



SAVAGE SAINTS

MC

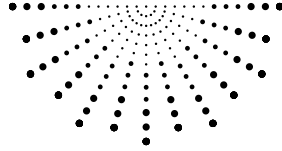


# RIDER

*USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR*

**CAMERON HART**

RIDER  
SAVAGE SAINTS  
BOOK TWO



# CAMERON HART

Copyright © 2023 by Cameron Hart

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

# CONTENTS

[Want a free book?](#)

[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](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Also by Cameron Hart](#)

WANT A FREE BOOK?



## CONNECT WITH ME!



Check out my website, [cameronhart.net](http://cameronhart.net), for sneak previews on my latest projects.

### **Follow me on social media:**

[Facebook Page](#)

[Facebook Group](#)

[TikTok](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Goodreads](#)

[Bookbub](#)

## RIDER

Sutton is like a delicate wildflower sprouting up between cracks in the cement. She's beautiful, unexpected, and life-giving, especially after spending the last five years in prison.

The first time I saw her at the clubhouse, my knees buckled and I grew so lightheaded I thought I would faint. She's skittish, however. I don't know what she's been through, but my girl can barely look at her own shadow without shrinking away from the darkness.

Little by little, I draw Sutton out of her shell, showing her how strong and brave she is all on her own. When she finds out about my past, all the progress we made is undone.

Can my wildflower forgive me and see past my flaws? I hope so, because I know I can't live without her...



# CHAPTER ONE



## SUTTON

“*T*here you are,” Hawk says as he comes up behind Tessa.

He wraps his arms around her hips, and my best friend spins in his embrace, her dreamy smile matching his.

I look down at the bar top while they kiss, trying not to feel like a third wheel. Grabbing a napkin from the dispenser next to me, I twist it in my hands in a familiar, anxious gesture. I’ve been to the Savage Saints MC clubhouse a dozen times to visit Tessa at work, but my nerves still get the best of me if I’m here longer than ten minutes.

It’s not just the clubhouse, though. I get panic attacks if I’m in the grocery store and someone is blocking an aisle I need to go down or if I’m waiting in line and someone steps up a little too close behind me.

Basically, I’m a pathetic mess.

The air around me grows heavy, and a spark of awareness shoots down my spine. *Rider is here*. I get the same feeling every time the tall, muscled, mysterious man is around me.

Turning slightly, I see Rider’s large silhouette sitting on the barstool on the other side of Hawk and Tessa. My eyes trace the sharp lines of his nose and chin, then wander down to his bulging biceps and thick, corded forearms covered in ink. I imagine what it would be like to curl up in his lap and have those arms wrapped around me, protecting me from everything. Maybe my anxiety wouldn’t be so crippling if I knew I had someone like Rider by my side.

I tear my gaze away from Rider, but not before capturing his chocolate brown eyes. He's so intense, yet I don't feel like he's scrutinizing or objectifying me. No, when Rider's attention is on me, I feel... safe. Seen. Protected. All things I had been sorely lacking in my life until recently.

A yawn sneaks up on me. I close my eyes, breaking eye contact with Rider as I lift my hand to cover my mouth. I haven't stopped yawning since I stepped into the clubhouse an hour ago to visit Tessa while she finished her bartending shift.

"Why are you so tired, Sutton?" Tessa asks.

"Oh, you know," I say vaguely as I shrug. "Working on a big design project."

It's not a lie, but it's not the whole truth. I *am* working on a big design project I hope to finish soon. The client paid half up-front, and I get the other half once everything is complete. As for the rest...

"You need to rest and take care of yourself," my friend gently reminds me. Tessa rests her hand on my shoulder, squeezing slightly. "You have people who care about you now. It's not about survival anymore. We get to decide how we live our lives."

I nod, smiling at Tessa. I know she means well, but I'm not done operating in survival mode. It's not her fault she doesn't know. I haven't had the heart to tell her about my dreadful trip back to my hometown a few weeks ago that changed everything. How could I? She's finally safe and happy and living her best life with Hawk. The last thing I want to do is burden her with my family drama and living situation.

"Thanks for the reminder," I say before another yawn creeps up on me.

Tessa furrows her brow, and I catch Rider doing the same behind her. His eyes haven't left me once since he sat down, but I don't mind.

My friend opens her mouth to say something, but she's cut off by someone slamming their beer mug down on the bar top.

Every muscle in my body tenses and I gasp, trying unsuccessfully to hide my whimper.

A second later, I regain control, telling myself I'm not in danger. It was just a loud noise. With each steady breath, I remind myself I'm not back in my childhood home, listening to my parents fight or scream at me for being in the way.

When I open my eyes again, Tessa has a worried look. I notice that Rider is gone, his drink untouched on the counter.

"I'm okay," I tell Tess with a reassuring smile. "Still working on my jump-scare reflexes," I say with a weak chuckle.

My bestie is unimpressed by my attempt at a joke, but she doesn't say anything else.

"Let's get you home, beautiful," Hawk tells Tessa before kissing her on the temple. She leans into his touch, that same dreamy smile spreading across her face.

Loneliness threatens to consume me, but I swallow past the lump in my throat. I'm happy for my friend. Ecstatic. No one deserves a happily ever after more than Tessa after everything she's been through. Her horrible, abusive father finally got what was coming to him, thanks to the Savage Saints MC.

Hawk takes Tessa's hand and leads her toward the door. I hop off my stool and follow them out into the parking lot.

"Thanks for visiting me at work tonight," Tessa says as they approach Hawk's motorcycle.

"Of course," I tell her, giving my friend a hug. "I don't get to see you as often these days, so I'll jump on any chance to hang out."

I meant for my comment to be sweet, but Tessa frowns slightly. "I know I kind of dropped off the face of the earth for a bit—"

I hold my hands up to stop her. "I didn't mean to guilt-trip you."

Tessa takes my hand in hers, squeezing slightly. “You’re not guilt-tripping me. I’ve been meaning to stop by the house and see you, but I just...” She trails off, looking over her shoulder at Hawk.

I grin at Tessa, whose cheeks are slightly pink.

“No worries. Seriously. I’d rather see you here or at Hawk’s,” I tell her.

Tessa lifts an eyebrow at me, and I realize I may have been less subtle than I had hoped.

Thankfully, Hawk hands Tessa her helmet, distracting her enough not to ask follow-up questions. Good thing, too. I’m unsure what I’d tell her if she asked why I don’t want her coming to the house.

“We’ll talk later!” Tessa calls out as Hawk starts up his bike.

I nod and wave, watching them ride off into the night. With a fortifying breath, I straighten my shoulders and walk to my car, hopping inside and starting the engine.

When I reach the end of the parking lot, I don’t turn left toward the house Tessa and I lived in together. Instead, I turn right, taking the gravel road further away from town. After a few blocks, I pull off to the side and ease my car under a large tree close to the edge of the road.

Turning off the car, I heave out a breath and sink further into the seat, resting my forehead on the steering wheel. This is not how I thought my life would turn out. Twenty-two and homeless.

Feeling sorry for myself isn’t going to fix anything, however.

I dig around in my glove compartment for a granola bar I stashed there yesterday, but I can’t find it. My stomach growls, and I try to ignore it. *I’ll pick something up in the morning*, I tell myself, even though I’ll have the same amount of money tomorrow as I do now. None.

Throwing open the driver's side door, I quickly get out and settle into the back seat, where I'll have more room to stretch out. Not much, but more than the front seat.

I grab the blanket I keep folded up against the back window and spread it out on top of me, using my purse as a pillow. As I curl up into a ball in the back seat of my car, I try not to let the tears break through. If I cry now, I might never stop. Besides, what good will tears do?

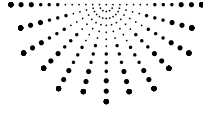
Even as I tell myself that, my eyes start to sting. I sniffle as the first tear falls, squeezing my eyes shut until the world around me is nothing but darkness. A pit opens in my chest, an endless void of loneliness that I fear may never leave me. I struggle to get a full breath in as rivers of despair pour from my eyes.

Eventually, I cry myself out. My eyes are swollen, and my throat is raw, but I have nothing left. At least now I'll finally be exhausted enough to sleep.

Pulling the thin blanket around my chin, I try to get more comfortable, only to be stabbed in the hip by a seatbelt holder. I'm sure I'll have a bruise in the morning, but right now, I'm too numb to feel anything.

*Tomorrow will be better*, I tell myself, even though the last fourteen days have seemed to get sequentially worse until I ended up sleeping in my car. Still, I have to hang on to that hope. One day, it will get better. Right?

# CHAPTER TWO



## RIDER

*W* hat the fuck am I looking at?

I circle the decades-old Toyota Corolla for the third time since finding it partially hidden on the side of the road. I couldn't sleep, so I decided to head to the Savage Saints clubhouse to see if there was anything to clean or fix up. That's when I stumbled upon Sutton's car.

Peering in through the back window, I still can't believe what's right in front of my eyes. At first, I thought the car had broken down, and Sutton abandoned it. Upon further inspection, I discovered the woman herself curled up in the back seat.

Looking down on her now, I can see her curvy little body covered in a tattered and worn blanket. Sutton is shivering slightly, her inky black hair tangled around the strap of her purse, which she's using as a pillow. Her eyes flutter slightly, and I notice her nose and cheeks are red. Has she been crying?

My gut twists into a knot just thinking about this precious woman sleeping in her goddamn car. Why didn't she tell anyone? Why didn't I figure it out sooner? I saw how tired she was at the clubhouse last night, but never in a million years did I think it was because she didn't have anywhere to sleep.

Fuck, I should have caught her before she left. I had to deal with Slinger slamming his glass down on the bar. He scared my woman, and I won't stand for that.

*My woman.* I have to stop thinking about Sutton that way. She's not mine, even though I want her with every cell in my



body. God, I can still remember the first time I saw her. I stumbled over my words, grunting at her like a caveman before shoving my giant, meaty paw in her face.

Sutton blinked at me, and those teal eyes reached into my very being and rearranged my chest to make room for her right next to my heart. When she didn't respond in any way, I realized what a fool I was.

Of course, she's not interested in someone like me. I'm a solid decade or so older than her, I've served hard time, and my presence alone is intimidating, especially to my sweet Sutton. I don't know what she's been through in her short life, but the mysterious, teal-eyed goddess can't even look at her own shadow without cowering away from the darkness.

With all of that stacked against me, I'm under no delusions that Sutton could ever be mine. That doesn't mean I won't do everything in my power to ensure she's safe.

My eyes drift to the door handles on her beat-up car, and I clench my fists, thinking about how easy it would be for someone to pry them open even if they were locked. Hell, it wouldn't take much to smash the goddamn window.

A growl escapes before I can suppress it. I ball my fists at my sides, every muscle tensing as I try to block out thoughts of what could have happened to Sutton if anyone else found her.

*Jesus, she's so vulnerable out here. Anything could have happened...*

Another growl is pulled from the pit of my stomach, and Sutton jerks awake, her eyes wide with fear. I can't fucking breathe when she looks at me like that. I never want her to be afraid of me, even if I tower over her and grunt like a neanderthal.

I hold my hands up, palms out, in a sign of surrender. As soon as she recognizes me, her shoulders relax slightly. She even graces me with a small smile, though it quickly disappears when she realizes I've caught her sleeping in her car.

Sutton untangles herself from the scrap of a blanket and pats her hair down before scooting over in the seat and opening the door. She slowly climbs out of the back seat, her eyes immediately focusing on the ground while she twists her hands in front of her.

“Um...” she starts, trailing off as she nibbles her bottom lip.

“What were you doing sleeping in your car?” I grunt more harshly than I meant. Sutton’s shoulders rise to her ears, and I want to kick myself for being gruff. “You could have gotten hurt,” I try again, though my tone is still sharp.

“Well, I... The house... and then my parents... I just...” Sutton can hardly say more than a few words at a time before she gets flustered and starts over. When the first tear falls, my knees give out.

Kneeling in front of her, I reach for her delicate little hands, taking both of them in one of mine. Her skin is so soft, so creamy and pure. It only serves to highlight the differences between us. My hands are weathered and worn from long days working and riding in the sun. My knuckles have scars from the violence I’ve inflicted on others over the years. My fingertips are rough, too rough to handle the broken angel standing in front of me.

“Breathe for me, little flower,” I tell her.

Sutton gasps softly, her ethereal eyes finally meeting mine. I’m not sure where the endearment came from, but it fits. My Sutton is exactly like a little wildflower: beautiful, unexpected, and life-giving.

She closes her eyes and takes a shaky breath before slowly exhaling.

“That’s good,” I encourage. “Take another one for me.”

Sutton nods, her hands squeezing mine as she takes a steadier breath this time. God, I can feel her trembling. It takes everything in me to stay kneeling on the ground instead of scooping up this precious woman in my arms and hauling her

back to my place so I can tuck her into my bed and ensure she never has to experience another night of homelessness again.

“I... I’m sorry,” she finally whispers.

I furrow my brow, tilting my head to look into those blue-green eyes. “There’s nothing to apologize for. I was worried about you. It’s not safe here.”

Sutton nods but doesn’t say anything else. I want to ask her a million questions, including but not limited to her thoughts on a summer wedding and how many kids she wants. However, that will have to wait.

I have to be careful with Sutton. She doesn’t trust easily, and asking her to tell me how she found herself in this position might be overstepping. My priority is to get her back to my place, back to a safe environment. Once she’s rested, we can talk about the next steps, whatever they may be.

“How about you crash at my place for a bit?” I ask, slowly standing from my position on the ground.

Sutton keeps her left hand securely locked in mine, making my heart flip inside my chest. On some level, this woman feels comfortable around me. I’ll take whatever I can get.

“Oh, no. I couldn’t inconvenience you like that,” she says automatically, standing beside me. I don’t like how rehearsed her response is.

“You’re not an inconvenience,” I assure her. I get the sense she doesn’t believe me, but she will.

Soon, Sutton will know she’s not a burden. She’s the reason I wake up every day, hoping to steal a glance into her eyes or sit near her while she visits Tessa. She has no idea how obsessed I am with her, and part of me is worried it’ll be too much. I don’t want to suffocate my little flower. All I want to do is give her room to flourish in a safe environment. Without knowing anything about her past, I know Sutton hasn’t had many safe places in her life. That ends today.

“How about just a nap, then?” I offer. “I have a guest bedroom. And, not to brag, but my couch is amazing.”

Sutton's lips turn up into a slight smile. Fuckin' adorable.

"Is that right?" she asks softly as I guide her to the passenger side of her car. She stifles a yawn, and I open the door for her, grunting when I realize it was unlocked this whole time.

"Yes," I reply, hoping to cover the hitch in my voice. "When I got out... er, when I moved back into my house, the first thing I bought was a huge-ass couch that could fit my six-and-a-half-foot frame."

*Shit.* I almost said *when I got out of prison*. I don't want to lie to Sutton, but I don't think now is the appropriate time to broach that subject. I just got her to trust me. I can't ruin that by talking about my time behind bars.

"That sounds lovely," Sutton says before another yawn overtakes her.

It's on the tip of my tongue to tell her *she's* lovely, but I reel it in. I don't know where this cheesy, flowery romance shit came from, but when I'm around Sutton, I can't help it. I want to give her endless compliments to make up for the obvious lack of love she's had in her life.

She relaxes into the seat, and I put her seatbelt on for her, not even stopping to consider how overprotective that might come across. I look at her over my shoulder as I click the belt in place, her teal eyes wide and filled with... disbelief? Longing? Whatever it is, she seems surprised that anyone would go the extra mile for her.

Jogging around to the other side of the car, I hop in the driver's seat, adjusting everything so I can wedge my massive body inside. I fuckin' hate being in a cage, aka a car. Undoubtedly, a result of being cooped up in a tiny cell for the last few years.

For Sutton, however, I'll drive this goddamn clown car across the country if it makes her happy.

Sutton digs around in her purse for the keys, handing them to me without a word. She can barely keep her eyes open, and my heart clenches in my chest.

I ease the old car back onto the road and take the quickest route to my place. It's nothing fancy, but it's a place to cook a few meals, wash up, and lay my head at night. That's all I need.

