



STEEL

KING'S DISCIPLES MC

ANA NIGHT

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Ana Night

Warning

This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature audiences.

This book contains mentions of crime, death, and violence.

When Kai fucks up and needs to run and hide, there's only one man he can go to for help. Or, rather, there's only one man he *wants* to go to. Steel might not be too happy to see him, but Kai is certain the chemistry he's felt between them since they first met will work in his favor. After all, who could resist a disgraced assassin with a hit out on him?

Harboring a fugitive is not how Steel wanted to spend his time, but one look at a disheveled and skittish Kai and he can't help but give in. The assassin intrigues him, though he also pisses him off like no one else. Steel is not sure if he'll be losing his mind or his heart by giving in to Kai's advances, but, either way, he knows he's screwed.

When Kai realizes that Steel is what he truly wants, he has to ensure he'll have more than a life on the run to offer him, and in order to do that, he'll have to stop hiding and fight back, even if it means he might not live long enough to make a home with Steel.

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Chapter One

Kai

HE PULLED up in front of Isaac's mansion. He got out of his car, eyes scanning his surroundings as he headed for the massive front door. He spotted a red Lamborghini with tinted windows and the annoyance he'd felt since Isaac's call turned into dread. He didn't know whose car it was, but he figured that it wasn't someone he would be happy to see.

Getting summoned by his boss wasn't a good thing. At least not anymore. Isaac hadn't exactly been happy with him the past few years. Having a strict code as a hitman for hire was somewhat unheard of.

It meant Isaac couldn't just appoint him to any hit. He knew he was one of Isaac's best. The man couldn't afford to lose him which was lucky for him. Well, lucky was maybe not the right word. He wouldn't have made demands that would've gotten him killed. He wasn't that stupid.

He gave a nod to the guards he passed and didn't bother knocking before pushing open the door. He stepped inside and said a quick hello to the butler who appeared from the sitting room. Unfortunately, everyone on Isaac's staff knew him well.

Kai headed up the stairs and down the long hallway, staring at the expensive art adorning the walls. Isaac had made a fortune by employing killers.

He didn't care too much for the other guys. Most of them didn't like him either. No one ever liked the person getting special treatment, but he wasn't there to make friends.

Some days he wasn't sure why he was there at all, but then the fridge was empty, gas was running low, and his parents struggled to pay their mortgage. Though he supposed he couldn't use the mortgage as an excuse anymore seeing as he'd just paid off the last of it. His parents didn't know it was him, but they weren't stupid. He just hoped it made up for all the years he hadn't seen them or been there for them.

He blew out a breath as he reached Isaac's office. He stepped through the door and instantly regretted it.

Abraham Briggs. Why his parents had given him a biblical name, he could only assume was a poor attempt to make them seem like god-fearing and good people. They were anything but good. Their whole family consisted of thieves and murderers. Not that the public would know. They were too good at hiding their true natures.

They'd been working with his boss, Isaac, for years now. Abraham had become Isaac's partner at the Company. He wasn't entirely sure what Isaac got out of that particular partnership, but he also knew better than to ask.

Briggs was standing next to Isaac, his head snapping up when he heard Kai enter the room, and a sneer spread on his face.

“Well, well. Look who finally decided to show up,” Briggs said, his voice grating on Kai's nerves.

Kai ignored him in favor of catching Isaac's gaze and saying, "Boss. You wanted to see me?"

"Yes. I have a job for you."

Isaac picked up a manilla folder from his desk. Kai walked closer to take it. He gave Briggs a quick glare before turning his attention to the content of the folder. He looked at the photos and skimmed the info, his blood running cold when he reached a certain detail.

He slowly raised his gaze to look at Isaac. From the way the man was watching him, he had been expecting Kai to react badly. He wasn't about to say anything in front of Fuck-Face, though.

"Is there a problem?" Briggs asked.

"No." Kai was grinding his teeth to keep quiet, though he didn't hold back on the glare he gave Isaac.

That asshole knew Kai couldn't say no to a job from Briggs. Not if he wanted to live. If there was a job you didn't want to do, Briggs didn't think you compatible with the Company, and that meant you ended up in a shallow grave because they couldn't use you, but they also couldn't let you walk away with the info you'd undoubtedly gathered on the Company over the years.

Isaac only gave him the jobs he knew he wouldn't turn down, so what the fuck was he doing?

Kai gave Isaac back the folder and turned to Briggs.

"Abraham," he said, knowing full well the man hated when he called him that.

Kai turned and walked out of there as calmly as he could while feeling like he needed to hit something. Or someone.

If that asshole thought he was going to be involved in something that would cost several kids their lives, he was sorely mistaken.

Steel

He ran his gaze over the red brick buildings, his heart squeezing almost painfully in his chest as memories tried to assault him. Those memories had no place there anymore. All the bad things that had happened there would be forgotten. They'd be replaced by good things.

"I never thought we'd be making good memories here after Ronin," Steel said.

Ares turned toward him with a wry smile on his lips.

"We're gonna be making good memories here in spite of him and what he made our club represent."

When Ares put a hand on Steel's shoulder, he couldn't help but smile. Ares had changed everything for them. Without him, they'd likely all still be stuck with Ronin. It had been over three years since they became the Disciples, and he didn't regret a single second of it. Well, getting shot hadn't been the best time of his life.

He ran his fingers over his clavicle.

It had been touch-and-go for a moment there, but they had gotten him to the hospital in time. His brother had been the club's doctor for as long as Steel had been a patched member and Tony had made sure none of his colleagues would ask questions about the bullet hole he'd shown up with, then he'd scolded the hell out of Steel once he'd woken from the anesthesia.

“You wanna come see what they’ve done with the place?” Ares asked.

“Hell, yeah.”

Griff’s crew had been working on the place for a few weeks. He knew they weren’t finished yet, but there were quite a few bullet holes in the walls that needed patching, after all.

He followed Ares inside and from what he could tell, the first floor hadn’t been touched yet. There was no furniture but everything else looked exactly the same. It had chills running up his arms, but he repressed them as they walked up the stairs to the second floor.

There was equipment and paint cans all over the hallway and he could hear someone drilling further down the hall.

Ares led him into the first bedroom and Steel came to a sharp halt. The double bed that had once been there had been replaced by a bunk bed and there was a desk with a chair by the window and a closet in the corner. There were shelves on the wall filled with toys and books.

“Mia brought in some of her old stuff,” Ares said with a smile. “Sawyer bought the rest along with clothes and game consoles.”

Now *that* didn’t surprise him. He was sure Sawyer had been waiting very impatiently to buy everything in every toy store in the city.

Ares showed him a few more of the finished rooms and while his heart was weary from the knowledge of why they’d be filling up those rooms in no time, he was immensely glad that they’d decided to do this, that they’d be providing safety,

meals, and a home to a whole lot of kids that desperately needed it.

“Can you imagine this place filled with kids?” Ares asked, his smile wide.

Actually, he could. He really could.

He hadn't been this excited about something in a long time.

Sawyer, Skinner, Ares, and Jace had put all of this into motion. Skinner ran an outreach program for kids in Baltimore along with the Kings. Ares and Jace had come up with the idea and he supposed it was because they both wished someone had done something like this for Jace. Sawyer was already sponsoring Skinner's program, so when he'd heard of this project, he'd jumped at the opportunity to give something back to the Disciples for saving his life. Well, that, and he had a soft spot for kids.

He wasn't the only one.

Steel didn't know exactly what his role would be in all this, but he knew he wanted to be involved as much as possible.

He'd always been a protector which was probably why the time with Ronin had been so hard on him. He'd managed to keep his brother's identity a secret from Ronin by some miracle, and when Ares had asked him to leave with him, he hadn't hesitated to follow him.

He'd never regretted that decision. In fact, it was the best one he'd ever made.

Kai

Screaming kids and their father's loud groan had him chuckling. Elijah's brother might still not be his biggest fan, but he at least felt safe enough with Kai to let him be around his kids. He'd take that win.

Obviously, it didn't help that he was laughing at Tommy but, oh well. He couldn't win every time.

Elijah and Nic had an open invitation for dinner on Sundays and Kai had taken advantage of said invitation many times. Who didn't like a home-cooked meal?

The boys came running past him and Tommy, both screaming uncontrollably. The oldest was chasing the youngest who was holding a tablet to his chest. Emmett ran around the table and headed straight back to his dad, skidding to a halt in front of him. His hands moved way too fast for Kai to understand, but going off the way Tommy's brows snapped together before he looked at Travis and waved him over, he'd say Emmett was tattling on his brother.

"He stole it out of my hands," Travis grumbled.

"Because you didn't give it to him when your dad told you it was his turn," Tommy said, giving Travis a stern look.

Emmett stuck his tongue out at Travis.

"See?" Travis said, pointing accusingly at his brother.
"He's an asshole."

"Travis," Tommy snapped.

Travis ignored his dad and flipped his brother the bird, and his brother, in all his seven-year-old glory, copied him and started to flip everyone off with a huge smile on his face. As if the little shit didn't know what that meant. That innocent face of his got him out of trouble way too much.

Just the way it should be, he figured.

Edan scolded them while Tommy ran his hands down his face and muttered, "Someone shoot me, already."

"Sorry, you can't afford my fee," Kai quipped.

Tommy scowled at him but, fortunately, his husband walking up to him had him forgetting all about Kai. Edan wrapped his arms around the back of Tommy's neck and Tommy tugged him closer to press a kiss to his lips.

Kai looked away which wasn't like him at all, but lately? He felt like he was drowning in other people's happiness and love. Was he jealous? Yeah, probably. Not of any of them, just the love and happy parts. He wanted that. If he was honest with himself, he wanted it a lot, but he also knew he'd never have it. Not with his line of work. Not with who he was.

He was stuck with meaningless sex for the rest of his life. Quite a chore, obviously.

The fact that he hadn't gotten laid in months meant nothing. It certainly wasn't because he kept thinking about one guy in particular. No. Nope. Not at all.

He hadn't seen Steel in forever. He'd checked up on him and his family a few times, because... well, he didn't really have a reason. Not a good one at least.

"Thinking hard over there, huh?"

Kai rolled his eyes before turning his head to find Nic next to him.

“Yeah, you should try it sometime.”

Nic snorted out a laugh and wrapped an arm around Kai’s shoulders. He pulled Kai toward the outdoor couch and when they sat down, Nic turned toward him, a line forming between his brows as he ran his gaze over Kai’s face.

“What’s going on?”

Fuck. Nic looked serious. Damn it.

He wasn’t about to tell him about the love and Steel parts. No fucking way. He could barely admit it to himself. He wasn’t saying any of that shit out loud.

“It’s nothing. Just a job.”

Nic got that perceptive look in his eye that Kai hated above all else. He usually managed to slink his way out of whatever questions that look spawned, but he’d been less and less successful with that over the past few months.

“Something you don’t wanna do?”

Kai shrugged. “Just complicated.”

“Then quit.”

Nic hadn’t been in the game for long enough to make Isaac worry about him knowing too much. He’d also gone straight to the Kings which had also kept Isaac at bay.

Kai didn’t have that luxury. He knew more than anyone else. He knew Isaac intimately, which, of course, would come back to bite him in the ass, and not a lovely little love-bite, but more like a shark attack.

“Gee, thanks. I totally hadn’t considered that option.”

The surprise in Nic’s eyes wasn’t good. Shit. He shouldn’t have said that. Now Nic was definitely going to try to convince him to quit even more than he usually did.

Elijah dropped onto the couch next to Nic and asked, “What’s up?”

“I think Kai’s joining the dark side,” Nic said.

Elijah grabbed a pillow and bonked Nic over the head with it because he hadn’t been looking at him nor signing as he spoke and then they were promptly attacked by their dog. If getting licked all over their faces could be considered an attack. It probably could. Ew. Dog breath. Ass-licking tongue on their faces. Gross.

Of course, he was King’s next victim.

“No. *Nonono*,” he cried out, but it was too late. There was no stopping King.

He was on his back on the couch, the pitbull on top of him wiggling happily as he licked all over his face, his friends laughing at his obvious distress—monsters. They were all monsters—while he wondered how his life had come to this and why the hell he wanted more of it.

He shoved that thought as deep down as it could get. He was already dealing with enough shit. He couldn’t afford to dream of happiness on top of it.

He knew what he had to do about the job. Just knowing the way his friends would look at him if they knew what Isaac and Briggs wanted him to do had him making a decision he’d

probably regret but only for the right reasons. At least, he hoped so.

Chapter Two

Steel

HE CLOSED his eyes for a second, simply enjoying the feel of the wind against his body, the bike under him vibrating as the asphalt beneath them allowed them to move faster than they probably should. No one could stop them.

The freedom he felt when he rode his bike was indescribable. There was nothing quite like it. The comradery with his brothers was just a nice bonus. They got to share their love for their motorcycles and riding and that's what had made him want to join a motorcycle club so many years ago. That hadn't changed.

He pulled into the courtyard and parked in front of the clubhouse. He pulled his helmet off, his smile wide. His chest felt light while the adrenaline from riding was thrumming through his veins.

Steel headed for the door and as he stepped inside, he almost ran straight into Digger.

“Oh. Hi, Dig.”

“Hey. How's the arm?”

Getting shot hadn't exactly been fun but he probably wouldn't have even survived if it hadn't been for Digger. The man had kept him safe and gotten him the hell out of there the first chance he'd gotten.

“Good enough to beat up Ace with.”

Digger huffed out a laugh.

“I’m sure he had it coming,” Digger said with a toothy smile.

“Oh, he did.”

That little fucker had played Titanium every single time they’d been in the same room since he’d gotten out of the hospital. The second he’d been out of his sling, he’d made sure Ace wouldn’t dare play that damned song again. Not that he thought it actually worked. Ace had no concept of consequences. He was quite the daredevil and over the past few years, he’d gotten into more shit than Steel could even recall. Even his own trip to the hospital hadn’t stopped him from driving poor Diesel bonkers. Every time Ace even thought about singing, Diesel was pulling out his gun.

“How’s Matt?”

He hadn’t seen the man in a while. Matt was a homebody if he’d ever met one. He was only at the club with Digger every once in a while and usually only if Sawyer was there as well.

“He’s good. It’s like coming home to a puppy. He’s always so happy to see me,” Digger said with a twinkle in his eye. “He’s got object permanence. It means he forgets people exist unless they’re with him or he can see them, so every time I walk through the door, he just lights up. Unless he’s having a bad day. I hate it for him when he has a bad day. I wish it was something palpable. Something I could hunt down and kill for him.”

Steel found himself smiling at Digger despite the seriousness of his words.

“He’s lucky to have you,” he said.

Digger shook his head. “*I’m* lucky to have him.”

Steel smiled and rubbed a hand over his chest, trying to ignore the twinge in his heart. Watching his brothers find love, including his big brother, had been hard. He’d been immensely happy for them. Really. They deserved to be happy and loved.

He just... couldn’t help comparing his own life and his own relationships with theirs and it was glaringly obvious that his was lacking compared to theirs.

The few relationships he’d had in the past years hadn’t lasted long. Despite a club bunny or two desperately trying, he hadn’t wanted to call them his property. He’d considered it with Gina but only to placate her because, hell. She’d been a lot. The sex had been great. The relationship, though? Not so much.

He hated to admit it, but he hadn’t exactly put in that much effort to make it work. His heart just hadn’t been in it.

The gay couples at the club had opened his eyes to a part of himself he hadn’t even known existed. He’d always found men handsome. Maybe even attractive. He just hadn’t known what it meant. He’d thought until two years ago that he was straight. He very much was not.

The thought of Kai had his muscles tensing up.

Kai was hot. He could admit that much to himself. And, yes, Kai may have been the final push he’d needed to explore his sexuality. Kai had flirted with him non-stop and as much as he didn’t want to admit it, it had gotten him hot under the collar quite a few times.

He'd been with a few men since then, but none of them had made him want to stick around for a relationship despite how great the sex had been.

Maybe there was just something wrong with him? Settling down probably just wasn't in the cards for him.

He should just focus on the shelter and the kids. Yeah. He liked that plan. Helping those kids would make him happy and that was all he needed.

Kai

They'd been hired to take out a senator and to do it with as many casualties as possible to conceal the fact that they were after the senator. He wasn't doing it. He'd made that decision while getting slobbered all over by King yesterday.

He'd done a lot of bad shit in his life. Hell, he killed people for a living, but he'd made a deal with Isaac years ago that he would only take out bad people, and under no circumstances would he kill a kid. Isaac knew. Briggs didn't. Whether Isaac had a hand in Briggs picking Kai for this hit, he didn't know, but it would be detrimental to all of them.

He pulled the strap of the backpack containing the bomb over his shoulder and headed for the drop-off point. While he'd made sure the bomb wouldn't blow, he still had to look like he was doing his job.

When the bomb didn't go off, they'd think the one who built it had made a mistake. He didn't know what would happen after that. He hadn't thought that far. He hadn't wanted to. Isaac would probably send someone else to end the senator's life. A traffic 'accident' seemed most likely.

As long as he wasn't the one killing a bunch of innocent people, he'd be fine. Mostly. He didn't want them to die, but he wasn't so sure there was anything he could do to stop it. In his experience, if someone wanted to kill you, they would.

He walked past the designated trash can and smoothly dropped the bag into it. The less suspicious you acted, the less

people tended to notice you. Looking around like someone might catch you doing something shady was a surefire way to get caught.

He headed back to the hotel where he'd set up earlier. He'd be able to watch the trash can from there to set off the bomb when the senator sat down at the bench across from it to have his lunch as he always did according to the info Isaac had provided. Even if the bomb wasn't going to work, he still had to act as if he thought it would.

He was wearing non-descript clothes and a cap, hiding his identity, but it wasn't the cops watching the security footage of the area that worried him. It was Isaac watching it.

The bomb not going off would be suspicious enough in itself. He didn't need to add to it.

He headed inside the hotel and walked up the stairs and when he reached the right floor, he dug his key card out of his back pocket. He walked to his room and placed the key card on the scanner. Once it beeped and flashed green, he pushed down the handle and stepped inside.

He came to a sharp halt when he saw Briggs standing in front of the window.

“What are you doing here?”

Briggs gave him a toothy smile and said, “I wanted to see it firsthand.”

That didn't answer how the fuck Briggs knew this was where he'd be watching from. Had Isaac sent Briggs here? Why?

He grunted and went to stand next to Briggs who was holding a pair of binoculars. At least the asshole had brought his own.

Kai grabbed his pair off the windowsill and looked through them while contemplating murder. Isaac's. For whatever this shit was.

He didn't fucking like it.

"There he is," Briggs said, excitement in his voice.

It made Kai want to vomit.

He blinked back into focus and Briggs was correct. The senator was sitting on his bench, unwrapping the food his wife had probably made for him. Right in front of the museum filled with people. Mainly kids on school excursions. The bomb would've taken out a good chunk of the building.

"What are you waiting for?"

Kai lowered his binoculars and clenched his jaw tight before looking at Briggs.

"I don't wanna do it too early. That would make the timing more suspicious."

Briggs grunted and waved him off.

Kai barely kept from rolling his eyes and took a deep breath before reaching for the detonator. He hit the button and after a few seconds of nothing happening, Briggs cursed.

"Why the fuck didn't it go off?"

"There must have been something wrong with the device," Kai said, arching a brow at him.

Briggs' guys had procured the bomb. Kai had just made a tiny alteration before activating it.

"To hell with the bomb. Go take care of it," Briggs ordered.

Kai didn't move. "Can't. It has to be a mass casualty."

"He just needs to be dead before two."

Kai frowned at Briggs. That was new information.

"Is there something you haven't told me?"

"I don't have to tell you shit."

"How am I supposed to carry out a job without all the information? Do you want your employees to fail?"

"If you still wanna be an employee, I suggest you get your ass down there and fucking kill him."

Kai still didn't move. He was done taking orders from that narcissistic sociopath.

"Fuck this," Briggs growled and threw up his hands. "I'll just put a bullet in him myself."

"I can't let you do that," Kai said.

Briggs gave him a seething look and said, "You think you can stop me?"

Kai unholstered his gun, aimed it at the man's head, and pulled the trigger.

Briggs' body hit the floor with a loud thud. Someone might've heard that. Shit.

Kai dropped his head forward and cursed.

He needed to get the fuck out of there and fast, so why the hell couldn't he move? He'd been killing people for money for so fucking long that this should've been a walk in the park. Granted, none of those other kills had put him on his boss' shitlist.

He needed to clean the scene and he had no fucking time to do it in. He didn't need the cops looking for him, too. Not that it would help with Isaac. He'd sent Briggs to him. He would know that it was him.

He was absolutely and utterly fucked now.

He was gonna need help. There was no way he could get through this alone. Not if he wanted to survive.

Chapter Three

Steel

HE STEPPED through the door to his apartment and the hair at the back of his neck rose. He continued inside as he usually would while discreetly unholstering his gun.

As he stepped into the living room, the lamp by the couch turned on. Steel aimed his gun at the man on his couch and even though he sighed when he saw who it was, he kept his gun trained on him.

“What are you doing here?”

Kai cocked his head to the side, a hungry look in his eyes as they roamed over Steel.

“I forgot how sexy you are,” Kai purred. “I would’ve waited for you in my birthday suit if that wouldn’t have made you kill me.”

“Good choice.”

If Kai was talking, he wasn’t there to kill him. He’d seen Kai in action one too many times to know how he operated. When he was working, it was the only time he was serious.

He lowered his gun.

“Did you seriously wait here in the dark just so you could dramatically turn on the light?”

“It would be so much cooler if I said yes, right?”

Steel arched a brow at him.

“Right.” Kai grinned at him. “So, yes. I did. Totally.”

Steel ran his gaze over Kai. His hair was flat on one side, and he had a red line across one cheek, and the collar on his shirt was folded the wrong way on his left side.

“Did you fall asleep?”

“What? No. *Pssh.*” Kai shook his head. “Why are you home so late?”

Steel refrained from rolling his eyes and holstered his gun, then walked in front of Kai, unsurprised when the man looked up at him with a sensual smile and heat in his eyes.

“I suggest you leave before I shoot you,” Steel said, giving Kai a pointed look.

Kai batted his lashes at Steel and said, “You say the sweetest things to me.”

“I mean it.”

“I’m sure you do,” Kai said and pushed up from the couch, bringing them much closer than Steel wanted.

“I figured you owe me,” Kai said.

Steel blinked slowly at him.

“I owe you?”

Kai hummed with a nod.

“Because you didn’t kill my brother?”

“Yep.”

“You’re out of your mind.”

Why the fuck that made Kai smile, he didn't know. He didn't *want* to know.

"I already deleted the video."

He'd had a video of Kai admitting that he'd been hired to kill Trina and while Kai hadn't seemed too bothered about it at the time, he'd agreed to help them.

The man had been so damned aloof about it that he hadn't been certain if he'd helped because of the video or because he'd cared. When he'd called Kai out on it, stepping between Kai's gun and Trina, he'd seen something in that brown gaze. He still didn't know what it was. Wasn't sure he wanted to know.

"Fine," Kai said with a sigh. "Then you owe me for saving Trina's life."

Steel clenched his teeth hard.

Kai wasn't wrong. He'd shot Trina's ex, killing him before he could kill Trina. Fuck. He did owe him. He wasn't about to tell Kai as much, though.

"How is your brother by the way?"

He glared at Kai, then released a sigh.

"Fine."

"And you?" Kai asked, hand reaching for Steel who was too shocked to move when Kai's fingers brushed across his left clavicle. The neck of his shirt was just low enough that Kai could touch his skin there and that contact was...

He breathed out shakily.

Fuck this.

He grabbed Kai's hand and twisted his arm, making Kai turn as he jerked his arm behind his back.

"If you wanted my ass all you had to do was ask," Kai purred, rubbing his ass against Steel.

Steel released his hold and stepped back with a curse.

Kai turned toward him, a playful smile on his lips. Steel kept his gaze locked on Kai's face because he knew if he looked down there'd be a bulge in Kai's pants, and he didn't fucking want to know.

Kai

From the murderous look in Steel's eyes, he might actually go through with that threat to kill him if he didn't leave, so Kai released a sigh and dropped back down onto the couch.

"I need your help."

Steel's startled bark of laughter didn't make him feel any better.

He crossed his arms over his chest and pouted up at Steel. The man looked dumbfounded as he shook his head.

Steel sat down in the armchair across from Kai.

"What the hell did you do?"

"What makes you think *I* did something?"

Steel cocked a brow at him.

"Fuck. Fine. I screwed up."

"How much?"

Kai pressed his lips together and avoided Steel's gaze.

"That much, huh?"

"I'm asking *you* for help, aren't I?"

Steel narrowed his eyes at him. "What did you do?"

Kai shrugged, then said, "I've got a hit out on me."

"*Jesus*," Steel breathed.

"Can you help?"

Asking for help wasn't exactly the norm for him, but he was desperate, and Steel might be the only person he knew who had the connections and resources to hide him.

He was sure his best friend could've helped, too, but he wasn't about to fuck up Nic's life. He'd gotten out of the game years ago and Kai should've followed him back then, but he'd felt indebted to Isaac, so he'd stayed. Probably the dumbest thing he'd ever done apart from becoming a hitman. He might be good at his job, but it was getting harder and harder to discern which people deserved a bullet and which didn't.

When he'd been hired to kill Steel's brother and his girlfriend a few years ago, he'd decided to help them instead, but he hadn't made that decision before laying eyes on Steel. He would've walked away any other time because he didn't kill innocents, but Steel had made him want to stick around for a while if only to tease the man endlessly. He was so hot when he got flustered.

"I'll make some calls," Steel said, bringing Kai out of his thoughts.

"Thanks."

Steel grunted. "Don't thank me yet. I still haven't decided if I'm gonna shoot you or not."

Kai felt his lips quirking up at the corners.

Steel

This wasn't a call he wanted to make but the desperate look in Kai's eyes had him pulling out his phone and dialing Ares' number. It rang a few times before Ares' rumbling voice came over the phone.

"Steel? What's up?"

He sighed before saying, "Hey. I need a favor."

"What's wrong?"

"Kai's in trouble."

The silence was almost deafening.

Ares cleared his throat before saying, "Kai?"

"Yeah. Remember the assassin sent to kill my brother and Trina?"

"I remember. I just don't understand why you're asking for favors for him."

He didn't understand himself, either.

He glanced over at Kai who was on his couch, feet on the coffee table while he pretended to be studying his nails very closely even though they both knew he was listening to Steel and Ares' conversation.

"I just need to get him to one of our safehouses and get him a new identity," Steel said. "He's got a hit out on him."

"In that case, he should stay the fuck away," Ares said, annoyance in his voice.

Before Steel could say anything, he heard low talking in the background, and then Ares cursed under his breath.

“Fuck. Fine,” Ares said. “Gimme a sec to figure this out.”

“Tell Jace I said thank you.”

Ares muttered something under his breath before hanging up.

“So?” Kai asked, appearing right next to Steel and making him jump.

“Jesus fucking Christ. Don’t do that.”

Kai gave him a cheeky smile.

Steel shook his head and shoved his phone into his back pocket.

“You got clothes? Supplies?”

Kai shook his head. “I came straight here.”

“Straight here?”

Kai rolled his eyes and said, “I wasn’t followed. I’m a fucking pro or did you forget?”

“That’s pretty fucking hard to forget,” Steel said and gave Kai a scathing look.

Kai may not have killed his brother, but he’d been seconds from pulling that trigger. Did he help them after that? Yes. Was it enough to make Steel forget that he almost lost his brother? Fuck no.

“I’m sure I’ve got some clothes you can fit in,” Steel muttered and took off toward his bedroom.

He stepped through the door opening and turned on the lights, stopping in his tracks when he saw the black duffel bag on his bed.

He looked over his shoulder at Kai.

“I thought you said you didn’t have anything?”

“Nope. I said I came straight here.” Kai pointed at the bag. “That’s my go-bag. It’s primarily money and guns.”

“Why am I not surprised?”

