.

“I’m sorry to do this, but you need to take this,” Spider, I think that’s what Rooke called him, says, handing each of us a pill. Rooke takes it immediately, but I hesitate.

“Trust me, Pay, you’re going to want it,” he mumbles, and I take it. Rooke grabs my hand tight and leads me to the steps.

My head is fuzzy, but I keep my hand in Rooke’s. I still can’t believe he’s here. Wherever the fuck we are. I’m going to chain Nixen to a wall and snip his balls off with a rusty pair of garden shears. I knew he was suspicious, but I never imagined this. Human fucking trafficking! Has he lost his Goddamn mind?

Someone softly cries behind me, and I wish I could save her—save them all—but I think we’re all truly fucked. We’re ushered into a small room and the lighting is dim. Even if I wasn’t drugged, I wouldn’t be able to make out what was going on. Someone rips my hand away from Rooke and I cry out.

“Shh, it’s okay. Don’t fight them,” Rooke whispers, and I tremble. I’m gripped tightly by the elbow and pulled into a smaller room. The floor is cold, and when they turn showers on, I figure out I’m in some type of locker room. The shirt Rooke gave me is pulled off me, and I’m shoved under the

freezing water. Rough bristles scratch my body as I'm scrubbed clean. The water stings along the marks as I'm rinsed and then dried.

I close my eyes against the harsh lighting in the next room, and I must have blacked out, because when I come to, I'm dressed in some silky lingerie and my hair and makeup is done.

Tears fill my eyes, but I don't let them fall. They don't deserve any more of my tears.

I just can't believe this is happening to me. And Rooke. Why him? Did Cal's dad find out about their relationship? And if so, who the fuck cares. He was still planning to marry me, so it's not like the contract wouldn't be fulfilled.

Except now, it won't. He really fucked up now. I start to laugh and someone clears their throat from the corner of the room.

"Is she done?" they ask, and a woman nods. She won't look me in the eyes, but she has the audacity to dress me up like some fucked up doll.

I don't even wear this shit at work. I scoff and cross my arms as a large man dressed in black comes over to me and grabs my arm hard, tugging me to my feet.

"Careful, sir. She's not to have any marks on her," the lady says quietly with a tremble in her voice. I notice the man's hand is shaking. Is he nervous? What the hell is going on here?

He clears his throat and gives the woman a nod before dragging me into another room. There is a huge bed and a row of lights and cameras. My eyes widen, and I freeze. The man grunts and I finally get a good look at him. He's big and has kind amber eyes, he's also covered in tattoos.

"Please, don't do this," I whisper, and he avoids my eyes. For being a grunt for Cal's dad, he seems awfully subdued.

I wonder what his story is, and how someone like him ended up here. I know I have no business being here, yet I am. I wish I could have stayed a step ahead of Nixen; I'd do so much differently if I'd had known.

## Chapter Three



I've been here for hours or maybe it's seconds. The drugs mess with my internal clock.

Spider left me to lay in this bed a while ago. I don't think he was comfortable being around me while I'm dolled up like some prostitute Barbie.

My stomach churns and my head hurts. My body aches and I know if it wasn't for the pound of makeup they covered me with, I would be showing my bruises.

Glancing around the room, I notice all the cameras. I don't want to know why I'm here or why there are recording devices surrounding me.

I close my eyes and think of my guys. I hope they are okay. Nixen said that he had to drug Nate. I hope he woke up and wasn't hurt. I know he would have asked questions if his father hadn't drugged him.

I wonder if they know I'm missing yet? I don't know how long I've even been here.

Wherever here is. The room I woke up in was a dungeon, but the rest of this place looks like some Greek wannabe mansion.

A noise sounds from the corner of the room and I begin to pray.

Opening my eyes, I see that there are a bunch of people now in the room with me.

I wish I could cover myself. I've never been self conscious before, but then again, I've never had people see me like this without my consent.

Flashes from a camera hurt my eyes and the drugs they gave me make me sleepy. But I'm fighting it. If I fall asleep right now, they could do something really bad to me.

I blink my eyes a few times and I can tell it's pissing off the guy taking my pictures.

He's young, with purple stripes in his mohawk, and is wearing some weird suspenders contraption without a shirt and black jeans that are two sizes too small.

"Can someone adjust her position? She's slouching, and the customers want sexy and willing. Not drugged and sloppy," the man says with a curse, and the man with the kind eyes pushes me firmly against the headboard.

He grabs some handcuffs and spreads me on the mattress. Lifting my wrists toward my head, he clicks the cuffs in place, restraining me.

I hate the feel of the cold metal against my heated flesh and a small moan leaves my lips.

"Now, that's more like it," the camera guy barks. "Spider, get closer to her. Touch her, kiss her, whatever, but keep your face away from the cameras." I look into his caramel eyes. My mind is a mess and the drugs are making me wet.

Spider leans down to kiss me, and I whimper. This is so wrong. He's not one of my guys, but my body doesn't care.

Leaning over me, he spreads my thighs and rocks his lower half against me, but he's limp. I close my eyes and pray for small mercies.

"I'm so sorry," he whispers so softly that I don't think I was meant to hear it, and I don't think he's talking to me. I can tell in his body language he feels torn. Maybe I can use that to my advantage. Maybe he will be mine and Rooke's ticket out of here.

He starts kissing my neck and I try not to throw up. I can tell he's not enjoying this, so small mercies at least.

Moving down to my jaw and my clavicle, he licks and nips while keeping his eyes shut. Maybe I should do the same and disassociate from myself. His hands shake as he removes the top exposing my breasts and I squirm a little.

My body is on fire, and I know it's not my normal reaction, but the way Spider is resisting almost makes me want to give him consent.

He's mumbling prayers and apologies, and my heart breaks a little for him. I should hate him. He works for Cal's dad, but at the same time, I don't think he's here of his own free will.

"It's okay," I whisper, and he freezes. "Just do what you have to to get this over with. I'm so tired," I mumble and can feel as he fights with his body.

He's shaking and some wetness drips onto my chest.

This is breaking him as much as me. "I can't," he grumbles and then rolls off of me and gives me his back.

"Yes, that's perfect. The clients are going to love this," the camera man shouts, and I jump as Spider removes my restraints.

I almost forgot that he was even there. I squirm and adjust my breasts, then cross my arms over them.

"Okay, I've got enough shots. Let's get the guy in here," he barks, and Spider takes that moment to flee the room.

I almost wish he didn't.



Another guard comes over to me and I shudder.

“Too bad I can’t take you out for a test ride. You have to be the hottest chick I’ve ever seen,” the man says, shoving his face into my neck, breathing me in. Bile climbs up my throat, but I swallow it back down. He groans and lifts me until I straddle his lap and his small bulge.

I bite my tongue from making a comment. I don’t need to piss these people off more. Someone knocks on the door and he sighs, then grips my ass cheeks tight in his rough hands. I tremble and he laughs.

“Such a shame,” he mutters, then moves me back to the bed and climbs off to open the door. Rooke is shoved inside and thrown on the bed beside me. His skin is oiled and he’s wearing a tight pair of boxer briefs. His eyes are glazed and he doesn’t seem to be all there.

I shuffle closer to him and someone tsks at me from the door.

“Not yet, princess,” he snaps, and I pause. His voice seems familiar, but I can’t place it.

I think he may work at the twins’ house. My eyes are blurry and my head swims. I just want to go home.

Rooke pulls me closer to him and tries to shush me, but he’s slurring his words.

My cheeks are wet and I know I’m going to be punished for ruining my makeup.

“Why am I here?” I mutter, not expecting anyone to actually answer me. Someone laughs and then a few more people follow.

I lift my head and glare, but it’s probably not very aggressive. I’m so sleepy.

“You pissed off the wrong man, sweetheart,” someone says then grunts.

Another man starts to chew him out and I groan. Rooke moves closer to me and runs his fingers down my spine.

“I never thought I would get to see you again, let alone hold you,” he whispers, and my heart breaks. I don’t know what’s going on. I’m not sure I ever will, but as selfish as it makes me, I’m glad he’s here and I don’t have to do it alone.

ROOKE

Patience lays below me with her thighs spread and legs wrapped around my waist. I thrust gently inside of her, dying a little more with each push of my hips.

I still don't understand how she could be here right now, but a sick part of me is happy that she's the one I'm being forced to fuck right now.

I love her, and before Cal's dad kidnapped me, we were happy. She whimpers and I lean down to whisper into her ear as the tears drip from my cheeks onto her skin.

"I love you, Pay. So much. I'm so sorry," I choke out the last words and her head jolts back so she can look me in the eyes.

Her words are slurred thanks to the drugs they keep feeding us.

"This is not your fault, Rooke. We will get through this. I love you, too," she says with a tired sigh, and I know she's about to fall asleep on me. I pick up my speed, trying to get through this fucking show as quickly as I can.

I am not into somnophilia.

Some people bark instructions and orders to me, and with how long I've been here, I'm used to it... but I'm trying to imagine they aren't here. That I'm back at Patience's house, just loving her.

Then, after, she would make us snacks and we would watch a movie or just cuddle. But I know that's not going to happen. After they get what they want, we will be shoved back in that basement and chained once more.

That's how this goes. Rinse and repeat. Patience arches her back and I can feel her tightening around me. One of the drugs they give us is a form of sex enhancement and it helps our bodies to perform when our minds are disgusted.

Not that I would ever feel that way with my girl in my arms. She's the only thing that makes today better.

I just hope this doesn't break her spirit in the end.

## PATIENCE

I close my legs and take the robe that's offered to me. Rooke won't look at me, and I don't know what breaks me more. The way he's slowly dying inside or that I'm a part of his pain. I'm not faring much better, but I know how to compartmentalize. I learned at a young age how to perfect my mask.

You kinda have to when the whole world thinks your father is some homicidal murderer and your mother is too broken to defend him. The stares get really old, and so do the biting comments. I had to hide myself away in order to survive it, which is what I'll have to do now. Hopefully.

The camera man is the first to leave the room after exclaiming how happy he is with the photos. "I need to work with these two again. They're both stunning together, and people will pay big to see this girl's pussy stuffed with cock," he chuckles.

Fuck, I hate that man. My body has been contorted into all kinds of positions today, and now everything is sore in a different way.

The other men leer at me specifically, one going so far as to grab my breast roughly. It makes me grateful that I was paired to fuck Rooke on camera, because I wouldn't be able to handle this. The drugs are starting to wear off as they leave, and my anxiety is starting to increase. Tears spill over as the enormity of what's happening hits me all at once.

"Come here, baby," Rooke whispers, pulling me into his arms. "I'm so sorry for everything. Let it go, and then you have to be strong for me, okay?"

Sobbing, I wrap my arms around him, happy not to be handcuffed anymore. I wish so many things were different, but wishes won't change a damn thing. I need a distraction.

"Will you tell me about what's been happening since you've been here?" I rasp, my nose against his neck to breathe

in the smell of sex and us. It's oddly familiar, and helps to ground me.

"There's a woman named Isabella who runs things with the Bossman," Rooke says softly, rubbing my neck for comfort. I start to soften in his arms in a way I couldn't when we were on camera. It's like we're in our own little world, just for a little while. "The guards bring new people in often, but the kids are what kill me, Pay. Thankfully, they're not touched inappropriately, and are here to be trained by the men. I don't know everything that entails... I'm drugged a lot of the time."

"You're okay," I whisper, offering him some solace.

"I should be comforting you," he sighs, moving back to stare into my eyes. "It's bad, baby girl. Right now all they want are videos, but they make me feel so dirty, like I'm cheating on you and Cal."

"No," I deny furtively. I don't know how long we have until people come for us. "Whatever we do to survive here isn't cheating, Rooke. I'm just so confused about why I'm even here."

"I don't know, baby girl. Someone fucked up though, because even I know you're important. As fucked up as it is, I was glad when I saw you, because you're mine. I think that makes me a terrible person," Rooke whispers.

"It doesn't," I tell him softly, tears starting to fall again. How can this beautiful, selfless man doubt himself? The first thing he tried to do when he saw me was to protect me, cover me up, take care of me. "I hate that we're performing for these sick fucks, but there's something comforting about it being you."

I'm so tired, and I curl up in his arms. "Sleep, Pay. It's just us right now. I don't know how long this will last. This is the longest they've left me in a room after finishing up," he says.

My eyes feel so heavy, and I can't fight it back. Nothing is okay right now, but at least I have Rooke beside me.

## Chapter Four



**K**ian called someone the other day and nothing happened. He sent us home the next morning and told us to act normal.

My boyfriend and fiancée are missing and he wants me to just act fucking normal?

My heart is broken and my head is fucked up. Nothing will ever be normal again if something has happened to them.

Nate is trying to keep me distracted with video games, but it's not working. I throw my controller onto the couch and stand.

“Cal, I know how you’re feeling right now. I do, but you heard Ki...” he trails off and checks that the coast is clear. “If Dad is responsible, the best thing to do is act normal and try to get some clues from him. Aren’t you supposed to go to the office with him tomorrow?”

I grunt and rub my hand over my face and into my hair.

I need a shower. The dark strands are greasy and messy.

My stomach chooses that moment to growl loudly, but I'm not hungry. Nate stands as well and grabs my arm.

"We need to keep our strength up, bro. Let's make some nachos. We have to keep going. For them."

Scowling, I agree, even as my stomach complains at me. I just want Pay and Rooke back, and nothing is going to feel normal until that happens.



KIAN COMES over a few hours later, looking as if he hasn't slept. We're all a mess, but it makes me feel better that I'm not the only one who looks as if they're struggling. Ki always looks so perfectly put together.

"I know you want to do something, so let's go. I want to see if I can find anything out about Patience's family. There has to be a reason that they're targeting her, I just haven't been able to find it yet." Kian sighs.

"Fuck, yes. I know I need to bide my time, but I really need this, Ki. Thank you for including us. It's something so small, but I have to do something."

"I get it, Cal. I don't want your father to know that we're suspicious. I have this odd feeling that it's why Pay and Rooke were taken. I just don't know where yet," Ki grumbles. "Let's go back to Patience's and see if there's anything we can find."

Trekking to Pay's reminds me of how many times we've done this in the past. We practically lived at each other's houses until it all went to shit. My brother and I were trying to protect her then too, and look where it all got us. Our girl is still gone.

"Let's start in the basement," Ki grunts, walking with purpose. I can see the urgency that he's kept so well hidden before. I really was starting to think that he wasn't worried or



didn't care, but that just shows how messed up my head is right now. I need to slow down, keep it together.

I hate it when other people are right. Fuck.

The basement is a mess as we walk down to see what we can find. There's boxes stacked at the back of the area, bookcases filled with random shit, and the chaos makes me wince. We're going to be here for a while.

"I've been thinking about what led to the night Patience's dad died," Ki says, taking in the area. It looks as if he's making a game plan on what to tackle first. "I never found out what it was, but they were willing to kill for it. I think it may be down here. The basement hasn't really been touched in years, and our parents always told us to stay out of it until they could clean it up."

"It obviously never happened," Nate grumbles.

"Nope, so where should I start?" I ask, ready to be pointed in a direction.

"Start at the boxes. Look for anything that mentions Richard or Philippe, and put it to the side if you think something looks off about it. Richard is into some illegal shit, but he's too smart to get caught," Ki explains.

Maybe his luck is running out. Tackling the boxes is dusty, thankless work, but I don't care. Hours later, I'm sneezing, but I think I found something.

"Kian," I call out around my sneezes.

"Damn, is the dust getting to you?" he asks with a small chuckle.

Rubbing my nose, I grumble, "I'm kind of allergic to it. It doesn't matter. This paperwork is talking about a real estate investment outside of town, but there's nothing out there," I tell him.

Pulling the paperwork from me, he looks it over. "Are there any more of these?" he asks.

"I found a deed too, but didn't think anything of it," Nate says. "Here. Shit, I should have mentioned it."

“No, you noticed now, so it’s fine.” Kian acknowledges, taking the deed. “Now to figure out why he was buying these. It may help us figure out what Philippe learned that led to his murder.”

“Fuck, what the hell is your family into?” I mutter.

“Your family too,” Kian says, wincing. “Everything that your dad has been teaching you about the company... Ever notice how many shady characters he works with?”

“What am I missing?” Nate asks. “I know that I was gone for school, but how was I so blind?”

“I kind of wanted you to have a normal life,” I tell him. “Dad’s an abusive bastard, and I didn’t want you to have to deal with it, so I made sure you went away to school. Honestly, I didn’t really want you to come home, but I didn’t realize you were still talking to Pay.”

“I’ve always been drawn to her. She’s always been ours, even when you told me I couldn’t talk to her anymore after her dad died. I didn’t realize her family was involved in—”

“The Mafia, Nate. Richard runs illegal contraband for the Mafia, and he’s been having me do some of his errands,” Kian says. “There’s a lot I don’t know, but I need to fully immerse myself now so we can find Rooke and Pay. Her grandfather swears that it wasn’t him, so the only thing I can think of is—”

“Dad?” Nate asks softly.

“Possibly,” I sigh. “He needs me to marry Pay, so it would be stupid of him to abduct her. There’s just too many variables.”

“Is that why you need to get close to him to see if he lets you see more of the business?” Nate asks, and I nod.

“I know you think I’ve been sitting with my thumb up my ass,” Kian begins. Damn, I feel shitty that he thinks that. “I haven’t been though. I called in a favor to the Locked Souls Society. I did some undercover work for them, but I never thought I’d have to call them. They’re going to help us find Patience. There’s just a lot of moving pieces we need to be careful of. Richard is a very dangerous man, and I’ve been

doing things his way to protect his granddaughter. With her gone, the gloves are off.”

“What kind of illegal Mafia activities are we talking about?” Nate asks. I’ll do anything to get Pay and Rooke back, but I understand his curiosity. I wish I had better answers than I do.

Looking dejected, I shake my head. “Dad doesn’t let me in enough to put everything together. I get glimpses, shady deals, but it all gives me a really bad feeling, Nate.”

Kian snorts, surprising me. “What, you didn’t know you two were Mafia princes? What a legacy. Richard runs guns and drugs for the Mafia, but I haven’t been able to get a feel for what Nixen does. They’re definitely different families of the Mafia, and merging the two when Cal and Patience get married would make them unstoppable,” Ki says. “Now that Pay is gone, the game has changed, and I’m uncertain of the new rules, so we need to be careful.”

As if things weren’t weird enough, now we’re some kind of fucked up royalty.

NATE

As I continue to listen to Kian, my stomach lurches. I knew my dad wasn't a good man; it's why Cal has been telling me to stay away from Patience for years. I just didn't realize what it all meant.

It's like being inside a movie that I can't get out of. I desperately want to hit the pause button, and maybe rewind this shit. Except I can't. Patience is caught up in the midst of all of this, and she's missing.

"Fuck," I breathe, looking around me in a whole new way. There's this fountain of possible evidence around us, and no one has thought to look down here.

"Nate, I'm sorry I kept so much from you," Cal says, his eyes filled with guilt. I know he doesn't like to lie to me, but I know he'd do it all again.

I've been so damn naïve about my life. I've never thought to ask how we were able to afford our lives, or school, or the fancy cars. Mafia princes, indeed.

"Kidnapping, Mafia, murder... What's next, prostitution? Trafficking?!" I yell, throwing something at the wall. I'm so damn pissed off right now... mostly at myself. There's so much that I've simply taken for granted.

"Maybe?" Kian says weakly. "No one can find Patience, and Richard said he's reached out to everyone he can think of. The man still doesn't sound too worried, but that doesn't mean shit. I refuse to play poker with him because he's either emotionless or furious."

"There's got to be another reason, right? Human trafficking, fuck. How will we find Rooke and Pay?" I've been really level headed up until now. I had to be to make sure that Cal didn't go off half-cocked. That was before, though. Pre-Mafia, before I realized how much of my life is a lie.

Now, I'm spiraling.

“We’re getting them back,” Cal says, grabbing my head to make me look at him. “You’ve kept me calm. You’re allowed to lose your shit. Don’t borrow trouble, though. Dad needs Pay alive, Nate. That’s what I’m holding onto right now. I’m going to call Dad and show some interest in some meetings he has coming up. See if he invites me along in the interest of grooming his future heir.”

“Mafia heir.” Kian sneezes, and as ridiculous as it is, my lips twitch.

“And then what?” I ask, feeling weary of the rollercoaster of emotions I’ve been feeling. “I need to see our next moves. I thought I was fine just winging it, but I can’t. Not now that I know what’s on the line.”

“I’m going to find out what’s in these warehouses,” Kian says, lifting the deeds. “We’ll keep you in the loop now that you know more, okay? Naïveté isn’t doing you any favors anymore.”

“I appreciate that,” I mutter. I feel like I’m going to be sick as I think about everything that could be happening to Patience. I really wish that things could go back to the way it was two weeks ago.

Everything was perfect back then.

# Chapter Five



## TWO WEEKS LATER

Time has gone by steadily, and a lot of it is spent in the cage. My thoughts whirl with what ifs, but I refuse to cry again. Tears aren't going to help Rooke, me, or anyone in here with us. Instead, I fold them all away tightly in a box to look at later, when I'm safe with the people that I love. I need to be strong now, which means that I can't indulge in sadness, or self loathing, or guilt.

Fuck, there's so much guilt to stuff away and hide. There's been so much wasted time between Kian, Cal, and I. I wish I'd made Ki see me as someone that he could have a relationship with, instead of fighting me every step of the way. I wish I had done so many things differently. If I had tried harder to figure out what my father was killed for, or been more careful, maybe I wouldn't be here.

There have been more performances for the camera, both with Rooke and solo. I almost prefer the solo work, because I can pretend I'm at work as I work a vibrator or butt plug for the men in the room. It's no less degrading when they grab my ass to expose me more, but I can pretend to be someone else in those moments.

It's not perfect, but I'm just trying to survive here. I'll put all of the broken parts of me together once we're free, and hope that they fit back together again. This is yet another dream, but it's one that's helping me through.

Rooke's whiskey eyes see too much when we perform together, his whispered apologies pierce my heart, and it's hard to keep the tears at bay in those moments. Having sex with him reminds me of better times, happier times, and it feels like sludge that's trying to infect my memories. It's at those times that I want to burn the world down for both of us.

Isabella has come into the holding area a few times, speaking harsh words and insults. She's training some of the teens that are in the cage with us for service, and it makes my

stomach turn every time she pulls them out by their hair, yelling obscenities. They're so young.

Some cry for mothers that they'll probably never see again, sometimes in another language. Others are more stoic, simply gritting their teeth against the pain. I wonder what other horrors those girls have seen in their short lives.

I, unfortunately, usually see her after a scene while I'm half-drugged.

"Look at you, whore," she snarls, after sending everyone out of the room under the guise of training me for the camera. Pulling my hair back roughly, she smacks me across the face. "All of this beauty is a sin against God. You flash your breasts and pussy for strange men, and you deserve all the cruelties this life has to give you. I promise there will be many. I have big plans for you."

Isabella is pretty, in an older woman type of way, but her crazy makes her ugly. I can tell by her words that she's jealous, and sometimes she'll slip and call me Chastity. I don't know who this girl is, but I wish for her sake that she is far away from here.

Isabella's insane and appears to be someone everyone obeys. No one said a word about the bright red handprint on my face as I left the room. As she appears to be so religious, I hope there's a fiery pit in Hell for her.

"Hey," Rooke whispers, touching my face. "Tonight is going to be hard, Spider told me. Are you ready for this?"

Rooke seems to have this special connection with Spider. It's not at all sexual, but the man with the kind, amber eyes will always try to make sure we have basic clothing in the cages.

Spider is a little kinder than the other guards when he escorts me to my performances, and I never end up with bruises from how rough the guards tend to be.

He also attempts to tell Rooke when something in our routine is about to change.



“As ready as I can be,” I whisper back. Rooke’s lips capture mine, and it’s hard, desperate, yet filled with love. I haven’t known this man for long, but his soul speaks to mine.

I’ve seen the dark moments, and now I’m sharing some of them too. It’s extremely humbling to go through an experience like this with someone, knowing no one else will know what this is like.

It’s strangely bonding, so I cling to his arms as we kiss.

“I love you so much, baby girl,” he murmurs into my hair as he kisses me. “We’ll be okay, I promise.”

This feels more like a prayer than a promise, and I hold him tightly. I can’t break, so I force myself to breathe, pushing back the fear and anger. I hold onto the love I have for him so he’ll hear the truth of my words. “I love you so much, Rooke.”

“I love you too, Pay. Remember, no matter what, I’m here.”

God, what’s going to happen today? I almost wish that he’d tell me, but then I wouldn’t be able to stop thinking about it. Ignorance may be bliss in this respect.

I lose track of time as I hold Rooke’s hand while we wait. Spider chained him next to me today, and I also take this as the kind gesture that it is. It also scares the shit out of me in equal measure, because today is going to be really bad.

“Let’s go!” two men say, opening the door to our cage. Quickly letting go of each other’s hands, we spring apart. There are rules against fraternizing outside of the parameters they’ve set for us. Meaning they want to get paid when we fuck.

They unchain me first, and I’m yanked onto my feet. I force myself to not look back, because I hate how rough they are. I don’t trust myself to keep control of my face. I have to be emotionless. I’ll let myself experience it all when I’m safe.

This is the first time that I haven’t been drugged, and I’m kind of missing it. Does this mean I have a problem? The girls in charge of dressing me shove me into the shower and scrub, shave, and clean my hair. There’s a detachable shower head,

and I swear I had water shoved into places that shocked even me. These women are very thorough.

Next, my hair is dried, curled, and sprayed. I'm confused as to why they're putting so much effort into my appearance, because they never have before. A corset that boosts my breasts while still leaving them bared is laced and tightened until I can barely breathe. They don't bother with panties, but shove my feet into thigh-high, high-heeled boots. I feel like Fuck-Me Barbie right now.

Thank God I can walk well in stilettos.

"Go now," one of the women says, looking at me critically. There's a look of sadness in her eyes, and I wonder if she knows what is going to happen to me. By the looks of it, it appears to be another performance, but they spent way too much time preparing me for this not to be something different.

Standing, I see Spider leaning against the wall watching me. The familiar face makes me walk immediately toward him, even though I know that he'll do whatever they tell him to. He holds out a pill without saying a word, and I bite my lip as my eyes move from his face to the pill worriedly.

"You have to take it," he says calmly and softly, as if it's just us having a normal conversation.

My heart is thundering as I think more and more about it. "Why?" I ask softly.

"It'll be easier, and now we're out of time," Spider says. Plugging my nose as he shoves my head back, every movement is calm, yet so incredibly calculated. Shoving the pill in my mouth, he holds my mouth shut. "Swallow."

Unable to breathe, I swallow, shuddering. As soon as I do, he releases me, pulling me to stumble after him. Spider worked so quickly I didn't even have a chance to cry.

"That wasn't so hard," he mutters. "Tonight is going to be different. You're going to perform in front of a live audience, and the pill is going to make you crave touch. Do you understand, Patience?"

“Yes,” I respond. I feel warm. It’s not uncomfortable yet, but I’m highly aware of where Spider is touching me. I want him to touch me more. “Wow... What was that pill, anyway?”

“Fuck,” he mutters. “At least it’s working. We’re almost there, and then you’ll get what you want, okay? I can not and will not fuck you, so just wait.”

Nodding, I shiver as my clit starts to throb. The effects are like three different sex enhancement drugs at once. Do they make their own drugs here, too? They give us all enough that I feel like it would be a solid investment.

My mind is wandering, but my footsteps are a lot more sure. My hips sway seductively as I walk, and I feel like a sex goddess. One that needs a dick inside of me right now.

“How much do you need a cock inside of you?” Spider asks. He doesn’t usually speak to me like this, and if I wasn’t high right now, I’d question it. We’re at a set of stairs, but I can’t see where it leads. “Patience.”

Oh... he asked me a question. “Dick,” I mutter. “Right now sounds really good.”

“Good girl.” He sighs. “Walk up those steps and you’ll find Rooke, okay?”

“Yes,” I murmur, already walking up the stairs. I vaguely hear Spider muttering to himself about forgiveness and God, but I don’t have the time to worry about that. Rooke is waiting for me.

At the top of the stairs I see Rooke in a glass cage, and a man walks me inside. My eyes are just on Rooke for right now. I’m certain he took something as well, because he’s naked outside of leather straps that criss-cross his chest.

Running toward him, I jump into his arms, wrapping my legs around his waist as I kiss him hard. “Mine,” I mutter as I grind over his thick cock.

“How much do you want my cock, baby girl?” he growls into my ear as he wraps his hand in my hair and yanks my head back as he kisses and sucks down my neck.

At this angle I can see that the glass cage is on a stage of sorts and there's people down below. The sight should scare me as I watch them leer at me, but I can't think of anything else when Rooke sucks on my wildly pounding pulse in my neck.

"Please, please," I beg, searching for friction.

"Patience," he says, chuckling darkly at the pun. There's a spanking bench in front of a glass window that faces the crowd, and he lays me down. "I need to taste your pretty pussy."

Whimpering just fuels his lust, and he shoves me up the bench so that my head dangles off it. Pushing my thighs up to my chest, he takes a leisurely lick up my core.

"So fucking sweet," he growls before he's devouring my pussy. Moaning, all I can do is dig my fingers into the leather of the bench as he eats me out. "Hold your legs up for me like a good little whore, baby girl."

Immediately, I move my hands to grab my thighs, holding myself open for Rooke. His words make me hotter, and I know he wouldn't usually speak to me like this. The drugs are making us do things that are out of character.

Moaning as he pushes his fingers inside me, I arch into his mouth as he sucks on my clit. Since my head is tilted back, the world is upside down. I can't see faces like this, and my eyes drift closed under the intensity of sensations. A slap on my breast makes my eyes pop open with a gasp.

"I can still see your face. Don't close your eyes, baby girl," Rooke commands. "How badly do you want to come?"

"Right... now!" I scream as he crooks his fingers inside of me and pinches my clit. I explode for him, holding my thighs tightly, as if it'll help hold myself together. Instead, tears leak slightly and I gasp as I come. Everything is so much more intense like this.

I barely get to catch my breath before he pulls me up into a sitting position as he sucks on his fingers. "Open," Rooke grunts, swiping his fingers along my arousal to gather it up. As

I open my mouth, he pushes his fingers into it. “Suck me clean before you suck my cock, baby.”

Doing as I’m told leads to orgasms today, so I leave my inner brat behind as I suck and lick his fingers. I moan as I taste myself and Rooke grins proudly. We are ignoring the outside world, but I know that’ll only last so long.

Grabbing my hair, he pulls me to my feet. Walking me to the glass, Rooke pushes me onto my knees as he fists his cock from base to tip. Precum is already threatening to spill from his slit, and I stick my tongue out as if to catch it.

“So fucking greedy. Come here, baby girl,” Rooke murmurs. I don’t know if they can hear us, but I pretend that they can’t. This is keeping me in the moment, and not thinking about all of the people watching us fuck. Leaning up, I suck on the head of his dick, rolling my tongue back and forth to catch all of his salty sweetness.

A thrust of his hips has him hurtling down my throat, and I gag. Rooke has a thick dick, and I feel so very full as I force myself to drop my head back to take all of him. Rooke rocks back and forth, moaning as he fucks my face. I can start to hear the yelling on the other side of the glass, something I couldn’t before.

*Stay with Rooke.*

As if knowing my thoughts, he squeezes my throat with his hand, making me stay in the here and now as he steals my breath. It helps more than he realizes as I shudder. My skin is tingling, my toes are curling, and I shove my fingers inside of my tight pussy, fucking myself. I need to come.

Rooke pulls out of my mouth so quickly I’m left whimpering, drool still connecting us for a moment.

“Hands on the glass, baby,” Rooke grunts, his jaw jutting in that direction. “I got you, but you have to do it.”

I must have hesitated for longer than I thought, because I force myself to move. Legs open, I place my hands on the glass. I can vaguely see Rooke moving in the glare of the light off the glass, but I’m still surprised when leather cuffs close

over my ankles. A snap thrusts my feet so far apart that I gasp, bracing myself on the glass.

Rooke's large hands lift me so that my tits are pressed against the glass, as is the side of my face. Smacking my ass, he grins evilly, and I know he's going to fuck me hard and fast. I want, no I need him. My skin is covered in a light sweat, and I know part of it is the drugs in my system. I feel as if I'm going to combust, and my heart is pounding with anticipation.

Feeling his dick line up with my core, I gasp, and he pushes himself inside of me. His hand fists my hair again, winding around it. Pulling it back, he fucks me as he holds my head so I can look out at the crowd.

I know this is on purpose, but I can't bring myself to care. His cock is stretching me in the best ways, and my mouth opens in a moan. "You're so damn tight," he growls. I'm slightly off balance as he fucks into me and I have to trust that the glass cage will hold our combined weight. I'm sure the crowd is getting quite the show right now of me in my corset and no panties splayed open wide.

Rooke's other hand finds my clit, and I squeal as his thrusts force my body up the glass as he fucks me. There's a disturbance out in the crowd and there are fists flying. As Rooke fucks me, giving me what my body is craving, I'm still left wondering why the fuck people are fighting at something like this.

However, people are hot heads and that's never going to change.

My legs are trembling as I get closer and closer to my release. "Rooke, I'm so close," I whimper. He rubs my clit faster as he fucks me hard against the glass, and I gasp in relief. Just a little more...

A man looks up at the stage, and my body stiffens. Rooke misunderstands me, whispering encouragement for me to come on his cock. I know the man with salt and pepper hair and gray eyes. He was a regular of mine from the club.

Why is he here?

Rooke is working hard to get me to come, and my body gives up, giving him his reward as I scream, coming apart just for him.

KIAN

I'm tired of hitting brick walls. The warehouses were empty when I went to look at them, but the deeds were years old so it makes sense. However, they could have easily been used to hold guns or drugs. I know Pay's grandfather has his fingers dipped into many different pies, and I think he thinks that it means he's less likely to get caught.

I hate that he's right.

My phone rings as I stand in my apartment, staring outside trying to untangle the web we seem to be in. Like clockwork, Richard is calling me again.

"Good afternoon, Richard," I greet him. "To what do I owe this honor?"

I'm being a dick, but I'm frustrated. I'm not against pushing him into blowing up at me. Maybe he'll actually give me some answers. I miss my baby girl, and I'm not the same man without her.

*"You really are a miserable bastard without my granddaughter,"* he grumbles. *"I think I have some information, but I need to see you. Tit for tat is how this works, boy."*

More damn errand boy shit. Come to think of it, I haven't seen my father recently. I'll need to talk to Richard about where he is. I hope he's okay. A stab of guilt hits me as I realize that I've forgotten all about him recently. I need to be sure to do better; it's just that life revolves around Pay now.

"Yes, sir. What do you want me to do?" I ask, resigned.

*"So you're done sniping at me now?"* he chuckles. Richard James smells blood in the water and is circling. He just doesn't understand that I'm done caring. I would cut myself open for this girl if I thought that it would help.