Will Sutton want a bigger house? I can make that happen. We'll probably need more rooms anyway once she gets pregnant.

*Reel it in*, I chastise myself. Just because she agreed to take a nap at my place doesn't mean she's suddenly in love with me.

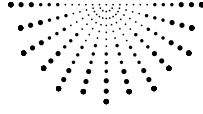
But God, wouldn't that be incredible?

A few minutes later, I pull into my driveway and shut off the car. Sutton's head rests against the window, and I hear her soft little snores for the first time. This woman is killing me.

I unbuckle her seatbelt, careful not to jostle her too much, then get out of the car and jog over to her side. Slowly, I open the door and slide one arm behind her back while the other hooks under her knees.

Standing with my precious cargo, I close the door with my foot and head inside, carrying my princess into her new home.

# CHAPTER THREE



## SUTTON

*I* roll over in the softest bed I've ever been in, burying my face into the nearest pillow, which smells like cedar and cinnamon.

*Hold up.*

I know that smell. It's warm and familiar and makes my stomach swoop. *Rider?*

Memories of this morning come flooding into my mind, and I flop over on my back, covering my face with the pillow. My cheeks heat in embarrassment as I remember waking up to Rider's growl. God, I can't believe the one person I never wanted to look weak and pathetic in front of found me.

At first, I thought he was angry with me. That's the default reaction to my presence.

*Not anymore*, I try to remind myself. Not since leaving my parents. My mom and dad weren't planning on having kids, so to say they weren't prepared or excited would be an understatement.

I learned from an early age to stay out of the way. If they couldn't see me, they couldn't be mad at me. At least, that was my logic. It worked about two-thirds of the time. The other third...

I shake off those thoughts, not wanting to relive the past. I escaped from my childhood home as soon as I had an opportunity. Unfortunately, that opportunity just got blown to smithereens, thanks to my parental units.

Groaning into the pillow over my face, I push all that aside and focus on the present. I have enough to worry about with trying to figure out what to tell Rider. I can't stay here. That's way too much to ask of him. More importantly, I need to convince him not to tell Tessa about my current living situation.

Finally gathering the strength to crawl out of the comfiest bed in the world, I toss the pillow aside and pull the blankets off, swinging my legs over the side of the bed. It occurs to me that I don't remember this room or walking from the car to the house.

*Oh god. Did Rider carry me?*

My hands immediately cover my rounded stomach, then slide to my extra wide hips. Shame courses through me at the thought of anyone having to carry me, let alone the sexiest, most chiseled man I've ever encountered.

*How embarrassing! He must be disgusted.*

New plan. Sneak out of Rider's house and drive my car off the nearest bridge.

Tiptoeing to the closed door, I slowly turn the knob, careful not to make a single sound. Years of living in the shadows and not drawing attention to myself have served me well. With the knob turned all the way, I inch the door open, peering my head out far enough to take in my surroundings.

Looking to the left, I don't see anything—just an empty hallway leading to more rooms. Looking to the right, I see...

"Sutton," Rider says, sounding equal parts relieved and surprised. He rushes over to me, stopping a few feet away. He reaches out for me, then changes his mind, running his hands through his hair.

"Oh. Uh, um, hey," I stutter out like an idiot. "How long have I been asleep?"

"Three hours and fourteen minutes," he answers matter-of-factly.

"And you've been out here the whole time?"



“No,” he says with a shake of his head. “After tucking you in, I paced around the hall and kept checking on you every ten minutes, but I didn’t want to risk waking you up, so I started pacing in the living room to give you some space.” His eyes never leave mine as he recounts his whereabouts all morning. It’s kind of cute that he wants to get every detail right. “After an hour, I cleaned the kitchen and did a lap around the outside of the house to check on some projects I’m working on. Then I prepared lunch and resumed pacing in the hallway because I needed to be here the moment you woke up.”

I stare at the dark-haired, dark-eyed beast of a man in front of me, watching as the tips of his ears turn red. Is he... blushing? After admitting he was so concerned about me he kept checking in while I was asleep?

A mix of overwhelming emotions slam into me, and I throw my arms around Rider before I can think better of it. He freezes, his muscles tensing the longer I hold onto his torso. I’m about to step away and run out the front door to resume my plan of driving my car off a bridge when Rider engulfs me in his embrace. His strong arms cover me completely, and I’m wrapped up in the warmest, safest hug in the universe.

I snuggle deeper into Rider, soaking up every single thing about this moment. Breathing his warm, earthy scent, I squeeze him harder, still not quite believing this is happening.

Suddenly, my feet aren’t on the ground anymore. I’m lifted in the air, and Rider adjusts his grip to steady me. I gasp, then giggle as he spins me around. It’s silly and sweet and so unexpected, and God, I find myself wanting to stay in his arms forever.

The moment is over when Rider sets me back down, taking a step away from me. I crane my neck to look up at the man curiously, taking in his deep brown eyes with a few crinkles in the corners. I love that he’s older and has experienced more of life than I have. It’s such a ridiculous thought, but if Rider were mine, his maturity would make me feel protected. Safe to explore my life, knowing I had Rider in my corner.

“Your laugh,” Rider murmurs, his eyes searching mine as if I’m a rare treasure. “I’ve never heard it before.” He pauses, his gaze wandering down my face in what can’t possibly be awe. “It’s magical.” I’m unsure who is more shocked at his words, me, or Rider. “Uh, what I meant was...”

“Thank you,” I whisper, not wanting him to be flustered. “No one’s ever... Well, thanks.” I give him an awkward smile, then stare down at my feet.

Rider clears his throat and claps his hands, apparently signaling a scene change. I grin at his tactic, then full-on smile when he takes my hand.

“Lunchtime,” he announces, tugging me down the hall and into the kitchen.

“Oh my gosh, what is all of this?” I gasp, walking forward as I take in all the food set out on the table.

There are bowls of fresh-cut fruit, a container of something creamy and delicious-looking, some egg salad, all manner of bread, including a loaf that looks homemade, a giant tray of deli meats, an equally large tray of cheese, and five bags of varying chip brands.

“Just a few things for sandwiches,” Rider says. I peer over my shoulder at him, one eyebrow lifted. “Okay, well, it started out as a few sandwich things, but then I realized you might be hungrier, so I whipped up some egg salad and a batch of my almond chicken salad with grapes. Then I thought grapes wouldn’t be nearly enough fruit, and, well, I may have gotten a bit carried away when I started chopping up the pineapple...”

He trails off, breaking eye contact with me as he rubs the back of his neck in a nervous gesture. I still can’t wrap my head around what is happening here.

“Wait. So all of this is for... me?” I thought maybe he had a bunch of leftovers he wanted to get rid of, but he made all of this. For me. Because he wanted to make sure I wasn’t hungry.

“Of course,” he responds as if it’s obvious. “But if you want something else, I think I have all the ingredients for

enchiladas. Or we can order in. I just thought something homemade would be nice.”

“Rider, I don’t even know what to say,” I whisper, turning to face him. “It’s too much.” I’m not sure if I’m referring to the amount of food, which is undoubtedly more than I could eat in a week, or the act of this near-stranger going out of his way to provide for me.

“Then I guess you’ll have to stay with me until we finish it all,” he answers smoothly. Rider’s lips pull to one side in the smallest, sexiest grin.

God. *Swoon*. How can I say no to that?

“Let’s get through lunch first,” I say, though I return his smile. It’s not like I have anywhere else to go, and if Rider is content to have me here for now, I’ll soak up every minute of being under his roof.

Rider hands me a plate and goes through the options again, each one more mouth-watering than the last. I make a chicken salad sandwich on the fresh-baked honey-wheat bread and an egg salad sandwich on a delectable-looking croissant. I scoop some strawberries and pineapple chunks onto my plate, and Rider adds a handful of blueberries and blackberries.

“High in antioxidants,” he explains. His tone is so serious, I can’t help but let out a tiny laugh.

“Thank you,” I tell him sincerely.

Rider’s eyes catch mine, sending my heart fluttering and my stomach somersaulting.

I sit at the breakfast bar since the kitchen table is covered in food. Rider joins me a moment later, his plate piled high with three sandwiches. He’s also grabbed a bag of BBQ chips and sour cream and onion chips, setting them down in front of me like the proud hunter/gatherer he is.

This man just keeps getting more adorable and perfect with each passing second. There has to be a catch, right? When is the other shoe going to drop? Good things don’t last for me.

“Oh, *wow*,” I groan after taking my first bite of the chicken salad sandwich. “Rider, this is incredible. Like... really freaking delicious,” I add after shoving another bite in my mouth.

He grunts, which I’m starting to understand is Rider’s preferred method of communication.

“Where did you learn to cook like this?” I ask, hoping to get some kind of conversation going. If we talk about him, maybe we won’t have time to talk about me and why I was sleeping in my car.

“My mother,” he says softly. The way the words are spoken with equal parts fondness and sadness lets me know she’s no longer with us.

“When did she pass?” I hold my hands up when Rider cuts a glance at me. “We don’t have to talk about it—”

“How did you know?” he asks, interrupting my spiral.

“Your tone. I can tell you love and miss her, but not the same way someone misses family that lives far away. It’s a deeper, more permanent loss.”

Rider furrows his brow, those dark eyes piercing me right down to my soul. He nods slowly, and for a moment, I think the conversation is over.

*Good job, I tell myself. Way to bring up a painful subject the first time you have an actual conversation with the man.*

“Two years ago,” Rider finally says. “I guess I haven’t processed it yet.”

My hand moves on its own, covering Rider’s. He flips his hand over, weaving our fingers together as he stares at where we’re connected. When he doesn’t say anything else, I take a chance by continuing.

“Tell me about her,” I whisper.

Rider takes a deep breath and closes his eyes. “The only thing she loved more than cooking was gardening. Wild roses, daffodils, gardenia bushes, and, of course, her herbs and

spices. Ma always had fresh spearmint, basil, parsley, and dill.”

“She sounds amazing,” I say quietly, not wanting to disturb this moment.

“She is. *Was*,” he corrects himself. I squeeze his hand, and he squeezes mine right back. “And she did it all on her own. Raised me, taught me how to work hard and treat people with respect. All while working her ass off at the local diner. I don’t know how she had time for it all while maintaining her garden and cooking for me most nights.” Rider pauses, shaking his head slightly. “As soon as I could safely operate the stove and oven, I had Ma show me her favorite recipes. I started with one meal a week, then two, until I took over cooking for her altogether.”

I never would have guessed the man sitting next to me loved his mama so much and could cook up a storm. Rider is one mystery after another, and I can’t wait to find out more.

“And now you’re using your cooking skills to feed the homeless,” I joke. Rider frowns. “For real, though, your mom would be proud of the man you’ve become,” I tell him sincerely.

He looks away from me, mumbling something that sounds like, “I failed her in the end.”

I want to ask a dozen questions but now isn’t the time. Especially since I can tell Rider is about to turn the tables on me and ask about my personal life.

“So, are we going to talk about your living situation?”

“I was hoping to skip that topic,” I say lightly as I take a huge bite of the egg salad sandwich. It’s also the stuff of dreams, for the record.

Rider waits patiently for me to finish chewing, but I take another bite, hoping to stall a bit more. He narrows his eyes at me, though his lip twitches with the slightest hint of a smile.

“All done?” he asks after I finish both sandwiches, the fruit, and a handful of chips.

“Yup. Just in time for a siesta.”

Rider grunts out a laugh, which makes me unreasonably happy.

“You don’t have to tell me everything, Sutton,” he says, the sudden seriousness in his tone making me pay attention.

Rider stands from his seat and moves closer, stepping in between my parted thighs. I tilt my head back to look into those deep brown eyes. Rider gently, so gently cups my cheek, the rough pad of his thumb brushing against my skin in the lightest touch. I can’t help but lean into him, loving the contact far more than I should.

“I need to know how I can keep you safe,” he continues in a hushed tone. “Are you running from anything?” Rider’s jaw clenches, though I’m not sure why. Is he that upset at the mere *thought* of someone threatening me?

“Just bad luck,” I say with a tiny smile. Rider’s eyes never leave mine, letting me know it’s not the time to joke or be cute. “No, I’m not in danger or anything, just...” I sigh, shrugging my shoulders dismissively. “Just struggling,” I finish, unsure what else to say.

“It’s okay to struggle, Sutton. You don’t have to go through it alone. Let me help.”

“Why?” I’m not sure he can even hear me, my voice is so soft.

“Princess, it kills me that you even have to ask.”

*Princess.* Did he really just call me that? *Me?* Lord, this man is ruining me.

“It doesn’t make any sense. You’re like this freaking Roman god with your muscles, tanned skin, and dark, broody eyes. You have a tight-knit family with the Savage Saints, a beautiful home, and I’m... me,” I end pathetically, turning my head away from him.

Rider doesn’t let me get very far. With one finger under my chin, he nudges my head up to look at him again. When I

do, I can hardly breathe with the way his eyes are boring into mine.

“You, Sutton, are worthy of a safe place to land. You’re worthy of good things and people who care about you. Tessa is a good friend, right?” I nod, barely able to move as I drink in every word he’s saying. “Do you feel like you owe her for being your friend?”

I shrug. Truthfully, I still don’t know why Tessa wants to be my friend. She’s this brave, incredible, kind woman with a fierce heart and gentle spirit.

“Sutton,” he murmurs, brushing a few stray hairs out of my face and tucking them behind my ear. I close my eyes, memorizing how it feels to have someone like Rider care for me. “I don’t know everything about you or your past, but I promise you, relationships aren’t supposed to be transactional. I want to show you that. Prove that you’re worthy of good things because of who you are.”

“I...” My voice gets caught in my throat as tears threaten to spill down my cheeks. I shake my head no, unable to accept that, especially coming from Rider.

“Yes,” he soothes, his voice both commanding and gentle. “All you have to do is let me show you. Can you do that for me?”

“But...”

Rider lifts an eyebrow, transforming his usually stoic features into a more playful look. I love it. I love every new thing I discover about him. I’m still unsure why Rider seems determined to be so nice to me, but I decide to trust it. For now.

“Okay,” I finally whisper.

“Really? You’ll stay here?” He says it like a kid on Christmas morning, which is the most adorable thing he’s done yet.

“At least until all this food is eaten,” I remind him with a grin.

Rider returns it, and lordy, what that does to me. “I guess I’ll just have to keep cooking for you. Maybe I can get you to stay forever.” My eyes widen, but Rider just winks as he steps back from me. “I heard you have a big design project you’re working on. Why don’t you set up shop out here in the living room while I do some yard work? I’m trying to wrestle the overgrown and sorely neglected garden beds into shape, but it’s a bigger project than I anticipated.”

I nod, smiling as Rider gathers the plates from breakfast. I know it won’t last forever, but sleeping in, having food served up, and working on our separate projects sounds awfully domestic. Almost like we do this every Saturday.

Crazy, I know. But for now, I can pretend I have everything I’ve ever wanted.



# CHAPTER FOUR



## RIDER

“So that shithead thinks he can get the charges dropped?” Axel exclaims, his indignant tone echoing around the room.

Blade, the President of Savage Saints MC, called church about thirty minutes ago. After a check-in on current assignments and a briefing on upcoming runs, Prez gave us the bad news that Darren, the dirty sheriff we put away a few months ago, is trying to get out of prison on a technicality.

“Fuckin’ low-life,” one member grumbles.

“Shoulda put him six feet under instead of handing him over to the authorities,” another man grunts.

“*Enough*,” Blade roars, slamming his fist on the podium in front of him. “Slick, do you want to share your opinion of how I handled the situation again? Louder this time so everyone can hear?” The prez stares down the man who suggested killing Darren, daring him to say it to his face. “Didn’t think so.”

Slick at least has the decency to bow his head and shut the fuck up. Yeah, we’re all pissed off and frustrated, but questioning Blade is about the stupidest response there is. Savage Saints are loyal. We have each other’s back. We don’t fuck around with clubhouse drama, and that includes giving Blade shit.

