

FORBIDDEN READS

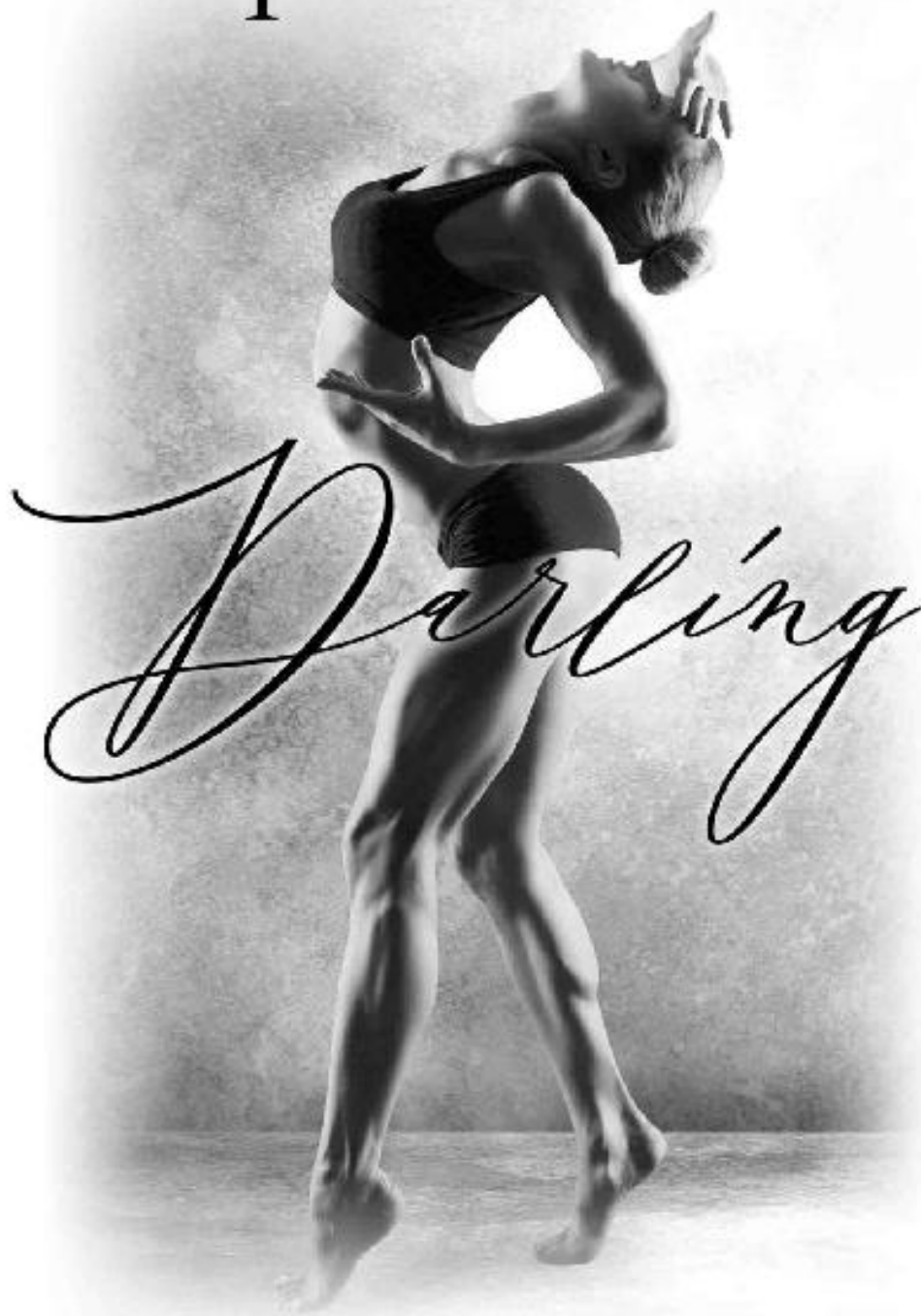


Stepbrothers'
DARLING

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR

K. A. KNIGHT

Stepbrothers'



Darling

K.A. KNIGHT

Stepbrothers' Darling (Forbidden Reads Book Two).

**This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to places, events or real people are
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**Written by K.A. Knight: Edited By Jess from Elemental Editing and
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Proofreading by Norma's Nook Proofreading LLC

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CONTENTS

[Playlist](#)

[Warning](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

[Chapter 42](#)

[Chapter 43](#)

[Chapter 44](#)

[Chapter 45](#)

[Chapter 46](#)

[Chapter 47](#)

[Chapter 48](#)

[Chapter 49](#)

[Chapter 50](#)

[Chapter 51](#)

[Chapter 52](#)

[Chapter 53](#)

[Chapter 54](#)

[Chapter 55](#)

[Chapter 56](#)

[Chapter 57](#)

[Chapter 58](#)

[Chapter 59](#)

[Chapter 60](#)

[Chapter 61](#)

[Chapter 62](#)

[Chapter 63](#)

[Chapter 64](#)

[Chapter 65](#)

[Chapter 66](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Afterword](#)

[Trigger List](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Also By K.A Knight](#)

DEDICATION

To all those out there that have found family doesn't always mean blood. And to all those out there still searching for theirs...

You are all welcome: All family.

You are Crew.

PLAYLIST

She - Winona Oak
Smile - Maisie Peters
Mountain - Faouzia
Praying - Kesha
Freak - Doja Cat
Villain - K/DA, Madison Beer
Crazier Things - Chelsea Cutler
Imposter - Henri Werner
Bitter - Fletcher
Karma's a B!tch - Sophia Rayne
I'm Not Mad - Halsey
How Villains Are Made - Madelen Duke
I'll be there for you - Silent Child
Siren - Kailee Morgue
Cus I Love You - Lizzo
Wonder - Shawn Mendes

WARNING

Please note: this book is a dark book which contains potential triggers. If you are unsure, please flip to the very back of the book for a detailed list (This will contain spoilers)



Prologue

The music pounds through me, syncing with the thumping of my heart. My head drops back, my blonde hair loose around my shoulders as I sway in time to the beat. I close my black-lined eyes, parting my red lips on a breath. Hands find my hips and pull me back against a hot body as someone starts to sway with me, his hard cock grinding against my ass as we move. Thick, male fingers trail up my sides and across my lace bralette, and I lean my head against his shoulder. The strobe lights are bright, even through my eyelids, and the alcohol warms my blood.

I don't need any help losing my inhibitions, but the burn of the vodka helps chase away the memories that invade when I'm alone, especially when I'm lying in bed in the dark. I stopped sleeping by myself. In fact, I stopped sleeping a lot—to my mother's annoyance. She calls me a disappointment, a dirty stop-out, and most recently, a whore. I'm pretty sure that's not language a lady like her should use, but fuck her.

Fuck her expectations and fuck her judgement.

This is when I'm alive, when I'm okay.

I grind into the man without even looking at his face, but when I hear a female shouting in front of me, I open my eyes.

Before me is a woman with perfectly curled dark brown hair and lined, smoky, big brown eyes. She has pink lips, and a skintight pale pink dress encases her curves. She looks from me to the man behind me with betrayal and pain etched on her features.

Shit, they are together.

When her eyes land on me again, however, I see a flicker of something... hunger. Her lips press together, and the man stills behind me.

“Babe, I was just dancing,” he yells, trying to be heard over the music, but her eyes don’t move from mine, and when I smirk and slide my gaze down her body, her lips part and her thighs clench together.

Just what I need—a sweet little pussy to help me forget and a cock to fuck.

A couple means less drama, less complications, and I’m also less likely to get a call back. Her eyes fill with jealousy and annoyance, and I can see she’s about to start yelling, so I do the only thing I can—I kiss her. I taste her interest on her lips as I grip her cheeks and pull her closer. Her mouth opens on a gasp, and I slip my tongue in, tangling it with hers as her body presses against mine. She’s all soft curves and silky skin under my hands. I stroke across her shoulders and back, grasping her ass as I sway and force her to move with me.

As I break our kiss, I see her eyes are closed and her pink lips are still parted. I brush her brown hair aside and kiss her neck. “I don’t care about your relationship. I’ll fuck you both, and you will never hear from me again. I just want a good time. Don’t you?”

She shivers as I slide my hand around and up her thigh. I push her silky thighs apart and cup her pussy through her lace panties, uncaring that we are in the middle of a club and everyone can see. Everyone is here for a reason—to fuck, to forget.

“No judgement, no one needs to know. You, him, and me, and all the pleasure we can have together,” I purr. She grinds

into my hand as her eyes flutter open, the buzz of alcohol giving her the confidence she needs to nod.

Grinning, I kiss her again as I feel him press against my back, and all three of us grind and dance together. We drink, dance, flirt, and touch until none of us can wait anymore.

I leave with them.

In the taxi ride to her place, I kiss him, sloppily tangling my tongue with his as my hand slips under her dress to her pussy. I rub her through her panties, and she moans, grinding into my touch as she grabs his cock and strokes.

I don't care about the wide-eyed look of the driver or anyone else. In their lips and hands, I find oblivion. We stumble from the taxi, and I barely glance at the townhouse as she drags me inside, her hands in my hair as her mouth finds mine. The man follows behind us, stripping as he goes.

I yank down her dress, baring her high, pert breasts as we find the bedroom. She kicks the dress away and reaches for my clothes, but I capture her hands, turn her, and push her towards her boyfriend who is sitting on the edge of the bed, watching us.

“Kiss him,” I order.

She stumbles over and tackles him onto the bed, grinding against his cock as they kiss. Stripping out of my clothes, I briefly hesitate when my hands catch on the scar on my hip as I hook my fingers in my panties. I ignore it, removing the thin layer of fabric before stepping closer and wrapping my hand in her hair. I tug on her locks, turning her head to kiss her as he observes, grunting at the sight. I release her lips and lean down to kiss him, too, before pulling her close and kissing them both.

“Please,” she whispers, cupping my breasts and twisting my nipples. I groan and pull back, tightening my hold on her hair to still her movements. Her lips are red and raw, her eyes wide and needy. I turn my head to meet her boyfriend's gaze. It's the first time I've ever really looked at him. He's good-

looking, if not forgettable. He has dark eyes, dark hair, nice cheekbones, and a great body. He will work.

“On your back,” I tell the woman, and then I wink at him. “I’m going to eat your girlfriend’s cunt until she screams, and you are going to fuck me.” His eyes flare wide, and he glances nervously to his girlfriend who only whimpers.

“Yes, oh God, yes, please,” she begs, rubbing against me like a cat in heat. Her soft, perfect curves are so different from his hardness. I like cock, but I like pussy too. I’m not picky. Pleasure is pleasure. I used to be attracted to people’s personalities, but now I don’t want to know them. I only want their bodies and the ecstasy I gain from them.

I push her away, and she falls to her back. I crawl up the bed and yank on her thighs, dragging her closer as she moans. She reaches up to hold onto the bedding above her, revealing all the contours of her body. She’s all thick thighs, high tits, and glistening sex. She sucks in her belly, and I arch my eyebrow as I get onto my knees, wiggling my ass in the air to urge him on as I part her thighs and gaze at her red, raw pussy. Her clit is engorged, and she is practically dripping.

I spread her lips and blow across her core as she shivers, meeting her gaze as I swipe my tongue down her pussy. I don’t think she has ever been with a girl—she’s too nervous, too unsure. I’ll give them both a night to remember on an evening when they are feeling naughty.

Licking up her sweet cream, I dip my tongue inside her cunt before sliding it up to her clit. I lash my tongue across her nub as he grips my hips and pulls me back, pressing his hard cock against my pussy. I don’t want to talk; I just want sex. I want a quick, dirty fuck that leaves me satisfied and feeling filthy.

She whimpers and grinds into my face until I can barely breathe, but who cares? His fingers drag down my pussy and slip inside me, making me groan into her cunt. He moves them around and apart, stretching me as his thumb rubs my clit. Pleasure spirals through me, but I need more, so I push back and lift my head.

“Fuck me, unless you would rather she does,” I taunt, looking back at him with his girlfriend’s cream on my lips.

He grunts, pulls his fingers free, and replaces them with his hard cock.

“Condom,” I snap.

He swears and disappears. I turn back to her, kissing up her body to her lips, forcing her to taste herself before I slide down and suck on her nipples. I twist and lick then kiss down her belly, not wanting her to come too early. When I hear a rustle and feel hands on my ass, I lick her pussy before sucking on her clit. Her hips come away from the bed as she cries out, her cunt pulsing as she comes, fresh wetness gushing from her core.

I look back at him with a smirk. “I’ve already made her come once, better catch up.”

I turn forward to see her body is almost limp, but I’m not finished with her yet. I trail my fingers down her core and push them inside her fluttering channel, fucking her with them.

“I want you to come all over my tongue again, but only when he and I find our release. All together,” I murmur against her pussy.

“I can’t,” she whimpers raggedly.

“You can, and you will,” I demand, adding another finger in punishment. She cries out and lifts her hips, meeting my thrusts.

His condom-covered cock presses against my pussy. Tired of waiting, I push back, impaling myself on his length. It’s long and thinner than I like, but it will do. His fingers dig into my hips, pulling me back before he pulls out and pushes back in. I roll my eyes.

“You don’t have to be gentle. I’m not your girlfriend. Just fuck me,” I snarl at him before I return to eating her cunt, licking at her cream as she writhes and moans beneath me.

He gets the picture. His grip tightens to the edge of pain, and then he yanks out before slamming back in, fucking me

hard. There's no gentleness like usual when you know someone. No, he fucks me like a stranger—hard, fast, and dirty. He hammers into me, impaling me on his cock again and again as his fingers sweep down my slick sex to my clit and start rubbing.

Pleasure explodes through me, and I cry out against her intimate flesh before adding another finger as I force her higher and higher. She screams as I stretch her. I'm so close now, he is too. His hips lose their steady rhythm as he slams into me, chasing his release. He palms the back of my head, pushing it down to his girlfriend's cunt as he fucks me.

His grip tightens on my head to the point of pain as his thumb rubs my clit faster and faster. I suck in desperate breaths as I try to lick her, but my own release is right there. I fuck her faster with my fingers then bite down on her clit, and she screams, her pussy clamping around my fingers as she comes. I rest my head on her pelvis as he hammers into me.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck, so hot watching you lick her. You like it, don't you, babe? God, you should feel her pussy, it's so tight. Shit, I'm going to—” His voice hiccups and he groans, spanking my clit. I moan my own release as I feel him still and come. My pussy clamps around him as I writhe and moan, the force of it taking me by surprise as my eyes close and my heart skips a beat.

Fuck.

When it's over, I slump, and he pulls free from my body, discarding the condom. I spread my pussy lips, swipe my fingers across the cream dripping from me, and then reach up, smearing it on his girlfriend's lips as she watches me. She licks her lips, her chest still heaving.

“That's how he tastes in me.” I smirk as I crawl up and kiss her before flopping onto my back by her side. He lies down on her other side, kissing her gently before drawing away and pulling her into his arms.

That's my cue to leave. I got what I wanted—orgasms, mine and theirs.

Slipping from the bed, I find my panties and pull them on. It's harder to get my leather trousers up because I've been sweating, but I jump and wiggle until I get my plump ass into them, and then I tug on the bralette, pushing up my double Ds while my flat stomach and tucked in waist are left on display.

I hear a noise and turn to see the woman watching me. Her eyes are running hungrily down my body before she meets my gaze and offers me a friendly smile—the type you only give someone when you have intimate knowledge of them.

“What's your name?” she calls, sitting up. Her body is still bare, and her eyes are fuzzy from pleasure and alcohol. Her boyfriend is wrapped around her, but he's already asleep.

Men.

“It doesn't matter, you will never see me again,” I reply with a grin before I grab my heels and slip out of the room. I exit the house and shut the front door behind me, shivering in the cool morning air. The sun will be rising soon, and the world will wake, but for now, the sky is almost grey and everything is quiet, so I walk for a little while in the direction of my home.

As usual, my thoughts spiral, and screams fill my head—his laughter too.

“Red. Blue. Green,” I whisper as I stop in the middle of the street, pushing the memories away. “Red. Blue. Green,” I chant as fear and anxiety crawl through my body. The pleasure wears off, like it always does, and the bad memories creep in again now that I'm alone.

When I can see without wanting to throw up or scream, I flag a taxi and give them my address. We drive through the quiet city to the other side, which doesn't take long. I stop him at the gate of the mansion that was left to us by my mum's last husband when he divorced her gold-digging ass and hand over the money as I climb out. He pulls away, and as I stare at the big gate with the gold inlaid letters, disgust fills me.

I may be a whore, as she calls me, but at least I fuck for pleasure, not to get ahead in life.

Stepping through the side gate, I rush across the paved driveway and up to the double door. It's unlocked.

I dangle my heels from my finger as I slip through the front door, trying to stay quiet as the early morning light shines through the huge windows, but I freeze. Sitting on the stairs with an angry, disapproving look is the devil herself.

"Blair," she snaps.

"Mother," I reply, dropping my heels as I go to move past her.

"Do not go to bed," she warns and gets to her feet, looking me over in disgust. "How did I get such a whore for a daughter?" she snarls, and I narrow my eyes as she sighs and brushes back her perfectly curled hair. Her white silk robe is cinched at her tiny waist, and her fake boobs press against the fabric—a gift from her first husband. Her long, perfectly tanned legs are on display, and her fluffy heeled slippers make me snort with my own feelings of disgust. I may have inherited her blonde hair, but that's where the comparison ends. I got my dad's anger, his determination, and talent. As for being short and stacked, well, fuck knows where I got that from, but everyone loves ass and tits. More to grab, after all.

"As I was saying, do not go to bed. You need to pack." She sniffs with derision and turns as if to dismiss me. This is the most we have spoken since *it* happened months ago.

"Pack?" I echo, pausing with my hand on the wrought iron banister.

"Pack," she yells, her cruel, cold eyes locking on mine as a smile tips up her fake lips. It's a malevolent one that makes my blood cold and sends my heart into overdrive. "We are moving."

Moving?

"What the fuck?" I yell.



Chapter One

Blair

A week later...

“It’s all your fault. I have to leave my friends, my house, my life. I can’t show my face anymore all because of you. You stupid, useless whore. I wish I had a boy...”

It goes on and on as the movers fill the van for us.

I have been going crazy for the last week from being trapped here with her. I was unable to leave, not even to attend school or work. She wouldn’t allow it, saying I had disgraced us enough. No, instead I had to clean and pack every inch of this too big house that doesn’t belong to us. Her ex-husband is selling it, though she tries to claim that isn’t why we are moving.

No, apparently I’m the reason.

I finally manage to escape her, for the drive at least. She’s flying, claiming she couldn’t possibly sit in a car for that long of a journey, never mind ride the ‘crotch rocket car’ I bought myself. Thank fuck. She hasn’t even told me where we are going. All I have is an address, which will take me eight hours

to get to, and no other information. Whose house is it? Why there?

When I asked, she just glared and stated it was none of my business. She said I should just feel lucky she is taking me with her. I shut my mouth and bit my tongue.

I don't want to move, but honestly, it may be a good idea to get away from here and the memories this city holds. I can have a fresh start where no one knows me or what happened...

It does mean I'll have to find a new job, though, and some new friends, but that shouldn't be too hard. With nothing else to do, I climb into my black Toyota Supra and crank up the music, blasting AC/DC as I peel out of the driveway and, without a backwards glance at the house, head towards my future.

I'm about halfway through the drive when I stop for the night, resting for a few hours in some motorway hotel. I don't want to beat my mother there, so I took a small detour earlier to earn some quick cash on a race to cover my room for the night. I order room service and relax in my old band shirt as I watch some shitty film on TV. I use the time to look up what's in the city we are going to, even searching for a job or two. This time I applied for a part-time university course though, but I've never been one to care too much about academics. I'm smart and I'll pass, but I prefer creativity and earning money that will allow me to escape my mother quicker. As soon as I make enough money—which I estimated would be in six months—I am out. I'm nineteen, after all, and there is nothing stopping me from hitting the road without a backwards glance. I want to explore the world and do whatever the hell I want, be whoever the fuck I want.

She will have no power over me anymore.

Scrolling through the map and local information, I raise my eyebrows in surprise. It's a suburban area next to a huge city, so it shouldn't be too bad. Commuting will probably be

easier than driving everywhere, but there is a beach close by and plenty of stretches of road to race on. The schools look okay too. The one I must be attending has a separate college from the lower years, which is good. It looks even better than the old public one I went to where I was likely to get stabbed for looking at someone wrong... well, not me, mainly because most people were scared of me, but still.

Closing the browser, I open a job app and search for ones in that area. I may as well get a jump on it. It's summer at the moment, so I can work full-time until we go back to school, and then I can work late nights. I never sleep anyway, so I may as well be earning money. I apply for a few ones I like—a night-time store stocker and a gas station worker—before a strange one catches my eye. I click on it, and my heart slams. Sitting up, I scroll down the advert with excitement coursing through my veins. It's as if I were meant to find it, to move there... to get the job.

Singer and dancer wanted.

Pearl clutchers need not apply. We are all free here, darlings. Like the stage? Enjoy being sexy and holding the power? How about leather and lace?

Apply here to find out more.

Be warned, this isn't your normal job.

This is burlesque, darlings.

I have never clicked 'apply' so fast. They want a video of applicants dancing and singing, so I upload one of my latest and wait. I can sing pretty well, and I enjoy it, but I love dancing. I love losing myself to the beat and feeling the power I wield as I control my body with expert precision. The pain and sweat are worthwhile when people see you.

I've always loved dancing. I started with ballet when I was young, and then I became a club dancer, usually entering battles for money. I've honed my skills, and I know how to move my body. I know how to enthrall others and make all their wildest fantasies come true before their very eyes. So to find a job that will pay for that? Hell yes.

I impatiently wait to hear back, even though it's late and they will probably take days, but I still refresh my email every few minutes. Sighing, I put my phone on the table and flick off the lights, resigning myself to waiting. They probably want someone older and more experienced anyway. I toss and turn as usual, memories crowding my mind, and finally, at around 4AM, I give up trying to sleep and get up. Padding over to the desk in the room, I turn on the kettle as I scroll through my notifications, freezing at the email waiting for me.

Well, hello there, darling. Aren't you just the talented beauty? You want the job, kitten? You work for it. Audition tomorrow night, 9PM. Bring your own outfit. Shake what your momma gave you and impress us.

—The girls

Holy fuck! I get dressed as fast as I can and am on the road in record time, only stopping to grab breakfast so I can eat as I drive. I need to get there, unpack to find an outfit, and sort out a routine. That job is going to be mine.

They will have no idea what's hit them when they meet me. I may be young, but I can move better than anyone else. And burlesque? Fuck yes, just another skill to master. It will make me feel alive as I shine under the stage lights, losing everything that haunts me in the beat of the music and the adoring eyes of the patrons.

I'll be their darling, alright. The best they've ever had.



Chapter Two

Blair

An hour before maps said I would arrive, I pull up to the new house and just idle there, frozen as I stare at the mansion before me. It's even bigger than the last house. *I wonder who she had to fuck to get it*, I think indolently as the engine purrs while I wait for the gates to open. As I drove through the suburb, the houses had got bigger and bigger... until this one.

Hell, this whole gated community looks like something celebrities would live in. And here I am, in leather shorts and a band shirt, my eyes lined and hair straight, with hoops in three of my ear piercings, a cross dangling from the other, and my cuff in. The tattoos on my thighs are on display in my tiny shorts as well. I stick out like a sore thumb. I would have been better staying on the other side of the train tracks I crossed on my way.

That part of the city was run-down and filled with graffiti and abandoned houses... but honestly, I felt more at home there than I do here. The house before me is no doubt filled with golden decorations and expensive decor just because they can. The gate finally swings open, and I pull through, stopping behind the mostly empty moving van. The back is still up, so

they must be on their last trip inside. Grabbing my phone and bag, I get out and stroll up to the house, whistling as I go. Fuck, it's even bigger up close.

It looks like someone took a stately manor and modernised it. It's all bright white—seriously, how do they keep it so clean? There are more windows than I can count with two huge, front white doors with glass down the sides. It's two stories, but at the top is a conservatory, a large round bubble that sticks into the sky made completely of glass, and I have a strange urge to explore it. The drive is sandwiched by perfectly manicured grass and flower beds, and I can hear a trickle of water somewhere—a fountain or a pool? Or both? Probably the latter with this house.

The house curves around and goes to the right, ending in a clear garage with three empty spaces, while the other side is filled with sports cars and bikes. My heart leaps, and I ache to touch them, ride them. I shuffle closer, reining in my desire to touch. They are pristine, and I don't want to leave dirty fingerprints behind. In fact, I feel like I shouldn't touch anything in this house.

The doors suddenly open, jarring me from my inspection. I turn my head guiltily for drooling over the rides and see my mother standing there talking to a man in a suit who she smiles sweetly at and kisses. I spot his greying hair from here, but he's still tall and muscular, his three-piece suit tailored perfectly. There's a Rolex watch on his wrist and diamonds in his cufflinks. He's the money man. He turns, and when he sees me, he smiles widely, his blue eyes brightening with it. He's good-looking, really good-looking if you are into that whole daddy thing. I bet his sons must be hot though, Meredith mentioned he had some.

“Well, hello, who do we have here?” he asks, his voice dark and low. His smile puts me at ease, but I look to my mother to see her frowning, almost glaring at me.

Brilliant.

However, when he turns back to her, she is all smiles and sweetness, as usual.

“Meredith, is this incredible creature your daughter?” he inquires kindly and then glances back at me. “She has told me so much about you,” he says. *Liar*. I smile anyway because he clearly means well.

“I have heard nothing about you. Let me guess, you’re getting married?” I ask tiredly.

Mother snarls but then straightens her expression, and with a smug look, she presents her hand to me. “Good guess, daughter,” she coos, leaning into his side. This rock is bigger than the last. Kudos to her. He leans into her with genuine happiness in his eyes. Poor man, she is going to eat him for breakfast.

“Nice. So, husband number four, your name is—”

Mum snaps then. “Blair, watch your mouth.”

He laughs. “It’s okay, Meredith. Blair, is it? I am Gareth Crew, and yes, I am soon to be husband number four, as you said.” He winks. “Don’t worry, I know about her past, but I genuinely love your mother and want you both to be happy here. I have set up a room for you in the hallway with my boys.”

“Boys?” I repeat.

“Gareth has three sons,” she informs me, flicking her hair over her shoulder. “Your new stepbrothers.” I see the flicker of annoyance at the word *sons*. Ah, I’m betting mother dearest didn’t know about them and she doesn’t like it one bit. Sharing money and attention? I don’t think so.

“Yes, well, they are on holiday right now and won’t be back until school starts, but I’m sure they can’t wait to meet you, Blair. Until then, my house is yours. I’m afraid I need to get back to work, so I will see you later.” He turns and kisses Meredith. “Ring me if you need anything,” he tells her, and then he smiles at me, heads to a waiting limousine, gets in, and drives off.

I whistle and turn to her. “Good pick. He seems nice, lots of money, but three kids.” I shake my head. “Getting sloppy, the money will go to them.”

She lifts her chin haughtily. “Not if I stay married to him.” She smiles like a snake, all cold and calculating. Fuck, she might as well just flash fangs. “I’m going shopping with his card, so do whatever the fuck you want. Just stay out of my sight.”

I salute her as she strolls away and another car pulls up, leaving me with the moving men and a mansion to explore. I need to unpack, which means I need to find my room first. Shouldn’t be too hard, right?

I was wrong.

The house has eighteen bedrooms. Eighteen. Seriously, what do they need that many for? I also find a game room and a cinema in the basement that uses the whole floor, with a pool table, dart board, bar, and basically everything you could imagine. It’s definitely his sons’, the skulls and LED ‘Crew’ light sign giving it away. I find some pills, weed, lots of booze, and some discarded ladies’ underwear. Nice. I found an outside and inside pool, a spa, and three living rooms—and that’s without even exploring half of the rooms on the first floor.

This place is insane. I peek in the rest of the rooms, each one making me back away and shake my head. I just need my bedroom!

An hour later, I’m still stumped. The only floor I haven’t explored is that glass dome I spotted from outside. I discover more stairs leading up from the second floor, but it is mostly accessible from the back door. Huh, do his sons basically run this house? I tread up the stairs, and when it opens up at the top, my jaw drops.

You have got to be fucking kidding me.

It’s basically an apartment. The whole ceiling is open and domed, and I bet at night you can see the stars. There are low leather couches with a white rug and a black coffee table to the left, with a cinema-sized TV on the wall. To the right is a huge

kitchen, and there is a round dining table with a chandelier above it. In one corner, a goddamn motorbike is placed on a turning pedestal with intricate art painted on it—including the word *Crew*—with skulls, roses, and flames. It's very impressive, and I have to drag my gaze away to look around at the other parts of this floor. There's a board in one corner with throwing knives sticking from it, an open gym behind the stairs I came up, and so much more.

It's insane.

It's clear this is their private space—no drugs or panties to be found—so I'm assuming they use the basement for parties and guests and then live up here. They might as well run the fucking house.

To the right is a hallway, and I follow it down, finding only four doors. I open the first to reveal a huge bedroom done in blacks with a low leather bed and an en-suite on the right. Even the carpet is black, and there are helmets and paintings all over the walls. I close the door, not wanting to snoop... yet. The next has a built-in wardrobe with rows upon rows of clothes, even more than my mother. The bed is a high back wing bed with satin sheets and the word *Crew* stencilled above it. There is an en-suite in here too, and floor-to-ceiling windows. The third door I open is another bedroom, clearly belonging to the last son. There are easels, spray cans, and everything you need for art in one corner and some unfinished pieces in a similar style from those littered around the house. I'm betting he's the artist of all the work in this place.

There's a king-sized, leather bed with a leather jacket tossed on it and another en-suite too, but this one has the first picture I have yet to see in the house. It's tucked on the bedside table behind the industrial style light as if hidden. I carefully pull it free, seeing a baby in a smiling woman's arms with the ocean behind them. She's cute, with long blonde hair, and she's smiling at the baby with such love. It's a bit tatty and obviously important, so I put it back before closing the door and trying the fourth, praying it's mine.

I'm a little scared to live up here with these three clearly insane rich boys. I mean, they have knives and spinning bikes,

for fuck's sake... okay, so I kinda love it and wanna play with everything in here. It's my style, all black and edgy with graffiti. It's nothing like the richness I was expecting. It's like a grungy bachelor pad.

I push open the door to the room. I was right, it's mine. Both fear and excitement flow through me as I step into my space. It's clear it used to be used for storage, because there is still a slightly musty smell, but it's nothing that keeping the windows open won't fix. There's a note next to the door on the switch, and I pick it up with arched eyebrows.

Decorate however you want—Gareth.

Crumpling it, I toss it into the garbage. Hopefully I won't be here long enough to decorate, but I can see why he offered. It's a blank slate. It only has the bare necessities even as it screams luxury and money.

There is a huge, king-sized—maybe even bigger—sleigh bed with a deep grey, almost black headboard and rolled over baseboard dimpled with buttons. The bedding is a deep navy and pintucked with throw cushions that make me snort. Really, throw cushions? There is a matching deep grey fur rug at the bottom of the bed with an ottoman with golden feet. The bed itself is situated to the right and pushed against a wall with two doors on either side of it. Strolling across the cream carpet, I peek into one to see a walk-in wardrobe with two long empty racks on either side and built-in, floor-to-ceiling shelves opposite a mirror. I turn on the lights, and bright blue LEDs flicker on. Cool.

I try the next door and find an en-suite. Thank fuck. Have you ever tried to share a bathroom with boys? Not cool. There is a huge, triangular corner bath big enough to fit more than one person, and a built-in, walk-in shower with black and gold marble walls and two huge waterfall showerheads. There is also a bench to sit on and built-in shelves to hold products. The glass door slides shut as I play with it. On my right are double sinks with two LED mirrors above them.

Shaking my head, I return to the room and place my hands on my hips. There is a TV mounted on the wall to the left of

the door, opposite the bed, and a deep grey dresser tucked in the corner behind the door. The other wall has floor-to-ceiling windows, which have a view of the back garden, framed with gauzy white curtains like something from a magazine. Those will need to be replaced with black-out curtains.

The one thing that does excite me? There's a giant black chandelier. My stuff will hardly fill this room, but that's okay, it's only a place to lay my head for a few hours. I don't intend to spend much time here, after all. My boxes are stacked in the middle of the room with two suitcases of clothes. That's everything, apart from the few bags in my car which were too important to leave to the movers.

I check my phone and see I only have a few hours before the audition, so I get to my knees and unzip the cases, rooting through for something to wear. It needs to be skimpy and sexy, but not too revealing, as well as easy to move in. I hold up a few options before settling on some high-waisted leather shorts and a black bra with a crisscross back, the cups covered in sparkles. I load some burlesque videos to ensure it's what they want. It's a bit grungier than normal, but so am I. I scroll through the videos, easily recognising some of the moves and memorising the others before I turn back to the clothes.

I change quickly and stretch, testing out my limbs before I plug in my headphones and crank up the music. I choose an upbeat song, not too fast to move to, but with enough beat so I can really lose myself in the music. I will probably make the dance up when I'm there, but it's nice to have a backup if they ask for one.

I move across the room, mixing ballet and R&B freestyle, swinging, rolling, and dropping to the floor and grinding. I lift my ass as I bang my fist to the ground, flicking my hair as I slide to my knees and shake. Winking, I press my hands to the floor and extend my ass into the air and shake before dragging my hands up my body. I keep moving, since it feels right. I leap, twirl, and pop as my heart thunders with the sound of the music. Peace fills me as my mind stays on the moves, on the next step, the next beat—never on the past, never the present, only the future.

Panting, I still as the song changes, wearing a smile on my face. Oh yes, tonight will go well. It has to. I need this job; I need the money. I want to get as far away from this place as possible. I have nothing against this new family, but I can't stand the woman who now lives here. Checking my phone, I realise I don't have too long until my audition. I still need to find the club and park, so I grab my boots and slip them on along with my jacket before taking my keys and shutting the bedroom door behind me. The house is eerily empty, but I shake it off.

Routine sorted, I grab my shades, and with a smirk, I head out to become a burlesque dancer.



Chapter Three

Blair

My engine purrs as I change gear and weave through traffic, my grin widening the faster and faster I go. I know I have an obsession with staying on the move, of pushing myself just to feel alive... to forget, but I don't care.

I locate the club easily enough, finding a space right outside which makes me raise my eyebrows. What kind of city is this? The street is quiet in the afternoon light, lined with bars and even a strip joint, but on the corner, there's a cafe that seems to be open with a nearly full parking lot. Oh well. Flicking down the mirror, I check my lipstick and blow myself a kiss before I get out.

The sign outside is dim, and the black front doors look ominous. There is a ticket booth to the side and posters across the exterior of girls in dresses, jewels, and bras all perfectly put together with a sensual appearance. There's one next to the door that catches my eye. It's of a blonde girl, her eyes downcast and red lips puckered in a pout. She's in a silky dress with her breasts pushed up, the fabric ruched up at one hip showing her curves. She looks like a pin-up girl, and I whistle.

Turning away, I knock on the door and wait, bouncing on my toes. Just as I'm about to knock again, it opens, and the woman from the poster stands there with a friendly smile on her face. "Hey there, you here for auditions?"

I nod, instantly liking her. She has a kind face. A smile tips up her lips, and she welcomes me inside, looking me over. I start to get defensive, but she winks at me. "Damn, love your style, you'll fit right in. My name is Lexi, what's yours?" she asks, extending her hand, and I see the truth in her eyes. There's no guile on her face, which is weird. I guess I'm used to lying to everyone and keeping my cards close to my chest.

"Blair, my name is Blair," I answer, shaking her hand. My chipped black nail polish is obvious next to her perfectly pink nails.

"Beautiful name, I have a feeling we'll like each other," she comments as another voice sounds.

"Is that the last one? Hurry the fuck up, Lex!" a grumpy voice yells.

She rolls her eyes and wraps her arm through mine and pulls me through the club. "Ignore her. That's Allegra, she's always mardy. Welcome to burlesque, babe," she chirps as we move through two opened doors and into the club.

My mouth almost drops open. I've been in a lot of clubs—shady ones, street ones, and the highest quality—but this... this is something else. It's like I've stepped into another world. It's cosy yet huge. There is a massive stage taking up most of the back wall with an area for the band to the side. The bar is to my right, the back lined with glass to reflect the stage, and tables are scattered throughout. Lush velvet carpet covers the space, not to mention the chandeliers providing a low, sexy glow. It screams sensual without being tacky. Instantly, I feel welcome and at home here, and I know I have to dance on that black lacquered stage.

"What do you think?" Lexi asks, looking down at me.

"It's incredible," I breathe and then clear my throat. "I mean, yeah, it's good."

She laughs and pulls me over to a group of girls gathered by the stage. There are two women up on the platform, one with a sour face who I'm guessing is Allegra. The other is grinning. She has long, thick, black curly hair thrown over one shoulder, with tanned skin, long black leather boots up to tiny leather pants, and a bustier. She looks like a fucking wet dream, and the confidence she emits has me grinning.

Lexi hops up on the stage between them, leaving me with the other girls who are also here to audition. They shift nervously and chatter amongst themselves, giggling and getting to know each other. I roll my eyes, prop myself up on the closest table, and cross my arms. The women who work here run their eyes across us before Allegra stops on me with a considering expression.

“You are here to audition. We have rules. First of all, this isn't a sex club or even a strip club, so if you thought it was, leave now. This is burlesque. This is art, this is about creating a fantasy. About confidence and owning your body. I can't teach talent, so you either have what it takes or you don't. We will audition each and every single one of you, and we will pick the song. I want you to move. After that, we'll ask you to sing. We are only taking one new girl... so good luck.” Allegra smirks as Lexi steps forward.

“Look around at the other girls. Each wants this as badly as you, but their success doesn't lower yours. All we ask is for you to show us what you've got.”

“What they said. I'm the manager here, and these girls are my family. No one disrespects them or my staff. If you get the job, you are one of us for life.” She looks us over and stops on a chatty blonde near the stage. “You first.” She whistles, and the lights come up on the stage as we take the table to the left, sitting back and watching. The girl nervously climbs up onto the stage and the house lights dim, then a spotlight shines on the blonde as she swallows anxiously. Her clearly dyed hair is dark at the roots, and her thick brown eyebrows are impressive. She's skinny but good-looking, however the nerves will kill her.

The music starts with a low, steady beat. She misses the first and second cue, and she looks at us uncertainly before closing her eyes, sucking in a breath, and beginning to move. She sways slowly at first before she loses herself in the music. She dances across the stage, sensually and slick. She's good, really good actually.

After her, two more girls auditioned. One panicked and ran off crying, and the other couldn't dance at all. Lexi, Allegra, and the manager whisper amongst themselves before Lexi lifts her head and looks at me. "Blair, you're up."

I see the other girls shooting me glares—they hate me already, I know it. I didn't bother to sit with them or get to know them. As I stand, I wink at them. I'm confident, bordering on cocky, but it will put them on edge too, which I need.

Because I *need* this job, I don't just want it.

I have to be a part of this.

"Watch how it's done," I purr cockily as I strip off my jacket, toss it on the table, and flip up onto the stage.

I stand under the light, lower my head, and close my eyes until the music starts. It's slow, sensual. I instantly throw myself into it. Clicking one hand at first before I start to tap my thigh, and when the beat kicks in, I drag my hands down my thighs and start to sway, shaking my hips from side to side as I lift my head and make eye contact. Smiling seductively, I turn and bend before flowing onto the floor and onto my back. I lift my hips as the beat increases.