Steel shook his head and walked to his closet. He pulled out a backpack and whatever clothes he figured they would need. It hit him then that Kai would be wearing his clothes and he told his brain to shut the fuck up before that thought could evolve into something he couldn’t ignore.

He checked his phone when he got a message. It was from Ares telling him which safehouse to go to.

“Let’s go,” he said and headed for the door.

Kai followed him to the parking lot. He walked to his bike and handed his helmet to Kai who was looking at him funny as he took it. Steel put his backpack on the seat and grabbed Kai’s bag to shove it into his saddlebag. It barely fit in there.

Steel held up the backpack by the straps and turned toward Kai.

“Put this on.”

Kai didn’t say a word as he put his arms through the straps. He still hadn’t put on the helmet, so Steel took it from him and placed it on his head, securing the chinstrap. He wished he had

two helmets, but he'd never had a use for another one before now, so this would have to do.

Steel put on his sunglasses, mounted his bike, and waited for Kai to slide on behind him.

The man's silence was unnerving.

He hadn't even made a joke about being pressed against Steel. No lewd comments or anything.

God help him, but he found he preferred the sassy, annoying Kai over this.

Chapter Four

Kai

HIS ASS was numb. That ride had taken a lot longer than he'd been prepared for. He wasn't against a sore ass, but this was a wholly different kind than what he was used to. There'd been no pleasure involved. He hadn't even been able to enjoy being pressed up against Steel's back. He'd been too fucking wired and looking everywhere for a tail or any sign of something bad about to happen.

He was exhausted.

Steel pulled into a short driveway and stopped, then tapped Kai's thigh. Kai groaned as he slid off the bike. He tried to open the chinstrap, but that shit was hard. He was too fucking tired.

Steel must have noticed him struggling because he appeared in front of him and pushed his hands away to take over. He got the strap loose and pulled the helmet off Kai's head, turning to place it on the seat of the bike.

Kai waited while Steel got his bag out of the saddlebags, then followed him up the small stone path to the front door. There was a small front porch with two comfy-looking wicker chairs. He also noted that there were neighbors on either side of the house and across the street.

“Is this a safehouse? Don't the neighbors wonder why people are coming and going all the time?”

Steel looked over his shoulder at Kai and said, “These are all vacation homes. They just think we rent it out a lot.”

Well, wasn't that an easy way to hide in plain sight?

Steel walked to a planter and pulled out a small lock box from behind it. He opened it and grabbed the key from inside, then unlocked and opened the front door, and led the way inside. Kai followed him into the kitchen and dining room where he took Steel's backpack off and placed it on the dining table.

“You can have the master,” Steel said, pointing down the hallway to his right. “I'll take the guest room.”

“What? You don't wanna sleep with me?”

Steel's exasperated sigh was like music to Kai's ears.

“Remind me again why I'm doing this?” Steel muttered to himself.

“Because you're a good guy?”

Steel's eyes clashed with his, his gaze searing.

Fuck. If he kept looking into that bluish-gray, he might just melt into a puddle of lust.

Kai cleared his throat and tore his gaze away from Steel.

“Do you have a phone I can use?”

Steel gave him a withering look.

“No.”

Kai pressed his lips together for a second before saying, “I need to warn Nic. Uh, Hawk. You know him as Hawk. He's a King.”

“What makes you think whoever you’re running from won’t be tracing that call?”

“Um, because it’s from a phone they don’t know and I’m calling Nic’s husband?”

Steel looked like he was about to argue with him, but then he dropped his head back with a loud sigh and dug a phone out of his jacket pocket. The second it was in Kai’s hands, he dialed Elijah’s number.

Steel stayed where he was, staring Kai down. He was probably waiting to monitor Kai’s conversation, but he was shit out of luck unless he knew sign language.

He put the phone on the counter up against a vase with fake flowers so he could use both hands to sign.

Elijah’s face appeared on his screen and from his ruffled appearance, he’d definitely been asleep.

“Hi,” Kai signed, not at all surprised when all Elijah did was glare at him. “*I fucked up. Big surprise.*”

Elijah groaned and then he was moving, the phone switching between showing Elijah’s chest and the ceiling. A few seconds later, Nic’s face appeared next to Elijah’s. He had sleep lines across one cheek and was rubbing the heels of his hands into his eyes.

“*What?*” Nic signed.

They’d gotten into the habit of only using ASL over the phone for Elijah’s sake. It had taken him a while to learn between jobs, but he was pretty confident in his signing abilities now.

“Isaac put a hit on me.”

Nic’s eyes went wide, and he cursed. Kai glanced up at Steel when the man shifted. There was a slight bit of confusion flashing across the man’s face, but other than that, he kept his expression blank.

“How the fuck did that happen?” Nic asked while signing, though the only two words he signed were ‘fuck’ and ‘happen.’

“I killed someone I shouldn’t.”

At that, they both groaned.

“Hey now, there’s no need for that,” Kai said, acting affronted. He wasn’t. Not in the least. He was a dumbass, and they all knew it.

“I knew this would happen,” Nic signed.

Kai rolled his eyes at that. *“Sure.”*

He didn’t sign the next part, knowing Nic would prefer Elijah didn’t hear it. He pretended to scratch his nose so his hand would be covering his mouth and making it impossible for Elijah to read his lips.

“Isaac might go after you guys to get to me.”

“I’d like to see him try,” Nic growled low.

The deadly look in the man’s eyes had Kai taking an easy breath. Nic was willing to do what was necessary to protect himself and his man despite being out of the game for years. He was still an enforcer for the Kings, but that wasn’t exactly the same as being a hitman.

“We’re good. He won’t bother with us,” Hawk said. “Not when he’d get all the Kings on his ass.”

Kai nodded with a sigh.

He could see Nic walking out of the bedroom and once he was in the kitchen, Nic asked, “Are *you* safe?”

Kai felt his lips quirk and he looked up at Steel who narrowed his eyes at him.

“Steel’s taking care of me,” he said and grabbed the phone to turn it and show Nic the man, then turned it back around to grin at Nic.

“Taking care of you... how?”

“Are you asking if he’s buttering my bread? Stuffing my muffin? If he’s creamed my pie?”

Nic shook his head with a chuckle while Steel cursed under his breath.

“Trust you not to be subtle,” Nic said.

Kai shrugged. “I’m only subtle when I’m paid to be.”

Which was, of course, the exact wrong thing to say. Not to Nic. Nic knew the game too well to be offended by that. Steel, though? Guess he still wasn’t over Kai almost popping his brother. Honestly, that should’ve gotten him more cred with the guy than it obviously did. He *hadn’t* killed Tony, which was the important part. Right?

Steel’s jaw was clenched tight and while he tried to pull off casual, the way he turned and walked out of the room made it very fucking clear that he was pissed.

“Whoops.”

“What did you do now?”

Kai glanced back at his phone and pulled a face at Nic.

“I don’t appreciate your tone, Nic.”

Said tone made it very clear that Nic wasn’t surprised that he had, in fact, fucked up again.

“Remember how I was hired to take out Steel’s brother and sister-in-law? Yeah, I don’t think he found me joking about it as funny as we did.”

Nic blinked at him.

“*That* Steel?”

“What? You know more than one?” Kai quipped.

Nic shook his head slowly, then said, “Good luck with that.”

“Thanks,” Kai said dryly.

He was going to need a hell of a lot of luck, and not just with Steel. He’d be damned lucky if he got out of this shit alive.

Steel

Hearing Kai joke about killing people had just hit home in a way he hadn't expected. The anger had exploded inside him along with a whole lot of fear and trepidation. Why was he protecting a man who killed for a living?

It might be hypocritical of him seeing as he'd killed a good few people himself over the years, but that was so very fucking different. Those had been people trying to hurt or kill him and those he cared about. Kai did it for money.

He probably had a whole-ass catalogue of which ways you could hire him to kill people. Want it silent? Want it to look like an accident?

A part of him wondered what Kai's specialty was. Was it innocent people running from their psycho-husbands? The fact that he still didn't know why Kai had decided to help them instead of carrying out the hit on his brother and Trina was driving him fucking nuts. Was it because there was more money in taking out Trina's husband? Kai had gotten off with quite a lot of Benjamins that night.

Or was it because there was something good in him? He was almost certain by now that it hadn't been the video that had made Kai help them.

He shook his head, attempting to clear it from those thoughts. There was no use in speculating. He was here now. They were doing this. He'd chosen to help Kai and he would see it through even if it made him a complete dumbass.

“Hey.”

He snapped his head up and whirled around, his hand landing on the gun at his hip. Kai was standing in the doorway, looking a bit taken aback as he came to a sharp halt.

“What?” Steel growled before he could stop himself.

Kai bit into his bottom lip, looking unsure as his eyes flitted across Steel’s face.

“I just...” Kai’s hands flailed around for a second before he wrapped them around his middle, rubbing the toe of his shoe against the floor. “I just wanted to make sure you were okay.”

Steel bit back the harsh words at the tip of his tongue and calmly said, “I’m fine.”

Kai nodded, that lip back between his teeth.

Watching that had heat sparking inside him. That was another thing. Another piece of this fucked up puzzle in his mind. He *was* attracted to Kai. Very much so. He just...

Steel sighed and said, “Let’s go to bed.”

Kai’s eyes lit up and before he even said a word, Steel was already groaning.

“You wanna sleep with me?” Kai asked, brows wagging. “We wouldn’t be sleeping much, though.”

“No. Go to bed, Kai. Alone.”

Kai sighed melodramatically. “Why must you hurt me so?”

“Not sleeping with you is hurting you?” Why did he ask? Fuck. “No. Don’t answer. Get out.”

Kai was grinning from ear to ear as he backed out of the room with his hands up.

“Night, Steel.”

Steel fought back an eye-roll. “Good night.”

“And thank you for not shooting me,” Kai said before disappearing out the door.

Staying there with Kai alone would test his resolve, that was for sure. It was still a fifty-fifty split between whether he’d shoot him or fuck him.

Chapter Five

Steel

KAI WAS doing everything he could to annoy him. If he wasn't chewing his food too loud, he was walking around in barely any clothes, lest he forget the man was wearing *his* clothes. Then there was all the sexual innuendo.

Kai knew how to get under Steel's skin. He constantly made him question why he was doing this. Especially the part where he stayed right here with Kai when he could just leave him there.

They'd just eaten canned spaghetti and meatballs because neither of them wanted to cook and now, Kai was sitting across from him, playing with his spoon, licking sauce off it slowly while looking at Steel with a naughty gleam in his eyes.

"Stop it," Steel growled under his breath.

Kai smirked at him and asked, "Stop what?"

"You know what, you little shit."

That only made Kai laugh. He really was a little shit.

"What's the problem?" Kai asked, his eyes twinkling as he swirled his tongue around the spoon again before putting it back in the empty bowl in front of him.

"You're frustrating and annoying and a pain in my ass."

"Not yet," Kai said with a cheeky wink.

Steel groaned. “And we’re back to annoying.”

“Aww. You love me,” Kai said in a baby voice that had Steel itching to reach for his gun.

“It’s no wonder you’ve got a hit out on you. Actually, I’m surprised it hasn’t happened a lot earlier.”

That seemed to sour Kai’s mood a bit. His smile dropped and he looked thoughtful for a moment. Just long enough for Steel to worry that he might be having a stroke.

“I’m too good at my job,” Kai mumbled, eyes avoiding Steel’s gaze.

Steel felt a chill run down his spine and instinctually leaned back in his seat, away from Kai.

He jerked when Kai roughly pushed his chair back and hurried out of the room.

What... had just happened?

He slowly got up and walked in the direction Kai had headed. He found him outside, arms resting on top of the porch railing. His head was dropped forward, and even though Steel couldn’t see his face, Kai looked defeated. He’d never seen him like that. Kai could be serious. Even if he was mostly goofy and had that annoying ability to turn anything you said into something sexual.

This was different. There was just an energy of pure defeat around him.

Steel moved closer but didn’t say anything. He knew Kai was aware of his presence. The man wouldn’t have lasted long in his line of work if he wasn’t hyper-aware of his

surroundings at all times. It was kind of sad, actually. When had Kai ever really relaxed? Had he ever been able to come home and drop onto the couch to watch a movie without that niggling thought that danger might be lurking somewhere in the back of his mind? Had he ever been with someone where he hadn't had to consider that they might try to kill him at any point?

"I'd grown cold," Kai said. "Passive. I'd stopped caring."

Steel had a lump in his throat as he watched Kai turn around. Kai leaned back against the rail, hands holding onto it on either side of him. His eyes... Steel didn't know what he was looking into. It was like a storm of emotions.

"I just followed orders," Kai said, his voice soft and filled with what almost sounded like regret.

Steel moved before he realized what he was doing. He walked closer, stopping at one of the pillars to rest his shoulder against it.

Kai was opening up to him and even if he very likely wouldn't like what he had to say, a part of him knew he had to hear it.

"I was sent to kill Elijah. Nic—Uh—*Hawk's* husband."

Steel sucked in a surprised breath.

Kai nodded, then said, "Hawk and I worked together until he quit, and I hadn't seen him for years. When I came for Elijah, Hawk was there, of course. We fought. At least until we realized who we were fighting. We sorted it all out and kept Elijah safe. Or, rather, he kept himself safe."

Kai shook his head. “Doesn’t matter. What I’m trying to say is that seeing those two together made me realize just how little my life is worth.”

Kai looked so sad. He wanted to wrap his arms around him and yet, he didn’t.

“I made a deal with my boss. I don’t kill innocents. Not anymore.”

That lump in Steel’s throat grew bigger. He knew Kai was telling him he was trying to do better, but all he could think about was that ‘not anymore’ because it meant Kai *had* killed innocent people before. Probably a lot of them.

Kai blew out a breath.

“I realized your brother and Trina were innocent. That’s why I didn’t kill them. Either Trina’s husband lied to my boss, or my boss lied to me.”

Kai

Why was he unloading all of this shit onto Steel? He really shouldn't. Self-preservation wanted him to stop. His heart wanted him to keep going. It was in need of a hefty unburdening.

He raised his gaze from his shoes to take in Steel and the way the man was watching him. Even if Steel had tried to keep a neutral expression, his eyes were doing all the talking. There was a war raging in those steely blues, not unlike what he felt inside himself.

He was back to asking himself why, even if a part of him didn't want to know the answer. He'd always known he wanted Steel. He wanted a good hard fuck. This, right now? It was getting personal, and he didn't do personal. He didn't do feelings.

Elijah had been the only one who could make his defenses drop without him realizing it. There was something so inherently sweet and innocent about the guy that his usual defenses melted away around him.

Steel wasn't sweet or innocent. Quite the contrary. So why was he telling him things he hadn't told a single fucking soul before?

“What do you want me to do with this?” Steel asked, his voice completely flat and emotionless.

“I don't fucking know, Steel. I...” he trailed off, closing his eyes for a second as he dropped his head back. “Maybe I just

want you to know that I'm human, too?"

As he said the words, he realized just how true they were. How much he actually cared about what Steel thought of him. It fucking sucked. He'd never cared. Not like this.

"Fuck," he said under his breath and pushed away from the railing.

He headed past Steel toward the door and a hand wrapping around his wrist had him freezing to the spot. He hadn't felt Steel's touch often and was disappointed when he couldn't even enjoy it, because they were both on high alert.

He turned slowly and raised his gaze, his mouth drying out when he looked into fiery eyes.

"I don't want to believe that you're human. I really fucking don't. But I think I also needed to know. Just don't expect me to forget that you almost killed my brother."

Steel cut Kai off before he could protest.

"Don't even think about saying that you didn't 'almost' kill him because you wouldn't have missed if you'd taken the shot."

Kai pressed his lips together hard. Technically, he didn't have to say it, because Steel had summed it up just perfectly. Which made him feel like shit because he realized what a shitty thing that would've been to say.

He could let his pride suffer if it meant he didn't have to upset Steel. He owed him that much. He owed him a hell of a lot more than that, but he'd make it up to him someday. Somehow.

“I’ll shut up,” Kai agreed with a nod.

Steel’s chest moved with a deep breath as he returned Kai’s nod.

“Deal.”

Steel

When Kai shifted his weight, Steel realized that he was still holding him by the wrist. Instead of letting go, he held on tighter as he watched Kai's Adam's apple bobbing. There shouldn't have been anything sexy about it. There really shouldn't. So why did his breath catch in his throat?

Kai pulled free and turned, walking away, which was the last reaction Steel expected from him. He was starting to see what lay underneath all that bravado and fake cheerfulness. It wasn't pretty, and yet...

He ran his hands down his face, muttering under his breath, "Get a grip, Steel. Kai is the last fucking thing you need in your life."

He followed Kai inside and went back to the kitchen where he grabbed their bowls to put in the dishwasher. He'd only just put them in when he heard the buzzing of his phone. It was on the dining table where he'd left it when he'd gone after Kai.

He walked over to pick it up, unsurprised to see Ares' name on the screen.

"Ares. What's up?"

"Hey. Just wanted an update. What's the plan here, Steel?"

As if he knew. He was following his intuition, his conscience, and maybe a tiny bit his dick.

"Honestly? I don't know. I think that's up to Kai to decide."

"I thought you were just getting him situated?"

He could hear the accusation in Ares' voice and cringed. Yep. That had been the plan. That plan hadn't worked out for him so far.

"I don't think I can leave him here alone. He's just gonna get himself into more trouble."

Good. That was a perfectly reasonable explanation. Or, excuse. Shit.

Ares grunted, then said, "I got his new ID. Little John will stop by with it tomorrow."

"Great. Thank you."

"You're my brother."

Ares had already made it clear he wasn't helping for Kai's sake, nor did he think Steel should be helping him either. Ares was right, but he was also wrong. He couldn't explain it to him, though. He couldn't even make sense of it himself.

Kai was this... almost enigma that he wanted to solve. Well, he didn't want to, he simply felt compelled to. He could've walked straight out that door and never thought of Kai again, but he didn't. He couldn't. The fucker was under his skin and even though his confessions should've pushed Steel further away, it was as if Kai had only crawled deeper.

He leaned back against the counter and watched Kai for a moment. He was sitting on the couch, legs curled up under him and a quilt draped across his shoulders. He looked cozy. There was no sign of the façade he was used to seeing from Kai. Right then, Kai was just a man. He was vulnerable and... human.

He didn't understand how those so starkly different sides of Kai could coexist. It made him wonder. It made him want to ask questions and despite himself, he couldn't stop from asking them.

He walked into the living room and sat down in the armchair across from the couch. Kai gave him a curious look.

“How did it start? How the hell did you become a hitman for hire?”

Kai looked at him with such a sad smile it made his heart hurt for him.

“You figure out that the only thing you're good at in life is taking it from others.”

Steel felt a lump form in his throat. Sadness was radiating from Kai.

“What happened?”

He shouldn't ask. There was no reason for him to want to know because the only one he could think of was that he was trying to humanize Kai and that was the last thing he should be trying to do.

Kai needed to remain a deadly, scrupulous murderer in his mind. He had to, because if he wasn't...

“One thing led to another. I went from being a merc at a private contractor firm to something darker and once that black hole opened up, I just kept falling deeper into it. I didn't have a way out.”

A part of him understood. In the time Ronin had been president of their former club, things had been dark. They'd

done shit he'd never thought they'd do. *He* had done shit he'd never thought he would do. He hadn't gotten paid for it, though, and he wasn't even sure anymore if that was better or worse.

Steel cleared his throat.

“And how many innocent people have you killed?”

“Enough.” Kai raised his head, gaze burning as he stared into Steel's eyes. “If I've taken even one innocent life, then the answer is one too many.”

And there Kai went and proved to him yet again that he *was* human. That there was something, if not good, then at least remorseful, inside him.

Kai straightened, his expression brightening.

“Enough talk about me,” Kai said, eyes gleaming with that sassiness he knew to expect from him. “Did you always want to be a biker or is it small-dick-syndrome?”

Steel snorted despite himself and shook his head at Kai. He wasn't touching that with a ten-foot-pole. Not a fucking chance.

“Oh, come on,” Kai whined and scooted closer to Steel.

Steel gave him a stern look and said, “I'm not showing you my dick.”

The joyous laughter spilling from Kai had him forgetting to breathe for a second.

“Then at least tell me your name, huh?”

He gave Kai a disbelieving look.

“Don’t tell me you knew where I lived but didn’t look at the name on the mailbox?”

Kai’s wry smile did something to Steel’s insides.

Kai shrugged. “Nah. It seemed like one of those things you have to earn in order to know.”

“You think you’ve earned it?”

Kai gave him a bashful smile and batted his lashes at him. Steel simply raised a brow at him in response.

“It was worth a try,” Kai said with a shrug.

Steel shook his head and found himself smiling at Kai. Yeah, the man was definitely under his skin. Whatever walls he’d put up, whatever lines he’d drawn, Kai was slowly but surely blasting his way through them all.

Chapter Six

Steel

HE WOKE in bed, his throat parched, and he wouldn't be surprised if he'd woken himself up by snoring.

He groaned as he sat up and rubbed his eyes. A glance at the alarm clock on the nightstand told him it was only two in the morning. He'd barely slept more than a few hours.

He threw the blanket aside and stood from the bed. He walked his tired ass into the kitchen where he grabbed a glass and filled it with water from the fridge dispenser. He drank it all down, the cold water feeling so damn nice.

The moon had to be almost full from the amount of light it shone through the skylight. It was bathing the whole kitchen and living area in a soft white glow.

He wasn't surprised that he couldn't sleep. His mind had been spinning with all things Kai the whole evening. Kai had been quiet. He'd barely looked at Steel who should've appreciated it. He hadn't. He'd gotten almost mad at himself when he'd realized he actually liked the annoying Kai. That he'd missed the teasing and endless innuendo.

He put the empty glass in the sink and headed back to his room. He rounded the corner and walked straight into Kai. He didn't move but Kai wobbled, and his hands went to Kai's hips on instinct.

“What the hell...” He forgot how to speak for a moment when he realized there was warm skin under his fingers. “Are you naked?”

Kai blinked those dark eyes up at him, a sheen of pink across his cheeks that was barely visible in the moonlight.

“Uh. Yeah. I sleep in the nude.”

“Why?” When Kai opened his mouth, Steel hurried to say, “Don’t answer that.”

Kai’s brow scrunched up and that shouldn’t have been adorable, but most importantly, why the hell was he still holding onto Kai?

As if his fingers had a life of their own, they squeezed Kai’s hips, the skin feeling hot and soft under his touch.

Kai gasped, gaze dropping between them for a second before he looked back up into Steel’s eyes.

They were too close. His heart was hammering in his chest. Fuck. He could feel Kai getting aroused against his thigh.

“Steel?” Kai asked, voice sounding husky and so fucking needy. Not like all of those times when he’d played with Steel. When he’d practically thrown himself at him. This was different. This... felt real.

“This is a bad idea.”

That didn’t mean he wasn’t gonna do it. He just wanted it on the record.

“I think I like your bad ideas,” Kai said, some of that sparkle back in his eyes.

Steel sucked in a deep breath, then thought to hell with it and slammed his mouth over Kai's. His lips were soft and full, and he was kissing Steel back with the same desperation he felt.

Kai rolled his hips against Steel, his erection very obvious by now. It hadn't taken long for Steel's dick to get the memo. He felt almost lightheaded from how fast his blood was rushing south.

He slid his hands from Kai's hips to his ass, squeezing those delicious globes before he hauled Kai against him and lifted him up. Kai's legs wrapped around Steel's waist and he turned, pushing Kai against the wall.

Kai

Steel's mouth was... *nrrgh*. Fuck. It felt so good. *Steel* felt so good. Steel's hands squeezing his ass. Their hard dicks trapped between them. If Steel stopped, he would die. Just straight up fucking die.

Steel pushed his hips into Kai, the thin fabric of Steel's sleep pants the only thing between them. He wanted them gone, like right now. He tugged at the waistband, but he couldn't do much to pull them down from where Steel had him pressed against the wall.

He whined against Steel's mouth.

Steel reached between them to push his pants down just enough to free his cock. It felt amazing against his, so hot and hard.

He hadn't thought Steel would actually give in. Especially after his confessions earlier.

Steel rolled his hips, his dick sliding against Kai's and turning him into a gibbering mess. Steel stuck his tongue down his throat to shut him up which... fair enough. He wasn't complaining.

Steel fucking owned him with that tongue. He was controlling everything. Every move. Every fucking thought, because all he could think about was Steel. The man was all-consuming.

Kai slid a hand between them and wrapped it around both their cocks. Touching Steel like that was insane. He could feel

an obsession taking hold. He wanted that dick in his mouth. In his ass. It was so fucking hot. Steel was so damn hot and sexy. The man set his blood on fire. He'd been lusting after him since they met. He hadn't exactly been quiet about it, either. He'd made it very obvious if all the scathing looks he'd received from Steel were anything to go by.

He used the precome that was already drizzling all over their cocks to ease the friction as he started working his hand over them.

Steel made a growling sound from deep in his chest when Kai pressed the pad of his thumb across the slit of his pulsing dick, and it was probably the hottest thing he'd ever heard.

Steel thrust against him, his cock sliding against Kai's, and holy fuck, but it felt so goddamned good.

Steel buried his face in Kai's neck, teeth sinking into his skin. He bit down hard as he shook against Kai and hot come covered their cocks and Kai's stomach. Feeling that along with that bite of pain had Kai throwing his head back as he followed Steel over that edge into blissful pleasure.

He gasped for breath, eyes closing on their own volition as he felt like he became weightless for a moment. It was amazing. Despite neither of them lasting that long, it felt like they'd been waiting for that moment forever. Perhaps if you considered the past few years foreplay, they pretty much had waited forever.

They were a sweaty mess and he liked being pressed against a sweaty Steel a whole lot more than he'd ever admit to the man. He ran his fingers through Steel's hair, loving the way the soft strands felt between his fingers.

“I don’t know whether to thank you or curse you,” Kai said, keeping his voice low so as not to startle Steel who seemed to be almost in a trance. He wasn’t ready to know if that was from pleasure or regret, but they couldn’t stay there all night. He didn’t mind being stuck to Steel but dry come wasn’t pleasant to get out of... well, anything.

Steel hummed and pulled back just enough to meet Kai’s gaze.

Kai smiled crookedly at him. Who gave the man permission to look that hot when he should’ve looked as worn out as Kai felt?

“Why?” Steel croaked out.

“Because I’ll need you to do that again.”

Steel blinked at him, some of the haze lifting right before he dropped his gaze to the mess between them.

“I won’t take no for an answer,” Kai said. “Unless you actually mean it, because *yay*, consent, you know—”

Steel swallowed the rest of Kai’s words with his mouth, his lips soft and warm and just perfect. He never wanted Steel to stop kissing him.

The way Steel instantly owned his mouth should’ve freaked him out, but instead, he leaned into it. He enjoyed the shit out of it. There was just something so fucking hot about Steel being in control of him, in control of his body. He’d never surrendered himself like that to anyone before. He was afraid he might get addicted.

When Steel’s lips disappeared, he found himself sighing. He blinked his eyes open and found Steel looking at him

intently with those gorgeous steel blues of his.

Steel stepped back and Kai unwrapped himself from his body with much disappointment. He'd much rather stay, but he knew he couldn't.

"Go to bed," Steel said.

Kai didn't move save to frown at Steel. He was feeling like a kid, afraid to ask for permission because he might get a no.

Steel ran his gaze over Kai's face, a deep line between his brows that suddenly smoothed out.

"Come on," Steel said and pushed Kai toward his room with a hand on the small of his back. Steel's room, that was.

It shouldn't have made him this giddy, but it did.

Steel

He felt too good to consider the consequences of what they'd just done. He'd face those tomorrow. Right now, he needed to get them both cleaned off so he could get Kai into bed with him.

He kept his hand on Kai's back, shifting between watching where they were going and running his gaze down Kai's back to that magnificent ass he knew he'd be dreaming about tonight. If he was stupid enough to do this again, he hoped he'd get the chance to take that ass. He had a feeling being inside Kai would be fucking glorious.