"I'm worried about Patience, sir, and it's affecting everything right now. She's my step-sister—"



*“We all know that you don’t have any brotherly or familial feelings for my granddaughter, so cut the shit, Kian,”* Richard James says. I can almost see his eyes rolling now. *“There’s a very important business woman coming into town that enjoys special tastes. I think you would do well to entertain her.”*

As a Korean man, it’s not the first time that I’ve played the doting date to a spoiled princess for Richard, but my anxiety is so ramped up that it’ll be harder for me to keep my cool. I hate being touched lately; my skin feels too tight, and my temper heats easily.

This isn’t me. I’m cool, collected, and have plans made. Except now... the plans have all been set on fire with Patience’s kidnapping. I know she wouldn’t have left without us.

“Alright,” I grunt. I have no other choice in this. “Where am I meeting her?”

*“She wants to meet at Abstinence. It’s one of the smaller sex clubs that she runs, somewhere intimate where she can have a bit of fun. Her name is Isabella, and her job is a bit... stressful. Show her a good time, Kian. You know how to do that, right? Eight on the dot tonight. Come to the house once you’re done.”* Richard hangs up the phone while I gawp at it.

I’ve never been to a sex club before, Patience is the one who enjoys letting loose while dominating others. I have no idea what the hell to expect.

A text comes through as I’m worrying, and I roll my eyes. Good old Richard James coming in clutch with the last words.

Richard James: Make sure you dress to impress, boy. Don’t fuck this up.

Groaning in frustration, I throw my phone on the couch behind me, choosing to ignore him. I have my instructions. I no longer have any need to speak with him until I’ve completed his directive.

Stalking into my bathroom, I prepare for a “date” that I have no intention of enjoying. If I was ever going to go on a

date to a sex club, I would want it to be with Pay. I have a lot of regrets about keeping her a secret, but Richard was never supposed to find out about it. I was doing this to protect her, and I couldn't even do that.

My thoughts dark, I take one last glance in the mirror. My short black hair is slicked back with product, my suit impeccable and expensive. I'm jumping through all of these hoops on the off chance that Richard James actually has a solid lead.

Rolling my eyes at the perfect fantasy I'm creating for this woman, I grab my car keys, wallet, and dig my phone out of the couch cushions. As I leave my home, I'm reminded that I have people who depend on me now outside of Pay.

Me: I have some errands to run tonight, and I'm hunting down a lead. I'll be by the house if anything pans out. It may be late.

Almost immediately, I can see the bubbles pop up that say Cal's texting me. He's really surprised me these last few weeks. While he's still an angry individual, Cal is fully invested in doing anything and everything to get Rooke and Patience back.

Cal: No matter how late, just come over. You have the key. Wake us up if we're passed out.

None of us have been sleeping well, but we're all struggling to keep up appearances. While Cal is within his rights to play the worried fiancé, the rest of us don't have that ability. Nixen has already started insisting that his prodigal son begin coming into the office to work again.

Thankful for good skin care and no bags under my eyes, I climb into the car after sending Cal a thumbs up sign to show that I got the message. I don't have the emotional energy to give him anymore right now.

*Abstinence* is an interesting name for a sex club, but I suppose that it is very tongue-in-cheek. The building is a brownstone with a black door at the top of the stairs. It's pretty

nondescript, and you'd only be able to find it if you knew where it was.

On my way here, Richard messaged me a password, insistent that I'd need it for entry into the club. As I park the car, I blow out an annoyed breath. I feel as if I'm playing a game of cloak and dagger, except I don't know where all the daggers are, so I'm constantly being cut.

Getting out of the car, I walk to the brownstone and slowly climb the stairs. As I raise my fist to knock on the door, it starts to open. A giant of a man stands on the other side, an immovable boulder in my way.

"Who may enter?" he asks, his midnight blue eyes staring deeply into me.

"Only sinners, spare the Angel," I respond softly.

"Have a good night, sir," he says, letting me in. "This young lady right here will be taking you to the Bosslady."

A girl who appears to be barely eighteen waits for me, dressed in a leather harness and nothing else. I force myself to look at her eyes, because she's so damn young. Straps criss-cross over her thighs, around her waist, and under breasts. Otherwise, she's practically naked. I incline my head to her, showing that I'm willing to follow her.

The girl nods, turning to walk through the crowd. As I follow her, I see that the straps are tightly buckled over the globes of her ass as well. Fuck, I can feel the bile rising as I see how young some of the other girls are here, and I force myself to swallow.

There's music in the club, but it's low and in the background. Men and women talk in booths that are partially hidden from the main floor, and there's a woman straddling and kissing another woman in a tiny leather outfit. There appears to be every vice and fantasy come true here.

The girl points to a booth, and I thank her as I take a seat. There's a woman who is already seated, and I take a moment to look at her. She preens, thinking that I'm taken with her.

However, the long blonde hair, perfect body, and baby blues only enforce how shallow she must be to insist on my presence here.

“Isabella?” I ask with a slow, shy smile. Every word will be fabricated to make me look like the innocent Korean man that she can pervert and manipulate however she wishes.

“You must be Kian,” she purrs. She’s a few years older than me, and watching me with a predatory glint in her eyes. “I’m so glad that you weren’t busy and had time for little ol’ me.”

Ha. I made time, because when Richard James demands something, you immediately agree. He has things that I want, so I’ll agree to almost anything.

“It’s my pleasure,” I murmur, leaning to the side to allow my finger to rub the skin of her thigh. She’s wearing a black pencil skirt and a lilac long-sleeved top. Isabella looks oddly respectable, but her skin still pebbles and she shivers. “Did you know that I’ve never been to a sex club before?”

“Oh?” she asks, moving closer to me. I rest my arm on the cushions along the back of the booth, and Isabella takes this as an invitation. I would rather cut my limbs off than touch her for any reason other than duty. “I would love to give you a tour after we have a drink.”

“Isabella...” I trail off on a chuckle, looking down at her and faking the heat I push into my gaze. “Are you telling me you’re kinky?”

Shrugging, she motions for a waitress. “You learn a few tricks when you own a variety of sex clubs, Kian,” she says with a smile.

This city is known for its willingness to lose itself in pleasure, vice, and sex. I think that’s why it makes sense that the Mafia has such a strong standing here. I was initially very surprised, but I think that speaks more to my innocence at the time than anything else.

Isabella and I have a couple of drinks, and then she walks me through the club. There are observation rooms where

scenes can happen between consenting adults and she explains that they have to all sign waivers. People watch the scenes as they happen, and others move to create their own pleasure.

Opening a room, she walks me inside. I know she can't make me take this any farther than I want to, but I don't want to fuck up all the goodwill that I've built up so far.

There are whips, chains, various other toys, and an odd bench with cuffs that I recognize as a spanking bench.

"This is where people come to satisfy their cravings. Each room has different tastes and rules, and some of the rooms come with their own female or male dominant. There's something nice about just letting go of control, don't you think?" Isabella asks, closing the door.

I've played both roles with Pay, so I do know. There is something nice about relinquishing control, but I only do it when I'm on her shit list. Otherwise, Patience James is mine to control, but always with her permission.

Isabella sits on the spanking bench, her skirt bunching up her thighs.

"Tell me a fantasy," she murmurs, unbuttoning her shirt. Why are these rich, older women such closet perverts?

"I... don't have any," I lie, shrugging. "I've never really experimented before."

Opening her shirt, her breasts bounce free as she undoes the front clasp of her bra. Grabbing my hand, I can tell she's going to make me touch her. Please, I'd rather do anything other than that.

My cock is uninterested and limp; there's not even a twitch. I'm broken for anyone except the light in my life. Patience is it for me.

I feel like I'm watching a train wreck about to happen the closer my hand gets to her. Isabella is just pressing my hand against her tit when there's a knock on the door. I release the breath I've been holding as I look over my shoulder.

“Should I...?” I act as awkward as I feel, holding a palmful of Isabella’s breast with someone waiting at the door. It would almost be comical if I didn’t want to get away so badly.

“Yes, please get that.” She sighs, releasing my hand. I glance down as I turn, and I can see that she’s left nail indentations in my skin.

Holding back my disgust as I walk to the door, I notice that she’s hurriedly dressing. Taking my time to ensure she’s fully dressed –because I’m a gentleman– I open the door as she rises.

“Miss Isabella?” a nervous girl asks, biting her lip. I quickly realize that she’s terrified to be standing here, making me wonder if Isabella is an abusive employer.

“Yes, Aria,” she says, walking over to her.

“There’s a matter that needs your attention. I tried to handle it on my own, but—”

“It’s better to come to me with questions,” Isabella says with a fake, calm smile. I feel badly for this girl, because I don’t think that her boss is going to go easy on her. On the other hand, she saved me from Isabella’s pushiness. “It appears that I’m needed, Kian. I’ll have someone escort you out, but maybe I can see you again the next time that I’m in town?”

I would rather shove razor blades under my eyelids, but I nod instead. “Absolutely. Richard has my number,” I murmur as I say goodbye. Following the man asked to escort me out, I take a deep breath as I walk out into the night air.

All I want to do is scrub my skin, but I’m not done for tonight. Picking up my phone, I text Richard that I’ve finished my task and expect to be rewarded.

Richard James: There’s an envelope on the front seat of your car. Time is running out to find my granddaughter, Kian. Get to work.

Son of a bitch! I want to scream as I walk quickly to my car, finding a thick envelope on the passenger seat. Deciding to press my luck, I decide to ask Richard another question.

Me: Have you seen my father lately? I wanted to check in with him.

Richard James: Calm down, Tae is in Italy currently. Stop worrying so much and go find Patience. You've been wanting this information so badly. Don't make me think love has made you stupid. Here's a photo to prove he's fine. I'm sure he'll call you if he wants to speak to you.

A photo pops up of my father eating dinner with Patience's mom. They're laughing at something, but it makes a rock form in my stomach. The photo was taken by a surveillance camera and was sent to me as a black and white photo. Richard is watching my father, reminding me of the stranglehold that he has on our family.

Getting into the car, I don't bother opening the package. No more secrets. I'll open it with Cal and Nate. We can work through the contents together to find Patience. My family is Pay and the guys; my father has made his bed.

It's time to bring Pay home. Nothing is the same without her.

## Chapter Six



I need to finally confront my dad about what's going on. It should be Cal because he's getting married to her, but I hate that I don't remember the time I passed out.

The only time that I can confront Dad is at his office. The man is constantly at the office, or working in some way. In fact, the secretary tells me that he's finishing a phone call when I arrive. I have my piercings in because they're my security blanket in a sense. They're the only way that people can usually tell Cal and I apart. I need individuality right now.

I want to be me.

I'm secretly hoping it'll piss my dad off, and maybe make him more likely to say things he wouldn't normally.

"Nate, your father will see you now," Georgina, my father's secretary, says.



“Thank you,” I murmur, standing to follow her. I force myself to be polite, even as she walks incredibly slowly through the hallway. My mother taught me to be polite to others without fault, even when I want to strangle them.

Finally, she knocks on my father’s door, opening it when he yells for me to come in. Shaking out my hands, I force myself to look calmer than I am. After everything that I’ve found out about him, I’m seeing him in a brand new light. Every word, hug, and conversation I’ve ever had with him is being called into question. My father was nicer to me than Cal, but I never understood why.

Maybe it’s because I’m the throwaway heir. Dad didn’t throw a fit when I went to the UK for school, instead he acted proud of me. I’m having a hard time meshing who I thought that he was with who he really is.

“Hello, son,” Dad says with a wide smile as I walk in. I always took this smile at face value, but now I’m questioning everything.

This smile is a tad predatory if I really force myself to evaluate it, and it makes me mourn my innocence for a moment. I can’t allow myself to take any more than this, because the girl I love is gone.

“Hi, Dad. I figured I’d come and see how you were. Maybe also take an interest in the family business,” I say as I sit down in front of him.

“Oh? I’m glad to hear that,” he murmurs as he returns to his seat. “Simon’s daughter, Silvia, is still really wanting you to take her on a date. This would be a big step in helping the company.”

“How?” I ask, brow furrowing. “I know you want me to marry her, but I don’t understand how that helps you or the company.”

“Every alliance made between families means that it is harder to walk away if we are bound together. It’s why Patience and Cal are bound by contract to get married,” Dad explains.

It makes me sick to my stomach that he's moving people on a chessboard the way that he is.

He doesn't seem to care that he's taking away our free will, so long as he's solidifying bonds for the mafia. God, things are starting to make so much sense now.

"Speaking of Patience," I begin, seeing my opportunity. "Do you know where she is? I haven't seen her in weeks. I think even Cal is starting to get worried. I'm a little concerned for my friend."

Dad rolls his eyes. "Do you really think that I haven't noticed you panting over that girl? She belongs to Cal and you need to grow up. Take the date with Silvia. May I suggest a vegan, or whatever she is, restaurant? Be an asset and help me solidify our position in this company," he demands.

"Doesn't Patience's disappearance hurt the company?" I ask, changing gears. There is no way in hell that I am taking that wretched woman on a date.

Leaning his head on his fist, he stares at me. "Maybe you are just worried on your brother's behalf, but he's perfectly capable of asking for himself," Dad scoffs. "Stop doing your brother's dirty work to keep the peace. You've always done this. It makes you the weaker twin, Nathaniel." I wince at that name.

Staring at him, I force myself to ignore his biting comment. Cal was right to keep me from this world, though I wish that I could have helped him. Now I'm going to step into my place. I'm done running. And so I sit in silence, waiting him out.

My father hates sitting in silence. It's the reason he's the loudest voice in the room. He thinks it makes him powerful.

It doesn't.

"Fine! I will indulge you in this if you agree to go on a date with the girl. I will be there the entire time with her father, and you have to actually make an effort," he demands. Ugh, I will do anything for Patience, even date someone else. How fucked up is that?

“Done,” I grunt, feeling as if I am signing my future away in a sense. It’s only a date. It’s nothing permanent.

“Patience is currently throwing a tantrum,” my father lies. Fucker. “I saw her as she was packing her bags when I visited the house. I wanted to see how everyone was faring. Imagine my surprise when Patience James flounced out of the house cursing the James’ name?”

I know he’s lying, because Patience would never leave without saying goodbye. I know this as much as I know that she loves baking and dominating people. I’ve managed to underestimate my father. I thought he’d play fair.

Keeping my back straight, I refuse to back down.

“Patience wouldn’t just leave after signing the contract,” I remind him. His smile dims a little as he realizes that I know about the contract. “The company is important to her.”

“Yes, yes. The little bitch is young and stupid. She got cold feet, which isn’t my problem. I’m sure that she’ll come to her senses and find a way to warm her feet up,” he says dismissively. “We shouldn’t be meddling in Cal and his future bride’s business, after all. They’ll figure it out.”

“Dad.” I sigh.

“She will come back!” My father screams, the veins bulging in his neck. I’m stunned, eyes wide. I’m surprised he didn’t just give himself an aneurysm.

“Yes, sir,” I mutter.

“Now, let’s talk about the date you’re going on,” he says, once again looking relaxed with a smile.

My father is a psychopath, and I’m just finally realizing it.

Numbly, I listen to my father, not one step closer to finding Patience.

ROOKE

Isabella grabbed Esme by the hair and threw her into a wall because she was crying. I'm very protective, and I lost my damn mind.

"Leave her alone," I roar, fighting against my chains. Patience isn't in the cage, and unfortunately she's the only one who would be able to calm me down.

Isabella turns to me with a predatory smile. "Such a big, strong, tough man. I'll have you know that it is my God given right to train you all," she says. This woman is batshit crazy. Kicking me in the thigh, she digs her heel into it.

Grunting with pain, I close my eyes against it. I would rather take the brunt of her anger over Esme any day. A hard series of slaps force my eyes open, and this damned woman's ring catches me above the eye.

As it bleeds, running into my eyes, and I blink furiously. I miss Isabella signaling the guards to bring me down out of my chains.

As they drag me out, I can see the fear in the women's eyes around me. I keep my mouth shut because I know I can't bring them hope. This place is where hope goes to die.

One of the guards punches me so hard my head flies back. I spit blood in his face, for once no longer caring about the consequences. Countless punches and kicks begin, and I'm thrown on the ground as they beat the shit out of me.

Finally, common sense starts to filter through and I find the will to curl into a ball, protecting my head.

"Isabella!" I hear Spider yell. "The Bossman wants to know what all the noise is about."

Mumbling to herself, I hear panic in her voice. "Stop!" she yells. My eye is swollen, so I can barely see her as I lay helpless on the ground. I know I look like a damn mess. "Take

him into one of the side rooms, Spider, and make sure the idiot lives. Take one of the girls to help you.”

Heels click across the concrete floor as she rushes out of the room, and Spider hauls me up.

“What the fuck were you thinking?” he groans.

As I pass out, the last thing I see is Patience’s panicked face.



“ROOKE,” Pay hisses, and I can feel a cool cloth on my neck. “Come on, baby. Open your pretty eyes so I can yell at you for being an idiot.”

That’s my girl. Chuckles force me to open my eyes, but they trigger a hacking cough. Spider is with us in a concrete room and helps me sit up.

“You gave us quite the scare.” Spider sighs. “Did you really have to poke the beast?”

“She threw Esme into a wall and I lost my mind,” I explain. “How is she?”

“A few bumps, but she’s a lot better off than you are. You probably saved her life,” Spider grumbles. “Yeah, it was a noble thing, but that shit gets you killed here, and you damn well know it. You’re not new here.”

“I know. She’s just a fucking kid,” I complain. My head is killing me and my ribs hurt, too.

“Spider managed to get you some pain meds for your head,” Pay says, breaking the tension. Handing the tablets to me with a bottle of water, she stares at me hard. “You did a very noble thing, but he’s right. I would die without you, Rooke. You can’t do stuff like that.”

Nodding, I grunt an apology as I take the medication. “I’m sorry, baby. You’re right, it just felt wrong to let someone so little get beaten up by an adult.”

“I know,” Spider sighs. “Sometimes you have to make the coward’s choice in order to live another day. Isabella is really pissed I stopped her, but the Bossman really was asking about her.”

Pay cleans my eyebrow, and Spider gives the cut stitches. Damn, Isabella’s ring really worked me over good.

I’m in and out of things after I’m all cleaned up, but I can hear Pay and Spider talking.

“Can I ask you a question?” Pay asks Spider. I know that tone, and it means that my girl is about to decimate this man in this round of questions and answers.

“You can ask,” he says. “I reserve the right to not answer, though.”

“That’s fair,” Pay says, getting comfortable. “Why are you a guard here? You seem to hate everything that this place stands for. I don’t understand it.”

“Sometimes you get asked to do impossible things, even when it’s against your morals,” Spider says softly. “I don’t have a choice in being here. Just know that I’m trying to help in my own way.”

“That’s awfully cryptic,” she sasses. It reminds me of how she usually acts, and I know we’re going to get through this.

“I am part of a society, and the night I became an initiate was the best night of my life. I bonded to my brothers, my girlfriend, and the man I love,” Spider says, waiting for judgment.

“I have a boyfriend and a Patience,” I slur. I realize what I said, but I’m too tired to fix it.

“Yes, you do,” Pay just says, rubbing my knee. Funny enough, it’s one of the least painful places on my body at the moment. “Spider, love who you want, Rooke and I are the last people to tell you what to do with your life.”

“You don’t think it’s wrong and an abomination to God?” I want to hug him or something, because there’s not a damn thing wrong with him. I’m too sore to move, though.

“No,” I deny, wincing at the pain. “I think God wants us to be happy, and gives us hearts capable of a lot of love.”

Pay smiles softly as she agrees.

“So, you came here because someone told you to? This seems like a pretty shitty job... unless you’re trying to shut it down?” Pay asks hopefully.

Smiling sadly, Spider shakes his head. “No, that’s not my mission. At least, not yet. I’m gathering information, finding out what makes the Bossman tick. I’m getting closer, though.”

“Is that why you’re so nice to us?” Pay asks softly.

“Rooke reminds me of someone I know, and I felt instantly connected to him in a platonic way,” he says hurriedly. I know what he means so I give him a nod.

“I felt connected, too. I couldn’t put my finger on why, though,” I explain.

“Sometimes you don’t need to. You just have to fly on faith,” Pay shrugs.

“Fuck, I could use more faith,” Spider sighs. “I’m a bit of a hot head. I kick it’s ass first, and then ask questions later. I’m working on it. It almost cost me someone really important to me.”

“Almost means that there’s a chance,” Pay says cautiously.

“Maybe. I had to leave her when my favor was called in, and I don’t know if she’ll ever forgive me. I really messed things up,” Spider says.

“You can fix it. How long are you going to need to pay your dues?” I ask.

“As long as it takes. I sure as shit can’t leave you two here alone. You’re menaces.”

My lips twitch, because my split decision to help Esme wasn’t smart, but I couldn’t stand by allowing her to be hurt.

“Thank you for helping us,” Patience says softly, staring at her feet. “It’s in the little things, but it makes all of the bullshit

easier. I think someone I know saw me during one of the performances, Spider.”

“Who,” I rasp, wincing as I cough. Patience stands, giving me a sip of water. Even though it’s lukewarm, it helps my scratchy throat.

“I had a Diamond Client at *Fantasies*, a BDSM club I worked at, and we always spoke and just shot the shit for a while after our sessions. He was a businessman who lost his wife, and I always felt bad for his loss,” she explains.

Spider glances at her, surprised, and Patience merely shrugs. She has such a big heart.

“I don’t know his name. For privacy reasons, he never gave it to me. I never minded, and there’s a lot of private information that he gave me that made him feel like a friend. Anyway, the poor man was shocked when he saw me getting fucked in that cage.” Pay sighs. “I don’t know if he’ll say anything, but I’m not a smart choice to be kidnapped. I worked in the sex industry, it was only a matter of time before I was recognized.”

“That’s bad luck for Isabella,” Spider says, his lips twitching. “I hope he does say something. She’s become more and more unhinged in some of her business dealings recently. The woman has many different sex clubs, but this one is the one that could topple her empire.”

“Why are you telling us this?” I ask. I have started considering Spider a friend of sorts, but I know his allegiance lies with those that he owes a favor to. It’s the entire reason why he stays here as a guard and does disgusting things for Isabella and the Bossman.

“You won’t be here forever,” he says cryptically. “Isabella is working on something big, but isn’t telling me shit. I’ll keep working on it.”

As Spider gets up and leaves, and my mind whirls with questions. Patience gets up to lay next to me, and exhaustion carries me away. Getting the shit beat out of me sapped my



strength. Patience plays with my hair as I fall asleep, but I can tell there's a lot on her mind.

## Chapter Seven



“The fact that you’re forcing me to go to school right now, when my fiancée is missing, is just making you look more guilty,” I hiss as my dad gives me a glare.

Nate is in the car waiting for me, but I know he’s not happy about it either.

“Enough, Cal. Get your ass in the car and go to school before you miss your first class. Patience isn’t missing. She probably just ran off. Wedding jitters and all that. I’m sure she will come back eventually. If not, then the company will just be yours,” he says with an evil grin, and I clench my teeth.

It feels more and more as if he’s the reason why my fiancée is gone. My father keeps repeating the same song and dance that Patience ran away. But if that’s true, then where’s Rooke? They sure as hell didn’t run off together and leave us all. There’s no way.

Forcing myself to get into the car, I scowl. I'm angry. I want to burn the world down and say fuck the consequences, but I can't. My father is holding so many lives in his hands, and he wouldn't hesitate to fuck up Nate's future if it meant getting me to fall in line.

So yes, I make the drive to school and I even walk through the doors. However, my brain is entirely checked out after that. I can't tell you how I got to class, what was taught, or why I was even there. Dad demanded it, but he didn't say I needed to do anything other than attend.

I miss Pay and Rooke so much that it hurts to breathe. Little things keep reminding me of them. Like the fact that Rooke would want to fuck me into submission when I'm pissed off. Pay would tease me, flirt with me, and force me to stop being a dick by relieving me until I'm in a better mood.

*Well, I'm tired of being alone, baby girl. I promise to be a good person, smile more, and love you the way you deserve for the rest of our lives... if only you come back. It's like my heart has been ripped from my chest, and I'm being forced to live anyway.*

Breathing hurts, and now I'm in the gym, beating the punching bag so hard that I'm worried it'll bust open.

"Cal, stop," Nate puts his hand on my shoulder, and I turn, forcing myself not to punch him. It's the adrenaline, but I would still feel badly if I accidentally gave him a black eye. "This isn't working. Do you want a fight? It'll give you an excuse to beat the shit out of someone."

"Yeah," I grunt. "I'm losing my mind right now. I just can't deal anymore. He took her, Nate. He's our fucking dad and he took her. I can't prove it, but the way he talks about Patience..."

"We don't know that," Nate mutters. There's this look in his eyes, though, and I can tell he's just trying to keep me calm. We can't afford to take our dad on right now. "Okay, I'm starting to have suspicions too, but why would he take Rooke?"

“He’s the only evidence that there’s something wrong with me.” I sigh. “I mean, I know now that the fact that I love Rooke isn’t wrong, but Dad will never accept it. I’m losing my fucking mind, Nate.”

Blowing out a breath, he hugs me hard. Clinging to him, I let myself feel the pain of not knowing where Rooke and Pay are for just a little while.

“Okay,” I rasp, pulling back to swipe the back of my hand under my eyes. The thought that they could be in completely separate places hits me and I see red. I think I would be okay if they were together to help each other, but what if they’re both alone?

Who will protect them? How will we find them? I swear, it feels like we’re chasing our tails. I can feel myself sliding into a deep depression.

“Where’d you go, bro?” Nate looks worried as he claps me on the shoulder.

Sighing, I shake my head. “I need to find a fight and beat the shit out of someone. Right now.”

Nate gives me a tight nod, grabbing his phone to start texting people. The fights always try to leave a space open for a big fighter, so I know that he’ll be able to find me a fight.

Grabbing a towel, I leave the gym, my mind moving a million miles an hour. I want to try to calm myself down so I don’t kill someone tonight, but it’s impossible.

Running up to my room to shower, I force myself to think about the future. In this alternate reality, Rooke is safe and I finally stop thinking about what my father thinks. Pulling off my clothes, I turn on the water. I know it’ll hurt when I go back to living in the real world, but I need to know there’s a chance at a future with Rooke and Patience.

I want to be spoiled by them while giving them everything they could ever want. I want to be the man that they deserve. As I think about the way their lips feel when I kiss them, how Rooke’s kisses are like we’re waging a battle, while Pay is soft and inviting, my cock starts to harden.

I've been broken since they disappeared. I lost them one after the other, and I have more questions than I do answers. Forcing my hand to fist myself at the root, I groan as the sensations roll through my body. The shower rains down on my body, making it feel as if someone is touching me, and I lean into the feeling. I'm starved for affection, and only want it from Pay and Rooke.

As I close my eyes, I imagine that Rooke is touching and stroking my cock. I can see his dirty-blond hair and beautiful whiskey eyes, and I almost reach out to touch him.

*"Come fuck Patience so I can take your tight ass," Rooke groans as his tongue licks me from base to tip.*

*"You're such a tease," I pant, wanting to be the filling in their sandwich more than anything.*

*"I swear to give you everything you could ever want," he promises. Pulling me to the bed, Pay sits up from where she's laying down. She looks gorgeous, healthy, her hair so thick that I want to run my fingers through it.*

*"I need you inside of me." She sighs. Climbing onto the bed, I'm suddenly naked, and I love this dream. Pushing her thighs open, I lick at her core.*

*"Fuck, baby, you taste so good," I moan.*

*"I want a taste too," Rooke chuckles as his large hands massage the globes of my ass. Oh, fuck yes.*

*Sucking on Pay's clit, I feel as if I'm flying high as her breaths start to come faster. Rooke spreads my ass cheeks, and starts to lick my tight hole. Groaning, I lay my head on Pay's stomach as I shudder.*

*"Cal, don't stop," she complains, making me smile.*

*"So greedy," I growl, pushing my fingers inside her tight pussy. "Fuck, you're always so wet and perfect."*

*Rooke spits between my cheeks, rubbing his fingers over my hole before pushing two fingers in.*

*"Oh, fuck," I whimper. It feels so damn good.*

*“Eat our baby girl’s pussy till she creams for us, and then I’ll give you my cock,” he croons as he strokes me.*

*I will do anything I need to make that happen, and this definitely isn’t a chore.*

*Licking, sucking, and finger fucking Patience James are some of my favorite activities. She holds tightly to my hair as I bury my face against her.*

*Her hips rock as her thighs tighten around my head.*

*“If he dies, he dies, baby girl. Drown him in your cum,” Rooke encourages. I huff in amusement, but I know she’s getting close. Rooke pushes a third finger inside of me, and while I know he doesn’t have to prep me, I know he is because he’s planning to be extra rough.*

*Fuck, I can’t wait.*

*Patience whimpers and I can feel her strangling my fingers. I graze my teeth along her clit as I lick and suck, and I know that she’s done. She shudders and screams as she comes hard.*

*“Such a good girl,” I gasp, lifting my head.*

*“More,” she insists, pulling on my hair. Hissing, I wait as Rooke removes his fingers from my ass so I can crawl up her body.*

*Pumping my cock, I line myself up with her pussy, pushing in with a thrust. We both hiss as I slowly bottom out inside of her.*

*“My turn,” Rooke murmurs. “I’m so excited to fuck you both. I can’t be gentle. I need you both too much right now.”*

*“Fuck me hard.” Pay smirks. “Cal can take it.”*

*Hell yes, I can. Feeling the tip of his thick cock against my hole, I kiss our girl hard. Swallowing each other’s noises, I’m aware of the cool air as it brushes against my body. My legs are spread wide to give Rooke access, and I have Pay’s legs up by her chest. I love how flexible she is.*

*Rooke's dick spreads my puckered hole wide, and I whimper as I hide my face in Pay's neck.*

*"I bet he feels so good as he destroys your tight hole," Pay whispers, brushing my hair off my forehead. Her dirty mouth is one of my favorite things about her. "Remember us, baby. Feel how good it feels to be loved by us."*

*"I love you so much," I groan. "Please stay with me."*

*Our lovemaking is fast and furious as we make declarations of love to each other. My balls draw up, and I don't want it to end. Rooke reaches around me, squeezing my balls hard. Grunting, I shudder, knowing I'm going to come. Pay writhes underneath me, moaning as I lift her ass as I rut and fuck her. It's animalistic, desperate, and I'm brushing her G-spot over and over.*

*Screaming, she comes for me, squeezing my cock so hard she forces me to follow. Collapsing almost on top of her, Patience holds me tightly as Rooke follows us into oblivion.*

*"It feels so good destroying this hole. You're such a good boy for me," Rooke groans. "Gonna fill you with my cum so you're thinking of me for days..."*

Ropes of cum cover the shower wall and I feel emptier than before. Dropping to my knees, I hang my head as the shower washes away the evidence of my most desperate fantasies.

"I need you both," I cry out, fat tears sliding down my cheeks. Sobbing, I let myself break just a bit as I remember how their love feels. I need them more than I need air. It feels selfish to love more than one person, but I don't care anymore. I will punish whoever took them.

A few minutes later, the freezing cold water forces me to stand and scrub my face. Turning off the water, I dry off. It's time to bring back the anger. These soft feelings won't help me find them, and that's what I need to hold onto.

I get dressed and meet Nate downstairs for the fight that he found for me. If he notices that my eyes look a little red, he's kind enough to avoid saying anything. Fighting will help me

regain my control, and if not, it'll help me unleash the anger living inside me.

The crowd is insane at the venue. People yell when they see Nate and I walk through. I've made a name for myself in the underground fight circuits, and I see money begin to change hands as they mutter to one another. My appearance is usually because I feel as if my life is spiraling out of control, or I can't see what my next step in life will be. I've been due to visit here for a while.

Every day I've felt unbalanced. Nate helped me keep it in check, but I'm a mess. I'm paired with someone called Death Mouth, but honestly that's such a douchebag stage name. I refuse to hide my crazy. I'll bare it for all to see.

Taking my bag into the dressing room, I come out bare chested and wearing shorts. Nate helps me tape my hands. A broken hand or finger won't help me in my mission.

"To my right is Death Mouth! He's one of our most ferocious fighters," the MC spouts, and I struggle not to roll my eyes. "On my left is a favorite of the fights, Cal X. There are no rules, leave it all on the mats."

Moving quickly I evaluate my opponent, and then the bell rings. I know that everyone in the venue is cheering, but there's a ringing in my ears that happens every time that I fight. I lose all sense except to obliterate my opponent.

Blinking, I step back because the demon filth is on the ground. Dropping to the ground, I pin him through the countdown, but I'm pretty sure the man needs a hospital bed for a bit. Oh well, these fights aren't for the weak. He shouldn't have been such an overconfident little shit.

Nate is watching me cautiously as I stand, and I nod. I'm back; I'm no longer the fighting machine that takes over when I'm in the ring. Bending, I walk through the ropes of the fighting enclosure.

"Let's get some beer and pizza," I grunt to my brother as I walk back to the lockers to change. I feel a lot better, may as well enjoy my zen before someone fucks it up.



## Chapter Eight



The spoiled princess has arrived. I didn't like Silvia when she screamed at me for eating a 'helpless cow', and I still don't care for her. Dad insisted that I attend this dinner, and for now I'm forced to follow his orders.

Silvia has her ice-blonde hair up in a braid and she's in a long-sleeved dress that's exceptionally low cut. She looks like a doll as she arrives at the house with her father, and I fight back a sneer.

"Hi, Nate," she says with a coy smile. I swear that she either had a personality transplant, or her father had a similar conversation with her that mine did.

"Give the girl a chance, because you're going to be marrying the eccentric bitch either way," are the words that Nixen Reynolds said just before the doorbell rang.

“Good evening, Silvia,” I murmur. I’m polite, but can’t bring myself to warm up to her. I want my beautiful brunette, the girl that I’ve been obsessed with since we were kids.

Silvia deflates a little at my cool greeting, but I don’t have it in me to give her more.

“Let’s have dinner, shall we?” Dad says with a grin. “We’re having a vegetarian lasagna tonight.”

Silvia perks up in excitement, but really, my father just wanted one thing to go well tonight. He’s been taking a lot of phone calls this week, and he’s always really pissed off afterwards. I don’t know what’s going on, but it makes me wonder if it’s the reason he’s moving us around his little chess board like perfect pawns.

Silvia’s dad puts his hand on her back as if in warning to remember her manners, and she walks like a perfect angel to the dining room. As I follow, my father leans in to speak to me.

“This marriage is happening, Nathaniel,” he hisses. “Don’t fuck this up.”

As dinner begins, Silvia drones on vapidly about things that I don’t care about. She could be a neurosurgeon and I still wouldn’t be interested in her because her name isn’t Patience James.

In the middle of dinner, my phone buzzes in my pocket, and I consider ignoring it. However, I’m getting this real sour feeling in my stomach for some reason, and I believe in following my gut. Pushing back my chair, I take a deep breath because I’m about to enrage my father.