I flip, dance, and turn on the floor before swaying to my feet. Dragging my hands up my body, I part my lips on a gasp and tip my head back. Swivelling, I shake my ass before lifting a leg and circling as I dance before tilting my head to the side. I flip my hair as I grin and lean onto my knee and shake my hip. Twirling across the floor, I go *en pointe* before leaping into the air, coming down on my knees, and smashing my fists into the stage with the music before pumping my chest and back and crawling to the edge.

Lifting my legs in a V before I slip off, I sway across the floor to the judges who are grinning at me. Lexi's smile is so wide, I know it's a good sign. I press my hands to their table, flip my hair as I start to shimmy up and down, and then spin around their chairs, dragging my hands on the wood, almost touching them, almost, before I twirl away with a laugh and leap up onto the stage for the big finish.

The beat is building, I feel it. I spot the rope at the back of the stage as I twirl and leap onto it, climbing. As the beat starts to reach its climax, I twist my foot in it and drop. As the music cuts out, I'm upside down with my leg held in the rope and a grin on my face.

Breathing heavily as adrenaline pumps through me, I untangle myself and flip from the rope. I run my hand through my hair before I take a cocky bow as whistles and claps begin. I climb down from the stage and grab my jacket, slipping back into it. Lexi winks at me and claps, Allegra watches me with appreciation, and the manager is grinning, impressed.

Bulls-fucking-eye.

This job is mine.

I have to watch the other girls. Some are really good, some are okay, and one is terrible. It takes another hour as I lean back in my chair with my legs crossed on the table. After everyone is done, the judges stand up. "Okay, here is the list for the next round. If your name isn't called, you may leave and better luck next time. Rosie, Emilida, Selina, Regan, and... Blair," she announces, and people grumble but get up and leave.

All apart from us five.

She looks at us when the others depart. "Now onto singing, you just need to be passable. We don't need another headliner, we already have two." She looks at Lexi and Allegra. "We need a strong dancer and someone who can do backup. Pick a song" —she jerks her head to the music desk in the corner— "and then perform for us. Sing for us like you would the customers, put everything into it. Your job depends on it."

She sits back down and chooses the first girl. I end up last due to the list. There are at least two girls who are better singers than me, and they were good dancers too, so I know I need to knock it out of the park. I could sing some upscale pop song, something sexy, but I watch the judges closely, and they seem disappointed when people do. They want something real, something raw.

Well, fuck it.

When it's my turn, I feel their gazes as I stand in front of the desk. I hover over a rock song before I close my eyes and, for once, I let myself feel vulnerable. These ladies will watch and know something about me after, but if it gets me the job... if it shows them the heart they clearly want, then fuck it.

I hit play, and the slow beat of Kesha's "Praying" starts as I turn and get on stage, holding the mic. Others put flair on it, danced or swayed, but not me. I hold still and keep my eyes on the crowd. I can't see past the lights, thank God, and I start to sing. My voice is raw and vulnerable. I glide over the lyrics I have sung a thousand times in my own head. Music was my escape, and never has a song resonated with me as much as this. The lyrics are ripped from my very soul, laying it bare. You can hear my secrets in my voice, the breathy quality giving them away.

I know the pain, the horror in these words.

I close my eyes as I hit the high note, and when the song ends, I stand on stage with my chest heaving and tears in my closed eyes. I force back the wetness in my eyes before I open them, and then other lights come on, letting me see every single person watching me. Some faces are shocked, some are devastated, and others are confused... all apart from the judges.

Allegra has an understanding gleam in her eyes, a sadness.

Lexi looks sad but proud.

They know what that meant. They know my deepest, darkest secret.

The manager nods at me and stands and starts to clap. I swallow nervously, licking my lips, and get down, tucking my shaking hands in my pockets to try and deflect the sympathy I see in their gazes.

Without even looking away from me, the manager smiles. “Blair, welcome to the family.”

My heart leaps at that. The job is mine!

After that it’s a blur. The other girls leave, some even congratulate me. Allegra pats me on the shoulder as she passes. “Welcome to the team, kid. Before the week is through, I bet we’ll know everything about you.”

I almost snort. Don’t count on it.

Lexi hugs me. “You were incredible. That song... I felt it in my soul. I felt your conviction, and your dancing? The best I’ve ever seen, I’m so glad you’re with us.”

The manager shakes my hand as well. “I’m Serina. Welcome to the team. I’ll get you the employee handbook, which basically says don’t turn up drunk or high, and always be on time for your shift and ready to practice—anything else, we don’t care. Got any issues, come to us. You are one of us now.”

I nod, and after signing paperwork and getting my key card, locker, and tour, I leave with a giant smile on my face.

I’m a burlesque dancer.

Stage name... *Darling*.

Instead of heading home, I decide to get food to celebrate.

Still flooded with adrenaline and excitement, I wander down to the cafe at the corner. The neon sign in the slightly dirty window says it’s open. It has old-style curtains running around the base of the windows, and the door is on the corner with the cafe shaped like a triangle. I step inside, and a bell

chimes overhead. My eyes widen as I look around. I double-check the name and grin, it makes sense.

Taste of America.

It looks like the diners you see in the old-fashioned movies, with red and checked seats, a white checkered floor, and a silver counter running along the back wall before the kitchen, which peeks through the silver serving window. Before the counter are cherry red leather stools, whereas on top, napkin holders and plastic menus wait for customers. There are road signs and old pin-up pictures all over the walls. It's almost too busy, but they somehow pulled it off.

It's pretty quiet at this time, between dinner and tea, with only a few of the booths along the windows occupied. There are some tables scattered to the left counter where it bulks out a bit, and the doors for the toilets are behind them.

"Take a seat anywhere," comes a panting yell. I look around, but I don't see anyone. My eyebrows rise, but I shuck out of my jacket and lay it on a stool before I hop up on another, kicking my feet onto the rungs because I'm too small to touch the floor.

Music plays softly in the background, and I hum and tap along on the counter as I wait to be served. About two minutes later, a girl pops up from behind the counter, making me jump as I peer over to try and see what she was doing. Looks like she was stacking glasses, but jeez, she was like a little ninja.

"Hi!" She grins before blowing out air to move the loose strands of pastel pink hair from her eyes. She has an adorable face, with bright blue eyes that laser into you. Her lips are painted the same shade of pink as her hair, and she has some giant winged liner and pink cheeks that have me running my gaze across her. She screams retro, and I love it, what an awesome style. Her uniform is a simple black skirt with a white blouse tucked into it. The top few buttons of her shirt are undone, showing off a pearl necklace.

She has a tiny waist with huge tits and hips. She's very attractive. Like I said, I prefer men, but I can appreciate the

beauty in women, and this girl? She's drop-dead gorgeous. Her 'happy to help' name tag reads Faye.

"Hey," I greet with a grin, powerless not to return her smile. I'm genuinely happy, and for some reason, I feel very relaxed around her. She places a glass in front of me and pours some ice-cold water before adding a straw without asking.

Pulling it closer, I wrap my hand around the cooling glass and take a sip. I groan when I realise how thirsty I am. "Nice to meet you, I'm Faye. What can I get for you?"

Originally, I thought she might be older than me, maybe twenty-two or twenty-three, but I think she is more my age, nineteen or twenty. Her voice is sweet and syrupy, and I feel like a grungy, dirty rocker next to her. We are total opposites, but she doesn't judge me. In fact, her eyes run across my outfit and her mouth pops open, and happiness shines in those blue eyes. This girl is an open book, wearing every emotion on her face. I bet she's even terrible at lying.

"Girl, I love your earrings and style."

"Thanks, I dig the retro thing you've got going," I tell her.

She perks up at that. "Really? Aww, thank you. What's your name? I don't think I've ever seen you in here."

"It's a big city," I comment, and she laughs, leaning into the counter.

"True, but this is the place you only come to if you work close by, hun."

I point my straw at her. "Good point. I just got a job down the street at the burlesque club. I moved here today, actually."

"No way, really? Well, come in here anytime. I love those girls. You are all so talented, I wish I could do what you do." She wipes the counter and rushes off to refill someone's coffee before returning. "So you're new here, huh?" she asks, continuing without so much as a blink. "You going to Leggott?"

I nod silently, and she grins widely. "I do too, if you need someone to show you around." She leans closer and winks.

“And if you want to know where all the good parties and spots are, I’m your girl.”

“Sounds good,” I reply, and I mean it. I could do with a few friends, and even though this girl reminds me of the Energizer Bunny, I have a feeling we’ll get along just fine. “What’s your number?”

She reels it off, and I plug it into my phone before placing it on the counter. “So what’s your name, rock chick?” she inquires.

“I’m Blair,” I offer and smile at her cockily. “Nice to meet you, Faye. Now how about you get me some coffee and something sweet, and we can talk more about those parties?”

With a laugh, she turns away to do just that.

Okay, so this move might be a good thing. I’ve got a job and clearly a new friend. All I need is to find places to dance and drink and maybe race... Oh, and cock of course, and then I’ll be all sorted.

Meredith has another thing coming if she thinks this city is going to change my attitude and life. If anything, I can tell it’s only going to get worse.



Chapter Four

Blair

Two Months Later

I screech into the space just before the old lady and flip her off, and she starts to yell. Just because they are old, that doesn't give them a bitch pass, but apparently she didn't get that memo. Sliding from my car, I slip into my jacket as I pull out a smoke, cupping it to stop the wind, then light it.

I draw a drag and blow it out as I use my ass to shut my car door. Locking it, I throw my bag over my shoulder and check my phone. I've still got thirty minutes before I need to get ready for my set, so I smoke as I walk down to the cafe at the end. When I get there, I spot Faye bustling around inside, busy with the teatime shift. Her pink hair is rolled back like a pin-up girl, and she's smiling like always, even when she's so busy. Shaking my head as she apologises for the wait to a clearly bitchy young couple, I puff my last drag before throwing it on the ground and grinding it under my boot.

Who knew Energizer Bunny and I would become besties? Not me, that's for sure. It's still summer, so there's no university work, but I started coming in here before and after work, sometimes with the other girls, especially Lexi and

Allegra whom I have become close with as well. It meant I spoke to Faye more and we started hanging out, going clubbing and partying. The girl can keep up with me, which I didn't expect, plus she doesn't judge me for my lifestyle. In fact, she thrives in it. One day she was just there as my bestie before I even realised it, and now I'm too far gone to cut her off.

Opening the door, I head to the counter as she stops behind it with a huff and a smile.

"Hey, the usual, babe?" she calls, and without even waiting for my reply, she hands the coffee over. She started having it ready when I got in, knowing I'm usually late.

"You are a godsend," I tell her, leaning over and kissing her, and she swats me away with a tea towel.

"Want me to wait for you tonight?" she asks.

I shake my head as I sip the strong coffee. It's just the way I like it—black like my soul. "Nah, I've got the last set tonight. You will be finished by then. I feel like going out though," I reply, downing more of the coffee as I take a bite of the pie she gave me.

"Yeah? Want me to meet you at Spectrum at about 2AM?" she inquires, nodding at a couple gesturing for her. "Sorry, it's rammed tonight, I'll text you. I get off at midnight, so I'll go home and get ready."

"Tell them to fuck off," I mutter as she grins, used to my, as she calls it, 'rude ass mouth.' "Sounds good, I'll come straight from work. I need to get laid tonight; it's been too long."

She bustles around the corner, spanking me as she passes. "It's been like twelve hours," she teases.

"Exactly, too long!" I call. "Mama needs her dick!"

Patrons turn with a gasp, and I chuckle as Faye's cheeks heat.

Downing the rest of the coffee, I lay a generous tip on the counter and slide off the stool as I walk to the door. "See you

then, hot stuff.”

“Have fun at work! Make them drool,” she calls as I smile and head out into the wind, pulling my jacket tighter. Ducking my head, I rush across the street and around the back of the club, not wanting to go through the main door and put up with customers just yet. The rear fire door is shut, so I type in the code, yank it open, and rush in, letting it slam closed behind me as I sigh.

Wandering down the lit corridor, I slip through the partially open dressing room door and into the laughter and chatter inside. The smell of perfume and the warmth of the LED lights makes me grin and relax as I hang my coat and bag.

“Hey, girl!” Sam, another one of the dancers, calls. Her long caramel legs are on display as she rolls up some fishnets.

“Hey, babe,” I reply as I slide through the hustle and bustle to my mirror in the corner near Lexi’s and Allegra’s. Allegra isn’t here, but Lexi is putting on some bright red lipstick. I lean into her mirror and kiss her cheek.

“Hey, cutie,” she greets as I slide into my chair. “It’s a full house tonight.”

“Is it?” I ask, opening my makeup bag and flicking on my light. I’m on some of the last songs tonight. A few have me performing as a dancer and backup singer, but the last number is one they made just for me. They said they weren’t looking for another headliner, but they made me one anyway. It’s a dance piece with pre-recorded lyrics. It’s sexy, sensual, and has you begging for more as we end the show. I love it, it’s my favourite. I even got to do my own choreography for it, and they trusted my vision completely.

“Yep, been out for one song already and it’s busy as hell. I guess everyone is trying to make the most of the last days of summer,” she says as she checks her face. Her phone vibrates, and she sighs as she looks down at it.

“That asshole boyfriend of yours again?” I snap as I pause in winging my liner.

“Yeah.” She worries her lips and gives me a look as she spins on her velvet stool. “I don’t know if it’s going to work out, honestly, they never do,” she murmurs sadly.

“Girl,” I growl, turning my head to meet her eyes. “I told you that when I first saw the jackass in here. He didn’t tip the waitress, he was loud and obnoxious, and he only wants a woman for her looks. You deserve more than that. You are an incredible woman. You deserve someone who worships you, and it’s about time you realised that.”

She nods, looking away for a moment. “I know you’re right. Blair...” She sighs and I look at her, watching something go through her eyes. “Nothing, don’t worry about it. Enough about my shitty love life, what about yours? You’ve been here what, two months now? I never see you with anyone.”

Smirking, I lean in and sweep some glitter across my eyelid as I blend out the dark, smoky shadow at the edge. “Babe, you know I don’t do relationships. I don’t have time for it, plus I don’t want to be tied down. Nope,” I tell her as I grab a dark purple lipstick and swipe it across my lips. “I’m happy with getting orgasms from strangers.”

She laughs as we hear the beat tapering off. Getting to her feet, she leans over me and places her hands onto my shoulders. “One day, Blair Bear, you’ll find someone who makes you rethink that decision. I can’t wait to be there for it.” She grins and turns with a flick of her hair and heads to the staircase at the back of the room that leads to the stage.

“Doubt it, babe.” I huff as I highlight my face. “It would take a hell of a man to make me settle down and keep me occupied... Hell, maybe even more than one man,” I mutter as I finish my face and start on my hair.

I slick it back with gel and a comb until it has that wet look, making my dark, slanted drawn eyebrows and my dark, smoky eyes the focal point. I look like the rocker bad girl, which is what they want. I add my signature necklace, the long gold chain with the scrawled word ‘Darling’ hanging from it, before I stand and head to my rack to get my first outfit of the night.

It's time to dance.

The first two hours go by so fast they are a blur. I do my policewoman backup singing and my good girl routine before I have a break. Downing some rum, I change into my next outfit, which is a sparkly flapper dress. I enjoy this dance and doing it with Allegra makes it all the better. Lexi sings as I move across the stage, smiling, kicking, twisting, and slowly stripping. Each item of clothing we lose is a tease, nothing more. It's all about perception, temptation, and beauty. We end with feathers in front of us, bare apart from that, and when the curtain drops, I rush down for the quick change for my end number.

I slip into the high-waisted hot pants that shimmer under the light and the dark lace strap up bralette. Lexi has to help me get the straps right across my throat, back, and stomach, and then I put on my high heel boots and blow myself a kiss.

“For our last dance of the night, we have our very own Darling. She will make you wet, make you hard, and she sure as shit will be in your fantasies after this,” Serina coos into the mic, making the crowd go wild.

It's busy tonight with college students coming back off holiday, men trying to celebrate before work tomorrow, and couples enjoying the oblivion the darkness offers them. I stop at the bottom of the stairs, bouncing on my toes as my heart starts to race. My blood is pumping, and I can already feel the beat, the happiness, and peace this dance will bring me—not to mention the sense of power and confidence.

Show time, baby.

I don't hear the rest of the normal introduction, but I feel the beat start to kick in. This is a little different than other acts, the curtains will be up already. I hear the murmur and confusion of the crowd as the slow rhythm carries on, and then bang, the light hits the stairs. I let them wait a moment longer, wearing a smirk on my face, and then finally, it's my cue. I slowly walk up the stairs, lifting each leg and placing it on the edge. When I know they can see me, I bend over and drag my fingers up each leg before shaking up to the next step. I hit my

spot under the lights exactly on time, my head tilted with a cocky smirk as we let them get a full look at me. Cheers go up, and I see some regulars and newbies amongst the crowd.

And then the bass kicks in and I start to move.

I dance across the stage, starting small with shimmies, bending, and turning, keeping it sensual but also aloof before suddenly, with the beat, I drop to the stage floor. Smirking at the crowd, I slide forward with my ass in the air, and then I turn onto my side and shake before rolling onto my front. With my arms against the floor, my ass up, I bang my fists and pulse my chest up and down as I move to the edge of the stage.

Sliding to my feet, my hands dragging up my body, I move to the music. People whistle and call my name, and this close to the edge, I can see them behind the lights which turn red and sweep across the room.

My cue to move.

Leaping from the stage, I land on the first table and instantly drop to my knees, crawling to the edge and grinning at the woman there. I shake my ass and run my finger across the edge of her glass before flipping onto my back, lifting my pelvis. The patrons reach out as if to touch me, but I wag my finger with pursed lips, making the crowd laugh. With a wink at the man, I scissor my legs and roll from the table. Swishing my hips, I dance around the tables, the light following me as I leap and twirl. I tease those in the booth and lie across the drums of the band, making them laugh as I wink up at them. The lyrics mention a big pole, and I cover my pussy with my hands, looking innocent, and they laugh harder.

I always end on the corner table just before the stage so I can roll back up onto the platform for the big finish, so I make my way there. I flirt, dance, and sing along the way, teasing them, but never giving them too much. I make them want it and use their imagination. My body is my weapon, and I'm their every fantasy.

The table is occupied by three men. Usually I don't notice people beyond their location in my dance, but for a moment, my heart skips and I miss a beat before I recover with an extra

twirl. They are beautiful. From what I can see in the dim lighting, they are young, maybe a year older than me, and all kinds of dark and sexy. Their eyes are locked on me and my every move.

One's dark gaze is filled with a promise as it roams down me in an unmistakable way.

Another's flirty eyes touch everywhere they look.

The third man, with light irises, is grinning at me.

I swallow and focus on the dance, trying to ignore the throb in my pussy from looking at them. I definitely need to get laid; it's been too long. My body moves, even as my mind drifts to them. I'm used to this by now, knowing every beat and movement by heart due to practicing every single day. Dance isn't something you learn, and boom, you don't have to do anything. You have to practice and improve.

You can always be better, do more, know more.

I slide around their table, stopping to shake my ass before I turn back with a flirty 'O' mouth, and then I roll onto the stage and get to my knees, sliding my finger down the front zip of the bra. I hear the calls to 'do it,' but I tease until the beat stills, and then I unzip it. I wait until the crowd chants as I let it fall to the stage, the straps crossing my breasts with black sparkly pasties covering my nipples. I shake my fingers in a naughty motion and get to my feet. Stepping back slowly, I drag my foot along the stage as I go, the beat building again. One step back, another, and another, until I reach the back of the stage, and then the beat drops.

I kick my leg and take a running leap, making sure my toes are pointed, my head tilting back and almost meeting my toes before I land on the stage and roll so my back is to the crowd, my legs parted as I kick them into the air. I flip back and look over my shoulder, and where they can't see, I flip the latch on my bralette so the straps fall away. My chest is bare, but they can't see it. Then, with a wink as the beat starts to slow, I slowly walk off the stage.

I hear chants for more as I grab the towel waiting for me and wrap it around my chest, then I head down the stairs. Lexi is there, helping me out of the shorts and touching up my makeup. I slip into a leather skirt with some red panties and a matching red bralette—it's the encore outfit. Some nights we don't do it, but tonight we will because the crowd is so large and infectious. The others are waiting, and as soon as I'm changed, we are back on stage. The patrons are all waiting, wondering if we'll come back, the lights dark as we spread out into a diamond.

The lights flash on, showing Lexi first. The soundtrack sings about each girl, introducing them and making them into fantasies. The angel. The devil. The twins... and then me—Darling. I cock my hip when the light hits me and smirk before doing the rock sign.

I lose myself in that final number. Allegra and I dance around Lexi. I bend as she spans me, and then I slip through her legs, crawling along the floor before we all lie on our backs and kick our legs as Lexi walks through us, singing. When she touches us, we flip onto our knees, shaking our heads with a roar, and then we get to our feet.

We all end around her. Allegra and I drape across Lexi as she sings the last note. The light stays on us, all of us panting and covered in sweat but smiling. We live for this. Then the applause starts—it's so loud it's like the roar of an engine—and they stamp their feet. Flowers you can buy at the bar are tossed onto the stage, and we all take a bow and blow kisses and smile.

We begin to pick up some of the blooms—we keep them in big vases in the dressing room. I'm just bending near the edge of the stage where those sexy men are when the one with the light eyes leans forward. I spy his blond, almost shaved head and bright blue eyes, and in his hand, he holds a rose. He's half in the light, half in the dark, but my heart skips at seeing his sharp, beautiful face and the lust in his eyes. His hunger shoots straight to my pussy and has my clit throbbing. He extends the rose to me with a smile, and I hear the others starting to leave the stage, so with a wink, I accept it. His

fingers brush along mine, rough and purposeful as I take it. Goosebumps rise from that one innocent touch, and I falter before I turn and follow the other girls off stage.

Who were those men?

Why do I care?

I push those hotties to the back of my mind as I wind my hips with the music. You would think after dancing all night I wouldn't want to now, but it's my happy place. I'm slightly drunk, the alcohol buzzing through my veins. The pop-up warehouse rave we are in is dark apart from the strobe lights and fast music. We have neon paint across us, and I'm dancing with the man I selected to fuck when I first walked in. I wink at Faye who is dancing with his friend.

I tangle my fingers in his shoulder-length blond hair and drag his head down. He almost has to bend in half, but he goes willingly as I kiss him. It's sloppy and fuelled by alcohol, which makes it all that much better. It's not fireworks like I felt from the touch earlier tonight, but it will do.

He grips my ass and rubs me against his hard, jean-clad cock. He lost his shirt at some point, and he has amazing abs. Definitely a surfer or a climber. He's not the brightest—I can tell from the one-minute conversation we had earlier—but who cares? He doesn't need to talk if his mouth is full with my cunt or nipples.

I don't need to like him, just want him.

His hand slips into the back of my shorts before he slides it around. I bite his lip, and he groans into my mouth as his fingers try to get into my knickers. Laughing, I move back and grab his hand. I pull it free and twine my fingers with his as he frowns in confusion, blinded by the liquor and lust fuelling him. I grab the pill from my pocket and pop it into my mouth as he watches, and with a grin, I kiss him again as it starts to dissolve. We kiss and dance and the drug kicks in. The world blurs around us and everything slows down.

I end up dragging him to the toilets and into the one working stall, much to the annoyance of the man who wants to use it. I push him into the graffiti covered door as my heart races from the cocktail mixing through me. Ripping at his pants, I unfasten them before turning him and pushing him down to the toilet. He goes to speak, but I yank down my shorts and climb onto his lap. I kiss him again before turning and pressing my palms to the sides of the stall as his fingers clumsily prod my pussy.

It's going to be a quick, messy fuck, and when I feel his condom covered cock pressing against my pussy, I lift and slam down onto it, taking his full, long length into my body. He groans and I cry out. The music pulses in here, seeming far away until the door opens and closes with people coming and going. Let them listen, I don't care. Dragging my hand across the dirty wall, I start to rise and drop, riding his cock as he lifts his hips and fucks me quickly.

His long cock hits that deep spot inside me that has me moaning. Dragging up my shirt, I cup my braless tits with one hand and squeeze and twist as they jiggle from our movements. He grunts and groans as he speeds up, basically bouncing me now. I know I'll be responsible for my own release, so I quickly reach down and flick my clit before rubbing it furiously. As he bottoms out and comes with a groan, his lips to my shoulder, I come myself, grinding down onto his pulsing cock. Sighing, I lean back for a moment as he pants.

Getting to my feet, I yank off my wet knickers, use the toilet roll to clean myself, and reach around him as he leans back, watching me—his softening cock still in the condom—and put it on the loo before yanking up my shorts.

“Thanks,” I say before unlocking the door and leaving.

“Hey, wait, what's your name?” he calls after me. I hear him fall as he tries to get up.

Idiot.

I got what I wanted, so I lose him in the crowd, and then I down more drinks as I spin and dance, my head one big blur

from the pill and booze. Time makes no sense out here, and when the cops show up, Faye grabs me and yanks me from the warehouse. We laugh as we run through the field and climb over the fence, shivering from the cold. It's almost morning.

I'm coming down, and I groan as I lean into her as we walk along the winding country road outside of town. It takes us about forty minutes to reach the edge of the city where we flag a taxi. It drops Faye off first, and she kisses my cheek while I'm consuming a breakfast sandwich we made the taxi driver stop for. He has his own on the front seat—bribery at its finest.

“See you tomorrow, babe. Try not to get into too much trouble until then.” She laughs as she gets out, waving from the curb of her two-story house she lives in with her uncle. “Text me when you get home!” she calls, and I wave her off, finishing the sandwich and sitting back with my eyes shut.

“Hey, we're here,” the cabbie announces sometime later, and I jolt awake. Half hungover and asleep, I pay him and get out. I slip through the side gate I found last month and tread across the grass to the front of the house.

The sun is starting to rise, and I don't want another awkward run-in with Meredith's new fiancé, not with my panties in my purse and a sore, satisfied pussy. That's when I see the open garage with three new editions. One Harley with a custom skull paint job, a Mustang painted matte black, and a Subaru with what seems to be holographic purple and green paint.

The sons must be back from holiday.



Chapter Five

Blair

I passed out so hard last night.

I wake up with a dry mouth and banging headache, spread naked across my crumpled bedding. Groaning, I flip over onto my back. Luckily, the new blackout curtains I installed are shut, keeping out the sunlight. I manage to drink some water from the bedside table and take some pain relief before slipping back to sleep. I hear voices later, but I'm half asleep and I dismiss them when they quieten.

When I finally wake up again, I reach over and check my phone to see it's late afternoon. My headache is gone, but I feel sticky and dirty, covered in dry sweat and crusty neon paint. I reply to Faye's angry message, apologising for not texting her when I got home, before getting up.

I make the bed and open the curtains with a wince, the bright sunlight piercing my aching head. Then I make my way to the bathroom and take a bath, washing my hair to get the paint out and scrubbing my pussy after last night. After I get out, I play my music through the mirror Money Bags installed as I wash my face and brush my teeth. I won't do my makeup and hair until later, though, because I'm working tonight.

Instead, I slip on a silky cami and shorts set before turning off the music and opening my bedroom door.

I remember seeing the cars last night, but the bedroom doors are shut and the floor we live on is silent. Are they sleeping? Or have they left already?

Who cares?

The good thing about them not being here most of the summer is that I got to know the layout. Food is delivered every week—I never see it, but the fridge and cupboards are always full, and once I mentioned I needed some stronger coffee and energy drinks, they appeared the next day.

I pad into the living/kitchen area, but it's empty too. There are pots in the sink, and some keys are gone from the side, so I'm assuming they have gone out. Works for me, no awkward introduction. *Oh yes, I'm the daughter of the woman shagging your dad and trying to get his money, nice to meet you.*

I flick on the coffee machine and wait for it to dispense the golden goodness that will make me less of a zombie. Even though I know it will scald my mouth, I down it and then pour another before grabbing some breakfast biscuits and heading back to my room. Placing the coffee on my bedside table, I sit back in my bed and munch on the oat biscuits as I scroll through my notifications. I reply to Lexi and Allegra in the group chat and text with Faye for a bit. We aren't going out tonight, but I promise to come to the diner earlier and have tea while she works.

I ignore the messages from old hook-ups and the message requests from men who have found me after seeing me perform. Pervs and assholes, all of them. None worth fucking. It usually tends to be older men who have the nerve to reach out, some even just send cock pictures without anything else—an angry-looking hard cock, and usually not very impressive either. What a greeting.

I started a game. Instead of getting annoyed, I rate the dick pics and send them back. I open one now and laugh, sending it to the group chat before I flip back onto the message and type

a response to the man. I can see his profile picture; he has his kid and wife there.

Nice. Real class act.

3/10.

Weird bend and colour. Not good girth or length, wouldn't even hit any of the good spots. Too hairy, not good for sucking. Not sure how you got your wife, but I wouldn't push your luck, buddy. She probably has to fake it as it is.

Would not recommend.

He reads it and instantly blocks me. I open another, and it starts off with lovely worship type messages, but because I haven't responded, it turns violent. He tells me he is going to kill me and shag my corpse. Wow, okay. I do a bit of research before sending my reply. People are so hard behind screens, but when you take it further, they panic, and it's fun to see. I've had to do this a few times already.

Full name: Mitchy Smith.

Email: badboyforeves@gmail.com (really bro?)

Age: 18

School: All Boys Catholic.

Year: Sixth-form.

Address: 4 Crescent Way.

I have forwarded your messages to your mother, your school, and the police. Have a nice life :)

He starts to panic immediately, backtracking to try and apologise, but I ignore him and block him after actually sending the screenshots. You can never be too careful, especially after what happened... well, yeah, I take certain

precautions. After nursing my coffee and watching the news, I decide to hit the gym. We have to stay in shape as dancers, and I do enjoy working out. Luckily, Money Bags has one here, so I get dressed in some stretchy shorts and a loose top before losing myself in the burn for a few hours.

Later, after I shower and shave again, I put some sparkly lotion on my skin. When the lights hit it, it makes my body glow. I cream my hair and curl it before starting on my face. I do a toned-down look for the diner, with some winged liner, contouring, and highlighter, but just a nude lip. I even slip on some jeans, black with hints of grey with huge rips down the front. I don't bother with a bra, slipping on a white crop top that has 'bite me' written across it. I put on my biker boots and always present leather jacket before packing my bag for tonight.

I tidy my room, grab my keys and phone, and rush downstairs to my car, not wanting to be late because Faye will murder me. The drive doesn't take me long, and after parking, I let myself into the diner. It's busy-ish, with a few tables full, but the counter is empty, so I put my bag and coat down and smack the bell with a grin. I smash my hand on it again and again.

Rey pops his head through the kitchen hole and grins at me with his perfectly straight, white teeth, his one gold tooth glimmering in the light. His head is shaved, and he has a spider tattoo around it. Rey's a big bulky bastard, an ex-con, but he's nice to me and cooks the best bloody omelette in town. "Hey, dancer, what do you fancy?"

"Something meaty and greasy," I tell him.

"My specialty, you've got it. Faye is just getting more sauce," he informs me as he pulls his head back into the kitchen. I hop over the counter and crank up the music before pouring myself a coke. When I turn, there's an old man waiting there with his mug.

"I'm thinking it's decaf, cutie?" I ask, and he grins as he hands it over.

I refill his mug and pass it to him, and he wanders away as I leap back over just as the side door opens and Faye comes out. She rolls her eyes and grins as she sets the box of sauces down behind the counter. “What have I said about coming back here?”

“Do it?” I reply sweetly as I sip my coke. I turn and cheers the old man with it before winking at Faye. “I think I’ve got a chance with him. Do you reckon his balls are down to his knees?” I whisper.

“Ew, what the fuck, Blair?” she whisper hisses, making me laugh as I swivel back to her. “If you want something good to look at, there are three hotties in the corner booth. I swear I didn’t know they made men our age that looked like that—don’t look now!” she hisses, making me smirk.

I turn slowly, taking in the diner, and spot three men in the corner. She’s right, they are hot as hell. They are also the three men from the show last night. I turn back to her with a grin. “They were watching me dance last night.”

“Of course they were,” she says with a sigh. “You always get the best ones,” she grumbles.

“Sorry, kid, I suppose I could let you have Iram...” She raises her eyebrow in question, and I grin. “Big, wrinkly balls old man? I thought he could be the one... but I guess I can share,” I tease, just as another young man comes up to the counter.

I sip my coke and swivel slightly on my stool as she serves him. She looks tired today. There are bags under her eyes, so she probably didn’t sleep, too busy cleaning up after her useless uncle. I told her she could move in with us and no one would notice, but she won’t. The man goes to grab the drink, and she passes it at the same time. Their hands knock together, and it spills all over Faye and the counter. He leaps back with a snarl.

“What the fuck?” he yells. “Shit, you’re clumsy. Clean it up and bring another to the table,” he demands and storms away.

Her eyes drop as her cheeks heat in shame. I go to stand, and her eyes snap to me. “Don’t,” she begs, knowing I’m going to cause a scene. I grind my teeth but refrain from attacking him for her. Instead, I grab napkins and help her mop it up. She takes him another before rolling the sleeves of her wet shirt back, her eyes sad and face pale.

Nope, we’re not having this.

An idea hits me, and I lean over and quickly turn up the radio when a good song comes on. Faye tries to reach over and turn it down, but I flick her hand away and begin to drag her around the counter, but she blushes and hides behind it. I leap to my feet and start to sing along, pointing and dancing until I’m behind her. I press my back to her and shimmy down before turning and spinning her in a circle until she giggles. A wide smile curls her lips—that’s more like it.

I carry on dancing across the diner, uncaring who is watching. Some customers cheer as I reach my new old friend and drop a kiss to his cheek as Faye laughs. Pressing my back to an empty table, I flip across it before pressing one foot onto a stool and hopping onto the counter.

Rey sticks his head through, grinning and tapping along as I hop and dance across the counter before dropping to my knees and crawling to Faye as I sing along. “Blair,” she protests, even as she laughs, her face red and smile so wide it has to hurt. I jump off and grind against her as I carry on. She spins me away, and I dance across the diner again, shaking my hips. The three hot men are watching me, so I wink at the one with the blond hair and grab the coke from the table next to them where the mardy guy is. I take a sip as I stare at him before putting it down as he leans back and runs his eyes over me.

Turning, I break into a run and slide across the floor, stopping at Faye’s feet on the last note. Cheers go up as people clap, and I get to my feet and turn with a bow. “Thank you, thank you very much,” I call.

“You’re insane,” Faye exclaims and pulls me into a hug. “And such an amazing friend.” She spans me then. “Now sit

and eat before you cause the old man to have a heart attack.”

Grinning, I slide into my chair, and she passes me my food before going back to work, serving people and taking food out. Once I’m done, I sit back and nurse a coffee she brings me, just relaxing before my shift tonight. It’s the last one before I have two days off.

Faye takes some food over to the table with the asshole from earlier.

“Thanks, you fat bitch. At least you didn’t drop it,” he snaps, and one of his friends moos. I turn slowly, anger igniting in my veins as I see Faye swallowing back tears as she quickly walks towards me.

“Blair, don’t,” she whispers. “Forget it.”

I nod, licking my teeth as she passes me, but then he makes a cow noise again, and, well, I lose my shit. Anger issues, my mother says, but I say a low tolerance for idiots. I put the mug down and storm over there.

“What the fuck did you say?” I demand, standing over their table. The guy sits back, smirking at me.

“She’s a clumsy cow. You, on the other hand—”

“Oh shit,” I hear Faye curse as I grab the back of his head and smash his face into the table—twice for good measure before I release him.

He scrambles back with a shout, tears running from his eyes. His nose is busted and bleeding everywhere.

His friend gets to his feet. “What the fuck—”

I grab his fist and twist him before throwing him into the table. He turns and swings at me. I duck with a laugh and smash my knee into his cock and balls, and he falls to his knees with a grunt. I slam my fist into his face, sending him sprawling to the floor.

Panting, my knuckles sore and covered in blood, I look at the last man at the table. “Don’t move,” I snap before I step over his whining friend, grab the broken-nosed man’s head,

and get right in his face. “If you ever so much as think about coming in here again, I will kill you, do you understand?”

He grunts, trying to struggle in my grip, so I smash his face into the table again.

“Do you understand?” I yell.

“Yes! Yes!” he cries out, and I drop his face into his broken plate where he squelches into his food.

“Who’s the cow now, bitch?” I sneer. Turning, I spot Rey next to Faye with his bat in his hand, but I grin at him. “Don’t worry, I saved you the pleasure of tossing them out.”

“Blair,” Faye murmurs, wiping her tears as she smiles. “You crazy bitch.”

Just then, the door opens, and I groan. Really? Can today get any better? Officer Small Dick looks around at the chaos and his gaze stops on me. “I should have known,” he mutters. He’s a big guy, a meathead, and I’ve had a few run-ins with him over the last few months from racing and partying. He always feels me up and makes snide little comments.

He’s a dick.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, they did that to themselves,” I tell him with a friendly smile. I really can’t get arrested again.

He steps closer, his hands on his belt. “Sure they did. Once white trash, always white trash,” he sneers, hungrily running his eyes down my body as he speaks.

Asshole.

“Yeah?” I taunt, stepping towards him. “Then why are you always trying to fuck me, Officer Small Dick? Love a bit of white trash, do you?” I spit.

His eyes narrow, and with a snarl, he grabs me. Holding my hands at the base of my back, he slams me into the closest table, forcing a breath out of me from the impact. I hear Faye and Rey protesting even as Officer Small Dick presses said tiny penis against my ass as he cuffs my hands roughly.

“Kinky,” I mutter as I lift my head and meet the eyes of the three men from the show. It’s their table, and they are all watching me. The blond-haired one with the blue eyes looks concerned, the light-brown-eyed one with luscious brown hair is smirking, and the dark one is glaring at the officer whose hands are clearly feeling me up as he states it’s for a weapon search. He even sticks his hands under my shirt. The prick.

He reads me my rights as he hoists me up and starts to drag me away. “Blair,” Faye calls.

“Don’t worry about it, I’ll see you later.” I wink as I’m dragged out of the door and slammed onto the bonnet of his police cruiser as he opens the door and leaves me there.

Luckily, Allegra has just pulled up, and as I meet her eyes, they narrow. She knows about the officer; I’ve told her before. She storms over and gets in his face. “Why are you harassing my friend now?” she demands.

“She assaulted—”

“Did you see it?” she interrupts.

“Well, no,” he starts. I crane my neck to see them standing toe-to-toe. I wouldn’t go against her.

“Are they pressing charges?” she questions. Faye comes out then and stands next to Allegra.

“No, they’re not, nor did we ring him. As usual, he turned up when Blair would be here and then felt her up. In fact, a witness has his inappropriate touching on camera.” She huffs.

“Yeah, asshole, don’t release me and that goes viral. You will lose your job and all that power you crave to use against women,” I yell.

I feel his indecision before his big, rough hands unlock the cuffs and he pushes me away from the car. I wind my arms to relieve the tension, grinning at him. “This was fun, thanks.” I wrap my arm around Faye and lead her inside. “Go back to work, babe, it’s fine.”

“You need to complain about him, Blair. He won’t stop.”

Don't I know that all too well... Memories start to surface. Screams. Blood. Pain. So much pain.