They stepped into his bedroom and Kai sped up, heading straight for the bed. Steel caught up with him, stopping him by wrapping his arm around his middle and pulling him back against his chest. He lowered his head to press his nose into Kai's hair, loving the smell of his shampoo on Kai.

"You're not getting on my clean sheets like that," he rumbled low against Kai's ear, punctuating his words by rubbing their come further into Kai's skin.

Kai hummed and leaned back against Steel, his body feeling more relaxed than Steel had ever seen before.

"You gon' clean me up?" Kai asked, thrusting his ass back against Steel's dick that was desperately trying to get back up, but he was completely spent already.

Steel found himself smiling against Kai's hair.

"Oh, I'll clean you."

He pulled Kai toward the en-suite and turned on the light. He headed for the shower and the second he turned on the water, he pushed Kai under the cold spray.

Kai gasped, looking at Steel with disbelief, his mouth hanging open.

“You shit,” Kai sputtered.

Steel huffed out a laugh.

“You’d better join me in here or else,” Kai said, not looking frightening in the least as he shivered and made a face at Steel.

“Oh, I was planning on it.” He smirked at Kai. “Once the water gets hot.”

Kai splashed water on Steel who jumped back with a laugh. The water didn’t feel cold, so he pushed down his pants and stepped under the spray, crowding Kai against the tile wall.

He put his hands on the wall behind Kai and lowered his head, catching Kai’s mouth with his. He tasted so damned good.

Kai groaned into his mouth, tongue tangling languidly with Steel’s.

He reluctantly pulled back to grab a handful of soap to wash them both with. Kai looked up at him with big, dark eyes filled with heat. Steel turned Kai so his back was against his chest and rubbed the soap over his stomach and chest.

He pressed a kiss to the spot below Kai’s ear and loved the way he shivered at the touch.

He moved his hands all over Kai’s body. He even slipped his fingers between his cheeks, lightly brushing that hole he

wanted so desperately to fill with his cock. With his come.

Kai shook against him, the whimper falling from his lips like music to Steel's ears. Kai was completely relaxed, dazed almost, as he leaned on Steel and let him do whatever he wanted to him. He'd never thought he'd see this side of Kai. He hadn't even considered that this side of him even existed.

Fingers threaded through his hair and then his head was pulled down and Kai's lips met his. The water was beating down on them, turning colder by the minute but he barely noticed because all he could think about, all he could feel, was Kai.

"Don't be such a tease," Kai muttered against his lips.

Steel couldn't help but grin as he slid his hand across Kai's stomach and found something very hard waiting for him. Kai turned in his arms and looked up at him, wet hair plastered to his forehead. There was nothing but stark need in those browns and Steel intended to give Kai exactly what he needed.

He reached around Kai to turn off the water, then lowered himself to his knees. He hadn't gotten a good look earlier, but now that he had Kai's cock right in his face, he wished he had. Their cocks sliding together must've painted quite an erotic picture.

He wrapped his left hand around Kai's hard length, stroking him with short, slow movements.

A curse fell from Kai's lips.

Steel tilted his head back, looking up at Kai. The man looked almost lost in his haze of lust, but he was watching Steel intently, need burning in his eyes.

Steel wrapped his lips around the head of Kai's cock, groaning deeply at the feel of him. The taste of him.

"Holy fuck," Kai gasped.

He started moving on Kai's cock, not surprised when fingers slipped into his hair. Kai was already moaning, the sounds he made driving Steel absolutely fucking crazy.

He ran his hand up Kai's thigh, loving the feel of soft skin and hard muscles under his fingers. He lifted Kai's leg, propping it up over his shoulder. Kai grabbed onto the shower caddy and his grip on Steel's hair tightened.

Steel brushed his fingers up Kai's leg, then around to his ass. He slipped a finger between his cheeks and pressed it against Kai's hole, not caring that he'd be going in dry because he knew Kai would stop him if he didn't want him to.

"Yes," Kai hissed. "Please. Fuck."

He pushed inside while taking Kai's cock to the back of his throat. Kai's moan was loud. He sounded so fucking sexy. So desperate.

He hadn't thought he'd be able to get hard again so fast but the need coursing through him had his cock going from half-hard to hard as a rock.

"You're so fucking hot right now," Kai said, sounding almost breathless.

Kai was the hot one.

He'd thought about sex with Kai more often than he cared to admit, but none of his fantasies came close to the way this felt. Having Kai right in front of him, finger inside him, cock

deep in his mouth, it was mesmerizing. It was almost carnal, the need he felt for him.

Kai shook and hot come filled Steel's mouth. His eyes fell shut as he moaned around Kai, loving every fucking second of it.

His finger slipped from Kai's hole as he let his leg drop off his shoulder. Hands landed on his shoulders, nails digging into his skin.

"Holy fuck," Kai breathed.

Steel opened his eyes and fuck if his dick didn't pulse at the sight of Kai in the throes of pleasure. He looked beautiful. Free. His head was thrown back against the wall, water dripping down his body. His lips were parted on a silent gasp, his chest moving rapidly.

He could've stayed right there on his knees in front of Kai forever, watching him, but Kai had other plans.

Hands wrapped around his upper arms and helped pull him up. He pushed Kai against the tile wall with his whole body and slammed his mouth over his. He licked into Kai's mouth, his tongue finding Kai's. The man tasted of sins and bad ideas. He couldn't get enough of it.

He moved his lips to the side of Kai's neck, hips thrusting desperately against him.

"Come on me," Kai said, hand slipping between them to wrap around Steel's hard length.

He pulled back enough to look between them, watching his cock sliding through Kai's fist. He rocked his hips, groaning when Kai tightened his grip.

“That’s it. Give it to me,” Kai said, voice husky and his tone desperate.

He cupped Kai’s jaw in his hand and after staring into his eyes for a second, he took his mouth in a hard kiss. He sucked Kai’s bottom lip between his teeth and bit down, and Kai’s responding moan and full-body shiver had his orgasm slamming into him.

He kept thrusting into Kai’s hand, watching as ropes of come hit Kai’s hand and chest. He feared seeing his come on Kai’s skin would quickly become an obsession because, fuck, but that was the hottest thing he’d ever seen in his life.

He buried his face in Kai’s neck, breathing in his heady scent. He was an idiot. Kai was right. He was going to need to do that again. He didn’t want to stop doing it. His orgasm had been incredible, but watching Kai come? Fuck. He could get addicted to that sight.

The water turned on and they both jumped at the cold splash.

Kai was looking up at him with a sly smile.

“I didn’t quite think that through,” Kai said with a low chuckle.

“Did you expect it to still be warm?”

Kai nodded, then moved to be fully under the spray to wash off Steel’s come. He found that as much as he liked seeing Kai naked, he sure as fuck didn’t like watching him wash his come off him. He liked it on Kai. He wanted his come on every single inch of the man, which was... not good. It was very bad. His inner caveman needed to take a leave of absence. At

least while they were at the safehouse. He couldn't afford to think that way. Not about Kai.

He shoved down that annoying part of his mind that wanted to remind him that he'd never felt like that with anyone else before and stepped out of the shower. He grabbed a towel for each of them. He'd already dried off when Kai turned off the water, and handed him a towel, liking the soft look in Kai's eyes way too much as he took it.

He walked into the bedroom and dropped onto the bed, a smile finding his lips when Kai crawled up next to him and burrowed in close. He wrapped an arm around Kai, loving the feel of the man's weight half on top of him.

He would enjoy this for as long as he could, which was likely until morning because this was a terrible idea to begin with, and keeping it going was even worse. But, right then, it was the best damned idea he'd ever had.

He tightened his hold on Kai who was already drifting off and closed his eyes, taking in the sweet smell of his soap on Kai. He liked it when Kai smelled like him. He liked it way too much.

Chapter Seven

Steel

HE WAS hunched over the kitchen counter, trying—and failing—to convince himself that last night had been a mistake. As much as he wanted it to be just a stupid mistake so he could easily move on, he knew it wasn't. At least, it wasn't that obvious of a mistake.

Sleeping with Kai... yeah. That definitely shouldn't have happened. That was what it was. The thing that was really bothering him was that when he'd woken up and seen Kai next to him in bed, he'd smiled.

Anyone else waking up to an assassin in their bed definitely wouldn't have fucking smiled.

He shouldn't trust him. He was a trained killer who had a bag filled with guns, knives, and God only knew what else in his room. For all sense and purpose, he didn't have a single reason to trust Kai, but he did.

He'd never seen Kai vulnerable before but finding him asleep on his couch, looking lost and desperate, had changed everything for him.

A groan fell from his lips.

This whole thing was confusing.

The sound of a bike pulling up in front of the house should've made him excited. It didn't. He knew he'd have to explain himself and he couldn't.

He walked to the door and pulled it open just before Little John made it to the front porch. He looked up and smiled at Steel who did his best to return it.

“Hey.”

“Hey. I got your package.”

Little John waved the manila envelope in front of him.

Steel stepped aside to let Little John in and after closing the front door, he led the way into the kitchen.

“You want something to drink?”

“I’d kill for some coffee.”

He’d already put a pot on, and when it was done he poured them both a cup. He handed Little John his mug before taking a sip of his own coffee. The caffeine hit was great. The confused look Little John gave him wasn’t.

Little John leaned his hip against the counter and held his steaming mug in front of him with both hands.

“So, what’s the deal with this guy?”

Steel arched a brow at him. He knew exactly who and what Kai was. That wasn’t what he was asking and Steel didn’t exactly want to answer that particular question.

“What’s going on, brother?”

“He needed help.”

Little John raised his brows and cocked his head to the side. “Uh-huh. Ares says hi, by the way.”

“Oh, I bet he does,” Steel drawled.

Ares hadn't exactly kept quiet about how he felt about Kai or Steel helping him.

Kai

He'd slept like the dead, which was extremely unusual for him. Steel had worn him out. Mmm. Steel. He turned over in the bed, reaching for the man and coming up empty. A disappointed whine escaped him before he could bite it back.

He sat up with a groan and ran his hands down his face.

He got up slowly, sifting through Steel's dresser to find something of his to wear. He was kinda getting addicted to the way the man smelled. It was weird. He'd never cared what someone smelled like before. He'd never cared, period.

Steel was doing weird things to him. He wasn't sure if he liked it or not. Well, some of it he certainly liked. He'd never been much for being manhandled and carried around—too risky—but when Steel had pressed him against that wall last night? Fuuuck. He'd never been so turned on in his life. He'd come so fucking hard. And then, after that, Steel had held him against his body from behind several times.

He hadn't been lying when he'd told Steel he needed him to do it again, because he was definitely addicted to the man by now.

Kai pulled out a pair of sweats that had drawstrings. They'd be too big but at least he could cinch them in enough that they wouldn't fall down. As much as he wanted to show Steel his goods, he wasn't exactly sure where they stood after last night. It was better to play it safe.

He put on the sweats and headed for the kitchen. He could hear voices, Steel's and a man he didn't recognize. He didn't like that he'd slept right through someone entering the house. He didn't like it at all.

He walked down the hallway and found Steel leaning against the counter. A man with long, dark hair in a ponytail was standing across from him. They were talking and neither noticed him, so he decided to listen in a bit.

“He told me to tell you to get your head outta your ass,” the man—who was definitely a Disciple considering his biker vest—said to Steel.

Steel grunted and shook his head.

“Do you even *know* why you're helping him?”

Kai felt a heavy thump in his chest and rubbed his hand over it in an attempt to ease the sudden pain there. He didn't want to hear Steel's answer to that. He really didn't. Yet, he stayed right where he was.

“I know it doesn't make much sense,” Steel said, running a hand through his hair.

“No. No, it really doesn't.”

“I just... He asked for help, and I couldn't say no.”

“You've already helped,” the Disciple said, pointing at a small envelope lying on the counter next to Steel. “You can leave now.”

Steel crossed his arms over his chest and Kai was too tense to even appreciate the arm porn.

“I can’t. I’m honestly surprised he’s managed to keep himself alive this long. I don’t want his death on my conscience.”

Steel’s *friend* shook his head with a sigh, then said, “So you’re staying?”

“I am. I need to keep him out of trouble.”

“You really wanna stick around for this guy?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t get it.”

“It’s probably the orgasms,” Kai quipped and started toward them.

The asshole jumped and snapped his head toward Kai while Steel gave him a less-than-pleased look. He didn’t care.

He walked up to Steel and when the man’s body relaxed a bit as he neared, he thought to hell with it and kissed him.

Steel didn’t move, but then Kai ran his hands up his chest and leaned against him, and within seconds, Steel’s arms wrapped around him, pulling him closer.

Steel didn’t open his mouth for him, but Kai hadn’t expected him to. He just teased him a bit, licking at the seams of his lips.

Kai pulled back and batted his lashes up at Steel who still looked annoyed, but he tended to like that look on him. It was how he knew he got under the man’s skin.

Kai moved back and reached for the fridge door, opening it to find something to drink.

Steel cleared his throat.

“Uh. Kai, this is—”

“Don’t care,” Kai said, barely keeping from snapping.

Steel’s sigh was almost satisfying. Almost.

“*Riiight*. I’mma head out.”

Kai looked over his shoulder at the guy and gave him a dark look. “Good idea.”

“I’ll see you, Steel.”

Steel gave the man a nod and then they both watched him walk to the front door and the second it closed behind him, Steel turned to Kai.

“Really?” Steel asked, looking exasperated.

Kai cocked a brow at him and took a long drink of the OJ bottle he’d taken out of the fridge. He put it down on the counter much slower than he needed to.

“He was a dick.”

“*You’re* being a dick.”

Kai wagged his brows at him.

“You like my dick.”

Steel’s face went blank for a second, a slight tinge of red spreading up the sides of his neck.

“God. You’re so fucking...”

“Sexy? Handsome? Bendy?”

Steel made a growling sound and grabbed Kai by the waist to tug him up against his body. Kai tilted his head back to grin

up at him.

“Frustrating,” Steel rumbled and slammed his mouth onto Kai’s.

The kiss was rough and so fucking hot. He needed more. So much more. He needed that tongue all over his body, those lips everywhere Steel could reach.

“You’re dangerous,” Steel mumbled against his lips.

Kai hummed in agreement. He *was* a dangerous man, though he doubted that was what Steel meant.

Steel

Kai was... making him lose his mind. And his morals. Seemed like he was doing it quite easily as well.

He slipped his fingers into the waistband of Kai's sweatpants. Kai was wearing his clothes, smelling like him, and he liked it way too much. The growl forming in his chest brought him right back to reality.

He pulled back and cleared his throat.

Kai looked up at him with all kinds of promises in his eyes and he knew he had to shut down whatever this was between them.

Steel grabbed the envelope off the counter and handed it to Kai.

“Your new papers.”

Kai blinked at him, then took the envelope and opened it. He pulled out his new ID and said, “Aww, they used my good picture.”

He didn't know how they'd even gotten a picture of Kai. He doubted there were many floating around on the internet. Auggie had probably worked his magic or Hawk had helped him dig one up.

“We can stay here for at least a week. Then we've gotta move.”

Kai nodded, a smile spreading on his lips.

“You coming with me?”

Steel froze. Fuck. He'd said *we*. He was starting to panic and not because he wasn't going with Kai, but because a part of him knew he *would* be. He couldn't leave him. He hadn't even been able to make himself leave before they'd...

He was fucked now.

Steel cleared his throat.

"I guess."

Kai was in front of him before he could even blink, his hands sliding up Steel's chest.

"So, it *is* the orgasms, huh?"

That cheeky smile almost had Steel forgetting why he needed to keep his distance. Kai was dangerous. Caring for the man was even more dangerous.

"Kai," he growled under his breath.

Did it make Kai back away? No. Of course, not. He put his lips against the side of Steel's neck instead, nipping and licking and fuck... warmth enveloped his dick through his pants, Kai's hand rubbing slowly across the growing bulge.

"You wanna put that inside me, don't you?" Kai asked, lips brushing Steel's ear. "You want me to ride it until I come all over both of us."

A shaky breath escaped Steel and despite how interested his cock was in making that fantasy come true, he stepped back.

"None of that," he said, his voice way too breathy for his words to be believable. "It's not happening again."

Kai crossed his arms over his chest and raised his brows at him, the smile on his lips downright wicked.

“We’ll see about that.”

Steel turned and walked away because he wasn’t sure he’d be able to keep his word with Kai right there within reach. He needed a cold shower and to remind himself who and what Kai was.

All he had to do was keep his distance and he’d be just fine. He could deal with Kai’s advances. He’d be fine.

Chapter Eight

Steel

HE'D BEEN mad at his brother for not being able to keep his hands off another man's wife, but he was starting to understand now. Not touching Kai was beyond frustrating.

Obviously, his brother and his girlfriend's situation had been very different. Trina had been in an abusive relationship with a psycho for a husband who'd nearly killed her several times.

His brother and Trina had fallen in love and once Tony found out that Trina was in danger, he'd called Ares. He was still pissed at them all for keeping the truth from him, but he knew the most important thing was that his brother and Trina were safe and alive.

Knowing that the only reason Kai hadn't killed them was because he saw them as innocent wasn't as comforting as Kai probably thought it'd be when he'd told him. What if he'd deemed a pair of cheaters not so innocent? What then? Would he have killed them?

Steel knew from experience that barely anyone was innocent. Even kids could be cruel. That Tony and Trina fit a hitman's definition of innocence was pure fucking luck.

He turned his head, gaze landing on Kai who was draped across the couch like he was Rose in Titanic. He'd taken his shirt off as well. At least he still had pants on. Seeing the man

half-naked was enough to make him waver. He remembered his come all over that chest every time he caught a glimpse of it, and it did nothing to convince himself he should stay away from Kai. Quite the opposite.

Kai looked up, his brown eyes clashing with Steel's as heat filled them.

Every single doubt went out the window when Kai looked at him like that. There was something about Kai that simply drew him in. He knew he was better off staying away, but that wouldn't stop him.

Kai got off the couch and the twinkle appearing in his eyes had Steel groaning before Kai even got close.

“You gon' stare at me all day or are you gonna let me ride that big dick of yours?” Kai asked, wagging his brows suggestively.

Steel looked skyward and shook his head, cursing under his breath.

Kai was testing his resolve. He had all day.

Warmth spread through his chest when Kai put his hand there.

Shit.

Something almost soft appeared in Kai's eyes, the corners crinkling as he smiled up at Steel.

“Did that sound like I only want your dick? 'Cause I kinda want the rest of you, too.”

Steel found himself swallowing hard.

Jesus.

Kai wasn't kidding. There was nothing but earnestness in those deep brown eyes.

Kai was about to say something more, so he cut him off with a hard kiss. The second he felt those lips against his, heat spread through his whole body.

He felt that possessive part of him that wanted to mark Kai rear its head and he didn't fucking care to push it back down.

Kai

Steel was kissing him like he was air and he couldn't breathe. It was intoxicating. It was fucking addictive. This man was utterly and thoroughly making Kai addicted to him.

Hands slid down his back to his ass, grabbing both cheeks and jerking him closer. The hardness he felt against him had a moan falling from his lips.

"I can't wait to be inside you," Steel said, lips brushing Kai's ear.

He froze against Steel, pulling back to glare at the man.

"What? You think because I'm smaller, because I'm twinkish, that makes me the bottom?"

Steel gave him a deadpan look and said, "No. I thought you'd prefer to bottom because you've told me you wanted to ride my cock like five times. Today."

Kai pressed his lips together and closed his eyes for a few seconds while he counted to ten. Or tried to. He only made it to four before he made a sound in the back of his throat and said, "It wasn't five times."

Steel arched a brow at him.

"Not *today*," Kai muttered under his breath.

"I guess the real question is, *do* you want to ride my cock?"

How was this man so fucking infuriating and yet he did still, in fact, want to ride that big cock of his.

“Shut up,” he said and slammed his mouth over Steels.

When Steel lifted him, he wrapped his legs around the man’s hips. He didn’t even care that he was being carried around because Steel felt too fucking good against him.

He slid his fingers into Steel’s hair and tugged his head a bit to the side to give himself better access to put his lips on his skin. He scraped his teeth down the side of his neck and Steel’s low groan did things to him. Delicious things.

So, he did it again.

This time, he got a groan *and* was slammed against a wall. So. Fucking. Hot.

Steel’s hands squeezed Kai’s ass and he rolled his hips, their hard cocks rubbing against each other. Their clothes were in the way, though. Fuck, he wanted them off. He wanted to see all of Steel.

He reached between them to grab the hem of Steel’s shirt, tugging it up as far as he could. Fingers threaded through his hair, grabbing a handful and then his head was jerked back. He grunted, not liking that he didn’t have Steel’s skin under his lips anymore. He didn’t have time to complain before Steel put his mouth on Kai’s throat, mouthing his Adam’s apple.

“Steel,” he groaned, eyes falling shut as he hummed.

Urgh. This man did incredible things to him without even trying.

It wasn’t fucking fair.

“Bedroom,” he gasped out.

Steel pulled back, the heat in his eyes as he looked at Kai making his pulse speed up.

Steel put his hands back on Kai's ass and pulled away from the wall. Kai put his hands and lips to good use while Steel walked them into the nearest bedroom. Anywhere he could touch, anywhere he could kiss and lick, he did.

Steel stopped moving and hands slid up his back. He released his hold on Steel's waist, letting his legs drop down. He slid down Steel's body until his feet landed on the floor.

He grabbed Steel's shirt and pulled it over his head, dropping it onto the floor so he could get his hands on the man's chest. He ran his hands over warm skin and tight muscles. He was busy brushing his fingers across Steel's hard nipples when the man hissed and grabbed him by the wrists.

Kai tilted his head back, his dick getting impossibly harder when he saw the intense lust burning in Steel's eyes.

“On the bed.”

Kai was crawling onto it the next second, questioning his sanity. Why was he following this man's orders? Why did he *like* following them so much?

He rolled onto his back, propping himself up onto his elbows so he could see Steel. He nearly swallowed his tongue when Steel slowly flicked open the button on his jeans, then proceeded to lower the zipper even slower.

He was trying to kill him. Obviously.

Bastard.

Kai pushed down his sweats and kicked them off, his cock standing tall and so very hard. He wrapped a hand around his dick and stroked slowly, loving the way Steel watched him, desire clear in his eyes.

His ass clenched in anticipation when Steel finally dropped his pants and Kai got to see that big cock of his. He couldn't wait to feel it inside him. He couldn't wait for that inevitable burn and stretch.

“Wait. Do we have supplies?”

He didn't mind going without lube. Surely there was something else in this place they could use. Condoms, though? Probably not a good idea to go without, no matter how hot that sounded.

The wicked smile Steel aimed his way had his heart fluttering and his cock twitching.

“We do,” Steel said, his voice all growly, and fuck if that didn't turn him on even more.

Steel walked into the bathroom, giving Kai a great view of his spectacular ass. When he returned, he gave him an even better view. Steel's cock was everything. It was thick and big and beautiful. He wanted one of those glass replicas of it because damn, but that deserved to be on display on a shelf somewhere.

Steel walked to the bed, dropping a tiny bottle of lube and some condoms onto it.

Kai crawled to the edge of the bed and grabbed Steel by the hips to keep from falling on his face as he lowered his head to wrap his lips around Steel's cock. He swallowed him down,

loving how wide his lips had to spread to take him into his mouth. Steel tasted like sex and debauchery. His favorite things.

A hand took hold of his head and Steel snapped his hips forward, driving his cock deep down Kai's throat over and over. He didn't care that he was gagging because it was hot as hell. Steel could use him any way he wanted.

The taste of hot, salty precome filled his mouth and he felt his own cock leaking. He wasn't sure which of them moaned first.

Steel pulled out of his mouth and said, "Lie down."

Kai moved back on the bed to lie on his back, grinning when Steel pushed between his legs. Steel leaned down, hand finding Kai's hair, and pressed their mouths together.

When Steel licked against his lips, he parted them for him without hesitation.

Kai groaned at the thought of Steel tasting himself on his tongue. Going by Steel's deep growl, he liked it, too.

He whimpered when Steel sat back and reached for him, trying to bring him back, but Steel grabbed his hands and pressed them into the mattress above his head.

"Patience," Steel said, his voice deep and husky.

Kai shuddered, loving Steel's bossy side way too much.

"Hurry the fuck up," he said and licked his lips in an attempt to savor the taste of Steel.

The look in Steel's eyes was damned near feral as he lowered his head and licked across Kai's lips. He tried to lift

up to meet Steel's mouth, but Steel kept him pressed against the bed. He arched his back and cursed under his breath.

"Stay," Steel ordered.

Steel released Kai's hands and moved back. Kai heard him open the lube and anticipation had his blood thrumming, the desire burning strong inside him.

His hips jerked and he gasped when heat surrounded his cock and fingers pressed against his hole at the same time.

"Fuck," he moaned, pushing up on his elbows to see Steel. He looked really fucking good with a dick in his mouth.

The first finger entering him had him groaning, the second had him trembling. Steel was just the right kind of rough with him. He loved every second of it. He wished they were recording it just so he could see how debauched he was certain they looked like.

Steel sucked on the head of Kai's cock and worked his fingers in and out of his hole fast and hard. It was too much, but also not enough.

"More," he gasped out, unsure of what he needed more of, but Steel didn't seem to have the same problem.

Steel added another finger, and that stretch was fucking heavenly. He couldn't wait for Steel to replace his fingers with his cock. He knew getting fucked by Steel would change his life. There was no way it couldn't. Not with how turned on he was or how much he wanted this. He'd never been so desperate for someone's cock before, but then again, he'd always been desperate for Steel.

Kai grabbed his legs under the knees and spread himself wider for Steel who let Kai's dick fall from his lips.

"Fuck," Steel hissed, eyes on what he was doing to Kai.

He slowed down his movements, making Kai drop his head back onto the mattress with a curse. He closed his eyes, lips parting on a gasp as he felt everything. Every part of him Steel touched.

"You ready?" Steel asked.

"Fuck, yeah."

He was so fucking ready. He'd been ready since they met.

The fingers disappeared, leaving him feeling oddly empty.

Steel grabbed the condom and Kai watched through hooded eyes as he tore the packet open and rolled the condom down his cock.

Kai rolled over before Steel could tell him to and arched his back, shoving his ass at Steel who ran his hands over his cheeks, squeezing for a second before he moved a hand to Kai's waist. He felt the thick head of Steel's cock against his hole and a thrill went through him. Fucking hell. It was actually happening.

"Oh, god," he cried out as Steel pushed inside.

Steel gasped, curling his fingers into Kai's skin, making him hiss, eyes rolling into the back of his head.

Steel bottomed out and he felt so fucking full. Steel had him spread wide and yet it wasn't enough because Steel wasn't fucking moving.

He rolled his hips, trying to fuck himself on Steel's cock.

“Fuck. Steel,” Kai whimpered.

“Slow down,” Steel said, his breath skirting across the back of Kai’s neck.

He reached behind him, trying to grab at Steel to get him to move. He needed the man to fuck him hard and fast, not this slow and sweet bullshit. He fucking hated that. Okay, that was a lie. He didn’t hate it. He just didn’t want... he didn’t even know. Steel had fried his mind with his sexiness and that cock. *Fuuuck*. His cock was—

“*Arg*,” he exclaimed when teeth sank into that sensitive spot between his neck and shoulder.

“I need you to stay right here with me.”

“I am,” Kai snapped.

Steel’s breathy laugh made him grind his teeth together.

A nose brushed against his neck, then lips pressed softly against his skin.

“You’re not.”

Steel pulled out of him, leaving him feeling incredibly empty and, yes, he was indeed both whining and cursing Steel at the same time.

He was rolled onto his back, Steel pushing between his thighs. He slid a hand down Kai’s chest and caused a shiver to rock through him. And why the hell was he arching up into his touch?

Fucking bastard.

“I want you right here. I want you to know who’s inside you.” Steel leaned down, bringing his lips within inches of

Kai's. He looked up into Kai's eyes and said, "I want you to scream my name."