“Excuse me, I have to take this,” I murmur, standing.

“Honestly, Nathaniel, you can’t wait for dinner to end?” my father scoffs.

Ignoring him, I walk around the corner to take the call. Answering quickly, I sigh in relief when I see I just made it.

“Hello, this is Nate. May I ask who’s calling?” I ask, and I’m greeted with a snort.

*“That’s a real fancy way to ask who the fuck this is,”* a woman mutters. *“My name is Shina and I was Patience’s boss at Fantasies. I have some information for you, but I’ll only be able to give it to you in person. Can you come by the club?”*

I hesitate, glancing over my shoulder. My father is attempting to mollify Silvia’s father, and I know I’m about to blow that up. Oh well, this is one of the first real leads I’ve received. It could be bullshit, but my gut is telling me to go.

“Sorry, yeah. I’m on my way now. Do I just ask for you when I arrive?” I ask.

*“Yeah,”* she grunts. *“I’ll be in my office or on the floor. It’s a busy night.”*

“I’ll let you go then. Thank you for the call,” I say politely as I hang up. I’m sure she’s having a field day with my pretty boy manners, but I don’t know how else to be.

Pretending isn’t something that I do well.

Time to pay the piper. Stepping into the dining room, I force myself to look apologetic. My father is sure to hate this.

“My apologies,” I sigh. “It looks like I’ll need to cut our dinner short. I had a really important call, and I need to go.”

“You’re not going anywhere,” my father growls, looking menacing. “You’re going to sit down and get to know your future wife.”

Silvia preens happily, but understands that I do not feel the same way, nor do I consent.

“This is fucking bullshit,” I roar as Cal stands and tries to calm me down, but I’m so over this.

“Sit down, Nathaniel,” my dad shouts, but I don’t listen. My girlfriend is missing and he thinks that I’m still going to put up with this arranged marriage façade.

Leaving the dining room, I grab my shoes and carry them out to the garage. The door slams behind me and a beep from the closest BMW proves my brother decided to come with me.

“You should stay,” I grumble, and Cal laughs before moving behind me and smacking my shoulder.

“Dad can kiss my fucking ass. I know he has something to do with Patience’s disappearance.”

I groan then open the passenger door and climb in.

“I know I keep trying to be Switzerland, but that ship has long sailed. I’m getting the same vibes you are.” I sigh as I push the start button in the car. “Dad wouldn’t have fought that hard to get me to stay if he wasn’t hiding something.”

Gunning the car, I peel out of the driveway, intent on getting to Shina’s place of business. I hope she has news for us and that it’ll bring us one step closer to bringing Patience home. I know that Cal is losing his mind about Rooke too, but I need to put out one fire at a time.

The club is busy when we arrive, so I find a parking spot as quickly as possible and trudge to the entrance. The weather is mimicking my mood right now; it’s rainy and windy. There’s a bouncer posted at the door when we arrive and I force myself to smile. He’s a pretty cool dude, and we’ve chatted a few times when I snuck in here to talk to my rabbit. I may be miserable, but I don’t have to act like an asshole.

I’m supposed to be the nice twin, after all.

“I’m here to see Shina, please. She’s expecting us,” I explain.

“Yeah, okay,” he murmurs. “She mentioned that actually. Shina is waiting at the bar. It’s a madhouse tonight.”

“Thanks, man,” I tell him, walking past with Cal to the bar. The club is filled with people drinking, talking, and moving into the private rooms available. It makes me remember secretly watching Pay work here and my heart hurts.

A woman with purple hair is working behind the bar alongside other bartenders, but I can tell she’s the boss because there’s a very dominant vibe about her. I can’t imagine her taking orders from someone else.

“Are you Shina?” I ask as I lean across the bar.

A snarl appears on her lips until she sees Cal and I. “Yeah. Sorry, it’s insane tonight and we’re short staffed. Yo, Ruby, come take over,” she yells at a girl who walks quickly over. “Come with me. It’s too damn loud out here.”

Following her to the office, my palms start to sweat. We may actually be getting a break, and I’m almost dizzy with anticipation.

“Close the door.” She sighs as she sits on the edge of her desk with her arms braced behind her. “I got a call from one of Patience’s old clients the other day. He was a little panicked, but he said that he saw her somewhere that girl has no business being. What do you have my girl mixed up in?”

“Nothing,” I sputter. “She disappeared and we’ve been desperately trying to find her. I know she wouldn’t leave us on her own.”

“I suppose not.” Shina sighs. “I really want to beat the shit out of someone. Patience is a good kid and she deserves the world.”

The phone next to her rings, and she picks it up. “Hey, Mr. Gray. I’m in my office now with the men you asked me to call. I think they’ll be very interested in what you saw.”

Looking over at us, Shina hangs up. “Mr. Gray is a very important client of ours. You will listen to what he has to say, but you will not interrogate him. Is that clear? I don’t want him to feel unsafe for what he saw. He didn’t need to call me, but to be honest, Patience has always had a really special connection to him.”

I know her clients are important to Pay, and even with her missing I would never want to fuck that up for her.

“I agree,” I tell her with a nod. Cal has been a lot more calm after he beat the shit out of his opponent, so I’m not too worried about him right now. The next time that he gets wound up, I’ll set him for his next fight.

It’s a fucked up form of therapy, but it works.

A knock makes me turn, and Shina rasps out a yell for him to come in. He’s older, with salt and pepper hair, but he has

kind gray eyes and looks like a normal business man in his suit. His eyes clue me in that this probably isn't his real name, and that he's protecting his identity.

As he closes the door and leans against it, I realize why.

"Hello," he murmurs. "I know Lucky because she's my go-to girl when I come here. She's tough as nails, but has a soft side. This isn't the only club I have where I have a membership, however, part of that reason is because I'm in the business of acquisitions."

"Human acquisitions," Shina says distastefully. Her tone is still respectful, but Mr. Gray flinches.

"Yes. I buy men and women for my employers. You can judge me all you want, but the other part of my job is saving children. I find all of the auctions as they happen, and then save them so I can help them be reunited with their families or disappear entirely. There are parents out there who will sell their own children," he explains.

Cal's eyes go wide, but not because he's surprised by this. My stomach lurches, having a feeling this is going in a direction that will make me lose the small amount of food I managed to consume earlier.

"The sex club that I was at was offering a live preview of the people that were going to be auctioned off. On a raised platform there was a couple fucking in a glass cage. The man was really rough, and the girl looked into it. But now... I'm wondering if they were both fucked up on some kind of drug. It's not unusual for the sex clubs that house auctions to drug their people so they'll perform better. I was shocked when I realized that the girl was Lucky with another man—"

"What did the man look like?" Cal whispers. Oh fuck, could that be Rooke?

Mr. Gray frowns as he thinks. "I believe the man had dirty blond hair, and he was a big guy. I remember thinking that he could have been a football player in another life. The people in the crowd were making comments about how big his cock was

and how much fun he'd be to break," he says, rubbing his neck uncomfortably.

"Rooke..." Cal rasps with so much emotion it makes me blink my eyes quickly. I've been trying to protect myself from my twin's pain, not because I don't care, but because I have to be able to function. The weight of his pain is soul crushing.

"Shit," I mutter. "Where are they? We need to get them the fuck out of there."

Mr. Gray's eyes are filled with sadness as he thinks about his next words. "As I said, Lucky and the man she was with were involved in a preview to increase interest for the auction that will be taking place in a week's time. The two of them received so much attention that a fight broke out."

"What does that mean? Are they being auctioned off in a week?" Cal asks urgently. I feel like I'm in an alternate universe still, and close my eyes for a moment to ground myself. I need to keep it together for Pay. We need to find her and Rooke.

"Your girl's going to be in the auction with X-treme Experiences. They're a company that promises to fulfill your every fantasy, no matter how depraved. I'm not some sadistic man; I try to save the little ones and rehome them with loving parents. As I said, that's why I troll these places. I've been doing it for a few years now. Wish I could do more to help, but my hands are tied. Lucky is being auctioned off in a week and there's interest in selling them together."

Fuck. Cal moves closer to the man, and I worry that he's going to punch him. I even open my mouth to warn him back. Instead, my twin manages to surprise me.

"Thank you for the information. We'd still be chasing our tails without this. I really appreciate this," Cal says, shaking Mr. Gray's hand.

"Your girl is special," he says. I can tell he has a special bond to Patience, and he's broken up that he can't do more. "I hope you find her."

He leaves quickly after that and I bite my lip. We need to work out a plan soon.

“I can’t do much, but I have some ideas on warehouses that may be used for an auction,” Shina says. “We get a lot of shady people who come in and out of this place, and I’ve managed to get some interesting confessions out of them. I’ve been holding onto all of that for a rainy day.”

“Well, it’s officially storming, so I’d love it if you’d share with the class,” I tell her, pulling out my phone to text Kian that we found something out. He tells me that he’s coming to meet us, and I check my morals at the door. I don’t care what I need to do.

Patience has to come home safely.

“Kian is on his way to help,” I grunt at them. “Will you let your bouncer know so he isn’t turned away, please?”

“The judgey stepbrother?” Shina scoffs. “He’s been trying to get her to quit working at my club for ages.”

I smirk despite the circumstances. Kian apparently has a reputation that precedes him.

“Yeah, he’s working on that,” I tell her. “Falling in love with your stepsister does that.”

Shina nods, but doesn’t say anything else. “Mr. Gray said that there are 300 lots being sold for this auction, so finding a place that will be able to hold that many people will be easier for us.”

I remember the package that Pay’s grandfather gave Ki, and remember that there were warehouse addresses inside of it. Pulling out my phone again, I open it to the pages I scanned.

“Maybe some of these addresses will match what they’ll need in size? Kian was given these as a lead on where Patience might be,” I tell her.

“Helpful,” Shina grunts as if surprised I’m not just ornamental. I hold in my grumble as she pulls out her laptop



and information. By the time Kian comes in twenty minutes later, we're deep into researching.

Hold on, baby. We're coming.

## Chapter Nine



Nate and Cal found a lead, and I couldn't be happier. I've hit so many different walls the last few weeks. I don't care that I couldn't find the lead that is going to pan out for us, I just want to find Pay.

Even Cal looks to be in better spirits, because the man with Pay sounds like it could be Rooke. It's nice to have solid plans, but it leads me to more questions.

"Guys, do you think that we should tell Richard?" I ask, looking up an address in relation to square footage on the property record websites.

It's been incredibly helpful, and something people rarely think about. I am quickly figuring out which warehouses are too small and which ones may be able to hold the amount of people that we're talking about for this auction. Then, I can look up floor plans that have been submitted to the city where

the warehouse was built. Even if there were changes later to the interior structure, it may help us minimize our choices.

“No,” Cal mutters as he works. “I don’t completely believe that he’s on our side. If he thinks we’re getting closer to finding her, I’m worried that he’ll pull something.”

Shina had to go back into the club to help work the bar. It has been a madhouse out there. I also don’t think that woman likes me very much, and I wonder how much Patience has told her about her life.

I wish I had been more understanding about why Patience worked here, but I was an asshole instead. I didn’t want her to get caught, and her working at a BDSM club made me worry about her all of the time.

“Then Richard can go fuck himself,” I mutter.

I can’t live on broken dreams and wishes, so I keep looking for warehouses that will fit the auction’s needs. It makes my skin crawl knowing that Pay is being forced to perform for those assholes.

“Did that guy who saw her say anything else?” I ask. Cal and Nate told me about how this Mr. Gray called Shina to tell her that he had seen Patience. I’m glad that Pay left such an impression that he remembered her.

Patience is a force to be reckoned with, and kind of unforgettable. I’m locking her in my room for a week to show her how much she means to me after this.

“No,” Nate says, holding up his phone as he double checks if the warehouses that I found would be large enough against the list that Richard gave us. “I think he’s genuinely sorry that he couldn’t help more. He mentioned that they may have been drugged, though, so that they would perform better.”

“They?” I ask. “I thought he only saw Patience. Start from the beginning, Nate.”

“Huh?” he asks. He’s concentrating so hard that he can’t focus on anything else. I understand, but I think I need the twin that’s not hyper-fixating at the moment.

“I got it, bro,” Cal tells him. “Nate’s not entirely here right now. I’m barely better, but here are the cliff notes: Mr. Gray looked really uncomfortable when he came in because he was at the sex club for his job. He buys people at these auctions, and he was invited to this preview before the auction takes place to see this couple. Mr. Gray recognized Pay in the glass cage that she was in, which is what led him to call Shina.”

“Okay...”

“The company that runs the auctions, and possibly the sex club, is called X-treme Experiences and they specialize in fulfilling your every dream or depraved fantasy. When I asked what the man that Patience was with looked like, we realized that it was Rooke,” Cal says.

“Oh, thank fuck she’s with Rooke,” I mutter. “Not like that, but—”

“I would rather that they’re together,” he admits. “It almost helps me a little knowing this. The auction is in exactly a week. What if we don’t figure this shit out in time?”

“Richard made me go on a date with a woman who runs a collection of sex clubs. I wonder if he’ll set me up with her again,” I mutter. Cal and Nate look up at me in alarm, and I shake my head. “I’m not at all interested in anyone but Pay. I’m just wondering if I could get any information on this experience company.”

Frowning, I look up the company in an internet search engine, but instead only find hits on extreme sports companies.

“Fuck,” I mutter.

“Search ‘sex experiences’,” Nate offers, still absorbed in his work.

I spend the next hour looking up different options, and I’m ready to scream. Right before I throw the laptop, I find an obscure posting which matches one of the towns on the outskirts of Boston.

“Oh, fuck. Nate, can you read off the listing in the warehouse district in Arlington for me please?” I ask.

Nate looks over at me, and can tell I've found something. "4322 Walsh Palace Avenue," he responds. "Did you find something?"

"Yeah," I sigh as I run the address through a database that I found to see who owns the warehouse. **Isabella Andrews: Owner.**

Richard James is a rat bastard that deserves to live in Hell forever. He dangled Isabella over me, and I was none the wiser. I vow to take him down.

Prison may actually be too good for him.

"You're never going to believe this," I tell them, my fist slamming into the desk I'm perched on. "Fucking asshole! I found out where the auctions are, and how to get an invite. It's in a post I found online."

"Damn, Ki," Cal says, his jaw dropping. "Who's an asshole, because I feel as if we're dealing with a lot of them right now?"

I don't want to laugh, but I bark one out anyway. "Remember how Richard forced me on a date with Isabella? I just figured out who owns the warehouse for this auction. It's fucking Isabella!"

"Do you think he knew?" Nate whispers and Cal snorts.

"Richard James is an insufferable bastard. I'd bet good money that he knew," he tells his brother.

"He was baiting me when he left the package in my car. Richard said that 'time was running out.' I was certain that, on some level, he cared about his granddaughter, even if it was just a tiny bit. But he's leaving her in a sex trafficking ring," I rasp. "Fuck, I need some air. I'll be right back."

The twins nod because they understand I need some time. I walk blindly out of the office, swallowing thickly around the bile that's clawing up my throat.

"You alright, man?" the bouncer asks and I nod. I know I look drunk as I stumble to my car.

The suit that I typically wear everywhere in an effort to fit the teacher façade is suffocating me. Unknotting my tie, I unbutton my shirt a bit so I can breathe. Dropping my head back, I force myself to breathe.

I'll never forgive myself if something happens to Pay because I didn't put it all together fast enough.

ROOKE

“Is everything ready for the auction?” one of the guards asks the men who are in the room with me. It’s another solo session today. There’s been more and more talk about a big auction happening, and emptying the cages for incoming stock.

We’re basically human cattle to these people to be bought and sold. I’m still a little bruised after my stunt with Isabella and my ribs hurt, but it’s not the worst thing in the world. My worries feel so much bigger than my bumps and bruises, so I push them to the side.

*What if Patience and I are sold to different people?*

The Experience, as I’ve realized that the men here call this place, has been a nightmare. The only thing that helps is knowing I’m close enough to give Pay solace. It’ll kill me if we’re separated.

Isabella said the club members loved the live performance the other night, which doesn’t mean jack shit to me. Whatever drug they gave me made me a lot more aggressive than usual, and I noticed that Patience was sore the following day. She insisted that she was fine, but I felt bad about it.

I tend to save my aggression for Cal. Fuck, I miss him. I wonder if they’ve figured out that I was taken, or that Patience is with me. I know her client recognized her while she was in the glass cage with me, and I can only pray that he said something.

“The Boss is really happy with this group that’s being auctioned off,” the guard continues as I fuck my own ass with a dildo. “Fist your cock! I want to see you make a mess, little whore!”

This guard has a thing for watching during my solo sessions. He’s constantly making excuses to be in the room during them and he makes a point to direct from the sidelines. The cameraman makes an annoyed sound in the back of his throat, but doesn’t correct him.

“Do it,” he grunts instead.

My hand immediately fists my cock as I push myself back onto the dildo suctioned to the head board. It’s big and uncomfortable, and my forehead furrows as I struggle to push through it. I’m facing the camera, my legs splayed open, my head dropping back as I start to perspire.

“Fuck, this one is really going to sell for a lot,” the guard says around a chuckle. The other men merely smirk, knowing that the guard likes me. There are days that come a lot more often now where I wish I was ugly. Maybe if I was a troll I wouldn’t get all of this unwanted attention.

Finally, my breaths start to quicken, and I can tell I’m about to come.

“They pay big money for this shot,” the cameraman says as he takes a step closer. Usually he takes photos from the tripod, and I can’t see much of him with the bright lights. The days where he decides to get his “money shots” are the most degrading, and I stop fighting the effects of the drugs. My eyesight goes fuzzy and the bright lights become my entire focus.

Soon, the performance is over and everyone leaves. I ease the dildo out with a wince, collapsing beside it with a sigh. I never in a million years thought that this would be my life.

My eyes get heavy and I find myself dozing. This isn’t really abnormal, because the drugs typically make me fall asleep, and they just leave me where I pass out. Waking up somewhere that I didn’t pass out in is what I’d expect in college, not a sex den.

Yet another example of how different my life is. I don’t think I’ll ever take anything for granted again.

A cold hand touches the inside of my leg, making my thigh muscles jolt. A whimper passes my lips that I immediately wish I could pull back. The men want to present strength and virility on camera, or at least that’s what is so often screamed at me.

Fuck, I’m still stoned as shit.



“Wake up,” a voice croons, but it’s not Patience. I don’t know anyone else who would be talking to me in a gentle voice. This just doesn’t feel right. Blinking, I force myself to wake up. Gentle words never stay that way for long here.

The room is hazy as I wake. I’m no longer in the filming room where I fell asleep, but instead I’m in a room with black silk sheets, and there are all of these hooks set into the headboard. I am getting really sketchy vibes right now. Moving my head to the side, I see Isabella’s hand is creeping toward my limp cock.

I feel revulsion instead of desire, and my skin breaks out in goose flesh. Isabella just smiles, misunderstanding my body’s response. She fists my dick, but it just lays there in her hand.

“Maybe you just need a little help,” she grumbles. “You’re young. I don’t know what the problem is. I want you to fuck me.”

I have no intentions of fucking her. I find her repulsive, even though she’s conventionally pretty. The evil that lives inside of her oozes out of her pores and I can feel my cock attempting to disappear, despite its size.

Getting on her knees, she puts my cock in her mouth, and I can’t move her. I feel as if I’m frozen in disgust. My gaze focuses on the bed post next to me, even as my eyes begin to fill with tears. I want to die as I feel her tongue touching the most intimate part of me, yet I can’t get hard. My dick has decided to check out as much as I’m attempting too.

“Why!” Isabella screams, her words garbled by my limp dick in her mouth. I wouldn’t be surprised if the bitch tried to bite it, she’s so frustrated with me. Sitting up, she lets my dick drop from her lips. “I thought all men got hard when you sucked it. Maybe it’s the drugs. Ugh.”

She continues to mutter to herself about how she’s too good for whores, but she won’t have me to herself for much longer. The auction apparently is a good thing for her pocketbook, but bad for her libido.

Standing, she leaves the room, and I close my eyes again. The sheets are cool; this isn't the worst place to pass out.

"Rooke?" Patience says, and my head snaps over in her direction. Isabella is dragging her behind her, and my girl looks really confused.

"What are you doing here?" I rasp. I'm a lot more awake now that I see her. My heart is pounding and I'm worried about what her appearance means.

"You two are going to fuck," Isabella snaps, pushing Pay toward me. "Get undressed like a good little whore, and fuck him."

Patience's eyes are wide as she looks over her shoulder and notices Isabella is also undressing. Oh dear God, please don't tell me she's going to try to join us.

"If he won't fuck me, I'll just get myself off while he fucks you instead," Isabella snipes, moving a chair near the bed.

She's in her bra and panties, and I motion for Patience to get on the bed. I need to focus on her because if I see Isabella's putrid pussy before I'm hard again, I'll be soft forever. The woman is unhinged enough to punish us both, and I don't want to be responsible for that.

I will protect Patience with my last breath, my dignity be damned.

"Take off your shirt, baby girl," I encourage, my eyes begging her to do it. Hesitantly, she nods, shrugging the oversized shirt off so it drops to the floor.

"Get him hard for me like a good little cock warmer," Isabella commands, and Patience's lashes flutter closed for a half a second. I'm terrified that she'll say no, but she just climbs up on the bed, straddling my hips.

Her hand cups my face as her lips brush mine. "Eyes on me, baby boy," she says so softly only I can hear. "We can get through this."

She's right. We have to just do it. My hands wrap around her ass, rocking her against my cock. Our lips crash together

as we kiss, tongues tangling as we cling to each other. Nothing else matters, especially not the sounds of Isabella playing with her clit.

There's a wetness that I can hear as she fingers herself, and my fingers tighten on Pay's ass as I struggle with the knowledge of what it means. Focus only on Pay, Rooke.

Fuck, I have to hype myself up to get hard. Isabella broke me. Patience shifts so that her pussy rocks on my dick, and that finally wakes it up. Moaning, I thrust up against her, my hardening cock sliding through her arousal, rubbing over and over against her clit.

Patience whimpers into my mouth, her fingers moving to my hair to pull gently as she gets closer to her release. Isabella's moaning is louder, and Patience shudders, but it's not from pleasure. I know she's trying.

I love her for working with me in the worst of circumstances. This woman's strength is awe-inspiring.

"Focus on me," I mumble against her lips, my hand moving between her legs. Fingers pushing into her wet pussy, I crook them inside of her as my thumb rubs her clit firmly. "Come for me, Pay. This is all for me, okay?"

Lost in the sensations I'm forcing her to feel, her eyes go soft as she moans. "Just for you," she smiles. It's an impossible task that we're being asked to do, and yet, here we are.

My heart is pounding as her walls start to flutter around my fingers. I know that I'm going to flip her before she comes, and fuck her through it so that I can continue the high of her orgasm. I need her to be wrapped up in me and only me.

"I want your big cock stuffed in her pussy," Isabella moans. "Is she tight?" Patience hides her face in my neck as she breathes my scent in, struggling to keep her momentum going.

"My girl is so tight. Her pussy is strangling my fingers like a good girl," I growl, hating my words. These are the things that I say just to Pay. I don't mind dirty talk in bed; I love how

hot it makes both Cal and our girl. But I hate the guttural moan that Isabella releases.

I am going to need so much therapy if we survive this Hell.

Patience whimpers my name, and I know she's close enough for me. "I got you, baby," I promise.

I pretend so much that everything is fine, that we'll be fine if we do one more thing. I'm waiting for Pay to call me on my bullshit. I'm tired of my own lies already.

Flipping her so I'm on top, I thrust inside of her with a single snap of my hips. I didn't prepare her enough, and she gasps as her back bows in surprise. As Pay gets used to my size, I lift her leg over my shoulder.

"Eyes on me," I whisper, and she nods.

"I want her tits to bounce," Isabella complains. "Fuck the soulless whore hard!"

Jesus. This woman clearly needs *Him* after that comment. Patience is one of the kindest people that I know. I know that because I wouldn't still be here if she hadn't thought to check in on me during one of my lowest moments.

On my knees as I hover over Pay, I fuck her into the mattress. Her fingers dig into my forearms, but I can tell it feels good. The bite of pain will keep her attention on me and only me. I make the mistake of glancing over at Isabella and gag. She's not paying attention to me, her feet are propped up on the mattress, legs wide as she fucks herself with a large dildo that she must have brought in.

If I wasn't going to fuck her, she was just going to do it herself. Isabella's eyes are glued to where my dick is stuffing Patience's pretty pink pussy, and I wish I could drop her leg. Instead, I inadvertently exposed her even more to Isabella.

"Rooke," Pay pants. Forcing my attention back to her, I smile. "Stay with me."

Dropping my lips to hers, I do just that. I ignore the wet sounds of the dildo as Isabella fucks herself, the moaning, and

focus on making Pay scream just for me. It's the only way that I'll be able to do this.

My balls are starting to draw up and I could cry. I'm not going to be able to stay hard for much longer. Patience cries out as she wraps her other leg around my waist, thrusting her hips up as well.

Together we hurtle toward our respective orgasms, clinging to each other as we come.

Isabella makes a sound that reminds me of a cat dying, signifying her orgasm. Resting my head on Pay's chest, I watch as she drops the toy on the floor and dresses.

"I don't know why that was so hard," she mutters as she stalks out the door in anger. Apparently, orgasms don't make her happy.

"Fuck, baby," I mutter, my eyes welling with tears. "I'm so sorry. I couldn't get hard, and the drugs made me really sleepy. I'm sorry that she got you involved."

"Things just keep getting worse, but you're not to blame," she reminds me, forcing me to look at her. "Don't apologize for fucking me. Apparently even your dick hates that wretched woman."

I want to laugh, but I sob instead. We cling together, my cock still nestled inside of her. Now that it's hard, it's refusing to release its hard-won erection. Fuck me, why is my dick even ornery right now?

Spider walks in on the two of us crying, and blows out a breath, his caramel eyes filled with pity.

"Why don't we go to the showers?" he says softly. "Isabella's left the facility for today. No one will care."

Slowly getting up, Pay and I both hiss as I pull out of her. My cock bobs against my stomach and all I can do is sigh wearily.

Holding hands, Pay and I follow Spider as we walk naked through the hallways to the bathroom. Turning on the water,

he gives us his back. Pay and I are exposed and we appreciate the gesture.

With him not looking, we turn the water to scalding hot, using soap to wash ourselves clean. Unfortunately, the filth is more than skin-deep and I can't extract it. Finally, Spider grabs our hands, shaking his head.

"You're clean enough," he says harshly. "Wash off."

I'm frustrated, but Spider has shown us kindness, so I help Patience wash up. Drying off afterward, he lets us keep the towels wrapped around us.

"Wait," Patience whispers, grabbing Spider's wrist. "I... We can't keep doing this. She tried to force Rooke to fuck her."

"I couldn't get hard for her," I mutter. "My dick basically told her to get fucked."

"One day, this won't be enough. She's going to want more. What happens when we physically can't perform for some reason?" Patience cries, her voice rising in hysteria.

"Shh," Spider hisses. "Don't lose it now. There's nothing I can do. You know my story. We're all trapped here."

"Help us escape," Patience pleads.

"Pay, no," I gasp. "That's not fair."

"I don't know what else to do," she sobs, and I hold her to me tightly, kissing her forehead.

"I know," I promise. I do know. There's no hope here. No salvation.

"I can't, Patience," Spider says harshly. "Let's go. Don't ask again."

It seems everyone's goodwill breaks eventually, and as he pulls us roughly back to our cage, I'm sorry we may have broken Spider's.

# *Chapter Ten*

THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS REFERENCES TO  
CANNIBALISM. PLEASE DON'T EAT WHILE READING.



Standing naked on the stage for auction is one of the most terrifying experiences of my life. My hair is perfectly curled, my eyes are done in a smoky eye that rivals my own skills, and yet I feel more exposed than I ever have. The auctioneer is a large, barrel-chested man with cruel, beady black eyes.

Rooke and I were brought up together, for which I will never tell a soul how absolutely grateful I was for that. My legs were shaking at the stairs until they led him next to me.

Handcuffs are clipped to our wrists between us, but the chain between us is longer than normal.

I found out why when the auctioneer started to spout off our ‘assets’.

“Look at how perky Lot One’s tits are!” he says, hitting them hard with a crop that he’s holding. I hiss as he forces them to bounce. “Her hair is shiny. She’s got pretty teeth—” The man squeezes my cheeks hard with his thumb and index finger as he pulls them forward so they can see my white teeth.

“Are we talking about horses? I want to ride her in a different way!” a crass man yells from the crowd.

“Well, I guess you can see if her nipple color matches her pussy,” the auctioneer snickers. I know that he’s playing the



crowd, drawing them into a frenzy as he holds tightly to my hair at the base of my skull. “Do you want to know if her pussy is loose or not? I hear this boy here fucked her real hard for you during their live expo!”

It happens so damn fast...

Whipping me around to where there's a table, he pushes me down until my cheek is squished against the surface.

“Hey!” my sweet Rooke yells, but I wish he'd hush. He can't protect me anymore.

A large hand swats across my ass, and I cry out.

“This is an ass that you can punish. Look at those pretty lips,” the auctioneer says proudly, kicking my feet wide before he smacks me with the crop. I feel so exposed, and tears begin to gather as ringing starts to sound in my ears.

I can't hear what he says before he's pushing his fat fingers inside of me, making me scream with his roughness.

And then... just as quickly, it's over and I'm being yanked around. The auctioneer crows a congratulations, stating that someone had bid and won over the phone. The crowd groans, and he says, “We'll see you later tonight for the main auction. I hope you enjoyed a hint of what we'll have to offer!”

Wait... we were auctioned early?! What does that mean, and who bought us?

Isabella grins as we stumble down the stairs, being hustled by the guards.

“I had to move up your selling date,” she sighs as she walks beside us. “Apparently, word is spreading that you two are with us, and Nixen was a little premature in giving you to me. Oh well, it's only by twelve hours. If anyone comes to look for you, you'll be long gone. Enjoy your new home!”

We aren't even given clothes as we're hustled into a white panel van and forced to sit on the floor. The chains are shortened more and then padlocked to hooks in the floor. And then... the door is shut behind them.

“What the fuck just happened?” I gasp.

“I think your friend told someone that he saw you,” Rooke whispers, his eyes filled with sadness and dejection. “Baby, I don’t know where we’re going or who bought us, but I want you to know that I love you so much.”

“Stop,” I whimper, tears escaping my eyes even faster. “Don’t say goodbye to me. I love you, too. We can do this. No matter what. You hear me?”

Rooke nods, blinking hard as the doors to the front of the van are opened. Unfortunately, I can’t see who is up there, but they drive like maniacs. Rooke and I are thrown around the back no matter how much we brace, and the only thing tethering us is where we’re attached to the floor.

When we finally stop, Rooke and I are sprawled on the floor in really uncomfortable positions. The door slides open, but my hair is in my face. Pushing it away, I see a woman with bleached blonde hair and green eyes staring at me.

“You’re so pretty,” she says in a creepy voice as she climbs into the van with us.

“Letty! Hurry up, woman! Don’t make me come in there and whip the three of you!” a man yells.

“Shit!” she hisses, scrambling to unchain me. “Earl, I’m sorry to bother you, but I’m going to need help with the big one. I didn’t realize how large he was when I saw him in the video!”

Fuck, the auction was live streamed? I can only imagine the kinds of bids they must have received. How much money do these two have to be able to afford us?

Yanking me up by the chain after disconnecting me from Rooke, she pulls me out of the van behind her. My legs are trembling so hard I fall out of the vehicle, scraping my knees.

“Get up! He’s coming,” Letty says, and I force myself to find the strength to stand.

Earl, as she called him, has a pot belly, and swaggers toward us.

“Take her inside, Letty. Get all of that shit off her face. I want to know what my hard-earned money bought without the paint,” he snarls.

“Yes, sir,” she says softly, taking off so fast I yelp as she drags me behind her. I’m barefoot and I can feel the asphalt tearing at my feet as I run after Letta.

“Come on, come on. I don’t want to make him mad,” she complains as she walks into a pretty two-story house. From what I could see on our mad dash, there’s no other houses near us, and I think I saw a barn to the right of us, too. It’s hard to focus on anything as she hustles me upstairs, because all I can wonder about is what horrors the beauty of this place is hiding.

Pushing me into a bathroom, she turns on the water. “Go wash yourself. I won’t have auction filth in my home,” Letty says. I still have a handcuff on my wrist, which is what she was using to drag me by.

Throwing soap at me, she closes the glass door before leaving. I’m freezing, soaking, and barefoot, so I do as I’m told. Rooke is somewhere in this house, and I can’t leave until I know he can run with me.

Letty seems a bit traumatized and crazy, while Earl is a bully. By the time she returns, I’m fairly certain my face has been scrubbed clean of makeup, and the rest of my body is clean.

Letty helps me out as she turns off the water with a towel in her hands. Instead of giving me the towel, she dries me herself. It feels so awkward, especially as she drops to her knees to dry my legs and lower body. My face flames with embarrassment and shame as her fingers drift a little as she dries my body.

“So pretty.” She sighs, then stands. “For now. Pretty things tend to break so easily.” Grabbing my hair, she pulls me to the mirror. “Do you know what the difference between you and me is?”

“What?” I whisper, my teeth chattering. It’s freezing in this room, and the cold water from the shower didn’t help matters.

“Earl is married to me,” she growls. “He may think you’re pretty, hell, he may even fuck you, but he is mine.”

I want to tell her that she can keep him, and that I don’t want any part of that man’s dick, but keep my mouth shut again. There’s something so very wrong with these two.

“Letty! Stop staring at the girl. You better keep your hands to yourself!” Earl yells.

Apparently, this is a pattern that they have, and I wonder how many men and women have come before me. They’re so comfortable in this routine, I wouldn’t be surprised to find out that there have been many.

“We’d better go.” She sighs.

Unlocking the handcuff, Letty pulls a knife out from the drawer in the cabinet. “Don’t be getting any ideas now, girl.”

I don’t know if it’s better to give your captors your name or not. Why didn’t I listen better in my psychology classes? I swear, I’ll never slack on classes that I think will be easy A’s ever again.

Brandishing the knife, she shoves me out of the room.

“Earl, are you ready, honey?” she calls out sweetly, pulling a mask from her pocket. “I think it’s time to play with our new guests...”

“Oh fuck,” I gasp, my breaths coming out in little pants.

“Let her go, baby. Little girl, if you can make it to the front door, we’ll let you go. No hard feelings, yeah?” he yells.

“How many times have you done this before?” I sob, eyes moving back to Letty, who is now wearing a mask with a painted white screaming face. I can’t breathe. Oh, fuck.

“At least twelve,” she says, waving the knife dismissively. “Spoiler: none of them have made it. At least make it interesting. Run!”

Screaming, I turn and do just that. I’m looking around as I wait for Earl to jump out at me. The corridor is long and dark

and there aren't any windows down it. It's afternoon, so it's odd to be surrounded by so much darkness.