"It's fine," I murmur, yanking myself back to the present. "I have a show to put on, and you have food to serve. I'll see you tomorrow."

She nods and backs away as I slump.

"Come on, kid." Allegra sighs, slinging her arm around my shoulders as we head to the club. "You can tell us all about it. So, was it fucking, fighting, or racing this time?" she teases.

I gasp in fake shock. "Me? I'm an innocent girl in this," I exclaim.

"Innocent, my ass." She laughs. "One day that cop is going to get what he wants from you, Blair. You need to deal with him now. Until then, let's go shake our asses and show them what they all want but can't have."

Let's.



Chapter Six

Blair

I finish early tonight and decide to head home and get ready to go out. I'm meeting Faye at a house party later after convincing her to get drunk as hell as I dance my ass off, wanting to forget today's events. I speed home, and when I pull up, I see the cars and Harley are back. I guess my stepbrothers are here.

Oh well.

I leave my car around the side, since my mother calls it unsightly. I almost snort. I guess it ruins her luxury vibe she has going. I wonder what she would think if she saw the skulled up Harley currently parked in the open garage. I head through the silent house, Meredith and Money Bags must be out again, probably to another gala or on a shopping trip—hell, he took her to Paris the other week. Whatever, so long as it keeps them away from me.

Now I only have the sons to put up with, and I have yet to meet them. Let's hope they are okay. We'll only need to interact when I see them in the kitchen upstairs, but nobody wants to live with a total tosser.

As I head through the dark house, I hear music coming from the basement. It's probably them, but I head upstairs to shower and dress. If I don't see them before then, I'll go find them after I'm ready to introduce myself. See? I can be nice when I need to.

The living room upstairs is the same as always—bar, a leather coat thrown over the back of one of the sofas, and some empty beer cans. I grab one from the fridge, pop the top, and drain some as I saunter to my room, wiping my mouth on the back of my hand as I go. I don't bother turning on the lights, I've learned the path to my room by heart over the last few months.

But a noise stops me, and then I see the door to the right is open—the artsy one's room. It's slightly ajar and there is a light on inside. I shuffle in place, watching as a shadow passes in front of it. Curiosity gets the better of me and I move closer. The condensation of the cold beer in my hand drips across my fist as I peek through the opening, trying to catch a glimpse.

Tits on a dick.

My eyes widen and I lick my lips as I view the show going on before me. And they say I'm a tease and a flirt... This guy puts me to shame. I should feel dirty for watching him, but I don't. Especially when he pushes his trousers down, his arms and back flexing. His back is built, and when I say built, I mean he must work out every single day. He has those two adorable dimples at the base of his tanned spine. His shoulders and arms are what catch my gaze though. They are impressive, all tanned, supple skin stretched over hard muscles.

The veins pop on his arms as he yanks up a new pair of jeans, struggling to get them over his tight, peachy ass and thick thighs. Eventually he gets them into place, the tight black skinny jeans ripped and acid washed. He's partially turned toward the mirror, and it's dark, so I can't get a good look at his face, but my eyes catch on his body, on his unbuttoned jeans and the patch of hair and V leading down to the gaping fabric. Licking my lips, I lean closer, spying the eight pack he's sporting, the indents visible as he twists and moves, getting dressed. He has tattoos randomly scrawled across his

body, but I can't get a good look at them in the dim light of his room. His hair is blond, almost white, and cut extremely short, like a buzz cut. I see a cross earring hanging from one ear and a few scars marring the perfect bronze of his skin.

He looks like a thirst trap off Instagram. You know, those men who are way too good-looking to be real? His arms bulge as he pulls on a loose grey shirt with holes in it, allowing the bar through his nipple and some of his tattoos to peek through. He stills like he can feel my gaze, so I step back into the dark, not wanting to meet my new stepbrother while I'm ogling him.

He turns his head to look out of the door, but he doesn't seem to see me. Most of his face is in shadow, but I catch thick lips and high cheekbones before he turns away. Holy fuck, my stepbrother is hot. And not in a *wow* kind of way, but in a *my panties just caught on fire and my vagina drooled* kind of way.

Shit. I down more beer and turn away. At least I'll have something pretty to look at while we live here... until Mother inevitably pisses off the husband and gets us kicked out. I can look, but I can't touch. That would be weird... wouldn't it?

Fuck, yeah, I need to get laid tonight. Preferably by someone with abs like that so I can lick, scratch, and ride. I shut my bedroom door behind me, and about a minute later, I hear footsteps heading away. He's leaving, so I guess I won't meet him after all.

If one of them looks like a runway model, what do the others look like?

Why does the thought of meeting them fill me with excitement and lust? It's almost like knowing they are forbidden is making me have all these dirty thoughts. I'm not a girl you say 'don't do it' to. It makes me want to do something all that much more—do *him* so much more. But even I know you don't mix pleasure with business or, more accurately, don't fuck where you eat. They might be hot, but this house is filled with too many lies and twisted relationships for me to get involved with. I can, however, appreciate the beauty while I'm here.

That decided, I down the beer and strip to take a shower. I'm not meeting Faye until much later, so I have plenty of time to get ready and chill.

I shave, wash my hair, and use a face mask before drying off.

After showering, I put on a simple pair of panties and an old, ripped band shirt as I let my hair dry naturally. I pump out rock through my speakers and decide to unpack some more clothes, dancing around my room as I go. I've got about two hours before I'm due to meet Faye, so there's no need to rush. I have my outfit out and ready on the bed, and my makeup is done.

Pulling out my cigs, I light one and take a drag before flicking my lighter shut and setting it down. Dancing again, I head over to the speaker and turn it up. The boom of the drums makes me grin, and the shredding guitar matches my racing heart.

I dance like nobody's watching.

Leaving everything else behind.

I twirl and grind as the beat controls me.

That's when I feel it...

Eyes.

It's my turn to be watched.



Chapter Seven

Cyrus

After I beat Bray at a game of pool, we both head upstairs to find Asher. He went to his room over an hour ago to shower off the blood from earlier and never came back. He probably got distracted and started painting.

“Oi, fuckface, you here?” Bray calls as we troop up the stairs, my booted feet loud behind Bray’s bare ones. “There’s a party over at some chick’s place on the east side in a few hours, you want to go?”

We stop at the kitchen, spotting him leaning over the counter with a beer at his side, doodling on a napkin. I snort at the image. It’s a rough drawing of the dancer from the club last night, the young, rock chick one. She was hot as fuck. We all took a bet to see if we could get into her pants, but she disappeared before we could follow through. Seems our brother is still thinking of her, probably wanking off over her too. He’s obsessed with the ‘female psyche,’ as he calls it. It’s a good drawing. The rough, straight, harsh lines showcase her smirking lips and sharp eyes. Her curves are depicted in a softer pen, with some smudges for shadows. She had a tight little body, all curves and muscle.

All the better to fuck.

Clearly she's an athlete, probably from dancing. I bet she would have been good in bed with how bendy she was. Asher looks up, blinking as he returns to the room. He's started to zone out more and more, usually when he draws or paints, but recently he's been doing it when we go out.

Is he bored?

Maybe we need to have some more fun. We have only been back a few nights, and we have been taking it slow for us. We've not been stirring shit up, apart from today's fight after they called Asher a fag. Asher's black lined eyes meet mine, those deep grey irises bright against the darkness.

"You hear that?" Bray asks, and I tilt my head to listen.

Rock music.

"Isn't it yours?" I reply.

They shake their heads, and we turn to look down the corridor. If it isn't ours, whose is it? Bray grabs a bat, while I just roll my eyes and crack my knuckles. If someone broke in to try and get revenge, they wouldn't alert us by putting on music, but I do like his enthusiasm. I go first, storming down the corridor, ready to beat the fucker to a pulp for coming into our space.

Our fucking space. No one else comes up here, not even father or his whores... or whore for that matter.

It's coming from the room at the end, so I push open the door and freeze, my brothers close behind me. But the woman before me wasn't what we were expecting, and we all stop, dumbfounded.

My eyes lock on the tiny blonde who's twirling around the once empty room. Her tanned, curvy legs are bare, sending a shot of lust straight to my rapidly hardening cock. Her nipples are pebbled against the ripped black top she's wearing, and her impressive curves are on full display. She moves across the room to the music, her body in perfect synchronisation with the beat.

What the fuck is she doing here?

Her hips sway to the blaring rock music as she turns and takes a draw from her cigarette. She spins again and stills when her eyes clash with ours, the smoke blowing from her mouth in a ring.

“Hello, boys, you must be my new stepbrothers.”

Oh, fuck no.

Asher

Stepbrother?

I must look as confused as my brothers. All of us remain silent as we stare at this tiny blonde who has rendered us speechless—the same blonde I can’t get from my mind.

It’s the dancer from the club. The one who moved so fluidly, it was like she was watercolour across a canvas. Her body was the brush, and the stage was her painting. It was incredible. Not to mention she’s fucking beautiful, the kind of beautiful you can’t replicate in a picture or painting. Trust me, I’ve tried nearly every hour since, but I can’t quite get her right. I can’t capture the promise of danger in those blue eyes, the shine of her drying wavy hair, or the dip of those incredible curves. The feel of grunge and rocker. Her lined eyes with smoke painted across her lids. Those maroon lips tipped up as she watches us. The many earrings dotting her ears.

No, I know now why I couldn’t get her right. I need to see her in the light and study her, or it will never be perfect.

But right now I’m more shocked that she’s here, in our house... stepbrother?

“What the fuck?” Bray exclaims incredulously, rubbing the back of his long brown hair which is tied back at the moment. I nod in agreement—what the fuck? Since when did we have a stepsister? To be fair, we haven’t seen Dad, but you would

have thought he would have dropped us a text or a quick message. Oh, by the way, you have a hot as hell new sister and she's living right next door to your room?

It's the kind of warning you need so you don't storm in ready to kick the ass of whoever has broken in only to find your wet dream standing in front of you, smirking like she's in on the secret as she watches us come to terms with it.

"Wow, eloquent." She grins as she takes another draw of her cigarette. "Stepsister." She points at herself, then at us. "Stepbrothers." She says it slowly, and I can't help but grin.

"Yes, I know how it works," Bray drawls. He turns to Cyrus, the big bastard is still staring at the blonde in anger. "Did you know about this?"

"If I did, you would too," he snaps, swiping a giant hand down his face. His beard is getting wild, and his eyebrows are slanted down in fury, giving his dark eyes a menacing look. The ladies love him as much as they fear him. He's a mean motherfucker, a giant and a beast. There is always anger in his gaze, one I have tried to paint since we were children. There is something so captivating about the utter rage always running through his veins.

"When did Dad get married?" I ask and look at the girl.

"Oh, you're talking to me now instead of stroking each other's cocks?" she teases. "Not married yet. Soon, though, if my mother has anything to do with it, the bitch." We all blink at that, sharing a confused look. She blows another ring and leans casually into her bed, uncaring that she's half naked. "Didn't I see you guys at the club?"

"Sure did." Bray smirks. "And we saw all of you." He runs his eyes down her body, turning on the charm like he usually does with anything with a vagina, making me roll my eyes. In response, she simply raises her eyebrow as if unimpressed, and he looks at me in shock.

"So you live here?" I ask, trying to be polite.

"No, I thought I would just move my stuff in for fun," she deadpans and then winks at me. "Yes, I live here, genius, now

can I put on pants, or do you want to watch me dress? I don't charge as much for that as I do for getting undressed."

Cyrus snorts and storms away without a word. She watches him go and then looks back at us.

"Wow, he's such a talker. Does he ever shut up?"

"Usually when he's beating the shit out of someone or pounding into a pussy." Bray shrugs.

"And you know that how?" She laughs. "Do you tag team cunts?"

"Sometimes," he teases. "Why? Want to sign up?"

She purposely runs her eyes over him, and he puffs up under her gaze. "Nah, I'm okay," she offers, and it's obvious she's astonished him again. He isn't used to girls turning him down or not falling at his feet. She looks at me then and grins. "You're more my type—rocker, artist, and all deep souled."

I can't help but grin wider at that, even as she grabs some shorts and starts to get dressed, unbothered that we're still watching. She has an intricate tattoo on her thigh and side, and I ache to trace the waterfall of colour there with my tongue. Shit, I blink and shake my head to dislodge my thoughts. No. I can't think about her like that, not if what she said is true...

Stepsister. Who would have ever thought?



Chapter Eight

Bray

I am so fucked, and not in a good way.

Our new stepsister is all mouth-watering curves and attitude. She has a pert fucking ass I want to dive into, thick thighs I want to part, huge tits I want to come on—and she’s off limits. My cock is hard and confused as to why we aren’t already balls deep in her cunt.

But that mouth... shit, her smart mouth has something else moving through me—interest. That’s not something I reserve for the women I fuck. Females are for one purpose and one purpose only, to sate my lust. My brothers are all I need, yet here is our new sister, right before us.

Asher drags me away and shuts the door so she can get dressed, and we head back to Cyrus who is prowling around the living room with his fists clenched and eyes wild. When he spots us, he scowls, his chest heaving as he darts a look at the corridor. “She needs to go.”

“We can’t kill her,” I reply and look back at the door. “Plus, she’s hot as hell.”

“You can’t fuck her, idiot,” Asher inserts as he rolls his eyes, leaning against the wall as we both watch our older brother gear up to explode.

Cyrus turns and glares at us both. “She’s pussy, that’s it. There are plenty of them out there waiting for us to return to town. They all want to snag a Crew brother. Stop acting like goddamn virgins or boyfriends.” He steps closer to us and narrows his eyes. “We’ll get rid of her one way or the other.”

Slumping on the sofa, I turn on a movie. “Yeah, well, for now she’s clearly here to stay. Maybe get over her.” I grin at them. “Or under her.”

Asher throws a pencil at my head, but I catch it and put it behind my ear as Cyrus drops down next to me, rubbing his head. He’s clearly annoyed. He hates when women get close, and her being here does make it hard for our... business, but there isn’t much we can do. Plus, she’s something perfect to look at. Shit, I nutted so hard in that girl the other night after watching our new stepsister dance. She moved like a goddamn whore on a pole, all slick moves and teasing ass shaking with those perfect tits and ass. Fuck... I have to rearrange myself even now from just thinking about it as Asher eventually joins us on the sofa.

About twenty minutes later—twenty minutes of me glancing at the corridor, imagining those thighs clamped around my head as I eat her cunt—she appears. She looks at the TV and then back to us.

“Mind if I join you?” she inquires, clearly trying to be nice. But this girl is anything but nice. It’s in her eyes, in her attitude. Not to mention we saw her beat the fuck out of a table full of guys and get arrested. No, our new stepsister is a badass cock tease.

Leaning back with my arm stretched over the sofa and my legs kicked out, I run my eyes down her again. At least she has shorts on now. I don’t know if I prefer her with or without them on.

“Yes,” Cy snarls, glaring, even as Asher says, “No.”

Oh, this should be fun. I lean back and wait for the fists to start flying. I enjoy fighting just as much as fucking; it's in my blood, after all.

Her eyebrows rise, and Cyrus gets to his feet, jerking his head at us both. "Let's go. We can hit up the party early."

She cocks her hip out and blocks Cyrus's path. She barely even reaches his chest and has to crane her neck back, but she doesn't seem intimidated even as he glares down at her, double her height and triple her weight. He vibrates with the need to either fuck, fight, or kill—or all three, knowing him. Asher shoots me a look, and I nod at him, agreeing, ready to hold him back if he goes for her. She really shouldn't poke the bear, but our new little stepsister is unrepentant as she smirks at him.

"Are you an asshole all the time, or only to me because you watched me dance and then came back here and wanked off to me?" She tilts her head, running her eyes across him, and his hands fist at his sides, making Asher and me step closer, ready to restrain him. "Annoyed with your own desire, *stepbrother*?" she taunts and saunters nearer, dragging a finger down his chest. "Better get over it, I'm here to stay... for now." She turns and flicks her hair over her shoulder, and you can goddam bet all of our eyes are locked on her ass, even Cyrus's. She looks back, not even blinking when she catches us like she knew we would be staring.

Oh yes, our little roommate knows how good-looking she is, and she isn't afraid to use it, just like her fists and body.

"I'm dancing tomorrow night." She winks. "Just in case you want to come and gawk at me again. This time you can pay," she jokes, referencing us staring at her in her room, and I bark out a laugh, unable to help it.

She has bigger balls than us.

She disappears into her room, leaving all three of us gaping after her.

"Shit, I think I'm in love," Asher remarks, and Cyrus reaches out and, without even looking, punches him. Asher

flies into the wall, and I watch him push away and press a finger to his bleeding lip with a laugh.

“Shut the fuck up. I need to get drunk and find some wet pussy. Now,” he snarls and stomps away, leaving Asher and me wearing smirks.

Oh, tonight’s party should be fun. He’s definitely going to try and kill someone, and I’m going to get drunk as hell and fuck some random bitch, imagining it’s my hot, new little roommate. Cyrus might be right, her being here is a bad idea. I only have so much restraint when it comes to cunt, and she’s the finest one I have ever seen, with a mouth, mind, and threats to back it up.

Did the Crew brothers just meet their match?



Chapter Nine

Blair

This is not a fucking *house* party, this is a bloody *mansion* party. I'm used to cheap beer, drugs, and tatted up gang members. This? Fucking hell. I've been to a few of the house parties over the summer, but none compare to this. The house is a fucking palace, with cars crowding the huge driveway that leads into a private estate. They have those large double doors with golden knockers, which are pushed open, displaying chandeliers and marble entryways. The windows outside sparkle even at night, with four huge columns surrounding them. It screams money and opulence.

But as soon as we head inside, I feel the shift from opulence and luxury to the grime and filth of teenage rebellion, instantly kicking my lips up into a grin.

After the stepbrothers from hell—I mean, seriously? Three ridiculous hotties. How is that fair? Three dicks I can't touch, and I wanted every single one. The arty one, Asher, I think, with the blond shaved head. Bray, with the tied back brown hair, muscles to die for, flirty smirk, and nose and lip piercings. Shit... and then Cyrus, the grumpy giant, whom I wanted to climb like a tree.

After they left, I got ready.

To make myself feel better, I changed my outfit to feel sexy as hell. I'm wearing a short, skintight, velvet mini dress with spaghetti straps, the deep red material highlighting my every curve, teamed with black heeled boots and my leather jacket. I look hot as fuck. I put in my earrings, applied a deep red lip and dark eyes, and curled my hair until it flowed around my face. I look good and I know it.

Faye looks incredible too. Standing at my side in her sailor dress and heels, she flashes me a look. "Welcome to the rich bitches of Leggott."

The music pounds throughout the house from speakers placed everywhere. There's even a DJ in the living room, though it's more like a fucking ballroom. People are already in the pool, and some are playing strip poker. There's beer pong and an unlimited bar over in the study—the frat jocks are congregated there. The dance floor is set up in the living room and already crowded. I see some familiar faces from previous parties, but there are many I don't recognise. There are sofas and chairs placed around the room, filled with couples and loners.

The floor is already filled with discarded cups, and there's vomit in one corner and empty syringes and baggies in the four bathrooms that I've been in. The bedrooms are filled as well, if the noises are anything to go by when Faye and I use the toilet up there to avoid the queue downstairs.

I grab another drink and we circle, deciding what we want to do first as I pound back the booze. I let it burn down my throat and strip away that last shred of reticence. Tonight, I'm getting fucked up. Faye is too, and she's already on her third drink, so I head to the bar and pour four shots. Being cheered on by some of the guys, I slam them back quickly, wiping my mouth as I wink at them. I avoid their hands and catcalls as I leave and find Faye on the dance floor, her arms already around a random boy as she grinds against him. I smirk, proud of her, and head to the beer pong tables instead. I want to get fucking wasted.

I sip another drink as I watch a game finish up, and then I take one side as a grinning rugby player takes the other. He's familiar, we've met at parties before. I've never fucked him though, but those thick thighs do have me intrigued. He has short brown hair, and a square face with a nose broken one too many times, but he's attractive enough. "Ready for me to drink you under the table, hottie?" he yells as he sets up his cups.

Laughing, I set up my own. "Babe, please, you'll be on the floor before I am." I wink and grab the ball, taking my first shot. I sink it into a cup before I blow him a kiss. He laughs, and those gathered around us cheer us on.

He sinks his as well, and I down my drink before bouncing it back. He misses his next shot, and I sink two in a row. It goes back and forth until we are neck and neck. Our banter has created quite the crowd around us, and as I line up my last shot, he leans closer. "When I win, you have to strip."

"Really? And if I win, does that mean you have to?" I tease.

"Deal." He grins, thinking he has me beat, but I sink that shot as well, and his mouth drops open as his friends roar with laughter. He downs the cup and looks at me with a smile. "You want me naked? Fine by me."

He rips off his shirt, exposing his impressive chest as his friends cheer him on. Girls laugh and reach out and grab his muscles as he flexes. I sip my drink with an unimpressed smirk. He keeps his eyes on me as he drops his trousers, and then he turns and races through the open back doors and cannonballs into the pool. Laughing, I turn away as others join in.

I manoeuvre through the crowd with a good buzz in my system, feeling happy and carefree as I slip onto the dance floor. Faye spots me and abandons the guy she's with, but he just turns and starts dancing with another girl as Faye's arms wrap around my neck.

"There you are!" she screams in my ear, her breath coated with booze.

“Sorry, I got held back spanking the shorts off a rugby guy. You having fun?” I yell over the music.

She nods as she starts to dance, pulling me with her. Laughing, I grab her hands and twirl her before tugging her closer. We grind and dance together, uncaring about anything other than the beat of the music. I let it fill me and guide my movements, and it’s not long before hands pull at us. I dance with the guy, turning to see another huge rugby player. This one has a cross tattoo under one eye though. I grind with him, our hips moving in sync. I drop my head back, my hair swaying with my movements as I feel his gaze greedily roaming across me. His large hands span my back before they glide down and grip my wiggling ass, holding me closer.

Grinning, I slide my hands to the back of his neck as I rub against him. I shake my ass like I know how, each move controlled by the music until it flows through me. He watches me with hungry eyes, his pupils blown wide by booze, and his hard cock presses against my stomach as we move.

“I want a drink!” Faye yells and tugs at me.

I lean in and brush my lips across his ear. “See you later,” I murmur before kissing his cheek, leaving a lipstick mark behind. With a cocky smirk, I slip from his grabbing hands, turn, and twine my fingers with Faye’s as she stumbles through the crowd. I look back to see his eyes locked on my ass, his mouth tipped up in a grin as he touches his cheek.

Laughing, I move with Faye until we reach the edge of the gyrating bodies, which have increased in the hour or so we have been here.

That’s when I see my new stepbrothers. They are sitting on the sofas like kings, with men and women flocked around them. Each has a girl on their knee and more vying for their attention. It seems they are celebrities around here.

“Oh shit, they’re back,” Faye slurs.

“You know them?” I ask, looking at her with raised eyebrows.

“The Crew brothers? Fuck, hun, everyone knows them. They own this fucking town. They’re dangerous as fuck, but sexy as hell. Every girl wants to date them, and every guy wants to be one of them, but they are super exclusive. It’s only ever the three of them. Shit, they are sexy. I didn’t know they were home.”

“They are my new stepbrothers,” I mutter, and her mouth drops open before she laughs.

“Damn, you get all the hotties,” she whines.

Rolling my eyes, I look back over to see all three of their gazes locked on me as they ignore those around them. A blonde on Cyrus’s lap throws me a glare, and I blow them a kiss and turn away. “They might be hot, but they’re assholes and too much work for some disposable dick. Come on, let’s get a drink.”

She giggles, and we grab a bottle of vodka to share as we head outside where more people have gathered, drinking, swimming, and even fucking on the sun loungers. Music blares through outside speakers, and the lights flash with the beat—the mood is much darker and sensual out here.

Faye and I sit on the edge of a lounge, sharing the bottle as we watch some lads leap off the flat roof and dive into the pool. “Shit, that looks fun,” I comment just as I spot the Crew brothers coming outside.

One of the guys nearby hears me and looks me over. “Ain’t no way you could do it, sweetie,” he remarks, clearly thinking it’s a good way to flirt.

Idiot.

Faye already knows what’s coming. She groans as I grab the bottle and take a swig before standing and passing it to the guy. “Hold that, *sweetie*,” I mock. I turn my back to him as I move inside, quickly heading upstairs and through the window they are using. Climbing onto the roof, I watch two more men jump off. There is another up here, his eyes hazy with alcohol as he stares at me.

“You going to jump, bro?” he asks.

“Sure am.” I wink as I head to the edge, unafraid. I hear Faye cheering me on, and some people turn to watch, wondering what’s happening. All eyes remain on me as the guys start to take bets on whether or not I’ll make it.

“You wanna take a running—” The guy starts to mansplain it, but I hold up my hand.

“I got this, *bro*. Watch and learn.” I move backwards and push off, sprinting to the edge and judging the distance. Adrenaline pumps through me, burning off some of the alcohol. As my feet leave the roof, I throw myself forward and do a front flip before straightening and entering the pool with a dive, hands first. Underwater, I can’t hear the noise, but I kick to the surface, hearing cheers and catcalls as I smirk and slick my hair back. I accept a high five from a few people lingering in the pool before I swim to the edge, grab onto it, and haul myself out of the water. My clothes are soaked and sticking to me, but I ignore it as I walk towards Faye, grab the bottle, and down another drink before winking at the guy.

“You’re up, sweetie,” I tease.

“Shit, you single?” he asks, making me grin wider.

“You wish.” I grab Faye. “Let’s dance.”

I pass the Crew brothers who are sparking up, watching me.

“Nice jump,” Asher offers with a smile. I wink at him before ignoring the other two and head back inside to find the dick I want to ride for the night. Booze surges through my body, loosening me up as we head back to the dance floor. I lose myself in the music again, and Faye and I end up with two guys. Mine happens to be the same guy from earlier—gotta give him credit for persistence.

His head tilts down and his mouth connects with mine. I groan, tangling my tongue with his as his fingers thread into my hair, yanking me closer. The dominance in his touch and the talent of his tongue determines that he’s my pleasure for the night. When he pulls back, his eyes filled with desire, I get

ready to drag him upstairs, but his gaze rises and he looks around before he frowns.

“Hey, isn’t that your friend?” he asks, and when I look over, I swear.

“Shit, wait here,” I growl.

“Need a hand?” he questions with concern.

“Nope, I’ve got this.” I sigh as I storm over to her. She’s being pinned against the wall by a huge guy who’s drunk as hell and clearly trying to feel her up.

I tap his shoulder and he ignores me, his hand dragging along her side. “Hey, asshole,” I yell and grab his shoulder.

He whirls around, glaring down at me. “The fuck you want, bitch? I’m busy,” he snarls.

“Yeah, busy feeling up my friend who clearly doesn’t want you to. So why don’t you fuck off?” I snap.

He slaps my hand away and shoves me back. “I’ll stop when I’ve had my fun with the cock tease—”

I see red. Bringing up my knee, I slam it into his junk. He howls and drops to the ground, cupping himself as spit flies from his lips as he throws threats at me. I grab his hair and lean into his face. “When a girl says no, it means no, asshole. It doesn’t mean maybe, and it doesn’t mean carry on and she will change her mind. It means no. N. O. I’ll say it slowly so I can get it through your tiny brain.” I slam my fist into his face. “N.” I punch him again, feeling my knuckle split and his nose burst. “O. Understand, motherfucker?” I let go and he falls to the side. I reach around and grab Faye, pulling her to me as she shakes and hugs my side.

“You okay?” I ask.

She nods, and I look around at the gathered crowd. “Alright, show’s over,” I call, and the throng starts to break away, apart from the guy I was snogging who comes over and glares down at the guy.

“Let me take out the trash for you.” He grabs him, and with the help of another dude, he throws the idiot out the front

door before coming back. Oh yeah, this guy is getting ridden tonight. “That was hot as hell,” he says to me before looking at Faye. “Are you okay? Want to hang with me and my friends? I promise they won’t touch you.”

Fuck, never mind riding, I’m going to suck his dick if he carries on.

She nods, smiling at him shyly, and he winks at me as he leads us over to the chairs in the dining room where some big guys are hanging out. “Hey, this is—” He looks over at us and winces.

“Faye.” I point at her, and one of the guys gets up and pulls out a seat for her, handing over the cards he was playing with.

“Here ya go, Faye. Beat these fucking guys for me, won’t you?” he says teasingly. The others instantly talk and joke with her, accepting her into the game, and she seems happier and okay as I step closer to the guy.

“Thank you...” I murmur, and he grins.

“Walker,” he offers.

“Walker,” I add. “I’m Blair.”

“Well, Blair, you want to play a hand?” he inquires, looking at the table.

“I can think of better things you can do with your hand,” I purr as I glance at Faye. “You good?”

She nods knowingly. “Go have fun.” She giggles as she turns back to the table, so I grab Walker’s hand and tug him after me.

“Or mouth,” I finish, and his grin grows.

“Shit, lead the way.” I turn, and he almost chases me up the stairs as I search for an empty room. I’m ready to jump this guy. He’s sweet and a great kisser, and I bet he’s good in bed—perfect for tonight.

I finally find an unoccupied bedroom and flick on the lights as Walker kicks the door shut behind him. He reaches

for his shirt, yanks it off, and tosses it to the bed as I jump on it and lie back, admiring his chest.

“Well, are you just going to stand there and stare, or are you going to do something about it?” I taunt, my head tilted back.

“Oh, I’m going to do something about it,” he replies and storms towards me, his hard cock pressing against his jeans, and before I know it, he’s on me.

He has me moaning loudly as I get just what I wanted.



Chapter Ten

Asher

After smoking, we head back inside to do our rounds. Bray is already choosing his girl for the night, and Cyrus watches me as I sell the baggies in my pocket. Neither of us have touched the shit or the drinks just yet. We do stop, however, when I spot Blair again. She's dancing with the guy from earlier. Walker, I think his name is. A smile curves her rosy lips, and his hands are on her shaking ass as they move together. There's barely any room between them before they start to kiss. I frown, observing them, wondering if she kisses as good as she dances. They break apart, and we watch, unable to look away as she scowls and glances over. A second later, she's heading for a huge guy.

I get ready to help, but Cyrus holds me back. "She isn't our problem. If she wants to pick a fight, then let her," he snarls.

I nod but keep glancing over. My mouth drops open as she kicks his ass before heading into another room with the guy and her friend. Shit. Not only did she pick a fight, she won it. I can't help but smile as I pass out more and take the money. Wandering through the party, I spot Bray going upstairs with a

girl thrown over his shoulder. He better make up for it later by taking over so I can get drunk.

About two minutes later, I watch Blair drag the same guy she kissed upstairs, and jealousy roars through me. She's off limits, I know that, but that doesn't mean I don't wish she were pulling me upstairs. If her dancing is any indication, she would be incredible in bed, all slow, slick moves and unashamed desire.

The way she would move...

"Concentrate," Cyrus barks, and I drag my gaze away from the staircase they disappeared up. "Business first, then we can have fun," he reminds me, even though he's sober tonight to watch our backs. He'll probably get into a fight or find someone to suck his dick to make it worthwhile.

I feel sorry for both of the people he'll pick. But he's right. I get back to work until we don't have much left to sell, and then I relax with him on the sofa, ignoring those around us vying for our attention. They're so boring and cliché, thinking if they impress us then they can get in on what we do and who we are. You can't buy your way into being a Crew, you are born into it. The women think flashing their tits and riding our dicks will get them protection, fame, and a place in our group, but they are wrong too. They are nothing but something we use.

All of them are idiots.

My fingers tap on my leg, aching to grab a pencil and some paper to draw the way Blair's lips tipped up slightly higher on the right side when she stared down at that man, and the high crest of her incredible tits and the droplets of water racing down them as she pulled herself from the pool after showing all those guys up.

Fuck.

Cyrus slaps me on the back of the head, bringing me out of my own thoughts. "Redhead cunt, go fuck that shit out of your head," he demands. I roll my eyes and follow his gaze to a cute redhead trying to get my attention, her ample tits falling

from her tiny top. Her ass cheeks are on display in her shorts, and her eyes are slightly glazed from booze, drugs, or both. But even as my dick twitches, she does nothing for me. She's beautiful—truly, with incredible colours in her hair and adorable freckles she has tried to hide behind makeup—but she doesn't have that spark... that life that I've become obsessed with after seeing Blair.

But I let her flirt and tease me, pretending to drink to keep Cyrus happy, knowing he worries about me. About an hour later, Bray comes downstairs, buttoning up his jeans. There's no girl at his side, but he has a smug, satisfied smirk on his face as he heads over to us and downs my beer. "Shit, that was some good pussy." He chuckles. "And I saw our *sister*" —he sneers the word— "coming out of the room opposite me. Seems she was getting some too."

Just then we hear the blare of sirens drawing closer. It's loud, even over the music and screams.

"Fuck," Cyrus snarls. "Let's bounce, we can't be caught again."

We quickly gather our shit and leave people staring at us in confusion as we move through the party with purpose. I wonder for a moment if I should warn Blair, but Cyrus is right.

She isn't family, and family comes first.

Outside is total chaos. People are trying to leave the party so they don't get a warning, or worse, arrested. Cyrus barrels through them, clearing a path to the side gate we found earlier. It leads through the trees to the layby on the road we parked our bikes at.

We just cross the gate when we hear footsteps behind us. I look back to see Blair there, pulling her drunk friend after her. She doesn't even notice us until she basically runs into my back.

"Well, hello again." I grin as I look down at her, my heart skipping a beat as I gaze into those flecked, glazed eyes.

"Oh great, my brother's here to save the day," she taunts, and then looks back as the music cuts off. "Shit, teasing later,

moving now.”

She grabs my hand and yanks me along also, and I can't help but jolt at the sudden warmth I feel from her touch, but she lets go all too soon. I curl my fingers into my palm to retain her heat as we rush through the trees—and right into the waiting cop car at the side of the road.



Chapter Eleven

Cyrus

Fuck.

The cop hasn't noticed us yet. He's parked at the front end of the layby, his windows down as he talks on his radio. Our bikes are parked to the right, just behind the cars separating us from him, but it's not enough to conceal us. We can't afford to be arrested again, not with drugs on us.

"Cyrus," Bray hisses.

"I know, I see him," I mutter. "We are going to have to sneak past."

"I've got four bags on me still." He sighs. "That's possession with intent to sell."

Fuck, he's right.

"What are you so worried about?" Blair snorts. "Just get on the bikes and go past him."

"They know our bikes, know to stop us," I snarl, glaring at her and her friend. Why the fuck is she even here? Shouldn't she be back at the party fucking that random idiot? Or dancing on all those snot-nosed boys and jumping off roofs? Okay, so that was pretty fucking impressive, but still. This cunt comes

with a lot of complications, and just because she's living under my roof doesn't mean we are responsible for her.

"Oh fuck it, fine." She sighs. "Make sure you get Faye away." She points in my face. "I mean it, asshole, you owe me."

I frown, wondering what the fuck she's going on about when she suddenly runs up to the car and lifts her top, pressing her breasts to the window.

Oh shit.

Bray and Asher rush to the bikes, and I follow after them, throwing my leg over as I start the engine. Faye gets on behind Bray and holds on as they gun it past the car just as the cop gets out. He looks familiar. Is he the one who almost arrested her at the diner? She gives me a pointed look over his shoulder, and he moves to follow her gaze, so she yanks her top higher. I don't hear what he says, but he looks confused about what to do as she turns him so his back is to us. He advances on her, his muscles bunching.

I might not like the bitch, but even I know that cop is bad news for her.

Revving the bike, I pull behind the cop car and narrow my eyes on her. "Get on," I mouth and jerk my head. I should leave her here, but she helped us, so I decide to be nice for once.

But it gives me the perfect view of her bare tits. Her full, high tits. One of her nipples has a sparkling bar through it, and my cock instantly hardens as I stare, just as entranced as the cop who's spouting shit to her.

"You fucking little hussy, I knew you would be here," he rants. She yanks her shirt down, and with a wink at him, she runs past, leaping onto my bike and tapping my shoulder to urge me to go.

"Go!" she shouts, and then she turns and gives the cop her middle finger as he swears and rushes to his car.

I rev and speed away, winding in and out of traffic until I catch up with my brothers. Her arms are wrapped around me,

holding on as she leans into me as we drive. I overtake Bray and Asher, and when we are far enough away, I pull to the side and idle the bike. “Where am I going?” I growl.

She reels off an address as I yank on my helmet and then pull back into traffic, letting them follow me.

She holds on the entire way through the city until we pull up outside a two-story house on the poorer side of the city. I idle at the curb as the others drive up behind me. She swings off and stops before me.

“This doesn’t mean we like you,” I snarl as I flip up my helmet. “Crew doesn’t owe anyone, understand?”

Stepping closer, she raps her knuckles on my helmet. “Whatever you say, stepbrother. Don’t be too nice about me saving your ass.”

“Feel free to do anything to my ass anytime.” Bray grins, helping Faye off the bike.

“Later, losers. Try not to have too many dreams about me.” She winks at me. “Especially my breasts since you were staring hard enough to memorise them.” She turns, arm in arm with her friend, she walks away as I gnash my teeth.

“I fucking hate her,” I snap.

“She did save us,” Asher remarks as he starts the engine. “Come on, I’m hungry.”

“Wait, you saw her tits? What were they like? I bet they were a good handful, right?” Bray says, but I ignore him as Asher sighs and starts an argument on why he shouldn’t objectify women.

“What? I can’t say tits? What about fun bags? Handfuls of joy?” Bray laughs as my eyes stay locked on her retreating back... and ass.

I watch her go into the house, and I hate that she’s right. I hate that I can still see her breasts so clearly—worse, I liked them, and my cock is rock hard. I should call Bianca, meet her somewhere and slacken my lust, but for some reason I don’t.

I head home with my brothers, the vision of my stepsister's breasts burned into my brain.

Blair

I stay over at Faye's. I sleep in a shirt I borrowed. She snores next to me, acting as the little spoon, while I lie awake in her double bed, staring at her wall as the lights of passing cars illuminate it. Tonight was wild, one of the best parties I've been to in a while... and the Crew brothers.

Shit, I flashed a cop to save their asses and Cyrus was still an asshole. Why was it weirdly appealing? My first reaction was to help them, to prove I'm not another passing pussy to them. I could have gotten arrested, which doesn't usually bother me. They are off limits, though I'm guessing that's why this is bugging me. I've never been told I can't have something before; I'm not the type to take no for an answer.

This city is filled with men, I have an amazing job, an incredible best friend... yet I'm always waiting for the other shoe to drop, like my mother fucking shit up and making us leave again. I keep walls around me, even with Faye. She's gotten closer than anyone has in a long time.

Yet even she doesn't know about my past, about all the shit that went down. I can't tell her, not ever. No one can know, especially those new pesky asshole stepbrothers of mine. I'll do my time, make my money, and then make my own future.

No dicks are going to stop that.

Closing my eyes, I force myself to relax, to try and sleep even though I always struggle. My mind never switches off, the memories crowding my head. The darkness closes in on me, and before I know it, I've faded into a memory.

A nightmare.

Screams fill the air, and the smell of blood surrounds me, filling my mouth until I choke on it. Tears stream down my

cheeks, cutting a path through the blood splatter on my pale face as I stare at them.

Oh God, no, please no.

I tug at my hands, trying to get free, to stop this from happening. But like a movie, I'm forced to watch him die all over again. His blue eyes, filled with terror, lock on me right before his throat is slit, his blood spurting across my face as I yell. My name on his lips as he dies.