"I'll be screaming something," Kai grumbled.

"'God' is fine, too."

That smug fucking bastard.

Why did he want to fuck him again?

Steel

Kai was looking up at him with such defiance in his brown eyes, that it sent a thrill down his spine. His resolve had all but disappeared throughout the day and it wasn't because Kai had said he wanted to ride his dick five times, but because he was so fucking weak where Kai was concerned. One moment of sincerity from Kai and he'd given in. He was starting to think he'd discovered a new kink.

He slid back inside Kai, both of them groaning loudly. Fuck but he felt good. So fucking good. Kai had no right to feel that amazing on his cock.

“You'd better fuck me hard or I'll—”

He put a hand over Kai's mouth and before he could complain, he pulled back and slammed into him hard. Kai's moan was clear even with Steel's hand covering his mouth.

Legs wrapped around Steel's waist, heels digging into his ass while Kai arched up into him. Steel slid his hand down to push his fingers into Kai's mouth. Kai sucked on them greedily, then bit down.

Steel cursed him and pulled his fingers out, slipping his hand between them to wrap it around Kai's dick. He matched his strokes to his thrusts as he slowed down.

Concentrating was hard because he kept catching himself just staring at Kai. He was gorgeous, skin glistening with sweat, hair plastered to his forehead, eyes filled with heat.

He lowered himself to press his lips to Kai's, growling when Kai bit his lip hard enough to draw blood. It didn't stop him from pushing his tongue into Kai's mouth or taking control of the kiss.

"Make me scream," Kai whispered against his lips.

Need coursed through his body, a fire of pure lust lighting up inside him. He pressed Kai's knees to his chest and slammed into him hard and fast. Kai writhed under him, mouth falling open on a groan as he grabbed at the bedding.

"Oh fuck. Oh god."

He smacked his hips against Kai's ass, driving himself deep and hard. They were both panting and sweating, Kai mumbling incoherent nothings while Steel was trying very fucking hard not to come first.

"Steel," Kai gasped. "Close."

He doubled down, stroking Kai's dick faster while pounding into him. He needed to see him come almost desperately.

Kai cried out and threw his head back, that elegant neck of his on display. Kai moaned as ropes of come hit his chest. He looked beautiful. Sinful. He looked like all Steel's dreams wrapped up in a neat, annoying, and very dangerous package.

Steel buried his face against Kai's neck, taking a deep breath. Sex, soap, and Kai filled his nose. It had to be the best scent in the world.

He slammed into Kai two more times, then stilled with a groan as pleasure spread through his body. Images of his come

filling up Kai flooded his mind, and he knew he was going to want that. Want it desperately.

He collapsed on top of Kai, smiling softly against his neck when he felt arms wrap around him.

“I didn’t get to ride you,” Kai mumbled.

“Next time,” Steel promised because he’d only be lying to himself if he didn’t admit that there would be a next time.

Chapter Nine

Kai

HE'D NEVER felt as sated and relaxed as he did after Steel fucked him into oblivion. It'd been the perfect combo of rough and intimate. He'd already known he was fucked where Steel was concerned, but now? After he'd had Steel inside him? After he'd rearranged his guts in such a delicious way? Yeah. Fucked wasn't word enough for what he was.

He sifted his fingers through Steel's hair. It was shorter on the sides though it was also thinning a little bit all over. He didn't actually know how old Steel was. He was fit as hell, but he was definitely the oldest of them.

He didn't know much about him, though he'd known where he lived because he may or may not have stalked him a little bit. Just a *teeny* tiny bit. Just enough to know he'd gotten shot and had a plate and screws in his collarbone.

"We should get up," Steel said, sounding groggy from sleep.

It was almost noon. They'd both slept for hours longer than they probably should have.

"Mmm. No."

He didn't want to move. Steel was pressed against his side, face in the crook of Kai's neck. He felt too good there.

"Yes," Steel said.

“But that’s no fun,” Kai said just before his stomach started growling. He groaned when Steel chuckled, then muttered, “Fine. But only because I’m starving.”

Steel sat up, Kai’s fingers slipping from his hair. The loss of contact hit him harder than it had any right to. He did feel marginally better when Steel looked down at him with warmth in his eyes. He liked that. Steel should keep doing it.

He begrudgingly followed Steel out of bed and into the kitchen where he leaned against the counter and watched Steel make them breakfast. It was such a mundane thing so how come he found it incredibly sexy? He was losing his mind. That had to be why.

That, and Steel’s arms and muscles looked mouthwatering as he grabbed a pan from the drawer to put on the stove. The jeans he’d put on were the same as yesterday and they looked so damned good on him. All he wanted to do was take them off, but he couldn’t. He wasn’t sure Steel would want him to, because he didn’t even know what was really going on between them. They hadn’t exactly had time to talk about it.

“What are we doing?”

Steel looked over his shoulder at him with a cocked brow. “Bacon.”

Kai sighed and shook his head.

“No. I mean with us,” he said, waving a hand between them.

Steel’s lips pressed into a thin line.

“Having sex,” Steel said, then returned to putting bacon on the pan.

Kai felt his heart drop a bit and hated it. Steel wasn't lying or being mean. They *were* just having sex, weren't they? So why did he want it to be more than that? He had no right to ask for that. He didn't even deserve it.

Steel

He got why Kai was asking. It was confusing as all hell. He didn't know what the hell they were doing except the sex. That part was obvious. That was why he'd just said that. It was the truth, but maybe not the whole truth.

His heart and head were warring over this whole thing. He liked Kai. A lot more than he'd ever thought he could. But he couldn't forget what he was. Maybe he was being a hypocrite, but he couldn't help how he felt.

He lifted the pan off the stove and tilted it to let the sizzling bacon slide off it and onto the plates he'd set out for them.

They sat down at the table and ate in silence. He was busy shoving bacon down his throat when he noticed Kai's gaze on him. Kai was looking at him with something in his eyes he wasn't sure he'd ever seen directed at himself before.

He swallowed the piece of bacon in his mouth and licked his lips before asking, "What?"

Kai worried his bottom lip for a second, then leaned back in his chair.

"Why are you really helping me?"

If he hadn't already swallowed that bacon, he would've choked on it. Instead, he choked on the air and ended up coughing.

"Why do you ask?" he managed to get out.

Kai's brows lowered.

“You can’t get out of my question by asking another question.”

Steel felt a breath escape him.

That was exactly what he’d hoped he could do. Shit.

“I uh... I...”

“Your answer won’t be, ‘because you care about me,’ will it?” Kai asked, gaze dropping to the table. “It’s just because you’re a decent person.”

Steel felt a lump form in his throat. A big one that hurt.

Kai pushed his chair back and stood, avoiding Steel’s gaze as he said, “You don’t have to stay for me. I promise I won’t get into trouble.”

He watched Kai walk away, his mouth opening and closing but no words coming out.

What the hell just happened?

Kai

He was way too involved. A certain part of him that had been closed off for over a decade was way too involved. His heart needed to take a hike. He was pissed at it. How dare it make him feel this way?

He couldn't deal with it.

Not on top of everything else.

He'd happily forgotten that his life was fucking over. Steel's dick had to be magical. Otherwise, how the hell could he have forgotten the hit out on him? How could he forget that they were in this house because he needed a place to hide and a new identity? He'd gotten his new ID yesterday. He could've left then. Steel could've left, too.

Neither of them had, though he surmised it was for very different reasons. Whereas he didn't *want* to leave, he figured Steel simply felt too responsible to go. The orgasms were just a bonus, right?

Who didn't want to fuck their brother's almost-murderer?

He released a big sigh and dropped face-first onto his bed.

Whatever this was, this lust, love—nope. Not love. Love wasn't welcome here—it was making him want all kinds of things he'd never thought he'd have nor want. *Steel* was making him want them. Fuck him very much.

“Kai?”

Urgh. Why?

“No,” Kai mumbled into his comforter.

A hand pressed lightly against his shoulder, and he turned around with a groan. He sat up, glaring at Steel when he took a seat on the bed next to him.

“Talk to me,” Steel said, that hint of worry in his voice making Kai want to puke.

“About what? That I’m fucking doomed and you’re too nice to take yourself out of the equation before I drag you down with me?”

Steel’s lips pressed into a hard line, and he shook his head.

“My reasons are way too selfish for them to be considered nice,” Steel said.

Kai rolled his eyes.

“Just fuck me and make me forget? Make both of us forget?”

Steel shook his head. “No. We need to—”

“Fuck me or I’ll get out my dildo and do it myself.”

Steel blinked rapidly at him.

“You brought a dildo?”

Kai scoffed. “What? You don’t keep a dildo in your go bag?”

“No,” Steel drawled. “I don’t think anyone does.”

Kai pulled a face, then sighed. “Fine. I didn’t pack a dildo. Will you please be my dildo?”

“I can’t with you,” Steel said with a huff of laughter.

At least one of them was having fun.

“Please?”

Where was all this begging coming from? And why couldn't he stop?

“Please push my face into the mattress and go to pound-town on my ass?”

Steel closed his eyes and was that a, “Dear god,” he heard the man mutter?

“I answer to God, too,” Kai said with a smug smile.

Steel snapped his eyes open, and that vivid blue took Kai's breath away.

A hand in the middle of his chest gave him a push and he bounced as he landed on his back on the bed. He cocked a curious brow at Steel.

“We'll see who will be calling who God.”

Kai couldn't help but grin at that.

He had Steel right where he wanted him.

His heart started pounding when Steel crawled on top of him, knees on either side of Kai's thighs, hands resting on the mattress by his shoulders. It was the good kind of pounding, though. Even if it was probably the first time in his life he'd felt completely safe with a bigger man on top of him like this. He found that he actually liked it a lot. It was all Steel, though. He loved everything the man did to him. Every touch. Every time he showed that possessive side of his, he only wanted more.

Fuck. Steel had *him* right where he wanted him.

Just because he could, he slid his hands into the back of Steel's jeans. There wasn't much room, but he got his hands on Steel's cheeks, digging in his nails.

Steel's hips punched forward as he groaned.

Mmm. He liked that sound.

"Go get the lube," he said to Steel who certainly didn't need to be told twice. He was pretty sure it only took the man two seconds to return with lube and a condom.

He had his lip between his teeth as he watched Steel take off his pants. He could watch the man undress anytime, loving the reveal of creamy skin, thick thighs, and that gorgeous cock.

He'd never been so turned on in his life.

Steel grabbed Kai's ankle and tugged him closer to the edge of the bed. Kai grunted and blew out a breath, then forgot how to breathe when Steel's fingers slid across his stomach before grabbing the waistband of his sweatpants. He lifted his hips to help Steel pull them off.

His cock was hard as hell, and it was like thinking was even harder.

He wrapped a hand around himself and started stroking, eyes on Steel who was getting back onto the bed. Steel's hand wrapped around Kai's, halting his movements and making him whimper.

"Mine," Steel said, nearly causing Kai to blow his load.

Holy fuck. Possessive Steel was the hottest thing in the world.

He let go and choked on air when Steel lowered his head and wrapped his lips around the head of his cock, the wet heat feeling so fucking good.

“See?” he gasped out, eyes rolling into the back of his head. “Much better than talking.”

Steel hummed around him, sending tingles of pleasure through his whole body.

“Fuck.”

Slick fingers slipped between his cheeks and when they pressed inside him, he nearly came on the spot. He squeezed his eyes closed, trying to think of horrible things to keep from releasing early, but Steel had an iron grip on his mind. He couldn't think of anything or anyone but him.

Steel had barely worked him open, and he didn't care. He needed him desperately.

“Fuck. Now. Please.”

Steel's mouth and fingers disappeared, and he could've cried in relief. He needed the man to be inside him when he came. He needed Steel to pound his ass with reckless abandon. He needed to be unable to fucking think.

He tried to turn over, but Steel kept him in place.

“Kai—”

“Yeah, yeah, you want me to know who's fucking me. Do it right and I won't have to see to know.”

His face was pushed into the mattress, and he didn't even care that he couldn't breathe because Steel's cock was pushing between his cheeks. He wasn't even sure if it was words or

just sounds coming out of his mouth as Steel slid inside him, spreading his hole wide.

He was on fucking fire. Steel might want him to see him, but he didn't need to. No one had ever made him feel the way Steel did. He couldn't have doubted whose dick was inside him no matter what.

His heart was hammering as his breath stuttered almost to a halt.

“Say it,” Steel growled.

“What?” Kai mumbled into the mattress.

A hand snaking up his chest pulled him up against Steel, his back arched and Steel's dick burying deep inside him. Why the hell wasn't Steel moving? Why was he so into torturing him?

“Who's fucking you?”

“God?” Kai suggested cheekily.

A hand wrapped around the base of Kai's dick, squeezing hard.

“Fuck,” he gasped out. “You. You're fucking me.”

He dropped his head back against Steel's shoulder, moaning when lips found his and the hand on his cock started moving.

Steel finally started thrusting into him, and it felt so fucking good.

His eyes fell shut. He stayed in the moment. Feeling every single touch on his skin. Every slide of Steel's cock inside

him. Every breath of air against his lips. Every callous on Steel's hand as he moved it over his cock.

He let Steel take control, melting into the man's touch.

This. This was what he thought Nic meant when he spoke about him and Elijah. This was what trusting your partner meant. This was what giving yourself up to another human felt like.

He'd never allowed himself to do it. He'd never truly wanted to before. He'd been... afraid. Terrified, really. But this wasn't scary. This was beautiful. This was... everything.

He didn't want to let this go. He didn't want to let Steel go. He didn't even care if Steel felt this the way he did. He was too far gone.

Steel

Something had changed between them. Kai had let go of whatever had been holding him back before and it was the most amazing thing he'd ever experienced. His hips stuttered when he realized what that meant.

He had a tightly-wound assassin at his mercy, one who'd probably been looking over his shoulder his whole life. He was in complete control. Kai was trusting him. With his body. With his life. With giving him the pleasure he needed.

He moved his hand up from Kai's chest to his throat just because he could. He put light pressure on the sides of Kai's throat. Kai whimpered as he shook against Steel.

It was so fucking heady. Kai was addictive in every fucking way. He knew now that he could never get enough. Never.

Kai's cock was pulsating in his hand, so he tightened his hold on Kai's throat and licked into his mouth. Kai's tongue met his in a deep kiss.

Kai gasped, come hitting his stomach and the sheets while the rest slid down Steel's hand. He didn't stop stroking him until Kai was twitching and whining.

Kai dropped to his hands, then lowered himself to the mattress, ass in the air, back arched. Steel groaned but kept from moving, knowing Kai had to be too sensitive.

"Don't stop," Kai gasped out, reaching back to grab his cheeks and pulled them apart. Steel looked down, seeing his cock spreading Kai's hole wide.

He put his hands on Kai's waist and jerked him back onto his cock.

"Fuck," Kai groaned.

Kai put his hands back in front of him and let Steel fuck him. He slammed into him hard and fast, Kai's loud moans pushing him closer and closer to the edge. The heat. The tightness. It was incredible.

"Steel," Kai said on a whimper, and he lost it.

He came gasping Kai's name. His legs shook, his breath caught in his throat while his mouth fell open. His hips didn't stop moving until he was completely spent.

He pulled out and got rid of the condom, then collapsed on the bed next to Kai as he tried to catch his breath.

Kai rolled onto his side to face Steel. His eyes were hazy with lust and pleasure, and he was looking at Steel like he was the only one he'd ever surrender to. Steel's inner caveman liked that a hell of a lot.

Kai was his now. He couldn't let him go even if he knew he should. Kai was on the run. They could never truly be together, but it didn't matter. Not in this second.

Steel

He ran a hand through Kai's hair, a wide smile on his face. They were lying on the couch, Kai pressed closely against his side while they watched a movie. Kai was either grumbling under his breath or yelling at the TV. It was hard to tell if Kai was enjoying the movie or not.

"Why would you do that?" Kai snapped, then muttered something in a language Steel didn't recognize.

"What was that?"

Kai turned his head to look up at Steel, brows furrowing.

"Greek. Have I not told you I'm Greek?"

Steel blinked at him. "Uh. No?"

"Oh." Kai sat up, making Steel protest when he couldn't keep his hand in his hair.

"My parents are from Mykonos. I've only been a few times, but it's beautiful there. I'd love to show you sometime."

The passion shining in Kai's eyes was incredible to watch, but knowing that Kai wanted to show him something that was important to him? Now that had his heart soaring.

"Were you born there?"

"Nah. I'm from Florida, baby."

He knew Kai was using the word jokingly, but damn if he didn't like Kai calling him that.

"You're a Florida Man?"

Kai pulled a face. “No. I’m a pro, not a crazy.”

Steel held his hands up as if he was weighing something.

Kai gasped and grabbed his hands. “How dare you.”

Steel laughed and jerked Kai closer, loving the wry smile Kai gave him as he wrapped his arms around the back of Steel’s neck.

“Oh, I dare.”

Kai rolled his eyes but leaned closer so he could press a kiss to the corner of Steel’s mouth. When he leaned back, he had a curious look in his eyes.

“How old are you?”

Steel burst out laughing. Of all the things Kai could’ve asked him, that was what he chose?

“What?”

Kai’s smile turned mischievous as he ran a hand through Steel’s hair.

“I was just wondering. You know, seeing as you’re turning gray.”

Steel’s mock-outraged gasp had Kai throwing his head back with a laugh that soothed Steel’s soul. Kai’s eyes were twinkling as he met his gaze.

Fuck. He was beautiful.

“Thirty-seven.”

Kai hummed, then said, “There’s only five years between us.”

“You’re forty-two? Damn, you look good for your age.”

Kai rolled his eyes with a loud sigh.

“Why do I like you again?” Kai muttered.

Steel’s heart skipped a beat and his mouth dried out in a second. Jesus. You’d think someone telling him that they liked him wouldn’t mean that much to him but as Kai looked at him with nothing but warmth in his eyes, he knew that not only was Kai his, but Kai fucking *owned* him.

Chapter Ten

Kai

HE KNEW what he had to do. He didn't like it, but, hey, what was life without a little danger? Or, you know, the risk of getting murdered in this case.

Steel was deep asleep. Kai didn't think the man had ever had the kind of life that led you to sleep with one eye open. Thankfully. But that also meant that he couldn't drag his shit into Steel's life. Not if he actually wanted more with him. He couldn't believe he was actively going into the fray for a guy. Not just for a guy, but for a *chance* with a guy.

He was fucked, but he was running with it. In order to even have a shot with Steel, he needed to get rid of that hit out on him. Well, that, and probably a whole lot of repenting for his crimes. He wasn't even sure if Steel could forgive and forget that almost assassination, which was why he decided that he wasn't only doing this for Steel or for them, but for himself, too.

He wanted out of the game. It had taken too much of his soul already. He was ready for more than killing. He wanted that domestic shit. He wanted a shot at love and a relationship. Specifically with Steel, but he knew only betting on one horse wasn't a good idea, even if his heart protested.

He shook his head at himself and shoved one of Steel's shirts into his go-bag. He zipped it up and pulled the strap over his shoulder, then silently made his way out of the house. He

looked back at it and knowing Steel was asleep inside made him want to drop his bag and run back in there, but he couldn't.

He sighed and started down the street.

He had his new ID with him and everything else that had been in the envelope, including a few hundred-dollar bills. He'd used Steel's phone the first day to check the map of the area, so he already knew there was a small train station about five miles to the east. He'd take the train closer to DC, then rent a car. He already felt sorry for the rental company because, with his luck, that car would end up shot to shit.

He wasn't entirely sure how the hell he was going to fix his mess. He just knew that something wasn't right. No matter what, he knew Isaac was involved somehow. Briggs hadn't shown up like that of his own accord. Or, at least, he wouldn't have known *where* to show up. Not without Isaac telling him.

He didn't know what was going on, but he was going to find out. No matter what it took.

Steel

Panicked wasn't word enough for how he felt.

That asshole had crept out during the night and the reason for his panic wasn't just that Kai had walked away from him, it was because of that damned hit out on him. Kai couldn't get far without getting recognized one way or another.

At least he had his new ID with him. It wasn't that much of a comfort but at least Kai's name wouldn't show up anywhere.

Steel grabbed his phone and found Ares' number, then hesitated. Ares wouldn't care. In fact, he'd probably be glad that Kai was gone. Fuck.

He shoved his phone into his jacket and grabbed his helmet from the top of the shoe cabinet by the front door. He hurried outside, relieved that Kai hadn't stolen his bike.

He jerked his helmet on and threw his leg over the seat. He got her started and took off, though he didn't make it far down the street before he realized he had no idea where Kai had gone. How the fuck was he supposed to find a man who was basically a ghost? One who was trained to work in the shadows?

He was shit out of luck and he was starkly aware of it.

"Fuck," he yelled.

He pulled over and hung his head, breathing hard as he ground his teeth together.

He spent a long moment just trying to think. He'd been in many fucked up situations before but none like this. None where he wasn't even sure how he felt. He'd always been opinionated and strong-willed. He knew his moral compass. He knew what he believed in and what he didn't.

He'd once condemned Kai and all he thought he stood for.

Now?

He was freaking out because Kai might get hurt or worse.

He needed perspective and maybe a slap to the head. He knew exactly where to go to get both. The drive was long from here, but at least they'd be up by the time he got there.

He went back to the safehouse and packed up his things, his heart giving a slight pang when he noticed that Kai had taken some of his clothes out of his dresser.

He tried very hard not to think during the drive, but he couldn't help it. Kai was on his mind. He was flooding his thoughts. Yesterday had been special. He was certain of it. The last thing he'd expected after that was for Kai to be gone. Not only did he want to make sure Kai was safe, but he also wanted answers. Why had Kai left? Was he running? From him or the hit?

He was still without answers when he drove up in front of his brother's house. He knew they would've heard his bike, so he didn't bother knocking. He used his key to unlock the front door and headed for the kitchen where he expected to find the two of them.

Trina was seated at the island, his brother leaning across it to wipe something off the corner of her lip.

“If you’re here for breakfast, you’re too late,” Tony said, looking up at Steel, a smile finding his lips. “Trina ate it all.”

Trina gasped and threw her napkin at Tony who caught it with a laugh.

“I’m not,” Steel said and took a deep breath to prepare himself for what he was about to tell his brother.

“What’s wrong?” Trina asked, a deep line forming between her brows.

“Everything?” He rubbed his hands on his jeans, trying and failing to keep the panic out of his voice. “Remember Kai?”

Tony’s expression turned shuttered in an instant, just as he’d expected.

“What about him? Is he back?” Tony asked, worry creeping into his voice.

“Not for you,” Steel hurried to say.

“Then what?” Trina asked, sliding off her barstool to walk around the island and grab Tony’s hand.

“Maybe we should sit?” Steel suggested.

Tony shook his head. “Spit it out.”

He blew out a breath, then decided that his brother was probably right. He should just get it over with.

“He’s in trouble. He came to me for help, and I did. I took him to a safe house and got him new papers. One thing led to another...” He cleared his throat. “He took off this morning. I don’t know what to do.”

“He finally got you, huh?” Trina asked, her smile much too smug for his liking.

He dropped his head forward with a groan, then muttered under his breath, “He got me alright.”

“Are you in love with him?” Tony asked.

“No.” Steel snapped his head up. “That’s too soon. Right?”

Trina looked at Tony, then at Steel and said, “Oh, honey. You’re asking the wrong people. We both fell within seconds.”

Tony hummed and looked at Trina. “It took a whole lot longer to convince you that you deserved more.”

He didn’t need to say who Trina deserved more than. Any mention of her psychotic ex could bring the mood down instantly. That was one thing he was thankful to Kai for; that he’d killed the fucker.

Trina let go of Tony and walked up in front of Steel to grab his hands in hers. She was a tiny woman who looked fragile, but she was strong as hell. He’d seen it firsthand. She’d willingly gone back to her ex to protect the club. She’d endured his abuse to keep them safe.

“If Kai hadn’t been the one sent to kill us, we would all be dead right now,” Trina said and squeezed Steel’s hands. “Instead, I’m free. I’m thriving. And that’s because of him.”

She wasn’t wrong, of course, but he wasn’t so certain his brother saw it the same way.

He looked over Trina’s head to find his brother’s gaze.

“Are you in love with him?” Tony asked hesitantly.

Steel swallowed hard.

Well, wasn't that the question of the century?

He gave a slight nod of his head before he could help it.

“Well.” Tony’s expression softened. “Looks like you’d better go get him, then.”

Kai

The train ride had been awful. After feeling so safe with Steel the past few days, he'd been on high alert the whole time. He could finally breathe a small sigh of relief as he slid into the driver's seat of his new rental and closed the door. It didn't make him relax any, though, because he'd be driving straight into the fray.

He pulled out the phone he'd bought earlier at a small shady store and connected to the rental place's Wi-Fi. The first thing he looked up was whether his mark was still alive or if they'd taken him out. Surprisingly, the senator was still breathing. Lucky him.

He scrolled further down, and an article caught his eye. A bill had gone through the day he should've died. It was clear now why Briggs had wanted the man dead. It had been personal. He figured the senator would've held the deciding vote. That bill would've fucked up Briggs' business. The legal one that wasn't so legal after all.

Briggs owned a casino and hotel along with a few nightclubs, but they were all a front. His whole family was heavily involved in all kinds of shady things. They were a crime family hiding in plain sight. He wasn't even sure the feds suspected anything.

From what he gleaned of that bill, once in effect, it would make it a whole lot harder for Briggs' criminal part of his business to go unnoticed.

He put his phone down with a sigh. At least he knew Briggs' part in this shit show, but he still needed to figure out Isaac's part.

He drove off toward the one place he should've avoided like the plague. It was the last place anyone would expect him to go because it was incredibly stupid, but, according to his friends, he was already a moron. Now he was just a suicidal moron. All for a chance of love. Urgh. He was disgusting. Love was disgusting. Why did it have such power over him?

Steel's blue eyes flashed before him.

Urgh. Fucking Steel and his electric blue eyes and his soft touch and his growly voice and...

Concentrating on not driving off the road was probably important. Probably. So, he shoved down those thoughts and prepared himself for entering a warzone alone and outgunned.

He was definitely a moron.

Chapter Eleven

Steel

HIS BROTHER was right. He needed to find Kai and fast. He needed to get him somewhere safe. But how the fuck was he gonna do that when he didn't know where to start looking? He didn't even know where he lived or who he'd worked for.

Who would know where to find him?

Kai's friend might know.

He had Hawk's number in his phone from when Kai had called him. He found the number and dialed it, wincing when he realized it was a video call. He knew shit all about sign language so if Hawk's husband answered, he wasn't sure how to tell him he needed to talk to Hawk.

Relief flooded him when it was Hawk's face that appeared on the screen.

"Steel? What's wrong?"

He took a deep breath.

"He left."

Hawk blinked at him, then his brows snapped into a deep frown.

"He what? Is he out of his mind?"

"I... I don't know why he left."

Before Hawk could say anything, the side of someone's head appeared on the screen. His husband, he assumed. Hawk adjusted the phone so they were both on screen.

The husband looked straight at Steel and asked, "Did you fuck?"

Steel's jaw dropped. He hadn't expected the guy to talk, but his words were as much a shock.

"What's that matter?" he asked.

Hawk's husband scrunched up his nose, then glanced at Hawk for a second before looking back at Steel.

"Someone like Kai? Who's pretty much cut emotions out of his life? If it got too real for him, he might've run."

His throat dried out in an instant.

"You're saying he felt too much?"

He thought back to last night. To what they shared.

If Kai hadn't run, perhaps *he* would have. It was a lot. All of this was.

"Kai doesn't run," Hawk said with a shake of his head.

Steel hadn't thought so either. Kai showing up to ask for help had seemed extremely out of character for him. He'd always seemed so in control, even when he was joking or was surrounded by people who wanted him dead. The night they met, Steel had aimed a gun at his head while Kai had been lowering his own and that hadn't faced him either. He'd just turned around and looked Steel over before giving him a flirtatious smile. He remembered how shocked he felt,

especially when Kai told him who he was and why he was there pointing a gun at his brother.