Earl jumps out at me, and I duck under his arm and keep running. There was a small closet that I wasn't expecting, which is where he popped out. I sprint down the stairs, knowing that I won't be looking for a way out. No, I'm looking for Rooke. Even if I never get out of here, at least I'll die protecting him.

The stampede of feet behind me only increases my anxiety, so I don't notice there's another person in the house when I jump off the last two steps until it's too late.

A man who is thinner than Earl steps out of the shadows with a grin as he pulls down his own mask. "Hello there, lovely," he murmurs as he swings a bat into my stomach.

I fall forward with a wheeze as he pushes me to the ground with his foot. I'm unable to protect myself as the three of them start to kick me once they've pushed me to the ground.

"Gotta tenderize her before we eat her!" Earl crows. I make myself as small as possible as they continue to kick me, trying to protect myself. I can't tell how many kicks and hits my poor head has taken, and my ears are ringing. Oh my God, please, please just kill me.

That's my last thought before I pass out.



I'M in and out of consciousness as I hear the three of them talking. Rooke screams, and I try to reach out to him. This horror house makes me long for the sex club, because at least there they had a reason to keep us alive.

"Rooke," I whimper, struggling against the ropes binding me.

"Look who's awake," Earl snickers as I blink away the last vestiges of my pain induced sleep.

"No!" Rooke screams, the sound making me shudder.

Letty is cutting him with a knife, muttering about how good he'll taste.

"Stay away from him!" I yell. I can handle pain, I can... Please God, make them leave my sweet man alone.

"Oh girl, you can't handle me," she chuckles, a very different woman than the one I saw in the van. She's self-confident now, and there's some blood on her lips.

A banging on the front door above us sounds and I look up. We appear to be in some kind of basement. Rough rope is tying me down to a hard, wood table. Rooke is turned away from me on a table of his own, and Letty's face is way too close to his crotch. We're both still naked.

"Who in the devil's asshole is coming to see us right now?" Earl grumbles.

This place is kind of isolated, and while I'm glad for the respite, I'm also worried for whoever is dumb enough to knock on the door of what is basically *Deliverance*.

There's a giant laundry room style sink to my right, and Earl and Letty wash their hands and arms. *How much is too much blood?*

Watching what is probably Rooke's blood being so thoughtlessly washed away makes me gag as I cry. We're going to die here...

The realization that this is the end of everything hurts.

I don't know where the other man who beat me with a bat earlier is, and I twist and writhe to see if he's in the room.

"Where is Kyle?" Letty complains as she dries her arms. "Do you think those fools that were banging on the door are gone?"

"Lazy boy is probably playing with his dick," Earl snarls. "He was way too interested in the girl. I wouldn't mind fucking her and giving Kyle a whirl before we harvest her, though. Gotta be careful when we pull their organs. They'll fetch a really nice price."

“They’d taste even better though,” Letty says hopefully, but Earl shakes his head.

The doorbell is ringing now and I wonder if there are people who are just really eager to meet their maker today. Earl scoffs and stomps up the stairs annoyed. Letty follows him, once again the meek, nervous housewife.

It’s a façade that she puts up for people and I was stupid enough to believe it.

Once they disappear up the stairs, I yank on the ropes holding my arms and legs down. Turning to Rooke, I make a frustrated sound when I see he’s not moving. “Rooke,” I pant out, forcing back my tears. “Baby, please say something.”

“I’m so sorry, Pay. I hoped if we were together that I could protect you. I can’t do shit,” he says bitterly. “They fucking want to eat us and harvest our organs.”

“Please fight,” I beg, tears streaming down my cheeks. “For me. Can you get out of the ropes? Mine are too tight.”

Rooke pulls and twists his wrists, and I see them start to shift a little.

“Keep going,” I sob, yanking and twisting my wrists. They’re starting to bleed, but I don’t care as long as it means we get out.

I hear Earl roar, and then there’s a gunshot. Gasping, I bite on my tongue to keep myself from screaming. My chest is sawing as if I ran a ton, but it’s the stress of the situation. I thought we’d be safe for a bit while they’re upstairs, but it looks like a new threat is coming into the house.

“Patience!” Cal screams, and I swear my heart is going to explode from how hard it’s racing.

“Did I just imagine that?” I whisper to Rooke. I don’t need to whisper, but I’m worried that my bubble of hope will explode if I talk any louder.

“Cal!” Rooke yells, and I sag in relief. I’m not crazy.

“They’re mine!” Letty yells, and I can hear her running toward the stairs. Rooke and I are sitting ducks. I have no idea

what she'll do if she gets down here.

"Mom!" Kyle screams just as another gunshot fires. Whoever is up there is picking them off, and I'm not sorry about it. Maybe it makes me a bad person, but it's us or them, and I'm choosing us.

"Cal, we're in the basement!" I yell, and I can hear lighter footsteps coming. It doesn't sound like Letty, Earl, or Kyle, but my heart is still in my throat as I hear three more gunshots.

The door to the basement opens slowly, and I start to hyperventilate. I try to twist my body to see who it is, but I can't see the top of the steps.

"Cal, is that you?" Rooke says hesitantly. The footsteps run down the stairs and Cal's tearstained face comes closer.

"Oh my God, I'm so sorry," he says, rushing to the tables. He doesn't know who to touch first, so his fingers curl in our dirty, blood-stained hair as he kisses our faces. "That bitch Isabella sold you before the main auction. We were there tonight, and Kian beat the shit out of one of the guys to find out who bought you. We should have found you sooner."

"Stop," I rasp. "You're here now. Focus on that, or you'll go insane."

Nodding, he pulls a knife from his pocket. His hands tremble slightly as he cuts the rope holding our arms and legs.

"Did you find her?" Kian yells as he comes down the stairs. Nate is with him, and the room swims as I try to sit up. I can't tell you the last time I ate something or drank anything, and the small window in the basement tells me that it's night time.

"Take it slow, baby girl," Nate murmurs, rushing to come help me. "Are you hurt?"

"Bruises," I grunt. "I think my head may be bleeding. Rooke is worse."

"I'm okay," he sighs. "They cut a little too deep in places, and I'm dizzy." My heart hurts at how nonchalant he is about



being tortured for hours. I swear I think Letty was eating strips of his skin as she cut him.

“The guy at the auction said only Patience was sold to these crazy fucks,” Kian says. “I’m sorry for the circumstances, but I’m really fucking glad you’re here, too.”

They’re all so focused on the two of us, and I’m just happy we’ll finally be safe again.

“I was so worried we’d be separated,” Rooke mutters, standing slowly. Cal easily loops his arm around his shoulder, knowing he’ll need the help. I’m glad that he’s getting support after the Hell that we’ve been through. “I wasn’t much help with these three, but I’m really glad you found us.”

I want to remind him not to be so hard on himself, because these have been impossible circumstances, but Cal starts taking control.

“Nate, can you grab the clothes from the trunk of the car and the first aid-kit? Let’s see what we can do with the worst of this before we go,” his brother says.

Kian lifts me into his arms as he looks around the room in disgust. “I’m so glad I put those assholes down like the animals that they are. There’s human meat in the freezer,” he says, his lips twisting. “I just want to light the whole thing on fire.”

If I wasn’t so traumatized and weak, his words would be really hot. Instead, I drop my head on his shoulder. I’m sure I’m getting his suit dirty, but neither of us care.

“Do it,” Rooke says, wincing as he holds a cloth to one of the deeper cuts on his legs. No one pays attention to the fact that we’re naked other than sending Nate upstairs to bring us clothes. “I think it’ll make me feel better.”

“Anything you want,” Cal promises, and surprisingly Kian agrees. No one fights; they’re actually getting along, maybe this is all a dream.

“I’m back,” Nate calls out as he peeks his head around the corner.

“I’m not going to shoot you,” Ki groans. “I promise the gun is put away.”

“Listen, I’m not taking any chances. I also checked and they really are dead,” he says. Nate is wearing black gloves, and it takes me a second to see that all three of them are. They put some thought into this.

Cal quickly cleans the worst of Rooke’s wounds and uses surgical glue to close them up.

“We’ll wait to get you completely cleaned up,” Kian explains as he carefully sits me down on the edge of the table. The care he takes to pull up my panties, drop a sweater over my head to help me dress, and slip joggers up my legs is sweet. There’s an intensity in his eyes that wasn’t there before I was taken. I think things are going to be different now, but I don’t know how.

“Do you need help with Rooke?” Nate asks as I’m lifted back into Kian’s arms.

“I got him, but walk behind us just in case? I want to make sure neither of us slip,” Cal says.

As we walk out, I catch a glimpse of the three cannibals that wanted to harvest our organs lying dead on the ground.

“Don’t look, Pay,” Rooke says urgently. Hiding my face in Ki’s neck, I breathe in his scent, grounding myself in the here and now. I listen to the rumble of Ki’s voice as he talks to me.

They leave Rooke and I to cuddle on a huge tree stump as they hunt down gasoline and matches. Thankfully the barn on the property has both, and the guys are back inside of the house to get the pyrotechnics started.

“You doing okay, doll?” Rooke murmurs, his hand smoothing my tangled hair. The sharp scent of gasoline is soothing as it permeates the air.

“I am now,” I sigh, looking up at him. Dipping his head, his soft lips brush against mine. Cal brought him a pair of sweats and tennis shoes for the ride home, and I dig my fingers into the soft material.

“I’m so sorry for everything I had to do, baby. I’m pretty sure it’ll give me nightmares for years to come,” he says.

Shaking my head, I lay my hand on his face. “Don’t apologize for what we had to do to survive, baby boy. We are free, sitting together while Ki, Cal, and Nate burn down the reminders of our nightmares. Well, some of them,” I amend. “We’ll get through this together. Somehow.”

As the fires are lit and the guys walk quickly out of the house toward us, Rooke and I grin. Fuck, the shadows made by the light are beautiful, beating back the night.

I take in some deep breaths and shake myself from all the horrors I’ve been through lately. I have always been strong and independent. I am not going to let this define me and break me down.

Nixen Reynolds will not win.

ROOKE

The ride home is quiet. Cal holds me tightly, and Nate snuggles Patience in his lap as Kian drives to his house. I'm not sure why we're going there, but I'm relieved that we're not going back to the twins' house. I don't think I'll be able to sleep there again after Pay and I were both taken from there.

Ki's gaze keeps checking the back seat repeatedly, making sure we're alright. He's especially concerned about Patience, but I think the only thing that'll help her is time and space from our nightmare.

"We've been able to piece together some of what happened, but how did you get taken?" Ki asks gently.

He doesn't have to be this careful with me, I barely know him, but I appreciate the kindness.

"I went into the twins' house after taking a shower with Pay and Cal, and Nixen was in the room I was staying in," I begin, struggling to remember the details of the past four months. "He saw me having sex with his son and was screaming at me. He told me to get into the car and grab my stuff because I couldn't stay there, but he was so mad he started to hit me. Everything started to go dark, but I remember that he was packing all of my shit with someone else, and then I passed out."

"He acted as if you left on your own," Cal whispers, holding my hand tightly. "It felt so weird after we had such a great night, I kept calling you over and over."

"I didn't leave because I wanted to," I reassure him. "I was so happy when I went up to my room. Things were clicking into place, but apparently I was a liability for your father, and when I woke up I was in the sex club."

"That son of a bitch," Cal curses.

"Dad kept saying that Pay ran off and got cold feet over the engagement," Nate sighs, laying his head on Patience's

forehead. “He won’t get away with this shit. He can’t.”

“That’s why you’re all staying with me from now on,” Ki explains. “I want him to have less access to you all. He’ll find out soon enough that you’re both safe. It means we need to dig up shit to bury his ass. I have a feeling your grandfather knew too, Pay.”

“He what?!” she gasps. “There was a time I thought he actually loved me, but I’m learning I’m just a fucking pawn.”

“Patience, rabbit,” Nate says. “We’ll take his ass down too. Right now, let’s focus on getting you both cleaned up, and I’m a little worried about your head. Do you feel dizzy?”

“It’s not so bad anymore,” she shrugs. Compared to the last few months, pain is relative.

“She lost consciousness for a while,” I tell them, ignoring her glare.

“I don’t want to go to the hospital,” she complains.

“You won’t, baby,” Ki soothes. “I can call in a doctor that does house calls just to make sure you’re both alright. No hospitals.”

I relax too at the sound of that. I just want to sleep in a bed without being poked and prodded.

As we pull up to Kian’s place, I sigh. “I would kill for a shower. I feel bad because I’m pretty sure I’m getting blood on your leather.”

“I’ll get it cleaned tomorrow,” Ki says, unbothered. “I really don’t care. I’m glad today is ending well. We could have been too late.”

On that somber note, we go inside and Kian shows Pay and I where we can shower. He follows her into his room and I have a feeling they’re due for a very honest conversation. The man has been pushing her away for what he thinks is her own good, and I know it’s been hurting Patience.

I know it does, because I have a feeling that Cal did the same thing to me. Except I wasn’t protected from anything. Walking slowly, I walk into the bathroom in another one of the

bedrooms. It feels... surreal to be in the real world again. That's the only way I can describe it.

I begin to close the door to the bathroom behind me, but decide against it. It's nice to have a choice—door open, door closed, hot or cold water... I can do whatever I want.

A bubble of laughter escapes my lips, and I clap my hand over my mouth as I turn to shower to a piping hot temperature. If I let myself keep laughing, I'll dissolve into hysterical crying.

Making sure I have a towel nearby, I strip off my clothes and get into the stall. This bathroom is really nice and nothing like the ones in the sex club. I keep reminding myself of things that are different as I grab the body wash and start lathering my body.

**I wouldn't have nice smelling body wash.**

**The light would be dim.**

**There would be someone watching my every move.**

**I am FREE.**

TEARS START to leak from my eyes, mixing in with the water from my shower, and I struggle to ignore it. Sniffling, I start to wash my hair. The door to the shower opens, startling me into a yell.

"I'm sorry," Cal mutters, still wearing his boxers as he gets in.

"Why are you wearing clothes in the shower?" I ask, confused.

"I wanted to talk, wash your hair, and tell you that I love you. I treated you like such shit before you were taken..."

"I know, but I kind of get that you were doing it because your dad can't handle the fact that you like a guy," I shrug.

“Nixen’s idea of what it’s like to be a man is very black and white, and you had to fit that idea.”

“How are you so cool with this?” Cal asks, moving around me to dig his fingers into my hair. The groan I release is porn star worthy, but he just chuckles. “Let me grovel a bit, baby. You deserve it. I was a dick, even though you and Pay are my entire world. I adore you, and I’ve spiraled without you.”

I let Cal rinse my hair as I think. Do I want him to grovel? No, I don’t need it. I just need to know that it won’t happen again. I want to know that there’s room for me too. Fuck...

“Cal... What if you don’t love me anymore? The things I did at the club were... awful,” I mutter.

“You can’t cheat on someone under duress,” he says gently, pulling my back against his chest. “If you had to fuck someone to stay alive, I’ll never hold it against you.”

“No... that’s not what they wanted,” I say wildly, shaking my head. “Isabella and the boss made me take photos of myself masturbating, or fucking myself with a dildo, and sometimes Pay and I had to fuck after being forced to take drugs.”

I feel ashamed and hang my head, waiting for him to yell at me. I feel like scum.

“Baby,” Cal barks, forcing me to look at him. “You did nothing wrong. I need you to get that straight in your head. I still love you. I am realizing that there will never be a time where I won’t love you. I just—” Cal’s voice breaks, making me turn to face him as I wrap my arms around him. “I wish that I had been able to show you this sooner. I don’t care that my father doesn’t like it. He’s done his worst already and I’m done playing nice.”

“You’re really sexy when you go all caveman,” I tease him, but his sweet words make my voice thick with emotion. My cock is also really liking what he’s saying.

“I can feel that,” he chuckles, brushing his hand across his face to brush away the tears even as he grabs my ass to pull me closer.

As his lips brush mine, I tell myself that I'm going to make things count. I want to live for us from now on.



## Chapter Eleven



I can't believe we did it. I'm disappointed we couldn't catch them before they were sold, and the haunted look in their eyes made my soul ache. I watch as Cal follows Rooke into the bedroom to check on him, so I stalk Patience's steps into my room.

I gave her my room for personal, intensely selfish reasons. I wanted to give her solace and comfort, and she's spent time in this room, even though we were always very secretive about the time we spent together.

They're all staying with me from now on; I have more than enough rooms. Nixen has proven that no one is safe from his plans and machinations, and his work with the Mafia has made him very interesting business partners.

The skin trade is a lucrative one, and while Cal hasn't been able to pinpoint exactly what he does for the Mafia, my money

is on some facet of it. Auctions, sex clubs, enforced sex slaves, trafficking—all of this is... profitable.

My stomach rolls at how easily Patience and Rooke were lost within this system, and how close we were to never finding them. I don't hear the water running as I ease into the bathroom, and I see Pay staring at herself in the mirror.

"Pay," I say softly, so as not to startle her. Unfortunately, she still breathes in sharply before meeting my gaze in the mirror.

"I was headed to the shower," she says, biting her trembling lip. "I saw my reflection in the mirror and realized that I don't even recognize myself anymore. Who am I?"

"That's easy, baby. You're ours. Anything else, you'll find your way," I tell her. Sighing, I try again. I don't want to offer her platitudes. "You are Patience James, a woman who is kind, strong, kinky, and beautiful. You can do anything you set your mind on."

"I couldn't get us out," she whispers. "If you hadn't come when you did..."

"You would have found a way," I insist. "Your screaming helped point us in the right direction. That stupid house was huge."

Patience's lips twist unexpectedly. "I don't think I'll be watching any horror shows for a while. They wore masks and chased me through the damn house together," she tells me, making my heart pound as I listen. "I didn't know the other man was there—"

"Kyle was their kid," I grunt, shaking my head. "They say that eating human flesh makes you a little unhinged, but fuck..."

"There were times where they seemed normal. Letty had the 'I'm so scared of my husband' act down," she says, wrapping her arms around her body.

Moving farther inside of the bathroom, I tug her into my arms. I can't stop touching her. It's as if the moment I stop,

she'll disappear. I'm sure I'll get over it, but for now I'll take the cuddles.

"I watched the act disappear when they realized that we were there for you. We hoped that Rooke was at the farmhouse too, but it was a shot in the dark. The man at the club said they only bought you," I explain.

"Isabella probably told the club and auction people to lie as much as possible about where we went. She purposely sold us earlier in the day to be petty," Pay says, lifting her shoulder.

"Welcome to your new home, because I want to tie you to the bed and bubble wrap you," I tease, kissing her neck. I know that I can't; she'd never accept it, and I don't want to cut her wings.

Patience snorts, almost sounding like her old self. "I'm pretty sure I'm the Domme in this relationship, baby," she says with a smirk.

"Show me," I growl, wrapping her hair in my fist. I'm careful not to pull her hair, instead circling her throat with my hand to lean her head back. "I want to see the bad ass bitch who's my girl."

A feral grin passes over her lips as she kisses me. Quickly forgetting myself, Pay surprises me by turning me until she has my arm twisted behind my back and my head against the mirror.

"You're a very pretty man, but I love it when you're in this position for me," she murmurs, licking up my throat.

"Baby girl, you're sexy as fuck," I purr with a brilliant smile. "Is this where you strap on your cock and fuck me? Because I have to say I might be into it."

Patience giggles, dropping the Domme persona to snuggle against my back. "I love you," she says, laying her head on me.

Twisting, I grunt as I move so that I can hold her in my arms. "I realized that I'm an idiot," is the first thing I say.

"Because I love you?" she giggles in disbelief.

“What? No,” I sputter. “I have had the most perfect woman for me in the world in front of me for years, and I kept pushing you away. It wasn’t because I knew you were still in love with Cal and Nate and always would be.”

“Cal hated me and was quite vocal about it,” she counters.

“You know that was all because of Nixen,” I remind her. “I want you. I don’t care if I have to share you with the others. You’re my girl and I’m done hiding. I want to keep you safe from the bullshit of Richard, but we can’t live in a bubble. I love you.”

Patience gives me this big smile, and for the first time there’s no snark or brat vibes. It’s just Pay.

“For the record, I’m recording this in my head, and I fully intend to hold this over your head until the end of time,” she says.

“There’s my brat,” I chuckle. “Clothes off, I’m washing your hair.”

“Really?” she asks, surprised. I’ve never offered to before, but her wrists are all cut to shit. I want to take care of her.

“Yeah, baby. Strip for me,” I tell her, wiggling my eyebrows as I begin to take off my suit. Her clothes are pulled off, dropped on the ground wherever they land. Turning on the water, I enjoy the view, my eyes heating because she’s gorgeous.

Stepping into the shower with Pay, I grab the shampoo and get to work. As I take care of her, I kiss her neck, wash her hair, and work the conditioner carefully into the ends.

Patience is leaning heavily against me and she yawns as I finish up. “I’m going to have to wake you up a few times tonight,” I tell her apologetically. I’m worried that she has a concussion.

“Can you do it with your head between my legs?” she snarks, a huge, sleepy smile stretching across her lips.

Turning off the water, I lift her into my arms with a smile. Drying her off, I lay her in my bed so I can disinfect her

wounds. I'm calling the doctor tomorrow to give both her and Rooke check-ups. I would have dragged his ass in here tonight, but they're both exhausted.

Helping her into one of my t-shirts, I watch her roll herself in my blankets like a burrito and pass out. I haven't gotten dressed yet, so I throw on a gray pair of sweatpants when someone knocks on my bedroom door.

Glancing at my burrito girlfriend, I snort in amusement. Some things really never do change. Patience James is one of the most adorable, oddest women that I've ever met. I will never look at another woman, because no one else compares.

Another knock pulls me from my thoughts, and I open the door. Rooke stands there in low slung joggers, biting his lip with nerves.

"Hey, what's up? Did you need Pay?" I ask, moving aside so that he can see her.

"Is she a burrito?" he asks in surprise, leaning against the door frame. "It's so odd not being around her after everything. My every waking thought was about her."

"You protected her so well," I praise him before I realize it. Rooke looks at me in surprise and I shrug. "Go with it. I don't trust many people with her, but I can tell she's safe with you."

"I want to be a safe space for her," Rooke murmurs. "Cal wants me to sleep in his room, and it physically hurts not to be with her."

Cal will need to get over his petty jealousies. "You're an adult who just went through some shit. My door will be unlocked if you need to sleep in here. My bed is huge, and I'll wake up sleeping beauty every few hours to make sure she's not concussed," I shrug.

"She's gonna hate that," he chuckles.

"The brat asked that I wake her from her slumber with my face between her legs," I whisper conspiratorially.

Snorting, Rooke throws himself into a coughing fit because he's choking on air. "Oh my God," he coughs, making

me grin as I grab him a glass of water from the bedside table.

“Rooke, two seconds out of my presence and already dying,” Cal jokes. He looks concerned, so I give him an apologetic look.

“Pay isn’t happy about my waking her up regularly to make sure she doesn’t have a concussion, so she demanded orgasms for her sacrifice,” I explain.

Cal smirks, patting Rooke on the back.

“Sounds about right. She really loves her sleep,” he says.

Rooke gets control of his coughing and smiles. “Will you let me know if she needs anything?” he asks.

“Do you think something will happen while she’s asleep?” Cal asks. I can tell that he’s battling his possessive nature with worry for Pay.

“We just don’t know,” I tell him. “I’ll let you know if anything happens tonight.”

They both say goodnight and I leave the door unlocked. Crawling into bed next to her, I spend an embarrassing amount of time just staring at her. We got so damn lucky.

## PATIENCE

*Everything is dark. The shadows keep moving, but I can't see anything. I'm laying in a bed with soft sheets and the shadows start to crawl up my body. Except the shapeless form is changing, and it's Isabella.*

*"You haven't seen the last of me, little whore. Shit brown hair, nothing special. Why do they obsess over you," she snarls. Pinning my shoulders down, her thighs trap my body in the blankets I'm under.*

*"Let me go," I whimper. "I'm safe... You're not real!"*

*"And yet, you're under my control. Why are you so obsessed with me?" she chuckles. "I'm going to take your pretty boys from you, fuck them, and make them throw you away. You'll be alone forever."*

*"No! They love me," I whisper. I've done so many things while in that sex club. I remember how Spider was forced to perform with me on camera, the solo work I did, and fucking Rooke. None of it was my choice. What if they think this makes me a whore?*

*I'm spiraling. Damn bitch.*

*"No. Get out of my head. Go!" I scream, struggling against her, my hair obscuring my face.*

*The shadows shift again, and now Earl is pinning me down. His skin is sallow and gray, and there's blood pouring from his wounds.*

*"I wonder how your eyes will taste when I pop them out of your pretty little skull. My contracts mean nothing now, death is freeing," Earl rasps, digging his finger in my socket, trying to pry my eye out.*

*Screaming. Someone is screaming. Who is that poor girl?*

*"Patience, baby girl, wake up!" Ki yells, pulling the blankets from my trapped body.*

Opening my eyes, I whimper. “My dreams are so fucked, Ki.”

“I’m sorry, you were screaming. I couldn’t... You sounded as if you were possessed,” he sighs, laying next to me. “Bad dream?”

“Unfinished business,” I sigh. “One is dead, and the other is taunting me in my dreams. Isabella really needs to fucking die.”

Ki gives me a sad smile as he brushes hair out of my eyes. “Your grandfather made me go on a date with her,” he tells me. As my eyes widen, Ki shakes his head. “It was what he made me do so that I could get the intel he had on your whereabouts. It was convoluted bullshit, but it did eventually help. Richard enjoys playing games.”

Blowing out a sigh, I nod. “The number of people I can trust are the same people who don’t want to sell me into the sex trade. My life is definitely never dull,” I mutter. Sitting up, I feel this intense need to see Rooke. “Where is Rooke sleeping?”

“Cal’s room. The one that has gray walls,” he reminds me. Ki really went all in on decorating his place and I love it. “Need to go see him?”

“Yeah,” I breathe. Should I feel bad? It’s so weird having them all be semi okay about each other. I’m not sure if Cal will kick me out of bed, though. He’s always been very possessive of Rooke.

“Go then,” he says reassuringly. “Rooke came in to see you before he went to bed. He was worried about you.”

“Yeah?”

“You have so many people who love you,” Ki reminds me with a smile while sitting up. “Let them. Go see if sleeping in there settles the demons.”

“Thank you,” I breathe out as he leans in and kisses the corner of my mouth.



“Nothing to thank me for,” he insists. “Scoot and get some sleep.”

“Night,” I murmur, slipping out of bed. Making a beeline for Cal’s room, I hesitate at the door. Do I knock? Just go in?

The door opens before I can decide.

“You think very loudly,” Cal sighs, his hazel eyes looking down at me. “Are you okay?”

“I had a nightmare,” I whisper. I used to run across the yard to his house so many times when I had a nightmare or question, it became second nature.

I’m no longer ten years old, though. I’m a grown woman, and I want to feel safe again.

“Pay,” Cal sighs. “I suck at sharing.”

“Oh... okay,” I tell him, trying to sound as if it doesn’t bother me. My heart tells me it’s a big deal. Cal and Rooke are mine, and I’m a greedy bitch.

Starting to turn away, I decide to sleep on the couch. I don’t want to have to tell Ki that I was turned away, and I’m unsure if I’ll be able to fall back asleep. My dreams are fucked right now.

“Wait,” Cal barks, grabbing me around the waist. “You came here, I’m not going to turn you away. Do we need to wake you for your concussion?”

“She’s fine, I think,” Ki calls from his room.

“Then come in and find a spot on the bed,” Cal says, his head jerking toward the bedroom. “I’m selfish, possessive, and a dick. I’m trying this new thing where I’m more understanding. If you need Rooke, then that’s what you need.”

“I... Wow,” I tell him. I’m in shock. Cal always does whatever the fuck he wants. I’m surprised.

“Damn, I’m going to need a tattoo on my dick that warns all other men and women off since I’m being so amazing. Pay’s dick!” he snorts.

“There better be room for my name too,” Rooke says sleepily. “Come get in bed, baby girl. Cal is done fucking with you.”

“Yeah, I’m mostly done.” He grins and pulls me into the room. “Look, I’m trying. I don’t know what the fuck I’m doing, but life is too damn short. I’m going to mess up.”

“We love your psychotic tendencies, baby,” Rooke mumbles from the bed, making me giggle.

“He says that now. We’ll see what he says when I follow the location on his phone everywhere. I’m going to LoJack his ass,” Cal mutters.

I don’t think I was meant to hear that, so I press my lips together to hide my smile. Rooke pulls me into his arms, and Cal sighs.

“Door open or closed?” he asks, waiting for us to answer.

“Open,” we respond quickly, and Cal stares for a moment before nodding.

I’m not ready to be enclosed again, plus Nate may want to join our cuddle pile.

Climbing into the bed, he spoons Rooke and kisses his neck. It’s not perfect, but it’s mine. I’ll take it for now. I can feel a storm brewing in my gut, and I know that I’m going to have to do something with all of this black energy pattering around inside of me.

That’s tomorrow’s problem. Tonight, I’m burying my head in the sand.

## Chapter Twelve



“Listen, I get it, and I love you all, but I’m not ready to talk about it. Right now, I’d really like to go to the club and just whip some people,” I grumble, and Cal looks at me like I just kicked his puppy.

“This can’t be safe, Pay,” he complains. “Can someone please back me up on this?”

Glaring at Ki and Nate, I almost dare them to tell me no. Rooke simply ignores the drama unfolding.

“Turn on your location and share it with us. Be careful. Shina cared about your well-being, and she made that abundantly clear when she let us take over her office and opened her resources to us,” Ki rumbles. “Be smart. Don’t take chances. Take my car.”

I don’t like to be dictated to, but since he’s making perfect sense, I nod. I have my duffel bag to change into my work

outfit for tonight and raise my hand to catch his keys.

“What do you mean Shina helped?” I ask. I’m still fuzzy on all of the details that went into extracting Rooke and I from Letty and Earl’s home.

“Mr. Gray, which I’m sure isn’t his name,” Nate says drolly. “He called Shina to tell her that he’d seen you and to call someone who may be looking for you. She called me, and it gave us another piece to the puzzle. If this will help you, go to work. Just be careful.”

Ki nods, blowing out a breath. “I need to check on a couple of things, but I think you’re fine to go to work. Cal needs to get some things done too, don’t you?” Ki snorts.

“Yeah, I need to do some errands,” Cal says, looking as if he’d rather do anything else. “I’ll let you know if the asshole has anything interesting to say. Pay, I’ll walk you out if you’re leaving.”

Pulling out the new phone that I got, I show them that I’ve turned my location on. “Feel free to stalk me now.” I smirk while walking out of the apartment.

“Love you!” Ki says, making me roll my eyes. I swear he got his need to have the last word from my grandfather. Cal chuckles under his breath as he walks me to the elevator.

“For what it’s worth, it’s taking everything in me to not chain you to my bed,” he says.

“Is there sexy time happening along with it?” They’ve all been obnoxiously careful around me, and I am tired of being treated like glass. I want to have sex, lose myself in orgasms and fun, but they all say that I should wait.

Wait for what? After all of the ‘performances’, my attitude on vibrators has soured. I want a connection. Blowing out a breath as I get into the elevator with Cal, I stare at the wall as I get lost in my thoughts.

“You think really loudly,” he says, rolling his eyes. “I can almost see the steam coming out of your ears.”

“I’m tired of being treated with kid gloves,” I snap as the doors open to the underground garage. Peeking out, I take a glance at my surroundings. It’d be dumb to think that Nixen is done fucking with me.

“Pay... What does that even mean?” Cal huffs in frustration as he follows behind me.

“It means I’m tired of feeling broken,” I yell, turning to walk backward as I talk to him. “I want to feel alive and powerful instead of like the person who was sold into a fucking sex ring.”

“Patience.” The way he says that is so disapproving it makes me feel like I said something wrong.

“Whatever, you asked. I’m going to work where they at least make me feel like a goddess,” I snipe, hitting the key fob to find Ki’s car.

“You’re seriously going to just go after dropping all of these bombs?” Cal asks, jaw dropped. There’s this little vein that I can see in his forehead, and I like to see how red he gets when he talks to me.

His head hasn’t exploded yet, so I think I’m good to push some more.

“Yep,” I say with a mean smile as I get into the car. “I’ll be in the Dungeon for a few hours. Don’t need me. I won’t be picking up.”

Cal growls as I shut the door behind me and hit the push start to get the car going. Tossing my duffel bag behind me, I text Shina.

Me: Please have clients for me. I’m coming in.

Shina: Are you sure?

I love that she didn’t push more. She’s a really good business woman, and it makes sense that she’d check in. No one wants their Domme to get triggered and fall apart.

Me: I got it locked down. The guys are treating me like glass.

There's a moment where there's a long pause, and I decide to start driving anyway. If she tells me no, I'll find a rage room to beat the shit out of things. As I stop at a light, my phone buzzes.

Asking Siri to read the last text, I smile at the words.

Shina: Bring your A game. I filled the next few hours with clients for you. You've been missed, girl.

Get ready boys, the Mistress is on her way.



EVERY CLIENT PUTS me in a better mood. Mr. Peters is a man who likes it when I degrade him, and wear my highest heels to step on him. Whatever floats his boat.

“Petey, you’ve kept me waiting,” I sneer, hiking my heeled thigh-high leather boots on the chair in front of me. His eyes grow large as he closes the door behind him. He’s exactly two minutes late. “Take your shirt and pants off and kneel at my feet.”

Quickly, he begins to undress, his fingers shaking. I can tell he hasn’t been to see anyone since I disappeared; he’s very pent up. That, or whoever has been dominating him sucks at it. Peters needs to be really treated like shit, and some people just don’t have the ovaries for it.

“Take your time, it’s not like my time isn’t money or anything,” I sigh, rolling my eyes.

Peters tears his shirt off finally. It was giving him a terrible time. Dropping to his knees, his eyes well with remorse as he looks up at me. “I’m sorry, Mistress. What can I do to show you how sorry I am?”

“Kiss my boot. Suck the heel down as far as you can go. Since you’re going to waste my time, I may as well show you

a new skill,” I snark. These boots never leave this room, so they’re relatively clean. He doesn’t know that though, so he looks warily at it before he does just that.

Peters is as straight as an arrow when it comes to his sexuality, but I enjoy pushing his limits. Once he’s gagged on my heel a bit, I decide to move on.

“Face the wall on your knees, hands behind your back. I’m going to use my crop on your ass, back, and legs. I’m going to also bind your hands with handcuffs. Leather or actual cuffs?” I ask, gauging what his need for pain is today.

“Real cuffs, please, Mistress,” he murmurs, getting into position.

Humming under my breath, I pick them up and secure his wrists. Peters hisses as I tighten them.

“Petey, what’s your safe word for Mommy if things get too hard?” I coo with a wicked grin. Some people would think I’m crazy for enjoying my work so much, but I guarantee Mr. Peters will be a much more relaxed man after spending thirty minutes in my tender care.

“Peanuts,” he grunts in response.