“As we already know, Sheriff Darren is about as corrupt as they come. He has no moral compass and will do whatever it takes to maintain control over his police force and this town.”

“Even lay his filthy fucking hands on his daughter,” Hawk spits out.

I clap him on the shoulder and squeeze, letting my friend know I’m there for him. I understand why he hates that bastard.

Tessa, Hawk’s girl, has the unfortunate luck of being Darren’s daughter. She escaped the abusive piece of shit only to have him find her and drag her back into his clutches. Hawk, Axel, and I found her and brought her back to safety. Then we beat the ever-living shit out of him and threw him to the FBI after showing them evidence of the sheriff falsifying charges and assaulting his daughter.

I have a different reason for hating that despicable excuse for a human. Dirty fucking Sheriff Darren stole five years of my life. His false statement sent me straight to the slammer.

“Like I said, no moral compass,” Blade affirms. “According to our source on the inside, he’s trying to build a case for obstruction of justice against the FBI agents who arrested him. Seems flimsy, but I wouldn’t put it past him to manipulate the system. He’s been doing it for decades.”

Heads nod around the room, the air thick with frustration and restless energy. We’re all itching for a way to keep that man behind bars forever. And if not, we can discuss... *alternative* ways of taking care of the problem.

“Hawk,” Blade says, staring at my friend. “I’m sure you won’t mind the assignment of sticking close to Tessa until we know for sure the sheriff isn’t going to get out on bail.”

Hawk nods, and the prez continues.

“Axel has eyes and ears around the police station and other locations in the form of cameras, mics, and several informants. We’ll take shifts monitoring everything, starting tonight. I’ll take the first shift, and Axel will replace me at six a.m. You can sign up for your slot on the sheet of paper by the door.”

Thirty heads turn to the table next to the exit. Sure enough, there’s a clipboard with a pen attached and a sheet of paper with lines and times.

“Now get out of here,” Prez growls, like he does at the end of every church meeting. “Rider and Axel, hold back.”

The two of us slowly stand, walking up to the front of the room. I hope this doesn't take up too much time. I told Hawk I'd grab a beer with him after church, but what I want to do is go back home to Sutton.

She's been with me for two days now. Two blissful days of seeing her around the kitchen making coffee in the morning. Two days of cooking for her and watching her teal eyes light up with each new dish. Two days of longing for her with every breath, yet never getting close enough to touch her the way I want. The way I need.

“New mission time?” Axel asks with a bit too much enthusiasm, jarring me out of my thoughts.

He's calmed down quite a bit in the last month or so, but he still has moments of being an excited little puppy. As our newest member, I know he's trying to prove himself. We give him shit, but it's only because he's family now. Besides, Axel has already proven his worth with his hacking skills and technological know-how. He's also a talented mechanic, but we've been relying more on his cyber skills recently.

“Yes,” Blade answers, his tone flat. There's a good-natured spark in his dark eyes, however, and I know he finds Axel amusing. “I would have brought Hawk in as well, but he's going to be distracted and busy enough watching out for Tessa.” We both nod. “Axel is already in on this, so I'll have him explain it to you.”

I turn to Axel, who is practically vibrating out of his skin. I can tell he's thrilled to take the lead on something, and honestly, I'm happy for the kid. He's earned it.

“So, while setting up the surveillance equipment around the station, I picked up on a lead for missing narcotics. At first, I thought it was gang activity or a rival club moving in on our territory. But then I listened more carefully and followed the clues... right back to the cops.”

“Of fucking course,” I grunt, not the least bit surprised.

“It gets worse,” Blade warns.

I turn my attention back to Axel and nod for him to continue.

“Get this. The drugs in question are all confiscated narcotics from police raids over the years. Apparently, there are several warehouses nearby housing everything. The street value for the amount they’ve got...” Axel whistles and shakes his head. “Millions.”

“Jesus,” I grunt, though I’m not surprised.

“While everyone else is working on taking the sheriff down, I want you two to follow this intel,” Blade says. “I have a feeling it all leads back to Darren, but I’m not sure how yet. Besides, we need to keep a lockdown on drugs in our town anyway, so two birds and all that shit.”

I nod, waiting for the next instruction.

“I’ll monitor the feeds from the clubhouse,” Axel jumps in. “And you’ll do some groundwork, meet with some of our less reputable contacts.”

I nod, knowing my recent prison time will help ingratiate me with the right people. Or, rather, the wrong people.

“Be careful out there,” Blade says, resting a hand on my shoulder.

I grunt, asking a few more details before we’re dismissed. Axel follows me out to the bar section of the clubhouse, waving at Hawk, who is leaning against the bar top.

“Join us for a drink?” I ask Axel, making my way toward my friend.

“Another time. I only have some surveillance to do, then I should sleep while I can before my next shift starts.”

“I’ll hold you to that, kid.”

Axel rolls his eyes every time I call him *kid*, which makes me smirk. He’s not much younger than me in the grand perspective of things, but he’s... less jaded. I know Axel hasn’t had the easiest life—no one ends up in the Savage

Saints because their childhood was great and they had all the opportunities in the world.

What's the opposite of an old soul? A new soul? Either way, Axel has an eternal optimism and motivation I associate with youth.

On the other hand, I've seen my fair share of gruesome crimes and experienced far more grisly horrors than I'd like to remember. If Axel sees the proverbial water glass as half full, I'm likely to assume it was once filled to the top with poison and is only half empty because the poor bastard who drank it died.

Until Sutton came into my life. My precious, brave little flower.

My life was filled with darkness long before I was locked away, and being in prison only hardened me more. I didn't think I was capable of feeling the warmth of the sun. Then Sutton smiled at me, her light piercing through the darkness and shining down on all the broken pieces of my soul.

"I know that look," Hawk says, startling me out of my thoughts. "Who is she?"

My eyes widen before I remember to school my expression. *How the hell did he figure it out so quickly?*

"Uh, what? What are you talking about? She?" I ramble.

Hawk grins at me and takes a swig of his beer. The bartender working tonight hands me a beer without me having to ask. I give him a nod and lay down a five-dollar bill, thankful for something to do other than look at Hawk's stupid smirk.

"Let me rephrase that. How are things going with Sutton?" I blink, unable to think of a response. "Rider, You could *not* be more obvious, my friend. And you weren't subtle the first time you met her."

I narrow my eyes at Hawk, not liking how quickly he's piecing everything together. I don't want to keep a secret from my friend, but truthfully, there isn't anything to say. It's not like Sutton and I are together. I'm just helping her out during a

rough patch. And sure, I hope she falls for me, and I can convince her to stay for good as my wife and partner, but he doesn't need to know that yet.

Plus, Sutton asked me to keep her living arrangements private for now. I initially encouraged her to talk to Tessa about it, but she's hesitant to give her friend any bad news. As much as I wanted to make her see that Tessa loves her, I know my girl needs time. She needs consistency. Sutton was brave enough to let me into her struggle and to let me help. That has to be enough, at least for a few days.

It's not like I can judge her for wanting to keep a secret. I still haven't told her about the arrest or my time in prison.

"Well, it's just... I mean, there's nothing..." I trail off with a sigh and take a long swig of beer. "Sutton and I have been hanging out," I finally settle on. It's not a total lie. Between my duties to the club and Sutton's design projects, we've been getting to know each other more and more.

"And...?" Hawk asks, dragging out the word.

"And that's all. You know how shy she is. I can't push for anything she's not ready for."

"But you think *you* might be? Ready for a relationship?"

"With anyone else, fuck no," I grunt. Women were never on my priorities list. No bitterness or terrible relationship experience, it just never felt right. Or worth it. Women were never the point and certainly never the most important thing in my life. Until my wildflower.

"But Sutton?"

I take a deep breath in, nodding yes on the exhale. "Yeah. She's... it. Everything. It's intense," I admit.

"Sure is," Hawk agrees. I know he's thinking about when he and Tessa first met.

"Not you, too," Blade says from behind me. Hawk and I turn slightly to make room for him. I give him a questioning look. "Found a woman to distract you, just like Hawk here."

“Tessa isn’t a distraction,” Hawk grumbles. Blade shoots him an incredulous look, which makes Hawk roll his eyes. “Fine. A tiny bit of a distraction. But more than that, she gives me a reason to be better and work harder. I want her to be proud of me.”

Blade scoffs while I listen intently. Yes, that’s exactly how I feel about Sutton. She makes me want to be a better man. The kind of man worthy of taking care of such a precious gift.

“Yeah, yeah,” Blade says dismissively. “Whatever you say.”

“What about you, Prez?” Hawk asks. “How is it that Rider spent the last five years locked up, yet he has a better love life than you?”

This startles a chuckle out of me, and a few others join in. Blade flips all of us off, though he’s smirking beneath his scowl.

“It’s called self-preservation, boys,” he says, grabbing a bottle of whiskey from behind the bar. Blade backs away, then turns on his heel, bottle in hand. “Women are crazy,” he hollers over his shoulder. “Every last fuckin’ one of ‘em.”

“Can’t wait to see the day you fall hard and fast for someone!” Hawk calls out.

“Never gonna happen!” comes Blade’s response. He throws a final middle finger in the air as he takes a long draw from the whiskey bottle, then shoves his way to the back room, presumably to start his surveillance shift.

Hawk is still grinning when he turns back to me. “So, when are you seeing her again?”

“Uh...”

“Is it now?” he asks excitedly.

“I mean, after this,” I answer cautiously. I’m not lying. I just don’t want to mess up and say the wrong thing.

“Well, then go on, man!” he insists. “Seriously, I understand. We’ll catch up later.”

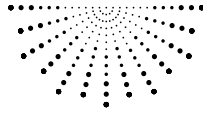


I'm about to protest, but it's been nearly four hours since I've seen Sutton. I'm feeling restless without her near me. I need to know how she's doing, if she's comfortable, and if she needs anything.

I nod, clapping my friend on the shoulder. "See you tomorrow," I tell him. I don't wait for his reply, which must amuse him.

Hawk's laughter follows me to the parking lot, where I hop on my bike and rev the engine, more than ready to return home to my woman.

# CHAPTER FIVE



## SUTTON

I finish polishing the stainless-steel fridge, smiling at my reflection in the freshly cleaned metal. Taking a step back, I look around the kitchen at my handiwork.

The dishes have been cleaned and put away from lunch this afternoon before Rider left for the clubhouse. I cleaned off the counters, organized the fridge and cupboards, swept, mopped, and polished all the appliances. I would have prepped something for dinner, but Rider is a much better chef than I could ever hope to be. I don't want to insult him by making him choke down something I made when we could enjoy whatever he cooks up.

My eye catches on a scuff mark on the stove, and I dash over there, rag and polish in hand.

"There," I say under my breath. "Spotless."

It's not a lot, but I need to start helping out more. There's no way I can ever repay Rider for his kindness, but this is a start. A clean house and yard. I can do that much, at least.

The now familiar sound of Rider's motorcycle gets closer and closer until I feel the vibrations of the powerful engine rumbling through the ground, into the floorboards, and up my legs, landing between my thighs. My core throbs as I listen for Rider's footsteps on the front porch. The closer he gets, the worse the ache blooming in my lower belly.

*What the heck is happening to me? Can someone die of being too turned on?* The man isn't even in the same room as me, and I'm about to melt into a puddle on the kitchen floor.

The front door swings open, and I rub my sweaty palms on my leggings, excited and anxious to see Rider again. His large frame fills the doorway as he strides inside, his shoulders barely fitting through the entryway.

Just like every time I see Rider, I'm struck by the depth in his espresso-brown eyes. Coupled with his strong brow, straight nose, and dark stubble, the man is so gorgeous it hurts.

When he grins at me, I nearly fall over from swooning so damn hard. Even after knowing Tessa for over a year, I'm still not used to people being happy to see me. And no one has ever looked at me like Rider does.

"Hi, princess," he says, his voice warm and raspy. I love all of his pet names for me. They make me feel special like we're a real couple.

"Hi," I stutter, wringing my hands in front of me. My heart is pumping faster than a hummingbird's wings, the sound deafening in my ears. Anxiety floods in, followed by my parent's voices.

*"What did I say about being out here when I get home from work? I don't want to see you until after I've had a drink."*

*"If I wanted to talk to you, I'd come find you. Until then, shut the hell up."*

I try blocking out my father's hurtful words and my mother's shrill tone, focusing on the present. They aren't here. They don't have any power over me anymore.

"Um, so I cleaned while you were away," I start, gesturing vaguely around the house. "Swept, mopped, vacuumed, dusted. Oh, and I organized the fridge and cupboards in a way that I think will be more efficient for how you use things. Although, now I think about it, maybe that was intrusive. Shoot. I, uh..."

Rider steps closer to me, his eyes never leaving mine. I can't tell if he's upset, annoyed, or some other emotion. I should stop talking since that's what usually set my parents

off, but I can't seem to hold back the words pouring from my mouth.

“And the yard!” I exclaim. “You said the garden beds were giving you trouble. I went through and pulled the weeds, then I found a garden hoe and tilled the soil. You'll probably need to mix in some new topsoil, depending on what you want to...”

I trail off, staring at the determined look in Rider's dark eyes. I watch as he steps into my personal space, still unsure if he's going to yell at me or...

His arms are around me in the next second, and I collapse into his comforting embrace.

“You're shaking, little flower,” he whispers.

I don't say anything. I just nod. Rider somehow knows what I need. He tucks my head under his chin, and I rest against his chest, my ear pressed against his heart. The steady beat tethers my soul back to reality. Back to him.

Rider trails his fingertips up and down my spine with one hand while the other cups the back of my head, keeping me close. We stay wrapped up in each other for long moments, Rider rocking me back and forth while whispering that I'm safe.

Eventually, my beastly biker peels me off his chest. A wave of vulnerability washes over me, leaving me cold and raw. I feel exposed without Rider touching me in some way. Then he cups my cheek, tilting my face up to meet his.

“Sutton,” he starts, his voice hardly above a whisper. It's like he knows I can't handle anything louder right now. “I appreciate all of your hard work today. This place looks incredible, and I can't believe you fixed up the garden beds for me.”

I nod, giving him a tentative smile. “I can do more,” I murmur, loving his praise. I didn't realize how starved for attention, for human contact I've been, until Rider showed up and gave me both.

“I want you to be safe and happy here, Sutton. You don't have to prove yourself or earn your keep. You give me

everything by being here when I get home. You have no idea how much I love seeing you as soon as I walk in from a long day with the Savage Saints.”

“Me?” I squeak, tears clogging my throat. I can’t believe what he’s telling me, but his brown eyes shine with sincerity.

“Yes. You, princess.” I shake my head no, but Rider nods his head yes until I grin at him. “Come here. Let’s talk.”

My stomach sinks, but I follow Rider to the living room. He sits on the couch, and I move to sit next to him, only to be redirected by Rider’s hands on my hips. He guides me to sit on his lap, and despite all my insecurities about my weight, I fall against him and curl up on his chest.

Rider adjusts me so my legs are off to one side and holds me close, nuzzling into the side of my neck. I breathe in everything about this moment, wanting to stay here forever.

“Who made you feel unworthy of being loved?” he murmurs against my skin. I can feel his whispered words echo throughout my body.

I shrug at first, but Rider grunts and gives me a stern look before pressing the sweetest, softest kiss to my forehead.

“I guess... I’ve always felt like a burden. My parents didn’t plan on me and didn’t want me after I was born.”

“I want you,” Rider growls as he tightens his hold on me.

Despite the emotion choking me at my childhood memory, I smile at my growly possessive biker. I want him, too. More than anything. I just hope he wants me in the same way.

“I was always in the way,” I continue in a hushed tone. “As soon as I could contribute to the family, I started doing chores to try and make my parents... I don’t know. Love me? It sounds so dumb now.”

“Sutton,” Rider whispers. “It’s not dumb. You didn’t have an example of what a family is supposed to be. You were trying your best to survive.”

I nod as the first tear falls. I’ve never felt so completely seen. “I was trying my best to survive,” I repeat, letting that

truth sink into the marrow of my bones.

“But you don’t need to try so hard anymore,” Rider continues. “You’re safe here, with me. You can be whoever you want, do whatever makes you happy. I’ll be here to support you no matter what.”