“Love makes you do stupid things,” Hawk’s husband said while giving Steel a pointed look.

“You’d better be talking about your brother and the shit he pulled,” Hawk said with a low growl in his voice.

Steel had no idea what they meant except that the husband was right. If Kai had felt the same connection he had last night, then maybe he hadn’t run away but rather, run toward something. He didn’t like to think about what that something was because he knew it was very likely danger.

“Steel?”

He snapped his attention back to the phone and saw Hawk watching him with a thoughtful look in his eyes, brows scrunched together, and his lips pursed.

“I’ll get Auggie to look for him, but I’ll run down some leads, too,” Hawk said.

“Thank you. I appreciate it.”

“No need. Kai’s a friend. Family, really.”

Why did that warm his heart so much? Knowing Kai had someone who cared about him? Jesus. He was so fucking gone for him. There was no use in denying it any longer.

“I’ll check out his apartment, too,” Hawk said.

Steel straightened. “Send me the address. I’ll meet you there.”

“Will do. See you there.”

Hawk hung up and a second later a message beeped in on his phone. He checked it and then he was out the door, heading for his bike. The drive from York to Fells Church would take at least an hour, so he was grateful that Trina had forced some food in him before she and his brother left for work. He didn't particularly like people taking care of him, or trying to, but he couldn't exactly blame Trina. She was a nurse through and through, and he'd probably needed that care a little more than he wanted to admit.

Kai

He did more recon than he'd ever done in his life before slipping past the guards. He knew this place well. He'd been there one too many times over the years. While he was definitely regretting the reason he'd been there, he was kinda glad he knew his way around.

He went inside through the open patio doors, making sure not to get seen by any of the staff. He made his way upstairs and snuck down the hallway, listening for footsteps, voices, or a crackling radio. The security was tight, but he also knew Isaac didn't like the guards being inside his house, which was lucky for him.

When he reached Isaac's office, he unholstered his gun as he slipped inside. Isaac had his back turned toward him, standing in front of his desk and looking out the windows.

Kai entered the room and quietly shut the door behind him. Though, he could do nothing to hide the click of the lock as he turned it.

Isaac didn't as much as flinch.

"Are you trying to make my job easier?"

Kai scoffed and aimed his gun at Isaac's back.

"We both know you don't get your hands dirty," he sneered at Isaac.

Isaac turned around, not bothering to put his hands up. He ran his dark gaze over Kai.

"I hadn't expected you to hide for this long."

Kai clenched his jaw tight and held back all the shit he wanted to yell at the asshole. Yelling would only alert the guards and that was the kind of trouble he was trying to avoid. At least for as long as possible.

“I wanna know why.”

Isaac raised a brow at him, then walked closer. Kai didn't bother telling him not to. He knew Isaac well enough to know he wouldn't do as he was told.

Isaac stopped a few feet from Kai and the stark contrast between the man's dead eyes and the sparkling blue of Steel's eyes had Kai sucking in a shaky breath.

“You used me, didn't you?” Kai growled.

The slight pull on the corner of Isaac's lips was answer enough for him.

“As you said; I don't like getting my hands dirty.”

Kai clenched his jaw so tight he almost gave himself a headache.

“You gave me that job knowing I wouldn't do it,” Kai said through gritted teeth. “You sent Briggs to the hotel, too.”

“I did. It worked out even better than I imagined. How long was he there before you pulled the trigger?”

“Why? Why me? You could've thrown anyone under the bus, but you chose me. Of everyone.”

The hurt was clear in his voice, and he hated that he was being emotional in front of Isaac.

Isaac lifted his hand as he moved closer, but Kai jerked backward.

“Don’t touch me,” he snapped.

Isaac dropped his hand and cocked his head to the side as he studied Kai intently.

“That ended years ago,” Kai said. “And even if it hadn’t, it would’ve ended the second you decided to use me as a pawn in your sick game.”

“Too bad,” Isaac said, though Kai doubted he really meant it.

In the beginning, he’d convinced himself that Isaac cared. It had never been love between them. Never. But he’d thought there’d been something, anything, that tied them together emotionally, but Isaac had no feelings. He was cold. He could’ve been a vampire with how fucking dead he was inside.

Even when he’d broken it off between them, he’d stayed.

“This is what loyalty got me, huh?”

“Ah, yes. Mr.-I’ll-only-stay-if-you-agree-to-these-insane-conditions. *So loyal.*”

“Is that what you’re pissed about? That I’m not as cold-blooded as you?”

Isaac crossed his arms, his brow furrowing the slightest bit. “You grew a conscience, Kai. That’s bad for business. I just killed two birds with one stone.”

A loud beeping had Kai jerking, his teeth clashing together while his heart skipped a beat. Fucking hell.

Isaac pulled a phone out of his back pocket and the sinister smile that spread on his face didn’t bode well for Kai.

“Looks like I’m about to kill more birdies.”

Isaac turned his phone around for Kai to see. It was a video looking down on a living room he knew well. His.

Two men appeared on the video and his heart lurched painfully.

Steel. Nic.

The two people he cared about the most.

“Maybe you’ll get there in time to watch them bleed out.”

He snapped his gaze back onto Isaac and snapped, “Call it off.”

“No.”

He knew nothing he could do would change the fucker’s mind, so he raised his gun to aim it at Isaac’s forehead.

“Do it.” Isaac shrugged, looking almost bored. “Come on, Kai. I’m a bad guy, and you only kill bad guys, right?”

Kai’s heart was beating wildly in his chest. Not because of Isaac but because of Steel. He remembered all too clearly the look on Steel’s face when he’d said he didn’t want to believe Kai was human. He never wanted to see that look again.

“I’m totally going to regret this, aren’t I?”

You know how in movies the hero has the opportunity to take out the villain and doesn’t, and you’re yelling at them to just do it, because you know the villain will be back worse than before? He finally understood why they didn’t do it. It wasn’t about the villain. It wasn’t about Isaac. It was about himself. What it would do to him if he killed Isaac like this.

He cursed under his breath and lowered his gun. The slight flare of surprise in Isaac’s eyes wasn’t comforting at all.

He knew he only had seconds to get out if he wanted to live long enough to regret not killing Isaac, so he ran. He ran as fast as he could toward Steel.

Steel

Whatever he'd expected Kai's home to look like, this wasn't it. It was a small one-story house, but it was in a nice neighborhood. Something told him Kai preferred cozy things over all that fancy and expensive stuff. The house was warm and inviting, Kai's Mediterranean roots quite evident. He had sculptures on his bookcases along with tons of books, and he was at least educated enough to recognize that one sculpture of Aphrodite without the arms.

He spotted some small pottery stuff and some creepy glass eye thingies hanging in a few places. He could see Kai in every single knickknack and decorative piece there. The bottle of Greek alcohol on the coffee table had a smile spreading on his lips.

He felt weird about going through Kai's things, but he didn't care if it helped him find Kai. He went to the kitchen and opened the fridge. He wasn't surprised to find practically nothing inside. A six-pack of beer, a block of cheese, and some leftovers that smelled terrible.

He closed the fridge door and turned around, his gaze catching on quite the collection of knives. They were hanging on a magnetic knife rack on the wall. He had a suspicious feeling that not a lot of them were actually used for food.

He followed Hawk down the hall to Kai's bedroom, stopping in the doorway. It didn't feel right to be there without Kai.

Hawk went to the closet, opened the door, and stepped inside. He heard a few beeps and then Hawk waved him closer.

He really shouldn't have been surprised to see the hidden storage compartment in the back wall of the closet filled with all kinds of guns. It made it hard to forget what Kai was.

He squeezed his eyes shut as a memory assaulted him. He saw Kai with a gun aimed at Tony. He remembered thinking that Kai had known exactly where he'd been the whole time and had let him walk up on him with his gun aimed at him. He hadn't understood why Kai had let him get so close.

The memory was replaced with another. Trina's ex holding a gun to her head. A gunshot. Kai killing Trina's ex. She'd said it herself; Kai had set her free.

That was the Kai he needed to remember. The one who'd pretended to only be helping them because of that video when he'd done it because he cared. He needed to remember the Kai who'd come to him when shit had hit the fan. The Kai who'd begged for him. The Kai who'd laughed with him on the couch. The Kai who yelled at the TV when he thought the characters were being stupid. He needed to remember *his* Kai.

He had to believe that *that* Kai was real. That he wanted to change. Even if he'd run away from him. From them.

He just needed to convince Kai that he saw who he really was. That he wanted to be with him.

“Here.”

Steel blinked and refocused on Hawk who was handing him a gun.

“You think we’ll need them?”

Hawk arched a brow at him. “Considering the shit Kai has gotten into? Yeah. I think we’ll need them.”

“Still no idea where he’s gone?” he asked, hoping for a different answer even if he knew he wouldn’t get one.

Hawk shook his head. “He obviously hasn’t been here. He didn’t go to me, either. I don’t... I know he doesn’t want anyone to get hurt because of him, so he might’ve just decided to go underground.”

Steel pressed his lips together.

He fucking hoped not.

It didn’t matter if Kai was hiding or running. He’d find him. He didn’t care what it took. He was in love with him, and he’d be damned if he didn’t at least get a chance to tell him that.

He put the gun down on Kai’s bed and walked into the living room. He sat down on the couch with a sigh and ran his hands through his hair.

He moved his gaze across the room, taking in more of Kai’s home, wishing things were different. Wishing he was there because Kai was showing him around. He imagined Kai wouldn’t get to show him all that much before he’d be dragging him into his bedroom. The thought made him smile.

Something caught his eye, making him frown and stand to walk closer. It looked a lot like a camera was sitting on the top of one of the bookcases. It was small but not could-be-hidden-inside-something small. It was weird.

“Hawk?” he yelled. “Is that a camera?”

Hawk appeared next to him in a second, making him jump.

“That’s not Kai’s,” Hawk said, his voice low.

The hair on Steel’s arms and the back of his neck stood on end.

“Fuck,” he muttered.

The sound of glass shattering had them both freezing.

Shit. Whoever was after Kai was now there for them and he doubted they’d stopped by for coffee.

“Go make sure they don’t get a hold of Kai’s weapons,” Hawk said while unholstering his gun. “We’re screwed if they do.”

He was pretty sure he’d seen a rifle along with a few machine guns in there, so he had to agree with Hawk. They didn’t know what kind of weapons or even how many men were there for them, but there was no sense in readily giving them the upper hand.

He gave Hawk a nod and took off toward Kai’s bedroom while pulling out his gun. He almost made it to the bedroom door when a light creaking had him whirling around.

A bullet whizzed by him just before he pulled the trigger. Neither of them hit their intended target. Instead, they made holes in Kai’s walls. He had a feeling he’d end up with a lot of those.

He took cover in the doorway and fired off another two rounds, then stopped and listened. The quiet was unnerving. All he could hear was his heartbeat. He didn’t like it. Not one

bit. He didn't know how many men had come to kill them, but he was grateful that Kai hadn't been here alone when they did.

The silence was broken by gunfire from the other end of the house, and he hoped like hell Hawk knew what he was doing.

Bullets riddled the wall right next to him and he dropped down with a curse. The bullets kept coming. He couldn't get a fucking shot off. Not unless he wanted another major surgery.

"Fuck," he muttered and moved back into the room, getting behind the dresser.

He could see a duffle bag on the bed, and he had to assume the weapons were in there. He couldn't let them get to it. Not if they were to have a shot at getting out of there alive.

His heart was going ballistic in his chest, the adrenaline making him dizzy.

The gunfire stopped and he heard footsteps down the hall. He raised his gun, peeking around the dresser. A man in all-black clothing appeared in the doorway, gun in hand.

Before he made it into the room, his head exploded. When the body hit the floor, Kai appeared in the doorway, lowering his gun as he glared down at the man.

"Fucker," Kai said under his breath.

"Kai," Steel said, holstering his gun and pushing off the floor.

Kai's head snapped up and whatever darkness had been in his eyes dissipated the second their gazes met. The next second, Kai was across the room, grabbing Steel by the front

of his shirt to pull him down while he rose up on his toes to slam their mouths together.

There was no hesitation, no doubt, in the way Kai kissed him. Relief flooded him and he wrapped his arms around the man to jerk him up against his body. Kai groaned into his mouth.

“Guess you didn’t run away from me,” he said when he pulled back.

Kai screwed up his face and said, “I don’t run.”

“You kinda did.”

Kai’s eye-roll had Steel grinning down at him.

“Hiding is not running,” Kai muttered.

“You guys good?” Hawk yelled from somewhere across the house.

“Perfect,” Kai yelled back, and Steel had to agree.

Kai in his arms felt perfect. More perfect than anything else ever had. Which was why he hated it when Kai stepped back.

“One second,” Kai said, holding up a finger.

He took off out of the room and Steel followed with a frown on his face. Kai walked into the living room, stepped over the two bodies on the floor, and faced the camera head-on.

“Go fuck yourself, Isaac,” Kai said, flipping off the camera with both hands.

Chapter Twelve

Kai

IN THEORY, seeing Steel again should've been amazing. It was. It was just also awkward as all hell. Especially with Nic there, watching and making weird faces at him.

“Stop it,” Kai said, giving Nic a pointed look.

“I haven't done anything.”

Their stare-down was interrupted by Steel saying, “We need to go.”

Kai sighed and glanced around at what he'd called home for a few years now. He was sad to see it go but, oh well. He was doing all this to make a home with Steel anyway. They'd figure something out.

“The cops are gonna have a field day with this bloodbath,” Steel said, the concern in his voice warming Kai's heart.

“There won't be much left for them to find.”

Steel's brows shot up, then lowered when Kai grinned at him.

“You thought your little assassin wouldn't have a plan in place in case something happened?” Nic asked Steel.

“I protest being called ‘little,’” Kai drawled, then caught the slight clench of Steel's jaw and added, “and assassin. My firing has been quite epic as you can see.”

He motioned at the bodies on the floor.

“Firing?” Steel asked.

“I’ll tell you all about it later.”

He grabbed the few things he didn’t want to lose. Was it a bit sad that one of them was the key to his parents’ house? Yeah, probably. The other things were mementos that couldn’t be replaced. Things he shouldn’t have kept but the sentimental fool inside him hadn’t allowed him to throw them away.

When they walked out of his house, he held his small bag of trinkets close and pulled out his phone. Nic had a duffel bag slung over his shoulder. It was filled with Kai’s guns and knives. He was thankful to the man for packing them. He’d paid a pretty penny for them, after all, and they’d probably end up needing them.

He breathed out a sigh and brought up the right app on his phone. He was about to press a button on his phone and make his house explode. It was almost anticlimactic in some way. Technology, man. All you needed was some Wi-Fi and you could blow up your whole life.

He’d rigged up the small device himself and all it needed to ignite was the flip of a switch which his app took care of.

The explosion wasn’t big by any means, but it would definitely attract attention. They had to move soon but he found himself stuck as he watched his home go up in flames. An arm wrapped around his shoulders and pulled him against a bigger body. He relaxed against Steel’s side.

“I’m sorry you have to lose your home,” Steel said in that deep rumble of his that made Kai feel like a blanket of safety wrapped around him.

Kai shrugged. “All the things that truly matter to me aren’t in there.”

The one that mattered the most was currently pressing a kiss to the top of his head. He felt his heart leap at the touch. He was fucking gone for this man.

“Let’s get out of here,” Kai said.

They got into their respective vehicles and drove off, following Nic toward one of the Kings’ safehouses. Halfway there, they switched out their cars to a pickup truck that had room for Steel’s bike in the bed.

Nic took the wheel, so they got into the backseat. He plastered himself against Steel’s side and put his head on the man’s shoulder. He hadn’t been this relaxed since he’d left the safehouse. The worst part had been driving like a lunatic from McLean to Falls Church, not knowing if Nic and Steel would be dead or alive when he arrived.

The amount of relief he’d felt when he’d seen Steel had almost overwhelmed him.

He squeezed his eyes closed and breathed in Steel’s scent, sliding his hand into Steel’s and lacing their fingers. He hadn’t felt safe since he’d left the safehouse, not until right now.

Steel

Kai was asleep against him. He looked adorable as he slept, his lips parted lightly, and his hair falling into his face. His expression was so soft and relaxed that it made Steel proud because he knew it meant Kai trusted him. Hell, Kai had trusted him way before he'd even been able to admit to himself that Kai was human and not just some monster.

"I don't think I've ever seen him sleep before," Hawk said.

Steel slowly lifted his gaze from Kai. Hawk was driving, eyes on the road, but he could see the man's surprise on his face.

"I think he rarely feels safe enough to sleep. Especially among other people," he said.

"Sounds about right."

Hawk glanced at Steel in the rearview mirror and said, "I'm glad he's got you now."

A smile pulled at Steel's lips.

"Me, too."

Kai wasn't the cold-hearted assassin he'd first thought he was. Kai was so much more. He had a bigger heart than he probably even knew.

He must have drifted off himself because he woke with a grunt and blinked his eyes a bit before he was awake enough to realize that he'd woken from the sound of Hawk pulling the handbrake.

“We there?” Kai mumbled, slowly pulling away from Steel’s side to sit up.

“We’re at my club,” Steel said, giving Hawk an accusing glare.

Hawk shrugged. “Ares called.”

Steel bit back a curse and went to open the door so they could get out. Ares was standing in front of the clubhouse waiting for them along with a few of the others.

He gave Kai a hand as he got out and when Kai smiled up at him, his heart gave a little flutter.

As much as he was dreading the conversation he was about to have, he knew he couldn’t avoid it, so he squared off his shoulders and walked up to Ares, Kai following right behind him.

Before he could get a word out, Ares said, “You can thank your brother.”

Steel’s brows snapped together.

“What?”

Ares gave Kai a scathing look.

“I still don’t like you.”

The light rumble of laughter from Kai had Steel relaxing until Ares gave him a serious look.

“He’s yours. Act accordingly.”

He would have sucked in a sharp breath if it wasn’t for his lungs seizing to work. Holy. Shit.

Ares gave Steel a nod, then turned and headed inside along with the others.

Hawk's low laugh had him snapping his head toward the man. He was leaning against the truck, arms folded in front of his chest and a smug grin on his face.

"Guess you're gonna need a cut," Hawk said to Kai.

Kai made a frustrated sound in the back of his throat.

"What does that even mean?"

Steel swallowed hard, then turned to meet Kai's gaze, and only then did he start breathing again, because Kai was looking up at him with a soft look in his eyes.

He reached up to brush a strand of hair behind Kai's ear, then moved his hand down to cup his face. Hawk walked past them and when he heard the front door slam shut, he knew they were alone.

"I hope you're ready for this," he said with just the slightest tremor in his voice.

Kai scrunched up his face.

"I still don't—"

Steel took Kai's mouth in a deep kiss, loving the way Kai melted against him. He wrapped his arms around Kai and pulled him closer. Kai's hand wound into Steel's hair, and the touch was as possessive as it was loving.

He pulled back to smile down at Kai who scrunched his brows up at him.

"What exactly is it I'm supposed to be ready for?"

“The club is gonna help you. Help us,” Steel said.

Kai’s eyes widened ever so slightly, and his mouth opened then closed before he frowned at Steel.

“Didn’t that guy just say he didn’t like me?”

“Oh, trust me, he doesn’t.” A smile pulled at Steel’s lips. “But you’re mine, now, and that means you’re under the club’s protection. I don’t know how my brother convinced them to vote yes on that, but fuck am I glad he did.”

Kai

He was still confused as to what Steel meant. He knew absolutely shit all about motorcycle clubs. What little he knew he'd learned from Nic and Elijah and that wasn't a lot.

“Come on,” Steel said, tugging on Kai's hand. “You should meet everyone.”

He followed Steel into the building feeling uneasy. This was worse than breaking into Isaac's place. Way worse.

These people were Steel's family, and he already had problems with Steel's real brother, so what was the odds of him not fucking it up with the rest of them? Probably zero.

When they stepped into the living area of the clubhouse, he came to a halt, his heart beating wildly in his chest. He watched as Steel continued across the room, but he couldn't move. The what-if's were playing hard in his mind.

A man walked up to him, and he watched him cautiously the whole time despite the man's warm smile. A few other men and women joined them.

“Hi, I'm Jace. We've met before, but you probably don't remember.”

He shook Jace's hand and only listened with half an ear as he told him the others' names, his focus split between them and Steel who was at the bar getting slapped on the back a disturbing number of times. Had they really missed him that much?

He caught Steel's gaze and mouthed, "Help."

Steel grinned and gave him a thumbs-up. Bastard.

"Welcome to the Olds Club," someone said.

"The what now?"

Jace chuckled, then said, "That's just what they call us old men and old ladies."

A lump formed in Kai's throat in seconds.

He did know what that meant. Elijah was Nic's old man. His husband.

"Wait wait. Hold on." He turned toward Jace. "Are you saying the thing you all voted on was me being Steel's old man?"

Jace blinked at him, a look of horror flashing across his face for a second before he contained it. He very cautiously asked, "Did he not... tell you?"

Kai cleared his throat, gaze landing on Steel again.

"He did. Kinda."

"Oh," Jace said with a relieved sigh. "Good."

Kai's thoughts were spinning. Steel had claimed him as his? Had they really gone from 'you almost killed my brother' to basically being married? Or... had Steel only done that so his club would help him? That's what he'd said, right? Because Kai was a part of the club now, that meant they *had* to help him.

"Why do you look pissed? Shit. Was it something I said?" Jace asked, worrying his bottom lip.

“No.”

Did he storm out of there with the rage of a scorned teenage girl? Yes. Was he embarrassed about it? Fuck, no.

On his way to the door, he slammed into a guy in the hallway.

“Oh. Sorry, man.”

The guy waved him off, not knowing Kai was mostly sorry that he’d snatched his keys out of his pocket. He headed outside and sifted through the keys, relieved to find a car key. He pressed the fob and headed for what looked like a work van.

He reached for the handle, then instantly whirled around only to get pressed up against the door.

“I thought you didn’t run,” Steel teased, his voice husky.

“Fuck you,” Kai snapped.

“Kai.”

He wriggled against Steel but realized he’d have to hurt him in order to get free and he just... couldn’t.

“How could you not tell me? Or ask me?”

Steel’s smile slipped, his voice low as he said, “I didn’t know. My brother went to them, which I think we can agree is pretty fucking big of him considering the history.”

Kai clenched his jaw tight and kept glaring at Steel.

“He wants me to be happy and he knew that meant keeping you safe. Because *you* make me happy.”

Kai shook his head, something burning suspiciously at the corner of his eyes.

“I don’t—”

“I’m in love with you.” Steel brushed his fingers across Kai’s cheek in a feather-light touch. “I didn’t want to be. I tried to think of all the awful things you’ve done, but none of it matters. All that matters to me is right here, right now.”

“I—”

“You don’t have to,” Steel said, disappointment in his gaze as he started to move back.

Kai grabbed him by the front of his shirt and pulled him back.

“I left because I wanted this. Us. I wanted *you*.”

“I... don’t understand.”

Kai swallowed hard.

“I knew I couldn’t offer you a life on the run, so I wanted to fix it. Get my hit cancelled or kill the ones who put it out on me in the first place. *That* is why I left.”

Steel stared into his eyes, a smile spreading on his lips.

“So, we’re both idiots, is what you’re saying?”

Kai cracked up at that and nodded.

“Yeah. Sounds ‘bout right.”

“Uh-huh. Wanna be idiots together?”

“Fuck yeah.”

Steel

He knew he was looking like a lovesick fool as he stared down at Kai. He didn't care because it was true. He was in love with his little assassin.

He slid a hand into Kai's hair and lowered his head, Kai's lips meeting his halfway between them. Kai's mouth was rough and desperate against his and when he slipped his tongue past Kai's lips, they both groaned.

Steel rested a hand against the car while pushing Kai into the side of it with his body.

Kai's nimble fingers slipped between them, popping open the button on Steel's jeans before pulling down the zipper.

The light touch of Kai's fingers brushing against his dick had it going from half-hard to rock-hard in an instant. Only Kai could have him aching in seconds.

He tore his mouth away from Kai's to ask, "Right here?"

Kai looked up at him with lust swirling in his eyes as he bit into his bottom lip.

"Fuck," Steel hissed.

He slammed his mouth back on Kai's, kissing him hard.

He pulled his hips back to get his hands between them so he could open Kai's pants, too. Kai freed Steel's dick and once he had Kai's out, too, he brought them together, wrapping his hand around them after spitting into it.

"Oh fuck," Kai gasped out.

Steel thrust into his hand, the sensation of sliding against Kai's hard cock nothing less than mind-blowing.

"Fuck," he hissed, eyes falling shut.

Kai's hands slid up under the back of his shirt, his warm hands leaving tingles in their wake. He wanted those hands all over him. He wanted to feel Kai's touch every second of every day.

He tried to keep his strokes slow but then Kai whimpered, and he fucking lost it. He needed to come. He needed Kai to come, preferably all over both of them. Just the thought had heat sparking in his veins and his cock leaking desperately.

Fuck. He burned for this man.

"You're mine," he growled low.

"Uh-huh," Kai said, sounding breathless.

He put his lips to the side of Kai's neck and sucked hard. Kai groaned and his hand landed on top of Steel's head, pressing him closer. He bit down and Kai shook against him. Hot come spread over their cocks and his hand.

Kai's gasp was the most erotic thing he'd ever heard, and it pushed him right over the edge with him. He came hard, gasping for air as pleasure washed over him. He buried his nose in Kai's hair.

He knew he was smiling wide, but he couldn't help it.

Kai was just... everything.

"Jesus fucking Christ."

He looked up to find Griff a few feet from them with his hands covering his daughter's eyes. From Mia's big smile, she

hadn't minded the show. Her father on the other hand? He was glaring daggers at them.

Steel tucked himself away and stepped half in front of Kai to shield him from their gazes.

"Better get used to it, sweetheart," Steel said with a grin.

Mia made a whiney sound, then said, "I'm trying. Someone won't *let* me."

"No," Griff snapped. "There will be no getting used to anything."

Poor Mia was dragged toward the clubhouse. She was laughing the whole way while her father cursed them out.

Steel turned his gaze back on Kai, finding the man leaning against the side of the van, body relaxed and his gaze soft.

"I'm in love with you, too," Kai said, making Steel's heart soar.

He didn't think he'd ever heard something so amazing in his whole fucking life.

Chapter Thirteen

Kai

HE DIDN'T like being outnumbered. Not when it was thirty to one. Ten he could do. Fifteen might be a stretch, but he'd done it before. Granted, none of these men were waiting to ambush or kill him. Well, maybe one would've preferred it.

Ares still wasn't happy to see him, that was for certain. He wasn't saying anything, but that was maybe also because Kai stuck to the opposite side of the room from him.

He spied some familiar faces and made his way toward them. Diesel and Chris were standing close together, Diesel's arm around Chris' waist while Chris was talking to one of the other guys.

"Kai," Diesel said, giving him a curious look over. "I didn't think we'd be seeing you again."

Kai shrugged, a cheeky smile finding his lips. "I didn't think so either, but I guess I just *am* that irresistible."

Chris huffed out a laugh.

Kai turned toward him. "Hello, detective."

Chris froze, then blinked at him rapidly.

"You *knew*?"

Now it was Kai's turn to blink.

"Do I have eyes?"

Chris' Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed.

"Honestly? I'm surprised no one else knew."

"Guess I should thank you for not outing me, then." Chris lowered his brows. "Wait. Were you aware that they all know now?"

Kai cocked a brow at him in response.

If he hadn't known that Chris was already out to the Disciples, it would've been a pretty shitty thing to do, blowing Chris' cover like that. He wasn't that much of an ass.

"Have you been watching us?" Chris asked, giving him a suspicious look.

He definitely wasn't going to answer that, so he just shrugged and gave Chris a wink.

He felt a hand on the small of his back and leaned into it, looking up over his shoulder at Steel. He was wearing his vest now and he had to admit that he might have a leather fetish because damn. His man looked hot in leather.