“And why is your safe word peanuts?” I ask as I draw the crop down his back.

“I’m allergic,” he says, making me nod. This is part of our process, and Peters needs a routine, even when he’s being punished.

The next twenty minutes are a lot of fun for me.

As he gets dressed, I hide my smile as I see heel marks pressed into his trim stomach and neck. Peters looks a lot more relaxed, and he gives me a loopy, happy smile.

“I missed you, Lucky. I’m really glad you’re back,” Peters says as he pulls his suit jacket on. He’s back to being the well polished businessman as he fixes his hair.

“Trust me, I’m happy my hiatus is done too,” I murmur. “Go kick ass today.”

“They won’t know what hit them in the courtroom,” Peters chuckles as he walks out. Mr. Peters is a shark in the courtroom apparently, and the job is stressful. Thirty minutes with me changes his life.

My job is important, both for me and my clients.



NATE

Things have been so tense here and I need an outlet. I leave Patience to finish napping with Kian and Rooke after her return from work, and slip out into the hall to put my shoes on and make a run to the store. Cal is at Stonewall getting Rooke's and Patience's absence handled.

They will have a lot of work to make up, but it's better than flunking out all together. I open my phone and order an UBER, then grab my wallet from the entry table and leave the apartment.

I wait ten minutes for my ride, then tell them to take me to the local toy store.

An hour later and two hundred dollars lighter, I bring my bags up the stairs to Kian's apartment. I don't have a key yet, so I hope no one woke up and latched the lock. I try the knob and smile when it opens.

Mouse is there to greet me with a "Meow," and I laugh. I still can't get over Ki having a cat. He always seemed like the Rottweiler type when he was in his punk-rock stage.

I place the bags in the kitchen, then bend down and love on Mouse until she's had enough and gently nips me. Okay, now I get it. She's perfect for Ki. They both have an attitude. I grab one of my bags and start to unpack. I can't wait for them to wake up so we can have some fun.

Rooke and Pay aren't ready to leave the apartment for long periods of time yet, and I get it. I don't know exactly what they went through, but I know it was bad. Patience wakes up two or three times a night with flashbacks and nightmares.

"What's all this?" Cal laughs as he comes into the kitchen.

"I want to have some fun," I smirk. "Let's wake up our sleeping beauties in a bit. First, can you help me get the ammo together in the Nerf guns?"

His smile is excited as he nods. As he reaches for one of the Nerf guns, his hand stills. “This is a really good idea. Patience acts like everything is fine, but she’s spiraling in her own way. Doing something like this will help, though.”

“Our girl’s a badass. Sometimes we have to remind her that we know that. She survived something huge, and I’m really grateful to Rooke for taking care of her the way he did,” I say seriously. “Don’t be a dick to him anymore, because we’re keeping him.”

“Fuck, everyone keeps accusing me of being a dick,” he groans. “You’re usually like eighty-five percent right when you call me out for it, but I have yet to be one today. Also, Rooke isn’t a dog, you can’t just keep someone.”

“Woof.” I grin, picking up the Nerf gun. I aim at his chest and pull the trigger, snickering as it bounces off his chest. Cal snorts, grabbing the other guns and racing for Kai’s bedroom.

He crashes into the room and jumps on the bed as I run after him. God, they’re going to think we’re being attacked.

“Do you wanna have a Nerf gun fight?” Cal yells, and I can’t stop laughing. This is the carefree guy that he used to be before everything changed and Mr. James died. A lot of things went up in flames after that.

“Please, please, please, Daddy Ki!” I crow, making Pay laugh so hard I worry about her bladder.

“Those are fighting words!” Ki yells, grabbing one of the Nerf guns and hitting me in the arm with the dart.

They truly are, because everyone scrambles out of bed, grabs their weapon of choice, and runs after me. I can’t stop laughing as I jump over the couch, crouching behind it as I shoot people sniper-style. Pillows are thrown, posts are abandoned— Fuck, this was a good idea.

I don’t really care what his poor neighbors think as we stomp around and yell. Totally worth it.

KIAN

I haven't laughed this hard in months. Nate had a great idea with the Nerf gun game. It almost reminded me of the days we used to play when we were younger.

I can see how Patience has welcomed the twins back into her life with open arms. It's hard not to get nostalgic.

Cal hits me in the back of the head with a rubber bullet and I groan. Dammit. I thought I found the best hiding spot.

Giggles and then a needy moan erupt from the kitchen. I stand from my crouched position and stretch my arms over my head.

I catch Cal looking at the small patch of skin that's showing from my shirt lifting and I raise a brow. His cheeks flush and he looks away. Hmm, interesting.

I've never been against exploring a male's body, but the way Rooke and Cal are, I never thought he would be interested in expanding his relationships.

"Who's making my girl make all of those pretty noises?" I call out, walking into the kitchen.

Rooke has his hand in Patience's panties, making her whimper as he kisses her. Nate palms his cock as he watches, muttering, "Fuck, that's so hot."

"I'm going to grab dinner," Cal calls out, completely oblivious to what's happening in the kitchen.

"Thanks, I have to go grocery shopping tomorrow," I tell him over my shoulder. The door shuts behind him, and Rooke moves his lips to her neck.

"Want to do something wild with me, baby girl?" Rooke asks as he pushes his thick fingers inside of her. I can only imagine how tightly she's squeezing him right now.

"I'll do anything if it means your dick is inside of me soon," she begs. It makes me pause. We've been careful with

Pay. Almost... too careful.

She's been snarling and angry the last few weeks, but she was in a much better mood after being at work. Patience is a very sexual person, and we've been depriving her of sex. We're idiots who have neglected the proper feeding and fucking of our girlfriend.

"Give it to her," I murmur, leaning against the wall. My cock thickens in my gray sweatpants, and Rooke rolls his tongue over his lips as he glances down.

"Do you want me to stretch your tight little pussy with my big cock while they watch, baby girl?" Rooke growls.

Nate groans at his words, saying, "Yes, please," under his breath.

"I second that. Fuck me, Rooke. I need it," Patience says.

I know that they were forced to perform together on camera, and for a second I worry that she may get triggered. Instead, Rooke whispers something in her ear and she nods wildly, pulling her shirt up and over her head. Our gorgeous girl ran around waging a Nerf war in her T-shirt and panties and nothing else.

Fuck, there are so many reasons that I love her, but the fact that she's adventurous and fun is one of the best. She reminds me that I can still enjoy myself, even though I'm a fussy professor.

Rooke wraps his strong hands in the straps of Pay's tiny thong, ripping it off. The tearing sound makes my dick twitch, especially as he shoves it into the pocket of his sweatpants.

Pushing her face down onto the island, he drops to his knees. Patience's gaze meets mine, and I release my cock, palming it just for her. I've never really been a voyeur, but this is damn hot. If it helps her reclaim pieces of her soul after the club tried to ruin her, so much the better.

Pay's lips open, and her pink tongue flicks along them as she watches me. Rooke drops to his knees spreading her ass cheeks wide.

“Fuck, you’re already soaked, baby girl,” I groan, lazily stroking my cock. Nate leans next to me, and it should be weird that we’re masturbating next to each other, but it isn’t as soon as Rooke’s tongue drags over her core.

Patience whimpers, arching and pushing her ass against Rooke’s face. *Spank her.* Fuck, that ass would look so much prettier if it matched the pretty pink of her pussy. Rooke looks at me as if he can hear my thoughts and my head drops back as I watch.

“Do it,” I plead, hoping he knows what I want.

“Brats don’t get to come,” he rumbles, spanking both of her ass cheeks.

Gasping, the swats make her rise onto her toes with the force of them. “Fuck, yes. More, Sir. I’ve been so bad.”

“Jesus fuck,” Nate groans.

“Yes, you have, but I have a feeling the peanut gallery wants to see you thoroughly fucked before a certain growly man comes home,” Rooke chuckles.

Cal has been very possessive of him since he’s been back, and I have a feeling that guilt is part of it.

Rooke sucks and licks at Pay’s slit while his thumb rubs her clit in insistent circles. After all, it’s not a DJ booth, he listens to her noises, and he knows how to edge her.

“Rooke...” she begs in a breathy whine. Pushing his thick fingers into her slick channel, he crooks his fingers.

“Fuck, yeah. Come for him, rabbit,” Nate sighs. “Her legs are shaking.”

I can see her muscles are trembling and smile as I collect my arousal at the slit of my cock, spreading it with my thumb before I continue to fuck my hand.

Rooke makes obscene sounds as he slurps at her clit, his tongue flicking it as he pushes her closer to her release.

“Rooke!” Pay screams, her toes curling into the tile as she shudders and showers his face with her release.

“So fucking good,” he grunts, brushing the back of his hand along his face. I want to ask to suck her cum off his fingers, but that’s weird, right? Goddamn, I really want it though.

Licking my lips, I watch as he slowly stands, shoving the waistband of his sweatpants down past his hips. Dropping his heavy cock on her ass, he grins as she shivers in anticipation. Rubbing the head of his dick through her cream, he squeezes her hip.

“You’re so damn beautiful,” he whispers. The words are reverent, full of emotion, as if he’s surprised they’re here, safe and together. I think they’ll both feel like that for a while. Pushing himself in slowly, I feel my chest start to heave as I watch her pussy swell with the strain of accepting all of him.

Patience’s forehead meets the cool granite of the island, struggling to breathe as she gets used to his size. I can’t even imagine how he fits anywhere else, or how Cal can take his dick. I think I’m a bit impressed by the thought.

Rocking his hips, Rooke works his way in until his thighs touch her ass. Leaning forward, his fingers entwine in hers as he fucks her. The sounds of moans and keening fills the room as he rides her hard from behind.

“You’re such a good girl taking my dick after I made your ass pretty and pink. Fuck, you’re strangling me, baby girl. Just like that,” he praises her, his head buried in her shoulder.

My other hand cups my balls as I massage and pull on them. I don’t care who else is around. Patience’s tits are flush against the granite, and her nipples could cut diamonds right now. Just as I’m wishing that she’d look at me, she rests her flushed cheek on the island. Pay’s lips are parted, and her eyes roll as she moans.

“Fuck, yeah. Do you feel good, baby?” I ask, forcing my gaze to stay on her. I can feel my balls starting to draw up and pressure building in my back. “Goddamn, I’m so close.”

“I want to watch you and Nate come first,” Patience whines, her hands pushing against the table as if to stave off

the inevitable.

Rooke's hips start to twist as he fucks her and she mewls. His hand spans her twice, and his head drops back as he groans. "Fuck, fuck. Mistakes were made. Dammit," he says.

The thought of how tight she has to be gripping his cock is my undoing. Ropes of cum cover my stomach and hand as I roar. Patience's eyes never leave Nate and I as she whimpers as lets go. Rooke's head drops to her shoulder as his arm wraps around her stomach and he pumps his cum deep inside of her.

Breathing hard, I look over at Nate, who looks entirely wrecked. "I need a shower and a nap, not food," he mutters, making me laugh.

"Your brother is going to be walking in soon, let's all clean up," I suggest.

Rooke hisses as he steps back, his cock is hard as it slips out of Patience. "Let's save water, beautiful, and shower together," he chuckles, picking her up and throwing her over his shoulder.

Grinning, I watch as they leave. Yeah, today has been the best day ever.

## Chapter Thirteen



“I am not looking forward to going back to school,” I groan to Nate as he takes my hand and leads me into the building. People are staring and I worry they know about what happened. But that’s not possible. Cal told the administration that Rooke and I caught a nasty case of mono.

Which I guess is better than saying we were kidnapped by his father, sold to a sex trafficking ring, then bought by a lunatic couple who had sadistic kinks.

A blur of blonde hair comes charging down the hall and I’m shoved against a locker. I laugh and a genuine smile graces my lips.

“I’ve missed you so much. Don’t ever get sick again,” Hana blubbers and I give her a quick squeeze. Brad takes her arm and pulls her off of me.



I give him a nod and he gives me that boyish smile that once had my panties dropping.

“Good to see you’re back, James,” he says and I shake my head at the weird nickname.

“Yeah, it’s good to be back,” I say and surprisingly I actually mean it.

Rooke and Cal come around the corner to join our little group and I smile at the PDA they are showing. Someone starts to comment on them holding hands and I’m about to whoop some asses but Nate shakes his head at me.

I want Cal to be allowed to show affection and love, but some people just suck. I can’t protect him from everything. People will need time to get used to this.

“It’s been so long I can’t remember my locker combination,” I tell Hana as we head that way. I don’t even know what’s in there but I’d like to dump my backpack before we go to class.

“If you can’t figure it out, we’ll just have the janitor help you break into it,” she says with a grin. “Don’t stress. I’m just so glad you’re back.”

Relaxing, I decide to just roll with it. It just feels so surreal to be here. History drones on and on, and my eyes droop during it. This reminds me why school and I aren’t the best of friends. It’s really fucking boring.

Sighing as I walk out of the first half of classes, I’m already wondering why I’m here. What’s the point? I survived being kidnapped into a sex ring and then sold to cannibals to go back to a normal life? It feels so anticlimactic. I want to yell at my grandfather for lying about loving me, and take Nixen down for being a mafioso piece of shit.

Cal is on the phone as I drop my books off, and I sigh in relief as I remember my locker combination. The janitor had to come save me this morning, because I couldn’t remember the numbers. He tried to give me a side eye as he pulled up the numbers, but then I explained that I’ve been sick for months.

Mr. Riley mumbled that he hoped I felt better now and went back about his day. He's a grumpy man, but fair for the most part.

Cal's face is turning red. Shit. I wonder who he's talking to?

Shoving my books into the locker, I shut it before running over to see what our next catastrophe is. I wish life would slow down a little, but we had a few nice moments before returning to school.

Rooke is watching Cal nervously, and when he starts yelling, he pushes him toward the exit so he doesn't draw a crowd.

"Move," he hisses, and I follow them both outside. It's lunch time, so people are traveling through the halls to get to food or leave campus. Nate is watching Cal nervously, his fingers running through his brown hair.

His piercings glint in the overhead lights as we walk, and I'm surprised that administrators haven't said anything to him yet. I know usually he'll just ignore them though.

Once outside, Cal starts to scream.

"Dad, how are you feeding me this bullshit right now? She didn't just decide to fuck off for a few months and take a tour of the world. Patience was missing!" Cal rolls his eyes, putting Nixen on speakerphone and muting himself.

I roll my lips in to keep quiet, my heart pounding. This man makes me irrationally angry.

"You're allowing your emotions to take control of you, son," Nixen says in a bored tone.

"You'll never get very far in this world if you spend it in this constant state of anger and impulsivity. Take a step back. Is she hurt? Nothing bad happened to her on her little vacation, and now is the perfect time to plan your wedding to her. Who knows what she was doing or who she was fucking. You need an heir. Do you even know if she came back pregnant or not?"

I shake my head because it's not possible. The only person I had sex with is Rooke, but I'm not pregnant. It's almost impossible since I have an IUD.

"I know, Pay," he mutters since the phone is muted. "Your uterus is none of his damned business anyway."

My heart pinches because he's going to bat for me. Even with what's on the line for both of us with the company, Cal is defying his dad.

Hitting unmute, Cal scoffs loudly so his father can hear him. It's a blatant sign of disrespect. "Patience isn't pregnant, she didn't go on vacation, and you're clearly up to something. Why the rush?"

"I'm your father, boy. You should do as I say. I'm making an appointment to meet with the wedding planner, and we are moving up the wedding. I'm not negotiating with you," Nixen sneers. If I could reach through the phone and beat the shit out of him I would. I'm feeling very violent at the moment.

"Dad, see reason—" Nixen hangs up, and Cal growls in annoyance. "Motherfucker!"

"Dad's never going to be someone who will see reason," Nate sighs. "I don't understand how he just thinks we can go back to normal."

"What, like I was on fucking vacation or something?" I snap and Nate flinches. Cal looks off at the wall. "I was taken by him and his little goons." I am fuming and Rooke moves closer to me and grabs my hand.

"What do you want to do, baby girl? Because honestly right now I want to put Nixen into a coma," Rooke grumbles and Cal huffs.

"Fuck this. I think it's time me and Daddy dearest have a chat," I growl and stomp to the parking lot.

"Pay!" Rooke calls out and I turn, walking backwards. "Keep your location on. If you need back up, I'll be there."

Cal and Nate look a little lost before they shake themselves out of it. I know he's their dad, but he's also an asshole who

had me kidnapped. They're going to have to figure out where they stand.

Immediately, I feel how unfair that thought was. Maybe I really am growing up. Shaking out my hands, I nod. "I love you guys, this is just something I have to do."

"Be safe, baby," Nate says, and Cal nods, his hazel eyes glittering with fury at his inability to do anything right now.

That's fine, I'm going to fuck some shit up.



I CALLED the office to make sure that Nixen was there, because I know that sometimes he works from home. The secretary confirmed that he was in the office, and as soon as she did, I hung up.

Kian is at the school working, so I have no issues swinging up to the store and buying a bat. My location is on, but they can't stop me.

He must have heard that I left campus, because my phone starts to ring just as I pull into the office parking lot. Sighing, I wonder if I should answer it. I really don't want to be yelled at. Just as I park, I roll my eyes and answer it.

"Yo, I'm a little busy at the moment, can I get a raincheck on school?" I ask, turning off the car.

"*Patience,*" Kian sputters as he laughs. "*Did you just say 'yo' to me?*"

"Eh, it was weird for me too. I was hoping you'd want to turn my ass red less if I was absolutely ridiculous?" I ask hopefully.

"*Oh, no, I definitely want to spank your ass and then maybe fuck it, but you're definitely in trouble. Can you tell me what's going on in that cute brain of yours?*"

"I want to beat the shit out of things, and I have poor impulse control," I tell him as I lock the car, new bat in hand. "Nixen wants to pretend that I went to Florida or the south of

Italy for a vacation. I was kidnapped! If that's his idea of a leisurely time off, then I'm here to tell him differently. He thinks I'm a pain in the ass, he has no fucking idea."

*"Why were you at the sporting goods store, baby? You know I can track your location, right?"* Ki asks, and I just grin like a psychopath, letting the tip of the steel bat drag behind me. I can practically see him pinching his nose in stress and it makes me giggle. *"I swear to god, you're going to give me gray hairs. What the fuck are you dragging on the ground?"*

"A bat. Love you, I'll be home soon," I sing as a nice man opens the door for me. He double takes at the sight of the bat that I hold against my leg, but doesn't say anything. I love that even security is so busy that they don't notice as I walk through the lobby of the building.

*"Pay,"* he sighs. *"Please don't land yourself in jail, that's all I ask."*

"I can handle that," I promise as I get into the elevator.

*"Fine, give him hell. Love you,"* he says, hanging up.

The words make me smile. It's not the first time that he's said this, but I feel like we're getting closer to not having to live in secrecy. It's one of my biggest regrets. I understand that Ki didn't want anyone to know we were involved since we're step-siblings, but we lost so much time together.

The smile still stretches over my lips as I get off on the correct floor. There's not many people in the office, and I wonder if Nixen sent everyone home early. Even his secretary isn't at her desk, so I take the liberty of walking past to his office.

Knocking on the closed door, I shove it open. Ew, well that explains where the secretary is. Her skirt is hiked up to her waist, and Nixen is rutting into her from behind.

"It looks as if you're busy taking a meeting," I say innocently, walking into the room. Nixen looks apoplectic as he falls forward, still connected to his secretary.

"Oh my god," she squeals, trying to get him off her. "Nixen, get off!"

“I’m trying, you stupid cow! Your pussy is so tight, I can’t get my cock out!” he roars.

I can’t stop laughing, and take a practice swing with my bat at a lamp. “Ooh that tinkles real pretty! Was it expensive? Look at all the glass,” I crow, crunching glass under my boot. I’m really glad that I wore good shoes today.

“Fuck! Stop! That was one of a kind,” Nixen complains, pulling up his pants. Giggling, I shake my head.

“I’m sorry, but investing in a bigger penis would have been a better use of your money,” I tell him. His secretary, Trish? Carly? Eh, either would work with all that blonde hair and big boobs, struggles to pull her tight skirt down her hips. Tripping when I slam the bat down on a printer, she starts running out the door. “A really good workplace rule is to not fuck the boss. It’s meant to protect you. Respect yourself!”

“Patience,” Nixen growls. It sounds so much like Cal, that I wrinkle my nose. Ew.

“Yes?” I ask, swinging the bat down on the pretty glass coffee table.

“That is quite enough, young lady!” he yells, making me shrug.

“Admit that I didn’t just take a vacation. You are a piece of shit kidnapper,” I remind him nonchalantly. My heart is pounding in my chest, because this is dangerous as fuck. Nixen Reynolds is not a good man.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he says, eyes wide. “Are you taking your medication, darling? Have you told my son about your condition?”

“I do have a condition,” I mull, killing a pretty statue next. “It’s called ‘aversion to bullshit,’ Nixen.”

Approaching the shiny monitor hanging from the wall for presentations, I get ready to break it.

“So help me God, Patience, upon my friendship with your father, I will end you!” Nixen screams, his face bright red.

Pausing, I tilt my head in surprise. I'm careful not to give the man my back, because I don't want to get hurt. Nixen is a loose cannon. "Tell me more about this so-called friendship," I sneer. I'm convinced that even though they may have at one time been friends, it grew to jealousy and resentment.

"He was my best friend," he sputters. "You know he was. We went on vacation together, we spent holidays together, you fucking grew up with my sons. You know we were close."

"Maybe once," I sigh. "He's dead now, and I will never know what happened."

Drawing my arms back as I hold the bat, I swing hard, breaking the glass. "I'm calling security, I don't know why that blasted secretary hasn't called them," he complains.

Moving quickly, I thank my training as I knock his cell phone out of his hand, smashing it to pieces. "Your secretary seemed pretty embarrassed, I wouldn't be surprised if she went home," I lament. "Do you usually fuck her around this time? The office is kind of empty today."

A look passes his eyes, and I wonder if I'm right. The man has a standing pussy appointment with his secretary. Gross. Apparently he was just getting ready to lunge for his office phone, so I aim between his arms, breaking that too.

"Why are you such a fucking psychopath?!" Nixen yells.

"You helped make me like this," I tell him innocently, pretending to get ready to hit him with the baseball bat. I would love to actually do it, but I know how much they hurt too.

Thankfully he squeals like a pig and runs out the door of his office.

I don't really remember the next fifteen minutes. When I blink, the office is trashed, and I've torn up all of his important papers. I probably should have tried to snoop, but I doubt he kept anything illegal in this office. I need to get into his house to find anything like that.

Keeping the bat with me because I'm attached to it now, I walk out of the room humming to myself. No one is in the

office now, no one came to stop me as I left either. It's surreal. I still feel like I didn't get to break enough shit. I need to fuck or fight. Maybe one of my men will give that to me.



CAL

*“Cal, your future wife needs a swift backhand to get back in line,”* my father growls into the phone hours after I spoke to him. I almost didn’t pick up, but Pay never came back to school, and we’re getting ready to drive home to Ki’s apartment. *“You need to control her! She destroyed my office.”*

“She interrupted your time with your secretary, huh?” I ask, ignoring Nate’s glance at me. There’s a lot that he doesn’t know about Dad, and one of those things is how much he fucks around.

He cheated on our mother quite often when she was alive, too. It’s just another secret I kept from my brother.

*“Nevermind how I get my dick wet, son. I have needs, and I’m sure that when Pay is old and her pussy is all stretched out, you’ll fuck your secretary, too,”* Nixen says sagely.

“Ugh, pass please. Where is my fiancée? Did you send her on another vacation?” I ask, looking up Pay’s location. It says she’s at Ki’s, and I sag in relief. Thank fuck for girlfriend LoJack.

Pulling out of the parking lot, I leave my father on speaker phone.

*“I never touched her then, and I didn’t touch her now, Cal. Get your head out of your ass. You’re going to both sit down with Laci, the wedding planner, and figure out this damn wedding. You will not defy me,”* he warns. *“Everything hinges on you two getting married, Cal.”*

“Aye, aye, sir,” I mutter, fake saluting. I know that he can’t see me, but it’ll piss him off regardless. As he screams obscenities, I roll my eyes and hang up.

“Is Dad always like that with you?” Nate asks, horrified.

“Yes,” Rooke and I say. “Dad... is an asshole. Everything has to be his way, and he gets really violent if he doesn’t get it.”

“He reminds me a lot of my dad,” Rooke says softly.

“We’re going to deal with that asshole really soon,” I promise him. “I don’t want you ever going back there. Nixen Reynolds is worse in some ways because he has an agenda and the Mafia contacts to make it happen. I’ve always been really careful around him, but honestly the worst thing that I thought could happen already did. I have no reason to be loyal to that man.”

“I don’t think your dad thought of it that way when he kidnapped me,” Rooke says gently.

“Or dropped Pay into Isabella’s lap,” Nate finishes.

“I’m betting that he didn’t think we’d find either one of you,” I sigh. “I’m done taking orders from him. However, I do have to marry Patience because of the will. I’m sorry, Rooke.”

“You’re fine,” he says, waving my words away. “I may have been worried when you were hiding me away, but you held my hand at school today. I think we’ll be fine.”

My chest hurts at the realization that I’ve been a really shitty boyfriend in the past. I was hiding my sexuality so much from my father and the world that I hurt the one person that I was trying to protect.

I suck. I’m honestly trying, though. Sharing isn’t something I’ve ever done very well.

“It was my honor to come out with you at school,” I tell him instead.

“You two are really adorable,” Nate chuckles as he gets out of the car once I park in the underground parking lot.

Patience: I need to beat something up. Can we spar?

I stare at my phone screen for a beat before smiling. I love that she reached out to me.

Me: Yeah, Pay. I’m in. Just got to the parking garage at home. Want to come down?

I always bring a change of clothes with me. Pulling up the schedule for the gym, I reserve a sparring ring for us.

“Why are you smiling like that?” Rooke teases. “The only reason I’m not jealous is because I’m pretty sure I know.”

Dropping my head back on the headrest, I continue to smile like a dope. “Patience asked me to spar with her. I have a feeling she’s still pissed after enacting her version of a rage room demolition in my dad’s office.”

“Happiness looks good on you, bro,” Nate says with a smirk while opening the car door. “She coming down here?”

“Yeah, I just reserved a ring. I’ll bring food back on my way home with her. I’m kind of in the mood for pasta, maybe some cannoli?” I suggest with a shrug.

“Fuck, yes. My hero,” Rooke groans, leaning in the back seat to kiss me upside down. I struggle not to make a sound, but as my pants start to tighten, I realize it’s a losing battle.

“My brother, the porn star,” Nate chuckles. I worry that Rooke might be upset, even though he’s joking, but Rooke just grins and gets out of the car.

“Bye, baby,” he says, walking to the elevator with my brother.

Patience steps out of the elevator in front of them, and I watch her closely as she interacts with them. She gives them each a hug and a kiss and walks to the car. She’s in tight workout gear, and I swear I almost swallow my tongue. Her sports bra should be illegal in five different states.

Slipping into the passenger seat, she gives me a feral grin. “Did you know that steel bats are super destructive when yielded properly?” she asks.

Snorting, I grin at her. “Please tell me that you took photos,” I beg as I put the car into drive.

Pulling her phone out of her tiny shorts, she leans in and shows me the photos. She really fucked up his office. Scrolling over the photos, I see there’s a photo of her posed

with the bat, her lips pursed in a kiss. “That’s just for you, Cal,” she murmurs.

“Send it to me, baby girl,” I tell her, maneuvering out of the garage. “I want to fucking frame it.”

The giggles she gives me are the world’s best gift. I love her so much, and I want to give her everything. We just need to survive our insane lives first. I feel as if it’s been one thing after another. We can’t get a damn break.

The drive to the gym is one that we spend comfortably as she turns on some music. Pay sings softly to herself as we drive, and I’m reminded of simpler times. We did everything together. We practically lived at each other’s houses. I’m hoping we can make what we had even better.

“What are you thinking about?” she asks as we get out of the car. I have my duffle in my hand to change quickly, and I also have tape and such in there. I prefer my own.

“The past,” I grunt. “Before your dad died and all the bullshit happened. It’s dumb.”

“It’s not,” she denies. “We had a pretty solid childhood, while it lasted.”

Telling her I’ll be a second, I send her on to the ring I reserved. Changing quickly, I find her there, stretching.

“I hope you’re ready to bring it,” she says with a grin. “I really will beat the shit out of you, baby.”

“Bring it on, baby girl. I hope you’re ready to eat the mat!” Trash talking is half the fun when it comes to sparring with Pay.

Making sure both our hands are taped and our mouth guards are in, we begin to spar. Patience is really good. She watches her blind spots and almost knocks me on my ass several times. For it being her namesake, my girl isn’t very patient though.

Lunging for me, she leaps onto my back, locking her arm around my throat. I do what anyone would have done: squashed her by dropping onto my back. As she grunts, I twist

around and I'm kneed in the stomach for my efforts. Huffing out a laugh, we spar for a bit longer until I manage to have her twisted into a pretty little pretzel with her head down on the mat and her ass up in the air.

Squeezing my hand between our bodies, I rub my finger along her panty line. Patience makes a needy sound and I grin.

"If I promise to make you come, do you concede the fight, baby girl?" I ask her. I don't want to get kicked in the head because she doesn't want to lose.

"Yes," she grinds out, and I'm on the move. Peeling down her shorts and panties to her thighs, I palm her ass, opening them wide. She's already glistening, making me moan.

Licking up her arousal, I get to work eating her gorgeous pussy. "I've missed the way you taste," I murmur. Sucking, nipping, I listen to her noises as I ease my fingers inside her.

I don't want her to come yet, though. I crook my fingers, sucking hard on her clit. Her walls are fluttering, and her body has a sheen of sweat that is only partly from sparring with me.

As she gets closer, I straighten, ignoring her whine. Pushing down my workout shorts, I release my cock, pumping it twice before sliding it inside of her. I want her to come on my dick or not at all.

"Fuck, baby. It's like coming home," I groan. Holding tightly to her hips, I fuck her into the mats. I know she may have bruises tomorrow, but it'll just be something to remind her of me. Patience's brown hair spills across the ring, loose because I pulled the hair tie out.

The bun works well for sparring, but I love seeing her pouty lips pant for breath, her hair over her eyes. Speaking of, she pushes it out of the way, squealing in surprise as I thrust so hard that she slides forward.

Smirking, I grab her waist and a handful of her gorgeous mane, pulling her tightly to me. Her back glued to my chest, I kiss her as she rolls her hips as she rocks against me. "Fuck, baby, that's so good," I praise her as her wide blue eyes are

overtaken by her pupils. She's so close to coming for me and I don't want it to end.

Collaring her throat with my palm, I slide the hand that was on her hips down her pelvis and through her arousal as she continues to fuck herself on my cock. Gathering it up, I rub her clit firmly.

"Cal, oh... fuck," she gasps, her hips rolling in a circle. I swear I see stars as she does that, and I bury my face in her shoulder to bite it. That throws her over the edge. She screams and creams all over my dick.

Squeezing her hip, I thrust up into her, fucking her hard. Patience grabs onto my arms for purchase, and I smirk, knowing she's worried she'll fall. I got her. There's nowhere for her to go since I've anchored her to me with my hand around her neck and hips. I love her possessive touch though, and my balls start to draw up.

"I love you, baby," I groan as I start to fill her with my release. I'm so glad she asked to spar. I didn't expect for it to end in sex in the ring, but it's so perfectly us.

## Chapter Fourteen



“I feel like we should be doing more,” Patience says, frustrated as she paces in the living room. “There are all of those men and women who are still there, Rooke. Fuck, they’re grooming and training children!”

“I know,” I grunt. I do know, and I feel a tendril of shame. I should be this upset, too. It’s like everything has been calmed down a bit, so it feels as if the four months that I was captive was a dream. Fuck, I’m a terrible person. I just wanted to move on, but Pay is right. There’s work to do. “Okay, baby. Let’s fuck it up.”

Patience gives me a brilliant smile, and a little broken piece of me fits back into place. I’m human, I’m fallible, but I can do better.

Ki comes into the room, brow raised as he sees where Patience is now squatting next to me.

“Is this a private meeting?” He chuckles.

“Can you help me take down a sex ring? If not, go away,” she says dismissively. I think she thought he’d tell her that it wasn’t safe or some shit.

I’m learning that there are many facets to Kian Park, some that I even like. Giving Patience his best ‘game on’ look, he pulls out his phone.

“There are a couple of things that are going to happen. I’m going to call in a favor with the Locked Souls Society. They’re a secret society that I went undercover for and have worked with in the past,” he explains. “I’ve kept a lot from you, Pay. Some because I wanted to keep you safe, some because I was ashamed of it, but—”

“What?” she asks, standing to face him.

“If I had just told you some of the shit your grandfather had me doing for him, maybe you wouldn’t have been kidnapped,” he sighs. Oh shit. This isn’t on him. Yes, the truth is important, but Nixen was on the warpath.

“Did you kidnap me personally, Ki?” Patience asks softly, walking to his side. I smirk, because that’s exactly what I’d do.

Ki shakes his head. It’s adorable that he thinks he’s capable of arguing with Pay. Her logic is impeccable.

“Then there’s nothing to apologize for. Just don’t lie to me or keep things from me going forward please,” she demands, and he pulls her to him to kiss her hard.

They look gorgeous together as their lips fuse. I even have to adjust myself as my cock twitches and thickens in my sweatpants. I hate how I can’t hide shit in them. It’s like a flag waving for everyone to see my cock. I can see why women go nuts for them.

“Before we get carried away,” she gasps, “you had more to tell me.”

“Yes, but this is a lot more fun,” Ki mutters, his fingers diving into her hair to bring her lips back to his. “You taste so fucking good. So, if you want to do this, I’m going to call the



Locked Souls Society to help dismantle the skin trade ring that Isabella and Nixen have going. It may get a little messy.”

“Totally in,” I say, knowing that Pay will be too as I stand. Ki’s eyes take me in, his gaze staying on my tented pants for a beat too long.

Clearing his throat, he looks back down at Patience. “You ready for this, baby girl?” His voice is low, throaty, and filled with desire. *Is that because of me too, or just Patience?*

Ki confuses me.

“Yes, Kian. Do what you have to do,” she says, smiling brilliantly at him. I would do anything she wanted to have that smile aimed at me. I know he’ll bend over backward for her too.

Calling a contact in his phone, we wait as it rings. Ki frowns as it continues, but finally a gruff voice answers.

*“This is the Dragon. This better be good,”* the man growls. He sounds important, scary, and like an asshole.

Folding my arms over my chest, I wait to be impressed by this man. We all shit the same way, and it takes a lot for me to trust new people.

“Dragon, it’s Kian Park. I’m sorry to call, but we have a situation and I need to turn in my boon,” Ki explains.