“Lucas!” I shout, and I wake screaming.

Faye is shaking me, trying to rouse me. My scream dies on my lips, my body is trembling and cold, and I taste blood in my mouth as I sit bolt upright.

“Blair, what the hell?” She sits back, her eyes wide and confused.

I rub at my sweating face before wrapping my arms around my quivering body. Shit, shit, shit, this is why I don't stay anywhere. Why did I let myself fall asleep?

“Blair... are you okay?” she whispers, staring at me in the early morning light.

I nod, trying to push back the memories and reassure her. “I had a dream. You tried to get a dick—”

She smiles but leans over and grabs my hand. “Fine, don't tell me, but don't lie to me either.”

I falter at that, and she carries on. “As long as you're okay, go shower and I'll make us some breakfast.” She squeezes my hand and then gets up as I stare at her wordlessly. She called me on my shit, and she never does that. She stills at the door with her hand on the knob, her shoulders hunching slightly.

“I'm here for you, Blair. I hope you'll take me up on that one day.” She smiles over her shoulder at me. “You saved me. You came into my life like a whirlwind. I worked, slept, and came home to an empty, messy house, and you saved me from that. You brought joy back into my life, and I would trust you with anything. I hope you feel the same.” She leaves, and I gape at the door in shock.

How can you feel so close to someone in such a short time? She's like a sister to me, yet she's wrong. I didn't save her. I damned her, and she can never know why.

She would walk away, and I crave her friendship.

I do trust her, more than I have ever trusted anyone. But she will never know why I wake up screaming, why I never do relationships... why I can never love.

Not again.

Never.



Chapter Twelve

Blair

After eating and showering at Faye's, I left her. I felt vulnerable and raw and needed some time to rebuild. She didn't ask what was wrong, but she hugged me before I left and promised to speak to me later, probably seeing the confusion in my eyes and knowing I would pull away if she pressed.

She's such a kind, loving soul.

She's so much better than me and what I deserve.

When I get back to the house, all the guys' bedroom doors are closed. I sneak past them and into my own room. I'm just changing my panties, my fingers caught at my hip, when the door opens without a knock. My eyebrow rises as Bray waltzes in, running his eyes across me and whistling.

"You look hot." He winks before throwing himself on my bed, crossing his arms beneath his head. His hair is untied today, falling across his face and my pillow like some kind of fucking hair advert, while his bright eyes watch me with unconcealed lust. His chest is bare and built, and he's in nothing but low rising grey joggers which almost have me groaning.

Brother, remember?

Straightening my thong, I grab my cotton pajama shorts, uncaring about him looking. I bend over in front of him and pull them up. I hear a groan, and when I settle them on my hips, it's my turn to wink at him. His fist is caught in his mouth, and his eyes roam across me. Turning away, I pull my shirt off, grab a short-sleeved white crop top, and slip it on before undoing my bra and tossing it away. My nipples instantly pebble beneath the material, but who cares?

“Any reason you are in my room?” I ask while I'm dressing.

“I just came for the view, it's better than mine,” he tells me unashamedly, grinning at me.

I prop my hands on my hips as I look over at him. “Do these corny lines ever work?” I ask curiously.

He sits up slowly, his abs rolling, as a slow smirk crawls across his dangerously sexy lips. “I don't know, you tell me... stepsister.”

“No,” I reply, leaning against the back of the bed, holding myself up until our faces almost touch. “Brother,” I whisper, pulling away with a grin, leaving him groaning as I exit the bedroom. A second later, I hear him rushing after me like a puppy.

I grab a beer from the fridge and pop the top, taking a sip as I watch Asher, who is now in the living room. There's a bike before him and he has headphones in, his expression locked in concentration. His eyes blaze with passion, and his mouth is slightly parted as his blond hair glows brightly in the sun. He holds a paintbrush in his hand, and there are some streaks on his arms and shirt. He's painting the bike. I move closer to see, and Bray leans his elbow onto my shoulder, whispering in my ear.

“When he gets in the zone, you have no chance of getting his attention. Trust me, all the ladies dig the art thing, but he never notices.”

Pushing his elbow away, I throw him a look over my shoulder. “Yeah? At least the ladies like him.”

He stumbles back with his hand on his chest and fake pain etched on his face. “Oh, baby, why you gotta do me like that?”

I grin, and Asher’s voice has me looking back. “What? What’s going on?” He watches us in confusion. “How long have you guys been standing there?”

Dear God, that’s adorable.

“Not long.” I smile. “What are you painting?” I ask, moving closer. I place my hand on his shoulder as I look at his work. He jolts under my touch, but he doesn’t pull away.

“It’s Cyrus, he wanted more skulls.” He grins up at me. “What do you think?”

“Wait, you never ask me that,” Bray calls, fake insulted.

“I like it,” I answer seriously, running my eyes over the outline. It’s going to be amazing and realistic as hell with all those strong lines. “You’re really talented.”

“Not as much as you, sister, with that ass,” Bray remarks, and we ignore him again.

“Thanks, Blair.” He beams.

I wink and pull away just as Cyrus storms into the room, his face thunderous. He glares when he sees me.

“The bike can wait, we are leaving.” He doesn’t even greet me, the ass.

“Hi, Cyrus, nice to see your grumpy ass too,” I singsong with a wave of my beer.

Asher sighs but gets up, wiping his hands as Bray jumps to his feet like a puppy. “Yes! Pussy, drugs, or ass beating?” he asks. Cyrus throws him a glare, jerking his head at me. “Oops. Forget you heard that, baby.”

“I don’t give a shit what you get up to.” I snort and down the beer just as we hear footsteps. Meredith appears, looking around in disgust like it’s her first time up here.

“Ah, Blair, there you are,” she snaps and clicks her fingers at me like I’m some kind of fucking lap dog or servant. To her I probably am. She ignores the boys completely, as if she doesn’t acknowledge them then they aren’t real.

Typical Meredith.

I feel Bray moving around me and staring at my ass, but I ignore him. I do, however, catch Asher checking me out too, and I stand taller. The look in Meredith’s eyes is mean, and I know whatever she’s going to say is bad. I wait for the blow, but when it comes, I don’t flinch.

“I should have known you would be with men,” she sneers.

“Hello, Mother Dearest, crawled from the bowels of hell—I mean digging for gold to come and see me, how lovely.” I cheers her with the bottle.

“Enough,” she scoffs, throwing her hair over her shoulder. “I heard from a friend you have been... stripping. That will stop right this second. I have a reputation to uphold, and we both know you can’t afford to attract the wrong kind of attention again.” I jolt at that as anger flows through me, but I don’t reply. “Good. Glad we understand each other.”

Stepping closer, ignoring the guys, I let my voice cover the silence. “Who told you I was dancing?” I demand.

She runs her eyes across me. “A nice police officer. He was worried about you, said you were getting into trouble and wanted to check in.”

“Motherfucker,” I hiss. “I’m going to kill that dick sucker.” Sighing, I walk to the kitchen and grab another beer, and then on my way past, I get into her face. “It’s dancing, not stripping, but even if I wanted to become a sex worker or stripper or just a whore and fuck this entire city, I would still be a better person than you, and nothing you say will stop me.”

“This is my house. My rules!” she yells.

“Not your house, bitch,” I snarl. “You might have sucked dick to get here, but we both know he’ll throw you out soon

enough, and I won't be around for you to blame it on this time. Now how about you go back to sitting around and looking pretty and leave me to earn my money in peace."

I turn to leave and her hand darts out, gripping my arm in a hold hard enough to bruise. I look down at it and then back at her face. The guys are staring between us, and embarrassment burns through me, even though I should be used to this by now.

She likes to make a scene, and I know she did it on purpose. She came up here to put me in my place, to make me seem like a horrible child that she was concerned about in case they tell their father.

The cunt.

"Remember your place. You are lucky I didn't leave you on the streets like trash after what you put me and those people's parents through." She narrows her eyes then, her voice lashing me. "You've ruined enough lives, you won't ruin any more." She pushes me away and sashays down the stairs.

I glare after her, my heart hammering. I'm so angry I could kill her. Downing the beer, I storm away, ignoring their curious gazes. I hear their whispers as I reach my room. I stand with my back to the door, breathing heavily, as memories crowd my head. Gripping it, I slide down the door and shove them away. I won't allow those horrors to affect me. I can't, or I'll crumble. That's why I have walls, after all.

Fuck them.

Fuck her.

Fuck this stupid city.

But most of all, fuck the man who ruined my life.



Chapter Thirteen

Cyrus

I watch Blair leave, her shoulders held back as anger flashes in her eyes. For some reason, I'm angry on her behalf. I might not get along with her or want her here, but that doesn't mean she should be spoken to like a piece of shit by her own mother.

What's with their relationship? What did she mean when she said *ruined enough*?

It's none of our business, but I glare over at Meredith's retreating back. I don't like the cunt anyway; it's clear she's a gold digger like Blair says. Even the way she had flipped her hair over her shoulder and smiled at us cruelly before leaving annoyed me. I'll remind her why she's not welcome up here. This is our house, not hers.

She's just a passing cunt for our lonely, gullible father who is obsessed with falling in love—it's where Asher gets it from. Me? Not so fucking much. I know love doesn't exist, and relationships are nothing but toxic bullshit. I spent too many years watching my own mother drink herself to death and viewing their fights and what his unrealistic standards of her

did to him. I don't blame him. No, she was an evil bitch, but he was too blind to see it.

I never will be.

Bray understands. He appreciates women for the passing fancy they are, and whereas I am cruel to them so they know what I think, he's the opposite. He breaks their hearts and leaves with a smile—I think my way is nicer.

“It's not our business,” I snap at them when I see Asher preparing to get involved. His hero complex means he wants to save everyone. Bray frowns, his usually happy eyes darkening. He's undoubtedly reliving our own mother's abuse.

I grab his head and force him to look at me to get rid of those demons. I might be the biggest and meanest Crew, but my brothers are more like me than most think. Bray might smile and act cheeky, but under it all is a hurt little boy who's now grown into a scarred, angry man. He's just slower to anger, but when he does... not even I would start with him.

Asher, well, let's just say he's an artist with a knife as well as a paintbrush.

“Let's go. Those uptown fuckers have been on our turf again. I just got a tip off.”

Bray's lips curve in a dark, dangerous grin. “Are we going to remind them why they shouldn't?” he purrs.

I smirk too, already tasting the imminent violence as my cock hardens from the thought. “Too fucking right we are. Bring your knuckles.” I let go and grab my jacket. “Leave them to their business, it has nothing to do with us. Like she said, they will be gone soon. She's nothing but a temporary complication, and she won't get in the way of our life.”

We take our bikes, knowing we'll need a quick getaway. We pull up to the back of the dive bar where the fights are, then we storm through the grounds, ignoring the calls and greetings. This is business, not pleasure. I even ignore Leigh,

who's vying for my attention when we step inside. She can be my punching bag later, taking all my anger as I fuck her—it's the only thing she is good for. Hell, I might even gag her so she can't run that annoying mouth about makeup, who kissed who, and bullshit gossip again.

The sound of fists hitting flesh is loud as the crowd cheers the fighters on. It stinks of cheap beer, hash, and sweaty bodies as we search the throng. Our height gives us an advantage, so I find them easily enough. The four skinny bastards, in their low-slung jeans, wife beaters, and beanies are hanging out in the corner. They wear cocky smirks and have girls on their knees, thinking they are safe.

They are wrong.

This is our city, not theirs.

It's time to remind them of that.

The crowd parts for us, and even the fight stops. Everyone knows what's going to happen as we stride up before them. The one in the middle notices us first, and he pales but continues to smirk, his eyes gleaming with fear even as he pretends to be tough. The others stand and flash their guns as I raise my eyebrows.

"It seems you have forgotten our agreement," I snarl.

"What's that, rich boy?" he questions as he laughs, stroking the cunt's leg on his lap.

"You don't cross over to our side, and we don't kill you." I grin at him as I crack my knuckles and lift my shirt, flashing my own gun.

He loses the smile and stands, pushing the bitch to the floor as he faces off with me. "Quit playing gangsters, rich boys, it's going to get you killed."

"The only one dying here will be you." I jerk my head. "Let's go." With that, I turn, showing them my back as I head through the crowd. It's silent, and then squeals and cheers go up as the crowd follows us outside. I rip off my jacket, and with a wink, I toss it to Leigh to hold. She acts like I've given her a fucking ring, when in reality, I just don't want it dirty,

but it keeps her happy and her pussy easy, so I let it be... for now.

Asher pulls his shirt off, showing his hard-won muscles, and palms his knife in his hand as Bray cheers with the crowd, donning his brass knuckles as he cracks his neck and looks to the four men stepping up. They wouldn't dare use their guns with this many people, and we can't either. Not even our money could wipe away a murder charge caught on camera. We don't need them though.

We don't posture or wait, instead I charge them first. Everyone thinks we got our name and reputation from our daddy's money, and they always underestimate us until it's too late. We show them that now; we show them why we are the fucking kings of this city. The pussy, money, drugs, and streets are ours.

I knock him out in one punch, and he goes down hard. I laugh as I step back. The next throws himself at me, but I block his flurry of punches. The blade he pulls slices across my arm, and I hiss, narrowing my eyes on him. He knows he's fucked up. I grab his head and smash mine into his. When he stumbles back, I slam my fist into his face again and again, driving him to his knees and then to his back where I slam my boot into his face and ribs. I hear an audible crack as he screams, and when I smash my boot into his face, crunching his nose, blood spurts over the grass and he passes out.

I ache to carry on, my muscles burning with the effort of refraining. My anger blazes like a fire inside me, taunting me, telling me to kill him, to keep going until he's a bloodied, unmoving pulp. I restrain myself though.

I haven't even broken a sweat as I look over at Asher. He has his knife against the man he has on the ground, and he's whispering something to him that has the man nearly pissing his pants.

Oh wait, there we go.

Bray is playing with his, riling up the crowd. "Stop playing and finish it," I demand, knowing the cops will be here soon.

He sighs, but in one smooth move, he spins and kicks, smashing his boot into the fucker's face. The man drops to the ground, where Bray grabs his head and slams it against the concrete. When he stops moving, Bray stands and winks at the girls screaming in the crowd, pulling down his rough bun and running his fingers through his hair. Rolling my eyes, I head over to get my jacket.

“Want some company?” Leigh purrs, blinking big, fake lashes and pursing her injected, plump lips at me as she tries to discreetly pull down her top.

I rip my jacket from her and then frown, twisting my arm to see the blood. It doesn't need stitches, but I don't want it on the leather. Looking up at Leigh, I run my eyes across her figure, and my cock doesn't even twitch, but hell, she might be a good distraction from our new sister.

“Shirt,” I demand. She frowns, and I jerk my chin at her, gesturing for her to remove it. She swallows nervously, not quite as cocky as she makes herself out to be, before pulling it over her head. Her pushed up tits nearly spill from her lace bra with the action, and now she stands in nothing but a tiny, skintight, white skirt, her bra, and some fake biker boots. She wears her blonde hair down and curled the way she thinks I like it. Leigh holds her shirt out to me, feigning confidence, not like Blair has to.

“If you wanted to see my tits, baby, all you had to do was ask.”

I ignore her ‘baby’ comment. She knows she isn't mine and never will be.

Ripping the expensive designer shirt, I wrap it around my arm and tie it off. I notice her eyes twitch, which makes me smirk. I love pissing her off and reminding her of her place. She's nothing. There are hundreds of girls like her trying to get in my pants, and as soon as she fucks up, she will be gone, just another broken-hearted rich girl with her spot filled by another exactly like her.

Slipping on my coat, I look her over. “Don't put another one on. Meet me at Randy's tonight,” I demand and then turn

away, ignoring her. My brothers and I bounce, getting on our bikes and driving away just as the cops pull up.

I smirk as I speed up, winding between cars. The speed, the fight, and the promise of a wet pussy later puts me in a good mood for once.



Chapter Fourteen

Blair

I pick up a shift in the afternoon, wanting to be out of the house. I want to dance away my anger and the memories plaguing me—the ones that always come back when I look at my mum or when she reminds me.

Sitting in my car in the drive, I scream, letting it all out as I beat the wheel.

The sound of the monitors in the hospital and the memory of opening my eyes and being told what happened fill my head. I hear sirens and feel blood. I let it all out in an agony-filled scream as tears fall down my face.

When it's over, I smile, pull down the mirror, and fix my face. Then, it's like it never happened. I drive to work and park outside. It's slow when I get inside the actual club. There are only a few people here, but I head to the back to get ready.

Over the next few hours, I lose myself in the music. It doesn't matter if there is one or a hundred people watching. It's not about them, it's about me and the beat transporting me away. For a moment, I'm somewhere else. I'm someone else.

I'm not broken.

I'm not angry.

I'm not alone.

I just am.

I exist from one heartbeat to the next, from one move to the next, and when it's over and I sit in my dressing room, reality comes crashing back down. I know tonight is one of those nights where I need to do something reckless.

I need to be wild. I need the adrenaline.

I need to feel.

I call Faye, and she tells me about a party. I promise to pick her up, and then I dress in some clothes I keep here. Wearing black ripped shorts and a simple, low-cut white tank top, I add some gold jewellery and makeup, and do my hair in curls to make it look like I didn't just roll out of bed, and then I'm on the road.

It's dark, almost ten, when I get Faye. She rushes to my car, holding a bottle of wine and doing a dance. When she slides in, she turns up the music and grins at me. "Let's get drunk, baby!"

Laughing, I yank on the wheel and race through the city, following her directions. She sings and dances in her seat, drinking from the bottle and making me laugh. I roll down the window, my arm hanging out to feel the breeze as we twist and turn down a long highway next to a lake. Just outside the city, I let myself go, pressing the pedal harder and screeching around the corners, making Faye scream in excitement.

When we finally reach the mansion on the hill, there are sports cars parked everywhere as all the rich bastards stream inside. Faye is already tipsy, her eyes sparkling as I get out and tuck my keys into my back pocket and light up. She comes around to my side and loops her arm through mine.

"This is Randy's place. His real name is Raymond Yulsef the third. His father is some rich ass Russian. I'm pretty sure he's into illegal shit, but he's never here, and Randy, well, he throws kickass parties."

I nod and puff before she drags me with her.

Music fills the air, vibrating through the fancy concrete driveway as we head up to the mansion made of glass. When we get inside, there are bodies everywhere. People talk, dance, and laugh. There is even someone hanging from the chandelier. I see what she means, this place is elegant and filled with riches.

We head down some glass steps into what Faye informs me is the party area. There's an indoor pool with people drinking and playing around. Hell, someone is even fucking in the corner. There's an actual bar across the back wall with LED lights and bartenders. The middle is taken up by a dance floor and poles, with cages hanging from the ceiling with half naked girls covered in jewels inside.

But outside? Shit.

The glass doors are thrown open. There's another pool with a fucking water slide going into it. There are two more bars and a stage where a band is currently playing, and the place is packed.

Beyond it is a stunning view of the city, the lights sparkling and the darkened roads calling my name.

“Holy shit,” I murmur as I put out my cig and look around. “How the rich fucking live.”

“Too right.” Faye grins. “Free bar and good music though, so let's get partying!” To the crowd, she yells, “To getting shit-faced!” and others scream with her.

She turns, grinning at me, and I laugh as she pulls me into the mass before the stage. I lose myself in the pounding bass, dancing and jumping. I don't drink, not yet anyway. I don't need it to have a good time.

An hour or so later, the band packs up, and while they are switching to a DJ, I drag Faye to the toilet. She leads me to some outside ones—a fucking block of them. We share a stall, and she falls into the door laughing, making me grin as I wipe and flush before she pulls up her red dress and goes too, nearly falling off the toilet.

“Gonna fuck tonight?” she slurs.

“Maybe?” I shrug, but I’m not actually in the mood. I want something exciting, more than drugs, booze, or boys. I need to feel alive. She nods like she knows what I’m thinking, which wouldn’t be a surprise.

When we are done and have washed our hands, ignoring the dirty stares of the drunk girls doing their makeup, we head inside. We make our way through the crowd, talking to people we know. Well, Faye does... I’m bored.

That’s not something I’m used to. I have everything I need here, but I want more. I need to forget, to feel my heart race. I don’t want this... drunken laughter with people we won’t remember tomorrow, or the touch of a stranger that will make me feel worse after.

That’s when I see them.

They make my heart skip a beat. Asher is sitting on a table, laughing with Bray, and not two moments later, Cyrus comes downstairs. His hair is messy, his face is slightly red, and he’s tightening his belt, making it obvious what he was just doing. He stops by his brothers, who joke with him while he rolls his eyes.

Faye follows my gaze. “Oh God, you have a death wish.”

I grin but don’t pull my eyes away as the same blonde from the party comes trotting down after Cyrus. Her face is flushed, she has freshly fucked hair, and her dress is wrinkled. She’s a mess, with her mascara and lipstick smeared.

I have a slight twinge of envy before I push it down. She’s nothing, he’s nothing. But then their eyes turn to me like they can feel my gaze. Asher smiles and waves, Bray winks, and Cyrus glares at me, hateful and angry.

For some reason, it makes my heart race. I want to prove to him who I am. I want to watch his eyes change and see that smile directed at me, and I don’t know why. I want to shock him, to keep his attention on me. It’s stupid, and I don’t have a fucking sane reason why, apart from the fact that they make me feel... something.

Anything.

They are my entertainment, but he turns away, looking at the girl in his arms. Swallowing, I do what I always do—something crazy, toxic, insane. Faye cheers me on as usual. Strutting towards them, I wink at Bray. “Looking good, brother.”

“You too, sexy. Did you change your mind and decide you want to feel a real man?” he jokes, his eyes alight with booze.

“Bray...” Asher sighs and smiles at me. “Sorry.”

“Maybe.” I grin, and they sit up. “Or maybe I’m just wondering if the rumours are true.”

“What rumours are those?” Cyrus snaps, looking at me now, and a thrill goes down my spine as those dark, dangerous eyes focus on me.

“They say you’re the fastest, most reckless guys in town, but I think I have you beat.”

Cyrus snorts and looks away, even as Bray grins and stands. “Yeah, how about you prove it, baby?”

Prove it? Oh, they are playing with fire.

Cyrus is still looking at the girl, so I do the only thing I can think of to get his attention. I step around the table, grab the girl’s hair, and turn her head. Her eyes widen as I press my lips to hers, tasting him on her before pulling back as she gapes. I see interest bloom in those depths.

Interesting.

I wink at Cyrus as I pull away from his girl. “I’ll be in my car if you think you can race me, brother,” I purr and then walk my ass out of the party. I feel their eyes on me as the others who heard cheer them on, oohing and aahing. They can’t back down. They are supposed to run this town, and I just challenged that.

I called them out, so they have to accept. Faye follows me outside, shaking her head, but she stands with the crowd as I get into my car and turn it on. The lights hit the crowd as I rev

my engine, and two seconds later, there are my new stepbrothers. Cyrus gets on his bike while the others watch.

Smirking, I look over my shoulder and reverse, spinning to face the road, and he pulls up next to me with his helmet in place. He lifts the visor as I drop my window down. “First to the end and back wins.”

“Wins what?” he demands, and his lips tip up in excitement. Mine mirror his as I rev the engine again.

Leaning out, I drag my hand up his thigh. “Whatever you want,” I flirt, and then leaning back in my car, I gun it.

I hear his bike rev as I laugh and he chases me. I speed up, taking the corner almost too fast as I change gears and hit the straight part. I glance in my rear-view mirror and see his bike right on my tail. He moves left, and I block him, but then he circles right, pulling up next to me. I blow him a kiss and then move ahead. His bike revs harder, and he manages to get past me as we turn the corner on the winding road, the lake sparkling next to us. Fuck. I speed up, almost hitting him, but he swerves and blocks me.

It continues like this through the next two turns with me trying to get past him, but he blocks until he has to turn to get back at the roundabout. I change to a lower gear and accelerate, not using the roundabout. No, I’m heading straight for the ramp that leads to the middle of it.

My heart slams and adrenaline surges through me, chasing away the memories. This is it, this is when I feel alive. I speed up and hit the ramp, flying over the other side of the roundabout. For a moment, I’m weightless, lifting from my seat, and then I crash down, spin, and race back around and up the road.

I glance back to see him trying to catch me. I change gears and speed up, almost taking off around the corner as I drift around the banked road. He’s on my tail the whole time, and just as we hit the straight stretch to the house, he manages to get next to me. We see the crowd waiting, and someone has a mic, cheering us on.

I gun it harder, and we pull through the gate at the same time. I slam on my breaks and do a donut, my tires squealing as I drop the clutch and stop, smoke billowing around me as I get out.

I hear the cheers and screams, but I ignore them. All that matters is him and the racing of my heart. I finally have someone who can keep up with me. He lifts the visor, wearing a smirk on his face. "That was a draw."

"Guess we'll have to have a rematch," I murmur, just as the blonde rushes over with Bray and Asher, who smack him on the back. He doesn't take his dark eyes off me, and I see respect glinting back at me from those depths.

"Guess we will," he murmurs.

I look over at Faye and grin. "Let's go, hottie. We've got places to be." I glance at the blonde and wink, licking my lips. "You taste like cum and strawberries." I get back in my car, flicking on my music and revving the engine as Faye slides in, and with them all watching...

I drive away.



Chapter Fifteen

Bray

We watch our new stepsister drive off, all three sets of our eyes locked on her retreating tail lights even as Cyrus's cunt vies for his attention. He might growl at her and say he hates her, but he's intrigued by our new stepsister.

Especially now. I see the flare of interest, of the chase, in his gaze.

She's piqued his interest. She's reckless, she's hot, and she's clearly fucking crazy... just like us. She almost won against Cyrus, and that's a fucking feat in itself. No one comes close to beating him, yet our new little blonde stepsister did. Fuck, why does that make me hard?

Why does it make me want her more?

She's like forbidden fruit. I know I'm not allowed to have her, so I crave her that much more. If Blair was the apple in the fucking garden, I would have eaten her too, ate that cunt all fucking night long. Hell, I probably still will, but for now, I'm enjoying our banter, the chase. I love the effect she has on my usually distant, artistic brother and angry, hateful one.

This is going to be fun.

“She almost got you,” Asher murmurs, and when I look over, he’s grinning.

“No, she didn’t,” Cyrus snaps, turning to glare at us.

“Oh, but she did, brother,” I taunt just as two brunettes converge on me. Wrapping my arms around them, I spank their asses and wink at Cyrus. “And it was fucking beautiful. I’m going to fuck out my desire for our new sister.”

“You’re sick,” Cyrus growls.

I simply laugh as I turn the girls and head back inside. I’m ready to party, fuck, and do some drugs. But I know, even with all that, the only person I’ll be thinking about tonight is the one I can’t have.

My stepsister.

Asher

I shake my head at Bray’s antics, knowing I’ll have to keep an eye on him tonight. He gets like this sometimes and goes too far. Too many girls, too much booze, too many drugs. It makes me worry for him. He lives life in the fast lane, we all do. But Bray? He’s trying to outrun his demons in any way he can.

I worry it will get him killed just like his mother.

Cyrus let her death warp and darken him into the monster they call him, while Bray made sure to protect his broken heart so he never has to feel such pain again. But does he feel anything anymore? Anything other than a passing fancy?

Maybe. Since Blair has come to town, I’ve seen more of the old him. The one from when we were kids, the one who wanted to fight, love, and be happy. I’ve seen the real Bray peeking through, and his focus is wholly on her for once.

Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

I share a look with Cyrus, a knowing one, and he sighs. We know we will spend tonight chasing him around and cleaning

up his mess. But that's what brothers, what Crew, does. We look out for each other and no one else.

It's us.

Always.

"I'll take first shift," I murmur. Unlike Cyrus or Bray, I don't want some quick, forgettable pussy tonight. The only one I seem to be getting hard for is one I shouldn't even be thinking about, so instead, I'll do what I do best—hold my family together and protect my brothers.

"You sure?" he asks, his eyebrows slanting downwards.

I nod and look around. "Yeah, go have some fun. We have a lot to do tomorrow. Might as well enjoy tonight while you can."

He groans but goes inside, leaving me alone.

I tip my head back and stare at the stars, at the multitude of black and blue hues and twinkling lights. My fingers itch for a brush or a pencil to draw them. I wonder if she's still out there. I wonder if, wherever she is right now, she's looking up at the sky like I am.

Does she think of me the way I still think of her?

My hand touches her picture in my jeans pocket, the tatty old Polaroid worn away from years of handling. I hope she isn't. Part of me hopes she isn't alive at all so she's not suffering any longer.

Cyrus

Asher is right. We've not been back long, and we've spent the last week enjoying ourselves, but after tomorrow, it's back to work. We have gangs to put in their place, money to collect, and places to buy. This city got a break from us for the summer while we went on the road to forget last year's troubles, but now we're back.

Harder. Stronger. Faster.

And our dark eyes are locked on our target—owning everyone and everything here.

I glance back to see Asher staring at the stars like he does every night. My heart pangs for my brother and what he's gone through. Those who know us know he's technically my half-brother, but that never fazed us. He's Crew, blood in, blood out. He's family all the way, no matter his past.

“Who is she?” Leigh sneers, making me roll my eyes as we head back into the party.

“No one you need to think about,” I warn. “Keep your nose out of Crew business.”

“Crew business? She's business?” she snaps, glaring at me. “So that's it, huh? I'm good enough to fuck and stand on your arm like a trophy, but not to know why my boyfriend is lusting after a fucking newcomer.”

Lowering my head, I step closer, letting her see the threat, the violence, in my eyes. “Get this through your tiny little skull. I am not your boyfriend. I'm not your anything. You are nothing more than a quick cunt. It's not my fault you have romanticised us. You don't get to know because you're not family; you are nothing to me. Got that?” I growl. I'm not playing anymore. She needs to remember her place. I've never led her on or told her pretty lies. I warned her from the beginning I would hurt her, that I would use her, piss her off, and make her hate me.

I told her she was nothing to me.

Yet she still put her own expectations on me, projecting what she wanted while blinding herself to the truth. That shit stops now before it gets her dropped, or worse, killed by those who hate us and want to see us suffer. She doesn't respond, but she swallows, and fear flickers to life in those once confident, cocky eyes.

“I said, got that?” I snarl as I grab her neck and squeeze, warning her. I let everyone see so the rumours will spread. So those who are always looking for a weakness, who draw a

target on our back, know she is nothing to us and useless as a pawn.

“Got it,” she whispers brokenly.

“Good.” I release her neck and step around her. “Don’t forget again.”

Or it means her death. We made this choice. We understood the risks when we became Crew.

Blood in. Blood out.

Crew for life.



Chapter Sixteen

Blair

It seems there is a truce between my new stepbrothers and me. Cyrus continues to silently hate me and stops talking when I come into the room, but he doesn't threaten me anymore, nor does he avoid me like the plague. I see them at parties, draped with girls and selling drugs. They really are the kings of this city, their names whispered in reverence.

Even though I live with them, I barely see them at home. They are out all night and sleep most of the morning. By the time I'm finished getting ready for work or to go out, they still haven't emerged. It's kind of lonely, but I have Faye to keep me entertained, and work is better than ever. I've been given more stage time, and at this rate, I'll have enough money to leave in a few months.

Something about the Crew brothers still intrigues me though. Like a moth to a flame, I can't help but be drawn to them, to push Cyrus's buttons, to flirt with Bray, and to watch Asher work. I know I shouldn't, I have my rules about keeping people at a distance for a reason, including Faye. She's gotten closer than anyone, but even she won't get past that final layer of armour I keep around myself.

Lexi and Allegra have also wormed their way into my life. We hang out after work and have girls' nights. I help Lexi with her dancing, and she helps me with my singing. I let them get close, too close probably, but I can't help it. We have a bond, a shared one from working together.

This city is dangerous, not for the drugs, violence, gangs, or fast cars, but for the people. The ones trying to get close. What if they hurt me? What if I hurt them? Like the last people... no. Don't fucking go there.

Sighing, I turn from the mirror in the dressing room and grab my jacket, slipping it on. I don't know what my plans are for tonight. I was supposed to meet Faye, but she bailed for a date. Looks like I'm on my own. I could try to earn some extra money with some races, or maybe I'll hit up a party. The idea of spending the night alone in a silent mansion doesn't appeal to me, with Meredith being in Paris with Money Bags.

Party it is.

Grabbing my bag, I wish the girls goodnight and decide to head through the front of the club to avoid the massive puddles out back so they don't ruin my boots. But when I get into the darkened front area, the music pulsing... I see them.

Fuck, how did I not see them when I was performing? They've been to a few more shows now, always watching from the back and tipping well, and I still don't know why. To keep an eye on me? To let me know they can get to me? Or simply because they like to watch me dance?

Rolling my eyes, I storm to their table. "At least you're paying to see me undress, unlike when you break into my bedroom." I grin as I wink at Bray.

"I can't help myself, hot stuff, your bed is just so comfy," he flirts and runs his eyes down me. "You were looking extra fuckable tonight."

"How do you get girls? Do they have to gag you?" I retort, making Asher laugh, and even Cyrus cracks a small grin, though when I notice, he loses it and glares at me like he would rather be anywhere else but here.

“Baby, you could gag me anytime, or tie me up. I’m up for any of the kinky shit you have in that dirty little brain.”

Ignoring him and the traitorous pulse of my pussy, I look them over. “Why are you here?”

“No parties tonight, we’re bored,” Bray answers. “Plus, I needed new material of you for my spank bank.”

Again, I ignore him and look to Asher who smiles sweetly. “Lying low tonight. We’re going to go home and have some drinks instead. We were—” Cyrus smacks him and he winces. “I was wondering if you wanted to join us? Get to know us a bit? Seeing as you’re living with us.”

“Get to know me all night long,” Bray teases, and again, I ignore him like a badly behaving dog who won’t get a reward.

“Sure.” I shrug. It’s not like I was doing anything else, but my heart races at the idea of spending the night alone with the Crew brothers. My inner whore loves it. It’s going to be a fun night, but I don’t think they realise just what they are getting themselves into. Looking over at Bray, unable to help myself, I lean down and lick his ear. “Baby,” I purr, “you can’t handle me all night.” I stand and tell them, “I don’t need a ride, tip your waitress. I’ll meet you back home.” I leave them staring after me, their eyes locked on my ass.

Tonight, I’m going to test my new stepbrothers because I can’t stand the fact that I’m attracted to all three of them. If I have to suffer and be in misery with my desire, so do they.

Game on, brothers.

I barely beat them back. I throw my jacket and bag into my room and kick off my boots, but I don’t bother changing from my ripped blue shorts and white crop top. I look damn fucking good. My hair is curled, my eyes are lined and smoky, and my lips are painted red.

“Get the drinks going,” I order when they walk in.

“Downstairs, have you been yet?” Asher asks.

I shake my head. It’s not a lie. Technically, I’ve seen it, but I’ve never hung in their party basement.

He smirks. “Follow me.”

I do as I’m told. Bray follows me the whole way, almost touching my ass with each step as we head down the stairs and into the den. The LED lights are on, the pool table is ready, and when he calls out, the music starts pumping through the room. The low ceiling is filled with crossing bars, and there is a new pole for dancing in the corner. Cyrus heads straight to the fridge at the bar and throws some cans at us. I catch one mid-air, and Bray smirks as he takes his and hops onto a stool.

“How about we get started early? Shotgun?” he offers.

I spot the knife in Asher’s pocket, and before he can comment, I slip my hand inside. His eyes widen and he freezes as I nearly stroke his cock before pulling it out. I stab the can and pop the top before draining it. Crushing it, I toss it into the bin in the corner.

“That all you got?” I challenge and shut the switchblade, handing it back to Asher with an innocent blink. He takes it, his teeth caught on his lip before Cyrus breaks our eye contact.

“Don’t encourage her, just drink,” he tells Bray.

“I know! How about truth or dare?” Bray jumps off his stool as he speaks.

“Why not?” I purr and smile at Asher as I move past him, purposely brushing my breasts against his chest. Throwing myself down on the sofa, I watch them get the drinks as I cross my legs on the table and wait.

Cyrus brings over a bottle of vodka, while Bray carries over a crate of beer and Asher some chasers and glasses. They lay it out as Cyrus pours me almost straight vodka with a dirty look, as if daring me to protest. I don’t. I take it and shoot it back without missing a beat, then return it. “Another.”

His eyes darken, but he loses the scowl as he tops me up, and I lean back. “Who first?”

“Ladies, of course.” Asher grins.

“Fine, dare,” I reply instantly. Truth is too... honest. They could ask me about my mum, my past, anything. That’s not happening, so instead I’ll distract them and let them think they can control me by daring me to do crazy things. They just don’t know there is nothing they could dare me to do that would scare me anymore.

I expect Bray to ask for something dirty, or even Asher, but Cyrus surprises me. Leaning back in his chair, holding vodka on his jean-clad leg, he orders, “Dance for us.”

I arch my eyebrow, and he leans forward, his dark hair falling across that heartbreaking face. He takes my breath away, all three of them do. Men shouldn’t have this much power or be this attractive.

“Right here, right now... unless you’re scared?” he taunts.

He’s wrong, I’m not scared. Dancing is my escape, my happy place, the area where I have the most power. He’s just given me the key to controlling all three of them because when I dance, they want me. It’s not me being cocky, it’s just the truth.

He wants me to dance?

It’s his own blue balls.

I drain my glass, get to my feet, and leap onto the table, kicking off the random cans and decorations. “Play ‘Such a Whore,’” I call, and the music switches. The entire time, I keep my eyes on him. This is a power play, a game.

He wants to be in control and does so by asking those around him for things they don’t want, making them bend to his will. But I don’t bend, I don’t break.

Not for him, not for anyone. Ever.

Rolling my hips, I press my hands to my thighs and grind, and once the beat truly kicks in, I drop, shaking my ass and winding my hips. I keep my eyes on him as I slide my hands up my body, across my stomach and breasts, to my neck and across my mouth, which I open as I toss my head back.

I hear Bray swear, and when I look over, he's leaning back and wincing as he tries to rearrange the huge bulge in his jeans. Asher's gaze is locked on my movements as if memorising them, and Cyrus? He observes me intently, as if this dance is just for him.

His show. His pleasure.

Spinning on the table, I bend, shake, do the splits, and bounce before grabbing the poles on the ceiling and twisting upside down before dropping to my bare feet on the table.

Eyes still on him, I press my foot to his chest and push him back. He grunts but moves, and I step on his leg, holding onto the ceiling as I wind my body and slowly lower myself. Before I touch him, I shimmy back up and then drop again, my knees going to either side of his legs as I roll my hips on his lap. I let him feel every inch of my body and the power it holds.

He sucks in a breath and grips my thighs, stilling my movements, so I lean down. My lips almost touch his as I twist my hand and stroke his as I feel his hard cock press against my stomach. It's like a fucking steel pipe. "Truth or dare, stepbrother?" I whisper silkily.

He snarls, grips me harder, and stands, throwing me onto the sofa and giving me a dirty look. Laughing, I tumble onto my back as Bray applauds, getting to his feet and clapping as Asher wolf whistles.

"My turn," Bray says, and I shake my head, sitting cross-legged and glancing back at Cyrus as he tugs at his hair and turns away to hide his obvious erection.

"Well, truth or dare?" I prompt.

"Dare," he snarls and grabs a can. He pops it and downs it before licking the beads off his lips. My eyes follow the movement, and only when he looks over with an arched eyebrow, more in control of himself, do I shake myself out of my ogling.