"Your boyfriend's a stalker," Chris said and returned Kai's wink before walking away and tugging Diesel along.

Kai grunted and when Steel smiled knowingly down at him, he made a face back at him.

"My little assassin stalker," Steel said all lovingly.

"I am not *little*," Kai grumbled.

Steel lowered his head to Kai's ear and said, "I know."

A hand squeezing his ass cheek had him cursing Steel because the last thing he needed to be dealing with right now

was a damned boner.

“Everyone’s here,” Steel said, keeping his hand on Kai’s ass.

He had a feeling that was something Steel would be doing a lot seeing as they were pseudo-married now. Jesus. He was in love. He was in a relationship. He was happy. Well, as happy as someone about to tell a bunch of biker guys why he had a hit out on him could be.

“Go ahead, Kai,” Ares said with a nod at him.

He turned to face the room and all the curious gazes watching him.

“Well.” Kai cleared his throat. “Turns out you definitely shouldn’t sleep with your boss. Especially if he’s a psychopath who uses you to get rid of his partner and then puts out a hit on you.”

He could almost hear Steel grinding his teeth. *Yeeeah*, that didn’t bode well for him. Should he have mentioned he used to bone Isaac before now? Probably. Definitely.

Nic on the other hand looked like he’d just gotten the confirmation he’d been looking for. He knew Nic had been wondering why he’d stayed with Isaac for so long and while their relationship wasn’t the whole reason, he understood why Nic had suspected it was.

“Tell us about this boss,” Diesel said.

“His name is Isaac,” Nic said. “We both worked for him.”

Kai nodded. “His partner, Briggs, gave me a job. The mark was a senator. He wanted me to blow him up along with a lot

of innocent people. I killed Briggs instead.”

Ares made a surprised sound and gave a slight nod of approval.

“Aw, don’t say you like me now,” Kai teased.

Ares scowled at him. “Don’t press your luck.”

Kai couldn’t help but grin at him.

“Okay. So, Isaac put out that hit on me to clean up his mess because he engineered the whole thing to make me kill Briggs.”

“Jesus,” Diesel said under his breath.

“What an ass,” someone said, and Kai had to agree.

“Why?” Chris asked.

“Why did he want to get rid of me? He didn’t like that I would only kill assholes like him. Guess it hit too close to home,” Kai said with a shrug.

“No. He meant why did Isaac go to all that trouble to hide his involvement,” Diesel said.

“Ah.” Kai smiled wryly at Diesel. “Because he didn’t want Briggs’ family on his ass.”

“They’re too powerful for him to handle,” Nic added.

“So, are we supposed to go up against Isaac or Briggs’ family?” Texas asked.

“We expose Isaac,” Steel said. His gaze clashed with Kai’s, the determination swirling in those depths making his heart flutter. “Let Briggs’ family take care of him.”

He liked the sound of that. Two birds one stone, as Isaac so eloquently had put it. Get the heat off his back and get rid of Isaac. Win-win.

“You’re forgetting that Kai did kill Briggs,” Nic said.
“They might not be so forgiving of that.”

Kai blew out a breath.

Damn. Nic was right.

“But Kai didn’t plan to kill him. Isaac set him up,” Steel said.

He thrust his lip out in a pout and muttered, “All that means is that I’m stupid.”

“We need to figure something out and soon,” Ares said, running his gaze over all the people in the room until he settled on Kai. “Because I doubt Isaac and the others are gonna delay their revenge too much longer.”

Steel

He could tell that Kai felt defeated. He'd told Steel that all he wanted was for this threat to be gone so they could be together. As much as he wanted to tell Kai that he'd run and hide with him, he knew it wasn't a real option for either of them. Not unless they couldn't do something about the threat, and they ended up putting everyone they cared about in danger. Only then would they go.

"I should've killed him," Kai muttered.

He was sitting on the couch, legs folded under him and a sullen look on his face. Steel sat down next to him and put a hand on his thigh.

"Killed who?"

Kai looked up, something unreadable in his eyes.

"Isaac. I had him. I could've pulled the trigger."

Steel's heart was hammering so fast and hard that he felt like he might pass out at any second.

"Why didn't you?"

"You," Kai said in a whisper.

"Me?"

Kai nodded. "It would've been an assassination. Not self-defense. That's not what I want. I'm done with that. I've taken enough lives."

He wasn't sure he'd ever felt anything like the warmth that spread through him at hearing Kai's admission.

"I'm proud of you."

Kai snapped his head up and gave him a strange look.

"Are you sick or something?"

Steel's bark of laughter only made Kai frown harder at him.

"No. I'm not sick," he said and pressed a quick kiss to Kai's lips.

Kai rolled his eyes, so he kissed him again, just because he could. Kai loved him. He felt high from that knowledge.

He got up from the couch, giving Kai a smile before walking toward the hallway. He peeked into the meeting room, finding Ares, Diesel, and Chris inside talking. He knew he needed to thank them for doing this for him. When he'd called his brother last night, he'd thanked him, then yelled at him for going over his head. Again. He'd heard Trina cackling in the background the whole time. All his brother had said was, "You're welcome."

"Hey, guys," he said and stepped into the room.

The three of them looked up at him.

"I just wanted to thank you," he said, but before he could continue, he was cut off by Ares' phone ringing.

Ares answered and within seconds, Steel's hackles went up. Ares held up a finger to let them know to be quiet, then put his phone on speaker.

"You seem like a reasonable man, Ares. Hand him over and no one else has to die for his mistakes."

He didn't know the voice, but he didn't have to. It was Isaac. Had to be.

"And if I refuse?" Ares asked.

"Well." Isaac clicked his tongue. "Let's just say that your little clubhouse will be reduced to rubble."

Steel's heart was beating like crazy as anger flooded him. It was pure luck that he managed to keep his mouth shut because all he wanted was to tell Isaac exactly how he felt about the asshole.

"I'll think about it," Ares said and hung up.

He dug his nails into the palms of his hands, his jaw clenched tight. He was barely keeping it together.

"I'll go."

Steel whirled around to find Kai in the doorway, a grim look on his face.

"Like hell you are," he snapped.

He wasn't losing him. Not now. Not ever.

"Guys, would you give us a minute?" Kai asked, looking at the men on either side of Steel.

He was grinding his teeth while glaring at Kai as the others left the room. Once the door closed, Kai stepped closer.

"No," Steel growled, stopping Kai in his tracks. "You're not going."

Kai closed the distance between them in a heartbeat and wrapped his arms around Steel who was rigid against him at

first, but Kai's warmth and soft voice had him sighing and melting against him.

"We'll be alright," Kai said.

"I can't lose you."

Kai leaned back in his arms and cocked a brow at him.

"I don't plan on dying."

"Who does?"

"Touché."

Kai gave him a soft smile.

"I don't want to go, but we need proof of what Isaac did, and what's better than a confession?"

Steel frowned at Kai.

"I thought we weren't doing that?"

"Desperate times," Kai said with a shrug.

He cupped Kai's face in his hands and stared into those mesmerizing eyes of his.

"I mean it. I can't lose you."

Kai's hands covered his.

"I can't lose you, either. Don't you get that?"

He did. Fuck, he did.

What would he do if he was in Kai's shoes? Probably the exact same thing. Keeping Kai safe was the most important thing in the world to him.

Chapter Fourteen

Kai

HE LIFTED his arm to make room for Chris to pull the wire from the device in his back pocket around to his chest. Chris held it in place against his chest and taped it down.

“This is a dumb plan,” Chris said.

“Thank you for your confidence,” Kai drawled.

Chris’s brows snapped together. “You really think he won’t be checking for a wire? That’s if he doesn’t just kill you on sight.”

“Oh, I’m sure.”

Isaac wouldn’t touch him until he had him somewhere secure. The reason Isaac didn’t like to get his hands dirty was because if he did, he couldn’t stop. He wasn’t telling anyone that, though. That was the last thing Steel needed to know. He was already vehemently against this plan. He didn’t need to add more fuel to that particular fire.

“We good?”

Chris stepped back with a nod, so Kai grabbed his shirt and pulled it over his head.

“Alright. I’m ready to be traded for your club’s safety.”

Chris rolled his eyes, muttering under his breath as he walked out of the room.

Kai turned to look in the mirror on the wall to inspect Chris' work. He was wearing a black shirt that covered up the wire. Steel's shirt. He grabbed the front and lifted it to his nose, a smile spreading on his lips when he smelled Steel on it.

"You really are a moron."

He turned to find Nic standing in the doorway with his arms crossed and an unreadable expression on his face.

"Are you really surprised?"

"No."

Kai arched a surprised brow at him because there was a lot more behind that 'no' than the average 'you're an idiot.'

"You closed yourself up so hard all those years because you care too much. Trust me, I know," Nic said, a sad look in his eyes. "In order to survive, you had to be cold and strong."

Kai was forced to swallow hard. He knew Nic was right, which only made his words hurt even more.

"I need you to be both right now. I need you to survive," Nic said and walked up to Kai to pull him into a hug. "Elijah won't forgive me if I let you get killed."

"Tell Elijah I'm looking forward to eating all your food next Sunday and tell King I'm coming back for more licks."

Nic pulled a face which only made Kai huff out a laugh.

"*Your* King. Not the other King. Though I wouldn't mind a few licks from him either. He's quite the silver fox nowadays. He's really got that Daddy vibe going on."

Nic rolled his eyes at him and said, "You're not getting licks from either of them."

“Aww. That’s cute. You think I couldn’t break into your backyard and steal your dog if I wanted to?”

“I’m gonna have to teach him stranger-danger, aren’t I?”

Kai huffed. “The fuck you calling a stranger?”

They were laughing, but they both knew he was only trying to keep them from thinking about the inevitable. He was about to walk right into a psychopath’s arms. One that wanted him dead.

“I’m gonna head home and try to figure out what I can about the Briggs family. Maybe Auggie can find something we can use if this doesn’t work,” Nic said.

Kai arched a brow at him. “You doubt my skills that much?”

Nic’s lips twitched, and he shook his head.

“I just like to be prepared. You stay alive, you hear me?”

Kai nodded, the words he tried to say stuck in his throat.

When Nic left, he sat down on the bed with a sigh and dropped his head into his hands.

Nic was right. He *was* a moron.

He just didn’t see any other way. He needed Steel to be safe, which included his club. These people had decided to help him even if some of them didn’t even like him. He couldn’t let anything happen to them.

He heard someone enter the room and instantly knew exactly who it was.

“Hi,” he said, looking up at Steel with a small smile.

“Hi.”

Steel hesitated a few feet from Kai, so he stood and stepped into Steel’s arms. He rested his head against Steel’s chest and closed his eyes. If only he could stop time, he would stay in this moment forever. If this was the last time he felt those arms around him, he would enjoy it to the fullest. He would remember every second of it.

“Please come back to me,” Steel whispered, cheek pressed against the top of Kai’s head.

“Always.” Kai leaned back in his arms and gave him what he hoped was a dazzling smile. “You know. I haven’t actually gotten to ride that dick of yours, yet. It’s on my bingo card. I’ll be coming back to check it off.”

“Just come back alive,” he said, the fear in his voice breaking Kai’s heart.

“I promise.”

“I’ll hold you to that.”

Kai nodded and blinked back tears. Steel cupped his face and leaned down for a kiss. It was bittersweet at best. It might be the last time he tasted those lips. The last time he drew in a breath and the man’s intoxicating scent filled his nose.

“I promise I’ll get you out,” Steel said, cheek pressed against the top of Kai’s head. “We’ll survive this.”

Kai burrowed closer and held on tight until Diesel showed up to tell them it was time for Kai to leave.

He pulled back reluctantly and tilted his head back to meet Steel’s gaze.

“I love you,” he said, his throat closing up.

“I love you, too.”

Steel lowered his head, and the brush of lips wasn't anywhere near enough, but it would have to do. It was a good reminder of what he had to get back to. He was gonna need a hell of a lot more of that. More kisses. More Steel.

Steel

Watching the man he loved walk away broke his heart. The pain was unbearable. It was like a fire burned hot through his heart while at the same time, it felt like that fire had been put out because Kai was no longer there to keep it alive.

The thought of anything happening to Kai had cold slithering down his spine. If Kai got hurt, how could he ever forgive himself? How could he... live?

A wave of dizziness hit him, and he couldn't get his lungs to pull in air. He flung his arm out and caught himself against the wall to keep from ending up on the floor.

"Whoa, easy there."

He raised his gaze to find his brother standing in front of him. He let Tony guide him down to sit on the floor while he tried to just breathe.

He leaned his head back against the wall and closed his eyes while he felt Tony's fingers on his wrist.

"What if he doesn't come back?" he whispered.

"You'll die."

Steel snapped his eyes open to stare at his brother.

"Trust me," Tony said, a grim look on his face. "I know."

Steel swallowed hard. His brother had been in this exact situation before. Trina had to go back to her psycho husband who'd started beating her and attempted to kill her. They'd

saved her, of course, but while he'd felt for his brother back then, now he truly understood his pain. His fear.

“How did you get through it?”

Tony's lips lifted at one corner. “I put my trust in you because I knew you'd get her back.”

Steel nodded, his lips trying and failing to pull into a smile.

“I may have made an oath to help people and do no harm, and I know you've made your own kind of oath, too. I can't say I know exactly what that entails, except that there are a lot of people who are alive because of you,” Tony said and squeezed Steel's shoulder. “But you made a promise to Kai, too. So go get him back. No matter what it takes.”

Steel sucked in a deep breath and pushed up off the floor, Tony standing along with him.

“I know I don't say it enough, but I love you.”

Tony rolled his eyes and said, “Oh, I know. That's why I kept you in the dark about me and Trina. I knew you'd lose your shit because of how much you care. I know you all too well, brother.”

“Is that about high school?”

Had his nerdy brother been bullied relentlessly throughout high school and the first time he'd seen it during his freshman year, he'd beaten the crab out of said bullies? Yes and yes. No one hurt his brother. No one.

Tony shook his head with a light laugh, then motioned with a tilt of his head toward the door.

“Go get him.”

Kai

They were waiting at the location Ares and Isaac had agreed on for the hand-over, and when he saw two cars pull up in front of them, one a black Mercedes he knew all too well, cold slithered down his spine. He was about to get into that car with Isaac. Someone whose hands had once brought him pleasure. They sure as fuck wouldn't now. He'd seen Isaac in his element, and he'd gone home and thrown up. He killed people for a living, but Isaac was in a whole other league. He enjoyed drawing out people's pain. It made sense, though. He was sure that was the only time the man truly felt anything.

He wasn't looking forward to that part, but he knew he had to expect it. There were no guarantees that the Disciples would get to him in time. He had to do this. It was the only way to clear his name. He needed that hit gone if he ever planned on making a life with Steel. He was willing to give it a shot, even if it might cost him his life.

The driver got out of the Mercedes and walked to the back, opening the door for Isaac to exit. He looked immaculate as always. The thousand-dollar suit helped.

His blood ran cold and his limbs felt like they were filled with lead as he met Isaac's cold gaze.

"Let's go," Ares said.

"Try not to enjoy this too much."

He caught a twitch of Ares' lips, but other than that, the man kept his expression blank.

They walked halfway to Isaac's car, Isaac meeting them there. He could've brought several cars full of his men, but Isaac was way too confident for that. Kai had to get him from confident to overconfident and the thought of it made him hate himself a little bit for jumping head first into this.

"We don't want a war," Ares said, sounding genuine. "But don't think for one second that we won't fight."

"Oh, I have no doubt," Isaac said.

Kai knew exactly what Isaac meant. He didn't doubt that the Disciples would fight, he just didn't believe they'd win.

"You get him, and you leave me and my club alone," Ares said, the malice in his voice doing nothing to hide the disdain he felt for Isaac.

"That's the deal," Isaac said.

Ares gave Isaac a nod, then gave Kai a push toward him.

Kai glared at Ares over his shoulder for a second before turning toward Isaac. He walked with him to the Mercedes and tried not to think too hard about the consequences of getting into that car with him. When they reached it, he looked over his shoulder at the Disciples. They were standing by their bikes, Ares looking straight at Kai with what looked like respect showing on his face. Hey, he might die today but at least he'd earned the man's respect if not approval. Not that he needed it. The only person's opinion that mattered to him was Steel's.

"See, Kai," Isaac said with a sinister smile. "This is what loyalty gets you."

"You don't know the first thing about loyalty," Kai hissed.

He wasn't about to admit that he'd volunteered. Isaac would know something was up.

Isaac reached out to grab Kai by the arm, but he jerked away before the asshole could get his hand on him.

“Don't fucking touch me,” he snapped.

Isaac's smile morphed into a look of displeasure.

“Get in the car.”

Chapter Fifteen

Steel

HE KNEW he'd get there too late, but that didn't mean he wouldn't try his hardest. If he could stop Kai from getting into that car with Isaac, it would be worth risking his life to get there.

The plan was to let Kai get Isaac to confess on tape, then get him out and get that tape to Briggs' family. He didn't give a shit about that plan. Not when it meant risking Kai's life to *maybe* get that hit called off.

He knew Kai was doing it to keep him safe. To keep his brothers safe. Fuck that. Someone needed to keep Kai safe.

He pulled up next to the van and cursed under his breath when he realized there was no sign of Isaac. They'd already handed over Kai.

He got off his bike, rushing toward his brothers who were all standing around the van. Ares didn't look surprised to see him. He was supposed to be there to help get Kai back, but only after the confession. He wasn't waiting for that.

"You got the tracker?" he asked no one in particular.

"Yeah," Chris said, waving him closer. He was sitting in the back of the van at a makeshift computer station. "We're following them at a distance, too."

He was about to demand the location when he heard Kai's voice and froze.

“Don’t even think about it,” Kai said, a growl in his voice.
“I’m only here for the torture.”

Steel’s heart skipped a painful beat.

“You can at least respect that.”

“As you wish,” Isaac said.

He was about to throw up and not just because he knew Isaac had tried to touch Kai but because Kai had known handing himself over would mean he’d be tortured.

“Where are they going?” he croaked out.

“Looks like they’re headed out of the city,” Chris said, looking at a map on his computer with two moving dots on it. One was Kai. The other was their guys following several miles behind them.

“Can you send that to my phone?”

“Sure. One sec.”

Once he got Chris’ message, he sent the link off to Hawk, knowing he might very well need the man’s help. He knew Isaac. He might even know where they were headed.

Hawk’s response was, ‘I’ll bring backup.’

He was off toward his bike the next second.

“Steel,” Ares snapped.

“I’m not letting him get tortured,” Steel yelled back.

He was going to get Kai back in one piece no matter what it took. No matter who he had to kill to get to him.

Kai

Isaac hadn't been too happy when he'd shut him down. The asshole actually thought he'd sleep with him while they were on their way to his murder cabin? Fuck no. Even if Steel hadn't been in the picture, that would've still been a no. He at least had that much self-respect.

“Why did you need to get rid of Briggs? Why didn't you just hire me to do it? I could've made it look like an accident. Saved us both this trouble.”

“Because I was hired.”

That... was probably the last thing he'd expected to hear.

“What the hell do you mean?”

Isaac looked smug as hell as he crossed his arms and leaned back in his seat, dark gaze on Kai.

“Now why would I tell you that? Hmm? You already told me I wasn't getting anything out of this,” Isaac said.

Kai clenched his jaw tight. That fucker.

He *needed* that confession. He'd done a lot of fucked up shit in his life but giving up his body? No. He couldn't do that. He couldn't even pretend to. Isaac would see right through him.

Kai grunted and turned his gaze out the window. Isaac was a megalomaniac. He might get lucky enough that Isaac couldn't keep from boasting, but they both stayed silent.

He was in desperate need of some damned luck right now. He was about to get tortured and maybe even killed for absolutely nothing.

He'd fight like hell to get back to Steel though he doubted it'd be enough. Isaac only had a few guys with him right now and he knew there wouldn't be that many at the cabin either. Isaac preferred his privacy. Especially when he was tearing someone limb from limb.

Nausea hit him as the memories of that particular incident flooded his mind.

People could stay alive for surprisingly long while being dismembered, which was something he thought he'd never have first-hand knowledge of. He'd certainly never wished for it.

He wanted away from all the death. It had taken too much from him already.

The car pulled to a stop, and he took a deep but silent breath before following Isaac out of the car.

They headed for the staircase leading up to the cabin that was partially built into the hill. They passed a few of his former colleagues on the way there, and he noticed them watching him with varying degrees of confusion. He knew a few had been jealous of his 'hold' over Isaac and those were the ones who he was sure would delight in his demise. The others were simply confused. He wasn't exactly tied up or anything. Isaac didn't need to. He knew Kai was well aware that there was nowhere for him to run.

They reached the wrap-around porch and he felt like he had tunnel vision as he looked at that front door. Or perhaps he was just dizzy because he knew what was waiting for him inside? He needed that confession and stat.

He was gonna have to provoke Isaac.

“It’s not like you to be this sloppy and disorganized.”

Isaac grunted and looked over his shoulder at Kai, the slightest furrow between his brows. That was enough to give Kai hope.

“When have you ever relied on luck before?”

“It wasn’t luck.”

Kai snorted out a short laugh.

“What the hell else would you call it? You could never know for certain what I would do,” Kai said.

Isaac whirled around, the hard set of his jaw making Kai smile up at him.

“I know you. I knew what you’d do.”

Kai cocked a brow at him and said, “You don’t know me at all.”

Isaac stepped closer, his voice low and husky and at one point he’d probably found it sexy. Now, though? It gave him the creeps.

“I know you intimately. I know what you sound like in the throes of pleasure.”

Kai scrunched up his nose.

“First of all. Ew. Second. Who talks like that?”

The provocation seemed to be working well. Maybe too well.

Isaac grabbed Kai by the arm and jerked him toward the door. He was dragged inside and dropped into the only chair in the otherwise empty living room. He put his ankle over his knee and leaned back in the chair while giving Isaac a bored look.

“Is this where you’re gonna torture me? Will it be with knives or that awful prose of yours?”

Isaac was grinding his teeth by now.

“You’re right,” Isaac said with a slow nod. “I should’ve killed you, then Briggs, and made it look like you killed each other.”

“See, that’s what I’m saying. You made a mess of things. You lost control.”

“I didn’t lose control,” Isaac yelled, making Kai flinch ever so slightly.

Fuck.

“I had to,” Isaac said, sounding almost petulant. “That’s what they wanted.”

“You know,” Kai said, arching a brow at Isaac. “If it ever gets out that you accepted a hit on your own partner, I’m pretty sure your integrity would be shot to shit.”

He mimicked an explosion with his hand while mouthing, “Poof.”

“Briggs is the one who fucked up,” Isaac said.

“Yeah, by trusting you,” Kai drawled.

“No. His family took out that hit.”

Yikes. That was not what he expected. Actually, it was the last fucking thing he wanted. If they already knew... then the hit on him was to keep him quiet. Not to exact revenge.

“He pissed off his whole family?”

Isaac shook his head and walked to the kitchen island, grabbing something off it.

Kai dropped his foot to the floor and straightened. When Isaac returned, he had a slim dagger with him.

Kai swallowed hard.

“The shit he’d gotten himself into would’ve torn apart their business and their lives,” Isaac said while inspecting the knife. “Killing that senator was merely a band-aid on an open wound. He was losing control of everything. His sister saw it coming, so she came to me. He would’ve taken us all down with him.”

Oh. That was... marginally better than the whole family, he supposed. It meant this stupid plan of theirs might actually work.

Something evil shone in Isaac’s eyes as he stepped in front of Kai. A slow smile spread on his lips and then he slammed the knife into Kai’s left thigh.

“Fuck,” he shouted, grinding his teeth at the sharp pain. “Motherfucker.”

“That’s more like it,” Isaac said, pure joy in his voice.

He knew the knife had only hit muscle because Isaac was psycho enough to know from experience exactly where to hit

to cause the least damage. He wanted it to last for as long as possible, after all.

Isaac pulled the knife out, then shoved it right back in, making Kai bite back a pained cry. It burned. His thigh felt cold, but it burned. So fucking much.

Isaac laughed and left the knife in Kai's thigh to clap his hands like the fucking psycho he was.

“Don't you worry. We're only just getting started.”

Isaac reached for the knife and Kai leaned as far away from Isaac as he could get.

“Don't tell me I need to tie you down,” Isaac said, sounding much too pleased with himself. “I know you like it rough, sweetheart.”

Kai bit his tongue but couldn't stop himself from glaring at Isaac.

Even if he fought off Isaac, even if he killed him, he sure as fuck wouldn't get past Isaac's guys. Not with his leg. Not down those stairs. He'd be completely exposed.

All he could do was stay alive long enough for Steel to come for him, but then? Isaac was a dead man.

Isaac wrapped his hand around the hilt of the knife and gave Kai an evil smile before slowly pulling it out.

He felt like screaming but he couldn't. He didn't fucking move. He didn't say a word. He just bit back everything. Sweat was dripping down into his eyes, a shiver running through him.

Isaac looked at the knife, running his finger through Kai's blood. He made an almost cheerful sound, then turned his gaze on Kai.

"Perhaps I should take a finger," Isaac said, grinning as he grabbed Kai's hand and held the blade against his index finger.

"You like my fingers," Kai forced out.

Isaac pursed his lips for a moment and Kai's heart stood still.

"You're right."

He braced himself for the pain but instead, Isaac lowered the knife.

"I do like them," Isaac said and brought Kai's hand to his lips, sucking a finger into his mouth. Kai was doing his best not to throw up.

"I'm quite fond of your nipples, too."

Isaac brought the knife to Kai's waistband, pressing it lightly against the button on his jeans. Kai sucked in his stomach and bit his lip hard. Steel needed to hurry the fuck up.

Isaac grabbed the hem of Kai's shirt and held it out, then cut it all the way up, nearly nicking Kai's chin.

"What the fuck is that?"

"Um. That's a wire, *sweetheart*."

How he was keeping his cool, he had no idea. Survival instinct maybe?

"Cops," Isaac snarled.

Kai shrugged. He wasn't sure if it mattered that Isaac thought he was working with the cops instead of the Disciples. Though he was sure the cops would've already stormed the building by now. Where the fuck were the Disciples? They had the confession already. Where was Steel?

A small part of him wondered if Steel wasn't coming. If his words had meant nothing. If he was on his own. But that was the pain and fear talking. He knew Steel. The man he loved was coming for him. He knew it.

Isaac grabbed the wire and pulled it off, Kai hissing when the tape came off too. Isaac threw the wire onto the ground, cursing under his breath. Kai slipped out of his ruined shirt and was trying to get up when an explosion rocked the building and sent them both scrambling to the floor.

He ended up on his hands and knees, head jerking up to see Isaac kneeling with his hands on the floor close to him.

He'd dropped the knife. It was on the floor between them.

One look confirmed that Isaac had seen it too and they both went for it.

He threw himself onto his stomach to grab it, fingers wrapping around the hilt a split second before Isaac reached him. He swung the knife toward Isaac, his heart hammering in his chest as blood splattered between them.

Chapter Sixteen

Steel

HE GAVE Scar a horrified look to which she just shrugged and grinned back at him. When she'd said she had planted an explosive device, this wasn't what he'd expected. That explosion could have torn down the whole house.

“Was that really necessary?”

“It'll keep them busy,” Hawk said and tapped Steel's shoulder to get him moving.

He grunted and took off toward the driveway in front of the cabin Kai was in. When Hawk had texted that he'd bring backup, he'd thought maybe he'd show up with a couple of the guys and not some crazy lady. Granted, she probably got as much done as several of the guys could have. In less time.

Kai better still be alive. He wasn't sure what he'd do if he wasn't. He just knew he'd feel empty. Life would be empty without his little assassin to keep him on his toes.

He tried to focus on the task at hand. The explosion had drawn the attention of the three men who'd been standing guard by the cars. Two of them were headed toward the blast site while the last one ran up the stairs.