“How can you possibly mean that?” I ask, blinking away a few tears.

Rider wipes my cheeks, catching my tears on the pads of his thumbs. He cups my face, framing it in his hands as he looks into my eyes. “Remember the first day we met?”

I nod, thinking over how surprised I was that someone as sexy and ripped as Rider would want to introduce himself to me.

“I was a nervous wreck.”

“What?” I gasp, furrowing my brow. “Why?”

“Why?” he echoes. “Because you’re the most gorgeous, precious woman I’ve ever seen. Because I’m not always great with communicating, but I couldn’t *not* talk to you, even if I knew it was going to end in disaster.” I blink at him a few times, seeing him in a new light. “I’ve been at the clubhouse every damn day since, hoping to get a glimpse of your teal eyes and silky black hair. I’ve lived off your smiles for weeks, but I never imagined I’d be lucky enough to hold you, let alone take care of you.”

“Lucky enough... to take care of... me,” I repeat, the words not making sense.

“Yes,” he confirms. “And one day, that won’t be shocking to hear. One day, you’ll trust that all I want is your happiness.”

“Rider, I don’t even know what to say,” I breathe, leaning forward to rest my forehead on his.

Rider slides his hands from my cheeks down to my neck, resting his hands lightly there. “You could start by telling me why I found you sleeping in your car.”

I nod, knowing I can’t put this conversation off any longer.

# CHAPTER SIX





## RIDER

Sutton straightens in my lap, tucking her hair behind her ear before taking a deep breath. I keep one arm around the small of her back, holding her close, while the other lightly caresses her legs stretched out over me.

This woman is killing me with her tears and tender, bruised heart. I knew my Sutton didn't have much confidence in herself, but seeing her scramble to tell me all of the things she did while I was away broke me. She wants to be loved so damn bad, but doesn't she know I already do?

"My parents always told me we didn't have any other family," Sutton starts, her voice barely above a whisper. "Both of their parents had died, and no one had siblings or grandparents. It was just us."

I nod, unsure where this is going but relieved she's finally giving me another piece of her story.

"But last year," she continues, "I got a very official-looking letter telling me someone left me something in their will. A big something that needed to be discussed in person. Turns out, my dad's mom, my grandma, had been alive this whole time. I'm still not sure why they didn't tell me about her. Maybe I could have lived with my grandma growing up, you know? If they didn't want me, maybe my grandma would. I don't know."

I lean forward, pressing my lips to her forehead as she shrugs. I hate that she has no idea how valuable she is, how bright, beautiful, and caring her soul is. I'm more than happy

to be the one to show her, to build her up and remind her how incredible she is for surviving.

“Anyway, my grandma lived here in this town for twenty years, I guess. She left me her entire house and everything in it. Crazy, right? I never met her, never knew a single thing about her, and suddenly, I owned her home. It was my chance to move, to change, to *exist*. I don’t think I felt like a real person until I walked into my grandma’s house. Does that make any sense?”

“Yeah,” I say softly as I trace patterns on the palm of her open hand. I ache for everything she’s been through, but I know there’s more.

“I met Tessa the first weekend I was in town to sign the papers. She was so open and friendly, so kind and welcoming, even to me. She moved in with me shortly after, and things were going great. Tessa met Hawk at just the right time, and I’m so thankful she practically moved in with him after a week.”

Sutton pauses, and I can feel her muscles tense and tighten as she thinks about what she’s going to tell me next. I cover her hands with one of mine, squeezing gently to encourage her to continue.

“I started getting calls from the estate lawyer saying my parents were trying to contest the will. At first, the lawyer assured me they had no case. The will was cut and dry, and never mentioned my father or mother once. My dad kept hounding the lawyer, and eventually got his own legal team to come in and dismantle my grandma’s will, rearranging it so *he* is the rightful owner of the house.”

“Fucker,” I spit out, startling Sutton. I’m about to apologize, but then she nods, a tiny smile playing at the corner of her lips.

“Yeah, I feel the same way. Especially since he won in the end and immediately evicted me. Not even a week later, the house was sold to the highest bidder, thus making me homeless and shit out of luck,” she finishes.

My girl deflates in my arms, and I gather her up, cradling her against my chest. “Thank you for trusting me,” I murmur.

What I really want to do is demand her father’s name and address so I can wrap my hand around his throat and choke him until he pisses his pants. How the hell could a parent do that to their child? Take away her home, knowing she has nothing and nowhere to go? I shove those thoughts aside before I get too worked up. I can deal with that low life later.

“Thank you for... everything,” she says with a sigh, snuggling even closer. “For listening to me, for taking me in, for making me feel...”

I perk up at her words, curious how I make my little flower feel. Looking down at her, I see her cheeks glow with the most adorable shade of pink.

“How do I make you feel, Sutton?” I ask, brushing my lips across her temple and pressing a kiss there. Her eyes flutter closed as she leans into my touch.

“Like I’m, I don’t know. Like I’m special,” she whispers.

“You are. What else?”

“You make me feel... important. Like my thoughts matter.”

“They do, princess. What else?”

“You make me feel safe. I feel like I can, I don’t know, explore more of who I am. More of who I want to be.”

“And who do you want to be, little flower?” I rasp the words against the sensitive skin of her neck, tickling her with my stubble. Her breath catches in her throat, and my sexy little vixen wiggles her hips, causing me to bite back a groan.

“I...”

My teeth catch on the tender flesh below her ear and lick away the sting, placing a kiss there.

“I-I...” my girl stutters, her back arching and body crying out for more of my touch.

“Tell me,” I demand.

“I want to be yours,” she finishes, her words catching me by surprise.

“Yeah?” I grunt. She nods. “Good. Cuz that’s exactly what you are.”

Her pink cheeks turn crimson, but her eyes never leave mine. “How is it possible to want you this much? After not even knowing you that long?”

“Time doesn’t matter when you’ve found your person.”

“And I’m your person?”

“Damn right, you are. And I’m yours,” I inform her. She grins, and God, I don’t know if I can hold off much longer.

“Is that so?”

“Yes,” I growl. “Need me to prove our connection, Sutton?” I murmur into the shell of her ear before trailing my lips down her neck. I’m playing a dangerous game. Every second my lips are on her flesh, I want more, more, *more*.

She nods, and I grunt in approval, though I pull myself away at the last second. “Need your words, princess. Tell me what you want.”

Sutton nods again, and I lift an eyebrow at her. She rolls her eyes, that little sassy spark making my dick impossibly harder. “I want... I want everything,” she says tentatively. “I’m just, um, a little lost here.”

“Lost?”

Sutton sighs, then rubs her lips together as if deciding what to say next. “Er, maybe *inexperienced* is a better word.”

It takes me a second to realize what she’s saying. “Princess, are you telling me I’ll be your first?” I choke out. She nods, but that’s not good enough for me. “Words,” I grunt, nearly feral at the thought. Never thought I’d care about that shit, but when it comes to Sutton... goddamn right I’m possessive. I’m glad I’m the first person to see her like this. Touch her like this. I don’t deserve this gift, but I’m taking it anyway.

“Yes, okay?” she says rather forcefully. “I’ve never done anything, even kissing, so I guess the joke’s on you if you thought I’d be better or more mature or—”

I curl my fingers around the back of her neck and pull my angel closer, sealing my lips over hers. Fire shoots down my spine when I get my first taste, and I already know I’ll never get enough. Sutton gasps, opening up for me in invitation.

Sliding my tongue between her juicy lips, I groan and let my other hand wander down her throat and chest until I’m squeezing her big, round breast. I find her nipple and brush my thumb over the hard little peak.

I pull Sutton into my lap so she’s straddling me, my hands immediately gripping her hips and helping her rock against my aching cock.

“Rider,” she breathes, tipping her head back to break our kiss.

I attach my lips to her exposed neck, sucking my mark on her. I don’t give a single fuck about being a caveman around my woman. Soon, I hope to have my baby in her belly and my ring on her finger.

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“M-More...”

I grunt, then lift her, sliding my hands around to her ass and holding her close as I stomp to the bathroom. When I set Sutton down, she looks up at me in confusion. Despite my raging dick and overwhelming lust, I lean down and kiss the tip of her nose.

“Let me explore you,” I tell her, stripping off her shirt, followed by her bra. Bending forward, I lick one nipple, then suck on the other, grinning when my girl whimpers for me. “The shower will relax you, and then we can talk about what you want to do next.”

Do I want to toss Sutton down on my bed and rut into her savagely? Fuck yes. But not for her first time. She deserves so much better. I don’t have roses and champagne, but I can give

my woman something else. An orgasm or five sounds like a good trade-off.

I make quick work of my clothing after helping Sutton out of her pants and little white panties. As soon as we step in the shower, I circle Sutton's round hips and back her into the shower wall, kissing the breath from her lungs. She wiggles against me, gasping when my cock rubs her hip.

"All for you, Sutton," I rasp, grinding my solid length against her soft skin.

I grunt and pin her to the wall, ravishing her mouth before kissing my way down her body. I lick her neck, suck on her collarbone, bite her nipples, and kiss the soft skin underneath her breasts. I lick down her tummy, kneeling before her, bowing before my queen.

I grab her hips and guide one leg over my shoulder, kissing the inside of her thigh. "Gonna lick this little pussy right up," I grunt. Brushing my lips up her inner thigh, I grip Sutton's hips, pinning her in place as she writhes with anticipation. "I've got you, Sutton," I murmur before parting her pussy lips and dragging my tongue over her swollen, sensitive clit.

"Ohhhh! Oh, my *god*, Rider," she moans.

Oh my god is right. Her juicy little cunt is sweet and musky, her pink lips glistening with need.

I dip my tongue in her hole and massage the walls of her tight channel. Then, I flatten my tongue and drag it up her slit until I get to the bundle of nerves that controls her pleasure.

I feel her tense underneath me. She's close. I lick her up and down, landing on her clit. Sucking it in my mouth, she begins to shake in my hands. I bite down softly, and Sutton erupts in my mouth, gushing her release, trembling, and mumbling my name over and over.

I feel like the king of the fucking world, knowing I gave her that pleasure. I lick her through her orgasm until she pushes my head away, too sensitive from all the attention.

"Sorry," I grunt. "You're so damn delicious." I stand and pull her in my arms, kissing her soundly.

Sutton pulls away from me, a wicked glint in her ethereal eyes.

“You look like you have some very dirty thoughts for such a sweet angel,” I tease, kissing the side of her neck.

Sutton nods and nibbles on her bottom lip. “I do. Would you like me to show you?”

*Fuck. Yes.*

# CHAPTER SEVEN





## SUTTON

“*F*uck,” he mutters under his breath before crashing his lips down on mine once more.

Something I said flipped a switch in my usually sweet and gentle giant. Rider is all beast as his tongue invades my mouth, demanding me to feel the strength and urgency behind his need for me. I’m right there with him. No one has ever made me feel the way Rider does. Not just physically but emotionally. I’m all wrapped up in Rider, and I know he’s as caught up as I am.

“Fuck,” he says again, sounding almost tortured as he buries his face into my neck, licking and kissing me there.

The next thing I know, he has me in his arms, carrying me across the hall to his bedroom. We’re naked and dripping wet, but none of that matters.

Rider slides me down his body, setting me at the foot of his bed. He reluctantly pulls his mouth from mine. I automatically follow him, seeking more of his lips, taste, and tongue. He brings his hands up, cupping the sides of my neck and resting his forehead on mine. Both of us are breathing heavily, sharing the same air, and savoring the tension crackling between us.

“Be very sure you want this, my beautiful girl. Once I have you, I’m not letting you go.”

“Same,” I breathe before tilting my head and kissing him again. “Just tell me what to do. I... I don’t know how to do any of this,” I confess.

“Touch me,” he groans. “Touch me everywhere. Anywhere. Just please... I need you to touch me right fucking now.”

My hands find his torso, my fingertips gliding along the packed muscles of his abs and chest. A shiver runs through him as he flexes and tenses beneath my touch. I trace the swirling ink across his flesh, followed by my lips, pressing kisses to his heated skin.

“You’re too good to me,” he murmurs, taking my lips once again.

“Oh, god,” I moan as his hands cover my breasts, kneading my soft flesh and plucking my nipples. I bow my back and thrust my chest further into his hands.

He slowly trails his fingertips down my torso, feeling every inch of my skin along the way. I don’t have time to feel self-conscious about the extra weight around my hips and belly. Not when Rider is growling softly and massaging everywhere he can reach.

I tilt my head back and surrender to his touch, gasping when his lips connect with the sensitive skin of my neck. He blazes a trail of kisses over my collarbone and down my chest, sucking on one nipple and then the other.

My pussy clenches, and more of my arousal leaks out. I don’t know how he knows, but Rider growls, almost like he can *smell* how turned on I am. He runs his hands back up my body, resting them on my shoulders and shoving me lightly. I giggle when my back hits the mattress, then gasp as Rider kneels before me.

He grips my knees and spreads my legs apart, staring right into my throbbing core.

“Again?” I gasp, unable to keep my hips from lifting and pressing my center closer to him.

Rider looks up from between my thighs, his brown eyes locking on mine. *God*, I swear I could come again if he keeps looking at me like that. “Better get used to it,” he says with a smirk.

“Do you... Do you like doing that? T-tasting m-me?” I stutter. I know I shouldn’t ask many questions, but I can’t help it. I want to know if he’s as crazy about me as I am about him.

Rider grins, a hint of mischievousness and darkness behind his gaze. “Yes, Sutton. I like doing that to you very much. You want to please me, don’t you, sweetheart?”

“More than anything,” I whisper, opening my legs wider for him, offering myself up to let him do whatever he wants to me.

He growls and guides my legs over his shoulders. Slowly, slowly, he drags his tongue through my folds. When he reaches my clit, Rider stops licking, merely flexing his tongue there, rolling it like a wave as pleasure breaks over my body.

I writhe under him as he licks and nips at my pussy, devouring me like he said he would. Rider reaches my entrance, circling his tongue around my throbbing opening before dipping it inside. We groan as I clench around him. He sips from my center, drinking my juices and massaging the walls of my tight channel.

I buck my hips, but Rider spreads one large hand over my stomach, stilling my motions and creating a delicious pressure in my core. His other hand slides underneath me, gripping my ass in a punishing hold. He has me locked in place, forcing me to feel every teasing lick, every slow stroke, every light scrape of his teeth over my sensitive bundle of nerves.

My back shoots off the bed as pleasure rockets through me. He slides his hands down to my hips, pinning me to the bed and growling into my pussy. I teeter on the edge, curling my toes, fisting his hair, and crying out.

I scream his name and thrash as a brutal orgasm rips through me. I feel unhinged, fucking his face like a wild animal, but he holds me in place, licking me clean.

“Goddamn,” he grunts, as out of breath as I am. He stands, his hand wrapping around his massive dick. It’s intimidatingly large, much like the rest of him. “Touch yourself,” he grits.

“W-What?” I whisper.

Rider groans and fists his cock, pumping his hand up and down. “Spread those legs, pretty girl, and play with your cunt. Fuck, do it now.”

My body responds to his command before my brain can catch up. I slide my hand down my torso and dip my fingers into my throbbing pussy, circling my clit.

“Jesus Christ, you’re perfect. So beautiful. My sweet, sexy girl.”

My chest swells with pride at his praise, and I feel warm liquid spill over my fingers. “I need you,” I whimper, blurring my fingers over my bundle of nerves. My other hand moves to my breast, pinching my nipple like Rider did. I squeeze my eyes shut and bow my back off the bed, nearly coming undone again. Knowing he’s watching me is so freaking hot, even more so when he swears under his breath like he’s barely hanging on too.

“Enough,” he grits out. Rider swats my hand away from my center, replacing it with his. “So hot and wet for me. Gonna make this pussy feel so good, Sutton. Promise to take care of you. Do you trust me?”

“Always.”

Rider climbs onto the bed, scooting me up before settling between my thighs. I feel his thickness slide up and down my cunt, coating himself in my cream and tapping the head of his cock against my sensitive clit.