“*Ki!*” The voice no longer sounds as annoyed. *“Tell me what’s going on.”*

“Patience was kidnapped and given to a sex ring in the hopes that she’d disappear. Cal’s father is a dick with a size complex and will need to be dealt with. Her grandfather will possibly need to be neutralized as well. Richard James is becoming a real thorn in my side. We managed to get her back, but she wants to dismantle the sex ring that took her,” Ki explains calmly. I don’t know how he can do that; my skin feels warm just thinking about it.

*“We can make that happen,”* Dragon confirms. *“You said sex ring. Is Patience in the room with you?”*

Pay glances at Kai, unsure if she should speak. At his nod, she sighs. “I am,” Pay says.

“*Great. Hi, Patience,*” Dragon says, his voice warming a little. “*Can I ask you a few questions? I want to get the full picture.*”

“Ask away,” Pay says carefully, unsure of what he’ll ask.

“*Can you confirm who is running the ring?*” Dragon asks.

“A woman named Isabella. Ki, do you know her last name?” she asks.

“Isabella Andrews. Richard made me go on a date with her,” Ki says, a sour look on his face. “I really think he knew who she was when he insisted I do it. He withheld crucial information from me about the sex ring.”

“*Richard James has always been a wily bastard,*” Dragon mutters. “*We’ll handle him. I have reasons to believe that a man named Spider was working there too—*”

“He was,” Pay and I say together.

“Spider helped us when he could,” I explain. “There were a couple times that he saved our lives.”

“*He’s a part of Locked Souls Society,*” Dragon explains. “*He is returning to the school now to tell me everything. As it was part of his mission to find out what he could about the sex ring, we will help you dismantle it. We’ll even enjoy it as this is personal for us as well.*”

I relax a little knowing that we’ll be getting help. There’s so much we don’t know about the sex ring. Ki told me that Isabella has other sex clubs, and we simply don’t know if they’re legit or another extension of her illegal activities.

“*Here he is,*” Dragon murmurs and I can hear the door open. “*Spider, how would you like to help us take down the ring with Patience and her men?*”

“*She got out?*” Spider asks with surprise. His voice is rough, and he sounds exhausted and raw. This mission was rough on him, I can tell.

“Hey, Spider,” I say, knowing Dragon is on speaker phone now. I throw my arm around Pay, squeezing her gently. We’re all out and safe. It’s time to pay it forward now.

*“Fuck,”* he mutters, blowing out a breath. *“Yeah, I’m in. Let’s bring Isabella and those fuckers down. The things I had to see are going to haunt me.”*

The next two hours are spent getting comfortable, switching to a video call, and planning how to ensure Madam Isabella has a really bad day.

NATE

My father is making me crazy. I think that as the years drag on so does his need to control us.

“For the last fucking time, I am not marrying Silvia. You want to disinherit me? Fine!” I hang up on my dad and stomp over to the bedroom Patience has claimed as hers.

She’s not here, but I still need a minute to calm down. Even after everything my father did, he’s still pushing Silvia on me and I’m fucking done. Not only has he been feeding her lies about me, she won’t stop sending me naked photos.

My eyes are burning, my dick is shriveling up, and I’m terrified that Patience will see them and get the wrong idea. I don’t need to be on her shit list or her whipping boy.

I wish that Silvia would have some self respect and just move on. However, if her father is as ambitious and insistent as mine, he may be driving her to do this. I can’t imagine being forced to whore myself out for a parent; that reality is horrifying.

There’s a small moment where I feel sorry for Silvia, and then I remember that she’s the end of my freedom if I give in. No matter how nice of a girl she may be, I can’t give an inch. Silvia would be detrimental to my love of meat and Patience.

Crawling into her bed, I snuggle in it, inhaling deeply. I love the way I can smell her scent even when she’s gone. I hate that life always feels like it’s spiraling. We have so many balls in the air, and nothing is simple. My father, Richard, Isabella, and her sex ring are all stumbling blocks to our happiness.

The Locked Souls Society is going to help us with these issues, though I’m skeptical about how it’ll all work. Nixen Reynolds is going to keep trying to mess with my life until he’s dead. The thought should make me sad, but there’s been no love lost between us for years.

When I started to lose my brother and realized who was at fault, my emotions became very muddled when it came to my father.

I'm lost in my thoughts for longer than I thought, and soon Patience is walking into the room.

"I must have gathered good karma today," she teases. "The Universe left me a present."

"Hey, rabbit," I chuckle, opening my arms to her. "Come here."

Jumping onto the bed after dropping her bag on the floor, my little rabbit crawls into my arms. I pull my shirt off first, because I love the feel of her against my skin. "How was your day?" she asks softly.

It feels like we're in our own little bubble right now. No bullshit, just us. I know that it's an illusion, there are people who count on us, but I don't mind the sharing. My head is a bit of a mess, and Patience helps to silence the questions of the unknown.

"Weird," I grunt. "Dad is on his usual rant about how I need to marry Silvia. Perfectly nice girl, though a little odd, but—"

"But what?" she asks, her nose scrunching.

"You're it for me, and she's not you," I mumble, threading my fingers through her hair.

"You're definitely my sweet boy," Pay sighs happily. "Now what is the little whore doing to put you into knots?"

"What? Umm..." Damn, why does she know me so well?

"Don't say anything. I want an orgasm, and I'll just go find someone else if you piss me off," she threatens with a bratty smile.

Covering her body with mine, I kiss her. I love her lips, her little sighs and moans, her...

Shit, I forgot the question.

“There’s no one else here but me and you,” I tease her with a grin. “You know we get you off better than your vibrator.”

Patience is still a little uncomfortable using toys because of her time in the club. She’ll use a butt plug, and she’s happy to experiment together, but she hates using toys alone. Needless to say, we have been having a lot of fun together.

“Nate,” Patience whimpers, her thighs rubbing together.

“Don’t get pissed off,” I beg her. “Silvia won’t stop calling me and sending me nudes.”

“Are her tits better than mine?” Pay asks, pulling her shirt off. Her breasts bounce free, and I wonder what voodoo keeps them so perky and perfect in her shirt.

“No,” I confess, dipping my head to draw her nipple into my mouth and suck. “I didn’t look hard enough to really pay attention and deleted them as soon as I checked to make sure it was nothing important!”

My voice is higher than normal and utterly panicked. Patience rolls her body under me, shaking her head.

“You’re fun to fuck with. I don’t care, baby. Now, fuck me,” she insists.

“Yes, rabbit,” I say gratefully, kissing her as I peel her pants off her body. She’s wearing tight pants, and they’re the devil to get off. Traveling down her body, licking and nipping so I can taste her sweet pussy once they’re off isn’t a hardship though.

Throwing her pants across the floor, I’m rewarded with my rabbit’s giggles for my efforts. Those quickly turn into moans as I push her thighs open, pinning them to the mattress as I lick her core.

“Fuck, baby. Is my rabbit feeling needy?” I tease her as I nuzzle her inner thigh.

Her fingers fist in my hair, pulling my face back to her pussy, which makes me chuckle against her clit. Pay shivers as the vibrations move through her.

“Everyone is pissing me off, and I just want to forget the outside world, Nate. Make me forget,” she sighs.

We’ve had a rough few days, and I’ll never deny this woman anything.

“Your wish is my command, rabbit,” I murmur, rolling my tongue over her clit. Reaching for a toy in the dresser, I pull it out as I tease her. I don’t want her to not enjoy her toys, they’re team members after all.

Pushing the toy inside of her, I suck hard on her clit, making sure her attention is all on me. I’m new to the use of toys, but the sound of her breath catching in surprise and pleasure makes me smile against her body.

“This okay, baby?” I ask her, pushing the button that makes the tip of the toy spin and thrust.

“Oh fuck, yes!” Pay gasps, pulling on my hair so hard that my scalp protests. I’m learning I don’t mind one bit. I’ll sacrifice a strand or two if I can command all of her attention. I’ve waited my entire life for Patience James, and she deserves the world.

Alternating to rubbing her clit with my thumb, I watch from between her creamy thighs as she writhes for me. My heart is pounding in anticipation of her coming for me so I can dive between her legs with my cock. Her channel is sucking the toy inside of her, and I look down as I thrust it inside of her. Her arousal coats the entire toy, making me want to do wicked things to her.

“Come for me like a good girl, rabbit. I’m so hard for you right now. Every sound you make makes my cock twitch. It’s like waiting to be tagged in to play a game.” I chuckle. It’s a shitty analogy, but it makes Pay huff out a laugh.

“God, that feels so good. I forgot that this toy did this,” Pay gasps. Her chest is heaving, and I look forward to watching her tits bounce as I fuck her. I’m obsessed with my little rabbit and I never want to be cured.

Feeling impatient, she starts to thrust her hips as I fuck her with the toy. She’s so close, and her arousal is starting to coat

her thighs. Dipping my head, I roll my tongue over her clit repeatedly, enjoying her as my favorite treat.

“If you stop doing that I’ll kill you,” she moans. “Please, please, fuck!”

Shuddering, she comes hard for me, sucking the toy deep inside her as she orgasms.

“Such a good girl for me,” I murmur, removing the toy with a pop. “I’ll give you something else to strangle with your pussy, baby.”

Pushing down my pants quickly, I kick them off, enjoying her breathless laugh at my enthusiasm. Entering her with a single thrust, I twist my body so that she’s now on top of me.

“Ride me, rabbit. Show me what you like.”

I’m still a little bit nervous when it comes to solo sex with Pay. I’m the most inexperienced of us. What if I can’t keep her happy?

“You’re what I like, baby,” Patience sighs. “Anything we do is perfect.” We’re still connected, as I was able to roll us without sliding out of her. Rocking her hips, she leans back so that her hands are on my thighs. The angle is amazing and my hands hold her thighs as she rides me.

“Goddamn, rabbit. You are a sight to see,” I say on a sigh.

Pay’s hand moves up her body, the other holding her weight as she fucks me. Squeezing her breast, she moans as she tightens around me. She can do anything she wants as long as she keeps strangling my cock the way she is.

Straightening, she grinds her clit into my pelvis, rocking and bouncing. The movements make my eyes roll and take my breath away. Goddamn, she may just be the death of me.

Groaning, I feel her getting closer and my control breaks. “Fuck, I need control, baby. I was going to let you have it, but I need you to come before I do.”

“Take it,” she whimpers, shuddering. Fucking up into her, I lose control as I pump into her. Patience falls on top of me,



clinging on as she screams. Her walls clamp down as she comes, triggering my orgasm and I roar with pleasure.

I almost wonder if I am imagining the clapping when I glance at the door that we left wide open.

“Did you break her?” Cal snickers. Pay pushes her hair out of her face as she lays her head on my chest. The room smells like sex and we’re both sweaty.

“My vagina is destroyed in the best of ways,” she grins, lifting the toy I used on her as well.

“I could hear you screaming from the front door.” Rooke chuckles, peeking in the door. “It sounds like you were well taken care of.”

“Nate is a sex god,” she says happily, brushing her lips against mine.

“I want to take you on a date,” I murmur, deepening the kiss. I ignore the guys, rolling over to pin her underneath me.

“A date sounds amazing,” she sighs. “I just go to school and work, and I need a break from it all. I never get to do anything fun anymore. Plan something?”

Patience misses the stricken look of anguish on Kian’s face as she pulls away to shower. I wince, because I should have asked her when they weren’t all standing there. I didn’t even notice him walk in, he’s so damn quiet.

“She didn’t mean it...” I begin to say after the door is closed, pulling a blanket over my lap as I sit up. It’s not as if they didn’t get a bird’s eye view of my junk while I was fucking my rabbit, but now it feels odd to be so exposed.

“It’s my fault,” Ki confesses. “I want to have dates with her too, and I’m tired of having to hide my relationship with her. Richard is aware now of my feelings for his granddaughter, so there’s nothing keeping me from publicly dating her. We just have so many wasted years.”

“So, you do better now.” Rooke shrugs. “We all fuck up, just figure out how to move forward. Time is too damn short.”

I can hear the sound of the shower and bend down to grab my pants. Shit, they're really far away. I may have been a little too excited when I threw them.

"You're a mess," Cal chuckles, giving me my pants.

Pulling them on without my underwear, I sit on the side of the bed with them half-buttoned.

"What if we plan a joint date? Something fun where she can let loose?" I suggest.

"That's really nice of you," Ki begins. "I don't want to crowd your time either."

"I don't care," I laugh. "There's a new ax throwing place that opened, and it could be fun. Our girl is ridiculously competitive, too."

"God, I hope she doesn't stab anyone," Cal groans. "I don't think our lawyer is good enough to get us out of that."

"Your Honor, what happened was....," Rooke says before dissolving into laughter.

"I'm going to shower. Someone reserve our spot, and we can get burgers after at the restaurant next door. It'll be great." I grin. As I see how happy the guys are, I realize being a team isn't so bad after all.

One step at a time, we'll heal the wounds our family has inflicted. It just won't happen all at once.

## Chapter Fifteen



The date last night was incredible, and just what we all needed. It reminded me of the past, when we were all just kids running around and playing. I miss those days. Before my dad died and everything changed.

They were my whole world. From the moment I woke up until I went to sleep, I was with the twins and Kian. Adding Rooke to the mix was a surprise, but not one I would ever take for granted.

He says I saved his life all those months ago. Well, him being with me in that awful place saved mine. He kept me going every day when I just wanted to quit.

I leave the college and head over to the parking lot. The guys had to stay back and talk to Rooke's coach. He's on the bench since he missed so many practices and games, but I'm hoping maybe they will find a place for him to keep playing soon.

He doesn't say it much, but I know Rooke loves football. I've never seen him play, but Hana tells me he's really good. Her and Brad are still going strong, and I couldn't be happier for them.

Is it weird that I slept with him? I mean, all the people outside of my little harem were just boytoys. Inconsequential compared to the men and love I have now.

I walk over to Ki's car and climb in. He shouldn't be much longer since today he doesn't have any office hours.

My phone buzzes and I groan when I see it's my mother. She has been blowing me up the last two days, but I haven't answered. Her and Tae are away again and I doubt she even knew that I was missing for over three weeks.

Biting the bullet, I answer. Might as well get this done and over with now.

*"Well, it's about damn time you picked up, Patience James,"* she snaps, and I roll my eyes, then look out the window.

"Mom, I am not in the mood right now. I just left school, so is there a reason for this call..."

*"Are you kidding me? Yes, I had to hear from Nixen Reynolds that your wedding date has been changed to next month! Were you ever going to tell me? Tae and I have reservations to spend next month in Bali!"* I listen to her rant and zone out.

I spot Ki walking toward me and I give him a little wave. "Mom, I don't know any of the details yet, but I'll be sure to text you when I do. I have to go." I end the call just as Ki is climbing into the car.

He gives me a smile and I know that he wishes he could lean over and kiss me right now, but we can't. There are tons of people on campus right now. We didn't have any issues with our date because it was in the next town over. We could just be ourselves without issue. I have a feeling Nixen and my grandpa have spies here, watching me.

“So, it seems that the wedding is now next month. What the fuck is Nixen planning now?” I grumble, and Ki places his hand on my thigh, giving me a soft squeeze.

“I don’t know what’s going on, but I’m sure it’s going to fuck up all of our plans.” I sigh as he starts the engine and pulls out of his parking spot.

“Can we swing by somewhere and grab a snack? I’m starving.” He nods, and drives toward a Taco Bell. I order a steak chalupa supreme with the nacho fries and nacho cheese dipping sauce.

“I don’t know why you love those so much,” Ki mutters as he drinks his Diet Coke and steals a few of my fries.

“Because it’s delicious, and with how much sex we’ve been having, I need the extra fat and calories.”

Ki gives me a smirk and I roll my eyes. “Speaking of sex, are you okay with us all living with you? I don’t feel safe moving home, but I will. I know how much you love your privacy.”

“Patience, I moved out because I was trying not to let more hormones take control when it came to you, but that still didn’t stop us. My place is small, but I think we’re managing well enough. I was contemplating buying a bigger house, but I didn’t know how you would feel about that.”

I gape at him and he rolls his eyes at me. “You know that I love you, and after you were taken, I had a lot of time to think about things. I don’t want to ever be apart from you again. And the guys are growing on me, so they can move with us too if that’s what they want.”

Tears fill my eyes and I discreetly wipe them away, but Ki sees everything. “Baby girl, don’t cry. You have shed way too many tears lately.” I huff a laugh at that and shake my head.

“They were a mixture of happy tears and being overwhelmed, you ass,” I grumble and he laughs.

We leave the drive thru and head home. “Just think about it. We don’t need to do anything yet. Let’s just get through this wedding.” I nod because I agree. There is way too much on

our plates right now to be thinking about moving and buying a house.

“Yeah, I will.”



WE GET HOME and Mouse greets us the moment we walk in. I saved her some of my steak, so I lean down and give her the treat. She is such a little food snatcher sometimes. She takes it then runs to the corner and growls at us as she eats it.

I laugh and move toward the kitchen to put some groceries away. I may have had a snack, but my mom pissed me off and I need to relieve some of this tension. Thankfully Ki was okay with running to the store.

His cupboard is seriously lacking ingredients. Ki helps me unpack before leaving me. He has some papers to grade. When he took some time off, his substitute was way too lax with his students.

I know he's been stressed getting things back in order. Nate walks inside and I know the others are following. I have something on my mind and I need to talk to my future hubby. *Cue the eyeroll.* We may be getting along better, but this wedding is still a fucking joke.

All it's going to do is hurt someone.

“Hey, can we run over to Laci's office tomorrow after class? We have to talk to her about the seating chart. I don't want my grandpa to attend our wedding,” I tell Cal as he walks into the kitchen.

When we went to the store, I grabbed a few things, plus some steaks for dinner. I want to do a potato bake.

“I fucking hate our wedding planner. You should just call Hana and have her plan something,” he grumbles as he digs in the fridge for a beer.

Scoffing, I dump some nuts and vanilla cinnamon chips into my brownie batter and sigh.

“I don’t like Laci either, but we don’t have a choice here, Cal. Your father kidnapped me to try and take over the company that our parents left to us. Don’t you find that a reason for concern? What is so important about C&P? Why did it have our parents killed and my grandfather’s assistant killed?”

“Yeah, no, you’re right. Sorry. It was just a long day today. I have to go into the office tomorrow. My dad ordered me to attend a meeting with the board, but maybe I can get out of it. I’ll tell him it’s about the wedding.” He leaves the room to make the call and Nate shuffles in from the hallway.

“I could just pretend to be Cal and go with you. It’s not like we haven’t done it before,” he says, then wiggles his eyebrow piercing with his finger. I laugh and give him a smile.

“That would be great, but I really do need his opinion on some of the details, so it’s probably best that he comes with me. But thank you.” I drop my spoon and walk over to give him a quick kiss.

He tries to deepen it and I laugh. “You want to help me make dinner? Ki is in his office grading some papers, but I don’t know what Rooke is doing if you’d rather go find him.”

Nate may love me, but he’s not the best chef. He laughs and moves over to the sink to wash his hands. “What do you need me to do?” he asks, and I point to the fridge.

“Grab the green beans from the drawer and a knife. I need you to cut all the stems off.”

He gets to work and I finish up our dessert. I haven’t made blondies in a while, but they sounded good to me.

“Something smells good,” Nate comments and I smile. “That was one of the things I missed most after we moved away. Alla used to always bake us sweets. Even her cooking was amazing. I’m glad she taught you,” he mutters and I laugh.

“Me too, because my mom can’t cook for shit. I would have starved or lived on takeout.”

I walk over to the sink and wash my hands then help him with the beans. He's going so slow, trying to make precision cuts, and it's adorable, but at this rate we won't be eating tonight.

Soon, dinner is ready and we're sitting down to eat. Ki sneaks out of his office, clearly smelling the food. His eyes roll in pleasure as he takes a bite and he moans. Cal and Rooke look over at him in surprise, but all I can do is giggle. That's almost exactly the face Ki makes when we have sex.

"Damn, I didn't peg you for someone who made sex noises at the dinner table," Cal teases him as he eats. Cal is a hypocrite, because soon he's moaning too.

"I only make these sounds when Patience cooks," Kian chuckles, his ears turning pink.

"I'm taking that as the compliment it is," I tell him with a smile. Taking a bite, I hum in contentment. Damn, I can cook.



"THANKS FOR COMING WITH ME," I tell Cal as he holds the door open for me. He grunts and I sigh. He seems to be in a bad mood today. I think his dad was a dick about him missing work. Maybe he needs another introduction to my bat.

"Let's just get this done with so I can get my dad off of my back. If it were up to me, I would just take you somewhere we could elope."

I smile and wish we could do just that. It would be amazing. Maybe on a beach somewhere. All the guys would be there and I could invite Hana. It's bad enough that Nixen told Cal that Rooke couldn't be there. Hana is taking him as her date anyways. I dare him to try something with me again.

I can't wait until we take his ass down. I want to bury him ten feet under the smelliest leach field we can find. Alive. I want him to fucking suffer. Maybe I should find someone to sell him to.

Too bad Letty and Earl are gone.



“Cal, Patience, I was so happy to get your call, but I have to ask, is there a reason why we had to bump up the date?” Laci asks, looking specifically at my stomach. I huff and Cal laughs, shaking his head.

“It’s more of a business reason. Patience isn’t pregnant. Actually, we’ve been waiting for the wedding night,” he says with a grin and I try not to crack. Is she really going to believe this?

“Oh, my God, that is just so sweet. I’ll be honest, marriages at your age usually don’t last, but I have a feeling you’ll make it. Childhood sweethearts, reunited. Ahhhh, it’s like the perfect love story.”

Cal moves closer to me, places his hand on my waist, and kisses my temple. I know he’s just doing it for show, but I try not to swoon. He’s come a long way from being that asshole bully who wanted to bury me.

I think Rooke brought us together, and I’m glad he did. I had missed my best friend. He’s still not the boy he once was, but there are times that I get a glimpse of him and it makes me ache for those days.

I’m having a really hard time planning the wedding as we go through color schemes and food menus. My throat closes with emotions several times, and it’s not because I’m bored to tears. My dad should be here for my wedding.

I always dreamed that he would be here to help me plan. I was always closer to him than my mom. Dad tried to tell me that she wasn’t always like this, but I will always wonder if that’s because he tended to see the good in people.

“You’ve been really quiet,” Cal murmurs as Laci steps out to check on something. “Are you okay?”

“I just miss my dad,” I whisper with a shrug, brushing a tear from my eye. “He was supposed to be here for all of this, and he was taken from me. My mom has been selfish and mean for years. We have never been as close as Dad and I were.”

His arm awkwardly comes around me and then he curses under his breath, hauling me into his lap. “Your dad, Phillippe, was one of the most attentive fathers that I’ve ever met,” Cal confesses. “I was always a little jealous. My dad would drown in work, but yours would find a way to sneak home to tuck you in. He never missed the big or little things. He would have hated this wedding.”

I giggle as I start to snifle, too. I’m a hormonal mess.

“I know we’re being pushed into this wedding, but who is going to walk me down the aisle? Should I just walk by myself? My dad left such big shoes to fill,” I explain.

“Think about it and then decide, baby. I’m not going to let that wench push you into a decision,” he tells me. “It may be a forced wedding, but I want this to be a good experience for you, too. I want to be a decent husband to you.”

We haven’t talked about all of this, but it’s important. Standing, I lock the door to her office.

“We’re taking a time out,” I mutter, walking back to straddle lap. “The fact that you’re even worried about being a decent husband to me means that you will be. Our lives are crazy and we have so many people in this relationship that it’s important to keep communication open. I’m just having a rough day.”

Kissing my neck, he rocks me against him, and I find that he’s already hard. “I want to be with you on your bad days, the good ones, and the sad ones, baby girl,” he says softly. “You’re worth working through all of that with. I’m going to fuck up; I just hope to fuck up a little less each day.”

“Those should be in your wedding vows,” I murmur, kissing him through his chuckles.

Things are far from perfect between us, but we’re working on it.

CAL

It has been a week of pure fucking Hell. My dad has been on my back non-stop, and now we have the wedding planning, and a rehearsal dinner, and then the actual event. It's just a lot. I leave school and head back to Ki's. We all practically live there now.

Nate even brought our game systems. I don't miss living with our dad, but I do miss Dana's cooking. Patience is a great cook, but I can tell she's getting tired of cooking for all of us every night. Walking in the door, I notice immediately that it's kind of quiet.

"Anyone here?" I call out, closing the door behind me.

Deciding to check on Rooke in the bedroom that we share, I walk down the hall. The sound of moaning makes me stop in my tracks. Is he...?

Peeking into the room, I see that Rooke is naked on the bed, his hand wrapped around his cock. Fuck, he's gorgeous. His strong thighs thrust up into his palm as he grunts, his other hand stroking his chest. Damn, I can tell why he's a football god on the field. He's been benched by the coach because he was sick for so long, but I think he's playing soon.

I'm glad because he loves it.

Stepping into the room, I watch as Rooke goes to town, taking advantage of an empty apartment. Sometimes, you just want to masturbate in peace. I respect that, especially when we're all living on top of each other.

Rooke's eyes are tightly closed, his chest heaving as he gets closer to coming. His thick cock is leaking his arousal. Licking my lips, I hope he doesn't donkey kick me as I lean over to suck on the tip of it.

"Oh fuck, Cal," he groans, his eyes widening. "God, yes, that feels good. I'd rather fuck you than my hand."

“Needy little cocktease,” I mumble around his cock, swallowing him down to the root. Rooke yowls, his fingers digging into my hair.

“I want to come in your ass, baby. I’m so goddamned close. How long have you been watching?”

Pulling off his dick, it’s so thick it pops out of my mouth. This man is a fucking snack.

“Not long,” I promise, pulling off my clothes. His eyes eat up the view as I uncover my body.

“I like it when you watch me,” he murmurs. After everything that he’s been through, I love that it didn’t ruin our connection. My cock bobs out of my pants as I shove them off my hips and Rooke licks his lips.

“It’s only fair,” I tease him, stepping out of my shoes as well. “Want a taste before you fuck me?”

Grinning, he sits up, his legs spread wide. Opening his mouth, he swallows me down, his tongue dragging along the vein of my cock. “Fuck, you’re amazing,” I groan as he bobs his head.

“You two are so beautiful together,” Pay murmurs. She’s leaning against the door, watching. “You two having fun?”

“Join us?” I ask, unsure why. We really connected when we talked about her dad, and I do love her. It’s hard for me to show people that I love them sometimes. I’m sure it’s because of how much I’ve spent hiding myself.

“I want to fuck Cal’s tight ass while he fucks you,” Rooke says after he releases my dick. “Get naked with us, baby. You know you want to.”

Pulling her dress over her head, she drops it to the floor. She’s in a lavender bra and panty set today, and fuck if it doesn’t make my mouth dry looking at her. Strutting over to us, she grins. “These shoes are a bitch to take off.”

“Leave them on,” I grunt. “Your legs are going to be by your ears for a while anyway.”

As she takes off her bra, I pull her to me, facing Rooke. Kissing her, I groan into her mouth as Rooke pushes her panties to the side. Lifting her leg onto the bed, he buries his face in her pussy, breathing deeply. "Mine," he grunts, licking up her core. I have the best view as my guy eats out our best girl.

Dessert has never looked so damn good. I'm holding Patience's body up when her legs threaten to go out by banding my arm around her waist, and I growl in her ear. "Are you going to be a good girl and squirt for us?"

Rooke pushes two thick fingers inside of her tight pussy, and I grind myself against her ass. Pay whimpers, writhing against me.

"Yes," she hisses as Rooke licks around her clit.

My hand pulls at her nipples and kneads her breast as Rooke begins to finger fuck her. I can tell when she starts to mewl that he's curling his fingers. "Let go and I'll give you my cock, baby girl."

"Fuck. Do you promise? I need it so much," she whines, her head on my chest as she throws it back.

"Yes, I'll give you what you need," I promise, sucking on her throat.

"Oh, God," she gasps, her skin pebbling in goosebumps as her thigh starts to tremble.

"Mmm, you're doing so good for me, baby," Rooke praises, pushing her harder.

"Please, please," Patience loses the ability to speak as she begs, coming all over Rooke's face.

"So damn pretty," Rooke murmurs as he puts her foot on the ground. Standing, he sandwiches Patience between us, grabbing my hair hard. "Want a taste of our gorgeous girl?"

"Fuck, yes," I groan. Firm, soft lips meet mine, his tongue swiping over mine. Immediately, I suck on it, tasting the bursts of Pay's flavor. She's so damn sweet; we're completely addicted. A whimper breaks us apart to look at Patience.

“You’re both so beautiful,” she whispers, her eyes wide.

“We love you,” I murmur with a grin. “Get on the bed. I need to be inside you.”

Pay squeals with excitement as Rooke lets her move, and he leans in so that his lips are against the shell of my ear. “She’s amazing, isn’t she?” he says softly.

“She’s perfect,” I confirm as I move to crawl onto the bed. Rooke spans my ass as I pass him, making me hiss. Patience pulls me between her thighs, wrapping her legs around me tightly.

“Hey, beautiful.” I grin lazily as I kiss her. I don’t want to put my cock inside her because I’m afraid I’ll embarrass myself. Rooke and I are both worked up.

The cold drizzle of lubricant hits between my ass cheeks, making me shiver. Fingers are pushed inside of me after Rooke coats them in lube. My head drops against Patience’s shoulder as he gets me ready, and I struggle to catch my breath. I want him so badly.

Pay’s fingers run through my hair gently, and she whispers in my ear. “He’s so good to us, isn’t he? Rooke is going to stretch you so well, baby.”

Groaning, I kiss her, distracting myself until I hear him uncap the bottle to put some on his dick.

“I don’t think Cal or I will last very long,” Rooke chuckles. “Let’s fuck our gorgeous girl together. Pay, put him inside of you.”

Leaning up, I let Pay reach between us as I push her legs up so that they’re resting on my arms. Pumping my cock twice, she lines me up so that I can push inside of her pussy. “So damn tight,” I sigh, bracing myself on my forearms. Rooke’s powerful legs bracket my sides, and I know I’ll be feeling him tomorrow. Hissing as he thrusts his cock inside me, my head drops back. I’m on all fours over Pay, but Rooke will be controlling us.

“You’re being so good to me, baby. You’re letting me stretch this tight hole like such a good fucking boy,” he grunts

as he pushes inside of me.

Rooke rocks his hips until they touch my ass cheeks, and then he pulls back until he's almost out.

"Oh fuck, oh fuck," I whimper. I know it's going to be amazing and sting at the same time. And I'm right. Rooke plunges all the way in, and I gasp as he fucks me into Pay. Every one of his movements controls mine, and the pace is fast and furious.

Patience sobs as the position she's in means that I'm hitting places deep inside her.

"Baby girl, you look like our idea of Heaven," Rooke says as his cock drags along my nerves. It feels so intense, and I know I'm going to come soon.

"I'm close," she gasps, tears leaking from her eyes because of how intense this is. I love being the filling in this sandwich, and it reminds me of how damn lucky I am.

The sounds of skin slapping, moans, and curses are the only things that can be heard. Patience comes first, her eyes closing with the intensity of her orgasm. Gasping, I swear her pussy is a vise as she comes, and it sets me off. Rooke's head drops to my back as his arms hug me.

"Goddamn. Fuck, I'm done," he whimpers, and I can feel ropes of come as he fills me up.

"I've died and gone to Heaven," Pay rasps, completely out of breath. "I have to say it was one hell of a way to go."

"So dramatic," I hiss as Rooke slowly pulls his dick free of my ass.

"Baby girl, come shower with me. I'll condition your hair and everything," Rooke coos, making me laugh as I sit up. He seriously spoils her and I love it.

I clean up quickly in the bathroom in the hallway, rinsing off Rooke's release and the sweat. I'm sore, but just smile at the memory of how amazing it was. While they went to rinse off and after I showered, I threw on a pair of boxers and headed out to the kitchen to grab all the snacks I could find.

Patience and Rooke return from the shower, and I have to smile when she bends down and grabs my discarded T-shirt from today and slips it on over her head.

I know I've been a jerk lately and I'm trying to do better. I can see now that Pay isn't trying to steal my guy away.

She smiles at me and takes a seat in the middle of the mattress, crossing her long, tanned legs. She smells amazing and I'm growing hard again. I grab the remote and hand it to her, then fix my dick.

I'm wearing a pair of light gray sweatpants and they don't hide *anything*. Rooke leans over and gives me a quick kiss, then takes the empty spot next to Pay.

"So, what are we in the mood for tonight?" she asks and I shrug.

"I really don't care, just not another sob fest. Things have been too emotional lately. Maybe a comedy," I suggest, and she nods, then chooses *Deadpool*, and I think I fall a little bit more in love with her.

Rooke hands her the bowl of buttered and salted popcorn and she places it on her lap so that we can all share. Reaching over to the bedside table, I grab some drinks and place them in front of them.

Pay shivers as the condensation from the bottle drips on her leg and Rooke reaches over and grabs a soft throw blanket. Lifting the popcorn, Pay lets him lay it over us.

I dig under and grab the other snacks, then we settle in for the movie.

It's not long until Nate joins us and lifts Pay so he can sit behind her. She laughs as he tickles her sides, then she yells at him about having to pee and he lets her go.

She crawls over top of me and then rushes to the bathroom. I pause the movie and Nate laughs.

"You know she's seen this like a million times, right?" he asks, and I shrug.



“It’s fine. We can wait for her, plus I have a feeling Ki will be joining us soon.”

The bathroom door opens and Pay turns the light off, then reaches for a towel off the floor to dry her hands. Ki walks in then and I look at my twin.

“See,” I mumble, and he grins. Ki looks around at the puppy pile we’ve made, and I shove over closer to Nate so he can fit on the bed. Patience climbs back onto Nate’s lap and I resume our movie.

I hand Ki a tub of Twizzlers and he takes a couple then sits down. He’s changed from his suit and is wearing a pair of black basketball shorts. I try not to stare at his abs and focus on the movie.

I still don’t know why I’ve been having thoughts about him lately. I don’t even know if he likes guys. Plus, that could be a whole can of worms we don’t need.

“I think we might need a bigger bed,” Ki comments, and Pay looks over at him with a smile and he winks at her.

Yeah, if this becomes a more regular thing, I think we very well might.

## Chapter Sixteen



I 'm bent over the kitchen counter as Kian licks me from clit to ass repeatedly. I glance up at Nate and he shoots me a wink as he tugs on his dick a few inches away. My mouth waters and I crave a taste.

“Please,” I beg and squirm. Ki smacks my ass and nibbles on my piercing, and it just makes me drip down my thighs. Nate smears some of his pre-cum on his thumb and feeds it to me as I moan. I suck it off of him and Ki chuckles from behind me.

“I don't know what you just did, but she really liked it,” he tells Nate before standing and gripping my hair tight, pulling my head back for a filthy kiss. I can taste myself on his lips and when he lets me go so he can fuck me into this counter, I grab Nate and pull him into a kiss so he can have a taste.

“So much better than last time,” he murmurs against my lips and I lean back, giving him a look.

“Last time?”

He nods, then rubs his hand along the back of his neck, his hard cock forgotten.