He's expecting me to be a bitch, I can tell, so I surprise him instead. "Down the vodka bottle."

His eyebrows rise, but he takes it and downs it. Luckily, only half of it is left. “Bray,” he gasps when it’s finished. “Truth or dare.”

“Dare, of course, brother.” He smirks.

“I dare you to tattoo yourself.”

I laugh, I can’t help it. Bray leaps up and disappears, and a minute later, he’s back with an actual tattoo machine. We all watch and drink as he tattoos a smiley face on his toe. “Asher, truth or dare,” he asks as he cleans up.

“Truth,” Asher replies, and I smile. He’s such a cutie.

“Erm, how many wanks have you had over our new stepsister?” he questions with a laugh. I expect Asher to blush or look away and lie, but he doesn’t. He accepts the challenge, looking me dead in the eye with a straight face.

“At least twice a day since I first saw her.”

My eyes widen, and I almost choke on my drink. Holy shit. When the Crew brothers play, they seriously play.

We go around and around, and the dares get increasingly worse. Bray has to upload a video of him to a porn site, shaking his ass butt naked. Cyrus has to pierce his cock, and Asher has to paint my ass. The drinks flow, and I can’t remember the last time I laughed so much. They even seem to be relaxing around me, letting stories slip and giving me insight into their relationship and past.

My head is buzzing, my stomach is warm, and I feel weightless and good when Cyrus brings out the joints—only the soft shit, thank fuck. I’m too drunk to be tripping. But after we’ve smoked, it’s my turn again.

“Dare,” I accept.

“Kiss me,” Bray orders, and then grins at me.

The others stare, high and drunk as hell. They know I’m going to do it. I never back down. I’m going to cross this line and break this desire between us all. It will have repercussions, but right now I can’t remember why I should care. With that cocky smirk, his wavy hair pulled back into a bun that shows

off his sharp cheekbones and thick jaw, and his bare chest, he's had my knickers wet all night.

That, and Cyrus's dark, demanding voice and touches, and Asher's cocky answers and recklessness... because once he stopped saying truth, it became obvious why he didn't pick dare. He's more fearless than me, and a whole lot wilder than Bray. Shit, they are doing something to me, and I realised as soon as he said it that's exactly what I want to do.

Kiss him, fuck him.

All of them. I'm in trouble, but I get my drunk, sloppy ass up anyway and strut over to him, dropping onto his knee. "Sure about this, stepbro?" I slur teasingly, and then I lick his lip before biting it. He groans and grabs my hips. "You won't be able to resist after."

"Kiss me," he demands. "Unless you want to for—"

I shut him up, crashing my lips onto his in a hard, sloppy, fast kiss. He grunts and grips me harder, dragging me closer as he kisses me back. He kisses like he acts—cocky, refined, and teasingly—and I pull back slightly and tug at his lip again until he moans and gets to his feet. He slides his hands down my body to my ass and squeezes.

I'm losing myself in him when I'm suddenly ripped away and held like a naughty kid by Cyrus, who glares at a slack-jawed and fuzzy-eyed Bray. "What the fuck are you thinking?" he demands.

I can't help it, I blame the booze. I press myself against Cyrus and lick and bite his ear. He turns and glares at me. "Stop," he orders.

"Here's the thing, stepbrother, I don't have to listen to you. And we both know you want to."

My heart slams when he turns to face me. The hand that was on my waist drags up my body, making me gasp as my clit throbs, thinking he's finally giving into that electricity between us. His dark eyes hold mine as he grabs my throat and backs me across the room. I almost fall, breathing hard at the violent hold, yet my pussy gushes as he slams me back into the

wall. Cyrus restrains me there, with his arm above me as he leans into me and brushes my ear with his lips.

“You’re not all that, Blair. Right now, you’re a fucking mess, with your lipstick smeared from kissing your stepbrother, beer on your shirt, and your ass hanging out. You’re a fucking mess, why would I want you?”

That’s when I get angry and grab his hard cock, making his breath stutter. “It’s not what I think, but what I know.” I know it’s the wrong move, but the booze makes me stupid, reckless.

He pulls back, glaring at me as he slams me harder into the wall. “You’re so used to getting your own way, thinking everyone wants you. You’re nothing more than a banging body and a pretty face, that’s it. You’re just easy.” With that, he lets go and turns away.

Sucking in desperate breaths and ignoring the pain that blooms in my chest from each word delivered in his harsh tone, I stumble forward. Fuck him, fuck all of them. Everyone wants me, and I don’t need him to make me feel like shit. I know my own worth. I’m not easy just because I like sex. If I were a man, it wouldn’t be an issue, but because I have a pussy, how many bodies I have apparently matters, as if my pussy has a body count.

If a woman has sex, it makes your pussy used, slack. If men do it, they are hailed as heroes. Fuck that double standard. I’ll fuck who I want, drink what I want. If I want to be a fucking mess, then I will be, I’ve earned that. This judgemental prick doesn’t get to take his issues out on me.

“And you’re not?” I call to his retreating back as Bray stares, open-mouthed, at the change in atmosphere. I went from having the best kiss of my life to feeling so angry I feel like I might explode. “What about that blonde that hangs on your arm? Or the stories of you fucking every girl in the city? If I’m easy, what does that make you, stepbrother?”

He stops, his back hunching, and I step forward. My anger burns some of the haze from the drugs and alcohol away.

“You didn’t mind it when I was dancing on you, or when I nearly kissed you. You stare at my ass and tits, imagining what my cunt feels like as you fuck those women. If I’m such a mess, why do you keep coming back to me? I think we both know it’s not me with the issue, it’s you, and one day, it’s going to ruin you—probably get your drug selling ass killed. You might own this city, Crew,” I sneer, “but you don’t own me. I’ll sleep with the whole fucking football team in the living room if I want to. My body, my fucking choice. You don’t get to judge me for my choices when yours are the same.” I grab another open bottle of vodka and storm past them.

“Blai—” Asher starts, but Bray stops him.

“Let her cool down.”

I rush upstairs, holding back tears of anger. I want to scream and fight someone. How dare he? I was having such a good night, and now I feel about one inch tall, like a piece of shit on his shoe. Just because he has money, he thinks he gets to look down on everyone else. I’m going to make that king fall from his pedestal built on money, blood, and drugs.

I’ll make them all fall.



Chapter Seventeen

Cyrus

Asher doesn't speak to me the whole next day, even Bray is annoyed at me. It's quieter than normal as we eat dinner at our favourite restaurant in the city. Surrounded by businessmen and women in fine dresses, we stick out like a sore thumb, but we bought this place when we were sixteen from our father, so we get to dress however the fuck we want.

"You can't still be fucking mad," I snap at them as they stare down at their plates sadly like kicked fucking dogs. "She's fine, she's a big girl and not our fucking problem."

"You didn't have to be so mean." Asher sighs.

"Mean? You think that was mean? Brother, you know me better. She needed to be taken down a peg, she needed to hate us, I just made that happen."

"Or you did exactly what she said." Bray snorts. "You pushed her away and accused her of all that shit because it's like looking in a mirror."

"Oh, for fuck's sake," I snarl and smash my fists into the table. "Will you two stop? We have more important things to

deal with than the fucking fragility of our stepsister's ego and emotions.”

“She's not fragile.” Asher shrugs. “She wasn't upset, she was pissed. I'm betting she's going to get her own back on you.” He smiles as if he likes the thought.

“You think?” Bray asks almost dreamily.

“Do you think she's the type to let an insult like that stand?” Asher laughs. “Nope, Blair is planning something to get back at this arse, only time will tell what.”

“Idiots, both of you. She's pussy, have you forgotten that? Do I need to organise you a fucking orgy of all the free pussy in this city so you can get her off your mind?” I snarl, exasperated. What is it about our new stepsister that's got them in a twist?

Even the name *stepsister* is a fucking mockery. We all know she'll be gone before long, all of Dad's gold diggers are. He's always searching for love, but instead, he finds users. Even our mother was a bad fucking idea, but he was too blind, too in love to notice her flaws.

RIP to the bitch. May she rest in fucking flames.

“I'm just saying, brother,” Bray starts, twirling his fork in his tuna, “you should be nicer to her. We aren't as different as you think.”

“What does that mean?” I roll my eyes, nursing the scotch.

“You saw the way her mother was with her.” He raises his eyebrow at me pointedly. “Remind you of anyone? She drinks, does drugs, and races cars to forget, to feel and be out of the house. Maybe you don't hate her because she tests you, because you want her, but because she reminds you of yourself—angry, withdrawn, broken, and fucking wild.”

My heart hammers as I stare into his knowing gaze. He looks away and continues eating like I'm not reeling from that.

Fuck, is he right?

Even if he is, it doesn't matter. I have to protect them from her. She's bad news and has them in her sights. They aren't

like me, they are soft and capable of feeling, and she could break them so easily.

I can't let that happen again.

If I have to be the bad fucking guy—to her or to them—then so fucking be it.



Chapter Eighteen

Blair

To say I'm even more angry when sober would be an understatement. These fucking Crew brothers need to be taken down a peg. I'm not the type to let an insult like that stand. Deep inside, I know I let it affect me so badly because... fuck. I give a shit what they think, and to hear they think I'm a mess? A fucking easy mess? It devastated me, but my reaction to being hurt or upset is built on years of mistrust, anger, and pain.

I act out like the mess they call me, but now it's focused on making them pay... or more importantly, making Cyrus pay. Everyone worships the ground he walks on. They fear him and refuse to even look at him in case it causes insult. Well, I've been living on borrowed time for a year or so now, so I'm not fucking scared.

I'm going to embarrass him in front of everyone. I'm going to take that crown and turn it into a devil's halo and make him look like the asshole he really is. I'm going to show people that I'm not afraid of my stepbrothers and that I shouldn't be messed with.

I may be a hot mess, I may even be easy like he calls me, but I'm also something else too...

I'm a fucking bitch, and it's time they realised that.

No man is going to make me feel like he did. My worth is not dependent on others' opinions of me. I know what I've survived, I know what I'm capable of, and I know how smart, talented, and fun I am. Fuck him and his words. He'll never dare insult me again.

Not after tonight.

Tugging on my dress, I straighten it as much as I can. The mix of watercolour red, brown, and orange material hugs my curves and rides up. It's tied down each side with thin bands, exposing my sides all the way from thigh to side boob. At the top, the material cowls, exposing my impressive cleavage, and it's short enough that when I walk, I almost flash my bare pussy. I still have on my ass kicking boots, though, with a leather jacket thrown over my shoulders. My hair is curled, my lips are bright red, and my eyes are smoky and lined.

I look fucking hot, and I know it. I use my body to get what I want, and tonight will be no different, only this time it's not for work or men... it's for revenge.

The party is in full swing as I strut up the long, beige, cobbled drive to the huge, detached mansion. All these rich fuckers have no concept of money, playing gangster and partying. I shake my head as I step inside. Faye is on a date again, so I'm flying solo which is good—she might have tried to stop me. Wandering past the already drunk, slurring men and women, I search for my target, sipping a red cup filled with beer as I wander through the luxurious party.

I spot Walker dancing with a girl and grin, good for him. Turning away, I spy my prey. She's sitting on the sofa and glaring down at her phone. Her friends are turned away from her, chatting between themselves, and she looks lonely. When she drops her phone with a sad expression and tosses back her drink, I know I have her.

He treats her like shit, like a disposable cunt, so I'm taking advantage of that. I head over and extend a drink I grabbed on the way. She looks up at me and instantly glares. "What the hell do you want? Do you know where he is?"

"He said something about a girl." I shrug. "Haven't seen him since."

Pain flashes through her eyes, and I only feel slightly bad. Swiping the cup, she knocks it back and wipes her mouth as I perch on the coffee table before her. I purposely cross my legs so the dress rises. I saw her interest last time, and it flares now. Her gaze travels along my body before quickly meeting mine as her face flushes in embarrassment.

Good. If she hadn't been interested, this wouldn't have worked, and I wouldn't have forced it.

She's going to fight it though, but I've never been one to back down, and it will make it all much sweeter. Leaning closer to be heard over the thumping bass, I give her a sympathetic look. "He's an asshole, girl. Is the dick really worth all that hassle?"

"You don't know him like I do," she spits and then seems to sag, her black and white checked crop top and tiny mini skirt exposing her pale skin as she flicks her blonde hair over her shoulder. She has a great body, good tits and ass, and big pouty lips. I see why Cyrus keeps her around. "I don't know, okay? I—" She looks at her friends who haven't even noticed she's upset. "Why the fuck am I telling you this?"

"Because I can't judge you. I don't know either of you." I shrug and tip back my drink.

"He never used to be this bad, but one night some guys approached me after they saw me with him. They threatened me simply for knowing him." She leans closer, her eyes wide. "They even had guns." That makes my eyebrows rise, but I'm not surprised since they are drug dealers. "Ever since then, all I am to him is a quick fuck, and only when he can't hold out anymore. Not even when I want it... I mean, last time he didn't even make me come. He literally fucked me against a

wall, drunk as hell, came, and left me there.” Her eyes widen at her confession, and I toast her with my cup.

“Your secret is safe with me. Want another drink?” I ask, and she shakes her head, her eyes already slightly buzzed from the alcohol. I need her sober enough to consent, which she is right now. The music pumps harder, and her friends walk away to dance. I take another sip, and she watches me swallow. I set down the cup, knowing now is the time, especially when I hear the roar of their bikes over the music. Leaning in, I let her get a good look at my tits like she was trying to without being obvious.

“He didn’t make you come?” I ask quietly, and she frowns.

“What did you say?”

Getting up, I purposely sit close, leaning in until my mouth is at her ear and my body is pressed against her side. “I said, he didn’t make you come, really?”

She shivers and presses into me before she realises what she’s doing and straightens. Her lips roll in, even as I see her nipples pebbling under her shirt. “No,” she replies, her voice slightly breathless.

“That’s not right,” I coo and swipe my tongue down her ear until she gasps. Reaching up, I twirl a strand of her hair around my finger and tug. “Want me to make up for what he missed out on?”

“W-What?” she queries almost dumbly, but she knows.

“Don’t act coy, it’s not your way. Do you want me to make you come?” I purr into her ear, and she shakes her head slightly, even as her thighs clench together, and I have a feeling she’s holding back out of uncertainty.

“Are you sure, babe? One stranger to another, it will mean nothing. You look like you could stand to lose some of that tension.” I pull back then, and she turns slightly, her eyes dropping to my lips as she swallows.

“I-I—he doesn’t know I’ve been with a girl before,” she whispers.

“Even more reason to get your own back. Only one girl? Did she make you come?” I ask curiously.

She nods, her eyes flaring with desire. “So hard.”

“Cause women are better at eating pussy.” I smirk. “Want me to show you?”

Her eyes flicker around nervously before landing back on me. “Really?”

“Unless you’re not interested? I’m not into chasing tail, there’s plenty here.” I stand, and her hand darts out to grab mine, squeezing as she gets to her feet. Her eyes are filled with desire as she leans in and quickly kisses me before stepping back.

Decision made.

“I’m interested.” She nods. “Fuck, yeah. Please make me come.”

“Lead the way.” I grin.

She turns and moves through the crowd with me on her heels, staring at her pert ass. This should be fun. She seems so sweet and innocent when asking for what she wants. Is she not used to that?

We head upstairs as the front door opens and the Crew brothers step in. Smirking, I turn forward and follow her down a winding hallway before she opens a door and ushers me inside. She shuts it quickly behind her, keeping her hand on the knob as she shivers. The bathroom we are in is bigger than my whole fucking room.

“What am I doing?” she asks herself.

Stepping up behind her, I press against her back and place my hands on her hips before dragging them up. She gasps, leaning back into me and letting go of the knob. I slide my hands around to her front, over her toned belly and up to her breasts. Slipping under the material, I cup the handful and squeeze until she presses her ass into me. Leaning in, I chuckle against her.

“No cock, remember, babe?” I whisper, even as I tweak her hard nipples, twisting them until she moans and tries to turn in my arms.

I allow it, and she presses her lips to mine, fumbling to kiss me, so I glide my hand up her throat and into her hair, gripping it and tilting her head so I can dominate her mouth. I swallow her breathy moan as I twine my tongue with hers. She rubs against me desperately, squeezing my ass. When I pull back, her eyes are closed, her lipstick is smeared, and her mouth is slack.

“On the counter,” I order, turning her. She blinks her eyes open and quickly hops up. Grabbing her supple thighs, I part them and push between them as I drag her closer to the edge.

“Oh God,” she mutters, even as she bends back, arching her chest greedily.

“Are you wet for me?” I ask silkily as I squeeze her thighs before sliding one hand up. Her eyes stay locked on mine as I slip it under her skirt and towards her pussy. I pause when she doesn’t respond.

“Yes,” she hisses, pushing down to urge me on. Smirking, I drag my hand higher and cup her pussy through her lace underwear. Her underwear is drenched, seeping through the material. She whimpers, lifting her hips to grind into my hand as I lean down and catch my teeth in the bottom of her crop top before tugging it up.

I free her breasts, and they bounce as she groans. I lick between them before swiping my tongue across the crest of her left one and circling her nipple. I pull my hand away from her pussy, and with my fingertips, I nudge her panties aside, parting her dripping lips and matching the rhythm of my fingers with my tongue.

I spread my fingers across her bare pussy teasingly. She groans and lifts her chest higher, and I finally suck her nipple into my mouth. I suck hard before I bite down, then I flip my hand and grind against her engorged clit with my palm.

She cries out, the music drowning out the sound as she falls back, her head pressed to the mirror. I switch to the other nipple, giving it the same treatment as I grind into her clit. She rubs against my hand, almost riding it, and just when she's about to come, I pull back. I leave her whimpering as I drag my fingers down her pussy and circle her hole.

“Please,” she begs desperately. “I need to come so badly.”

Eyebrow arched, I use my other hand to rip up her skirt to expose her panties. Slipping them from her legs, I throw them onto the floor and stare at her pink, glistening cunt as she parts her legs farther, exposing herself as she grabs her breasts and rolls the nipples between her fingers.

“Please!” she says again.

“Please what?” I prompt, leaning closer until she feels my breath blow across her intimate flesh. She shivers from it, a groan catching in her throat.

“Touch me, fuck me, make me come,” she demands. Needy little thing.

Chuckling, I stroke down her pussy and press two fingers to her entrance. Just as she breathes in, probably to protest again, I slam them into her tight channel. She screams, and I waste no time pumping them inside of her as I rub her clit with my thumb and hook my fingers, rubbing along her inner wall.

Looking up, I watch her go wild. Her mouth is open as she cries out, her chest is flushed, and her breath heaves as she lifts her hips to fuck herself on my fingers. “Oh fuck, fuck, fuck, how can it feel so good?” she asks, grinding harder.

Her channel flutters around my fingers as her cream drips from her tight hole. She's close, so close. “Don't you dare come until I say so, I haven't even tasted you yet,” I warn.

She whimpers and opens her eyes. “I can't—I'm so close, oh God!” She screams, her eyes slamming shut as she squeezes her breasts so hard they will bruise. Her tight little cunt pulses around my fingers as she comes, gripping them as she grinds into the pleasure until she slumps in aftershocks.

Pulling my fingers free from her dripping cunt, I frown at her. Her eyes open and lock on me, and I suck my fingers into my mouth, tasting her sweet release as she moans softly. I prop my hands on the sink on either side of her legs.

“I didn’t say you could come yet, did I?” I question, and she closes her eyes, shaking her head even as she shivers from aftershocks. “I wasn’t done having fun, so you’re going to pay for that.”

“Pay how?” she croaks.

I grab her hair hard, mussing the locks and twisting until she cries out. Yanking her from the counter, I turn us, and then I push her to her knees. She goes wide-eyed and willingly.

“You’re going to eat my pussy until I come all over your tongue,” I order. “We don’t leave this room until I come so hard it drips down your chin. You want that, don’t you?”

She swallows, gripping my bare legs, and nods hesitantly.

“Ever ate pussy before?” I murmur, pulling her closer.

“No,” she whispers.

“But you want to?” I push, unwilling to let her hide.

“Yes! Fuck, okay, I want to eat your pussy!” she almost yells, and then looks to the door and back to me. “I want to taste you, to know what it feels like.”

“Good girl,” I coo as she pushes my dress up, gasping when she finds my bare pussy before her. Parting my legs, I throw one over her shoulder, forcing her to take my weight and exposing myself... and my wetness.

This might be for revenge, but it doesn’t mean I’m not enjoying myself. Watching her come was fucking beautiful, and feeling it around my fingers, hearing her cries in my ears, and watching her breasts bounce from the force of my fingers has me wet as hell, imagining her tongue inside of me.

Without instruction, her hand comes out shakily, and she trails it down my pussy, like I did to her. “Good girl, touch me like I touched you, like you would touch yourself.” I look down at her as she stares at my pussy like a puzzle.

Tentatively, she runs it back up and rubs my clit. “Harder, babe. Fuck me like I fucked you. Like you want me to squirt down your throat until I’m all you taste all night.”

She rubs my clit harder, and I groan as pleasure pulses through me. Grabbing my breast, I twirl and tweak my nipple, adding a hint of pain. “That’s it, now fuck me with two fingers.”

She hesitates before moving lower and pressing two fingers to my hole. “Now,” I demand harshly, and she pushes them into me, slowly at first.

“You’re so wet.” She groans and pushes them deeper, stopping before curling them and searching for my G-spot. She finds it and I moan, encouraging her. It does the trick. She pulls her wet digits free and pushes them back in, fucking me slowly at first before speeding up.

I grind into them, using my leg to thrust. “Now lick my clit.”

She moves her head closer like she was waiting for that, her tiny pink tongue coming out and lapping at my clit. “Oh my God, you taste so good,” she murmurs between my thighs, dragging her tongue down to her fingers and back up.

“Just like that, harder, flick it. Suck it if you want.”

She flicks my clit over and over until the pleasure rises within me. My pussy drips down her thrusting fingers, and just then, the little bitch sucks on my clit hard, the way I did her nipples, before letting go and lapping me again. I groan, riding her face and fingers.

I feel her struggling to breathe, but I drag her closer with my hand, grinding my cunt into her mouth until she has no choice. “That’s it, use teeth, I’m so close.”

She ups her speed then, adding another finger and licking my clit urgently before sucking it. “Good girl, you’re doing so good. Feel how wet I am? How my pussy is clenching around you?”

She nods against me.

“That means I’m close, so don’t you dare pull away. Right there.” My words end in a cry as my release explodes through me.

I grind into her face harder, slamming down on her fingers and lips. No doubt I’m hurting her, but she doesn’t pull away until I push her back. She’s breathing heavily, her eyes wide and filled with desire. Her lips are swollen and glistening with my cum, her chin too.

Her fingers are still inside of me, and I narrow my eyes. “Pull them out slowly and let me see you lick them clean.”

Licking her lips, she slides them free, and as I watch, raises them to her lips and sucks them clean. “Good girl, now drag them down my cunt again.”

She does, following my every instruction, knowing it pleases me. When she pulls away, I hop up onto the counter, my pussy still out.

“Now fuck yourself with them coated in my cream.”

Her eyes widen, and I laugh.

“You didn’t think I was only going to let you come once, did you? Babe, please, women are better than that. I want you to fuck yourself with your cream and mine inside of you as you come all over this floor... with your friends right outside of this door.”

She swallows but reaches down and slowly strokes her pussy.

“Lean back with your pussy in the air and let me watch your greedy little hole.”

Whimpering, she does as she’s told, her legs spread so wide I can see her engorged clit and dripping hole. She rubs her clit as I watch before pushing her fingers inside of her, lifting her hips to fuck them. Her moans fill the air with the musk of her cunt.

“I don’t think I can come again,” she cries out, and I watch her pussy clench around her fingers, betraying her words.

“Liar, you can and will.”

Nodding, she speeds up, flicking her clit before fucking herself. Her moans increase, and a moment later, she comes all over her fingers, her head thrown back in ecstasy.

I hop down and pull my dress down. Turning, I rub the mess on my mouth away. When I look back at her, she's pressed to the wall, panting, with her fingers still buried inside of her as she watches me in shock and confusion.

“Good girl.” I smirk. “Don't bother cleaning yourself up. I'm not. I'm going to walk around this party with my fingers smelling like your pussy and your saliva inside me.”

She nods again like a good girl. No wonder Cyrus plays with her so much. She follows orders well, making this almost too easy. But who said business can't be pleasure as well?

I leave the bathroom with her on her knees, her lips coated in my cum and her makeup smeared. Tugging down my dress, I freeze as I stare at the painting hung in the hallway.

She's there with a rich-looking man in a suit—her father, I'm betting—a sour-mouthed woman with pearls and a tight conservative dress... and Walker. Fuck. She's his sister? Well, I guess I'm keeping it in the family.

Shaking my head, I walk towards the rest of the party to spring the second part of my plan.

Embarrassment.

I wait for the perfect time to let him know what I've done.



Chapter Nineteen

Blair

Grabbing a drink, I lean back against the wall and watch it all unfold around me. Cyrus, draped across the sofa like a king, glares at me when he spots me. Asher is talking to a blue-haired guy, and Bray is behind him, necking some girl. I smile and wave with a finger as I sip my drink, observing the stairs as she comes down, fixing her hair. She freezes when she spots Cyrus, completely paling, and he crooks his finger at her, his eyes still on me.

She follows his gaze and shivers before walking over and sitting awkwardly on his knee, making me laugh under my breath. I watch in rapt fascination as he turns her head harshly and kisses her.

Bingo.

Pushing from the wall, I drain my drink and drop the cup on the table as I wander over. Feeling smug, he pulls away and sits back, smirking at me as Bray pauses to watch me, wondering what I'm going to do.

“How do I taste?” I purr at him.

He frowns at me in confusion, and then it seems to dawn on him, even if he doesn't quite believe it. He looks from me to her blushing face and freezes.

Sucking my fingers into my mouth, I fake a moan. "Cause she tasted delicious."

"Oh shit," Bray mutters, his eyes wide before he looks me over. "Well played."

"Cyrus, I—" She's cut off when he bounces his knee and drops her to her ass on the floor. Tears fill her eyes as her face reddens even more. Shaking my head, I lean down and offer her my hand, but she smacks it away and climbs unsteadily to her feet.

"I told you, babe, you deserve better." I look at him then. "Don't fuck with me again, or it won't just be your girlfriend I'm fucking with."

He gets to his feet, his nostrils flared and eyes wide as he goes toe-to-toe with me. Everyone is watching and whispering, knowing what happened. "You wouldn't dare, you bitch."

"Try me, asshole," I snap and shove him back. He goes, and I keep pushing. "I already had your girl coming faster than you ever could; you didn't even let her orgasm last time. Who's next? Your dad? Maybe I'll fuck with your business instead. You might be king here, kid, but I've been playing these games since you were in golden fucking training wheels. Learn some respect." With that, I toss my hair over my shoulder and start to leave. He grabs my neck, yanks me back against his body, and leans down to my ear.

"This isn't the end of it, mark my words, stepsister," he growls.

Turning again, I press against him and roll my eyes up as he inhales. "Are you mad 'cause I fucked her... or 'cause I didn't fuck you?" I retort, and he swallows. "That's what I thought. Jealousy is a bitch, and so am I." Winking, I turn, and this time, I get to walk away, leaving everyone cheering after me.

Cyrus turns to his girl and starts screaming. I would have stayed and helped, but she clearly didn't need my assistance. Maybe she'll finally realise she's worth more than him.

I leave them to their argument, while Bray and Asher stare after me with equal parts amusement, respect, and desire.

Grabbing my jacket, I toss it over my shoulder and head for the door, ready to crash Faye's date and tell her all about my night.



Chapter Twenty

Bray

“She got you, just admit it.” I laugh as I smack Cyrus on the back. He storms past me to his bike. After screaming and embarrassing that blonde trophy who always hung on his arm, he demanded we leave. Cyrus isn’t just embarrassed, I would say he’s more... angry. He’s angry she played him, Blair that is. That she got him back. But not even he could hide the desire and respect it instilled in him.

No one ever stands up to him, nor have they ever been able to play his game.

Our new stepsister did, and now she has opened herself up to a world of pain. She basically just moved her pawn across the board, and now Cyrus won’t stop until that queen falls.

“Where are we going?” Asher grins at me, swinging his leg over his bike. “Need some mouthwash?”

“Yes, tell me, brother, what did she taste like?” Licking my lips, I lean into my bike as I stare at him. “I’ve been wondering every night when I jerk off to her.”

“Shut the fuck up,” he snarls, smashing down his visor and revving his bike over the sound of our laughter. He peels away

as I grab my helmet and slip it on, winking at Asher.

“I’m betting pretty fucking good. Does this mean she’s no longer off limits, or do we just not give a fuck anymore?”

“I’m thinking all rules are out of the window.” He shrugs. “She started it, now she’s going to have to deal with it.”

“Shall we bet on who will be the first one to actually taste that little cunt?”

He snorts, pulling down his visor. “Why? We both know it’ll be me.” He revs and peels away too, following Cyrus. That little prick.

The game is on, stepsister, and you aren’t only the target of all three of us... but there are no more rules.

I’m going to make her scream my name so loudly she won’t be able to talk for a week.

I’m coming for you, Darling.



Chapter Twenty One

Blair

I give up after an hour or so of having no luck finding Faye. She better be having the date or orgasm of her life. Sighing, I turn the car around, and with no other place to go, I head home.

Fuck, when did I start thinking of it like that? It's not my home, it's just a house. That's all, a roof over my head. Annoyed at myself, I flick on the radio and crank up the pounding bass of late-night Friday music. Once the song finishes, a news alert comes on. I'm turning the corner, so I can't change it, and I hear them announce that a body has been found in the boot of his own car, bound and gagged with his throat slit.

His clothes and wallet were taken.

Poor sod.

I turn it to a rock station and jam out all the way through the bustling streets of the city and into the suburbs. I don't bother parking in the garage, instead I park out front to piss off Meredith when she gets back from Paris. Sliding from my car, I lock it and sing under my breath as I head up to the front door.

It's unlocked. Panic surges through my veins as memories come flooding back, but I refuse to cower or run away. I shake them off and grip my keys harder, flipping open the small knife I keep on a key ring as I step inside.

It's dark, there are no lights on. I don't call out, though, because that's dumb girl shit. Instead, I tilt my head and listen, staying near the open door. I hear the pop of a cork and then something being poured into a glass. I refuse to be run out of the house, so I throw back my shoulders and follow the sound to the kitchen.

I slump when I see Meredith there with a glass of red wine in hand. "Fucking hell, I thought you were in Paris. Did he get bored of you already?" I mutter. "I didn't even smell the stench of the baby prostitute perfume you wear." I shut the knife and turn to leave now that I know it's only her.

"He had to come back for a meeting, the selfish prick," she snarls. Oh, how selfish, putting his business over his new gold-digging fiancée. "Stop right there, you stupid whore," she demands, and I freeze, spinning to glare at her as she puts her glass down and gets to her high-heeled feet. Her lips turn up as she looks me over, but I refuse to be embarrassed or intimidated. I stopped caring what my mother thinks of me a long time ago, so I pull the dress down farther until she growls in disgust.

"You look like a corner whore," she sneers and strides over. "How can any daughter of mine come out looking like you? I'll never know."

"Me either. I'm so fucking glad I don't look like your wrinkly, cardboard ass," I retort, going toe-to-toe with her. "Too much filler and Botox, no ass or tits, and only relying on my pussy to get my way in life because I have no brains or talent. It must be fucking horrible. Tell me, has he worked out what you are yet?" Her eyes narrow in warning as I smirk. "No? He will soon enough. You aren't exactly sly, Mother," I taunt. "All that money you grab, the gifts, the cars, the trips... yet none of it can buy you any class. Before you know it, you'll be back to sucking off married men for—"

The slap comes out of nowhere, turning my head from the force. Ignoring the sting in my cheek, I look back at her. “I warned you if you ever laid hands on me again, I would destroy you,” I seethe as she swallows nervously before playing it off.

“You’ll destroy *me*? Then I’ll destroy you, little girl,” she snaps.

“I have nothing else to lose.” I laugh manically, my arms spread. “I’m already in fucking hell, don’t you see that? So bring it. I’ve lost every single person I love... and yet you’re still here. You want to what? Tell everyone? Bare our dirty little secrets? Go ahead, you’ll only end up ruining your life too, and Meredith? I’m used to living with shame and judgement, but you? Not so much.”

I hear her teeth grinding as I snort and step back, working my cheek to feel the pain and maintain my anger so fear, shame, and memories don’t stream back in.

“That’s what I thought. You stay in your place, and I’ll stay in mine, and yours, Meredith, you poisonous bitch, is as far away from my life as you can get.” I turn, leaving her glaring after me as I storm through the house.

That’s when I see all three of my new stepbrothers standing in the open front doorway. Listening. Watching. Their eyes show their confusion as they track across me and back to the kitchen. I freeze, wondering if I said anything they might understand before I mentally say *fuck it*. Asher frowns at my cheek, while Cyrus narrows his eyes and steps towards me at the sight.

“Are you okay?” Bray whispers.

“Don’t pretend to care,” I tell them almost tiredly before heading up the stairs, ignoring them. I just need to be alone so I can fight off my demons. It’s better that way.

I’m better that way. Alone, no one can ever hurt, betray, or ruin me. Meredith reminded me of that, of my plan. It might have gotten blurry with the friends I was making and... well, them, but I still have the same goals.

Save up and get the fuck out of this place.

That means keeping my distance from those three men who have wormed their annoying asses into my brain.



Chapter Twenty Two

Bray

I watch her move up the stairs, leisurely, as if she doesn't have a care in the world, but her back is hunched in pain and anger, her hands are fisted at her sides... and I saw her face.

Devastated, hurt, scared.

It reminded me of my own, reminded me of just what we used to go through with our mother. Maybe that's why I move towards the kitchen, escaping Cyrus's arm as he tries to stop me. I find her there drinking wine. Meredith, Dad's new plaything. The gold digger, as Blair calls her. Is she right? She seems like the type, and she wouldn't be the first to try to sleep her way to my dad's money. Fuck, even our mum did. It doesn't help that the fool will fall for anyone with a nice smile and a pair of tits.

She sneers as she scans me. "What the fuck do you want?"

My eyebrow arches at that. "You are awfully cocky for someone living in my house."

"Your house?" She snorts, standing taller. "Kid, this is your dad's—"

“No, it really isn’t.” I grin. “We bought it off him once we realised he couldn’t be trusted to protect his own investments. So, you see, you are standing in my house and insulting me.”

“Rather rude, don’t you think, brother?” Asher calls, striding into the room and looking her over, his lips turned down in displeasure. He hates when women are upset, and he seems to have a fondness for our stepsister, not that I can blame him. He likes to play the hero, likes to protect them.

“You’re lying,” she hisses and knocks back her wine, grabbing the bottle to top it up. “Now get the fuck out of my face before I tell your father about your spoiled, rich asses.”

Cyrus is there then, grabbing the wine bottle and holding it so quickly she doesn’t even have time to move. Her eyes widen as he leans into her, his intimidating eyes dark and angry. Cyrus towers above her as she teeters on her high heels and fancy clothes. Her expensive guise can’t cover the rot inside of her. It leaks from her in waves, no wonder Blair hates her. It does make me question what happened though. Her mother said something about her past.

Not that it’s any of my business, or my brothers’ either, but we aren’t letting the insults to our new stepsister slip by. Not in our own house. It seems we have chosen a side, and it happens to be hers, which makes Meredith our new enemy.

“I would watch your tone,” Cyrus purrs, “and remember your place. You are nothing more than a hole for our father to stick his dick into. Once he grows tired of you, he will toss you right back onto your fake plastic ass, and you’ll have to return to tricking men for money again. Don’t get comfortable.”

She shivers under the menace and stumbles away, but Asher is there, his arms crossed, blocking her path. “And leave Blair alone. You clearly hate her, so just stay away.”

“You’re protecting her?” She laughs hysterically, turning to face us. “You are protecting that cunt of a daughter of mine?”

“Tone,” I remind her. “I don’t take kindly to those insulting family.”

“She’s not family!” Meredith screams. “You don’t even fucking know her.” She shakes her head. “I should have guessed she would fuck all three of you for protection and money. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree—”

That’s when Cyrus moves. It’s a controlled movement, a quick slap that has her recoiling into the nearest counter. He barely used any force, his hands clenched as he steps back.

It was a warning, a threat.

“If you want to survive us, Meredith,” I sneer, pushing away from the counter and stopping before her, “then follow our rules, or the only place you will find yourself is legs up in a shallow grave.” Leaning in, I bring my mouth to her ear, and disgust fills me at being so close to the poisonous bitch. “We’ll be watching. Play nice, won’t you?” I turn, and Cyrus smashes the bottle in the sink as we all leave, trooping up the stairs. She can stew and think on our words.

They were not empty promises.

They were facts.

We’ve just claimed Blair as ours to protect, and we protect ferociously and permanently.

Once upstairs, we split into our rooms. Cyrus is undoubtedly wondering why he went along with our act. Asher is no doubt drawing Blair from tonight or jerking off to her. Me, I hesitate in the hallway after changing into some comfy shorts. I stare at her closed door. She clearly doesn’t want to talk to us or even be near us...

But everyone needs someone at some point. Maybe it’s the fact that the look in her eyes as she ran up those stairs is burned into my brain. Maybe it’s the fact that I know that pain, that I might just know Blair better than anyone after seeing

those ghosts in her eyes... I place my hand on the handle and take a deep breath.

If I go in there, if I cross that line, there is no going back. I'm letting her in, comforting her. It's something Crew doesn't do, but we just claimed her in front of Meredith. That means something to me. It means this might have started as some fun or even a game, but now, Blair is our responsibility. She's hurting, so despite the fact I would never usually give a fuck, I swing the door open and step inside, shutting it behind me.

The room is dark, the only light provided by some streetlights coming in through the open curtains. I spot her in her bed, curled into a ball.

"I swear to God, Bray, get the fuck out of my room," she snaps.

I don't know how she knows it's me, well, maybe it's the fact I'm always breaking into her room and sleeping in her bed or stealing her underwear, but damn she's smart. Ignoring her, I jump on her bed like normal before scooting under the covers. I tuck my arm under my head as I stare up at the ceiling. She flips and glares at me, lifting her head. Her face is bare of her usual makeup, and she looks so much younger... softer. Vulnerable. Her eyes are red, but she isn't crying.

Turning my head farther, I meet her eyes. "You look beautiful with makeup, and you look beautiful without it too," I murmur.

She smiles for a second before it melts away. "Bray," she warns.

I roll onto my side, mirroring how she's lying, and now there are only inches between us. In the dark room, it seems so much more intimate. Her breath hitches as I run my eyes across her face.

I lower my voice, and it almost comes out hushed as I prompt, "Yes, cutie?"

"Get out," she mutters wearily.

I ignore that and the exhaustion in her tone and focus on the vulnerability in her eyes—the one she's trying to hide from

everyone. It's the same sense of helplessness that fills me at night as I lie alone in my bed; the one I cover with drugs, booze, and girls. The one I do anything to forget. I act all tough, but underneath, I'm just as scared, fucked up, and vulnerable as the girl before me.