“I’m the first one to see you like this, and I’m sure as hell going to be the last,” he murmurs, taking my lips in a searing kiss. “Ready to be mine?” Rider whispers into my lips.

“So ready,” I nod, kissing him again.

The head of his cock nudges my entrance, and then he thrusts his hips, filling me up in one long stroke. I cry out and cling to him as he stretches me and then holds still, buried inside me.

“I’m sorry, sweet girl. It won’t hurt after this. I’ll make it up to you, I promise,” he whispers into the shell of my ear before placing soft kisses up and down my neck. He slides his

hand between us, the rough pad of his thumb circling my clit. I let out a shuddering breath as my pussy pulses around him. “Fuck, you feel so good,” he grits out.

“We fit,” I murmur, wiggling my hips. “I know it’s supposed to hurt, but it just feels...” I gasp when he pinches my clit, my core clenching and trying to suck him further inside.

“How does it feel?” Rider asks, starting to move inside me with shallow thrusts.

“Perfect. It feels perfect.”

He growls in approval and pulls out almost all the way before snapping his hips and wedging his thick dick even deeper inside me.

“Fuck me back, baby,” he grits, hitting the end of me with each stroke.

I plant my feet on the mattress and spread my legs, lifting my hips and meeting him thrust for thrust. Rider lets out a tortured groan and kisses down my neck and chest, swirling his tongue over one nipple and then the other.

We get lost in our rhythm, stroke after stroke, kiss after kiss, again and again, until we’re both sweating and shaking. I’m almost there, almost to my breaking point. My sopping wet pussy grips his cock, trying to keep him inside me, needing that closeness.

Rider senses my urgent need and grinds down, hitting me so, *so* deep. “Yes! Oh, God, there, *right there*, right...” I suck in a breath and hold it as my muscles tense and lock up, preparing for my release.

All at once, my orgasm seizes my body, making me convulse underneath him and claw at his back. I come around his cock, each spasm of my pussy setting off another wave of bliss. Rider fucks me through it, never giving me a chance to recover as he pounds into me.

“Again,” he demands, hooking a hand under my left knee and bringing it up so he can change the angle. His dick scrapes

along my front wall with each thrust, hitting a super sensitive spot.

I gasp for air as another orgasm ravishes my body, tearing a guttural scream from the very depths of me.

“R-Ri-Ri-der...” I stutter, twisting and trembling as he hammers into me and wrings out every drop of pleasure from my bones.

He grunts in response, fucking me so hard, so good, I feel like I’m going to explode into a million pieces. My limbs shake and then go numb, but Rider doesn’t let up. He thrusts into me over and over, rutting into me and seeking his end.

I can hardly move, my body is completely spent and blissed out, but I manage to clench my pussy around him each time he pulls out. His hips jerk and he shoves his cock so far into me I come again, taking him with me over the edge.

Rider snarls into the side of my neck as his release spills into my spasming cunt. He fills me with his hot, sticky cum, so much so it leaks out of me, trickling over my sensitive skin and making me moan.

He collapses on top of me, his sweat mingling with mine as we come back down. I comb my fingers through his damp hair and rub my cheek against his. This is the most perfect moment of my life.

“Mine too,” Rider whispers.

I must have said that last part out loud. I smile at his mumbled agreement, loving that I wore him out as much as he did me.

We stay wrapped up in each other for long moments, our racing hearts eventually slowing down and finding the same rhythm. And then my stomach growls obnoxiously, breaking through the romantic afterglow.

I’m about to apologize profusely and jump out the nearest window, but Rider chuckles and tickles my belly. “Need some food, little flower?” he asks, though he already knows the answer. “I’ve been slacking in my duties. Please forgive me.”

“I suppose I’ll let it slip this time,” I tell him, a playful grin on my lips. “But only because you gave me so many orgasms, I don’t think I can move. You’ll have to hand feed me and tuck me in.”

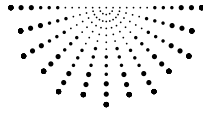
“Deal.” Rider kisses me on the forehead and then untangles himself from me, hopping out of bed before I realize what’s happening.

“I was kidding!” I insist.

“I wasn’t.” Rider gives me the sexiest little grin, and I can’t help but return it. “Stay here. Dinner in bed for the princess, coming right up.”

I can’t keep the cheesy smile off my face as I watch my beastly biker throw on a pair of joggers and race out of the room toward the kitchen. Yeah, a girl could get used to this kind of life.

# CHAPTER EIGHT





## RIDER

*J* stir awake in the early hours of the morning, squinting against the orange glow from the rising sun streaming through the window. Sutton's floral scent wraps around me, and I turn to see my goddess on her back, the sheet pulled down and exposing her breasts.

Groaning, I brush my knuckles over her nipples, reveling in the pebbled peaks and the soft flesh surrounding them. My dick is solid granite, and when Sutton squeezes her thighs together while letting out a breathy moan, I know she's as desperate for another hit as I am.

Without wasting another second, I lean down and suck on her breast, teasing her with little bites and soft licks. Sutton moans softly and bows her back, offering herself up to me, even in her sleep.

I switch to her other breast, giving it the same attention. I can fucking feel her heart pounding in her chest. I swear I smell her getting wet for me. The thought makes me groan as I play with her other nipple. Each swipe of my tongue elicits a breathy moan, making my dick ache and leak precum. Fuck, I want to be inside her tight little pussy, but I'll go at her pace.

"Rider?" Sutton's confused, sexy little voice fills the room. She whimpers for me as I pinch one nipple and bite down on the other. "Yes! Oh, God, yes..."

I look up at her, grunting with satisfaction when I see her eyes closed and her face scrunched up in pure pleasure. Sutton's lips part as she sucks down air. She rocks her hips,

rubbing her wet heat against me. I don't think she's even aware she's doing it.

“You like when I play with your tits?”

“Mmhm,” she moans, finally opening her eyes.

I bite the inside of my cheek to keep from coming. Her eyes are deep and dark, glazed over with lust.

She licks her lips and winds her fingers through my hair, pulling me toward her. “I think I'll like anything you do to me,” she whispers before sealing her lips over mine.

Sutton dominates this kiss, taking what she needs from me. Her tongue tangles with mine as I swallow her passion and greedy little moans. She pulls back, gasping for air. I nuzzle into the side of her neck, breathing in her sweet, wildflower scent. I can't help but lick her skin, wanting her taste on my tongue.

“Rider,” Sutton breathes out. “I need you. Please?”

“Need me to do what, baby?” I trail kisses down her neck before sucking on the sensitive spot beneath her ear.

“I-I ache for you. I feel so empty.”

“Need me to fill you up?” I ask, my lips brushing up against the shell of her ear.

“Yes, I need it. Need your cock.”

I growl and pin her to the mattress, devouring her sweet, filthy mouth. “Jesus, woman,” I grunt before kissing her again.

Sutton wiggles beneath me and spreads her legs wide, letting me settle between them. My heavy cock glides through her folds, making us both groan.

She clutches my biceps, digging her nails into my skin as I suck on her pulse point. “R-Rider...” she whimpers. “Don't tease me.”

The last thread of my tentative sanity snaps, and I sink into her tight, wet little cunt one inch at a time, feeling her pulse around my thickness.

“More,” Sutton whispers, wrapping her legs around my hips. “Deeper. I want it all.”

“Fuck,” I growl, pulling out and slamming my dick back inside. She feels so damn good, so warm and wet.

Sutton inhales sharply and then exhales a breathy moan. Her pussy ripples around me, sucking me in deeper, deeper, so fucking deep I see stars behind my eyes. I grit my teeth, hanging on to my orgasm by a thread. Sutton clings to me as I rock in and out of her. My thrusts become more forceful, and my needy girl loves it. She plants her feet on the bed and lifts her hips, meeting me brutal thrust for brutal thrust.

I scrape my cock along her front wall, searching for that spot...

“Fuck!” Sutton cries out as she spasms around me, her muscles flexing and releasing, squeezing my dick so damn tight as she comes around me like a goddess.

I fucking lose all control.

I hammer into her, hitting her G-spot over and over, grunting as I fuck her right through her first orgasm and into another. Sutton screams my name and claws at my back, tearing up my skin. It hurts so damn good.

“Again,” I growl, burying my head into the side of her neck. I know I should slow down, but the way my woman is moaning and writhing beneath me, I don’t think she minds.

My spine tingles with the first signs of my orgasm. My muscles flex and tense as I try to shove it back down. I’m not ready for this to end yet. White hot bliss courses through me, but I need her to come again before I give up the fight.

I sit back on my heels and pull her legs up to rest them against my chest, changing the angle. Her already tight pussy squeezes my cock like a vise, pulling a growl from somewhere deep in my chest as I thrust harder, faster, deeper inside her. Sutton’s glazed-over eyes roll to the back of her head and her mouth hangs open, rewarding my rough strokes with greedy little whimpers as I bring us closer and closer to our climax.

“Oh, God. I think I’m...”

“Yes, baby. That’s right. Come for me. I want to feel you come all over my hard fucking cock.”

Her body responds to me immediately, that sweet pussy massaging me as I lean in for another kiss. She arches her back, and I know she’s close. Just a little more. Fuck, I’m going to come, but I need her to get there first.

“Yes,” she whispers. “Yes, yes, yes...”

“Who does this pussy belong to?” I snarl, unable to hold back the beast inside me.

“You,” she cries out.

“Say my fucking name, Sutton. Say my name when you come for me.”

“Rider! Fuck, Rider, Rider, R—”

I feel her climax as it rushes through her, overwhelming her curvy body as she clamps down on my thick dick over and over. I pound into her spasming cunt, losing a little more of myself with each rough stroke until I’m nothing more than a wild animal rutting inside my mate.

Sutton tenses for a heartbeat then claws my chest as a raw scream is ripped from her throat. I roar her name as we shatter together, our old selves breaking apart, making way for the new life we’re going to build together.

I reluctantly pull out of my woman and collapse beside her, draping her limp, sweaty body over mine. Her heart slams against her chest as she gasps for air. I rub her back in calming circles, letting her know she’s safe with me, even in this vulnerable state.

My beautiful girl finally looks up at me, her teal eyes filled with satisfaction and awe. Yeah, I’m going to put that look on her face every chance I get.

“Holy shit,” she finally says, making me chuckle.

I tuck some of her hair behind her ear, drawing her up for a kiss. “My thought exactly,” I whisper before pressing my lips against her forehead and breathing her in.

Sutton hums contentedly and snuggles closer to me. I tuck her head under my chin and continue to rub her back.

“When did you join Savage Saints?” Sutton asks quietly after a few moments of comfortable silence.

“Right after college.”

Sutton perks her head up, her eyes bright with curiosity as she props herself up on my chest. “You went to college?”

“Surprised?” I ask, lifting an eyebrow at my adorable princess.

“What was your major?”

“Business financing.”

Her eyebrows disappear into her hairline while her teal eyes grow wide with shock. “Seriously?!”

“I dropped out after a month and haven’t stepped foot on a college campus since,” I tell her with a grin.

Sutton laughs, her entire body shaking with joy. “Now *that* sounds more like it,” she says between giggles.

“My mom wanted me to go to college, so I gave it a shot. Signed up for classes, bought the books, even tried making a few friends in the dorm. It was miserable, and each day felt like ten years. I couldn’t imagine doing that for another four years, only to graduate and get an equally awful job for the next fifty years.”

Sutton nods, settling back on my chest and curling up like a cat. She even purrs like one as I continue rubbing her back and combing my fingers through her hair.

“Initially, Ma wasn’t happy about my decision, but she agreed I hadn’t been the same since going to school. I told her I would still make her proud, even if it wasn’t with a college degree.”

“Did she approve of the MC?”

I chuckle, thinking back to our conversation about me being a prospect for the Savage Saints. “Not at first. The night I told her, she grabbed her trusty wooden spoon and threatened

to beat some sense into me. Of course, even back then, I was double her size, so it was an empty threat. Still, she didn't like the idea of her son being a *thug*. Her words, not mine."

"But she came around to the idea?"

I nod. "Once she saw how loyal the club was and the good we do for the community, Ma eventually gave me her blessing. She even came with me to the clubhouse on occasion to throw back a few beers." My cheeks are sore from smiling so wide. "Once she accepted that I was a Savage Saint for life, my mom was supportive and along for the ride."

"I wish I could have met her," Sutton whispers.

"Me, too." I swallow past the unexpected emotion in my throat. "She would have loved you." I can feel my girl smiling into the side of my neck, and I know it means a lot to her to have my mother's approval. She's the sweetest fucking woman in the world, and it pisses me off that her parents ever made her feel like a burden.

"How did she... Never mind." Sutton starts and stops her question, but I know what she was going to ask.

"Cancer," I choke out before clearing my throat. "By the time we caught it, there weren't many options other than trying to make her comfortable in the end. I wish I could have... If I was there when..."

I trail off, bringing my free hand to my eyes and rubbing them, trying to wipe away the pesky moisture that seems to be gathering there.

"We don't have to talk about it," Sutton murmurs, pressing the softest kiss to my cheek.

I want to tell her everything. I want Sutton to know my greatest failure in life was not being there for my mom during her final days. She was my biggest supporter, and she always believed that I was wrongfully put in prison. Still, being trapped in a cage while my mom wasted away into nothing is a special kind of hell and shame.

The words are on the tip of my tongue, but I can't seem to put my voice behind them. Sutton needs to know I spent the

last five years behind bars. I can't hide it forever. I don't want to, yet every time I think about telling her, I picture the hurt and betrayal in her eyes. I've waited too long now, and it's going to be a whole thing once I finally confess what happened.

"I want to," I start. "I just... I need some time." *Coward*, I growl at myself.

"Of course. No pressure," my girl says soothingly. Of course, she's understanding and perfect. Which only makes me feel like more of an ass.

My phone rings, making us jump. I groan while Sutton giggles, and I can't help but lean forward and kiss the tip of her nose.

"The real world is calling," I whisper. "Want me to tell whoever it is to fuck off?"

Sutton laughs but shakes her head no. "It's okay. I'm almost done with this design project, and I'd like to finish today. So go ahead and do your thing."

Another ring from my annoying phone, and I grunt, rolling my eyes. "Fiiiine," I huff dramatically.

I answer the call while Sutton climbs out of bed and heads toward the bathroom. Blade is rattling off my mission for the day, and I calculate how long I think it will take before I can reasonably make it back home to my woman.

"Rider, you got it?" Blade snaps.

"Yeah, Prez. See you at the clubhouse in fifteen."

The sooner I get my club duties out of the way, the sooner I can have Sutton back in my arms.

# CHAPTER NINE





## SUTTON

I finished my design project a few hours ago and emailed the files to my client for approval. Hopefully, there won't be any major edits needed, and I can get the last payment soon. It won't be enough to pay Rider back for everything he's done for me these last few days, but it's a start.

Rider said he'd be back before dinner, but it's almost six, and I still haven't heard anything from him. I get up from my spot on the couch and pace in front of the window overlooking the yard and driveway, pushing down thoughts of him abandoning me after our night and morning together.

He's not that kind of guy. If Rider is late, he has a good reason.

Plus, he can't exactly abandon me while I'm staying at his house. He'll have to come back eventually.

After a few more minutes of stress-pacing, I turn my attention to the living room and kitchen, picking things up here and there to keep myself busy. When seven-thirty comes and goes, my anxiety finally gets the best of me.

I'm not sure who to contact. I have Rider's number, of course, but he hasn't answered my calls or texts all afternoon. I could ask Tessa to ask Hawk if he knows where Rider is, but then I would have to explain why I need to contact him, which would lead to me telling her about the house, and I just... I just don't have it in me right now.

Guilt twists my gut into a pretzel. I feel like a terrible friend for keeping something like this from my bestie, but I'm

trying to protect her. That's how I'm justifying it, at least.

The only other thing I can think of is to go to the Savage Saints clubhouse and see if he's there. If not, maybe someone there will have information.

Wiping my sweaty palms on my jeans, I take a deep breath and go over the plan again in my mind. A few months ago, the thought of showing up at a biker bar alone would have terrified me. I'm still anxious, but visiting Tessa since she started working there as a bartender has helped. She's been working fewer hours lately, and I know she doesn't have a shift tonight, which is for the best.