“Cal and I watched Ki do almost this exact thing to you on your birthday,” he grumbles and I moan loudly as Kian hits that spot deep inside of me.

“Stop,” I groan and Ki listens, pulling out of me. I give Nate a smirk and bite my bottom lip as I stand and walk naked to the living room. I wait for them to follow me, then I drop to my knees and clean my juices off of Ki’s cock before turning and giving him my ass as I get on all fours.

Nate stands there pumping his dick with his hand and I lick my lips. “Come here and fuck my face as Ki takes me like the animal he is.” Two groans sound at once and I wiggle my ass, hoping it will get these guys to move faster.

I mean, fuck, I stopped my orgasm to turn this into a threesome. Nate is the first to move and drop to his knees in front of me. I smile up at him and he groans. Gripping the base of his hard cock tight, I run my tongue along the tip. His salty taste makes me whimper and I want more.

“You really want me to fuck your face?” Nate asks, his hands gripping my hair.

Nodding as much as I can, I say, “Yes,” with my mouth full. I know I shouldn’t talk with something in my mouth, but I think I should get a pass.

“You won’t hurt her,” Ki says calmly, slapping my ass as he drops to his knees behind me. “You want us to fuck you hard, make you scream our names, and scare the neighbors, I see.”

I didn’t say it quite that way, but it makes me giggle. Nate grunts, pulling his cock from between my lips with a wince.

“Your mouth gets so damn wet and tight when you talk or laugh. Have mercy on a man, rabbit,” Nate groans.

“Yeah, baby,” Ki teases, rubbing his cock through my arousal. “Although, mercy isn’t something Pay does well. Not

when she's this wet... or perfectly tight."

That's all the warning I get before he shifts his cock to stretch my pussy. Gasping, my back arches at the sensations overwhelming my senses. Nate brushes the head of his dick over my lips, which open immediately to allow him entrance.

"Mine," I gasp just before he fills my mouth again with his length. I gag slightly as Ki pushes me forward forcing me to swallow more of Nate's cock. I'm the ultimate tug of war with a happy ending at the finish line as they fuck me.

Nate is true to his word, gripping my face tightly as he fucks my mouth. "So damn pretty," he moans. He strokes his fingertips along my throat before gripping it lightly. Nate is getting a handle on what he likes, and I'm loving that I get to enjoy his experimentation.

"Our girl loves her daily dose of cock," Ki grunts. His cock is hitting my piercing perfectly, and I can feel my body reacting. I feel powerful as they use me together, and honestly, Ki is completely right.

*I need a good fucking daily or I'm cranky.*

His hand smacks my ass hard, making me cry out. Nate's eyes roll as he thrusts down my throat. His muscles strain as he struggles not to come. I love watching him like this, and that he's so close to the edge.

Ki ruts into me, fulfilling my request to be taken hard and rough. His hands hold onto my hips like handles as he moves me like his own personal fuck doll.

"God, I don't know why I deny myself the pleasure of fucking you. I'm a damn idiot," he mutters. Nate barks out a laugh as he tightens his hand around my throat. I shiver with desire, swallowing hard. I'm sure the indentation of his dick can be seen as he enjoys my sucking skills.

I've perfected the art of pulling a man's soul out of his body with my mouth, after all.

"Pay," Ki moans, partially in pain as I tighten around him, too. I'm so close to coming, and I know they're waiting for

me. “So damn greedy. You goad me into fucking you, and now you want to come when you want? Such a brat.”

I want to laugh, but I’m a little busy at the moment. Humming my agreement, I bob my head at Nate’s command. My mouth almost struggles to take him all since he’s so thick, but I manage.

Ki leans over me, kissing my back as his hand smooths over my skin. His hips never stop moving, his dick hitting every deliciously overstimulated nerve ending. My breasts bounce with every movement, and it’s oddly erotic that his hand explores and squeezes while ignoring the area I really want him to touch.

Whining, I listen to Ki and Nate chuckle. Traitor. He’s supposed to be on my side: it leads to orgasms and cum. I don’t like to be edged.

Clamping down on his cock, I moan as it starts building delicious pressure. It also makes him curse a blue streak and earns me a smack across my ass.

“Fine, Jesus, you’re such a brat,” he complains.

“Such a bad girl, rabbit. I’m going to shower you with cum for that. Get ready,” Nate gasps.

“She’ll look so good covered in your cum,” Ki murmurs. I can feel his cock starting to twitch, which means he won’t last long.

“Fuck, you feel so good,” Nate sighs, pulling his cock out of my mouth quickly. Ki pulls me up, bouncing me on his cock. “Open wide, baby.”

Ropes of cum hit my breasts, chin, and tongue as Nate pumps his cock. His mouth is slack, pupils blown wide, and he looks blissed out. Ki reaches between where he and I are connected, kissing my shoulder as he pinches my clit.

Screaming, I come next, grinding on Ki’s cock as he fucks up into me. The new position means that he’s even deeper, stroking my cervix. Shuddering, I whimper as I feel Kian swell inside of me before he explodes.

My ears are ringing with how hard I came, and I can't see straight, but Ki just grins. He holds me as my heartbeat returns to normal, and my body stops vibrating from the experience. Nate brings me a glass of water and a washcloth with a sheepish smile, gently cleaning me of his release.

I've had a lot of sex in my life, but life-altering orgasms definitely only happen with my men. I love how much they care for me afterwards. It gives me a glimpse of the future and makes me think this'll work out.

KIAN

I finish up my final lesson for the day and dismiss my students. I'm fucking exhausted, and ready for this weekend to begin. Richard has been oddly quiet and I'm hoping he stays that way while Pay and I hang out tomorrow. It's been a while since we've been able to do something just the two of us.

I know she's starting to go a little stir-crazy and wants to go back to work, but besides that one night, I don't think it's safe for her to be out and about in public alone. I know Shina and Bear would keep her safe, but still I worry.

Yawning, I walk over to my office. I have a few papers to get through before I can leave. I take my tie off and drop it on my desk, then open the bottom drawer and pull out the bottle I keep there.

I pour myself a drink, then sit and try to read the papers in front of me. Some of my students do well, but there are always a few that have no fucking clue what I'm teaching them. It's just all a part of the job, but it gives me a headache.



“WE NEED to talk about the future,” my dad says as he storms into my office. I'm grading one of Tyler's assignments and not expecting to be interrupted.

“What about it?” I grunt as he takes a seat. “Wait, aren't you and the wife supposed to be in Italy or somewhere?” I ask with a wave of my hand.

He scoffs and grabs the bottle of scotch and my glass, refilling it to the brim, then downs it. “Richard ordered me back. Seems we have a little problem here.”

I pull another glass out of my drawer and he hands me the bottle. I think I'm going to need another drink for this conversation.

“Yeah? What does Richard want now?” I ask and he gives me a look of pity.

“We need to hook you up with someone nice. This thing with Patience was just a fun fantasy, but it’s not your future, Kian. You need to end it now before Richard makes you,” he says with a sigh and I close my eyes and take a deep breath.

“I’ve done everything for duty, Dad,” I explain. “I love Patience. You may not understand it, but everything has always been out of duty and protecting that girl. I’m not willing to step aside. I don’t want a loveless marriage.”

“Does she understand what it’ll cost her?” Dad argues. “The company will be sold to this Gatem woman if Patience doesn’t submit to the contract’s orders. It’s her legacy. Will she just throw all of that away?”

“Patience will fulfill the edict of her contractual agreement,” I reassure him, taking a sip of my drink. Its warmth is making my belly feel heated, spreading calmness with it. However, I want to keep my edge, so I put the glass down.

While Tae is my father, he is also Richard’s little soldier. His entire life revolves around him. It’s his personality, and some days I worry he’ll sacrifice me for it. This talk about marriage skirts that fear.

“Will she do it in time to avoid a takeover? The Gatem woman is pushing the board of directors to look at other options because she’s an opportunistic whore,” my father snarls. My eyes widen in surprise. He’s usually calmer than this.

“Father,” I admonish. “Cal and Patience moved up the wedding. What’s the worst that Sharon Gatem could do in that time?”

My father frowns at me and I feel ashamed. What am I missing?

“The dragon is easier to draw than the snake,” my father counsels me. “There is no honor in the Gatem family. If you’re going to insist on traveling on this path with Patience, find out



what that woman's motivation is before it's too late for us all. She's a wild girl and I do not approve."

Blowing out a breath in frustration, I nod. I hate when we're at odds with each other, and it doesn't often happen.

"Any other advice, Father?" I ask, rubbing my forehead tiredly.

"Yes, they need to get married as soon as possible or they will lose everything. Don't be the reason that she detests you later, son. Patience is young, but that company is her and Cal's legacy," he reminds me.

Fuck, I need to talk to Pay and the guys, but first I need time to think.

## Chapter Seventeen



Kian came home upset, but he doesn't want to talk about it. He kissed me on the forehead, then locked himself in his room. I leave him be and make a quick dinner. I was looking forward to this weekend and going hiking with him tomorrow, but maybe something changed.

I finish up a simple casserole and put it in the oven to bake. I wanted to make a salad to go with it, but it can wait. Rooke and Cal walk in and Mouse has a huge fit.

She's sitting on the floor with one of my bra pads in her mouth and she's growling. Rooke gives her a quick scratch behind her ear, then throws the pad with a laugh. He looks happy and it makes me smile.

There has been a darkness surrounding him for way too fucking long. I'm glad he's starting to heal and express who he really is. No more hiding for him. "How was the arcade?" I

ask them, and Cal gives me a quick kiss on the cheek before heading to the fridge for water.

He grabs one for Rooke and shrugs. “It was good. Nate whooped my ass in DDR, but it was fun.” He looks at the mess on the counter and winces. “We did already eat, though. We split a pizza.”

I throw a dish towel at him and pretend to be pissed. Frowning, I move over to him and he pulls me into a hug. I lean up so I can whisper in his ear. “Well, it’s a good thing that I only made enough for me and Ki,” I say, and he laughs.

“That was mean, babe,” he grumbles, and I give him a smirk.

Rooke is still playing with the cat and Nate is just now walking into the apartment. He’s holding a takeout container and the smell of honey mustard wings has me groaning.

“And that’s why you’re my favorite,” I say, and he gives me a huge grin as he places them in front of me on the counter. I don’t hesitate and soon I have sauce dripping down my chin and I’m moaning as I eat.

“Fuck, baby girl, I love to watch you eat,” Rooke mutters and I laugh. Nate walks behind me and grabs me a paper towel so I can clean off my face. I hum as I finish my wings, then jump when I feel someone stand behind me and press me into the counter.

I grind my butt back against them and Cal growls. “We don’t have time for this right now, your time is just about out,” he says, then steps away with my chicken bones.

I watch in amazement as he puts them inside a bag, then ties it tight and puts it in the trash. “We can’t have Mouse eating these and choking” is his explanation, and fuck, I think I just fell even more in love with my grumpy fiancé.

The oven beeps and I turn, grabbing a potholder to pull the casserole out. I set it on the counter and make a quick salad.

“Can one of you set the table and tell Ki dinner is ready, please?” Rooke leaves the room and Nate walks to the

cupboard for plates. I shuffle closer to him and pull him into a deep kiss.

“Thank you for my snack,” I mumble against his lips and he laughs, kissing me one more time before moving away.

Cal is the only one remaining with me and he looks like he has something on his mind.

“What’s wrong?”

Sighing, he turns to face me, then rubs his hand over his face. “You know I love you, Patience, but there are these moments between you and Nate and it just reminds me that he’s the one you should be marrying.”

“Okay, then how about after the wedding we have a small ceremony and handfast us all? This way, we’re all connected. I’m figuring out things as we go, and sometimes I’m winging it. It’s actually really sweet that you would think of your brother and his happiness,” I tell him with a smile. The back of Cal’s neck turns red with embarrassment, but I wisely ignore it. “You don’t have to count yourself out. I love you, Cal. I always have. Even when you were being a huge dick. You’re one of my best friends.”

I leave him to his thoughts and bring the food over to the table. Ki is waiting for me and he still seems to have a lot on his mind.

“This looks amazing, baby girl. Thank you,” he says and gives me a quick kiss before making me a plate and setting it in front of me.

“I may have eaten my weight in wings a few minutes ago,” I mumble, looking at the large portion he gave me.

He laughs and digs in. Rooke and Nate take a seat at the table with us and I giggle when Rooke piles his plate full. His appetite astounds me.

It’s quiet and I startle as Ki begins to talk. “My dad is back in town. Your mom is still in Italy and plans to stay there until a few days before the wedding.” I roll my eyes and scoff.

“Yeah, she’s not thrilled that I’m interrupting her plans. Honestly, I’d be fine if she didn’t even come.”

Nate reaches over to take my hand and Cal gives me a small smile from across the table. I know he would do anything to have his mom attend, as I would my dad. It sucks that our amazing parents died and left us with the shitty ones.

“Sharon Gatem is requesting a meeting with you and Cal,” Kian tells me after his plate is empty. I choke on a sip of my water and Nate pats me on the back.

“What? Why?” I stumble on my words and Cal laughs.

“Because she’s a greedy little opportunist. She’s probably pissed we bumped up the wedding.”

Sighing, I stand and start to clean up the table. Rooke grabs the leftovers and carries them into the kitchen to put away. “I really don’t want to deal with any more drama. Can we just go one week without it?”

“God, I wish,” I sigh. “What’s the deal with this woman anyway? Why does she want the company so badly?”

“That’s what I want to talk about,” Ki says. “We need to figure out why she’s got such a hard-on for this company. This feels personal.”

“Well, I think it may be time we pay this woman a visit. I don’t think I’ve ever even met her. What makes her so special that she would get our family’s company?”

“She was our mother’s best friend. They worked together. I think they even went to school together or something, but after she died we never heard from her again,” Nate grumbles and moves closer to me.

Lifting my feet off the other end of the couch, he sits and starts to rub my feet. I moan and Ki gives me a look that has my panties ruined.

“Get moving, love birds,” Cal smirks. “We have some spying to do. It’s time to find out what Sharon’s agenda is. I have a feeling the woman is a dirty, money-grabbing asshole.”

I hate to say it, but I think he's right. Sighing, I pull my feet away from Nate.

"Raincheck on the foot rub, please?" I grumble. It's hard to be an adult. I don't like it.

Nate simply chuckles as I shove my feet into a pair of shoes as he agrees.

We end up back in the basement of my home and I make sure all the fucking lights are on. This place gives me the creeps. My mom always kept me away from here, but she's still on vacation so she will never know.

"What are we looking for?" I ask, and Ki sighs. He looks exhausted and I know I'm partly to blame. I haven't been sleeping well. I guess you can call it PTSD or something, but it sucks and nightmares wake me up.

Even though I try to keep the screaming to a minimum, I still think about how close I was to never coming home. Some of my nightmares are still alive and walking around free, and one day soon I'm going to need to deal with that. I don't have time for therapy right now, so I'm going to keep moving for now.

"Anything with Sharon's name. I know there was a folder here somewhere, but I didn't open it," he mutters and I nod.

Cal is next door at his house, going through his dad's office while he's out of town, and Rooke is upstairs in my room with Nate, packing me some more clothes. I was running out of bras and Ki's washer likes to eat them.

I think a shopping trip is in order soon. Maybe I can get Hana to come with me. I really need a girls' day. I love my guys, but sometimes the testosterone is so thick I could choke on it.

Cal returns, and he looks ill. He hands Ki a folder and walks out of the room. "What is it?" I ask, and Ki shakes his head.

"I don't know, but by the look on his face I'm going to say nothing good."

We walk up the basement steps and head toward my room. It's late and we all have school tomorrow. I didn't really find anything while I was in the basement, and I'm tired. "Let's just grab the others and head home. I could use a drink," I mumble and Ki pulls me into his arms and kisses my head.

"We will figure this out, Pay. We all love you and won't let Nixen get his hands on you again. Last time was a fucking fluke. I will kill him with my bare hands if I have to," he swears and I shiver.

"Unless you want me to fuck you here in this kitchen, Ki, we better go."

Rooke chooses that moment to walk into the room and his eyes are wide. "Fuck, Pay, just the thought of you bent over another counter has me dripping." I roll my eyes and walk toward the back door.

"Make sure all the lights are off, I'll be in the car."

"It looks like Cal found something, and he wasn't very happy about it." Ki sighs. "Let's wait till we get home to look at it all."

Ugh, it's going to be a long, uncomfortable ride home. I'm right, and Cal fumes silently as we drive home. I can't handle it anymore, turning as we walk into the apartment.

"Someone spill. What's going on with Sharon?" I ask.

Ki opens the folder, grimacing at the first photo and handing it to me. Oh, that's something I could have lived the rest of my life without seeing.

Sharon Gatem is blindfolded and naked, tied up on a bed. She's facing the headboard, and the photo shows the woman in all of her glory. I can see a cock in the frame of the photo, and a hand that looks remarkably like Nixen stroking it.

"Oh, my God," I mutter, horrified. "Who isn't your father fucking? I'm sorry, but he needs his dick cut off."

Nate looks sick as he peeks over my shoulder at the photo. "Fuck, that's just... special."

“How long has she been sleeping with our father? Was it before the fire?” Cal is livid, and I can’t blame him. Every step we take to finding out a hint of truth just has our list of questions increasing.

“I am so sick of this shit!” Nate snaps, and I lean closer to him to rest my head on his shoulder. Rooke is digging through all the papers and I could kiss him. He has nothing to do with all this drama, but because he loves us he’s willing to help us dig for the truth.

“Wait. Yes, your father is a piece of shit who can’t keep it in his pants, but think about everything she might know,” I murmur. I want to be the voice of reason right now, despite how much this is hurting them.

Nixen Reynolds has made hurting his sons into an art form. It’s amazing how much our parents have managed to fuck us up. We all have attachment issues, irrational fears when it comes to relationships, and most of all, trust issues.

Maybe we can bring both my grandfather and Nixen down once and for all. We deserve some happiness after all of the bullshit that they’ve put us through.

I want to be able to live my life in peace. I want to be able to have a healthy relationship with the men that I love. I don’t want to fucking choose. I’m done.

“I think it’s time that we take this empire down for good. What’s to stop them from coming after me and Rooke again? What makes Nate and Ki safe?” I ask, beginning to pace.

“Rabbit, calm down—”

“No!” I yell, throwing up my arms. “I’ve been wading through this shit for weeks. I still feel like it’s surreal that Rooke and I made it home. What if you guys hadn’t gotten there in time? What if they—”

I gag as I think about how we could have become meat for Earl’s family meals. Nope, don’t think about it. Just keep moving. It’s not healthy, but it’s what I have to do.

“I refuse to lose anyone, and I’m tired of living half a life. I can’t even hold Kian’s hand in public!” I’m hysterical, but I



can't stop as tears start to fall down my face. "When does it end? When do we get to start living?"

"There's enough to blackmail her into telling us everything," Rooke says, looking up. His eyes are wide and concerned, but he doesn't make a move to stop my pacing. Sometimes you just have to lose your shit.

"Let's make arrangements to talk to her. This has to end. I refuse to live like this anymore. I'll marry Cal because of the contract," I confirm with a heavy sigh. "I already told him that I want a private ceremony to marry all of you. It may not be legal, but it's what I want. I'm not choosing, and I refuse to let society make me choose. If you're not strong enough to stand with me, then I need to know."

My eyes land on Ki and Cal as I say that, and they both flinch.

"I'll see everyone in the morning. I don't want company."

Walking to my room, I dash the tears away. I can hear them talking, but I can't handle it. I know I may have hurt Cal and Ki with my words, but they need to understand where I stand. I won't choose—I can't—but I don't want them to hang around unless they can handle me being with them all.

As I slam the door closed, I scream, just to remind myself that I'm alive.

KIAN

Last night was a fucking shit show. Not only did I have to deal with my dad's bullshit, but the revelations about Sharon and Nixen as well. Just another bomb I have to diffuse.

Patience lost her shit at all of the obstacles that we're having to deal with, and I don't think she was being overdramatic in the least.

A lesser person would have already broken. Pay has been so damn strong, even though she's been struggling. It's easier for her to handle her own load and emotions than when the people that she loves are hurting.

Nate and Cal had yet another of Nixen's affairs thrown in their faces, and it looks like it's been going on for a while. The lab fire killed Pay's dad and the guys' mother, but it makes everything hurt more that Nixen had been fucking around while their mom was still alive.

There's always something new we're finding out as we dig deeper into the past. Richard James has a lot of skeletons in his closet, but he's smart. The man kills those closest to him that may spill his tea to the world, like his assistant that wanted to meet with Patience.

No one is safe from his ire. It honestly makes me worried that he'll off my father one day, but he's more than made his bed for a cushy life and a perfect wife.

Maybe the true sacrifice isn't staying to make it work with Patience and the guys... maybe it's leaving. It'll break my own heart, but I can teach anywhere. Richard always wants me to do his errands in obscure places in the world. Should I just go?

If I'm not here, it would help clear Pay's mind. She wouldn't be so worried about my safety. Her words of fear over something happening to one of us ring in my ears from last night, and I'm worried that she'll do something insane in order to keep us safe. Patience James shouldn't be lifting a

finger for anyone. For once, she should be focused on keeping herself safe.

Patience needs to marry Cal Reynolds so she can secure her company and her future. Nothing else matters anymore. It'll secure her safety too, because less people will be able to hurt her due to the contract's edicts.

Her other men will step into the gap when I leave, right?

Someone knocks on the door and I groan. I swear these kids won't leave me alone. The only one I can tolerate is Tyler, but I know it's not him.

"Come in," I yell, but they don't enter. "Fucking seriously," I mumble quietly as I push my chair back and stand up. I stretch and crack my neck as I walk over to the door. Patience is standing there in a skirt so short that I can see her garters.

"What are you doing here?" I ask and she gives me a smile, licks her lips, and presses against my chest, pushing me back into my office.

I grab her hips and pull her lips to mine as soon as the door is closed behind her. Leaning over, I flick the lock to be safe, then spin us so I can lean her over my desk.

This isn't a good idea, but the way she smells and feels is causing all the blood to rush to my dick. She moans against my mouth and I move closer to her, letting her feel how hard she makes me.

Pulling away from her to take a breath, I shake my head. "One of these days we are going to get caught," I scold her as she turns and bends over my desk, lifting her skirt and showing me she forgot her underwear again.

Shaking her ass, she looks over her shoulder at me and smiles.

"Please, Ki, I need you to pound my pussy until I cream all over you. It's been so long," she whimpers, and I throw my head back and laugh at how odd she's acting. Gripping her ass cheeks in my palm, I squeeze and lean over her.

“Okay, who put you up to this, baby girl? Was it Nate?” I whisper into her ear, then nibble on her neck and she moans, shaking her ass, grinding my cock harder against her. I smack her ass, then pull away and she groans out her frustration.

I leave her sprawled out and looking like the tastiest treat, but we can't do this.

She gives me a pout, then stands and walks over to the door.

Reaching for her purse—I didn't even notice she'd dropped it—she pulls out a small, purple, lace thong and kicks off her shoes before slipping the material up and over her ass.

“I told him this wouldn't work. You haven't fucked me in your office since before the kidnapping, and I understand we need to be super careful now, but don't you ever miss the spontaneity?”

She crosses her arms with a pout and I step closer. “No, because every time with you is amazing, Pay. What is this really about?”

She moves over to me and straddles my lap, but this isn't a sex thing, this is a comfort thing. I pull her into a tight hug.

“I'm getting married in a few weeks, Ki, and everything is going to change. I know you've all said that it won't, but... I love you, Nate, and Rooke. Cal will be my husband, but what about the rest of you?”

I grab her hair and pull her head back so I can kiss her. I know I've been having doubts myself, but her coming here and telling me about her own insecurities has helped me make up my mind.

Pulling away from her, I look her straight in the eyes. I was wrong. “I'm not going anywhere, Patience.”

## Chapter Eighteen



I'm leaving football practice with a huge grin on my face. Things have been good this past week. I'm no longer having to hide how I feel about Cal at school and Patience is starting to sleep better at night.

I know she's been struggling—so am I—but I'm glad things are looking up for us. Now, we just need to deal with all this Sharon Gatem drama and the wedding.

Fuck, I still don't want them to marry. Does that make me an awful person? I love them both, but the fact that I'm not going to be standing up there at the altar too breaks me.

I know I need to get over it, and that Patience mentioned us all having a bonding ceremony, but I'm still struggling.

As I move closer to the parking lot, a police cruiser catches my eye. Fuck! What is he doing here?

“Rooke, we need to talk, son,” my dad yells from the car window and I stop walking. I don’t move any closer to him and I make sure to stay out in the open. Other students are running around and some are even laying under a big tree on the lawn studying.

The weather is nice and I thank whatever god is looking over me that I’m not alone.

“Get in,” he barks, but I shake my head.

“I have plans and I’m running late,” I reply and watch as my father’s face starts to redden. He’s trying to keep his perfect police chief persona, but I know he can’t stand me.

He drives off and I take in a deep breath of relief, but I guess I counted my eggs too soon because he parks and storms over to me.

“Always fucking petulant,” he growls quietly and I try not to show him fear. I’m bigger and stronger now, but he always makes me feel like that little boy on the other end of his boot.

“What’s up, Dad?” I try to keep a pleasant smile on my face. I just want to get whatever this conversation is over and done with.

“I was surprised to hear that you were back at school. Last I heard, you were taken to a place you deserved to be.” He gives me a cruel smile and my heart stops.

“You knew,” I breathe out, and he throws his head back with a booming laugh leaving his lips.

“You think I would let you prance around all willy-fucking-nilly? Waving your rainbow flag?” he grunts and I wince.

“No, I knew when Nixen Reynolds showed up that not only was he aware about you fucking his son, but I was about to get one hell of a payday.”

My head swims and I feel sick.

“I’m your son,” I rasp. “Do you have any idea what I went through to be able to survive that place?”

“The effort is admirable, but honestly, it’d be easier if you had just stayed there,” Dad groans. “Your very existence is an issue for me. You need to leave and never come back. Do your dear, old dad a solid, would ya? You had the nerve to be a fucking fag, Rooke. This is a problem for me.”

*This can't be happening at school right now.* My eyes prick with tears, but I force myself to breathe. I will not allow him the satisfaction of breaking me. I need more answers if Nixen and my father are working together. I can fall apart later.

“Please, tell me more about my failures,” I insist, my tone as dry and disrespectful as possible. “What is in this for you?”

My father would never have left the house for anything less than a payoff.

“Nixen promised to pay me thirty grand if I dumped you outside of town with the understanding that you’d never come back,” he sneers. I want to say that he was a good man once, but that would be a lie. He’s always been a small, greedy man.

“How are you supposed to keep me from ever coming back?” I ask. “Kidnapping? Selling me to someone else?”

“There are some men who promised to break a few of your bones for fun.” He shrugs. Dear God, this man is an asshole. “They don’t like no queers either. I don’t even have to pay them anything for it.”

“You’re a small minded asshole,” Cal growls behind me, startling me. Usually I’m better about listening to my surroundings, but I’m so damn angry. “Rooke isn’t going anywhere with you, so go fuck off. You’re trespassing currently, and I’ve alerted the campus security that you’re here.”

Thank God for Cal. I want to sag against him in relief, but I can’t yet.

“I have a new home now, with people that believe in me and love me. I’ll never go back,” I promise. “You’re no longer my father and I owe you nothing.”

“You ungrateful little flamer,” he slurs. My jaw drops because I’m not at all ostentatious about my sexuality. I think

I'm in shock. My father is just dropping all of the most hurtful slurs that he possibly can right now. Damn.

“And, I'm done. Sorry, baby,” Cal says, moving to punch my dad in the face. “You will not disrespect the man I love.” Kicking him in the stomach, he pushes my father further away from me so he falls to the ground. “Just because the word exists, does not mean you should ever use it!”

Cal stomps on my dad's chest and I swallow thickly. I think this is the most romantic thing that he's ever done for me. Is it wrong that I'm incredibly turned on by him at the moment? Probably. But this is equally one of the worst moments of my life and the most healing.

“Cal,” I bark, because I don't want him to kill my father. There are people watching around us, but not a single phone is filming. Thank fuck. Our luck isn't going to last for long, though. “Baby, stop! He isn't worth going to jail over.”

Breathing hard, Cal forces himself to move back. Catching him around the waist, I throw my arms around him. “Thank you,” I whisper with my lips against the shell of his ear. “You didn't have to do that.”

“It was a long time coming,” he growls. Security starts to walk over and Cal stiffens.

“It's okay,” I mutter, but I'm worried since he attacked an officer of the law.

“What's going on here?” the security guard asks. I'm frozen in fear, but a bystander steps forward.

“Sir, the man on the ground was attempting to hurt his son. He threw the first punch and Rooke's boyfriend ended it. This man shouldn't be here on campus. He's trespassing,” he says. My heart is in a vice as I listen to him lie.

I'm not used to people trying to help me and I can't breathe. Cal clings to me. Holy shit.

“Did everyone else see the same thing?” the guard asks.

Every single person who watched what happened nods in agreement.



“Students here should be protected better,” a girl from my English class says. “Take the trash out, please.”

“No! I’m not leaving without my son,” my father roars. I know he’s pissed that he won’t be getting the money that’s been promised to him, but I’m not sacrificing my life for him.

Not anymore.

As the guards drag my father away, I find it slightly easier to breathe. “You’re safe,” Cal promises softly.

Looking over at the other students, I say the only thing I can think of. “Thank you.”

They just smile and walk away to continue their day. They’ll never understand how much this means to me.

“That was intense,” Cal grunts, kissing my forehead. It’s a sweet gesture after such a traumatic experience, and I fall even harder for this man. “I think it’s time to talk about taking my father out. Let’s go home. I think we’re both done with school for today.”

I’m glad that football practice is over and that I can get the hell out of here. Cal had a meeting with a teacher, which is why he was even here this late. This school is known for their after school programs, and is why it’s one of the best schools in the area.

Falling into step with him, I link my fingers in his. I rinsed off after football practice, but I still feel dirty as hell. The interaction with my father was one of the worst in some ways because this was goodbye. I never want to see him again. I don’t have any reason to go back to his house.

And campus police know to keep him from the gates.

As we get into the car, I finally break my silence. “Are you serious about getting rid of your father?” I ask after the doors are closed.

Cal nods tightly as he starts the car. “Yeah. He’ll never stop, baby. Every machination, deal, and blackmail attempt will surround his greed and determination to get his damn way,” he mutters, maneuvering out of the parking lot.

Dropping my head back on the headrest, I nod. I know he's right, but it pains me for him. We are both choosing to cut our fathers out of our lives permanently. It feels like yet another bond between us that isn't one to be happy about. Our lives are kind of fucked up.

"When?" I ask, knowing he'll know what I'm talking about.

"After the wedding, Nixen has to die," Cal tells me. He's disassociating himself from his father already, and that'll make it easier to deal with him. Now we just have to get through till then.



*I SHUT off the engine and open the door, then walk up to the house. I'm not paying attention and still repeating all the hurtful words Cal said to me. At least the tears have stopped. I open the door, not noticing that it's unlocked, and walk inside.*

*"Oh, look who decided to show up," my dad slurs the moment I walk in the door.*

*Shit! I didn't think he was here. Where the hell is his car? If I knew he was home, I would have climbed in through my bedroom window. I shut the door and shuffle closer to him. I might as well get this over with so I can go to my room.*

*"What, you have nothing to say? How about how you're a sissy and fucking other guys? Oh, what? You didn't think I knew? The whole fucking town knows!" he roars, and I don't even flinch when he stumbles to his feet and charges me.*

*He moves to take a swing at my face, but he's too drunk to aim properly. He hits my shoulder and I move a little to the left, hitting the dining room table. I realize my mistake too late as he swings at me again, but this time I can't move away in time.*

*The force of his hit splits my lip and I taste the metallic flavor I'm so familiar with. He usually avoids my face, going for places where I can hide the bruises.*

*“I don’t know why I was given a son like you. You’re worthless, a real disappointment. You should have been swallowed instead of stuffed in that whore’s vagina,” he slurs.*

*I flinch at his callous words. He has said similar things in the past, but that was too graphic. I don’t bother replying because it will just set him off further. He scoffs and hits me again, this time in the temple.*

*My vision becomes fuzzy and I fall to my knees. I blink a few times, waiting for the dizzy feeling to pass. He swings his foot, hitting me hard in the ribs and I wince.*

*“Pathetic,” he slurs as he spits on me. My eyes fill with tears and I fight them, determined not to let them fall. I can’t show him that he’s getting to me. I can’t let him see how his words are tearing me up inside. How I wish I could just run away, leave this place. I hate it here. “Get the fuck out of my sight. Better yet, get the fuck out of my house. I won’t have no fag for a son.”*

*I close my eyes and use the table as leverage to pull myself to my feet. I stumble toward my room as he laughs.*

*“Waste of life. A loser whore, just like your mother. I want you gone by morning.” He keeps shouting things at me and my control is slipping. Every day, little by little, he tears me down, and I’m afraid one day soon I won’t have any pieces of me left.*

Gasping, I sit up in bed. I’m covered in sweat and shaking. I never want to feel as sad and hopeless as I did that day. I wanted to end it all, and I really believed my father when he told me I was useless.

“Rooke?” Patience says softly, opening the door. I had decided to take a nap after football practice and showering when we got back. I think it was a mistake looking back now. “Can I come in?”

“Yeah,” I rasp, belatedly realizing that I was crying in my sleep.

“What happened?” she asks, crawling into the bed. Pulling hard, I smirk as she tumbles into my arms.

“Bad fucking dream.” I say softly, kissing the top of her head. “I dreamt about my dad. He beat the shit out of me, and afterward I felt so helpless. I wondered why I even bothered to live.”

“Rooke, you’re alive because you’re important,” she admonishes. “A lot of people love you, including me, but you’re one of the best people that I know. The world would be a lot dimmer without you. Any time you feel low, I’ll give you a laundry list of things I adore about you.”

I chuckle, even if it is a little watery. I’m getting there. “No, baby, that’s not necessary. Do you want to know one of the reasons that I put one foot in front of the other?” I ask her.

Patience nods, moving to straddle my lap, her arms encircling my neck. “Tell me,” she murmurs, breathing in my scent. I’m sure it’s a bit sour after my dream, but she just snuggles into my chest.

“You. I’m here because you drew me out of the bad thoughts. Pay, you’re so strong, and it reminds me that I can be too.”

Lifting her face, I kiss her lips, feeling like the luckiest bastard in the world.

KIAN

The next day my office door flies open and Richard James walks inside like he owns the building. For the record, he doesn't. His skin is pale and he's dragging a rolling suitcase behind him. He looks nervous and I try not to smile.

"Richard?" I ask as I stand and fix my tie. "This is an unwelcome surprise," I grunt, and he shuts the door and locks it.

"Yes, well, I needed to have a chat with you, my boy," he says, but his usual authoritative tone is lacking today. Something has this man spooked and I'm hoping it's the Dragon. Maybe he's already started phase one.