Maybe that's why I'm here in her bed, because I know what it means to need someone but to be completely alone. To lie in bed at night with tears in your eyes and pain in your heart, needing to scream, to rage, and let it out, but instead, you just lie there completely still, as if you do, it will all disappear.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

Her head jerks back like she wasn't expecting that, and her lips part slightly, but no words come out for a second. She swallows and looks away, and I know whatever leaves her mouth will be a lie. You get so used to pushing people away, to lying to protect yourself and others, that it becomes second nature because usually when people ask if you're okay, they really don't want the truth. It's inconvenient for them, especially when talking to men. I learned that early on. We are supposed to be tough and emotionless, which is something I've always struggled with. I'm not supposed to cry, it's not manly. I'm not supposed to hurt or worry, it makes me weak.

Less of a man.

I'm betting Blair has been told nearly the same thing her whole life. Others' actions and responses only hammer it home that no one gives a fuck about you. For me, I have Cyrus and Asher though... they understand. They are there for me at the darkest times.

Who is there for her?

"I'm fine." She looks back at me as I stare at her in response, waiting, and she rolls her eyes. "I don't give a fuck what anyone thinks," she snaps, her tone hardening like it will push me away. Like the venom and anger in her voice will make me leave. Is that what she's used to? I live with Cyrus, so she's going to have to try harder than that.

“Sure you don’t, Blair,” I tease and stroke her face. She leans into it for a moment before shaking off my touch.

“What does that mean?” she demands, her eyes firing at me. Her attitude hardens my cock, even when she’s at her lowest.

“It means, Blair,” I murmur and lean in, almost touching our lips together, “you act all tough, but I saw your face when Cy said all that shit. Your mum too. You care, Blair, probably more deeply than anyone, which is why you hide it and conceal these feelings, because it only leads to being hurt and you are tired of it. It’s your biggest secret. You’re not the tough bitch you project. Inside, you’re all soft, but it’s marred, scarred, from how others treat you.”

“Stop,” she begs.

“You feel so deeply, babe. I see it in your eyes. You care too much, and with such a big heart, all it leads to is pain... I know. Don’t you see we’re the same?” The dark captures our whispers, and the bed is our sanctuary as I admit my darkest secret to her, letting her see past the jokes and flirting to the man who hides underneath. “I’ve had my heart broken so much it just became easier to pretend I didn’t have one... and then you came along.”

“Bray,” she implores desperately, her eyes flickering from mine to my lips, which are almost on hers, before she closes her eyelids. “Stop.”

“For now,” I concede. “But we both know this is only the beginning, stepsister,” I tease and pull away.

She shivers, sucking in air, even as I hide my own vulnerability at being so near to her and seeing that pain and beauty up close.

“One day, you’ll figure out you can’t do this alone. You might hate us and push us away, but we’re all you have right now. This might have started out as a joke, stepsister, but you aren’t going anywhere, and neither are we.” I slip from the bed, leaving her to her thoughts and demons, but before I can take a step, her small voice fills the air.

“Don’t go.” Both words are hoarse, as if dragged from the very depths of her soul.

It’s a plea. I know if I ignore it, if I make a joke now, she will never open up to me again. I would be just another man, another face who used her, hurt her. Turning, I meet her eyes as she sits up nervously.

“I hate sleeping. I have nightmares all night... Stay. Don’t go.”

Without a word, I get back into bed. She turns, giving me her back, and with a chuckle, I slip closer, wrapping my arms around her and twining our legs. She stiffens before softening as I nuzzle into her neck, just holding her. We are both quiet, unsure what to say. This is the first time I’ve slept in a bed with someone other than my brothers, but it feels... right. All my own dark thoughts disappear with each inhale of her scent, and each rise and fall of her chest. Her steady heartbeat grounds me, and her warmth relaxes me like nothing else, even as my cock throbs from being pressed against that fucking perfect ass. But I ignore it. This is about so much more than sex.

This is about comfort.

“Tomorrow I’ll go back to hating you, you know that, right?” she whispers, making me grin even as I kiss her shoulder.

“You can try, but we both know you only hate us so much because you want us,” I murmur, closing my eyes.

“Shut the fuck up before I kick your ass.”

“Baby, you can touch any part of me at any time. Kick, bite, lick, I’m down for whatever your kinky ass wants,” I tease before nipping her shoulder. “Now sleep before I decide to stop ignoring that ass.”

“You’re an idiot.” She chuckles, but her words sound more like a compliment.

“Yeah, maybe,” I whisper, the dark making my voice that much deeper. My desire, too, as I press against her. “But you’re laughing, Blair, so I call that a win.”

“I’ll still kick you,” she warns, and I chuckle and settle down, ignoring the ache of my own lust for once.

Her threat sounded more like a promise. Like, in fact, she doesn’t want to kick me at all... more like kiss me. Blair is a tough girl, really fucking strong, but it’s obvious she doesn’t do feelings or relationships. I feel the same way. But this thing between us is blurred. We are both in new territory, fighting each other because we want one another so badly, while also knowing this won’t be easy. It won’t be just sex, no, this will be so much more, and neither of us are prepared for that.

I know this desire between us will explode one day, and we’ll just be swept away in the flames.

I fall asleep with her in my arms, wondering if it would really be so bad to let another person back in.

Get ready, Blair, because before this month is through, you’ll be ours. You just don’t know it yet.

I can’t wait to break down the rest of those carefully built walls so I can find the woman hiding behind. There won’t be a part of her I won’t know better than myself.

What Crew owns, they protect. I’ll look after this broken little heart of hers and never let anyone close to it again.

It’s a promise.



Chapter Twenty Three

Blair

I get up early, leaving Bray snoring in my bed, his bare, muscled chest on display. Shaking my head at my thoughts, I refrain from climbing back in next to him and just letting him hold me. It's wrong, it's stupid. I promised myself I'd stay away, so how did I end up sleeping with him all night?

Fucking idiot.

Needing to get out of the house, I grab some clothes and my keys. As quietly as possible, I leave the room and get dressed in the kitchen as the others sleep. On bare feet, boots in hand, I rush downstairs and out of the front door. Why did sleeping with him, just sleeping, feel so much more intimate than anything I have ever done with a man or woman?

They're getting too close. I need to draw limits and build myself back up before I see them again, which is why I'm running from my own place—not mine, theirs. I don't belong here, and the faster I remember that, the better. I find myself hurrying to my car with only one escape in mind.

Faye's.

But when I catch sight of my car, I freeze, my breath catching as I stare. On my window is a bouquet of red roses... the same type of flower as before. I stumble back, holding my keys tighter as I scan the area, fear filling my veins.

Impossible. He can't be... he can't, but it doesn't stop the terror blooming within me. I refuse to run though. I watch my surroundings, but nothing moves, and I slump. It must have been one of the guys thinking it was funny. It's fucking not. I grab the roses, ready to smash them into the ground, when a car idling beyond the gates of the house catches my attention.

A police car.

Pissed as hell as my fear morphs into anger, I storm towards it. The gates open, and I get right up to the window and smash my fist into it. He rolls his eyes and winds down the window. Fucking Officer Small Dick really isn't getting the hint.

"So you're stalking me at my house now, asshole?" I snap. "This is fucking sick—"

"I wasn't stalking you," he snarls, trying to get out of the door, but I slam it shut with my hip as he snarls. "I was stalking the Crew brothers."

"Why?" I ask with a frown, not believing his answer nor the fact he would so easily tell me. He must be worried about me reporting him—really worried if the frown tugging at his lips is any indication.

"We've been trying to catch them in something we can prosecute them on for a while. I followed them. I didn't even know you lived here... makes sense."

"Stay the fuck away from me," I demand and throw the flowers at him. "And take your ugly ass flowers back."

"I didn't leave them," he calls after me, making me freeze again. If he didn't... then who did?

Could he...

No, it had to be Bray or Asher. Still angry and shaken from the mere memory the flowers caused, I get in my car and

speed off. I drive way over the limit as the morning sun shines down at me.

Weak, I'm so fucking weak.

Some fucking flowers triggered me, how fucking pathetic is that? Fuck! I slam my hands onto the wheel, and before I know it, I'm at Faye's house. I bet they're asleep, but I need her. I need to forget, so I get out and go around the back and climb the tree near her window and slip inside.

She's sleeping in her bed, and as I shut the window, she jerks awake. Sitting up, she blinks at me, half asleep. "Blair?" she asks, confused.

I throw myself on the bed, making her bounce and roll into me as I stare at the ceiling. "Hi," I mutter dumbly.

"Are you okay?" she murmurs around a yawn, wiping at her face as she snuggles into the duvet and watches me.

"Great," I mumble even though it's a lie. I came here to feel better, but with her staring at me, demanding to know what's wrong, I realise it was a mistake. She sees too much, sees through me, and she's going to know I'm not okay. I'm still not fully put together after last night's encounter with my mother and then the flowers. She will want to know, and what can I say?

I slept in a bed with a boy, got freaked, and ran away? Some flowers made me want to break into a panic attack at—

No.

"Don't lie to me. What's wrong?" she says, fully awake now and worried... for me.

"How was your date?" I ask instead.

"A fucking mess, he was an idiot. Remind me to never date again." She sighs but then glares at me as I grin. "You're not changing the subject. What's wrong? You are as pale as a fucking ghost and look totally freaked out. Tell me."

But I can't, can't she see that? I search her face as she frowns. She's only worried for me, I know that, but she can never know. It's to protect her, to... protect me. If she found

out, she might look at me the same way my mother does, and I cannot survive that. She's come to mean a lot to me, even if I try to deny it, so as usual, I deflect and pretend everything's okay so I won't hurt her.

"Nothing," I answer and close my eyes. "Let's sleep, or we could go get high—"

"Blair," she snaps and sits up, appearing annoyed now. "Why are you here?"

"What do you mean?" I question. "Is this not Chris Hemsworth's house?" I joke, but she ignores it.

"I mean it. Why come here? Why wake me up if you don't plan on talking or letting me help?" I see the hurt in her eyes and lick my lips. I'm not ready to deal with this. I'm still raw, I can't deal with anything else, so I shut down like always.

"Sorry, I'll go." I quickly get to my feet, and she follows.

"That's not what I meant!" she yells in annoyance and scrubs at her bedhead as I turn to look at her. She's standing in some tiny shorts and a crop top, fully awake now... and pissed. She's never been angry at me before, and I instantly decide I don't like it. "Why did you come here?"

Maybe it's the fact I'm tired, emotionally vulnerable, or just don't want Faye to look at me the same way as everyone else, but I let some of it slip off of my usually controlled tongue.

"I slept with Bray!" I yell and then rub at my own head. "Not in that way, we didn't fuck. Shit, Faye, he slept in my bed after a run-in with my mother."

"And? That's bad how?" she queries, and I throw my hands up.

"Of course this is bad! They're assholes, idiots, my fucking stepbrothers. You know I don't do that shit. Disposable dick, remember?"

"Uh-huh, so you're freaked because they're getting close?"

"They aren't getting close," I snap, pacing as she crosses her arms and watches me.

“Sure they are. They have been since you first met them. They get under your skin; they want you. I see the way they watch you, it’s unlike they’ve ever watched anyone before. Why are you fighting it?” she challenges.

“Because I don’t need them! I don’t need anybody!” I yell and then wince when she staggers back. “That didn’t come out right,” I mutter.

“No? You don’t need anyone? Really? That’s why you’re in my room freaking out? That’s why you came here?” She shakes her head sadly. “Stop lying, Blair, and don’t insult me like that. Don’t tell me the truth, fine, but don’t fucking lie to me. I’m tired of it. I’m tired of only knowing what you allow me to. We’re supposed to be best friends.”

“We are,” I reply lamely.

“You know everything about me, yet I know hardly anything about you. Tell me, Blair, tell me why you run whenever you get close to someone. Tell me why you trusting those boys is a bad thing.”

“I—don’t ask that,” I beg.

She laughs bitterly. “It doesn’t matter, because even if I did, you wouldn’t answer. You never do. You change the subject, or you take us somewhere. You try to make me forget what I was even wondering because it’s easier for you.”

“Look, you’re clearly tired and maybe in a bad mood. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to wake you. I’ll talk to you later,” I say, but she’s not finished. She steps closer, her eyes sad and lips turned down.

“You’re running again,” she points out. “You always talk about not needing someone, Blair, or anyone, but love and friendship aren’t about need. The guards you put up against the world stop the hurt, that’s true, but they also stop the good from getting in. You’re so scared of being let down, of being used and hurt and tossed aside, that you built these walls around yourself. It stops anything from penetrating your heart, but it also stops you from seeing what’s right in front of you.”

“Like what?” I demand.

“Like me! Your best friend, the one you’re losing because you keep pushing me away. Or those men.”

I shake my head, and she steps towards me again, so I step back, and she winces.

“You keep us all at arm’s length because it’s easier for you. Your hyper-independence isn’t a strength, it’s a weakness. It’s something caused by trauma because you think if you never trust again, never let anyone in, then they won’t hurt you. You don’t think you deserve love and believe that everyone will do exactly what you’ve always experienced—hurt you. But you’re wrong, babe.” She wipes at the tears on her cheeks, tears I put there. My heart cracks at her words, at the pain and hopelessness in them, at the acceptance in her eyes. Is that what I’m doing?

Pushing them away before they can hurt me?

And if so, is that such a bad thing?

“You’re wrong, Blair, you’re so wrong about the world. I used to think it was a lonely, fake place, but then I met you. You gave me hope. I’ve been hurt too. I’ve been left and tossed aside. I was so tired of fighting, so tired of being alone, and then you came into my life. You made me laugh and showed me what friendship was... but you still never let me past those walls. It might keep your heart intact, Blair, but it broke mine.” She hiccups in a sob and wraps her arms around herself.

I want to go to her, to make this better, but I don’t know how to. I knew this would happen, I even warned myself, but I still let myself believe it could be different. I got close, which is my own fault, and now she’s the one hurting.

“I don’t know what happened to you.”

I flinch as she meets my eyes, feeling the chasm between us.

“I know you will never tell me, but one day you will have to trust someone. You can’t fight everyone. I just hope you’ve not pushed me away too much before I see that day.”

“Faye,” I whisper, “I am your friend. You’re supposed to support me—”

“Not blindly,” she interjects before licking her lips and wiping her eyes. “Not when I see you destroying yourself and everything that could be. Being a friend doesn’t mean blind adoration, it means calling you on your shit when you need it. It means trying to help and support you when you need it, but it also means knowing when to leave you when you need to be broken so you can heal better than you did last time. Fuck knows I’m trying to be here for you, babe, but you don’t let me. You don’t make it easy. You’re breaking my heart.”

“I never meant to,” I murmur sadly.

“I know,” she replies softly. “And that’s the worst bit. You are more than a best friend. Babe, you’re my sister. You need to figure out what I am to you and if it’s worth getting hurt for. Until then, you need to leave because I can’t keep hurting myself to help you.”

I stumble back, and she looks away, her lips rolled in as she cries. “I’m sorry,” I whisper, and it’s the truth. I am. I turn away, doing what she asked. It’s for the best. She deserves better than me. She deserves a true friend, not this broken piece of shit. I gave her every part of me I could, but it’s not enough.

I’m never enough.

I leave the same way I came, my heart smashed and hurting. The pieces slice into my soul, reopening old scars, and the rot seeps through my veins as I get into my car. I look back up at her window to see her there. She watches me briefly before turning away.

Revvng the engine, I leave before I hurt her more than I already have. But it’s only in losing her when I truly realise just how much she means to me.

I need her.

I drive and drive, but I don’t want to be alone with my thoughts. Faye’s accusations and Bray’s words ring through

my head. I know better than to let people close, to let them in, but I couldn't help it. Faye was an unexpected variable.

She became my home.

And now that she's gone, I don't know what to do.

My world is crumbling around me, so I go to the one place I know—work. Allegra takes one look at me when I walk into the dressing room and calls us both in sick. When she grabs me and puts me in her car, I don't protest, I don't even speak, not wanting to let the pain lingering within me out like a cloud of decay I always seem to carry around.

I always hurt those I love. I should know better by now.

She calls Lexi on the way, and she takes me to her house without a word. Allegra doesn't ask what's wrong, nor does she demand words. She's just there for me, letting me into her flat and getting me comfortable on the sofa before grabbing a bottle and handing it over. I take a swig, coughing at the strength of the booze, but it frees my tongue as I watch her sit on the coffee table before me.

“Why?” I ask.

“I know what a broken heart looks like,” is all she says, and then she grabs the bottle and takes a drink. “Want to talk about it?”

“Not really. It's not a broken heart, I guess. I just had a huge fight with my best friend. I think I lost her.”

“Blair...” Allegra sighs, handing me the bottle. “Friends can break your heart too, sometimes deeper than even a lover, because you expect them to always be there and have your back, and when it ends... it's like grieving a loved one.”

She's right, that's exactly what it feels like, but if it hurts so much, is it really the right thing? Did I fuck up by pushing away the only person who truly didn't deserve it? Faye has done nothing but be there for me. I never made it easy for her, yet she never gave up on me, but did I on her? Did I let my past stop me from seeing what's right in front of me?

The family I always needed?

Lexi turns up moments later, and together, they cheer me up. They drink, and we watch a film. I'm quiet the whole time, thinking over her words, but they are here for me nonetheless, asking for nothing in return. Isn't that what friends do?

That's when I realise I've been running for so long I forgot how to stop.

I have friends, I have a family, and I have a chance to be happy.

Can I really let that slip by because of fear? I pride myself on being strong, but sometimes you have to be weak.

Just then my phone sounds. I hastily pull it from my pocket, hoping it's Faye, but it's Asher. I slump as I open it, expecting another incredible drawing or photograph, but it's a simple text. I can feel the urgency in it, however, and that has me sitting upright instantly.

Asher: Come home.

I don't know what's wrong, but I know they need me. Without a second thought, without wondering why I care so much, I say goodbye, thanking Allegra and Lexi for being there for me, and promise to text them later before I grab a taxi... home.

My stepbrothers need me. I don't know what for, but I can't run any longer.

It's time I faced the truth.

It's time I forgave myself.

It's time I gave myself a chance.



Chapter Twenty Four

Asher

I put my phone away and glance at Bray who nods. Cyrus just rolls his head but doesn't get angry. Our father got home less than an hour ago, and we heard him and Meredith arguing. A moment after, he came and asked for a family meal. Including Blair. We all know what that means.

A fight.

Meredith wants to show us who's boss. She's not the first woman to do this. It's a fucking pattern at this point. He even knew, we could see it in his eyes, as he respectfully asked us. We only agreed for the entertainment, and I volunteered to tell Blair.

After last night with her mum, I have questions, and what better way to get answers than with all of us in a room? It's going to be explosive, that's for sure. I caught Bray sneaking out of her room this morning, but he wouldn't tell me anything, which isn't like him.

It seems she's got us all in a spin, not that I can blame them. She has this magnetism that makes you want to be with her at all times. It's more than skin deep beauty, it's her heart. It's so pure, so strong. She makes me smile and laugh, and

better yet, she can handle my brothers. But it was the pain in her eyes last night that has me captivated. It's the same pain that runs through me, indicative of a parent who's hurt them and let them down.

My fingers twitch, so I grab a pencil from behind my ear and some paper and start to sketch. I need to get the image down before I forget—the slope of her lips, the tears shimmering in her eyes, her pale face, and her clenched fists. I want to capture the battle waging within her between strength and weakness. She's such a beautiful masterpiece, and I ache to go back to that moment where she met my eyes.

I hate her mother for putting that pain there, but in pain there is such splendour, and that's what I draw now so she can see the strength I saw in her last night as she walked away. It's not the first drawing or even the tenth. I've drawn her every day since I first saw her. I've been unable to paint or sketch anything else, everything turns into her. I've lost most of them though. I think Bray and Cyrus have been secretly stealing them, but that's okay, since it gives me an excuse to draw more. Like now, while we wait for her.

Once the sketch is done, the compulsion leaves me, and I almost sag in relief. Flipping it, I lean closer and scribble some words for her before slipping into her room and putting it under her pillow—it's where I keep a picture of my real mom. She should have something that she can draw strength and memories from when she feels alone. It seems important.

We all wait for her. Cyrus paces, and Bray pretends to scroll through his phone while we all watch and anticipate her arrival. We hear a car outside ten minutes later, and with a shared look, we rush downstairs. We just reach the bottom when she opens the door. She looks tired, her eyes puffy and red. Has she been crying?

She freezes when she sees us and stands up straighter, painting on a fake smile. "What's up? Missed me so much already?"

"Ah, Blair, there you are," Meredith calls from the dining room. "Please join us, won't you? We are having a family

meal.”

I smile at Blair warmly, even as Bray rolls his eyes and strolls over. “Save yourself,” he jokes and heads to the dining room. Her eyebrow rises as she steps into the dining room, seeing the table all set up. My dad sits at the farthest end, looking uncomfortable, while Meredith reclines in her chair with, yup, a glass of wine.

“Family meal?” Blair echoes, her hip cocking out enticingly. “Since when have we been a family?”

Meredith’s eyes narrow in anger before she puts on a fake laugh. “Don’t be silly, come and sit.”

Blair shares a look with me as I head around the dark wood table and pull out a chair for her on the opposite side of Meredith. She smiles and strolls over, sitting as I push her in. I sit to her right, and Bray is on her left, as if we are boxing her in to protect her. Cyrus takes a seat at the other end, narrowing his eyes on Dad and Meredith in warning. The crystal chandelier hangs above us, gently swinging with the breeze from the open window, the tinkling of the diamonds the only sound in the room. It’s quiet, awkwardly so, and Meredith scans us before her gaze lands on Blair.

“And where have you been this morning, daughter? And looking so... scruffy,” she hedges. Dad winces and looks at Blair with a small, sad smile, but he says nothing, as usual. It used to hurt me before Cyrus pointed out that Dad is weak. He’s willing to do anything to make anyone happy, even at the expense of others’ feelings and his own. It doesn’t mean he doesn’t love us, just that he isn’t the same as us. He doesn’t have the same steel that runs through all three of us.

Blair flinches, though, before licking her lips and aiming a fake smile at her mum. “On the street corner where I belong,” she deadpans.

Meredith smashes her glass to the table before looking to my dad who seems confused. “Always so funny, Blair,” she snaps, her tone venomous.

Blair grabs a glass of wine and toasts her mum. Then, with her eyes on Meredith, she downs it and gasps before wiping her mouth, making Bray laugh.

“So, Blair, how are you finding living here?” my dad asks politely.

“Oh, it’s wonderful, thank you for asking. Your sons have been so... welcoming,” she offers excessively sweetly, but my dad is clueless and smiles in happiness.

“Oh, how lovely,” Meredith chirps. “I knew you would get along with the three boys so well.” She insinuates more with the last part, and Blair’s hand grips the wine glass harder, even as she breathes slowly through her fury.

I frown at Meredith as Cyrus leans closer, his eyes narrowed, reminding her of our threats last night.

“So what do you three do? I know you’re in university, only being twenty-one...”

“They own quite a few businesses, started young,” Dad shares proudly. “They’ve always worked hard. Isn’t that right, boys? They even bought this place off of me for when I grow old.”

“That’s right,” I agree kindly with a smile at Dad.

“I see,” Meredith grumbles. “So, they have your business?”

Dad frowns at her, unsure what she’s asking even though everyone else knows. “No, they have their own.”

Meredith nods, but she’s unhappy with his answer.

“And what is it you do, Meredith?” I ask, and her eyes widen before narrowing as I smile.

“I, well, erm... I’m in between jobs,” she snaps as Blair chuckles and grins over at me in thanks.

“And where is your mother?” Meredith questions, ignoring Dad’s flinch at the reminder, but then her eyes lock on me. “Or mothers, should I say? Your father informed me you’re only their half-brother, correct? Different mothers? Where is she?”

I wince, and Blair frowns at me and then glares at her mother. “She’s... not around,” I reply painfully as Cyrus stands.

“Cyrus, please sit. She didn’t mean anything by that. Did you, Merry?” Dad urges.

“Nothing at all,” she says sweetly. “I was just curious.”

“Bray and Cyrus’s mother is... dead, I’m afraid. Asher’s mother is not in the picture.” It’s a nice way of saying she abandoned me to him when I became too much for her and her addiction.

“I see.” It goes quiet again before my dad clears his throat and looks at Blair, trying to play nice and change the subject. I have to hand it to the man, he’s really trying even if he’s clueless and likely to step in shit.

“Your mother told me you dance?”

“I do,” Blair replies hesitantly. “Have since I was a child. My father taught me.”

“Really? Was he a dancer?”

“No, he wasn’t, and he’s dead. It’s rude to bring it up,” Meredith snaps.

I see Blair flinch in pain, so I automatically reach for her under the table. She looks at me as I link our pinkies. Her hand hangs by her chair as I wrap my pinkie around hers, offering her comfort. Her eyes lift to mine, searching for something before my father addresses her again and she turns away, but she doesn’t let go of my hand.

No, she holds it tighter.

“I’m sorry, Blair, I truly am. I didn’t mean to offer any insult or upset you.” He rubs his chin awkwardly. “What about a boyfriend... girlfriend?”

“Blair prefers to keep her options open, isn’t that right?” Meredith almost spits. “A free spirit, they used to call her.”

I grind my teeth, even as Bray leans in and grins at Meredith. “I think that’s what they call you, not your

daughter.”

“Bray,” Dad barks, but Bray just laughs and reclines back, sliding his arm across Blair’s chair. Her mother notices and narrows her eyes but says nothing.

“Well, there was that one boy...” Meredith starts, her eyes cruel as she watches Blair. She’s targeting her in retribution because she can’t come after us. Blair freezes, her eyes widen, and her breath stops as we observe her with concern. “What was his name again? Reece? No, that wasn’t it. It began with an L, right?”

“Lucas,” Blair rasps, and I see her anger growing as she tries to fight it. “His name was Lucas, and you damn well know it.”

“It must have slipped my mind.” Her mother laughs and looks at my dad. “He died, terribly tragic—”

“Don’t you fucking dare,” Blair snarls, leaping to her feet. Her body vibrates with pain and rage so potent, I can actually feel it. “Don’t you dare fucking speak his name like you give a shit. You always hated him; you even tried to fuck him once to break us up, you spiteful bitch!”

“Now, Blair...” Her mother smirks. “That’s not nice. After all, wasn’t it your fault he died?”

The question hangs in the air, and I see Blair snap. Her chest heaves as she glares at her mother. “Guess that runs in the family too. Isn’t Dad dead because of you? Or how about your boss who shot himself after you told his wife how you got him drunk and slept with him in their bed? You want to play this game, Mother? Fucking get ready, because we both know I have a lot more on you than you have on me. If you ever bring up Lucas or what happened again, I will destroy you and the little money sucking leech system you have set up.” She throws her napkin on the table and storms away.

I go to push to my feet to follow her, but Meredith speaks.

“Let her go,” Meredith sneers. “Ungrateful bitch.”

“Meredith,” Dad warns.

I glance at Bray who appears shocked and worried, and then we look at Cyrus. His eyes are narrowed on Meredith, and his lips are tilted down. We just learned more about both of them than we have the entire time we have been here. It seems our stepsister has been through a lot more than we ever thought, and right now, all I want to do is punch her smug mother's face for hurting her. She knew exactly what she was doing, and she did it on purpose to hurt her child.

Cyrus meets my and Bray's gazes. "Why don't you see if Meredith here is aware of the house rules?" he suggests with a growl and stands. "I'll check on Blair."

"I don't think that's such a good idea," Bray hedges, knowing they're volatile together.

"I'll be nice," he snaps as he turns, following her upstairs.

"Him nice? There's something new." Bray chuckles and then looks at me. "You can have the honour, brother."

"Boys, please, you don't have t—"

"Please be quiet, Father. It seems Meredith has not quite grasped how things run around here, but she is about to." I glare at her. "You ignored our warning from last night, but you'll heed this one." She swallows nervously at my firm, unarguable tone and the fact my father is not stopping me. His eyes remain downcast as he ignores her searching gaze, leaving her to us.

"This is our house, our rules, and you will follow them. This is not a request, it is now an order. You don't seem to grasp just how much power we have in this city. We own four of the top law firms. We donate to the police and fire department. We own nearly fifty percent of the businesses in this city, and every single person here knows our names. You are nothing. You will be polite, almost silent in this house. You will stay out of our way, and you will not so much as speak or look at your daughter again."

"Or what?" she sneers, used to getting her way and forcing others to back down. We are not anyone though. We are the

Crew brothers, and we back down from nothing, especially not a gold-digging cunt like her.

“Or you will regret the day you stepped foot in our house and opened your legs for our father’s money.”

Bray looks at Dad then. “We love you, Father, but this one is a spiteful bitch, you’ll see that soon enough. Ensure she follows the rules. We would hate to have to ruin her like the last one.” With that, we both stand. Bray leans over the table to get into Meredith’s space, and she jerks back, finally realising how serious we are.

“We mean this, Meredith. Your daughter belongs to us now. She’s a Crew, and we will protect her like family from anyone, including you. I suggest you buy a muzzle if you can’t stay quiet,” he growls before we both leave the room.

Some family dinner that was.

At least she knows who she’s messing with now. It’s just not the legitimate side of our businesses we have bought and cultivated she should be worried about though, but we don’t brag about those—the ones with guns—with the convictions and morals most people have.

But first, we have to find out just what our stepsister is hiding and why the name of her dead ex brought her so much pain. Family has no secrets, and Blair is about to find out she has been adopted into us and she has no choice.

She’s Crew.

Forever.



Chapter Twenty Five

Blair

I smash my hand into the bathroom wall with a scream. How dare she say his name? How dare she? He's not a dirty little secret, but God, just his name has my heart aching. I want to march back down there and rip her to pieces. I want to see her fall the way I did, to see her hurt and almost die—

I punch the wall again with another shriek and the door opens. I turn away, holding my aching knuckles. "Fuck off."

"No," Cyrus snaps, and the door shuts. I jolt at his voice, expecting Asher or even Bray, but not him. "Did you break it?" he asks.

I flex my hand, not looking at him. "No, I've had worse."

"Let me look," he murmurs softly.

"Get out. Why the fuck don't any of you listen to me?" I almost yell and spin. His eyes narrow as he steps closer, grabbing my arm none too gently and jerking it out. I try to fight it, but he turns my hand and prods at my split knuckle, ignoring my hisses and threats.

"It's not broken, but you'll need to clean it," he says and lets go. I tug it back and step away.

“No shit, Sherlock. Now get out,” I order.

“No,” he replies with an arched brow. He crosses his arms as he runs his eyes over me.

“What the fuck is your problem?” I snarl.

“You, it seems.” He smirks, focusing on my heaving chest.

“Fuck you,” I snap. I’m not in the mood for their games or shit right now. My head is screaming at me, and my pain is almost palpable as I fight back the memories.

“If you’re offering.” He grins, running his teeth along his lip as if imagining it.

“Was that a fucking joke?” I almost choke. “Fucking hell, what is it? Backwards day? Fuck off, Cyrus. I mean it.”

“Or what?” he taunts, stepping closer. “What are you going to do, princess?” The word is sardonic, and I jerk. All of my pain and anger contract on him, and before I know it, my hand is lifted, ready to strike. He catches it mid-air, grinding my bones until I gasp. The pain slams through me, mixing with my fury, and for some reason... it turns to desire.

The electricity that’s been building between us explodes through me until my heart slams, my pussy clenches, and all the hair on my body lifts.

“Wrong move, but if you want to fight...” He wrenches me around and smashes me into the door. The force knocks my breath from me. I glare up at him as he reaches down and lifts me, holding me in place as our eyes meet from inches away. “I’ll happily oblige, but that’s not what you want, is it?”

I don’t speak, the objection to his suggestion caught in my throat. I choke on it, and he smirks, running his eyes across my face and landing on my lips. “You fucked her.”

“Huh?” I say stupidly, caught off guard from the whiplash of the conversation.

“You fucked her,” he repeats, and it finally clicks. He means the blonde who chases him around.

“So?” I snap, dragging my eyes from his lips.

“So...” He leans in. “The next person you fuck is going to be me after you taunted me with that little cunt.” He slams his lips onto mine. I groan, fighting back with my lips, giving as good as I get. He wants to play? So be it. I pour all my anger into him, and he takes it. I grab onto his shoulders and dig my nails in, but it only makes him groan as he presses against me and grinds his hard cock into me.

Did he mean it?

He’s going to fuck me?

Don’t get me wrong, I’m all for that, especially with Cyrus knowing it won’t lead to anything more... but isn’t this wrong? Fuck, why does the thought only make me wetter?

I rip my lips away to suck in deep breaths, and he nudges my head to the side and bites my ear. “I tasted you on her, like rain and fucking sin.” He groans and grinds against me as I moan. “I want your taste all over my tongue and cock. All those teasing touches... I want you to dance on my cock like you did on the table that night for me.”

“I knew you wanted me,” I taunt as I kick him back. He drops me, and I lean against the door as he watches me.

“Want you?” he growls, grappling with his belt.

I swallow as he unbuckles it and slowly pulls it free from the loops. Cyrus unbalances me, always has. I’m used to being in charge, being so wanted that they can’t think or speak or question me, but he isn’t like that. He plays me right back, making me want him more than I’ve ever wanted anyone. I’m unable to look away, my pussy clenching and nipples tightening at the purposely slow, controlled movements. This isn’t my usual quick fuck.

“Acting all cool like you’ve not touched yourself while you’ve thought about me in the other room, huh?”

“Nope,” I reply, meeting those dark eyes. “I have other dicks for that.”

He shakes his head, storms over, and grabs my throat, just like that night we argued. Only this time, we both know it

won't stop there. He's going to fuck me tonight and get out all this tension between us.

And I can't fucking wait.

"Not anymore," he mutters and spins me. Slamming me into the wood, he rips down my shorts. I help him, kicking them off, but he squeezes tighter as I fight to breathe. A moment later, I feel something cold at my hip, a blade, and then my underwear is cut from me, leaving me bare and wet. He strips off my shirt and bra next. I'm completely naked while he's dressed. Anyone else would feel vulnerable, whereas I feel strongest in my bare skin. I lean into his touch, the pain and pleasure pounding through me like my heart, making me gasp. He just stands behind me, letting me feel the warmth and power of his body as his breath blows over my ear, making me shiver.

"You want my cock? Beg for it." He releases my throat, and I suck in enough air to speak. I love the utter power in his hand. I'm used to being in charge, being dominant, but right now, Cyrus is throwing that out of the window. It doesn't mean I won't test it though. I like to push the boundaries, and no one, especially not Cyrus Crew, will make me beg.

"Not a fucking chance, I'll just go fuck your girlfriend or your brother."

I'm slammed into the door again hard, making me groan. The pain pushes back the mental spiral I'm struggling with. He consumes my entire awareness so there is no room for thoughts of anything else—just him and me. The promise of pleasure hangs between us if we're willing to cross those lines we shouldn't.

"Watch that mouth before I fuck it," he demands.

"Do it," I challenge. "Fuck it, shove your cock so deep you're all I can taste for the next week." I push back, rubbing against him. "I dare you."

I play the game right back, because as much as I want him, crave him, he craves me too, and we both know it.

It's a fight for power, for control. I'm not easy, and I won't lie back and accept his orders like his other little girls. I give as good as I get, and I get what I want, which is him.

"Fuck," he groans, grinding into me as his hand drags down my back and cups my bare ass. "Not yet though. I've been imagining those big breasts in my hands while I fuck you since the moment I saw you dance."

"Yeah? What else?" I press, seeing what he's visualising. Those tattooed, scarred knuckles gripping my tits as he fucks me... Fuck, I want that.

"Oh, princess, we're just getting started. You should never have tempted me. I might be your stepbrother, but right now, I'm your fucking everything." He spins me and smashes his lips to mine again to swallow my protests. Using the door, I hike my leg up and wrap it around his waist, grinding my dripping pussy on his jeans. He'll have to go back out there with my cream staining them, and the thought only turns me on more, knowing Asher or Bray might see. Might ask.

Might know.

Grabbing his other hand, I pull it down my chest until it's on my breast. He grunts into my mouth and bites my lip in punishment even as he tweaks my hard nipple. He twists and plucks them until I'm groaning into his mouth. Smirking against my lips, he cups the heavy weight and squeezes them together before pulling back and licking down my chest until he can taste them. My head drops back as he sucks one into his mouth firmly before sucking on the other. He bites, licks, and tastes until I'm wild. I drip with sweat as I fight my own desire, trying to stay in control.

This is so fucking wrong. He's my stepbrother, but he's right. We couldn't stop this even if we tried. This is more than sex or want.

"Touch me," I demand.

"Where?" he mumbles against my breasts, playing dumb, but I hear the amusement in his tone. I unwrap my legs and drop my feet to the floor, glaring at him.

“My pussy, or do you need a fucking road map—fuck!” I yell as his hand comes down in a hard slap on my cunt.

He kicks my legs apart. “What did I tell you about that mouth, princess? It’s going to get you in some real trouble,” he warns, his dark hungry eyes rolling up to mine.

“Fuck, I hope so,” I mutter as he chuckles before he releases my breasts. He moves his hands to my hips, and I frown before I gasp. Cyrus lifts me into the air without even a grunt, holding me against the door as he buries his head between my thighs so quickly I don’t even have time to inhale before he’s feasting on me.

His stubble scrapes my inner thighs, the splash of pain blending into pleasure as he eats me up.

His tongue drags down my folds without warning. Reaching up, I hold onto the top of the door, the other clutching his hair and pulling him closer, shutting up that infuriating mouth with my pussy. He may be the one pinning me here, but I’m in charge as I squeeze my thighs and shove my cunt closer, forcing him to make me come. He spears his tongue into me roughly, eating my cunt the way we fight.

Feral and hard.

His teeth catch on my clit, and his tongue swipes down my core. He tastes me, getting as deep as he can like he’s never sampled anything better. Shit, no wonder blondie sticks around if this is how he eats pussy. What’s his dick game like?

“Harder,” I order, just so it doesn’t seem like I’m losing myself in his mouth.

He smiles against me, I feel it, and then turns, biting my thigh in punishment hard enough to bruise. I cry out, grinding down from the pressure.

“Cyrus,” I warn, but it ends in a groan as he pushes a thick finger into me. He holds it there, not giving me enough for me to ride or come, but to keep me on that edge. Pleasure floods through me, demanding release—a release he’s controlling. It’s just another game.

Fine.

I reach up, trusting him to hold me, and cup my breast. I tweak and play with my nipples until I'm almost coming. He looks up, his face and beard coated in my cream, and watches me as he adds another finger.

"Ride it. I don't want to fucking breathe past your cum, you understand me, princess?" he growls as he swoops back in. My thighs clench on either side of his head like he demanded as he eats my cunt hard and fast, thrusting his fingers in and out of me before curling them and dragging his digits along my walls.

It throws me over the edge.

I come with a muffled yell, grinding against his face. He licks me through it unrelentingly, and one orgasm quickly turns into two. Only when I slump and try to push him away does he let me down. He holds me against the door again as he steps back.

"Death by pussy suffocation," I tease as he strokes his finger across his cheek and licks it clean.

"The best way to go," he murmurs.

"Shit." I groan, shivering as I droop.

"Oh no, princess, I'm not done with you yet. I was promised a family fucking dinner, and that's what I'm going to get. That was just a starter. Bend your bratty ass over that sink for the main course."

I don't rush like he's expecting. He made me come too swiftly; it was addictive. He thinks he won, that I'm another soft girl for him to manipulate, so I throw him a curve ball. I stroll over to him, feeling my own cream across my pussy and thighs with each step. I want him to be as crazy as I am. He's holding back his desire right now, and I don't want that.

I want the crazy fucking Crew brother everyone fears.

I want his power, his pain, and everything between.