Gathering up my purse, phone, and keys, I head out the front door and make my way to the Savage Saints clubhouse. Gravel crunches under my tires as I pull into the parking lot and come to a stop, my heart hammering against my ribcage.

I inhale deeply, reminding myself that I'm safe. This isn't about me right now. I need to find Rider and make sure he's okay. What if something happened to him while he was out on club business? Rider told me he can't give any specifics, but I'm not stupid. I know the Savage Saints are involved in dangerous endeavors.

That's all the motivation I need to kick open my car door and walk up to the clubhouse. I slip inside, inching along the wall until I reach my familiar spot in the corner of the bar top. I don't know that I'll ever truly be comfortable in a room filled with so many hulking men, but I've been doing better ever since Rider came into my life.

Now, I feel more vulnerable than ever. I'm lost without Rider, unsure of who to talk to or what to say. Luckily, no one seems to notice me. I fade into the background, observing the people around me as they throw back beers and joke around with their MC brothers.

Maybe Rider lost track of time while hanging out with his friends. That would make sense. I've taken up most of his afternoons and evenings this week, and I'm sure Rider wants some time with other people. I can't be selfish with him.

Deep down, though, I know he's not here. I can't feel his warmth. Plus, a part of me knows Rider would choose me over anyone here. As crazy as it is, he's nearly convinced me I'm the most important person in his life.

Still, I allow myself this tiny scrap of hope for a moment. Scanning the crowd, I don't see my Rider's kind brown eyes or hear his deep timbre.

"The fuck?" someone shouts.

Every muscle in my body tenses, and I barely hold back a whimper. Tessa isn't here to check on me, and Rider isn't here to reassure me with his steady gaze, but I'm able to calm myself down with a few deep breaths.

"How the hell... Yeah, yeah, of course. You know we have your back, Rider."

My ears perk up, and I hop out of my seat, drawn toward the sound of his name. Peering around a table of bikers, I see Blade, the President of Savage Saints. I haven't met him in person, but I know him from hanging around the clubhouse. The man is covered in tattoos, his dark olive skin barely visible through all the ink.

Blade has his phone to his ear, and he's gripping it so hard his hand is shaking. "Goddamn right, we're gonna get you outta there. We're not letting this happen again, brother. Hang tight, and don't lose faith."

Blade hangs up and runs a hand down his face, rolling his massive shoulders as he sighs. All eyes are on him, and the clubhouse goes eerily silent as every single soul waits for whatever bombshell the prez is about to drop.

"Church!" he snarls as his head snaps up. "Fuckin' cops got Rider on some bullshit drug charges. Need all hands on deck to ensure he doesn't spend another five years in prison."

Men shout in outrage around the room as chairs scrape against the concrete floor. The bar empties as most of the patrons head to the back where church is held. I float toward the exit, everything in me numb as I climb into my car and buckle my seatbelt.

It isn't until I start the engine that everything comes crashing down.

*Drug charges. Prison. Five years. Again.*

It's that last one that sends me headfirst into a panic attack.

Blade said *another five years*, as in Rider *already* spent five years in prison? For drug charges? Something else? Something *worse*?

My breathing grows shallow, and for a moment, I think I might be sick to my stomach. Why didn't he tell me? Was he going to keep this from me forever?

Another thought flashes through my mind. Maybe he didn't tell me because he wasn't planning on having me around long enough for it to matter.

Rider said I was his. He held me so tenderly after consuming me, body and soul. Was that all fake? It couldn't be. Right?

God, I have no idea. I have nothing to compare this to. No past relationship or any kind of experience whatsoever. Was everything a lie?

I don't even realize I'm crying until tears drip down my chin and tickle my neck before soaking my shirt collar. My throat swells and nearly closes, each breath painful as it saws in and out of my lungs.

I wrap my shaking hands around the steering wheel, gripping the smooth surface tighter and tighter until my fingers cramp and my knuckles pop. It's still not enough. With no more tears left, I heave a dry sob, fearing I may crumble apart completely.

It *hurts*. Everything hurts. The agony of Rider's betrayal cuts me through and through until I'm flayed wide open.

I finally loosen my grip on the steering wheel and dig through my purse until I find my phone. With trembling hands, I look up the local women's shelter and call, asking about a bed.

Fifteen minutes later, I'm checked in and curled up on my side in the last available bed for the night. Pulling the thin blanket over my shoulders, I block everything out and let sleep drag me under. Maybe then I'll get some peace. When I wake up, I'll have a plan. I just need to sleep...

"Hey," comes a groggy female voice. "Wake up, girlie," the person says, a little sharper this time. I must have fallen asleep, though I have no idea how long I've been out. "Your phone keeps ringing. Answer it or shut the damn thing off."

Right on cue, my phone chirps with an incoming call. "Sorry," I mumble as I grab it from my purse. Tessa's name flashes across the screen, and I consider ignoring the call. One final ring, and I decide to answer. It's time to tell my friend what's been going on. It's not like things can get much worse.

"Tessa," I say once I've stepped out of the room with the other women staying here for the evening.

"Oh, my god, Sutton. Where are you? Some things went down at the club, and Rider and I went to find you at the house, but—"

"I know," I whisper, my shoulders heavy with shame.

"What happened? There's a giant sign out front saying the house is sold."

"Yeah, I, uh—"

"Where have you been staying?"

"Um, I..." My voice cracks, and I lean against the wall to support myself. My knees give out, and I slide down the wall, curling up into a ball on the floor as tears overwhelm me once more.

"Oh, Sutton," Tessa exclaims, her voice filled with worry. "Just tell me where you are. I'll come to get you. Please, let me help."

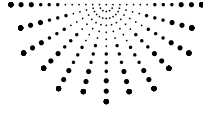
"I... I'm sorry," I squeak.

"Sutton, I love you. I want to help. Please tell me where you are."

“I’ve been staying with Rider, but I’m at the women’s shelter on Walter Road right now.”

I expect Tessa to ask about Rider and why I didn’t say anything about him, but she thanks me and says she’ll be here soon. Every limb feels like a lead weight, but I drag my weary bones and soul back into the room to gather my things, trying to figure out how to tell Tessa everything that’s happened the last few weeks.

# CHAPTER TEN



## RIDER

I can't fucking believe it.

I stare down at my hands, grimacing when I see ink stains on the tips of my thumbs from when they brought me in and booked me last night. Balling my hands into fists, I push off the hard metal bench in the holding cell and resume pacing from one wall to the other. It takes me all of four steps before I have to turn around again.

Two blocks from home. I was two fucking blocks away from Sutton when Officer Pete Towe pulled me over. He claimed I was speeding, which is bullshit. Not saying I haven't had my fair share of joy rides that got the speedometer up in the triple digits. Last night, however, I was simply on my way home, going the speed limit.

I was prepared to bite the bullet and pay the damn ticket to get Pete out of my hair, not thinking much of it. The police give us Savage Saints more shit than we deserve and always try to pin ridiculous petty traffic violations on us when we're riding in town. Usually, I'd fight it, but I didn't want to make a scene. The only thing on my mind was getting home so I could finally tell Sutton everything.

What a fucking idiot I turned out to be.

I knew the cops here were dirtier than the toilet in the corner of my cell, and fuck, this isn't the first time I've been wrongfully arrested. Still, I wasn't expecting Officer Towe to plant drugs in my bike's saddlebags.



I growl as flashes of yesterday play over in my mind. Officer Towe ordered me off my bike and had his partner frisk me for weapons. As a convicted felon, I'm not allowed to own or carry firearms, blades of a certain length, or any other weapon. When I'm out on a mission, I say fuck it to all that and pack heat. I also have my club around me, ready to fight on my behalf if we run into trouble.

That day, like I said, I was going home. I wasn't armed.

While receiving the pat-down from his partner, Pete dug around in my saddlebags and pulled out enough meth to send me away for a long damn time. Forever, if the cops have anything to say about it.

"Fuck," I grunt, pausing my frantic pacing to rest my forehead against the concrete wall.

I should have told Sutton. I should have been honest with her from the start. She asked me about my past multiple times, but I always managed to steer clear of my time in prison. Sutton knows about my mom, my time in college, and what drove me to join the Savage Saints. She gave me every opportunity to share, yet I found an excuse every damn time not to go there.

And now I may have lost her forever.

"Fuck," I growl again. Self-loathing pours over me like tar; slow and suffocating.

"Aye, shut up in there," one of the guards shouts from his desk at the end of the hall of holding cells.

I snarl and pound my fist against the wall, not giving him the satisfaction.

"They said I can't shoot you, but I'm itching to try out my brand-new police-issued taser," the guard informs me. "Might need to turn it up to twenty watts for you, big guy."

"I'd like to see you try," I grunt, though I'm not sure he heard me. I don't give a shit either way. What is one measly guard going to do when I'm at the mercy of a corrupt, careless, and cold system wrought with power-hungry sociopaths?

Turning to rest my back against the wall, I take a deep breath and try to let the cool concrete calm me down. My one call after booking wasn't to a sleazy lawyer, it was to Blade. He said he'd find a way to get me out. I want to trust him, but there's only so much the prez of an outlaw biker gang can do when up against a corrupt police department.

I slide down the wall, sitting on the hard ground with my elbows resting on my knees. Light from the small window twelve feet up shines into the cell, unaware of my life imploding around me. There's something oddly comforting about the indifference of nature. The same sun is shining down on my Sutton.

I watch the sunlight move from one side of the cell to the other before fading into night. No word from anyone, not Savage Saints nor the arresting officers. I thought I would have had some answers by now, some direction so I know what to prepare for. I'm unsure if the silence is good or bad, but from how things have been going lately, I'm going with bad.

"Get up!" a guard yells at me through the bars.

I startle a bit from my position on the floor, my muscles protesting as I stand. I haven't moved in hours, simply letting myself wallow in regret and misery.

"Bail posted?" I ask when the guard slides the door to my cell open.

He shakes his head no.

"I don't understand."

"You want to stay in here? Fine by me," he says with a shrug.

I glare at him as I walk through the door, not liking his attitude. The man is no more than five foot ten, and his arms are about as thick as my pinky finger. He might feel big and tough when he's looking in from the outside, but now I'm in front of him without a protective shield, the man cowers slightly. His posture changes from entitled and annoyed to submissive.

I step toward him, smirking when he winces. The guard scurries ahead of me, unlocking several doors with his key card until I'm finally back out in the precinct lobby, where Blade is waiting.

He gives me a nod, handing me the all-too-familiar brown paper bag of everything that was confiscated when I was arrested.

"Got your bike out of the impound lot and had Axel bring it to your place," he informs me as we walk out of the building. I roll my shoulders, the tension breaking up only slightly now I'm not in a cell. That's only part of what has me so damn anxious. The majority of my nerves are from facing Sutton. "My car is parked right here."

As soon as we're inside, I ask how the hell he got me out of jail.

"All charges have been dropped," Blade tells me as he starts the car and peels into the street.

"Say it again?" I ask, wanting to make sure I heard him right.

Blade looks over at me, a slight smirk on his otherwise impassive features. "Axel has been coming in clutch for us since the day he patched in, and today was no exception. He did some research and found that most of the drugs confiscated by police are tagged with invisible ink so they don't get redistributed in the community."

"Lot of good that did," I mutter.

"It took a little time, but the invisible ink did come in handy. The police here have been doing deals across state lines, where they have different policies and procedures, aka, they won't check for invisible ink since it's not in their training."

I nod, encouraging him to continue as we wind our way through town.

"Axel figured the shit planted on you came from confiscated evidence. He proved his case to the interim chief of police, and instead of turning Officer Towe into internal

affairs or calling down the FBI again, we were able to negotiate your release.”

I grunt, and I know Blade can read my thoughts.

“I hate that Pete fucking Towe will still have his job,” he concedes without me having to say a word. “But now we know to keep an eye on him. His time will come, just like the rest of those dirty fuckers. What’s important is that you’re free.”

“You’re right,” I tell him, still trying to wrap my brain around everything that’s happened in the last twenty-four hours. “Thanks for having my back.”

“Always. You’re not going back in lock-up, Rider. Not while the Savage Saints are on your side.”

I nod, and we ride in silence for a few moments before I ask the other question burning in my gut.

“Sutton?” I choke out.

When I called Blade from jail, I told him Sutton had been staying with me, and she was probably worried and scared. I expected the jaded prez to make fun of me or give me shit for thinking about a woman, but instead, he agreed to talk to Hawk and Tessa and have them go over to my place and talk with Sutton.

“She’s with Hawk and Tessa,” he assures me.

“Good.” I’m unsure how else to respond or even what to think. What is going on in my sweet girl’s head? Is she hurt? Angry? Can she ever trust me again? Did I lose her forever?

“Listen, I know I’m the last person on the face of this god-forsaken planet who should be giving relationship advice, but Sutton might need some space. She’s safe with her friend for the night, so maybe you should hang back at your place tonight. Clean up and get some rest.”

I narrow my eyes at Blade, who shrugs as he pulls into my driveway.

“Or storm over there and declare your love for her with a big boom box over your head,” he adds.

This pulls a chuckle from some hidden reserve locked away in my chest. “I think the second one is more my style,” I say as I open my door and hop out. “Thanks again for everything.”

“Go get your girl,” he tells me, rolling his eyes. “Still don’t get how you and Hawk were taken down without so much as a fight,” he mumbles under his breath.

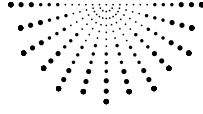
“Can’t wait until you meet the woman who bowls you over when you least expect it,” I joke, slamming the door shut before he can respond.

Blade gives me the middle finger, and I grin, shaking my head as he backs out of the driveway.

Ten seconds later, I’m on my bike, racing toward town to make things right with Sutton. I have to find a way to make her forgive me, to make her understand. Now that I know what life can be like with Sutton by my side and in my bed, I refuse to go back to my pitiful existence without her grace and warmth.

*Get ready, little flower. I’m not coming back home without you.*

# CHAPTER ELEVEN



## SUTTON

“**S**o you were living out of your car for two weeks?!” Tessa exclaims, her eyes wide with concern. “And you didn’t tell me?”

My friend sounds hurt, which kills me. Not all that long ago, the thought of someone being upset that I *didn’t* tell them my problems would have been ridiculous. I’m starting to get used to it, though it will take some time to fully accept that I have a friend who will support me no matter what.

“I wasn’t in my car the whole time,” I tell her, sipping the hot chocolate she made for me when we got back to her place. Tessa and I have been curled up on the couch under a blanket for the last few hours, drinking hot chocolate and finally catching up.

My friend gives me a look, and I know she needs more details.

“After everything with my parents contesting the will and selling the house, I scraped up enough money for a motel for a few nights. Then I called the shelter, which is on a first-come, first-served basis. I got a bed for two nights, then had to stay in my car for a night, then back to the shelter. Rider found me last week after I spent a few nights in my car.”

Tessa’s hand covers mine, and tears sting my eyes from whatever kind thing she’s going to say.

“I’m so sorry you were dealing with all of this and I had no idea. If I thought for a second you were homeless—”

“I know. You would have insisted I stay with you and Hawk or set up a spot for me at the Savage Saints clubhouse,” I finish for her.

Tessa nods. “So why didn’t you say anything?”

I shrug, staring down into my hot chocolate. “It’s one thing to *know* someone will theoretically help you when times are tough, and another thing entirely to *trust* them.” I realize how that must sound, and immediately backtrack. “Not that I don’t trust you,” I rush to say. “It’s me. I’m broken. I can’t... I can’t trust anything. It doesn’t make sense to get something for nothing, especially when I’m such a burden.”

“Sutton, I’m not mad at you,” she reminds me gently. “I’m worried because I care. It’s not a burden to be there for you or to share my resources. You’re not a burden for simply existing.”

I sniffle back a few tears and nod. She’s right. I know she’s right. Rider has told me the same thing over the last few days.