They moved closer, the adrenaline starting to hit him. He knew there were more men somewhere. He just didn't know where.

He'd barely finished that thought when a hand landed on his shoulder and pulled him behind a car right before bullets tore up the ground where he'd just been.

"Fuck," he hissed, turning to give Hawk a quick nod of thanks before trying to figure out where the hell those shots had come from.

"There," Scar said, pointing toward the trees.

He couldn't see how many there were, but they were effectively cutting off their access to the cabin.

"We need to get past them," he said to Hawk who nodded. He turned to Scar, ducking when another hail of bullets rained down on them. "You got any more of those bombs?"

Scar shook her head and shot off a few rounds toward the trees.

"I used it all," she yelled.

"Fuck."

They were pinned down and Kai was up there alone. He didn't even know if he was alive. The thought had panic trying to take hold.

Gunfire sounded from behind them. He whirled around and brought his gun up, but relief hit him instead of dread. Seemed his brothers had finally decided to join the action. It was about fucking time.

With them providing cover, they could make their way up the stairs.

"Go. I've got your backs," Scar yelled.

Steel gave her a nod, then turned and ran up the stairs. Hawk was right behind him.

Just before they reached the top, he saw movement and raised his gun. He didn't take the shot until he was certain it wasn't Kai. The bullets fired at them were more than confirmation enough, though.

Steel fired back and his bullets tore through the guy. The man wavered and Steel's breath got caught in his throat when he realized that he was falling toward them.

"Move," he yelled, shifting to the side just as the guy fell. He watched him fly through the air and hit the stairs right next to Hawk. He kept falling until he hit the ground at the end of the staircase.

Steel snapped his head back up and took the last three steps in one go. The cabin had a wrap-around porch, and they followed it to the right, heading for the front door.

A gun appeared from around the corner of the building and Steel quickly holstered his own to grab the man's hands, pushing them up. A bearded face came into view. Definitely not Kai.

He slammed the man's hands into the side of the cabin and the gun fell to the ground, then he found himself shoved into the wall, the air knocked right out of him. He slammed his elbow into the man's nose, making him roar and pull Steel away from the wall, turning them so Steel's back was to Hawk.

"Get out of the way," Hawk yelled.

They both threw punches. He managed to shove the man down but lost his balance and fell forward, his knee slamming into the ground. Pain sparked like lightning up his leg making him shout. It felt like something shattered, but he didn't have time to wonder about it. A fist came flying at his face and he ducked just in time to avoid it. His ears rang from a gunshot close by.

His brain was frozen for a moment, then he blinked and found Hawk in front of him.

"Thanks," he said and took the hand Hawk held out for him.

He grunted when his knee throbbed as he got up.

"Anytime," Hawk said.

"I'll hold you to that."

Chances were, he'd need it.

They went to either side of the front door, Hawk giving him a nod before pulling the door open for Steel to enter.

They stepped into a short hallway that led to a big open kitchen and dining room. It was empty save for an overturned chair on the floor and blood. So much blood.

"Kai?"

He heard a thump and a muffled shout coming from the other end of the house and headed in that direction.

He found Kai in a bedroom on the floor, sitting in the corner with a knife in his hand. The other hand was pressed against his middle. He wasn't wearing a shirt and the wire was gone, too.

“Kai,” he gasped out.

“Steel?”

He was at Kai’s side the next second, hands moving over Kai’s face. He was pale. Too pale. He looked down, the red covering Kai’s stomach making him nauseated. He slowly moved Kai’s hand aside so he could assess the damage.

“You should see the other guy,” Kai said and whimpered when Steel touched the edge of the wound.

Any other time, he would’ve cursed him out for his inappropriate joking, but he was too focused on the wound to care. The laceration wasn’t wide, but it looked deep.

“No. I mean it,” Kai said and hissed. “I think I actually got him good.”

Steel looked up and met Kai’s gaze.

“I need to get you out of here.”

Kai nodded.

“Please tell me you got that recording,” Kai said between groans as Steel helped him to his feet, biting back a curse when his knee protested.

“I don’t know.”

“What?”

“I didn’t stay to hear it. I went straight after you.”

“You what?”

He didn’t get to answer before Kai pulled him down for a kiss. His lips were too cold, but he still savored it.

“You’d better have that damned recording,” Kai muttered.

He wrapped his left arm around Kai's waist and kept his gun in his right. Kai was still holding the knife and he was about to tell him to drop it because he needed to keep pressure on that wound when the floor creaking had them both freezing.

A man he suspected was Isaac appeared in the doorway, gun aimed at Kai.

"You think I'd just let you leave?"

He had a bleeding wound down the side of his face and blood was dripping onto the floor from somewhere under his shirt.

"You think you get to fuck everything up and just walk away?" Isaac growled, shaking with anger.

"Fuck you," Kai snapped, and before either of them could get a shot off, Kai's knife went flying across the room.

Kai

They were both wounded. Isaac and him. He'd gotten the knife first and made that slash across Isaac's face when he'd gone for it. Then they'd both gotten cuts he feared were too deep.

He'd thrown Isaac off him and run as fast as he could with that painful twinge in his thigh. When he'd reached the front door, he'd heard gunshots outside and turned down the hall and went into one of the bedrooms.

He'd heard his name called and had bumped into the nightstand and slid to the floor, unable to get back up or move. He'd thought being mortally wounded meant that you weren't supposed to feel anything, but fuck, if he did. That shit hurt like a mother. It burned like crazy. So much so that he'd prefer being on fire.

Now, there they were. Steel's arm around him, keeping him up, and Isaac in front of them. He wasn't about to let Isaac hurt Steel. Not a fucking chance.

He sent that knife flying and while he would have much preferred to aim for Isaac's face, he was limited not only by his injuries but by his position across from Isaac.

The knife hit Isaac in the shoulder, making him drop his gun with a howl. A shot went off. Then another.

A bullet struck Isaac between the eyes, and he'd never felt as much satisfaction as he did when he watched Isaac's body

hit the floor. Relief flooded him and nearly made him forget the pain.

“Fuck,” Steel groaned.

Kai snapped his head toward him, breath stuttering when he saw the pained expression on Steel’s face.

“What’s wrong?”

“Ricochet,” Steel said and motioned with his chin toward his arm. There was a line of blood across the sleeve. Isaac’s gun had gone off when it hit the floor. The bullet must’ve hit Steel.

Steel was still holding onto Kai tightly with his left arm which was probably a good idea. He would’ve keeled over otherwise.

“It’s just a flesh wound,” Steel said.

He would’ve rolled his eyes if he wasn’t so worried. Flesh wound or not, he hated that Steel had gotten hurt because of him.

Nic appeared in the doorway, making them jump which also resulted in pained groans from them both.

“Jesus,” Nic muttered.

“He got shot,” Kai said, panic starting to slowly hit him.

Steel grunted. “*He* got stabbed.”

“Quite the pair, aren’t you? Let’s get you the fuck out of here,” Hawk said and stepped over Isaac’s body, but before he reached them, he turned around and put two bullets in Isaac.

“A bit overkill, wouldn’t you say?” Kai drawled.

Hawk shrugged. “Double tap or die.

Kai rolled his eyes, then winced. Who knew moving your eyes could hurt? Granted, it was probably because he’d slammed his head into the floor when he’d fought Isaac.

“Let’s get you two to the hospital,” Nic said.

Steel groaned and when Kai met his gaze, Steel said, “My brother’s gonna kill me.”

While he was pretty sure they had bigger issues, he was also dreading seeing Tony. Last time, he’d been sent to kill the man, after all, and if Tony didn’t approve of their relationship? Fuck. That wouldn’t be good. That wouldn’t be good at all.

Steel

His brother had stitched him up while Kai was in surgery. He'd been a fucking mess until Tony got word from Kai's surgeon that he was okay. Minimal damage, all things considered. He wasn't exactly sure what that meant, but he'd take it. He'd take anything that meant Kai was alive. He was still going a bit out of his mind with worry when Tony appeared in the doorway to his room.

"He's awake," Tony said with a soft smile.

"Oh, thank fuck," Steel said on a relieved breath.

"I'm having them bring him up here, so you won't tear the place apart looking for him."

His brother knew him too well.

He gave Tony a grateful smile and dropped back against his pillows.

"You doing okay?"

Steel nodded. "I'm fine."

"Keep that leg elevated," Tony said with a stern look.

"It's up, isn't it?"

He had a mountain of pillows shoved under his leg to keep it up. It was swollen as all hell. They hadn't been able to see any fractures on the x-ray, but they'd told him to come back for another one once the swelling went down a bit.

"I'll get you some ice," Tony said and left.

He wasn't even sure the ice was helping, though he was also on some pretty hefty painkillers. He still got a sharp pain when he moved too fast, but other than that, he was alright. It was Kai he was worried about. He knew Kai was tough. He was the most resilient man he knew. He'd be okay. He had to.

Voices and footsteps nearing had him perking up and a sigh escaped him when a bed was rolled into the room. Kai was cracking a joke that made the nurse laugh.

Kai turned his head and when he saw Steel, a big smile spread on his face.

"Oh, hi babe."

"Hi," Steel said.

"He's still a bit affected by the anesthesia," the nurse said to Steel. "But no need to worry. We'll keep an eye on him."

"Thank you."

She walked out just as Tony returned with a fresh pack of ice. He came to a halt when he saw Kai.

"You're alive."

Kai scrunched up his face and said, "Sound happy about it, why don't you?"

"You're both idiots," Tony said and gave Steel a look of disapproval. "And *you* need to stop getting shot."

Unfortunately, his brother wasn't wrong. He'd already gotten shot twice this year. They'd gotten into quite a mess. Shit. They *were* idiots. He just wasn't certain which one of them was the biggest.

He looked across the room at Kai and figured he was the biggest idiot for ever agreeing to that stupid plan and letting Kai go. He'd almost lost him and for what? He didn't care if they had to run and hide. Not as long as he had Kai by his side. They could figure everything else out along the way. The most important thing was that Kai was alive. Nothing else mattered.

Tony walked over and dropped the ice pack next to Steel's leg.

"Hey," Kai croaked out.

Tony turned toward Kai.

"Thank you."

Tony shook his head and stepped closer. Steel pushed himself up to have a better view of the two.

"You don't owe me anything, Kai. You never did," Tony said.

"But I almost killed you," Kai said, confusion clear in his voice.

"There's no *almost*. You decided not to, and not only that, but you helped save Trina." Tony put his hand over Kai's that was lying on top of his blanket. "We're good."

Kai nodded and Steel felt an intense sense of relief.

He watched his brother walk out of the room and swung his legs over the side of his bed and slid down, wincing when his feet hit the floor. He humped the few feet to Kai's bed.

"Scoot over."

Kai grunted but made room for Steel.

He lifted Kai's blanket and crawled under it, pressing his body up against Kai's. He felt Kai's sigh to his core. Touching Kai soothed his soul.

He brushed Kai's hair out of his eyes and pressed a soft kiss to his forehead. Kai looked up at him with tired eyes.

"I'm here. Get some sleep."

They both needed it, but he'd stay awake for Kai. He knew his brothers were keeping watch over them and wouldn't let anyone get near Kai, but he also knew the people who still had a hit out on Kai weren't to be messed with. If they had learned of Isaac's death, he was certain they would work harder to get to Kai, but he'd be damned if he let anyone take Kai from him. He'd die before he let anyone hurt him.

Chapter Seventeen

Kai

THEY WERE back to hiding out and while he appreciated any time he got with Steel, having the man's brother and sister-in-law fussing over them wasn't exactly... helpful. Two weeks of pain and no sex wasn't really good for morale. Sleeping in Steel's arms had been wonderful but also torture at the same time.

Trina's cooking, though? It was so good it had made him declare his undying love for her and he'd jokingly told her to run away with him. The brothers hadn't protested until she'd grabbed his hand and tugged him toward the front door. He'd never seen anyone get up as fast as those two did. Tony had pulled Trina away from him while making an I'm-watching-you gesture. He was pretty sure that had been the first time they'd all laughed since moving into the safehouse. They'd all been tense and not just because him and Steel had been close to dying, but because they were all still in danger.

Loud voices caught his attention and he headed into the kitchen where he found Tony and Steel, both with their arms crossed as they talked.

"The swelling has gone down enough," Tony said to Steel.

"But it doesn't really hurt anymore so is it necessary? I'd rather stay," Steel said and threw a quick glance Kai's way.

Kai rolled his eyes.

“I’m perfectly safe here. You should go.”

“But—”

“You’re going,” Tony said, cutting him off. “Doctor’s orders.”

Steel muttered under his breath, and Kai had no doubt he was cursing out both of them. He had a line between his brows as he walked up to Kai and when he bent down for a kiss, Kai did his very best to smooth that line out.

“I’ll see you in a few hours,” he said against Steel’s lips.

Steel grunted and pulled back, a look of displeasure on his face.

“I love you,” Kai said, grinning when Steel’s expression changed in an instant. Steel’s smile made his heart jump, and he knew that even though he’d only be gone for a few hours, he’d miss him the whole time.

“I love you, too,” Steel said and pressed a quick kiss to Kai’s lips before Tony nearly dragged him out of there.

He watched them disappear out the door with a smile on his lips, then headed into the living room where he found Trina in the armchair reading a book.

She looked up when she saw him and asked, “Did he have to drag him to the car?”

Kai chuckled and said, “Nearly.”

He sat down on the couch with a pained grunt.

“Alright. Let me have a look,” Trina said, putting down her book and motioning for Kai to pull up his shirt.

She sat down next to him on the couch, and he held up his shirt so she could inspect his wound. She'd removed his stitches a few days ago.

He was doing a lot better than expected. Granted, he'd thought he might die so anything was better than that. The wounds from Isaac's lovely little torture session were all healing well, too. He still felt a twinge in his thigh every time he moved but it was nothing he couldn't deal with.

"Still looking good," Trina said.

Kai patted his stomach.

"I'm never gonna have a six-pack again, am I?"

Trina raised her brow and said, "I didn't know you had one to begin with."

His mock-gasping made her laugh.

"Why do you hurt me so?"

The woman he'd met years ago had been timid. Strong, but scared and quiet. Without the constant threat of her husband looming over her, she'd been able to really grow and become who she was always meant to be. It warmed his heart to see. What Tony and Trina had was exactly what he wanted for him and Steel. Love. Warmth. A home. He hadn't had a home since he'd left his parents. He hadn't seen them in years. He hadn't even been in Tampa for over a decade. He'd never wanted them to see what he'd become.

He'd checked up on them as well as he could from afar. He knew they missed him and didn't understand why he'd cut contact, but he'd had to.

Maybe once he didn't have a hit out on him, he could finally go home? He knew his days as an assassin were well and truly over now. He'd never go back. All he could do was try to atone for his sins. Whatever he could do to balance the scales.

He wrapped an arm around Trina's shoulders, smiling when she leaned into him. He was glad he'd started that balancing with saving her life.

Steel

He was back in a hospital bed, and he hated it. Mostly because Kai wasn't there. He hated being away from him even though he knew he was safe. Not only did their safehouse have a state-of-the-art security system, but the man knew how to protect himself. If anything happened, he could keep him and Trina safe. He just liked it better when he was the one doing the protecting.

He looked up when he heard someone enter the room and when he saw his brother, he straightened, waiting to hear the verdict on his knee.

"Nothing's broken," Tony said.

Steel threw up his hands. "What did I say? There was no need to come here."

He swung his legs over the side of the bed and slid down, hiding a wince when his feet hit the floor and he felt a sharp pain in his knee.

"We wouldn't have known if we hadn't come," Tony said with a raised brow.

"Yeah. Yeah. Can we just go home now?"

He watched Tony's expression change from annoyed to somber and let out a sigh.

"When *can* we go home?" Tony asked.

He'd expected the question, but he still hadn't quite found the answer yet.

“I don’t know. It depends.”

“On what?”

Steel pressed his lips together for a moment, then dropped his gaze to the floor.

“There’s something Kai needs to do.”

“Something dangerous, I take it?” Tony asked as he leaned back against the bed next to Steel’s. Steel sat back down, too.

“Yeah,” he said, his voice low and his head down.

“Have you been keeping him from doing it?”

He slowly raised his head and while he’d expected to see anger for keeping them in hiding for this long, all he saw was understanding in his brother’s eyes.

“We’ve been safe there. We don’t know if there is still someone after Kai. You and Trina are in danger because I love him,” he said.

Tony crossed his arms and gave Steel a stern look.

“Don’t do that. We chose to go with you and not because we were in danger. The Disciples would’ve kept us safe at home, too. We wanted to be there for you and Kai.”

He stared at his brother, unable to form a single word, so instead of saying some gibberish, he pushed away from his bed and wrapped his arms around Tony instead.

“You’ve always been there for me,” Tony said. “It was about time I was there for you, too.”

Steel squeezed a bit tighter, ignoring the pain in his body. It wasn’t that bad. His arm was fine. The knee would take some

time to heal from the sprain, but he'd be alright.

They didn't speak much on the drive to the safehouse, both seemingly lost in their thoughts. He knew Tony and Trina wanted to go home and he was the one keeping them there because he was afraid of what Kai would have to do to ensure their safety.

Tony was parking the car before he even realized they'd driven for almost an hour.

He unbuckled his belt and got out of the car with almost no wincing. Tony walked around the car and looked like he was about to ask if he needed help.

"I'm fine."

Tony pressed his lips together and took off toward the front door. Steel followed with a sigh.

Walking inside, they found Trina and Kai in the kitchen. Trina was mixing something in a bowl while Kai was munching on whatever ingredients she hadn't put in yet. The sight made him smile.

Kai looked up when he heard them and grinned at Steel.

"It's not broken," Tony said and walked up to Trina, placing a kiss on her cheek before he gently pulled her hands off the bowl and put the spoon she'd been using on the counter to walk her out of the room.

Steel dropped his head back with a loud groan.

"Way to be subtle, Tony," he mumbled.

When he turned toward Kai, the man was looking at him with narrowed eyes, his arms crossed over his chest.

“I know,” Steel said with a sigh.

“No more hiding,” Kai said.

His heart felt heavy as he looked at Kai. He wasn't surprised by the determination he saw in Kai's gaze. He'd known this had to happen. Kai needed to secure his future. *Their* future. He just hated that Kai had to put himself in danger to do it.

“I'll call Ares,” he said, barely keeping his emotions out of his voice.

Kai dropped his arms and walked up to him. He smiled at Steel and wrapped his arms around his neck, leaning his body against his.

“Thank you,” Kai said and pulled Steel down for a soft kiss.

It didn't stay soft for long. That little minx pulled Steel's bottom lip between his teeth and bit down. Hard. A growl rose from deep in his chest and he jerked Kai against his body.

Kai groaned into his mouth and slid his fingers into Steel's hair, tongue tangling with Steel's.

“You know,” Kai said as he pulled back. “Seeing as your knee isn't broken and I'm healing just fine, we might just get the all-clear from the doc to get some sexy-time.”

He was already smiling but when Kai wagged his brows at him, a laugh burst from him.

“You and your one-track mind,” he said and caught Kai's lips in a quick kiss.

“You’re the one who’s been staring at my ass for weeks,” Kai said.

Steel grinned down at him. “Guilty.”

In his defense, that was an ass worth staring at.

“But I’m not gonna ask my brother if we can have sex,” Steel said and arched a brow at Kai.

Kai groaned. They both knew Kai wouldn’t be asking either. With his luck, Tony would say no just because he could.

“Wanna just give it a shot?” Kai asked, eyes twinkling as he tugged on the waistband of Steel’s pants to bring him closer. “I do believe I owe you a ride.”

His knee suddenly didn’t hurt at all.

Kai

Steel's lips were on his, that devilish tongue making his knees weak. He dug his fingers into Steel's shoulders, holding on for dear life as the man ravaged him.

"We're going for a walk," Tony yelled from somewhere close by.

Steel pulled back, gaze burning with lust as he stared into Kai's eyes.

"Make it a long one," Steel yelled back.

Distantly, Kai heard a giggle and a door slamming, but he was way too busy staring into those steely blue eyes he loved so much.

"Bedroom. Now," Steel ordered with a growl in his voice.

Kai grabbed Steel's hand and dragged him out of the kitchen and down the hallway to their room. He walked him to the bed and pushed him onto it. He followed, crawling on top of him.

"Oh, fuck," Steel groaned, eyes dark with lust.

"Oh, you'd better fuck me," Kai quipped.

Steel chuckled and grabbed the back of Kai's head to pull him down. Their mouths met in a hard kiss, teeth scraping at lips, tongues battling for control even if it was obvious that Steel fucking owned him.

He felt a tug on his shirt and reluctantly pulled away from Steel's mouth to let him pull his shirt off. He helped Steel out

of his shirt and then went straight for the button on his jeans. He popped it open, then looked up at Steel before pulling down the zipper.

He rubbed Steel through his boxers, grinning when Steel dropped back onto the bed with a loud groan.

“Where did you put the lube?”

“My toiletry bag,” Steel said.

Of course, it had to be all the way in the bathroom.

Kai quickly found the bag and grabbed the whole thing because he knew he’d end up spilling all the contents onto the floor with how impatient he was. He walked back into the bedroom. Steel was sitting on the edge of the bed, his pants on the floor and that gorgeous cock of his on full display.

Kai stepped between Steel’s legs and dropped the bag onto the bed next to him. Steel tilted his head back to look up at him.

“I’m not gonna last long,” Steel said, voice strained.

“It’s cute you think I’ll last any longer than you after two weeks without touching you.”

He *had* touched him. Just not the way he really wanted to. The way he was about to.

He held his lip between his teeth as he reached for Steel, sliding his hands down the man’s impressive chest. Jesus, but that was one sexy man. *His* man.

“Pants. Off,” Steel ordered.

Kai grinned at him as he took a step back. Someone was impatient.

He slipped his fingers into the waistband of his sweats, slowly dragging them down to tease Steel. His dick was painfully hard and the second the head was exposed to the cold air, he sucked in a sharp breath.

He pushed his pants down past his hips and when they fell to the floor, he stepped out of them. He stood in front of Steel completely naked and the look of stark lust in Steel's eyes as they roamed over Kai made him feel sexy and cherished at the same time. No one had ever made him feel like that with a simple look before. No one but Steel ever would.

"You're so fucking gorgeous," Steel said, voice low and husky.

"I'll look even better on top of you," Kai said with a wink.

Steel's chuckle was warm, and he looked at Kai with so much affection in his eyes it made him blush. Bastard.

He gave Steel a shove and moved around him to crawl onto the bed. He laid down on his back and bent his knees, feet on the mattress, looking up at Steel who was watching him with hunger in his eyes.

"Get me ready?"

Steel scrambled for the toiletry bag and Kai couldn't keep from laughing when he heard a thump.

"Goddammit," Steel grumbled and reached for the bag that had fallen onto the floor. He put it on the bed and unzipped it, pulling condoms and lube out along with some other stuff he pushed off the bed along with the bag.

He heard the click of a lid opening and then Steel's slick fingers slipped between his cheeks, pressing against his hole.

The tip of one finger entered him, slowly pushing inside. He bit his lip to keep from begging for more because he knew damned well he'd lose it if Steel went any faster and he didn't want to come until Steel was inside him.

As much as he wanted to, he didn't touch his dick. He dug his fingers into the sheets instead.

Steel worked him gently up to taking two of his fingers, sliding them in and out of him slowly. Steel's fingers felt amazing, pleasure sparking every time they hit his prostate. It didn't take long before Steel had him writhing and cursing between moans.

The brush of lips to his inner thigh had him shivering and gasping.

"Fuck," he muttered and wrapped a hand around the base of his cock, squeezing to try to stave off his orgasm.

"I'm good," he said, sounding breathless. "Need you."

The fingers disappeared and Kai sat up. Steel reached for the condoms, but Kai put his hand over his.

"Do we need it?"

Steel arched a brow at him and said, "If you want me to last more than two seconds, then yeah."

Kai's lips quirked at the corner.

"I don't care. I just wanna feel you."

"Fucking hell. You're gonna kill me," Steel muttered.

Kai huffed. "Honey, all I've been tryna do is keep you alive."

“Is that what that was?” Steel teased.

Kai rolled his eyes. “Shut up and put your dick in me.”

“Always so romantic.”

“Romance can wait.”

He pushed Steel down on the bed and crawled into his lap. He grabbed the lube, holding it over Steel’s cock, and let it drizzle onto it.

Steel hissed and threw his arm across his face, muttering, “Dead. You’ll kill me dead.”

Kai grinned to himself.

He dropped the bottle of lube onto the bed and rose onto his knees, holding Steel’s cock under him. He bit his lip as he sank down on Steel’s thick cock, loving the burn as he was stretched so fucking wide. It felt so fucking good.

He bottomed out and closed his eyes, head dropped back as he just took it all in. The stretch. The fullness. Steel’s bare cock inside him.

Steel hissed. “Don’t move.”

Steel wasn’t the one in control right now, so he rolled his hips just to hear the sounds he knew Steel would make. His deep groan had a shiver running down Kai’s spine.

Steel put his hands on Kai’s waist, but Kai grabbed them and pulled them above Steel’s head, pressing them into the mattress, his dick trapped between them and leaking onto their stomachs. He caught Steel’s lip between his teeth, giving him a little bite as he started to move on his cock.

They both groaned, Kai's eyes rolling into the back of his head.

Fuck, but he'd missed that. Missed being this close to Steel.

They were closer than they'd ever been before.

He pressed a hard kiss to Steel's lips before pulling back.

"Fuck," Steel gasped. "You're so beautiful."

Kai shook his head and ran a hand down Steel's chest.

"You're the one who's beautiful."

He put his hands on Steel's thighs behind him and sped up, his dick hitting his stomach every time he lifted up. He had to let go with one hand to wrap it around his cock to keep it from hitting his wound. He tried to stroke himself, but multitasking was hard when you were consumed with lust and pleasure.

His thigh was alright, but his stomach was hurting a bit. He didn't really care. Not when he had Steel inside him, though Steel seemed to be of a different opinion.

Steel put his hands on Kai's hips and said, "Slow down."

A frustrated groan escaped him, but he moved slower and leaned forward to kiss Steel. That man's tongue did things to him. Wicked things.

He felt Steel move under him and then he was thrusting up into him.

"Fuck," he gasped, eyes falling shut as pleasure rippled through him.

"Your knee," he said, though he did nothing to stop Steel. It felt too fucking good, Steel's hips hitting his ass with every thrust as he drove his cock deep inside him.

“I’ll live,” Steel said, voice laced with the same intense need Kai felt to his bones.

“Make me come, then.”

Steel slammed up into him, the friction, the slide of his cock moving in and out of him, the way he hit his prostate. Holy fucking hell. It was heaven and hell at the same time because he loved it so much he didn’t want Steel to ever stop, but he also needed to come almost desperately.

“Gonna come,” Steel gasped out.

“I’m close. Keep going.”

He wrapped his hand around his cock and stroked fast, feeling the pressure building at the base of his spine. He felt Steel’s fingers sliding down to his ass, then they were pushing inside him next to his cock.

“Holy fuck,” he exclaimed, shivering against Steel.

Steel cried out as he came and knowing his come was filling up his hole did it for him. It was probably the hottest thing he’d ever experienced in his life.

He came on Steel’s chest and as soon as he caught his breath, he rubbed his fingers through it. A part of him wanted to rub it into his skin, to have it sink inside him. He wanted to be under Steel’s skin. If he could, he would’ve crawled inside him and stayed there forever. He knew he wasn’t making much sense, but he didn’t care. Steel’s come was inside him. He wanted his all over Steel.

Steel rolled them over, making sure not to put his weight on Kai.

“I love you,” he said.

Kai grinned lazily up at him. “I love you, too.”

A door slamming had him jumping, then laughing. Steel groaned and dropped onto the bed next to him.

“We’re never gonna live that down, are we?” Steel mumbled.

“Probably not.”

Steel turned his head and as he smiled at Kai, he knew Steel didn’t mind it one bit.