I drop to my knees, and he opens his mouth, but before he can order me around or protest, I grab his hard cock. Pushing his jeans down, I stroke his huge, hard length. It's bigger than

I've ever seen or had before, and there's a Jacob's Ladder down his cock. My pussy clenches as I twist my hips, imagining that inside me, and my mouth salivates, wanting him in my mouth. So I do it.

I swallow him whole.

He groans, and I grip his thigh with my other hand, digging my nails in as the metal balls drag across my tongue as I swallow him. I take him all the way down until he hits the back of my throat, then I meet his gaze, and if I could, I would smirk. His cock might be huge, but I can take it.

I can take anything he has to offer.

He bends slightly, rolling his hips forward and fucking my mouth.

I hold on, humming as he fucks my mouth with hard, quick thrusts. He speeds up, moving harder and faster, and his grunts fill the air. The taste of his precum fills my mouth, making me shiver in desire. I pull back, blowing over the tip of his wet cock, and my saliva drips from my mouth to his dick. His dark, wild eyes remain locked on me.

"I want to feel you come down my throat," I murmur, licking my lips before leaning in and tracing my tongue along the Jacob's Ladder. "I want to feel these rip my mouth apart as you go wild."

"Fucking hell, princess," he growls, pushing his cock against my cheek as I pull back. "Get your hot little mouth back on my dick."

I hold back, running my tongue along the head of his cock and inside the tip to get more of his precum. His chest is heaving now, and his thighs are shaking.

"Now!" he snarls.

I narrow my eyes and suck on the tip. He grabs my hair, using it to drag my mouth down his cock. The pain from him ripping through the roots makes me whimper, even as my pussy clenches at the power he wields. No one else could make me as hot as he does just by fucking my mouth. My

mouth aches and my eyes water as he slams into me over and over.

His lips twist in a snarl, and he takes my mouth as hard as I imagined he would. It hurts, it's painful, and I fucking love it, but his hips stutter. He's close to coming, and I don't want that just yet. I want to feel this huge cock inside me. If we are finally giving in, I want everything he has to offer. I manage to pull back, even with his hand in my hair.

Laughing, I squeeze the base of his cock, wiggling on the floor. "Thought my pussy was the main course, big guy, or have you forgotten yourself in my mouth? I'm thinking it's all just words, and you couldn't hang on long enough to fuck me."

He finally breaks.

Yanking me up by my hair, he throws me into the sink. I hit it hard, my ribs protesting the blow, but I don't have time to catch my breath. His hand wraps around my throat from behind, pushing my head down, as his other hand pulls out my hips and he kicks my legs apart.

"You'll eat those words, princess, while you scream for me."

"Promises, promises—" My response ends on a yell as he slams that huge cock into me. I'm wet, dripping, but he's so big it borders on painful. Those piercings drag along my wall as he pulls out and pistons back in.

Oh fuck, oh fuck.

I writhe on that monster cock. It's never felt so good, never felt so full, like without him inside of me, I'd be empty and cold.

"That's what I thought, princess," he growls, gripping my throat tighter as he fucks me. The force pushes me into the sink so hard it hurts. The pain morphs into pleasure—it's too much.

Fuck, I didn't even know it could feel this good.

Every other person I have fucked pales in comparison. The fact that I know it's wrong and a fucked up, dirty little secret only makes it that much better. I raise my eyes and meet his in the mirror, his mouth open on a snarl as he fucks me. Seeing his huge body towering behind me while those massive, tattooed hands clutch my flesh causes me to cry out wordlessly.

The big, scary bastard makes me scream when he hits that spot inside me over and over, his fingers bruising my skin at my neck and hip.

He's my stepbrother, supposed to be family, but all I can think about is how right this is, how good it feels, and how much I want this to last forever. I want to feel that cock in my mouth again and see him come over and over as I do all the dirty, fucked up things in my head.

There's a knock on the door, but Cyrus doesn't stop. He slams into me, holding me as he fucks me ferally. "What?" he yells, uncaring that the person can hear our skin slapping together. The fact that they are listening makes me cry out loudly. He pulls free of my clinging, dripping cunt and flips me before hoisting me onto the sink and slamming back into me. I wrap my legs around his waist and lean back, my tits jiggling from the force of his thrusts as he continues to fuck me.

I can barely catch my breath as moans escape my lips, even as I try to stop them. "Are you two okay?" Asher calls. "Haven't killed her, have you?"

Cyrus leans down and bites my nipple, making me yelp. "Better answer, princess, before he breaks down the door."

"I'm fine!" I shout, my voice tight as my pussy clenches around Cyrus's cock. He chuckles against my skin, continuing to fuck me even with his brother listening through the door.

"You sure, Blair?" Asher calls again, and this time his voice seems choked... with laughter?

"Think he knows, princess? I reckon so. I don't fucking care, I'm not stopping until your cum is dripping down my

cock and you scream so loud everyone hears.”

“Shit,” I hiss, lifting my hips to meet his thrusts. “Let him listen, I don’t give a fuck. Hell, open the door and he can watch.”

Cyrus groans, tightening his grip as he bites my nipple again in warning. “Dirty fucking bitch.”

“You love it,” I retort, making him smirk.

“That I do.”

He shuts me up by leaning in and smashing his lips to mine. Our teeth clack with the force of our coming together. The wet slap of our bodies is loud, and my cream drips down his thighs. Each thrust of his huge cock drags along my nerves, sending me higher and higher. When his hand slips down to my pussy, pinching my clit, he finally does as he promised...

He makes me scream.

I yell into his mouth, jerking as I come so hard I almost black out. I hear him grunt as he slams into me over and over before stilling and filling me with his own release. The feel of his cum inside of me, my stepbrother’s cum, causes me to cry out again as I drop back.

I’m panting and sweating but fucking satisfied.

When the aftershocks pass, he pulls free of my body and falls back to the other wall. Those dark eyes stay focused on me, and they look almost... soft. Fuck, fuck, fuck. No. I wanted a hard, angry fuck.

“Princess,” he purrs.

Shit.

I almost kick myself. Once again, I let my emotions control me, and now look. I quickly disentangle myself, and after pulling on my clothes as he watches with a confused frown, I rush from the bathroom, leaving him staring after me.

I end up leaving the house entirely. My worry and panic overwhelm me as I rush to my car and gun it. They all know what I’ve done, and anxiety circles in my head as I drive and

drive until it's dark, and then I head back and sneak up to my room.

No one else is awake, and I still outside of Bray's door, debating if I should see if he's awake so he can fight my demons with me, but that's not fair, so I slip into my room and throw myself on my bed. I should shower, but I kind of like the feeling of him still being with me.

Fuck, I'm messed up.

I smack the bed again and flip, angry at myself. Turning with a muffled groan, I hit my pillow over and over until something white sticks out from it, then I freeze.

Heart pounding, I pull the paper free and unfold it, and my breath stills in my chest. There, in an achingly beautiful drawing, is me... from today. I'm standing at the table with my eyes narrowed, almost shooting fire, and my lips are in a snarl. It's so well drawn it almost feels lifelike, and the emotions leaking from it feel real. I flip it over to see words scrawled on the back in an endearing scribble.

Even in our weakest moment, we have strength and beauty.

Asher

It makes me smile. I fold it and put it back under my pillow as everything else fades for a moment. I just lie here, imagining him drawing me. How did he know I needed to see that? That my life was spiralling again, and my own actions were once again getting me into shit?

Fuck, I screwed Cyrus.

What will the repercussions be? But even as I wonder, I don't regret it. It was great sex—no, it was incredible sex. Some of the best I've ever had, and the fact it felt dirty and wrong only made it that much better. No matter what happens because of it, I can't help thinking it was worth it to destroy that carefully constructed anger, to see past the hate to the sexual, dominant man beneath.

Even if he destroys me because of it.

I won't go down without a fight... I never do, after all.

“Bear,” he whispers, and I close my eyes as his low, pain-filled voice fills my head. “It’s okay, look away, don’t watch.”

“Please,” I beg, tears dripping from my eyes as I plead for his life. “Please don’t, let him go—”

“Bear,” he coughs, but I ignore him as my own pain and hopelessness only grows. Fear pounds through me so hard I’m choking on it.

“Please,” I implore, meeting his eyes and shivering at the coldness I see there.

He’s a killer no matter what he says. It’s there in his eyes, even as they lighten with something akin to love.

“If you love me, you won’t kill him,” I sob.

His low, bone-chilling voice fills the space, making more tears roll down my cheeks. I almost shrink as he steps closer. “Soon you won’t have to question my love.”

I jolt awake, fully clothed and coated in a cold sweat. My heart hammers and tears fall down my cheeks. I wipe them away angrily before curling in on myself, and then I breathe deeply to slow my heart and ease the fear shivering through me.

Lucas, I’m sorry...



Chapter Twenty Six

Cyrus

I lie in my bed, angry at myself, but not for crossing the line. I can't regret it, not with her scent still on my fingers, tongue, and cock, making me hard all over again. I'm used to crossing lines, to doing what others say is wrong. It's what Crew is, after all, but Blair...

Fuck, there was more than just sex there. I could feel the connection winding through us. Our emotions were heightened from the fight, and when we took it out on each other, it felt... different than it ever had. I didn't want to let her go. I didn't want to fuck her, fill her with my cum, and leave her there. I wanted... fuck, I wanted to make sure she was okay, and that pisses me the fuck off.

What is she doing to us?

Isn't it bad enough my brothers have claimed her as our own, as Crew? Now I've gone and fucked the one person in this fucking world I should have never touched. Not because she's my stepsister or too real... but because Blair is dangerous.

To my family, to my control, and to my heart.

It's clear her mother is a real piece of shit. I thought Asher's was bad, even though he romanticises her. At least she truly loved him—unlike Blair's—just not enough to stop sticking that shit in her body, even when she was pregnant with him. She told our father it was to forget, to forget... forget what? How she fucked a married man and got pregnant? Broke up a marriage?

Our father is no saint, he's always looking for love, sometimes in the wrong places. Our mother was a cold, gold-digging bitch. It was obvious there was no love between them, so of course he found it elsewhere... but fuck. He got his mistress pregnant, and that pissed off our mummy dearest. But our dear old dad could never be an asshole, so he paid for the baby and everything she might need. He bought her a house and a car, paid her bills, and even tried to be there for her though she wouldn't have it. Then, the money and items started to disappear, sold for drugs. He didn't want to believe it, especially since Asher was a baby and her life. It seemed like she was finally turning over a new leaf for him.

I'd never met him, of course, since our cunt of a mother wouldn't let us. I was angry at first, sure, but he was family, another brother, and maybe one not as crazy as Bray. Then one day, he showed up here with just a backpack, a blanket, a picture of her, and an apology. She left him to try and get clean, she said. My dad took him in and raised him. Mother didn't like that... shit, the trouble it caused.

But I knew after one look into those bright eyes as he stood there crying and holding his bag... I knew he was my brother and I would do anything to protect him, even at eight years old. I shielded him from our mother's wrath, helped raise him with Bray, and the three of us became inseparable. It was us against the world...

I grab my phone, not for the first time, to dial some contacts to find his mother. He says he doesn't want to, that if she wants to find him she knows where he is, but he has an artist's heart. All soft and yearning, just like her. She was a singer, after all, but we both know the truth. She is either long

dead with a needle in her arm or she doesn't care enough to come back.

I'm surprised Dad hasn't tried to find her. Honestly, I think she was the only woman he ever truly loved. He found what he needed in her, but life got in the way, and now he buries himself in these cold, greedy women to forget. And Asher? Asher paints his pain. He may have us, a family, but he lost his mother, just like us... and it seems just like Blair.

Her mother may be here, but Blair lost her a long time ago. The way Meredith treated her tonight was the same way our mother treated me, just not so much Bray. She loved Bray, her little beautiful baby boy. She showed him off and doted on him when she remembered she had kids. Me? She hated me because I saw her for who she truly was. I tried to protect him from that side of her, from the callousness she was capable of. Who protected Blair from that?

Tonight, I saw the jabs hit home. They were delivered in the same way my mother used to attack me, ripping me up and replacing any sort of love I had for her and this world with nothing but anger and pain.

Fuck.

She was almost crying when she left. Blair tried to hide it, tried to conceal what was going through her head, but I saw past it. I saw into those eyes and saw the demons she was fighting, so much like my own.

Already irritated with myself and her, I leap to my feet and jerk my door open before storming down the hallway. My hand is on her door before I hear low murmurs and a familiar voice.

Bray.

Jealousy surges through me for a moment as I let my hand fall, and then a smile curls my lips. Good, he should be there for her. He can comfort her, I can't. It's not who I am. I can't bare myself to someone that way, because to offer comfort, you have to make yourself weak. You have to let yourself feel what that person is feeling, and I can't. It will skew my

judgement; it will make it impossible for me to hate her. I turn away and head back to my room.

I need to be able to kill her if need be, to destroy her to save my family if I need to.

It's... good she's not alone.

I will never be what Blair needs.

I'm too scarred, jaded, and angry at the world. She may be tough, she might be angry and reckless like me, but she has this inner softness. I saw it earlier in her actions, in the way she loves her friend and protects those she believes need it.

I have no softness, no weakness.

Except for her, it seems.



Chapter Twenty Seven

Blair

There is a strange truce, a peace, in the air between us.

Cyrus doesn't snarl at me, but it could be the post sex glow. He doesn't speak, but he doesn't threaten to kill me, so that's always good. Asher hums as he lies with his head on my lap as he draws, his tongue caught in his lips in concentration, while Bray does sit-ups near the TV as I watch. It's almost relaxing.

I hate it. It's like I'm waiting for the fight, the judgement. They have to know I slept with Cyrus... yet they have said nothing.

Bray slept in my bed all night again, just slept and held me, keeping my demons at bay with his touch alone. I thought the other night might have been a fluke, but I had no nightmares last night, and for the first time in a year I feel... rested. I'm fully awake and aware, not like a ghost wandering around in a constant state of tiredness.

I woke up before Bray and showered and dressed and came in here. Asher made me breakfast, and we ate together before the others slowly trickled in, and now they are acting like it's no problem I'm here. Cyrus scrolls through his phone,

his arm draping across the back of the sofa as his fingers touch my hair. He freezes before relaxing, and without looking at me, he starts to twiddle the ends as if he doesn't even realise he's doing it.

I feel like I'm in the fucking twilight zone.

Since I got here, we have been fighting, flirting, or causing chaos. This peace is weird. It makes me want to start shit just to see their reaction, but then Faye's words come back to me, reminding me I destroy things so I don't get hurt. I don't want to do that. I really don't, and I know if I stay, I will. Years of trauma and experience fuel me until the urge is so strong I jump up.

"I gotta go, see you later," I blurt before I grab my bag and keys. They watch me with confusion.

Asher sits up with a frown. "Go where?" he asks, but I'm already gone.

They are too much, too consuming. I know I promised to give it a chance, but I feel their eyes on me. They know I fucked Cyrus, know I slept with Bray. They see too much, know too much, and I can't breathe, so I get the fuck out of there before I hurt them or worse... I let them in and they see every fucked up piece of me. Bray is already getting close, pulling back layer after layer, and even Cyrus and Asher... Asher is so sweet, he sneaks past my walls without me even noticing.

I don't know if I'm ready for that, but I feel like I have no choice. They aren't giving me one.

I need to forget, for just a moment, the way Faye cried, the way Cyrus tasted, touched me, and fucked me, and the way Bray's arms felt as I slept without nightmares for the first time ever. And then there's the way I felt when I found Asher's drawing...

I just need to forget, to numb my brain from all the worry, fear, and pain. After tonight, I'll try, really try, to let people in and let them close. I'll try to patch things up with Faye, if she'll let me, and I'll do right by her this time. I'll not even

push my infuriatingly sexy stepbrothers away if that's what they want. I'll be a better friend to Allegra and Lexi. Most of all, I'll be kinder to myself. I'll forgive myself because it wasn't my fault.

It took all this time to admit it, but what happened wasn't my fault. It was tragic, horrendous, and will scar me for life, but I was not to blame for it. It's time I let that sink in, time I let it stop controlling me. There are bad people in this world and a lot of fucked up shit happens, but I cannot be responsible for others' actions. All I need to worry about are my own.

It's only early afternoon after Bray and I slept in, though, so there aren't any parties or anywhere for me to go. I pull up and search my socials for all the people who have added me since I moved here, looking for anything to do. I find it on Walker's. There's a car meet and BBQ happening not too far away, and it looks like there are a lot of people there, people I recognise, and booze. I even open my texts to hit up Faye before closing the app, locking my phone, and tossing it away. She wants time from me, and I'll give her that. I'll give myself that.

I find the place easily enough and park towards the back with a row of pimped out Subarus, which makes me snort. The owners are showing them off, revving their engines and flicking on their LED lights as a group of men drink beer and watch. They spot me, admiring my car, and then look shocked when a woman gets out. I wink before locking it and walking away. There are groups of people lying on the grass, some sitting on coats and blankets, others eating and drinking. There are even some in a river, swimming and having fun. Behind us are trees, blocking off the field and river, the sun shining down on us.

To the left is an old farmhouse and barn. The house looks old and unkempt, but the barn has clearly been turned into a hangout spot. There are lights strung across the beams, and the huge barn door is pushed open so I can see inside. Some of the stalls have been ripped out and turned over to make a bar and beer pong area. There are porta potties at the back, some kegs, and hay still covering the floor.

It's cute and different than all the rich boy parties I've been to. It's more low key and less about money, which is probably why I don't spot a lot of the rich girls from the city here with their teetering heels. It's mainly a lot of guys and some of the chill girls I've met. I spot Walker dive-bombing the water and smirk as I head over to one of the freezer chests. I pull a Bud, crack off the cap, and down some of the cool bottle. The condensation drips down my hand as I close my eyes and tip my head back, breathing for a minute. There's no one here with expectations of me, no one picking me apart or trying to make me reveal all my dark secrets. I'm just me.

Maybe some may find that sad or lonely, but honestly, everyone needs to relax and forget every now and again, to just be a stranger in a crowd with no expectations or concerns. Sometimes it's nice to not have to be... you.

But then my world comes crashing down around me as reality sets in. I wipe my mouth and search the crowd, and I catch a few looks as people whisper. I can't be a stranger. Here, I'm the girl who fucked Cyrus's girlfriend, who starts fights and races cars. Here, I'm the girl they are all curious about, wondering if I'm part of Crew. Chugging the beer, I toss it in the trash and grab another, quickly getting rid of the top as I look around for anyone who's not staring and whispering. It seems being with the Crew brothers gains you a lot of attention. Before, I could have slipped into the crowd. Some would have known me, but to most, I was forgettable. Now I stand out, now they stare, watching and wondering. I even see one person taking a picture, and I frown, wondering if it's to send to Cyrus or their group chat.

Turning away, I genuinely smile when I see Walker climbing from the water. He shakes off his hair and runs a towel over his chest, then his eyes meet mine and his lips quirk up. He was good in bed, that's for sure, but he also feels safe. Nice. He wanders over, flashing his straight white teeth in a smile.

"Fancy seeing you here. I figured those Crew boys would have you tied up somewhere."

“How did you know?” I gasp. “Don’t worry, I broke the zip ties and made a run for it.”

“Well, if anyone could, it’s you,” he jokes. “I would ask if you want a drink” —he looks at my beer pointedly— “but it seems like you’re sorted.”

“I made myself at home.” I toast and take a swig.

“Good, it’s pretty chilly here, if you haven’t guessed.”

“What, no snobby rich girls in designer dresses and heels?”

“Nope. Just water, sex, and a good time.” He laughs. “It’s not all rich parties like you’ve seen. I don’t even usually go to them, but my sister made me.” He grins wider. “But you know her pretty well, I’m guessing.”

“Well enough.” I wink, loving that he’s not acting jealous or weird. After all, we just had a quickie.

“Come on, let me introduce you to some people.” He turns and starts to walk across the grass, so I follow him over to a group of lads. I always felt like a sore thumb in those rich parties anyway, like they all knew I came from the streets and stolen money. Here? Booze, drugs, and the sun? It feels right. No one is judging what you’re wearing, how much your jewellery costs, or how many followers you have.

It’s just about having a good time.

The group consists of five lads all around our age. There’s a redhead who grins as Walker introduces me. “This is Blair, she’s cool. Blair, this brighter than the sun idiot is Malcolm.” He cheers me with his beer before pointing at an attractive blond-haired, blue-eyed man. “Billy.” I nod, and he introduces the other three as Dustin, Jay, and Will.

“Shit, she’s a Crew girl, isn’t she? They aren’t going to kick our asses for looking at her, are they?” Billy teases.

“I’m no one’s girl, cutie.” I wink, even as annoyance fills me. “If anyone’s gonna kick your ass, it’s me.” That makes them laugh.

“So, for real though, there’s a rumour you’re their sister?” Jay asks. His wet black hair is pushed back, and his beard is untrimmed, but he’s built. What’s in the water around here? “That true? Because I gotta tell you, that’s a damn shame for them... not for us though.”

“Yeah, if you like your head attached, I’d stay away though,” Will warns.

“Stepsister,” I confirm. “And they won’t kill you.”

“Not what I heard,” Dustin inserts with a laugh.

I narrow my eyes. “What have you heard?”

“There was word sent out last night that you’re off limits,” Billy tells me, looking me over with a hungry gaze. “Unless we want our asses kicked and our bodies to turn up in the water.”

“Basically, they will hurt us and then kill us for even looking at you.” Jay shrugs.

“No shit?” Walker grins and winks at me. “Good job this only just came into effect.”

“Fuck them.” I snort and down my beer. “They don’t own me. If they try to hurt whoever I want to fuck, I’ll kill them.”

“Damn, that’s hot,” Billy mutters, licking his lips. “You taking on the Crew? You’ve got some big balls, girl.”

“You know it. If you’re good, I might even let you see them.” That makes them laugh again, even as I debate how best to murder my three new stepbrothers. How dare they warn people off me? I can fuck who I want. Just because I fucked Cyrus and made nice doesn’t mean they get to control me. I am my own person. Maybe that’s why I do it. Maybe, just like Faye said, I like to self-destruct. I down some shots, grab Billy’s hand, and drag him behind the barn as Walker laughs and Jay catcalls us.

Fuck the Crew brothers. I’ll do whoever I want, and they can’t do a fucking thing about it.

“You’re hot—” Billy starts, but I don’t want his words. I turn and press my hands to Billy’s bare, golden chest and push.

He falls back against the barn wall with a grin as I plaster myself to his chest.

His head descends and he kisses me hard, his teeth hitting mine—he's not great at it. His hands roam my body, grabbing my ass and squeezing. I close my eyes, and the image of Cyrus's expert hands touching me comes to mind. I try to push it away, to forget the way he tasted and the way he kissed me so hard and perfectly, dominating my mouth.

Fuck, am I messing up? Am I using this to hurt them? To push them away? Is Faye right? I turn my head as I debate it. If I do this, there's no going back. It will hurt them... I think. I'm being impulsive because I'm pissed about what they did. They probably said it as some fucked up way to protect me, not control me. Not like him...

Fuck. Billy's lips run down my neck as I open my eyes, ready to push him away. I can't do this. Even if I hate them, even if they annoy me and I want to jump their bones and also kill them.

I can't keep self-destructing, not just for them and Faye... but for me. I promised to try harder, to trust in these foreign feelings and not do stupid shit just because it's easier not to think or feel. But as my eyes open, I meet three hard gazes, and my heart drops.

I straighten in Billy's unaware, clumsy grasp as excitement fills me. I've just dared the Crew brothers to back up their claim, and from the look in their eyes, they plan to do just that.

I turn to Billy to warn him, but he smashes his lips to me again, even as I fight to push him away. I manage and stumble back, wiping my mouth.

"Blair," comes a snap. I turn and groan, meeting all three sets of the Crew brothers' eyes. Shit. I'm so busted.

"Hello, trouble." Asher grins.

"Who's your friend?" Bray says. "Don't be shy now, babe." He looks at Billy, who has turned pale. I cross my arms and step in front of him.

"No one." I sigh. "What are you guys doing here?"

“We were bored, and then we heard some rumours that our girl was teasing all the boys,” Bray replies.

“And we came to find out,” Asher finishes with a friendly grin, but then he turns to Billy and his smile turns sharklike. “What’s your name?”

“Erm, Billy,” he stutters out, holding his hands up. “I meant no harm, she said—”

“Oh, I can imagine what she said,” Cyrus snarls and throws me a glare. “But we will deal with her later. However, you, Billy, touched what’s ours.”

“Fuck, man, I didn’t know, okay? Please, I’ll pretend I was never here—”

“But we saw you.” Bray shrugs with an aw-shucks smile, but his eyes are angry. “We saw you touching her, kissing her... What do you think, brothers?”

“Make an example, I say,” Asher offers.

“I agree, then no others will attempt this again. Clearly they believe we have gone soft.”

“Oh, stop that,” I snap. “You fucking morons.” I stomp towards them. “The whole fake threat, talking among—” I gasp as Cyrus grabs me and yanks me closer. I fall into his chest, and he glares down at me.

“You should know by now, baby, we don’t fake anything. Don’t think you’re off the hook either, but it seems we need to remind everyone why we are in charge.” He leans down, getting in my face. “Now, for once, shut the fuck up or you’ll be in more shit than you already are.”

“For kissing some rando?” I retort, struggling in his arms, but he easily passes me off to Bray who holds me back. “Seriously? What the fuck? It’s not like you’re my boyfriend. I can fuck whoever I want—”

Bray’s hand covers my mouth, and he leans down to my ear as I watch Cyrus and Asher converge on Billy. “Better listen to him, Darling, and not anger him further. It’s not personal, it’s business. If they ignore our warnings, it could

lead to them thinking they can ignore everything we say, then we would have to hurt a lot more people. Better make an example... and yeah, okay, it's a little personal. No one touches you but us."

I struggle in his arms before biting his hand. He hisses, even as he grinds his cock into my ass. "Stop biting, I like it," he snarls before biting my neck. "Or I'll do it back." I jerk from the force, and a gasp leaves my lips, even as my pussy clenches. He kisses and licks it better, and I shiver, making him chuckle. My eyes are wide, and I watch as Asher and Cyrus still. Billy looks terrified, and I feel horrible. I led him back here, he shouldn't get hurt because of me...

He nips again, rubbing his hard cock against my ass. What's fucking happening? Why are they suddenly all over me? Is it because I slept with Cyrus or something else? Either way, it seems Bray is sick of pretending and is just outright showing me what he wants—me.

He licks up my neck, and my head tilts all by itself to give him better access. His teeth catch on my ear as he licks the shell. "You can't save him; he touched you. He touched what's ours." I growl at that, and he chuckles. "So watch and learn, Darling, what happens when you try to fuck a rando. The sooner you learn that, the less bloodshed there will be. This city is ours, and you are ours, so get used to it." He bites down as Cyrus stops circling Billy. Asher pushes him forward, and Billy stumbles as he stands in front of Cyrus who towers over him, his face hard and angry. The difference between the two men is shocking, proving I had been aching for a pale imitation, something to satisfy the lust... that I have for them.

Not Billy.

"I saw you kiss her," Cyrus comments conversationally, and then he punches him right in the mouth. Billy falls into Asher with a groan, his hands going to his lips. Asher laughs and shoves him forward, yanking his hands away and holding them behind his back.

"I saw him touch her with these," Asher offers cruelly. His eyes slide to mine, and I finally see the other side of Asher—

the Crew brother, not the painter, not the gentle artist. I see the fucking gang member he is and just why everyone is afraid of all of them, not just Cyrus. They vibrate with barely restrained violence, but each move is calculated to cause harm, not kill, and send a message.

I'm theirs.

It's what they are proving, but they have another thing coming if they think I'm just going to let them claim me like that. I'm not a fucking pushover or a toy. I'm a fucking fighter, and they might think I'll just lie back and become their little shared cunt, but I'm going to ruin them if they try.

I'm my own person, even if I ache for them. Even if I'm drawn to them. They better start realising I've got my own brain and my own fists, and if they aren't careful, I'll use them on them.

I sag in his arms, and he rewards me, kissing along my neck and thumping pulse, even as my eyes stay on his brothers—but he should know I never give up. Cyrus grabs one of Billy's hands and breaks it, and I make my move as Bray lifts his head to watch. I stomp on his foot and thrust my elbow back, breaking his hold as he groans and stumbles away. Turning, I bring my knee up right into his cock. He drops to his knees, his mouth open on a groan as he covers his jewels with his hands.

I turn back to Cyrus and Asher.

Before Cyrus can snap Billy's other hand, I rush forward and catch his hand mid-air. He looks down at me and then back at Bray and smirks. "Baby—"

I shove his hand back at him. "You touch him again, and I'll shave off your hair and key a cock into your bike while you sleep," I hiss. I mean it, and then I look at Asher. "And I will destroy all of your paintings. I'm not fucking around here, you assholes." Asher steps back, his eyes sad as he watches me. Cyrus just glares at me, and I stare him down until he rolls his eyes.

“Let him go.” Billy runs away instantly, and I run my eye across all three of them.

“Fucking assholes, all of you.” I throw them my middle finger, turn, and storm away. I hear the commotion from the others at the party, even Walker’s worried voice, and it makes me sad. I’ll probably never be accepted or invited again after this.

I’m also pissed as hell, horny from Bray’s touch and the pure possessiveness and controlled rage contained within my stepbrothers, and annoyed at how hot watching them hurt someone just for touching me made me. Pissed, horny, and annoyed is not a good combination. I go to leave after screaming at them, but they’ve had enough of my shit. Asher scoops me up and tosses me over his shoulder. I beat his back, hissing at him, but he just spanks me and ignores my protests. I expect this from Cyrus, maybe even Bray... but Asher?

What. The. Fuck.

He rushes across the lot, the other two on our heels, and to my car. Bray hooks his hands in my pocket, grabs my keys, and unlocks it as Cyrus opens the back door and jerks his head at Asher.

“Put her inside,” he demands.

“Don’t you even think about it—” I’m thrown inside, and I land with an *oomph* on the backseat. My legs hang out of the side door before they are yanked farther out, and Cyrus holds them as he glares down at me.

“Your turn, baby.” He smirks.

“My turn?” I repeat dumbly, propped up on my elbows before my head is pulled back by my hair. I meet Bray’s eyes at the other open door.

“Punishment.” He smirks. “Time for your punishment, Darling.”

“If you fucking try, I’ll cut your balls off and shove them down Bray’s throat,” I warn Cyrus. Bray chuckles as he shuts the door and gets in the front passenger seat. Asher slides into

the driver's seat as Cyrus climbs in and closes the door, trapping me with them.

"Here's the thing, baby," Bray says, turning to watch as I huff and fight off Cyrus. "We claimed you, you're ours." He shrugs with a smile. "No one will ever touch you again."

"Want to bet?" I snarl.

Cyrus yanks my head back and gets in my face, his dark, dangerous eyes locking me in place. My pussy clenches as I recall the way he felt inside me, and he grins like he knows it, the fucker. "You want to come, baby girl? You want to fuck? Then fine, but it will only be with one of us."

I narrow my eyes, my chest heaving with anger and desire as I kick at his legs. "Fuck you."

"That's the plan. This will teach you for being a brat."

I turn my head as his head swoops down to kiss me. "Fuck you, you'll never taste me again," I snarl. I'm angry for getting myself into this situation, angry that I'm turned on, knowing Bray and Asher are watching. It's fucked up. They are watching their brother trying to fuck me, and they don't care. Why does that thought make me want to shout in happiness and give into all these twisted desires to have them all?

"Such a liar, baby," he murmurs as he yanks my head back around, my eyes meeting his once more. "Your cum will be dripping down my dick, and we both know it. You can fight all you want, it only makes me harder." He grinds his hard cock into my stomach. "Bray, make sure no one disturbs us. No one sees her but us. Asher, turn on the heat. We wouldn't want her cold, now would we?" They both laugh and do as they are told.

"This is so fucked up!" I yell, twisting in his arms to avoid him.

"It is, and you love it," Cyrus snarls.

"You're Crew now, Blair, so you better get used to it," Asher comments, the usually nice brother not offering me an inch of escape. Are they really okay with watching their

brother fuck me? But as I glance over, I see they are more than okay—they are hard.

What the fuck is happening?

It's like some bad porno, apart from the fact it's got me dripping into my panties and wanting it so badly I'm almost choking on my desire for these assholes. Cyrus slams me into the door as the locks sound, sitting me up as he yanks off my shorts. I kick at him or help him, I'm not sure which, but they are gone in an instant. He pulls a knife, and with a grin, cuts away my panties. He chucks them to Bray who groans and fists them as his eyes meet mine. "I'll add these to my collection," he teases.

My gaze is jerked back to Cyrus as he pulls my legs open, drops to his knees on the seat, and buries his face in my dripping cunt. I cry out, slamming my hand onto the roof of the car before grabbing the oh shit handle to hold on.

Fine, I'll let him eat me. I get to come, and that's all I wanted—like I had a choice, like he would have let me get away. This is my punishment, I realise. He's proving that anytime I try to get my pleasure elsewhere, they will find me and take it for themselves. He lays me bare before his brothers, my hard nipples rubbing on my top as my eyes close. My thighs open wider as his beard chafes the sensitive skin. His tongue drags down my cunt, licking me like I'm his favourite dessert, as his fingers dig into my thighs and hold me tightly against his face so I can't escape.

"How does she taste?" Bray asks. "I've always wanted to know."

His words make me moan and grind into his brother's face. I feel their eyes watching me, and I want to put on a show. I want them to be as wild and desperate with desire as I am. My fucked up brain needs the Crew brothers to crave me so badly they are helpless to resist.

I reach down and pull my shirt up, baring my breasts. I hear an inhale and then a curse, causing me to grin as I thrust my chest out. Cyrus sucks on my clit hard in punishment for teasing them.

“Shit,” Bray mutters. “I’m gonna fucking come in my pants,” he protests as Cyrus dips his tongue inside me, making my mouth drop open. The pleasure builds higher and higher with each touch.

My eyes open, locking on his dark head, and I anchor my other hand in his hair, holding him there as I buck my hips and grind into his mouth. I hear a grunt and look up, meeting Asher’s gaze. He’s watching me carefully, observing my movements, likely analysing and remembering them for later. Bray is staring out of the front window, and from here, I can see his hands fisted on his jean-clad thighs as if he can ignore me, so I purposely moan, letting every little noise slip free.

Cyrus’s talented tongue alternates between spearing me and dragging up my folds and flicking my clit before his teeth graze my nub, making me explode. Their eyes, his mouth, it’s too much. I come all over his tongue. He licks it up and sticks his tongue deeper inside of me, tasting every bit of my release as my thighs quiver. I jerk and twist from the force of my release, my heart pounding as my eyes slide shut. It came on so suddenly and leaves just as quickly, making me slump into him.

Holy fuck.

He lifts his head, looking smug as he licks his lips. His beard and cheeks glisten with my cream as he sits back on his heels, wipes his face, and then licks his hand clean. Fuck, why is that so hot? Not to mention anyone could see us. The windows are fogging, but we aren’t exactly hidden. They could see me getting eaten, getting fucked, and it makes me want to be seen, for others to know Asher and Bray are watching their brother fuck me.

“Only one? Some punishment,” I taunt, and he chuckles, leaning down until he kisses me hard. I taste myself on his tongue.

“We’re just getting started, brat,” he says as he pulls away. “We aren’t leaving here until you’re dripping with my cum and can’t try to run and fuck anyone else again.”

“I don’t think you have it in you,” I goad, drifting my hands up to my chest. I tweak my nipples and groan as his eyes track the movements. With a smirk, I trail one down my belly to my pussy and push two fingers inside me. My hips lift as I start to fuck myself on them.

Cyrus’s hand grabs mine, grinding the bones as I gasp, my fingers still inside my fluttering channel. “Only we get to fuck you, remember?” he snarls, pulling my fingers free before his hand covers my pussy. I grind into it, watching him, and he pulls away and slams two fingers into me. I jerk and cry out as I lift up, but he doesn’t let me pull away. He fucks them in and out of me with hard, quick thrusts, dragging them along my nerves as his thumb rubs my clit.

I know he’ll have me coming in no time, so I do the only thing I can—I go along with it, getting what I wanted. I turn my head and reach my hand over the seat. “You wanted a taste?” I ask Bray, wiggling my cream-covered fingers at him. He groans, his eyes locking on mine as he sucks them into his mouth. My breath catches as I watch his tongue lave my fingers, catching every droplet of my cum.

Cyrus twists his fingers inside me and adds another, making me fall back into the seat. My fingers pop from Bray’s mouth as I’m dragged down the seat until I’m on my back. He covers me, still fucking me with his fingers. His tongue licks between my breasts before he turns his head and sucks one of my nipples into his mouth. I cry out as I fuck myself on his fingers. He flicks and twists my nipple before doing the same to the other, leaving me a sweaty, wet mess beneath him.

With a twist of his thumb and a pinch of his teeth around my nipple, I come again, crying out into the nearly silent car. He chuckles. The cocky bastard knows I’m already addicted to the brand of pleasure he can give me.

Hard, fast, and unforgiving.

The twisted nature of our taboo relationship only brings it to new heights. His fingers pull free, and he licks them clean. “Tastes like victory, stepsister,” he taunts, but I’m too spent to think of a witty remark.

I'll get him back for it later.

In the meantime, he undoes his jeans, slides the belt off, and palms his hard cock. I lick my lips, remembering how good it felt inside me. I wonder if he will fuck me again, or if I'll let him. I shouldn't, it will only encourage him, all of them, but it seems I'm helpless against the Crew brothers.

He flips me, and my face slams into the seat as my ass is yanked into the air. A moment later, his hard, huge cock slams into me, and I scream. "That's it, baby girl, take all of me. Let every fucker here see who you belong to. Who can fuck you like no one else."

His hand strokes up my spine to my throat before he grips it hard, using it to push and pull me along his dick. I close my eyes, pressing back to meet his thrusts. The stretch of his giant cock inside me feels so fucking good it almost borders on too much. I can't breathe, can't think. I can feel eyes on me, and every fucking person at this party could open the door and record me right now and I wouldn't care—wouldn't let him stop.

Dick this good is dangerous.

My car rocks from the force, the slap of our bodies loud over my constant cries as he hits that spot inside me over and over again. His other hand digs into my hips to control my wild movements. My heart pounds so loudly it roars in my ears, almost obscuring the dirty, raw feral sounds he makes behind me.

I can feel all that power, all that strength behind each thrust and each grip of his hand. He could easily break me. He could choke me, and I wouldn't be able to stop him, but the sense of danger, of power, of being utterly fucking powerless somehow makes me let go.

I close my eyes and just fuck, just meet his thrusts, letting every noise out of my choked throat. The pleasure runs through me like a live wire, concentrated at my pussy where I'm being impaled on his fucking monster cock, remade and reshaped around him.

We hear laughter echoing past the car as people walk by, but he doesn't stop. If anything, he speeds up. He pulls my hair tighter until all I can do is take his fucking. My hand slams into the window, dragging down the fogged glass as I cry out.

His other hand comes down on my ass, hard enough to bruise, and I come again, all over his cock like he promised. He snarls as he fights through my tight channel. He fucks me through the pleasure that's so strong I almost black out, then he suddenly stills, coming with a roar. I feel his release splash inside me.

Slumping forward, I relax in post orgasm bliss as his softening cock slips from my aching pussy. I feel my cream and his cum dripping from me. It was worth it though. I'll have beard burn and aches for a while, but fuck if that wasn't some of the best angry sex of my life. Not to mention the audience. I turn and meet their eyes, and Bray looks pained, but he winks.