Oof, just thinking his name has my stomach churning and my breath catching in my throat. As if sensing my shift in thoughts, Tessa readjusts in her seat to face me, letting the blanket fall from her lap. I gather it up, needing this little protective shield for the question I know she’s about to ask.

“So, Rider, huh?”

My cheeks heat, and I shrug, unsure what else to say.

“You know, he’s been into you since he first introduced himself.”

A smile spreads across my lips despite the pain tearing at my heart. “He told me the same thing,” I murmur. Then I remember hearing Blade shout about Rider being thrown in jail, where he’s already spent some time. “But he lied to me. Why didn’t he tell me he spent time in prison?”

“Why didn’t you tell me about the house?” Tessa counters.

I blink at her, not expecting that question. “That’s not the same thing at all,” I start.



“Maybe not, but do you know why he went away the first time? Or if it was his fault?”

I continue to stare at my friend. That thought never crossed my mind.

“You know how awful my dad is,” Tessa continues. “And he was the sheriff. Can you imagine what all of his little cronies are like, especially now that there’s a power shift?”

“Not his fault,” I repeat. “Like, he was set up?”

Tessa shrugs. “I don’t know all of the details, but yeah. My father confessed to putting several Savage Saints in prison for simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

“Still, he didn’t tell me. We shared so many things, and he knows my greatest vulnerabilities, so why couldn’t he trust me with his?”

“Why couldn’t you trust me with yours?” Tessa asks, flipping the tables on me once more. My shoulders drop, and my stomach twists. My friend scoots closer to me on the couch, taking the empty hot chocolate mug from my hands and setting it on the table before resting her arm around my shoulders. “I didn’t mean that to shame you. I simply wanted to remind you what you told me a few minutes ago. You said it wasn’t because of *me* but because you struggle to trust anyone or anything. Could Rider have the same feelings? The same insecurities?”

“Well...” I trail off, knowing she’s right.

“I’m always on team Sutton,” Tessa tells me, giving my shoulder a squeeze. “Whatever you want to do about Rider, I’m here for you. If you want, I can probably get Hawk to punch Rider in the balls if that would make you feel better.”

I snort out a laugh at my bestie’s suggestion.

“But I wanted to give you a different perspective,” Tessa says, more softly this time. “Other than finding out about Rider’s past in the worst way possible, how have you felt being with him the last few days? Is he good to you? Does he make you feel safe?”

“Yeah,” I say with a nod. “He’s so sweet to me, and he makes me feel like I’m this precious gift. He told me he looks forward to coming home to me and my smile. I’ve never had that before,” I tell her, my voice cracking at the end.

“Rider sounds like a good man to me,” Tessa says. “Stubborn and a bit of an idiot when it comes to communicating, but all the best men are.” My friend winks at me, and I can’t help but return her smile.

Just then, we hear a commotion coming from the front entryway.

“Maybe just give her some—”

“Time? Yeah, I don’t think so,” comes the familiar deep, gravelly voice of my Rider.

“Rider,” Hawk calls out.

Heavy footsteps draw closer to where Tessa and I are in the living room. A second later, my beastly biker steps into view, his massive frame silhouetted against the bay window as he strides toward me. I’m still confused, hurt, and a little angry, but mostly, I’m overwhelmingly relieved that he’s here.

Tears spring to my eyes as Rider closes the distance between us, his brown gaze locking on mine. Before I can register what is happening, Rider scoops me up in his arms and tosses me over his shoulder.

I’m so stunned at the turn of events, I don’t so much as squeak when he promptly turns and stomps back down the hall toward the front door.

“Tell me everything the second you’re done making up!” Tessa shouts from her spot on the couch.

Rider grunts and tightens his hold on me.

“You good?” Hawk asks.

“I am now,” Rider says.

“I was asking Sutton, you brute.”

“I-I’m good,” I manage to say. “Confused. What exactly is happening?”

“I’m doing what I should have done from the start,” Rider grunts. “Sitting you down and telling you the truth.”

“And why can’t we do that here?” I push myself up from where he has me flung against his back.

Rider takes the hint and sets me down, though he circles his arms around my hips to keep me close. “Because if all goes according to plan, my sweet flower, we’re going to need some privacy.”

It takes a second for his meaning to set in, and when it does, my face heats with a blush.

Rider takes my hand and guides me outside, stopping in front of his bike. He turns to me once more, cupping my cheek so tenderly as he tilts my head toward his. “You’re safe with me, Sutton. I’m not... I’m sorry I didn’t tell you any of this shit sooner. I’m not the criminal they’ve made me out to be. I’d never hurt you, and it would kill me if you ever felt uncomfortable or unsafe with me. I’ll explain everything, I promise, just please... Please let me know I haven’t lost you for good. Tell me I don’t scare you.”

This man. The genuine fear in his eyes swallows any last doubt I had about him. After everything he’s been through, his biggest concern is if I’m afraid of him now that I know he’s been in prison.

“You don’t scare me, Rider. No one has ever made me feel safer than when I’m with you.”

He releases all the tension in his muscles and rests his forehead on mine. “Thank you,” he murmurs, though I’m unsure why he’s thanking me. “Let’s get home so I can grovel and explain everything.”

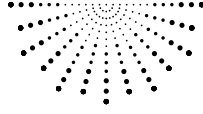
I nod, and Rider steps away, placing his helmet on my head. I’ve never been on a motorcycle before. Never considered it before meeting Rider. The noise, the vibrations, the attention bikes draw from the general public... no, thank you. But now, seeing the sleek machine through Rider’s eyes, I get it.

It’s freedom. And he wants to take me along for the ride.

Rider climbs on his bike and directs me to get on behind him. “Hang on tight, princess. I’ll get you home safely.”

“Home,” I whisper, though I know he can’t hear me over the roar of the engine. We’re going home.

# CHAPTER TWELVE



## RIDER

Step one of winning Sutton back went better than planned. I expected more resistance, but my girl agreed to come with me without a fight. Not that I gave her much of a choice by throwing her over my shoulder, but still. That has to be a good sign.

Sutton tightens her hold around my torso as I ease my motorcycle around a corner and straighten out. Her legs squeeze around mine, and it takes everything in me not to pull the damn bike over, strip her down, and kiss every inch of her body until she forgives me and tells me she loves me as much as I love her.

Soon. For now, I need to focus on getting my girl home and telling her the truth about everything. If she can still look at me when all of my shame is out in the open, I'll work on giving her enough orgasms so she can barely walk, let alone run away.

*Who the fuck am I right now?* These possessive thoughts have plagued me since laying eyes on Sutton all those weeks ago, but now I've had her and stand to lose her... they're more intense than ever.

I pull into my driveway and cut the engine, helping Sutton off before swinging my leg over and standing next to her. She's shaking, though I'm unsure if it's from the bike ride or all the anxiety and emotions I've caused her.

"You okay?" I ask softly, resting a hand on the small of her back to steady her.

“Yes,” she says, though she shakes her head no.

I lift an eyebrow at her confusing answer.

“I-I mean, no, not really,” she tries again, though her head nods yes this time. “Sorry, I’m just...”

Sutton shrugs, and I pull her into my arms, holding her trembling body against mine. “Never apologize to me,” I whisper. “It’s all my fault. Everything. I should have said something. I should have told you about my past and the danger that comes with someone like me.”

“So tell me now,” Sutton says, stepping back from my embrace. A bitter chill runs through me at the loss, but then she holds her hand out for me to take.

I curl my massive hand around her delicate one and lead her inside. We walk through the living room, past the kitchen, and down the hall, only stopping when we get to the bedroom. Sutton looks up at me with a curious expression.

“Need to hold you,” I explain, my voice scratchy. Emotion clogs my throat, and I’d think I was about to cry if I didn’t know any better.

Sutton nods and climbs into bed, scooting over and patting the space next to her. I yank my shirt off, grinning when her bright eyes widen and skim down my torso. My girl likes what she sees.

“Not fair,” she mumbles as I crawl in next to her and turn her to face me.

“I need to feel you,” I tell her truthfully. “And if the abs help distract, then all the better,” I joke.

Sutton rolls her eyes, then smiles so sweetly. God, I don’t deserve her. When the light in her eyes dims, I know she’s thinking about everything I put her through in the last twenty-four hours.

“I was pulled over on my way home to you,” I start.

Rolling over on my back, I open my arm, satisfied beyond belief when Sutton curls up on my chest and lets me hold her.

My fingers find the hem of her shirt, and I trace the edge of the fabric before tickling my fingertips across her bare skin.

“Dirty cops in this town planted drugs on me and hauled me into jail. Thankfully, Axel and my brothers at Savage Saints figured out a way to leverage my release. I won’t be going away ever again.”

Sutton nods, her hand tracing the stubble across my jaw. She’s not looking me in the eye, seemingly fixated on where she’s touching me. I know what she’s going to ask before the words leave her lips.

“What about the last time you were in prison? Five years, was it?”

Teal eyes flick up to mine, and I hold her gaze as I confess everything to the only woman who matters to me.

“Yes. I was in prison for five years. Sheriff Darren, Tessa’s dad, fucked me over with assault charges and carrying illegal substances, both of which were false. It didn’t matter, though. Nothing Blade or any of the Savage Saints tried made a difference. The lawyer we hired got my sentence down from ten years to five, but... Well, anyway. I got out a few weeks before I met you.” I pause, letting this information sink in.

Sutton blinks a few times, her pulse pounding in the side of her neck. “You’ve only been out for a little over a month?”

I nod, hoping I didn’t just ruin my last chance with her.

“When I saw you sitting on the barstool at the clubhouse... I knew I didn’t deserve to breathe the same air as you, let alone touch you. Then I found you in your car, and things between us escalated so quickly. I had everything I ever wanted with you in my arms, and I couldn’t risk losing the best thing that ever happened to me and—”

“Breathe,” Sutton whispers, cupping the side of my cheek.

I turn and kiss her palm, soaking up as many of her gentle touches as she’ll give me. “All of my excuses burned into a pile of ash as soon as the cuffs slapped against my wrists,” I continue. “I’m so sorry for keeping this secret from you. I was terrified you wouldn’t trust me to take care of you if you knew



I was a convicted felon. And then I fucked it all up by not telling you and causing you to lose trust in me anyway.”

“You deserve to be loved,” Sutton says, surprising the hell out of me. After everything I just told her, that’s her first reaction?

“You don’t know everything yet,” I tell her, unable to process her response. “While I was in prison, my ma... fuck, she got cancer. I wasn’t there for her. I failed her like I failed you, and I...”

“You deserve to be loved,” she says again, her soothing voice rolling over me. “Your mom getting sick wasn’t your fault, and neither was not being there. It was a horrible consequence of a broken, corrupt system.”

“Sutton, you can’t mean that.”

“I do,” she insists, pressing her lips to my temple in the sweetest gesture anyone has ever shown me. “From what you’ve said about your mom, I know she believed you were wrongfully convicted. I know she loved you and was proud of you. She would have wanted you to be happy and accept that you can be loved and forgiven.”

“But... what?”

“You’ve been showing me every day since I moved in that I’m worthy of taking up space and asking for what I need and want. But what about you? You deserve to have good things in your life. You deserve love.”

“But I... What?” I ask again.

“I forgive you,” Sutton says. “I was surprised when I found out, and yeah, I was hurt that there was a whole part of your life you didn’t share with me. But I get it. Tessa reminded me that I also kept secrets from her. I didn’t want to burden her with my baggage, but in the end, it hurt her to know she could have helped, but I didn’t let her in. So, will you let me in?”

“Let you in?” I whisper, hardly able to comprehend her words.

“Let me love you,” she clarifies.

“Love me?”

Sutton’s lips curl up into the cutest grin. “Are you going to repeat everything I say?”

“You love me?”

“That’s what I’m trying to tell you, yes,” she says with a spark in her eyes.

“I love you so goddamn much,” I reply, my forehead resting on hers. “Love your tender heart and sweet kisses. Love how brave you are and how you push yourself to grow and be a better person. It makes me want to be better, to be the best because that’s what you deserve.”

“Can... Can you say it again?” Sutton murmurs. “The part about loving me?”

I smile at her, my heart growing impossibly bigger at her request. “I love you, Sutton. I love every single thing about you.”

“Show me,” Sutton says, her teal eyes pleading with me to prove my words.

I lean forward, taking her lips with mine and leading us in a slow, drugging kiss. Sutton’s hands curl against my bare chest as I pull her closer, consuming her with each swipe of my tongue.

My girl wiggles out of my embrace and removes her shirt, making me groan. I’m on her in the next second, unhooking her bra and moving down her body, peeling her leggings and panties off.

“Beautiful,” I rasp as I drag my eyes up and down her naked body. “Gonna kiss you and make everything all better,” I promise, catching her eye before scooting down the bed and spreading her thighs.

I trail my lips up the inside of her right leg, pausing briefly to kiss behind her knee. Sutton inhales sharply, making me grin wickedly at how well I can read her. I continue placing

featherlight kisses up her thigh, nuzzling into her soaking wet pussy.

“Jesus,” I groan, unable to resist the urge to lick her from bottom to top. My girl is fucking delicious, and I’ll never get enough of her.

“More,” she whimpers. “I need more. I need it all.”

I growl into her cunt and scrape my teeth along her clit. She lifts her hips and spreads her legs wider. I press my tongue against her tight-as-fuck entrance, groaning when I feel her little hole pulse and release a shot of cream into my mouth.

Sutton lets out a pained cry as she rubs her cunt against my face, coating me in her juices. That’s my tipping point. Knowing she marked me, that she’s as desperate and needy as I am, and I’m the only one who can satisfy her, has me ridding myself of my jeans and boxers in a split second, eliminating every piece of clothing between us.

My greedy girl whimpers and reaches for me as I crawl up her sexy-as-fuck body. I groan when I feel her delicate fingers trail over my shoulders, chest, abs, and lower.

Resting my forehead on hers, I hiss a breath when she wraps her hand around my cock and strokes me up and down. “Fuck, Sutton. You feel so good, baby. So damn good.”

I let her touch me and explore what now belongs to her. She shocks the hell out of me by guiding me to her entrance and rocking her hips. My eyes snap open, and I groan when I see her gaze burning with lust. “Need me to show you what it means to be mine, Sutton?”

“Yes,” she whispers. Her eyes are blazing, barely containing the raging fire within.

I push the tip of my thickness inside her snug hole. Her pussy spasms, massaging the head of my cock.

“Need me to show you how much I love you?” I ask, pushing in a little further.

“Please,” she moans, her fingers curling around my biceps as she spreads her legs wider for me.

“Need me to make this pussy come? Need me to fill you up so you can fucking come all over me again and again?”

“Yes!” Sutton cries out, thrusting her hips up, taking more of me.

I grunt and pull out, swallowing her whimpers before shoving my cock all the way inside her tight little channel. I pull out, looking down between us as I set a steady pace. “Look at us, Sutton. Fucking look at your little pussy stretching around me, taking my cock like a good girl.” I don’t know where these filthy words are coming from, but I can’t seem to keep them in my head. She doesn’t seem to mind.

Sutton whimpers and squeezes her inner muscles, making me growl as every part of my dick throbs in torturous pleasure. “More,” she cries out, her lips seeking mine. She totally owns this kiss, nipping at me and sucking my tongue inside her mouth as her pussy sucks my cock deeper, deeper, so damn deep.

I pull out and slam back inside her. God, I can feel her channel stretch and clench around me as I pick up speed. Her legs wrap around my torso, her heels digging into my ass, urging me on.

“Fuck, Sutton. I don’t want to hurt you,” I grit, though I don’t slow down. Not for a second. I keep hammering into her over and over, tilting my hips and scraping my cock along her front wall in search of...

“Rider!” Sutton shouts and claws at my back, clinging to me as I tear her apart.

I can’t stop. I know I should slow down, but I no longer have control over anything. My hands slip under her back and slide up, my fingers curling around her shoulders, giving me more leverage to fuck that tight little pussy.

Every time I hit the end of her, Sutton jerks beneath me, letting out the sexiest whimper. I keep pounding into her as I bury my face in her neck, sucking on her soft skin. I feel her entire body tighten around me, her muscles tensing, her pussy throbbing, pulsing, gushing for me.