I pull out my bottle of scotch and a glass, then pour him a drink. He takes it from me with a shake in his hand, but I don't acknowledge it.

"What is this chat that you need to have?" I ask, boredom present in my tone. Richard is a bit dramatic at times, and I don't really believe that there's a noteworthy reason to come see me.

"I need to get out of town for a while, Kian," Richard says carefully, taking a sip of his drink. His Adam's apple bobs as he swallows hard. "I don't think it's safe for me to stay here anymore, so I want you to take over the company for me."

"You mean, run James' Industries?" I ask, surprised. The company is his baby. Things must be really dire for him to be leaving. This doesn't work for me. "I don't want any part of the company. I'm done being your errand boy, Richard. The answer is no. Why can't my father do this?"

"We all know that your father is too pretty and spoiled to run my company," he says on a laugh. I scowl, because Dad's looks help Richard James con a lot of men and women into investing in his company. It's unfair for him to make fun of Tae.

“Get out and find another whipping boy,” I tell him. “I’m done. You deserve whatever you have coming to you.”

I don’t know what kind of trouble Pay’s grandfather has gotten himself into, but I know I can’t allow him to leave town.

Richard turns red with anger and throws his glass at my head. Ducking quickly is the only thing that saves me from breaking the thing with my face. Instead, it crashes into the wall behind me, shattering everywhere.

“Goddammit, old man!” I scream, standing tall. He’s out of ammo now, so there’s nothing to throw at me. “Get out of my office!”

Richard breathes heavily, and it would be just my luck if he were to keel over and die in here. It would be simpler. I refuse to feel badly for the unkind thoughts.

“You and your father exist because I allow it,” Richard growls and I shake my head.

“My father enjoys his lifestyle because he’s your errand boy. I don’t need to be involved in that anymore. Now get out of here,” I tell him.

Muttering obscenities that are barely under his breath, he turns to leave, and I wince at the slurs I hear. As Richard slams the door behind him, I pick up my cell phone and call Dragon at the Locked Souls Society. I need to ask for a favor.

Answering, Dragon requests a video chat. It’s the best way to ensure no one else is in the room that shouldn’t be. It’s smart.

Hitting the accept button, I pull the phone away so that he can see me.

“*Ki!*” Dragon booms with a small smile. “*What’s happened now?*”

“I hate that I’m so predictable now.” I sigh. “Richard James is a controlling asshole and is Patience’s grandfather. He’s ignored her safety multiple times, and I need him to

disappear. He's been blackmailing me for years to do his dirty little errands. I want Pay to be able to live in peace."

*"I don't usually ask for payment in something like this, but my sister is missing. I'm worried she's in trouble. I'll take care of Richard, and you'll never have to deal with him again,"* Dragon reassures me. *"Chastity is important to a lot of people, and she has small children at home—"*

"I'll help," I respond immediately. "I understand the importance of family, more than anyone. Are you sending anyone? What makes you think she may be here?"

*"I didn't think it'd be so easy,"* he says, relief creeping into his tone. *"Spider is on his way to you. He'll take care of the old man, then come find you with ideas of who may have taken Chastity. I'm afraid we have a lot of enemies, and many of them live in your area."*

"Of course, they do," I mutter. "I accept the responsibility of helping you find Chastity. I look forward to meeting Spider. It's about time I met the man who helped save my step-sister."

Hanging up, I lean back in my office chair as I look around at the destructive path that Richard left behind. I'll leave it for now and call a janitor to help me clean up. Then I'll go home and wait to see what kind of magic the Society has in store for Richard.

## PATIENCE

The sound of an incessant vibrating pulls me out of sleep next to Cal and Rooke. Why can't people call at a normal time?

"Who the fuck is calling you at three AM?" Cal snaps and I groan, opening my eyes. I reach over to my nightstand and answer it without looking.

"Mellow," I grumble, my eyes are already closing again.

"*Oh, Patience, it's just horrible,*" my mother sobs, and I sit up.

"What happened? Is it Tae?" I really can't think of any other reason my mom would be sobbing right now.

"*No, sweetie, your grandpa... His plane crashed... There were no survivors,*" she wails, and I'm so fucking confused. Like yeah, that's bad, but she hated the man.

"Oh, wow, umm..."

"*I know, but don't worry, darling, I am on a plane home and I will be there with you for the funeral and the reading of the will. You won't be alone during this.*" I scoff and bite my tongue.

"Yeah, okay." I end the call and then laugh.

"What's going on?" Nate asks me from beside Cal, and I shake my head.

"Richard James is dead and I guess my mom is on her way home. Gave me a load of shit about our wedding being an inconvenience earlier, but the thought of her not getting anything in the will is unheard of," I mutter, then lay back down and close my eyes.

"Holy fuck," Cal grumbles, and I laugh. I think I'm in shock. I should be crying right now. I mean, my grandpa wasn't always evil. At one point, I think he really loved me, but after all the bullshit and truths that have been revealed lately, the only thing I can think is thank God he's gone.



Now my family won't be in danger. We just need to deal with Nixen, and then maybe I'll be able to breathe easily again.

## Chapter Nineteen



“Let’s get out of here,” I suggest the next morning at breakfast. It’s still a few weeks before the wedding, and with all the fucking doom and gloom going on, I need a vacation.

“Where would we go?” Pay asks, not even questioning it.

“Where would you like to go, rabbit?” I ask and she moves closer to me. Mouse bats at her ankle and she bends down to swoop her up into her arms.

“I haven’t been on a vacation since before my dad died. It’s been non-stop business classes, karate, and etiquette lessons. My mom and Tae were always leaving, but I had to stay behind.”

“We can’t go far,” Kian adds before standing up from the table. “We have Richard’s funeral and then the wedding.

Maybe we could get away for a week after the reading of the will?"

Patience sits down and places Mouse on her lap. She's been oddly calm considering her grandpa just died, but then again, their relationship hasn't been the best since her birthday.

"What about the cabin? I haven't been there in so long, but I think there was someone taking care of it the last time my mom mentioned it."

I smile at the memories of our childhood. Swimming in the lake, making smores in the fire pit outside, catching lightning bugs at night. We used to spend three weeks there every summer.

"I think the cabin sounds great," I mutter, trying to think of the logistics of everything. I'll probably have to call Patience's mom and ask permission. Contact whoever has the keys to the place. Maybe I can claim it's a bachelor/bachelorette weekend since Pay and Cal said they didn't want to celebrate.

"I have to call my dad today anyways, so I'll ask him about the cabin. Why don't you, Cal, and Pay go over to Richard's house and get the things we need for the funeral." Ki suggests as he walks over to the door and grabs his coat and shoes.

He has a lesson today, but the rest of us are skipping classes until tomorrow. Patience says she's fine and hasn't cried yet, but I know she's going to break at some point. She may have hated Richard, but at one point she loved him.

He doted on her and called her his little princess. We didn't know about the Mafia ties, but now things make sense.

"Let me know if you need anything. I will cancel my classes," Ki says, then grabs his keys and walks over to Pay to give her a kiss.

"I love you," he breathes, and she gives him a huge smile.

"I love you, too."

Ki leaves and there's just the four of us left sitting around the table. Rooke and Cal are digging into the French toast and

Pay is still petting Mouse. I finish my coffee, then stand.

“When did you want to leave? No offense, rabbit, but your grandpa’s house gives me the fucking creeps, so I’d like to be in and out before dark,” I mutter and Cal laughs.

“It’s just an old, empty mansion, bro.” I shiver at the memory of playing hide-and-seek there when we were younger. I got locked in a closet and they didn’t find me for hours. I swear that place is haunted.

“We can go after I take a shower,” Patience says and I nod. She sets Mouse down and pushes her seat back. Cal stands too.

“Where are you going?” I ask him, and he waggles his eyebrows at me.

“To take a shower,” he says, then grabs Pay’s hand and drags her to the bedroom.

Rooke chuckles and grabs some more bacon as we listen to Pay laugh and then moan. I groan and drink my coffee, ignoring my rock hard cock.



WE GET to the creepy mansion and Patience hesitates to climb out of the car. Rooke takes her hand. “We can go inside and get his suit and the photo album. You don’t have to do it, baby,” he tells her and she sighs.

“No, I’ll do it. I just haven’t been here in a long time. I know he wasn’t the best man, but he was good and kind to me when I was little.” Her voice gets a little choked up and she clears her throat before opening the car door. “I wish that I knew what changed.”

I think that Richard’s demands on his sweet little granddaughter changed once she grew up, but Patience didn’t. No one should push the disgusting societal agenda that he did on her. I don’t like to think badly of the dead, but I’m glad Richard James is gone.

Walking into the James' patriarch's home is creepy. This house is huge and dark, filled with expensive paintings created by dead artists that I don't know. My skin is crawling and I can't wait to leave.

"In and out, baby girl," Rooke reminds her. "Let's go to his room and get his suit. All together, this place is fucking disturbing."

"Tell me about it," I mutter.

"I used to love it," Patience whispers as we go up the stairs. I'm waiting for a ghost to start screaming. I'm not allowed to watch any more scary movies. Ever. "I would curl up with a book and hide in the library reading for hours. It was my way of getting away from all of the testosterone for a bit."

There's a teasing lilt to her voice, and I chuckle despite myself. "We were smelly boys," I remind her. "Cal and I were obsessed with you."

"You two and Ki were my world until Dad died," she says. "I'm glad you are again."

My hand finds hers as we walk into Richard's bedroom. He has a huge four post bed in the room that takes up most of it. Shivering, I open the closet so we can get out of here quickly. Turning on the light, I step into the huge closet that has tons of austere suits all lined up in neat rows.

"Blue, gray, or black?" I ask, looking around. There are shoe boxes that are perfectly lined up at the top of the closet, as well as shoes on the ground. Why both?

"Black, but there's a Valentino suit that he loved," Patience murmurs as she walks into the closet. Moving to the right side of the area, she begins to look.

Richard James definitely wasn't hurting for money. The price of the clothing here would feed a small town for a year. Reaching over my head, I pull down a shoebox. It's lighter than I'd expect shoes to be. My curiosity is piqued and I need a distraction from this creepy house.

"What have you got there?" Rooke murmurs, looking over my shoulder.

“I’m following a hunch. Who knows when we’ll be able to get in here alone again,” I mumble, opening the box. There’s receipts and photos in the box and Rooke pulls some out.

The photos are dated a little over ten years ago, and they’re surveillance photos of my mom and Pay’s dad. What the hell...

I go through them all as Rooke checks the receipts. “These are receipts for a private investigator,” he mutters. “Richard was having someone checked out.”

Pay drifts back over to us with a suit and expensive watch in her hands. “Who was he having investigated?” she asks.

“Our mom and your dad,” I answer her.

“I mean, it just makes sense that if my dad was looking into my grandfather that he would be doing the same, right? Dad was always so loyal to the company. It would have had to have been a really big reason for him to question anything...”

Intrigued, I take photos of everything with my phone and upload them all to the cloud. “Let’s see what else there is,” I suggest. Putting everything back where we found it, we go through each box.

It appears that Richard was a hoarder. There are receipts, photos, little notebooks, and cassette tapes of recorded conversations in these boxes.

“Fuck, is it wrong if we just take it all?” I complain.

“No one else has been in here or would know this is here. Put it all into tote bags and we’ll go through them together,” Patience says. She looks a little pale, and I don’t blame her. Richard was into some bad shit.

Blackmail, pimping and escorts, controlling interest of illegal businesses. I’m sure this doesn’t even scratch the surface of his own Mafia connections. I’m suddenly even happier that the old man’s plane crashed.

Packing up all the shit into tote bags, we leave the house, closing it up as if we were never there.



THE FUNERAL IS A QUIET, dreary affair. It decided to pour this morning, which just serves to remind me what a miserable bastard Richard James was. Everyone attending are people that he worked with, scared shitless, or are family hoping to be named in the will.

The only person who cried during the service is Pay's mom, Stephanie. She sniffled into her handkerchief multiple times next to Ki's father, who stoically looked straight ahead and patted her hand from time to time.

Funerals are a great way to people watch and view the human condition. There were older women in black veils with rosaries in their hands who mumbled prayers during the service, while mischievous little grandchildren wiggled uncomfortably in their suits.

As I run my finger under my collar, I totally commiserate with them. Catching one of their eyes, I wink at them. The little boy grins at me before remembering where he is.

Not wanting to be a bad influence, I look away. Patience has dry eyes as she listens to the service, but her hand is held tightly between Cal and Rooke. Kian looks a little lost as he watches his father instead of the priest.

Tae's spine is ramrod straight and he appears to be very proud. How he followed orders dictated to him by Richard James for years is beyond me.

It's already been the longest day ever, and it's barely eleven in the morning as we walk out of the church.

"We have to follow the hearse to the cemetery," Pay says softly. Pallbearers brought Richard's body into the church, and even then, Tae was faithfully at the old man's side.

"Even now, the old man is making everyone dance for him," Kian grumbles. His relationship with the man was tumultuous, and no one is happier to see his demise.

“We’re almost done, guys. Let’s go,” I murmur. I personally hate funerals. Burn my body, have a party, remember me fondly. That’s all I want.

Black umbrellas open over our heads as we hurry to the car. We all came together because we knew today would be hard. This is the home stretch.

The drive to the cemetery is slow, and Pay yawns, laying her head on my shoulder. Her phone vibrates in her purse, and she pulls it out warily. There are few people who would want to speak to her knowing there’s a funeral.

I don’t think anyone doesn’t know that the great Richard James is deceased. The entire thing has been televised, and I saw media trucks outside of the church as we left. It’s a fucking circus.

“The ground is going to be muddy,” Ki frets as he parks the car. “Please be careful in your heels, Patience.”

She nods absently, but the last thing she needs is to fall into the mud in front of everyone. Patience looks beautiful in a black pencil skirt suit. She’s wearing sky-high heels, and I wonder if it would be terrible if I picked her up to walk her across the grass.

“You’re going to sink, rabbit,” I sigh.

“I’ll carry her,” Rooke says with a shrug. “Wanna take a ride, baby girl?”

Patience’s eyes light up, and I relax slightly. Rooke reminds her how to have fun and worships the ground she walks on.

“Let me do it,” Cal murmurs as we get out of the car. “There’s so many eyes here, and I’m her public fiancé. I don’t care about the title personally, but I don’t want to make this about us today.”

“You’re right,” I agree just as Rooke nods.

We all huddle together under the umbrellas around Cal and Pay as he carries her carefully across the grass.



Placing her on the ground in front of the gravesite, he holds Patience around the waist. It looks as if he is being supportive, when really he's holding her weight off the back of her shoes.

"Best public fiancé ever," she says so lowly only we can hear. Even Ki's lips twitch, and I know we'll survive this.

Pay's mother is the most obnoxious person here. Honestly, how many tears does this woman have? She cries loudly while everyone else dabs at their eyes, whether there are actual tears or not. All too soon, the funeral is over, and people come over to give their condolences as they leave.

"It's time to go to the lawyer's office for the reading of the will," Stephanie says as she stands in front of us. The rain has petered out thankfully, but it's left the air feeling heavy, like there are ghosts huddled over us.

I am in a morbid state of mind, clearly.

"We'll follow you there, Mom," Patience reassures her.

"Why don't you drive with us?" Tae suggests, his arm holding his wife's waist to ensure that she doesn't sink into the soggy ground. There's a certain sharpness in his eyes as he watches his son surreptitiously. I know they are on rocky ground right now, but I think that's part of growing up and breaking out on your own.

Tae Park is just having a hard time with this.

"Ki will drive me, but thank you," Patience says with a smile. Her body is stiff with tension, and I can only imagine how the reading will go down this afternoon.

"They're not family," Tae says harshly. I don't know what his deal is, but he won't speak like that to my girl.

"They're my family," Patience corrects him, her chin rising stubbornly. She'll be polite to a fault, but she is done mollycoddling people. "I'll go with them, thank you."

Stephanie's eyes widen in anger, but Cal sweeps Pay into his arms. "We'll see you there," he tells them, walking around a puddle.

Following them, we ignore the tantrum that Stephanie throws as we leave her behind. There's no one in the cemetery except for us now, so she can do what she wants. Tae murmurs calm words as they walk behind us, but I can feel the daggered looks he's giving.

What is it about money that sours relationships?

Thankfully, the lawyer's office isn't far and it has its own parking lot. Patience walks with purpose as we cross it into the office.

"Patience, why are you walking so fast?" Stephanie complains, trying to keep up with us. I don't know why, but I refuse to let her corner Patience again. We're going straight in to listen to the reading and then leaving.

Fuck waiting so that she can yell at her daughter over things that she has no control over. The lawyer's secretary rises from her desk as we walk in, looking calm and friendly. She must see these happen often, and it doesn't faze her.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Waters is waiting for you in the conference room. Please follow me," she murmurs. The little plaque at the front of her desk says that her name is Desiree Merchant.

She appears to be in her fifties, portly, but calm and collected. I would much rather have a secretary like this than the one that my father has.

Please be competent, and stay away from my dick.

"We have quite the group today," Mr. Waters says with a smile. "I'm glad I booked the conference room for today. Please take a seat, everyone, so we can get right to it. Richard was a good friend as well as a client, and I'm very sorry for his loss. It's been very tragic indeed."

I'm not quite sure how he manages to say that with a straight face, but I have to say that I'm impressed. We make sure to sit around Patience, leaving no room for Stephanie or Tae to sit next to her. Kian glances at his father before gluing his eyes on Mr. Waters' face. There will be a confrontation between the two of them, but hopefully not today.

“As you know, Richard made certain that he had a will prepared. Over the years, he’s made changes to it, but overall the contents have remained privileged information between he and I,” Mr. Waters begins, pulling out his glasses.

He works slowly as he pulls out a hard copy of the will from a file. I want to snatch it out of his hands just so we can get the fuck out of here, but I curl my fingers into the fabric of my pants instead.

I can manage a little patience. It won’t be much longer.

“This will has not been tampered with or altered after the death of Richard James and is a legal document. Now, let’s continue,” he murmurs.

I pay attention to his words, but honestly, his voice makes me sleepy.

“.... I, Richard James, am of sound mind and body. It is my decision to leave my company, the house, and all of my assets to my granddaughter, Patience James. My only stipulation is that she marry or still be married to Cal Reynolds, as their union is important to the growth of my empire...”

My lips part in surprise, and I glance at Patience. She’s pale and trembling as Mr. Waters continues to list all of the different properties that she now owns. There’s a shit ton of zeros that will be attached to her name, more still as soon as she’s married to my brother.

The wiley old bastard is still getting the last word in, even though he’s about to be worm food. Pay isn’t the only one who is shocked. Ki is having trouble breathing as he looks at his father.

Rooke leans over to him, rubbing his back and murmuring in his ear. I’m glad it’s helping, because Stephanie looks apoplectic. I hope this place has good insurance, because she looks like someone who likes to break shit.

“I understand that this may be a bit of a shock to some of you,” Mr. Waters says, staring pointedly at Tae and Stephanie. Richard left them a fixed amount of money annually from the

trust that will allow them to live comfortably, but I'm sure they were prepared to get more than they are. "I'll give you some time to talk; however, the will can not be changed. Again, I am sorry for your loss."

Smoothly, the lawyer leaves the will on the table, though I'm sure there are several copies of it. Stephanie grabs it, looking over it as if it'll say something different than it does.

"I wasn't expecting that," Patience says weakly. "Mom—"

"I should have aborted you!" Stephanie screams, throwing the will at her. We're in shock as she continues to scream obscenities. I know that she wasn't always the most loving mother, but holy shit! "You ruined my body, you ungrateful little whore. Philippe wanted to have his perfect princess, but you destroyed my body coming out. Your huge head got stuck in my vagina, and I had to have a c-section in order to get you out. Do you know who your father was the most worried about?! You!"

"Stephanie, you're making a scene," Tae says softly.

"Tae, you know it's true. She's never wanted to spend any time with us—"

"Mom, you're never home," Patience intervenes, standing. "Traipsing all over the world isn't conducive to being open to spending time with me. I was kidnapped and held against my will and you never even noticed!"

"Richard said that you were fine and taking an extended school abroad program in Brazil. I only thought it was odd because you don't even know Portuguese," Stephanie laughs shrilly.

"That son of a bitch," Kian snarls, standing up. "He knew she had disappeared."

"Richard knew no such thing, son," Tae says, waving his hand to silence him. "Don't speak ill of the dead. He always took care of us."

"Until *now*," Stephanie shrieks. "Everyone has been telling me what a little whore you are and I refused to believe them. Not my Patience! And here you are dating your step-brother

and three other men? How the fuck does that work? You only have so many holes. Oh my God... did you fuck your grandfather for his fortune?!"

Tae looks a little green at the thought and looks balefully at his wife. I'd feel bad for him, but he's been living with her for years. This can't be the first time that she's lost it like this.

"Respectfully, Mrs. Park, that is called incest. Patience hasn't spent much time with her grandfather since her birthday," Cal says while standing. "The old man has been trying to force her to do things that she doesn't want, and Patience is an independent woman who does what she wants. You will find that your actions have consequences. Don't come around when you realize your vitriol is wrong and depraved as well. I'm taking my fiancée and her boyfriends' home now."

Cal just claimed us all. I think I may be dreaming this entire day. And yet, I find my feet moving as we walk out.

"I will never speak to you again, Patience James. Do you hear me? I disown you!" The crash of the glass as we walk by makes us curl around Pay to protect her. Thankfully, the glass didn't shatter.

Hurrying away, we thunder past the surprised secretary.

"We're so sorry," Rooke mutters as we move past. Jesus, I hope they bill Stephanie and Tae for this and not us.

Patience takes a huge breath of fresh air as we make our escape outside. The rain is finally gone, and the sunlight is peeking through the clouds, making the puddles sparkle.

"That could have been worse," Ki murmurs, making us glance at him in surprise.

"How?" I sputter.

"Stephanie used to go to the gun range regularly up until recently. She could have drawn a gun," he says with a shrug.

"Fuck, walk faster," Pay says. Soon, we're in the car and peeling out of the lot.

Ki gets a call as we're arriving at home, and he grunts at the preview of who it is.

"It's the Society, let's all get inside to see what's going on," he says. Hurrying, we get into the elevator as he answers.

"I'm almost inside the apartment," Kian says in greeting as the request for a video call comes through.

"Don't accept the video request until you're inside," says Dragon, except his voice is disguised and sounds odd. "I'll use the voice changer till you're clear."

"Thank you," Ki murmurs as the door opens. "Three doors away."

I unlock the door, and we pile inside. Rooke locks the door, making a beeline for the kitchen to get water. Opening the bottles, we wait for Ki to accept the request.

"Thank you for your patience," Kian says. Dragon is sitting on a couch, and I wonder if that's his home.

"Not a problem. I know the funeral was today," he says, his voice normal again. "We have a bit of a development, though. I'm getting ready to leave my home, I have my bag packed, and I need to see you all immediately. Give me a safe address."

Looking around the room, we prepare ourselves for whatever is about to happen.



SO WHAT I had planned as a simple getaway is now turning into a business meeting with the infamous Dragon and the Locked Souls Society. I still don't know what to believe about it all, but the fact that they took down Richard, and that Spider, AKA: Ash, kept my girl safe... so I owe them.

I'm not sure how much help I'm going to be, but I'll do anything they ask of me. We all would.

"So, do you even know where we're driving to?" I ask Kian as he's loading up an SUV that he rented for our trip.

“Yeah, Dragon said to just go to the cabin and he will meet us there. He didn’t want to inconvenience us, and it’s not too far from their headquarters,” Ki says as he closes the hatchback and moves over to the driver’s side door.

He insisted on driving and I let him. Cal and Pay kept me up half the night. I love to hear my rabbit moan, but for four hours straight! I think we all need to have a chat.

Or we just need a bigger house. I think it’s time now that we’re out as a family.

“There’s still so many loose ends. I can’t even enjoy the planning of our trip,” Patience sighs. “I just want to be normal for a few days, but it’s not in the cards.”

We all get into the car together, ready for the drive to what is supposed to be our vacation. Patience had to block her mom’s number because she’s been non-stop calling, and Kian yelled at his father as well about how he speaks about Pay. Tae keeps telling Ki that he needs to marry a nice girl and not a thankless whore.

I think all of our parents suck.

“I know what you mean, rabbit,” I tell her, rubbing her back as I sit next to her. I won rock paper scissors, and I don’t care how childish it may have been. I really like sitting next to her. Cal sits on her other side, and he looks worried about her.

“We still have your father to worry about, and Isabella. I don’t know how I can be excited about this wedding either,” Patience says, her throat sounding as if it’s starting to close.

“Hey!” Ki says, looking up to look at her in the rearview mirror. “None of that. Breathe, baby. One step at a time, okay? The Society will be helping us with Nixen. He is part of the sex trade industry, with heavy ties to Isabella. We just need to get through the wedding.”

“Does that mean that all bets are off afterward?” I ask. I need things to be clear for my rabbit. Platitudes will not work if she’s panicking.

“Yes. We’re going after Isabella after the wedding,” Ki confirms.

Cheers to tying off some loose ends.



## Chapter Twenty



I didn't expect the funeral or the reading of the will to explode the way it did. Maybe I'm still in shock. I know my mother didn't like me that much, but for her to go off on me like that and accuse me of sleeping with my grandpa... I think... I really don't know what to think.

Rooke hands me a coffee in a travel mug and Cal grabs my favorite car blanket. We have a bit of a drive, and I'm looking forward to getting away with my family. Nate hands me Mouse's carrier, and as soon as I'm in the back seat and buckled, I unzip the side door and let her out.

She's wearing a harness with a bell and has a leash, so I'm not worried about her escaping. Plus the cabin is huge. Plenty of new rooms for her to explore and hide in.

"Do you want to try and take a nap while we drive?" Nate asks me and I shake my head.

I know the guys are all worried about my mental state, but I'm okay. I think my mother disowning me could have been a blessing instead of a curse.

She hasn't been around in years and when she did pop in, it was all fake. A show to make her look like the best, most loving mother. I thought our heart to heart a few months back meant something, but it was probably all another farce.

Ki pulls onto the highway and I stare out the window for a few minutes. The sun is just starting to peek over the mass of trees. It's early, but that's fine. I know the leader of the Locked Souls Society is waiting at the cabin for us.

"So, you never told me, Ki. How do you know Dragon?" I ask and he looks back at me quickly before focussing on the road.

"Richard had been sending me on errands since I was fifteen. Well, one assignment unbeknownst to me was stealing from the Society. Instead of killing me on the spot, they gave me a chance to explain and then told me that Richard had been a target of their concern for a few years..."

He changes lanes and then continues. "I guess you could say that I've been a double agent at times. I'm not a member, but I'm an informant. I have done a few things for them over the years as well."

"Wait, so Richard was Mafia and Dragon is like... the leader of the Ivy Club?" The guys all look at me at once and I roll my eyes.

"This is all too crazy. Was my dad a member of the Mafia? Am I the leader of the Mafia now? Richard left me everything, but I don't want to become some Godmother or something." I'm starting to spiral and Rooke grabs my hand, giving me a hard squeeze and grounding me.

"Take some deep breaths, baby girl. We won't make you do anything you don't want to." He's trying to reassure me, but I'm lost in my head.

Ki pulls the car over and parks. "Switch seats with Patience," he tells Cal, and I unbuckle. Rooke gives me a

quick kiss and I hand him Mouse. She's been sleeping through my freakout and I wish I could be as relaxed as her.

Cal opens his door, then mine, and offers me a hug. I fall into his arms and breathe in his clean linen and citrus smell. "You and I are in this together, Patience. Once we take down my dad and Sharon, and then go after Isabella, we can decide what our future looks like."

I give him a nod and he kisses my forehead before gently pressing me toward the front seat. I climb in as he sits beside Rooke. Nate moves to the third row, reading something seemingly intriguing, but he gives me a smile.

I don't know what I would do without these guys. Ki takes my hand and holds it tight as he pulls back onto the highway.

"So, how mad was Hana when you told her you weren't having a bachelorette party?" Rooke asks me and I groan.

"Well, it started with a pout, then she gave me the puppy eyes, then tears, then I may have agreed to a spa weekend before the wedding," I grumble and the guys all laugh. They know that Hana has me wrapped around her finger.

"It's better than her original plan for Vegas," Nate comments and I nod.

"I just don't know if I feel comfortable being away from you all for a whole weekend. Any way I could convince you all to come to the spa, too?" I look back at Rooke and give him my own version of puppy eyes and I know he's about to cave, but Cal butts in.

"Nope, we have plans of our own, but we won't be far away. You deserve some girl time, Pay," he says and I sigh.

Ki continues driving as we fight over the music and snacks. Cal and Rooke drift off about an hour in and I have to take some photos. They are so cute together. Nate gave up the music fight and asked for my headphones, leaving Ki and I to be able to talk in private.

"You trust Dragon?" I ask him and he nods, tapping his fingers on the steering wheel to the beat of the song.

“I do. I wouldn’t bring someone close to you that would hurt you. Plus, you trust Spider... I mean Ash, right?”

“Yeah, he was the only one that helped Rooke, me, and the others. I knew from the moment he was told to touch me for the cameras that he didn’t belong there,” I mumble and Ki’s grip on the steering wheel becomes tighter.

“I can’t wait to kill Nixen. He’s going to pay. Him and that bitch, Isabella, for what they did to you and Rooke, and what they are still doing to poor, innocent children.”

Tears fill my eyes at the thought of all the innocents we left behind, but we have a plan. We will be freeing them all. We just have to get through this wedding first.



A FEW HOURS later we arrive and I’m glad. The guys had started to complain and I needed to stretch my legs.

Pulling up to the lake house, I choke back tears. It’s been so long since I’ve been here, and I know the guys are just trying to cheer me up, but all this place does is remind me of the last night I saw my dad.

*A PHONE RINGS from his pocket and he sighs, giving me an apologetic look. I roll my eyes and he kisses my forehead before pulling out the small silver device and reading a text. He sits up straight and his face turns white.*

*“Are you okay, Daddy?” I ask, and as he pulls me into a tight hug. His hands are shaking.*

*“Yes, baby. Just some work things.” He tries to wave it away, but I can see the worry in his eyes. I lie back on my pillow and he lays beside me. “Did I ever tell you about the day your mom told me I was going to be a dad?” He runs his fingers through my messy brown hair and I sigh. I shake my head no and he kisses my forehead again.*

*“We had just finished our sophomore year at Stonewall, and your uncle Nixen decided that a trip to the lake was in order. We had been studying really hard, and a relaxing week on the water sounded great. But when we arrived, it turned out to be a shack in the woods. The look on your mom’s face was priceless.” He stops and laughs, and I glance up at him.*

*“Daddy, is this the lake that we go to sometimes?” He nods and I listen as he talks.*

*“Yes, but this was before we built the big house. It was just a two-bedroom shack on the water. The moment we unlocked the front door, your mother took off like a bullet and raced to the bigger bedroom, claiming it before Nix or Cami could. When your uncle started to argue with her, she looked him straight in the eye and said, ‘I need the bigger bed,’ then turned to me and said, ‘I’m pregnant’.”*

*“At first, I was in shock, but then she gave me the biggest smile and I melted. I knew I loved your mom from the first day of high school. I knew that I would marry her someday, and she would give me tons of babies.” He pauses and turns to face me.*

*“Your mom wasn’t always distant. She used to be so much fun, full of smiles and laughter. She was my best friend. I miss that girl, but I want you to know, Patience, that she loves you more than anything in this world, and I need you to promise me something, princess.”*

*He looks so serious right now, and his eyes are glazed as if he’s trying not to cry. I nod and he squeezes me tighter in his arms. “Take good care of her. If, for any reason, I’m not around. I need to know that she won’t be alone. Either of my girls.”*

TOO BAD HE wasn’t psychic. Maybe if he was, he wouldn’t have left that night and would still be alive. He wanted my mom and I to band together, but that wish or dream he had for all of us was a joke.

“Penny for your thoughts, rabbit?” Nate mumbles and I sigh. I was too in my head and I didn’t even notice Ki, Rooke, and Cal had climbed out and started to unload the SUV.

“Just a penny? No, it’s more like a thousand dollars. Do you ever feel like your life isn’t what it should be? I don’t mean dating you guys. I love you. I just mean that something isn’t right.”

Nate climbs out and opens my door as I unbuckle. Taking my hand, he brings my knuckles to his lips to kiss before giving me a smile.

“When I was away from you, I constantly felt like something was wrong. I was just wasting days where I could have been doing something with you or Cal. I regret not spending more time with my grandparents, but it’s too late now to worry about it.”

“I know, I remember how angry you were. I missed you all too, and now that we’re all together again, I just have this bad feeling that our time is limited.” I sigh and lean forward to give him a kiss.

Glancing around, I don’t see any other cars here. Ki walks over to us and he has my bag over one shoulder and a pissed off Mouse in his arms. “We didn’t bring the litter box. Rooke and I are going to run to the store in town. Cal and Nate will stay here with you. We’re still early, so maybe go for a walk or take a nap. You look exhausted, baby girl,” he tells me.

I move away from Nate and take the cat from Ki, then give him a quick kiss. Cal starts up the steps to the cabin and Nate follows. I wait until Rooke and Ki leave, then stare off at the lake, remembering how my dad taught me and Nate to swim there.

I hope one day when we have kids we can come back here and continue the summer vacations. I don’t want this place to rot any longer.

I set Mouse down and let her lead me over to some bushes so she can do her business. I have to laugh as she starts to dig a hole to go to the bathroom in. She’s such a weird cat.

“Patience!” one of the guys yells from inside, and I quickly bend down to grab Mouse then haul ass up the steps. They sounded panicked and that’s not good.

When I open the door, I freeze and my heart starts to race. There’s a man sitting on the couch beside a woman and two little girls that look identical to each other. The woman is staring at Nate and Cal with tears in her eyes, but I can’t move my eyes from the man.

He stands, but doesn’t move any closer. Licking my lips, I clear my throat, then try to speak.

“Dad?” I croak and he gives me a smile.

“Hey, PJ.”

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## About Author Amber Nicole

Before accompanying her military husband across the United States, Amber Nicole was born and raised in upstate NY. An avid reader and baker, she always has something cooking, whether in the kitchen or in her mind. She is well known for her international best selling duet *Forever Changed*, and she has a wide range of tropes to choose from. Whether it be why choose, MF, MM, FF, paranormal, or contemporary.

She also has two incredible children who help inspire her every day and a husband that pushes her to follow her dreams. She's an animal lover and has many of her own.

Stay tuned for more from this incredible author.

If you want to come hang out with me and talk about books, come—join my author's group!

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## *About Author Jenn Bullard*

Jenn Bullard is a tiny pixie author that loves to read. She has three daughters and is married to her cinnamon roll— her Griffin. She is a stay at home mom with a healthy appreciation for things that vibrate. Most of the time, Jenn is ruled by her characters: they drive, she just tells their story. If Jenn could tell her readers anything: it's to follow your dreams. She wouldn't be writing if she hadn't.

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