Chapter Eighteen

Kai

STEEL WAS clenching his jaw so tight Kai was afraid he might break something. The last thing they needed was more injuries. They'd literally just gotten back to having sex. Granted, they'd both been aching after and not necessarily in a good way. Steel's knee would need a few more weeks to heal and so would his thigh and stomach. Knife wounds sucked.

"I don't like you going in there alone," Steel said through gritted teeth.

"I have to do it alone. I don't want them to even know you exist."

Steel didn't look happy about it if how tight he was still grinding his teeth was any indication, but he gave Kai a sharp nod.

"I'll be listening the whole time and Digger will be in position. We've got your back."

Kai smiled up at him, then grabbed a handful of his shirt and pulled him down for a quick kiss.

"I like you having my ass," he said.

"Back," Steel corrected with a frown.

Kai winked at him. "That, too."

Steel rolled his eyes with a groan, but Kai got a tiny smile out of him, so he was happy.

He got in the car and with a last long look at Steel, he took off to ensure their future. Or his death. Who the fuck knew.

His stomach was in knots as he drove to the mansion. He knew they'd let him in. It was getting out that might be difficult.

He pulled up to the big iron gate that looked anything but pleasant.

"Name," a grumpy voice said when he pushed the button on the intercom.

"Kai. I'm here to see the family."

"Hold, please."

The gate opened a few seconds later.

He drove up the long driveway and parked in front of a huge fountain. It was just one of many extravagant things on the property. It was ridiculous, really.

He got out of the car and found a man waiting for him. He looked like a butler, but he wouldn't be surprised if he carried a gun.

"Weapons?" the butler asked.

Kai shook his head and held out his arms to let him pat him down. The only thing he had on him was his phone. It would be enough. It had to be.

"Follow me, please."

He was led through wide double doors, down a hall, and into a big open room with a lot of couches and a gold-coated fireplace. The couches were filled with people who looked like they were having a pleasant time. Their chatter ceased the

second they saw him, though, and a well-dressed woman with long dark hair got up and herded the two kids who couldn't have been older than six and four out of the room, giving Kai a look he wouldn't forget. She was scared. Not of Kai, but, he assumed, of what she thought was about to happen there.

An older man with gray hair and a protruding belly got up, the rest following suit. Joseph Briggs. The head of the family and Abraham's uncle.

He recognized a few of the others as well. One man stood out to him, though. He was the only one with brown curly hair and a darker skin tone. The rest of them were paler than their marble floors, all with varying shades of blond hair. The man stood off to the side by a window, arms crossed, and the tiniest of smiles on his lips as he watched.

Abraham had two siblings, Caleb and Phoebe. He'd met both of them before. They were standing on either side of Joseph in their expensive suits as if the clothes could somehow hide the ugliness inside them. They probably did to the world, but he got to see the unmasked version of them. He got to see the evil shining in their eyes.

"Have you come to die?" Joseph asked, his smug smile grating on Kai's nerves.

Kai raised a brow at him.

"I'm here to set things straight," he said, running his gaze across the people that made up the Briggs family. Most of them were looking at him with anger and scorn. One had the slightest bit of panic in her eyes though.

"I killed Abraham on Isaac's orders."

They all looked surprised, except for two of them.

“Isaac was hired to do it.”

“That motherfucker,” Caleb growled. “I knew we shouldn’t have gotten into business with him.”

Joseph stepped closer, making Kai tense up.

“Who hired him?”

Kai only needed to turn his head to look at the culprit. Phoebe straightened, eyes going wide.

“You’d better have some fucking proof of that,” Caleb snapped.

Phoebe gave Kai a smug smile that slid right off her face when he said, “Oh, I do. I have Isaac’s confession.”

Phoebe pulled a gun from the back of her suit pants, aiming it at Kai while she yelled, “He’s a fucking liar.”

“I’d be careful where you point that,” Kai said, dropping his gaze to the red dot on her chest.

“You motherfucker,” Phoebe hissed, lowering her gun.

Kai tilted his head to the side, brow raised.

“Did you think I was dumb enough to come here without backup? Without proof?”

He tsked, shaking his head at her.

He was pretty sure if he had super hearing he’d be hearing a lot of teeth-gnashing right now. There was only one person who seemed to find the situation amusing and he hadn’t moved from his spot by the window.

Kai took out his phone and hit the play button.

“His family took out that hit.”

Hearing Isaac’s voice had him fighting against clenching his hands into fists. He was so fucking glad that fucker was dead.

“He pissed off his whole family?”

“The shit he’d gotten himself into would’ve torn apart their business and their lives.”

When Phoebe opened her mouth, Kai held up a finger to halt her.

“Killing that senator was merely a band-aid on an open wound. He was losing control of everything. His sister saw it coming, so she came to me. He would’ve taken us all down with him.”

He lowered the phone.

“So. Is that proof enough for you?” he asked.

One of the other men pulled his gun and aimed it at Phoebe.

“You’d better start talking,” he snapped.

Oh, the world was coming crashing down around Phoebe.

“He was a fucking leech. He was taking us all down with him,” she screeched. “I couldn’t let him do that. I had to get rid of him.”

“You don’t get rid of family,” Joseph said, darkness in his voice. “Not unless I say so.”

Jesus. What a family. It was a wonder that they managed to appear normal out in public.

Phoebe tried to protest, but with a nod of his head, Joseph had two men grabbing her. They took her gun away from her and dragged her out of the room. To her credit, she didn't scream or plead. He doubted there was any point.

He didn't know what Joseph would do to her, but he also didn't really care. The people he loved had almost died because of her.

"What do we do about him?" Someone asked with a nod toward Kai.

"We should just kill him," Caleb said.

They all turned toward Kai and from the dark looks in their eyes, he knew having backup had been a very good idea. Thank you, Digger.

"You do that, and you'll be spending the rest of your lives in prison," Kai said with a shrug.

Caleb huffed out a laugh.

"You really think we're dumb enough to get caught?"

Kai blinked at him. "You were dumb enough to trust Isaac."

Caleb pulled out a nasty-looking knife and made it two steps toward Kai before the sound of glass shattering filled the room and a bullet splintered the floor right in front of him.

"Forgot about that, did you?"

Thank fuck he was good at pretending to be calm and collected.

"Now, let me make this very clear for you." Kai slid his hands into his pockets. "If you try anything right now, he will

kill you. If you try anything at any other time, including hurting the people I care about, I will release all the evidence Isaac collected on you for years.”

Oh, they did not like that at all. Well, sucked for them.

A cacophony of beeping phones made everyone jumpy.

“That’s a little preview of what we have on you.”

They’d all been sent a video. Isaac had been a sick piece of shit, but he hadn’t been dumb. He’d recorded every single conversation. Every single hit he’d carried out for them. It had been his fail-safe.

“And if you think getting rid of me will make this go away, you’re very wrong. Someone you will never get to, is sitting on all that evidence. They’ll release it if anything ever happens to me or my family.”

“How do we know you won’t just release it anyway?”
Joseph asked.

Kai shrugged. “I guess you’ll have to trust that I want to put all this behind me. Call off the hit and leave me alone and we won’t have a problem.”

Joseph met Kai’s gaze, anger burning in his eyes as he ground out, “You have a deal.”

Steel

He was antsy right until the second he could wrap his arms around Kai and pull him close. He buried his face in Kai's hair and squeezed his eyes shut.

"I'm fine," Kai mumbled against Steel's chest.

"Let's never do that again," Steel said.

Kai pulled back and gave him a tight smile as he nodded.

"Agreed."

His phone buzzed in his back pocket. He pulled it out, a relieved sigh escaping him when he saw Auggie's text.

"The hit has been called off."

"Good. We still won't be safe for a while, though."

"I know," Steel said with a nod.

There could still be some stragglers who may not know the hit was called off.

"I also need to do something else," Kai said, sounding a bit hesitant.

Steel's brows snapped together.

"What?"

"I need to see Isaac's replacement."

"No. Absolutely not."

Kai sighed, which only pissed him off more.

"You're not putting yourself in more danger. Fuck, no."

“He won’t hurt me. I just need to talk to him.”

“Why?”

“He’s the one who gave Nic the evidence from Isaac,” Kai said, making Steel curse.

“Fine, but I’m coming with you,” he said and gave Kai a look that let him know he wasn’t taking no for an answer.

“You say that like I wasn’t expecting you to,” Kai said, eyes twinkling as he smiled at him.

He grumbled under his breath and nudged Kai toward the car.

Kai had to drive them thanks to Steel’s knee and when he parked and led Steel to a small building downtown, he could only frown at him in confusion.

“What are we doing here?”

Kai looked from the front of the tiny coffee shop to Steel.

“We’re meeting him here.”

They walked inside and Kai headed toward a booth. A man was sitting in it with his back toward them. He could see the top of his dark hair and as they got closer, he saw that he was reading a newspaper. Old school. He looked young, though. Early twenties maybe.

They slid into the booth across from him.

Steel had his guard up. He didn’t like this one bit.

“You’ve been busy,” the man said.

“Aren’t I always?” Kai asked.

He slowly looked up from his newspaper, then closed it and put it down on the table.

“Hello, Gael,” Kai said.

“Kai.” Gael smiled wryly at him. “That was quite the performance earlier. Uncle has already called off the hit.”

Steel froze for a second, then put his hand on his gun. He was a Briggs? What the actual fuck?

“Guess I should thank you for that,” Kai said and leaned back in his seat.

Gael shook his head. “Nah. You did me a solid.”

“We good, then?”

Steel tried not to hold his breath, but fuck if the guy wasn't taking a long-ass time to answer.

“We're good. You're free from the Company, and no one will be taking out any hits on you or your loved ones,” Gael said.

“Thank you.”

Gael's lips quirked at the corner. “No, thank *you*.”

Gael and Kai shook hands across the table and then they stood. It didn't escape Gael's attention that Steel still had a hand on his gun, but he simply smiled at Steel, seemingly unbothered by it.

“If you ever find yourself in need of a job,” he said, looking from Kai to Steel. “Give me a call.”

Steel watched Kai, wondering why the appalled look on Kai's face made him so happy.

“Never,” Kai said. He slipped his hand into Steel’s. “I’m done with that.”

The pride that filled him at hearing that was almost overwhelming. His little assassin was officially no longer an assassin.

“Worth a try,” Gael said with a shrug.

He gave them both a nod and then Steel pushed Kai toward the exit.

Once they were outside he pulled them to a stop and turned Kai to face him.

“What the hell was that?”

Kai scrunched up his face. “Sorry. I figured you wouldn’t have let me go if you knew he was a Briggs.”

“Fuck, no, I wouldn’t have.” He closed his eyes and counted to ten, pretending that it worked. He clenched his hands into fists and met Kai’s gaze. “What just happened?”

“I don’t know why he did it, but clearly, he’s got problems with his family. He’s the one who gave me all that evidence on them, remember?”

“And let me guess, there’s none on him?”

Kai shrugged. “He might’ve thrown his family under the bus, but why would he fuck himself over, too?”

Steel pulled in a breath and released it slowly, shaking his head.

“Just tell me it’s over?”

When Kai nodded, he wrapped his arms around him and lifted him off his feet. Kai's laughter was like music to his ears. They were finally free.

Chapter Nineteen

Steel

HE HAD his arms wrapped tightly around Kai. He knew the man was awake. They hadn't slept much. Not after the day they'd had. He was exhausted from everything that had happened the past month and yet he was wide awake.

"Austin," he said.

Kai turned in his arms, his brows scrunched up in confusion.

"You wanna go to Austin?" Kai asked, his voice gravelly from sleep.

Steel felt his lips lift at the corners.

"No. That's my name."

Kai's eyes got wide for a few seconds, then he blinked rapidly at Steel.

"Austin?" Kai whispered. He knew exactly what Steel was telling him. It wasn't about the name. It was about trust, and he needed Kai to know that he trusted him. That Kai had earned that knowledge.

"Yes," Steel said.

Kai nodded.

"Kaiser."

Steel's brows hit his hairline and a huff of laughter escaped him. He was pretty sure Kai had told him his full name before. He didn't know how he could've forgotten a name like that.

"I get why you go by Kai."

Kai rolled his eyes.

"It means 'emperor' in German."

"And what does it mean in Greek?"

Kai gave him a sullen look, then sighed and said, "Something akin to 'a head of hair.'"

Steel chuckled and when Kai ducked his head, hiding his face against Steel's chest, he slid a hand into his hair and said with a smile, "I do like your hair."

"Shut up," Kai mumbled and burrowed closer, as if that was even possible.

Steel tugged on Kai's hair to make him look up at him. He stared down into those gorgeous brown eyes and brushed a kiss across Kai's lips.

"I love you."

"I didn't think anyone would ever tell me that," Kai said, worrying his bottom lip. "Well, say it and mean it."

"Oh, I mean it."

He'd never felt the way he did for Kai for anyone else. He'd never loved someone as deeply as he loved Kai.

"I know," Kai said and pressed their lips together.

He rolled on top of Kai, his good knee sliding between Kai's legs. Kai groaned into his mouth, the sound so carnal

and sensual.

He knew Kai was with him a hundred percent. He was as consumed by Steel as Steel was by him. He saw nothing but Kai.

He licked at Kai's lips, groaning when he opened for him, his tongue matching Steel's stroke for stroke.

They were both panting hard when he pulled back.

Kai's dark eyes met his.

"Show me, anyway?" Kai asked.

Kai didn't have to ask him twice.

Kai

He pushed Steel onto his back and crawled between his thighs. He kissed and licked his way down Steel's neck, pausing to suck on the spots that made Steel's breath hitch.

He brushed his lips over the faded scar along the underside of Steel's clavicle, then moved to the newer one across his arm. It was still red, but it was healing nicely.

"Kai," Steel gasped, raw emotion in his voice.

Kai raised his head to meet his gaze. The love that shone so brightly in Steel's eyes made his heart feel lighter than ever before.

"You're everything to me."

Steel reached for him, hand sliding into his hair and cupping the back of his head.

"I love you," Steel said.

Kai brought their lips together, licking into Steel's mouth and he didn't pull back until they were both in desperate need of air.

He turned around, throwing a leg over Steel's chest, knee on either side of him and his ass right in his face. Steel's hard cock was right in front of him, and he didn't hesitate to wrap his lips around the head and sucked, hollowing his cheeks.

"Fuck," Steel exclaimed, hands grabbing Kai's hips. "Jesus fucking Christ."

Kai popped off his cock to look over his shoulder at Steel and say, “I prefer God, but I guess Jesus is alright, too.”

The next second, he was the one cursing. Steel jerked his ass closer, spread his cheeks, and put his tongue on him.

“Holy fuck,” Kai groaned, thrusting back against him.

Steel’s tongue entered him and that was just a whole other kind of insane pleasure.

“Forget what I said,” Kai said between gasps for air. “*You’re God.*”

Steel hummed against him, his stubble rubbing so nicely against his skin. If he ended up with beard burn on his ass, it would be worth it.

He swallowed down Steel’s cock, taking him to the back of his throat. He closed his eyes, humming at the sweet taste of Steel in his mouth.

Steel added his fingers, pushing at least two inside him. His eyes rolled into the back of his head as he groaned. It was hard to remember that he needed to breathe, especially because he had Steel’s cock in his mouth, too.

Steel pulled his fingers out and squeezed Kai’s balls, tugging gently on them. Lust was burning through his body, sweat dripping down his face and onto Steel.

Concentrating was hard when Steel had his tongue in his ass and his hand on his balls. It felt too fucking good. He couldn’t take anymore without coming.

He reluctantly let Steel’s cock fall from his lips.

“I’m ready.”

Steel moved his hand from Kai's balls up his hard length, fingers rubbing into the precome covering the tip of his cock.

Steel's tongue disappeared.

"You're more than ready, aren't you?"

The lust in Steel's voice had him swallowing back a groan.

"Please, baby. I need you."

Steel cursed, then patted Kai's side to get him to move.

He laid down on the bed, looking up at Steel, lips parting on a silent gasp when Steel leaned down to lick off the precome he'd spread all over his cock. The man's tongue on his cock made him hiss.

Steel sat back with a smug smile on his face. Yeah, the bastard knew exactly what he did to him.

Steel leaned over Kai to open the drawer in the nightstand and pulled out a bottle of lube. He poured some into his hand, then wrapped it around his cock and stroked himself, getting the lube spread out well.

Steel put his hands on Kai's knees, pushing his legs apart, and settled between his thighs.

"You want my cock, baby?"

Kai groaned. "Please."

He felt the thick head of Steel's cock pushing against his entrance and was already panting and moaning from the way it stretched his hole. He hissed at the burn but fuck if he didn't love it, too.

Steel sank inside him, hips settling against his ass.

Steel's hands found his, fingers lacing as his mouth found Kai's. His lips were soft, his kiss gentle right until Kai bit into his lip. Steel growled into his mouth.

He wrapped his legs around Steel's hips, gasping when Steel slammed into him, hitting his prostate with each thrust. Steel let go of Kai's hands, putting one on the bed and the other on Kai's waist, while Kai grabbed at the sheets, holding on for dear life as Steel fucked him.

Steel kissed his way up the side of Kai's neck, making him moan when he found that sensitive spot behind his ear. He slid his fingers into Steel's hair to keep him there. The need, the pleasure, it coursed through him.

He whimpered when Steel moved his mouth despite him tugging on his hair.

Steel brushed a kiss to the corner of Kai's mouth, panting against his lips. He looked up into Steel's eyes. His pupils were blown wide, covering almost all of that electric blue he loved so much.

Steel was looking at him with nothing but hunger and lust as he snapped his hips against his ass, driving his cock deep inside him.

His orgasm hit him hard, and he came with Steel's name on his lips, his head thrown back as intense pleasure burst through his body, leaving him breathless.

Steel pulled out, stroking his cock over Kai who watched through hazy eyes as come hit his chest. A wanton moan fell from his lips. He loved it when Steel marked him.

Steel was making sure he knew exactly who he belonged to. As if he could forget.

He was Steel's. Body and soul.

He always would be.

Chapter Twenty

Steel

AS HE walked up the stairs in what used to be the Henchmen's clubhouse, he didn't get that feeling of dread like he had when they'd been renovating the place. The second they'd filled the place with kids, it had changed everything.

This was the last place he thought he'd be spending most of his time back when they'd split from the Henchmen, and yet, here he was. When after working at the shelter for a month, Ares had asked if he wanted to be in charge of it, he hadn't hesitated to say yes.

Working with frightened, homeless kids who didn't trust anyone was never easy, but it was a challenge he enjoyed. It always felt like he'd hit the jackpot when they got that first little smile from a kid who'd been through so much that they'd almost forgotten what being safe and happy meant.

He heard laughter and walked down the hall. He knew exactly where to go and when he peeked into the room, he saw Kai on the floor with several of the kids. He was reading them a story though he wasn't quite following the book. He was adding his own little details and using various voices. It had the kids laughing and paying close attention even if some looked like they were about to fall asleep.

He leaned his shoulder against the door jamb to watch. He loved watching Kai. He loved watching him interact with the kids even more.

Kai had found himself in his work at the shelter. He'd found a part of himself he'd never known was there. His compassion and devotion had surprised everyone, Kai included. Well, not everyone. *He* hadn't been surprised.

Kai looked up and gave Steel a smile that gave him the best kind of butterflies. Kai winked at him, and he just knew that he was smiling like an idiot. Kai did that to him. Every single fucking time.

He left Kai with the kids and headed downstairs to check on their food supply. Who would've thought kids eat like a pack of lions?

If they were out of breakfast foods, he'd have to ask one of the others to buy some for tomorrow or empty whatever Kai and him had in their wing of the building. Kai had moved into his apartment straight away, but once they'd started work at the shelter, most of their time had been spent there so instead of that constant commute back and forth, Ares had offered for them to live there. He'd been skeptical at first, but that protective streak he had with Kai? Yeah, it had expanded to include the kids, too. Not in the same way, but he'd found he liked being on site in case of... well, anything.

He saw Jace leaning against one of the dining tables as he came down the stairs. He had a hand in his hair and a worried look on his face.

He frowned and started toward him until he heard a car door slam outside and then heavy footsteps. He barely held back a laugh when he saw Kaz stomping inside followed closely by Ares who was glaring at the back of the kid's head. Kaz kept running away and Ares kept bringing him back.

The kids didn't have to stay if they didn't want to. The shelter was open for anyone to come and go as they pleased, but every time Kaz left, he got himself into trouble and Ares went to save his ass.

Kaz walked straight into Jace's open arms and Steel could see Jace telling Kaz something before he looked over Kaz's shoulder at Ares and winked.

"This is not how I thought I'd be spending my weekends," Ares grumbled as he stopped next to Steel.

Steel shook his head, his smile breaking free.

"Why haven't you taken the kid home yet?"

Ares glared at Steel. "Because the little shit doesn't want to. He never does as he's told."

"Have you tried asking instead of telling?"

"The fuck do you think Jace is here for?" Ares asked though there was no anger in his voice. There was just exhaustion. He sounded like a parent already.

Kaz headed upstairs, throwing Ares a shady look on the way, and Jace walked over to join them.

"He's just grabbing the last of his things and then I'll take him home," Jace said to Ares.

Ares threw his hands up. "I can't with that fucking kid."

Ares walked off, muttering under his breath.

"He loves him so much," Jace said, a soft smile on his lips as he followed Ares with his gaze.

"I know. Not so sure either of them knows, though."

Jace snorted. “They’re both too damned stubborn.”

Kai

He'd put all the kids to bed and was on his way to the stairs when he saw Kaz slipping into his bedroom and followed, stopping in the doorway. Kaz was angrily pulling his bag out from under the bed. He hadn't unpacked despite having been at the shelter on and off for months. It broke Kai's heart.

"Hey, kiddo."

Kaz looked up, the slight panic in his eyes dissipating when he saw Kai.

"Oh, hey."

"What's going on?"

Kaz hesitated for a second before he said, "I'm going home with Jace and Ares."

His words were soft-spoken, as if he wasn't entirely sure they were true.

"Ah. Did love slap you upside the head?"

Kaz's scowl was adorable.

He wrapped an arm around Kaz's shoulders and pulled him into a hug.

"Don't worry. I know just how you feel."

"Did you get adopted by an annoying ass, too?"

A snort had Kai turning his head toward the door where he found Steel grinning at him.

Kai did the mature thing and stuck out his tongue.

“I’m pretty sure *I’m* the annoying ass in this scenario,” Kai muttered, making Kaz chuckle.

“Hey, now,” Steel said and stepped closer. “I like your ass.”

Kai mock-gasped and put his hands over Kaz’s ears. “Not in front of the kids, babe.”

Kaz pulled away, batting at Kai’s hands.

“I’m not a kid.”

He wasn’t sure which of them snorted the loudest.

Kaz may be a teenager—barely—but he most certainly was still very much a kid. It had taken several months before he’d trusted them enough to open up to them. Everything the kid had said had broken Kai’s heart a little more. If he’d still been an assassin, he would’ve tracked down the people who hurt Kaz and every one of the other kids and he would have killed them all. But he’d found a better way by giving those kids a future and a safe place to call home.

“I guess you’re a Disciple now,” Steel said to Kaz with a wink.

Kaz groaned and shook his head. “I’m really not.”

“Yeah. So, here’s the thing, kid. Once the club adopts you—and let’s not mince words here. You’re definitely adopted now—it’s a losing battle.” Steel put his hand on Kaz’s shoulder and gave him a proud smile. “You’re a Disciple whether you like it or not.”

“I guess it beats being homeless,” Kaz muttered, eyes on the ground.

Kai felt something tugging on his heartstrings and when he met Steel's gaze, he saw the same affection shining brightly in those steely blues. Between the two of them, it was a wonder they hadn't already taken home every single kid coming through the shelter.

He'd long forgotten about repenting. He wasn't even sure anything he did could make up for the lives he'd taken. Instead, he focused on helping the kids because he could. They liked him. He liked them. He could help them through things most of the others couldn't. He understood them. He knew what to do when the shit they'd been through became too much.

Aside from being a cautionary tale of how bad things could go, thanks to Steel, he was also a good example of what they could become despite everything they'd been through. He didn't hide things about himself from the kids that were old enough to understand. They needed honesty and earnestness. They needed to know that no matter what they had to tell him, he wouldn't judge because he'd already done worse himself.

"You ready?" Ares asked as he appeared in the doorway.

He scowled when he saw Kai though there was no real heat behind it. As much as Ares pretended to still hate that he was around, he knew how grateful he really was for his hard work. Getting on the guy's nerves was still fun, though. They had a love-hate relationship that had their partners rolling their eyes at them and calling them stupid.

Kaz grumbled under his breath and grabbed his bag off the floor then pushed past Ares out the door.

Ares sucked in a deep breath, then muttered, “Better than being homeless, my ass.”

Kai chuckled which earned him a glare. Not that he cared. All he really cared about was Kaz getting the home and love he deserved and despite Ares and Kaz’s issues, he had no doubt about how much they both cared for each other. They were just too stubborn to let it show.

“We’ve gotta get going if we’re to pick up your parents on time,” Steel said, eyes on his wristwatch.

Kai nodded and slipped his hand into Steel’s. They walked together down the hall, heading for the stairs.

His parents were landing at Harrisburg International. He’d taken Steel with him to see them a few times in Tampa, and he’d never cried as much as the first time his mom had seen him and hugged him. She’d told him that she loved him, and he’d broken down. Steel had been there to catch him, though.

His father had been more reserved at first until Kai explained that he’d gotten into some dark and dangerous shit, and the reason he’d cut contact was to spare them the heartache and worry.

His mom had slapped the back of his head and cursed him out in Greek because, as she said, she was his mother and she’d never stop worrying about him. Steel hadn’t understood a word, but from the raised brow he’d aimed at Kai, he’d understood enough.

Kai came to a halt. Steel turned and frowned at Kai.

“Thank you,” Kai said.

Steel's frown deepened. He stepped closer, keeping a hold of Kai's hand while bringing his other up to cup Kai's face, thumb brushing over his cheek.

"For what?"

Kai swallowed hard, his heart thundering in his chest.

"For loving me."

The smile that spread on Steel's lips had Kai's heart beating even faster.

"Nothing could have stopped me from loving you," Steel said.

Kai's lips twitched. "Not even yourself, huh?"

Steel snorted out a low laugh and shook his head.

"No. Not even myself."

God. He loved this man. So fucking much.

"Before you, I only had a reason to kill. Now, you've given me a reason to live," Kai said and put his hand on Steel's chest, right over his heart. "I love you."

"I love you, too." Steel lowered his head. "Kaiser."

Kai pulled back with a grimace. "Shut up, Austin."

Steel laughed instead, so Kai shut him up himself. He pushed up on his toes and caught Steel's mouth with his. The man's possessive kiss made him go weak in the knees. The way Steel owned him was unlike anything he'd ever experienced, and he couldn't get enough. He doubted he ever would.

Everything had turned out just right.

Being with Steel had changed his life. He hadn't lied when he'd said Steel had given him a reason to live. He'd given him a reason to *want* to live. Not just survive. He'd given him a home and love. So much love.

A Note from the Author

Thank you for reading *Steel*. I hope you liked this story and look forward to the next one as much as I do! If you enjoyed Steel and Kai's story, please consider leaving a review. Reviews are a great way to help a book's visibility, so any support you show these guys would be amazing.

About the Author

Ana Night is a writer of suspenseful gay romance. She's an avid reader who has loved the written word since she discovered it. When she was a kid, she never went anywhere without a notebook. She was always writing, be it in the back seat of the car, between classes in school, or by the pool on vacations.

When she's not writing, you can find her with her nose buried in a book, singing and dancing, watching her favorite TV shows, or creating book covers.

Ana lives in Denmark where she spends most of her time running from her ninja kitty—that one goes for the ankles—and getting lost in the woods with her horse.

You can find Ana here:

Website: www.ananight.com

Email: ana@ananight.com

Newsletter: <https://www.subscribepage.com/ananight>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/authorananight

Facebook: www.facebook.com/authorananight

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Steel

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