I grunt with each savage stroke, more beast than man. Sutton breaks apart for me, her jagged cries and desperate moans growing louder by the second. She bows her back and digs her fingernails into my shoulders, sucking in a huge breath of air. She freezes, tenses, trembles...

And then fucking shatters so beautifully for me.

Her cries of pleasure echo around the room as her cunt snaps around me over and over. I sit back and grip her hips, fucking myself with her spasming pussy. Sutton fists the comforter and thrashes her head back and forth as another orgasm rips through her body, leaving her breathless.

“Goddamn,” I snarl, shoving my cock deep inside her and staying still. I tip my head back and feel, just fucking feel every ounce of her pleasure ripple around me.

She’s still twitching and whimpering out the last of her release when I pull out of her and grab my dick, stroking myself roughly. The need to mark her is such a primal, caveman thing, but it can’t be denied. It won’t.

My orgasm slams into me, and I roar as I paint her tits and pussy with my cum. I grunt something unintelligible, squeezing my dick so damn hard as it jerks and empties more of my release all over her.

I’m about to collapse, but then my dirty fucking girl rubs my seed into her skin. She cups her breast, pinching her nipple as her other hand trails lower, gathering my cum before she dips her fingers into her pussy.

“Jesus Christ,” I growl, my body shaking with how turned on I still am despite my intense, all-consuming orgasm.

“Rider,” Sutton cries out. “God, Rider, I can’t stop, I can’t stop.”

Christ, she fucks her hand while I hover over her, taking in this goddess. Her mouth opens in a silent scream, all the breath leaving her lungs as she nearly comes again.

I swat her hand away, sliding down her body and prying her legs open. Flattening my tongue, I lick her up and down in

frantic, feral strokes before spearing my tongue inside her entrance, scooping out more of her cream.

Sutton winds her fingers in my hair, holding me still as she rubs her pussy against my lips and tongue. Her scream carves through the air as a fierce orgasm overwhelms her curvy body. I grip her thighs, pinning them to the mattress as I drink down every last drop of her release.

I only stop when she goes completely limp. Looking up from between her legs, I see her head loll to the side as her chest heaves. I crawl up her body, placing kisses on her stomach, her breasts, her neck, and finally, her lips.

Collapsing beside her, I drape my Sutton over my chest and hold her trembling body close. We're both breathing heavily, our bodies slick with sweat as we cling to each other. I comb my fingers through her damp hair and place a kiss on top of her head.

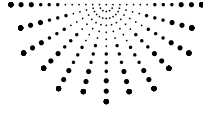
"You okay, princess?" I whisper, tugging on her hair slightly to tilt her head up.

"Hmm?" Sutton asks in a daze, her eyelids barely fluttering open as a sleepy, contented smile stretches across her lips.

I grin and kiss the tip of her nose. "Never mind. I've got you," I murmur, tucking her head under my chin. I hold her for long moments, listening to her breathing slowly return to normal.

We need to wash up and talk about other details of our new lives together, but there will be time for that later. Right now, I'm content knowing my Sutton is safe and happy here in my arms, where she belongs.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN



## SUTTON

Rider and I walk into the Savage Saints clubhouse and are greeted with a round of cheers and applause. Rider squeezes my hand, letting me know he's right here if I get overwhelmed or panicky. I squeeze his back, letting him know I'm okay. This is different than other times. This is important, and I can't wait.

"Fuckin' hell. Almost lost ya to the law again," one man says as he claps Rider on the shoulder.

"Let me buy you a beer," another calls out as he makes his way through the crowd of bikers to get to us.

"Who's your lady?" someone asks off to one side. "She need a beer, too?"

"Rider, we need to—"

"Enough!" Rider yells, surprising everyone in the clubhouse, including me. My beastly biker looks down at me, his brown eyes twinkling and letting me know he's not upset. He's excited. "Yes, I survived another scrape with the dirty cops in this town, but that's not important."

"If that's not important, what is?" Blade asks.

"This," Rider answers seconds before lifting me into his arms.

His lips are on mine in the next second, his tongue stroking inside my mouth and claiming me from the inside out. I kiss him back with every ounce of gratitude I have for this man who has healed me in more ways than one. We get lost in each



other, only coming back to reality when the hoots and hollers of the crowd filter in around us.

“Mine,” Rider growls as he sets me back on my feet. “My woman,” he says again, addressing everyone staring at us.

The heat of a blush covers my face and travels down my body, but I can’t deny that I like the attention. I like everyone knowing I belong to Rider.

“Okay, okay, we get it. Another one bites the dust,” Blade says.

Rider grunts while a few of the patrons in the clubhouse chuckle. Blade grins, and I know he’s happy for his friend. I hope he finds someone someday who keeps that smile on his face.

“A round of shots on me to celebrate the new couple,” he announces as he lifts his beer glass.

Rider nods and lifts me in his arms.

I shriek and giggle, giving my man a questioning look. “I thought the point of this was to claim me in front of your MC brothers or whatever.”

“Just did that. Now, I need to claim you in private.” He’s so serious as he carries me through the bar area and into a separate hallway.

“Um, as in...?”

“As in need to be inside you, need to feel that connection, need you wrapped around me as I remind you how much I love you.”

“Okay, then,” I say breathlessly as he darts into one of the empty rooms used for members who need a place to crash for the night.

Rider sets me down in front of the bed and strips me of my clothes so reverently despite his obvious need. He tears at his clothes, making me giggle with his intensity.

My laughter dies on my lips as he steps closer, erasing the distance between us. He runs his hands up and down my naked

body, caressing my hips, breasts, and even my throat and lips. His strong, capable hands leave a throbbing, warm blaze in their wake.

His hand wraps around the back of my neck, pulling me into him for a punishing kiss. I'm his. He owns every part of me. That's what he's telling me with each stroke of his tongue, each anguished groan that travels through his body and into mine. I feel his kiss everywhere, and I need more.

"Please," I whimper, not even caring that I sound desperate. I am. He's right there with me.

"I've got you, baby. I've got you," he murmurs, gripping my hips and guiding me backward until the edge of the mattress hits the back of my legs.

Rider gently lays me on the bed, then stands in front of me, looking down at my body. It's all for him. I spread my legs, moaning when he growls and clenches his fist.

"Please," I whisper again, my hands trailing up my torso to cup my breasts. My skin is so sensitive, every light touch seems to go straight to my clit, making it throb in anticipation.

Rider tears his eyes away from where they were locked on my pussy, and he grunts again when he sees me playing with my nipples.

"Fuck, Sutton. You're so damn sexy." He's on me in the next instant, covering my body with open-mouthed kisses, sucking on my skin and leaving little love bites up my torso and on my breasts.

I jerk and twist beneath him, gasping for air and whimpering with each lingering touch and kiss. When Rider finally reaches my mouth, he slants his lips over mine and leads us in a slow, drugging kiss.

My legs automatically spread wider so he can settle between them. His long, thick cock glides against my pussy, collecting my juices and driving me crazy. He's *so close* to where I need him, and I nearly cry in frustration.

Rider sits back slightly and gathers my wrists in one of his massive hands. He raises my hands over my head and pins

them to the mattress before nuzzling into the side of my neck. “Fuckin’ love seeing you stretched out for me,” he says into my skin, his voice low, gravelly, and desperate. He drags his lips down my neck and across my collarbone, then nips at the tops of my breasts, grinning wickedly when I jump and gasp. “Gonna fuck this sweet little pussy now, Sutton. Are you ready for me?”

I nod and tilt my hips, nudging the swollen head of his cock against my entrance. Rider growls and reaches between us to guide himself inside in one smooth stroke. Fire spreads through my veins, and heat pulses from my core, overwhelming my body.

I wiggle my hips, making sparks sizzle and burn across my skin. Rider groans, leaning over me, one hand still holding my wrists above my head while the other trails up my side. He squeezes my breast, pinching my hardened, sensitive nipple before sucking it into his mouth.

My back bows off the bed, and he takes the opportunity to slip his hand between my back and the mattress, pushing my chest up so he can feast on me. Rider grinds his cock into me, filling me up before pulling back and slamming into me roughly.

My breasts jiggle with every thrust as he sets a relentless pace. I wrap my legs around him and dig my heels into his sculpted ass, crying out when he hits that spot inside me that pushes me right to the edge.

My muscles tense as my pussy tightens around his thickness. He lifts his head from my chest and studies my face, no doubt sensing how close I am. My thighs shake, and a shiver runs up my spine, seizing my lungs and forcing out a scream as I come around his cock.

Rivulets of pleasure course through my body, making every nerve ending spark to life. Rider fucks me through it, never letting up. He still has my wrists secured in his grasp despite all my writhing and trying to twist away from the intense pressure and sharp ecstasy he’s creating deep inside me.

I swear I'm about to come again, but suddenly Rider isn't on top of me anymore. I hardly have time to register his absence before his large hands grasp my hips firmly. Rider flips me over effortlessly, then pulls my hips back so I'm on all fours.

"Fuck, yes," he grunts, gripping my ass cheeks and spreading them wide. "Jesus Christ, I've pictured you like this too many damn times."

Rider thrusts into me, growling when he bottoms out. I let out a broken cry as I unravel for him, my orgasm ricocheting through my body but never leaving me completely. I'm so fucking sensitive, so raw as he pounds into me.

"I-I-I ca-ca-n't..." I stutter, unable to take a full breath.

"You can, baby. Trust me, you can. Feel this with me. *Fuck*, feel it, Sutton."

I whimper and nod, staying right here with him in the moment, struggling to hold myself up on shaky arms while my pussy knots around him over and over. Incoherent words and strangled, almost tormented sounds fall from my lips as Rider tears me apart, fucks me so good, so hard, so damn rough. He's branding me with each savage stroke, claiming all of me, body and soul.

Rider slides his hand around to my front, spreading his fingers over my stomach and pulling me even closer as he ruts into me. His hand creates more pressure. I swear I feel his dick rearrange my organs, he's fucking me so damn deep.

My fingers curl into the sheets, fisting them as I try desperately to hold myself up. When he brushes the tips of his fingers over my clit, my knees wobble and my arms give out. I face plant into the pillow, my ass still in the air, Rider still pounding away. He pinches my clit, and I sob out yet another orgasm. My pleasure spikes as white-hot bliss fills my veins. When it fades away, I'm completely limp. Boneless. Held up only by Rider's punishing grip on my hips.

"Gonna come inside you, love," he growls as he holds himself deep inside me.

His words make my pussy contract one last time, and that's his breaking point.

Rider lets out a feral roar as his cum fills me. He pulls back and enters me again as more of his release shoots out of him. There's so much that it drips down my thighs, the tickling sensation making me moan and involuntarily tremble in his arms.

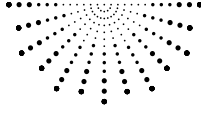
The last of his orgasm drains from him, and Rider collapses on top of me. He's sweaty and panting for air as he rests his forehead between my shoulder blades. I feel his hot breath on my skin, the weight of his body on top of mine, his sweat mixing with mine.

Rider rolls off me and pulls me into his arms, draping my still boneless body across his chest. We don't say anything, and we don't need to. Rider combs his fingers through my hair and kisses the top of my head, his breathing finally returning to normal.

I tilt my head and smile, getting lost in his loving gaze. Those chocolatey brown eyes get me every time. "I'm yours," I whisper, brushing my lips against his.

"And I'm yours, Sutton. So fucking yours."

# EPILOGUE



## RIDER

“One... two... three... four. Four tires!” Laura, our three-year-old, exclaims, turning in my lap to smile up at me.

“That’s right, sweetheart. That car has four tires. How about my bike over there?” I ask, pointing to my motorcycle parked outside in the driveway.

“Two,” she says without counting. “That was too easy.”

I grin at my youngest, then stand with her in my arms, swinging her up and over my head so she’s sitting on my shoulders. Laura giggles, her joyful laugh almost as life-giving as her mother’s.

“And what are you up to?” Sutton asks from behind us. I spin, giving my gorgeous wife a grin.

“Counting!” Laura says excitedly.

“Oh, yeah?” Sutton tickles Laura’s little feet, making our daughter laugh. “Maybe you can help your brother with his homework. I give up.”

I chuckle and lean down to kiss my wife on the temple. “What’s Simon’s homework this week?”

“Fractions,” she says with a weary sigh, making me laugh again. “I’m an artist, okay? The only time I work with numbers is when charging clients,” she mumbles as she reties one of Laura’s shoes.

“Switch?” I ask, lifting my little girl off my shoulders and handing her to Sutton.

“How about we go outside and play for a bit? I could use a homework break,” Sutton says.

“Homework break?” Simon calls out from his spot at the dining room table where he’s been plugging away at his fractions worksheet. He’s next to us in a second, and I swear I can see a trail of dust he kicked up from moving so fast.

“Let’s go,” I tell him, leading my family out to the backyard.

Simon takes Laura’s hand, and they run off to the playground while Sutton and I hang back on the porch.

My beautiful wife rests her elbows against the railing while I step up behind her and wrap my arms around her waist. She leans against me, letting me cradle her in my embrace.

“Love our family,” I whisper, pressing a kiss to her temple.

She smiles, turning her head to kiss the side of my neck. “We love you,” she murmurs, snuggling deeper against me.

We stay wrapped up in each other while watching our kids play in the yard. I never knew I wanted this: the family, the wife, the crazy kids, and the picket fence. Not that we have a picket fence. Yet. It’s on backorder.

But now? I couldn’t picture my life any other way.

Sutton is wildly successful with her design business, and it’s been a joy to see her grow in her skillset and as a person. She has confidence in herself and her abilities, and she’s not afraid to set boundaries and take up space. She’s not afraid to be loved, and neither am I.

Every day with my Sutton is better than the last, which isn’t to say we’ve always had it easy. I just know deep down in my soul that we’ll make it through anything as long as we choose each other every time.

“Thank you for giving me a second chance all those years ago,” I tell her, tightening my hold around her waist.



“Thank you for showing me how to love and be loved,” she replies, her voice soft and sweet like the rest of her.

“You’re too good to me, princess.”

“We’re good to each other,” she counters, resting her head against my shoulder as I rock her back and forth.

“That we are, little flower. That we are.”

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Cameron Hart is a USA Today bestselling author of contemporary romance. She writes books with lots of heat, plenty of sweet, and just enough drama to keep things interesting.

**Want to meet me?** Check out events and book signings I'll be attending across the US: <https://www.cameronhart.net/meet-me-in-person/>

**Sign up for my newsletter** and get a free novella!



## ALSO BY CAMERON HART

*Check out my other popular series and books!*

### **Mafia, MC, & Bodyguard Romance:**

[Savage Saints MC Series](#)

[Moscatelli Crime Family Series](#)

[Di Salvo Crime Family Series](#)

[Chaos MC series](#)

[Savage Ride](#)

[Ace](#)

[Watchdog Protection, Inc.](#)

### **Mountain Man Romance:**

[Men of Blackthorne Mountain Series](#)

[Bear's Tooth Mountain Men Series](#)

### **Curvy Girl Romance:**

[Curvy Temptations Boxset](#)

[Drilling Deep](#)

[Infinity](#)

[Claiming His Babygirl](#)

[Secret Temptations Boxset](#)

[At First Sight](#)

[Designed by Fate](#)

[My Heart & Soul](#)

[Finding Her Strength](#)

[1012 Curvy Way](#)

### **Office Romance:**

[Boss Me Series](#)

[Beastly Brute](#)

[Executive Rule](#)

### **Cowboy & Small Town Romance:**

[Roped in by Love Series](#)

[Sequoia Stud Farm](#)

[Small Town Love Boxset](#)

[Where I Belong](#)

[Seducing Sophia](#)

[Take Me Home](#)

### **Forbidden Romance:**

[Secret Obsession](#)

Secret Protector

Secret Desire

**Holiday Romance:**

Adored by Landon

Unwrapping His Package

Coming Down Her Chimney

His Christmas Angel

Hungry for Owen

Snow & Her Seven White Lies

Accidental Valentine

For Richer or Poorer