"I need to have a talk with my hand," he says, making me laugh as I turn and sit up. Asher gives me some wet wipes I keep in the glove compartment for such occasions, and I clean myself up and get dressed as Cyrus sits back, smirking. He looks proud of himself.

Asshole.

"So why did you leave?" Asher inquires, turning to look at me. He's acting like he didn't just see me get my brains fucked out.

I sit back in the seat and sigh. "I had a fight with Faye and then with everything... it got to be too much," I admit. I don't know why I'm telling them this other than I need someone to talk to.

"You don't need her, only us." Bray shrugs, and I snarl.

"She always comes first?" He laughs and I kick his chair. "She's my best friend. She comes first, you fucking hear me? She was here before you, and she will be here long after you."

“Oh, that’s where you’re wrong, baby girl.” Cyrus smirks at me then leans closer. “But I like your loyalty, and now you know how you feel about the argument.”

Bray grins as I huff, realising he was doing it on purpose.

“Let’s get her home so she can shower and change, and I can wank into her underwear.”

“What?” I ask. “No to the underwear bit. We share a wall, after all.”

“Big party tonight, and you are coming with us,” Cyrus demands.

“I thought you didn’t let anyone in the Crew?” I taunt.

He leans in, grabs my neck, and squeezes. “We don’t, only you, so you better zip that bratty mouth before we fuck it. You’re one of us now, there is no going back.” He kisses me hard and then releases me.

“We’ll follow you home, baby,” Bray tells me, and then they all get out, leaving me panting in the back of my car, my thighs aching and wet.

I swear the Crew brothers are going to be the death of me. I thought I was so smart, that I could play their games and not get burnt, but it seems I’ve been plunged into the fucking fire. I need to find out what being Crew entails before it gets me hurt or worse.

I guess I’m not just their darling anymore...



Chapter Twenty Eight

Blair

Once I put myself together again, I follow them home. Meredith is nowhere to be seen, and neither is their father. Bray whoops, throwing me over his shoulder and carrying me up the stairs as I roll my eyes. He rushes to my room, stepping right into the bathroom and into the shower. I scream as he turns on the water and it sprays us. He laughs and slides me down his soaked body, setting me on my feet. I slap him away with a laugh, grab the knob, and turn the heat up.

“Now get out, I’m getting naked,” I tell him.

He presses against my back and runs his nose up my neck. “Babe, I just saw you naked while my brother ate your cunt, now’s not the time to be shy.”

I turn to face him, planting my hand in the middle of his chest and pushing him into the wall as I plaster myself against him. I glide my nose up his neck, copying his earlier movement. “Babe, I’m not shy,” I tease. “We both know if you stay and watch, you’ll want to touch, and you have to earn my pussy.” I turn away and start to strip.

He groans but slips out of the bathroom, making me laugh. I’ve never had an issue with confidence, I own my body, but

something about the way they watch me only makes me more confident. I want to flaunt it and tease them with it, knowing they crave me like I want them.

This electricity between us all is only getting stronger.

Shaking my head at the absurdity of our situation, I shower, shave, and wash my hair thoroughly, and when I get out, I do a face mask and some toners and moisturisers across my whole body. Next, I repaint my nails, pluck my eyebrows, and then lie on my bed in a towel as I soak up the silence.

It's late afternoon, so I grab my phone and scroll through the notifications, knowing I have time before the party. There's nothing from Faye, and my heart sinks, but I force myself to reply to Allegra's and Lexi's messages to let them know I'm okay. Their worry makes me smile; I'm not as alone as I thought. Sometimes I sink into that darkness when I don't mean to, and everything becomes overwhelming, but a bit of time and perspective can help a lot. Not to mention having people to lean on.

I reply to some messages from girls at work and others asking about me going to the party tonight, and I ignore the ones that want to know if I'm sleeping with the Crew brothers. When I check notifications for social media, there are some tagged photos on Instagram which makes me frown. I didn't pose for any. Most of my posts are of me dancing—it's my escape and my way of combating the stigma of burlesque dancers, and I do pretty well. My frown only increases as I scroll through the images. There are only a few words on the caption.

Crew whore?

They are pictures of me and my stepbrothers—I need to stop calling them that now. There's one where I'm in Cyrus's face and he's smirking down at me. Bray and Asher are there too. The next is of me slung over his shoulder, and the last is of him standing above me as I lie on the backseat of the car. Luckily, I'm still clothed.

Fuck, who is this person? I'm going to kick their ass. I bet it's one of their old flings or girlfriends who's getting jealous,

but the stalker angle has all my alarm bells ringing as the past rears its ugly head. Getting up, I storm into the living room where they are drinking beer and watching a football game.

“Control your sluts,” I seethe. I show them the phone, thrusting it in their faces as they blink in confusion. Bray mutes the TV and peers at the images. “If they take pictures without my consent again and post them anywhere, I will kill them.”

“Wait, who took these?” Bray asks, grabbing the phone before Cyrus snatches it from his hand.

His expression darkens with thunder as he thumbs through them before flinging it at Asher with a snarl. “It’s not one of ours. There were no girls I’ve fucked at that party,” Cyrus growls.

“Me either,” Asher offers.

Bray frowns, trying to think, but he shakes his head. “Nor me.”

“So not a jealous girl.” I shrug, crossing my arms. “But someone did. I don’t appreciate it.”

“We’ll find out who and kick their ass,” Cyrus promises, cracking his knuckles and smiling meanly. “I’ll enjoy it.”

“Me too,” Asher adds, handing the phone back to me. “I’ve reported them for you. They will get taken down. I’m sorry, Blair.”

I relax a little at his sincere apology. “Not your fault,” I grumble. “I just—I don’t like the thought of someone watching me, okay? Find out who it was before I do.” I turn and stomp away. The past is chasing me like a burning fire at my heels.

There’s a bad feeling starting in my belly, which I try to push away. It’s nothing, just a coincidence. It’s just some dude who’s angry at them or a jealous girl.

That’s all.

I need to get drunk to cool the anger inside me. The anger is born of fear of the past, fear of the memories those stupid photographs brought up. I came with the Crew brothers tonight like they asked, riding on Asher's bike as he sped through the city. The freedom it brought settled me a little.

They informed me they had been putting out feelers all afternoon to find out who took them. When I asked who they were, they smiled and told me I was better off not knowing. It makes me wonder just who they are friends with. They run drugs, I know that much, and they are rich and unafraid of the police who clearly want to bring them down.

Just who are the Crew brothers, and what are they capable of?

Shouldn't I know if I'm supposedly part of them now? At first, I thought they were playing at being gangbangers, but I know now, deep down, they are so much more. They are dangerous, deadly, and powerful. I just need to know how powerful.

Not that it will change how I see or treat them. Cyrus will still be an entitled asshole with an epic mouth. Bray will still be a giant flirt who gives the best cuddles. Asher will still be an incredibly talented soft soul.

But I hate being in the dark and not knowing who I'm dealing with. My past has taught me that mistake over and over. Never again.

When we reach the party, I get off Asher's bike, and with a flick of my hair, I walk inside, leaving them to follow after me. Blair waits for no man—or woman. They want to party? Well, so do I, and I won't follow them around like a lost fucking puppy just because we fucked. I'm my own person, and even though they say I'm Crew, it won't change how I act, party, dress, or play. This is my life, not theirs, and they are just along for the ride.

“Blair,” Cyrus barks, but I just shake my ass as I slip through the open front door. I’ve been to a party at this mansion before. There are a lot of rich kids, booze, drugs, and wannabes, but it’s a good time. I make a beeline for the bar and grab a beer before circulating. I shake my hips to the music as I nod and greet people as I pass. People who looked down at me or ignored me before now notice me—I blame the Crew brothers. They treat me with respect and a cautious distance, especially the men, which makes me sigh, even as I search the crowd for the one person I can admit I want to see.

Faye.

Asher is right, I need to make up with her. It’s stupid to fight, she’s my best friend. She was right too. I’m guarding myself so I don’t get hurt, but I can’t walk through life like that. If I’m constantly blocking myself from pain, I block out the love and good stuff too. Faye deserves a better friend, but she’s got me, and I’m not going anywhere. I will make this right and try to open up more. I might never be ready to talk about what happened to me, even my own memories and nightmares block some parts of my past out, but I can offer a sliver. I can let her see inside and hope she sticks around after.

She’s nowhere to be found, though, and I turn with disappointment, chugging the beer before grabbing a shot and tossing that back too. I just hope I’m not too late to salvage our friendship. She was the first person I met in this city, but more than that, she brought me back to life. She taught me to laugh and love again. Sometimes you can find your soulmate in friendship, and I feel like I have with her. I’ve never been this close with someone. Faye slid so easily into my life, and now that she isn’t here, there is a huge hole.

She’s right, I broke her heart and mine in the process. That’s what’s causing this pain I’m trying to numb with booze and cocks.

I spot Leigh then. She’s alone, leaning against a wall with a sad expression, and when I follow her gaze, I realise she’s staring at the Crew brothers as they slap backs, grin, and joke with men on their way to their thrones in the back—three white leather sofas where girls are waiting to fawn all over

them. Their tits are pushed up, their dresses are hiked high, and their fake eyelashes flutter, making me grin before I realise they are Leigh's friends. Shit, how fake are they? Poor girl looks lost as she chugs her drink and turns away. I feel bad for what I did, but I know it was inevitable. Someone would come between her and Cyrus, maybe even him. He never saw her as anything but a fuck, and she deserves so much better than that. I just wish I hadn't been the trigger on the gun.

"Blair," Bray calls, waving me over as he heads to the sofas. I ignore him and go for another drink. A moment later, a hand catches my wrist before dragging me back. I turn and glare at Asher as he grins, pulling me over to Cyrus and Bray. Cyrus glares at anyone who gets too close, while Bray grins and smiles, flirting with the girls and guys surrounding them.

Asher lets go of my hand and drops into the seat next to Cyrus with a grin. "Family sits here." He winks, the bastard, knowing I can't stay mad at his cute smile. I'm about to sit when a redhead drops into Bray's lap and glares at me. I blink before rolling my eyes at her bitchiness.

"No, sit here," Bray says, glaring at the woman as he leans into her. "Move, please."

"I'm just gonna sit here," I start, but he reaches out, captures my hand, and tugs me over before letting go and glaring at the redhead who still sits on his knee.

"Don't you want to sit with me, baby?" she purrs, running her nails down his chest.

"I said fucking move, that's her seat," Bray snaps, his usual flirtatious nature morphing into anger.

The redhead glances from me to him in confusion. She's his type for sure, but he doesn't care. Bray leans back, as if he's trying to avoid touching her, as she rubs herself on his knee. With a bounce, he sends her flying to the floor, and he peers at her in disgust before his eyes move back to me. His scowl disappears into a grin.

"Come on, Darling, I got a seat right here for you." He pats his thighs, and with a roll of my eyes, I step over the girl and

drop onto his lap. I ignore the whispers and stares as my stepbrother's hand strokes down my back to cup my ass. He runs his nose up my shoulder and neck before reaching my ear, his warm, bourbon scented breath washing over me. I shiver as he presses his mouth closer.

"You're mine tonight," he murmurs, and I tremble from the hunger in his tone, even as I smile and roll my hips so he can feel my pussy.

"I'm no one's, baby, unless I want to be," I say loud enough for all of them to hear. Even as I speak, my eyes go to Asher as a guy leans into him, whispering in his ear. Asher's expression turns serious for a moment. The guy isn't our age, he's older for sure and covered in tattoos. Who is he? When he walks away, Asher leans into Cyrus. I can't hear them over the music, but Bray doesn't seem concerned, still feeling me up. Cyrus turns to Bray and then twists his lips and relaxes back when he catches me watching.

"What is it?" I ask.

"Nothing, just business," he answers before his eyes scan over the crowd.

"Aren't I part of that now? You told everyone, including me, I'm Crew. What does that mean?"

"Nothing for you to worry about," Bray says. "Just look pretty on my lap."

Anger flows through me. "I'm not a fucking trophy," I snap, sitting rigidly, "or something to show off."

"That's exactly what you are," Cyrus teases.

"Fuck you. What do you do apart from run drugs?" I demand.

That gets his attention, and he leans closer angrily. "Keep that quiet. You don't need to worry about what we do. It's family only."

"I thought I was family," I retort, my eyebrow arched.

He scowls but ignores me, and I fume. So they won't even tell me? All this going around and telling everyone I'm family

now, Crew, and yet I don't know what that means. They have painted targets on my back with that name, but I have no idea who my enemies are now. I'm just supposed to expect it and let them run everything and look after me like a weak little bitch.

Fuck that.

I silently rage, and a few moments later, Cyrus stands and stops before me. "Dance with me," he demands.

I glare at him harder, crossing my arms. So now he wants to get along? I'm good enough to fuck, flirt, and dance with, but not enough to know what being Crew means?

"I don't want to dance. Fuck you," I snarl as Bray laughs.

"Did I fucking stutter, princess? I said get your ass up and dance with me."

I glare, and he leans down and drags me off Bray's lap. He ignores my protests as he pulls me through the crowd to the dance floor. Cyrus spins me so my back is against his chest before placing his hands on my hips as he starts to move.

I don't move for a moment, glaring as people throw us glances. He ignores them, grinding his hips. Fine, if he wants to play this game, then I'll play too, and I'll do it better.

Leaning into him, I start to twist my hips, grinding and rocking to the music. I move slowly at first before I lift my arm and wrap it around his neck. He groans, his hard cock digging into my ass as he moves his hips to match mine. We are so close I can hear the pounding of his heart as I roll and grind.

With a smirk, I lower, dragging my hand down his chest as I widen my stance and slut drop before bending forward and standing. Cyrus's hands snap out and drag me back again, digging in so hard I gasp.

He nips my ear. "Don't tease, or I'll fuck you right here in front of everyone. Let them see just how much Crew you are."

I grin before turning and hiking my leg up onto his hip and swaying with him. His eyes are hungry as he holds my ass as

we basically fuck on the dance floor. We have eyes only for each other until mine flit over his shoulder for a second and connect with Leigh's. Instantly, a bucket of water is thrown over me at the hurt in her gaze, and then she turns and rushes outside.

Sighing, I lean into Cyrus. "I'll be back," I mutter before breaking free of his arms and following after her. I don't owe her an apology. They weren't together or dating, just fucking, but that doesn't stop the guilt I feel or the desire I have to see if she's okay.

Some guy falls back into me, laughing, but I push him away with a grin at the cheers that sound as he falls to the floor. Slipping out of the rear glass doors, I spot her retreating back near the pool. Hurrying after her, I find her sitting near the hot tub on a sun lounger with her knees to her chest as she stares at the sky.

"Hey," I call, my hands in my pockets. She jerks at my voice, and I see tears in her eyes. She quickly turns away and wipes them. Sighing, I move closer and perch on the end of the wooden sun lounger. "I'm sorry."

"What for?" she snaps. "Giving me a mind-blowing orgasm or being all over Cyrus? Newsflash, I don't care, he fucks everyone that moves."

"He does." I nod. "And he doesn't give a fuck about them. I won't sit here and lie to you, I slept with him." She flinches and turns to me in shock. "It happened. I don't regret it, but I do regret that it brings you pain." Rubbing my hair, I smile guiltily at her. "You're a nice girl, you are. I'll admit I used you to get back at him, and I shouldn't have. I enjoyed it though, and I know you did too. But I meant what I said, you deserve better than him, and you deserve better than those friends in there fawning over him now that you're out of the picture."

"I don't give a fuck," she insists, but her lips tremble. "I don't need them. I'm the most popular girl in... well, I was. It doesn't matter."

“Yes, it does,” I counter, reaching over and covering her hand. “It matters. You are allowed to be upset and angry. If you need to hate me, I understand, but I’ve also been told I’m a good friend. I know you cared for Cyrus, maybe even loved him, and I’m sorry that I pushed that in your face in there. That was fucked, and I should have thought of someone other than me.”

“I hated you at first,” she admits truthfully, “because I saw the way he looked at you, the way everyone looked at you. You’re so beautiful and strong, so confident. You don’t care what anyone thinks, and you have the rocker, badass thing going on that I wish I could pull off. You’re fearless, and you had your pick of men and women.” She laughs. “I think that’s why I hated you so much. When I first saw him watching you, first saw you together, I knew. It was a spark, a feeling, a pull like you were always meant to be. And I knew then he was never mine. How could he be when he was always yours? I was just saving your seat. Like me, those girls in there will never be enough. They will never be you. I don’t hate you, how could I? I was holding on so hard, gripping this relationship—if I could even call it that—like it’s water. It kept on dripping through the cracks until I finally realised it was just easier to let it go. When I find it, when I find what you have with them—” I go to say I have nothing, but she cuts me off. “You do, what you have is... real. Raw. Meant to be. Everyone can see that even if you guys fight it. But when I find that, it won’t be water. It will be rock—solid, strong, unmovable, and forever. Don’t be a fool, Blair. Don’t throw away something so pure and hard-won. Something we search forever for. It won’t be easy.” She snorts as I smile. “Fuck, don’t I know that. But I wish you nothing but the best, I truly do. I loved him once, but I know when I find my person, that love will pale in comparison. You can love someone and not be in love with them, if that makes sense. Just, please...” She swallows. “Please don’t break his heart. You might think he doesn’t have one, but he does. He just doesn’t know it because it’s in your hands.”

“Leigh...”

“He will never admit it, but he’s broken from his past. In your eyes, I see the same pain that’s in theirs. I could never understand, but you can. You can be what he—what they need. Don’t break it.”

“I don’t want to,” I whisper. “I’m lost in them. I never expected to come here and find... well, them. I don’t even know what this is.”

“But you want to.”

“I want to,” I agree, and then laugh as I gaze up at the sky. “I came out here to try and help you, and here we are. I’m pouring my heart out to you, the girl who should hate me.” I look at her then. “But thank you. I mean it on the friendship offer.”

“Yeah, well, I might have to take you up on that.” She smiles. “It seems I’m lacking in friends, but I should thank you for showing me how fake they were so I could find the real thing. I do deserve better, I know that.”

“You do,” I murmur, and we share a smile.

“Damn, I was hoping you two would be fucking again,” Bray calls, and I turn to see him grinning at me suggestively.

“Were you eavesdropping?” I growl, angry as I meet his gaze.

He holds his hands up innocently, but the smile lets me know he was. Fuck, how much did he hear? I narrow my eyes, and Asher appears behind him.

“What’s happening?” he asks, frowning as he glances between us.

Then Cyrus appears. I throw my hands in the air. “What the fuck is this, a mothers meeting?”

“We missed you,” Asher tells me. “What happened?” His eyes go to Leigh, and he glares as if she’s upset me. I move in front of her, but she gets to her feet and rolls her eyes.

“Nothing, we were just talking. Catch you later, Blair.” She pushes past Cyrus with a muttered, “Asshole,” and I can’t help but laugh.

“See you later. I’ve got an ass to kick.” I look at Bray.
“You don’t spy on me, you fucking psycho.”

“You were spying on her?” Asher reaches out and slaps the back of his head. Bray stumbles forward with an outraged cry.

“Hey!”

“Hmm, that deserves a free shot for sure,” Cyrus comments, leaning against the bushes as he watches me. In his eyes, I see the question. He’s wondering if I was upset by anything Leigh said, so I shake my head, and he deflates a little in relief. He’s scared, but of his past or what she knows? The thing is, I’m not blind. I see Cyrus for what he is—a womanising user. He fucks and leaves. He’s harsh, crude, and fucking annoying, but he’s also very protective of his family, and under all that hate and pain... he’s sweet, I think. So nothing she could say would shock me because I see the real Cyrus. The one he hides, even from himself.

“Oh, hell no. Don’t listen to him, Darling.”

“Free shot?” I ask.

“It started when we were kids. If someone fucked up, instead of saying sorry, we got to take a free shot at them anywhere we wanted without repercussions. It was a way to end arguments and move on.” Asher shrugs.

“That’s crazy and such a man thing to do. I love it! I get a free shot because you were eavesdropping on a private conversation.”

Bray’s eyes widen. “I was just checking on you. You don’t want to hit me. Look how cute I am,” he begs, pouting, and I grin as I step closer.

“Oh, I definitely want to hit you.” I crack my knuckles and run my eyes over him. “Anywhere?” I ask the others without sparing them a glance.

“Yup,” Cyrus agrees, laughing at Bray who looks panicked before he deflates.

“Fine, hit me, Darling. Free shot,” he mutters sadly.

“Aww, Bray is sad,” I tease, setting him at ease as I stop before him.

Hooking my hand in his belt, I drag him closer. He groans, expecting something else, but while he’s distracted and trying to kiss me, I punch him right in the stomach and then bring my knee up into his junk. He falls back with a groan as those around us laugh.

Smirking, I prop my hands on my hips as I smile down at him. “Next time, mind your fucking business.” I turn and head back to the party, the sound of Asher’s and Cyrus’s roaring laughter following me inside.



Chapter Twenty Nine

Bray

On the ground, I watch her stroll away, my hands cupping my throbbing junk. “Shit.” I groan as I flip onto my back to see Cyrus and Asher peering down at me. They are both grinning. “Assholes, both of you, for telling her.”

“It was funny.” Cyrus shrugs. “And for once she wasn’t angry at me.”

“Fuck you,” I grumble, as I lie here and try to let the pain ebb away. They laugh and joke above me as I close my eyes until I can finally get to my knees, and then Cyrus hauls me up.

“Come on, brother, let’s check on our stepsister before she gets herself in more trouble,” Asher teases, and just then we hear a huge cheer sound from the party.

“Too late.” Cyrus chuckles, and we share a look before hurrying back, wondering what Blair’s done now.

We step inside to see her finishing off a bottle of vodka, standing opposite a huge dude who’s trying to do the same. Of course she finishes it first and wipes her lips with a grin as everyone cheers. Dropping the bottle, she grins at the massive

man. She's drunk, which means we need to keep an eye on her. The big guy hands over some money though, which she quickly pockets before turning to us as the song changes to some old-school rock.

“Oh shit, this is my song!” she cries, rushing towards us and grabbing my and Asher's hands. “Let's dance!”

With no choice but to follow—or be dragged after her—we find ourselves pushed into the middle of dancing drunk people. Cyrus makes sure to keep an eye on her as he starts to push the product while we just enjoy our time with her.

Once there, she lets go of our hands and drags hers up her body until her arms are in the air. Her eyes close, and she tips her head back as her hips roll to the beat. I watch, my mouth dry and cock hardening as she drops, twists, and grinds effortlessly, like no one else is here. When her eyes open and lock on me, she smirks. She knows the effect she has on me.

On all men, for that matter.

My gaze pulls away for only a moment to see Asher is struggling also. He's watching her ass and hips, entranced by her every move. She giggles as her eyes close again and she spins, stumbling into me before dancing outside of my grasp. I can feel the hungry, jealous eyes of the men around us, and I want them to know. Want them to see.

That she's ours.

She laughs as she spins between us, and I finally manage to catch the free bird. Gripping her hips, I stare hungrily into her eyes.

Pulling her close, I drop my head and press my forehead to hers as I grind into her. I match the twist of her hips as those incredible breasts press against my chest. Asher comes up behind her, brushing the hair from her neck and dropping a kiss there as he cups her hips from behind.

I feel people staring, but I don't give a fuck. They are probably jealous, and not of her, but us. She looks like a fucking goddess between us, especially when her eyes close, her lips tilt up, and her head falls back to Asher's shoulder.

Her body winds and moves to the beat with a fluidity that can't be replicated.

As if she is the music.

It pounds in time to my heart. My world is consumed by the woman, the fucking beautiful goddess in my arms. She may be rude, impulsive, brash, and loud, but fuck if I'm not obsessed with every inch of her. From her smart fucking mouth to her insane talent. I could watch her dance all night, like my own private show, but feeling her flow against me? It has me imagining just how she would move as I fucked her—something I've imagined every single fucking day since I met her.

I hear the whispers, the nickname they are giving her—Crew's Darling, and they are fucking right. She's ours, and I'm never giving her up. I wasn't looking for anything more than a good time, happy with my brothers and our family, but then she came crashing into our lives with a smirk and a wild heart, ready to keep up with us and hand us our asses when we need it. In a short amount of time, Blair has slipped her way into our family and my priorities.

I don't know where we'll be tomorrow or the day after or even next year. I live day to day, always have, but I know for the first time ever that Blair has me planning my future, and she's in it. She's the fucking hub, the fucking heart. It's unconventional, but our family always has been. I don't know if it will work, or if it will fall apart. We are always walking a tightrope between too much and just enough, and one day it might just snap, but right now? With her in my arms?

I'm ready to risk it all for my stepsister.

Leaning down, I press my lips to her ear, feeling the way her chest rises sharply as she inhales. "Tonight, you're ours." Before she can protest, I nibble on her lobe, making her groan before I carry on. "And we are yours."

She shivers in our grasp but doesn't defy my snarled promise. She simply lets herself go in our arms, trusting us to protect her, to be there as she dances. I feel Cyrus's eyes on us

at all times, always watching our backs, but we have more than our own to protect now.

We have hers.

We claimed her, so she has a target on her, and one day she will find that out. Before then, we need to make it worth her while so she sticks around, because if she left now, she would be taking Cyrus's ruined heart and Asher's colourful one with her.

We dance for hours, our bodies moving in sync, not sparing anyone else a look. There is no one but Crew, and when Cyrus has finally had enough of stupid drunk people, he tells us it's time to leave. Asher helps Blair outside. Some of the booze has worn off, but she's still giggly, and apparently so is he. I walk behind them, grinning at the sight of them hanging on to each other as Cyrus snorts next to me.

"Least he's happy."

"We all are, brother," I reply, and when he looks over at me, I smile wider. "Even you."

"Shut up, I'm not."

"Keep lying to yourself," I call as I increase my strides to catch up to them, looping my arm through hers before turning to look at him. "She'll break through it all eventually."

Cyrus ignores me, and after we get in the car, he's silent all the way home until we go to get out and Blair leans in and kisses him unashamedly. "Thank you," she purrs before strolling into the house. A shocked Cyrus gapes after her while Asher and I just grin.

"What was that again, brother?" I tease as he turns to us and glares.

"Get inside," he mutters. "And get some sleep."

Laughing, I head towards the house, shedding my shirt as I go. "Oh, I plan to, right after I have a quick date with my hand while I remember the way our stepsister screamed for you."

I ignore his swearing as I chase Blair upstairs, her laughter echoing through the once empty house, filling it in the way

only she can.

Home.

It's finally a home, not a house.



Chapter Thirty

Blair

Bray chases me all the way to the corridor where our rooms are. Laughing, I turn to face him as I back into my room. He smirks, prowling after me, but I plant my hand on his chest and lean in. “Goodnight,” I purr before closing the door, hearing his groan from the other side.

I stand facing the door, expecting him to open it, throw me on the bed, and finally fuck me, but I see his shadow under the door move away and disappointment fills me. Maybe it’s the fading alcohol buzzing through my system, but I really want Bray. They told me the only way I will get any release is from them.

Well, it applies to them now too.

Turning away, I yank off my clothes and pull on a loose shirt and some shorts, but even the slide of the soft material against my hard nipples and pulsing pussy is too much. My desire surges through me until I can barely breathe. I know he feels the same; I could taste it in each brush of his lips on my skin as we danced.

He wants me as much as I want him... so why isn’t he doing anything about it?

I never expect Bray to be shy, not with the way he talks, but it seems like I'm going to have to make the first move. Feeling bold, I grin as I come up with an idea. Slipping out of my room, I move to the kitchen and open the freezer, grabbing two ice cubes and popping them into my mouth as I head to his bedroom. I don't stop at the closed door, knowing this is happening and neither of us can control it—the desire between us is too much.

Just like with his brother.

I open the door to see him lying in a mess of his sheets. He has one arm behind his head, while the other holds his phone as he scrolls through it. He's wearing nothing but his boxers, so his abs and chest are on full display. I can't help but let out a gasp at his beauty. I try to ignore it a lot, but Bray Crew is fucking stunning. All hard lines, tanned skin, and muscle. He looks like every wet dream I have about being fucked, and although I didn't come here with any plans, I have one now, and that's to taste him. I'll swallow all the flirt has to offer and show him exactly just who he's playing with.

His eyes rise and he meets my gaze. "Hey, beautiful, what ar—"

Gripping the bottom of my shirt, I rip it over my head and bare my breasts. He inhales sharply, dropping his phone to the bed as I pull my shorts down slowly before kicking them across his carpet. Naked, I prowl towards him. I crawl up the bed, the cold ice melting in my mouth as I lick a line up his leg. He jerks and gasps.

"What th—"

I reach for his boxers and roll my tongue out to expose the ice cubes. "I came to kiss it better," I purr.

"Oh fuck," he whispers, his phone completely forgotten as those dark, hungry eyes lock on my mouth.

With a smirk, I curl my tongue back into my mouth as I slip my fingers under the waistband of his boxers and slowly pull them down, freeing his hard cock. It almost smacks me in the face.

I leave his boxers around his ankles, anchoring him. Keeping my eyes on his, I lick a long, cold line up his cock. He shudders, gripping the bed as his mouth drops open on a pant.

“Blair—”

I reach the tip of his huge, hard cock and suck it into my mouth alongside the ice. He cries out, writhing as I pull away with a chuckle.

“Was that where it hurt?” I murmur before kissing down his length to the base and back up, licking the underside. “Or here maybe?”

“Oh fuck,” he growls, closing his eyes as he throws one arm across his face. “You keep that up, and I’ll be shooting my load across that beautiful face.”

“Is that a promise?” I murmur, clenching my legs together as lust shoots through me. I imagine just that, his cum dripping down my face to my chest.

“Shit,” he hisses as I keep licking his cock.

I wrap my hand around his base and squeeze, barely able to even touch my fingers together. He’s huge, maybe thicker than Cyrus, and I cannot fucking wait to feel that monster inside me, but I want it filling my mouth first. I want to feel him slamming it down my throat as he uses me for his pleasure. Shit, I’m turning myself on from the thought. I need to calm down before I just swallow him whole.

“Baby, oh fuck, stop,” he begs as he lifts his hips, pressing his cock closer. Chuckling, I wrap my lips around his tip and swallow him all the way to his base. He hits the back of my throat as I hold still, letting him feel every cold inch of me. He cries out, lifting his hips and slamming farther down my throat. I stay there, just holding him in my mouth as he writhes. My other hand grips his thigh before I pull back slowly, lifting my mouth from his cock to see the ice and saliva dripping from him and my lips. I don’t bother wiping it away; I want dirty fucking sex.

I want him to use my mouth, so I tell him as much. “I want to taste your cum. I want you to fuck my mouth the way you want to fuck my pussy. I want to feel every hard” —I squeeze his cock— “inch of this slamming down my throat over and over again. Use me, fuck me, and let me taste you.”

“Are you trying to kill me?” he growls as he stares at me. “You want me to fuck your mouth?” He sits up, grabbing my chin and dragging me up his body until our lips are inches away. “You’ve got it, Darling. I’ll fuck it so hard you won’t fucking be able to speak another teasing word. I’ll fill it with my cum until it drips down that little chin of yours and onto those tight, fuckable tits. I’ll mark every fucking inch of you, so get back on those knees and swallow me.”

He kisses me hard before releasing me. He tangles his fingers in my hair and guides me back down to his cock. I go willingly, opening my mouth as I hold his dick and stroke it across my lips, painting them with his precum. He watches me, his chest heaving, eyes wild, and lips parted.

I’m getting him back for every teasing word or touch. I’m going to show my stepbrother that he might play the game, but I will always win, and victory will taste fucking delicious.

He lifts his hips, smacking his hard cock into my lips, and I settle on my knees between his parted legs. I focus on him, on the taste of his huge cock, on making him so wild with desire he can’t do anything but release control to me.

Blowing my cold breath over the tip of his cock, I ignore his insistent fist in my hair, and when he stops trying to control me, I finally drop my mouth onto his cock. I open wide and swallow him halfway before pulling back and doing it again, bobbing my head as I set a fast, hard pace.

His hips lift desperately, and his groans spur me on. His legs tremble under my touch as I dig my nails into the tight muscle.

“Shit, that’s it, suck me hard. Good girl.” The praise makes my pussy clench for some reason, as I imagine those husky words whispered in my ear while he rams into my tight

wetness. “Yes, fuck, so good, baby girl. Your mouth feels way too fucking good.”

I wiggle on the bed as I swallow him deeper, all the way to my hand, my saliva dripping down his cock. It’s a dirty fucking blowjob, and I’ve never been so turned on in my life or felt the need to work so hard. Usually, I just sit back and enjoy the pleasure, but right now, I’m as wild as he is, needing him to come. This is more than fucking, this is connection, and I couldn’t stop it if I tried, especially when he tugs on my hair.

“Eyes on me, Darling. Let me see those stunning fucking orbs as you suck me off.”

Oh fuck.

My pussy clamps down at the command, at the stark hunger on his handsome face as he watches me. The electricity firing between us in this moment of pleasure awakens something in me, something I had hidden deep, something I had forgotten.

Affection. The intense physical connection of being with someone when it means something, not just fucking for pleasure and feeling dirty after.

“Good girl,” he rasps. “Swallow me whole, let me fill that teasing little mouth.”

His praise makes me wild as he forces me to swallow him faster. Bobbing up and down, I stroke up his leg and cradle his balls, rolling them in my hand. He goes to speak, but it just comes out as a groan, my name on his lips as I swallow him, swallow everything he has to offer in a way no one else will ever be able to.

Every time anyone else tries to suck his cock, he will think of me. Of my lips wrapped around him, of the way I take him to the back of my throat. The way I moan around his length as I bob up and down. The way his hand grips my hair, yanking me down and up, urging me on.

His rhythm falters, and I know he’s close. His abs roll as he tries to hold it back, tries to keep this going, but I don’t

want that. I suck harder, humming around him as I squeeze his balls.

“Oh fuck!” he yells, his back coming away from the bed, and then he finally lets go of that last shred of control. His hips rise as he fucks my mouth like I asked, hammering into me as I hold on, and when I squeeze his balls again, he yells, exploding in my mouth. There’s so much I have to swallow over and over. I pull off his cock, shooting his salty cum down my throat, and I let it drip down my chin to my chest like he described.

His eyes are closed, and his head is thrown back. I watch the beauty of his release as he slumps. His eyes flutter open as he pants, meeting my gaze as I lick my lips. “You taste better than I imagined,” I purr, my voice hoarse from his cock.

His chest heaves, coated in sweat, and his leg, which I’m using for balance, still shakes as he watches me with shock and something else. Reaching down lovingly, he swipes his thumb along my lip, catching a drop of his cum. I turn my head, capture his thumb in my mouth, and suck it clean, making him grunt before he drags me up by my hair and smashes his lips to mine. But tonight isn’t about me.

It’s about him.

Is there anything hotter than seeing a powerful, sexy man lose all control because of you? No, so even though my pussy is dripping, and I’m turned on from watching him come apart, I know I’ll leave.

I kiss him back before slipping from his grasp. Bray sits up on his elbows, observing me with a frown. “Where are you going?”

“Back to my room to sleep.” I grin as I grab one of his shirts and pull it on, leaving my clothes on the floor with his.

“Yeah, that’s not fucking happening. I was going to leave you be tonight, but you brought that sexy ass in here and now you aren’t leaving until I’ve fucked every inch of you,” he snarls, leaping to his feet faster than I thought possible. He grabs me and tosses me over his shoulder before throwing me

on the bed. I bounce and then he's there, flipping me onto my front. He pulls my ass into the air as his hand slides down my back to my throat, squeezing hard as he pushes my head down sharply.

“You tasted my cum, now I want to taste yours, Darling.”

His hands push my thighs apart, and he wedges his head between them before he attacks my pussy. I don't even have time to catch my breath as he licks up my pussy, tasting my cream. He circles my clit before he pulls back slightly. “Fuck, you taste as good as I remember. I didn't even want to eat after I tasted you on your fingers, wanting to keep your flavour in my mouth forever.”

My hands fist on the sheet as I turn my head, pushing my pussy back. I had every intention of leaving, but I won't turn down an orgasm.

He eats me like he speaks, confidently and cockily, with teasing strokes of his tongue. He licks my clit before dipping to my pussy and pushing inside, groaning as he tastes me. His fingers brush along my clit, flicking it, and I cry out, so he does it again and again before sliding them down to my hole and pressing them inside.

“Impale yourself,” he demands, his voice muffled between my legs.

I slam back, fucking myself onto them. I groan as they fill my rippling hole. He moans and draws my clit into his mouth, sucking and biting as he pulls his fingers out and pushes them back in, starting a quick rhythm that I push back into. My breasts drag along the sheets, the friction on my nipples only adding to the pleasure pounding through me. My everything is focused on his touch, on his talented tongue as he sweeps it across my nub and pussy. He licks a line from the top of my cunt to my ass and back again, his fingers thrusting inside me.

“Fuck, you taste so good,” he growls. “Look at you dripping for me, Darling. Shit. I'm hard again just from the sight of your little pink pussy. Does it make you wet knowing this is wrong? Knowing I'm your stepbrother and that your

little cunt shouldn't be spread for me like this while I eat you?"

"Your mouth should be too full to talk," I retort, my voice hoarse even as I clench around his fingers at his dirty words. He's right, it feels so wrong but so fucking good. We aren't related, but fuck, the use of the words stepbrother and stepsister have got me feeling all sorts of fucked up and way too turned on. I should be concerned.

Chuckling, he shows me just what that mouth can do, eating me up and fucking me with his fingers at the same time.

Just as I'm about to come, he tears his mouth and fingers from my pussy, leaving me whimpering. I'm flipped again, and his fingers slam back into my cunt as his mouth descends on my nipples. He pushes my breasts together until he can turn his mouth, licking at my nipples as he fucks me with his fingers. My legs wrap around him as I lift my hips. Desire rocks through me higher and higher with each touch of his mouth and fingers.

I'm so close, so fucking close.

When his other hand releases my breast, slides down my body, and pinches my clit, I scream my release, clamping around his fingers as he fucks me through it. When I start to come down from the explosive orgasm, he pulls away from my breasts and pulls his fingers free. They glisten with my cream, and he reaches down and swirls them through his cum on my chest, mixing our releases together. My breath catches at the hunger in his eyes, and his hard cock bobs against his stomach again.

"I'm going to fuck you, Darling." He grins. "I'm going to fill that pussy like I did your mouth."

"Prove it," I growl, too deep to stop now.

Smirking, he grabs my legs and tosses them over his shoulders as he yanks me down the bed until my ass hits his thighs, then he runs his tongue through the mess on my chest.

"Scream for me," he purrs, and I go to speak when he slams into me, making me do just that. I shout as he forces his

giant cock through my fluttering channel. Groaning, he pulls back and works in inch by inch until that massive cock fills me. I writhe, needing to move. Pushing up to his knees, he turns his head and kisses my leg before pulling out and slamming into me.

The force of the thrust pushes me up the bed, jiggling my breasts.

“You are way too fucking hot; you make me wild,” he snarls, fighting my cunt as he fucks me bare. I should worry. I’m on birth control, but still. I couldn’t stop this even if I tried, and the bare feeling of that huge cock inside me pushes all thoughts out of mind... for now.

His quick, hard thrusts have me groaning, reaching down, and cupping my breasts, rolling my nipples as I lift my hips to meet him.

“Fuck, I’m gonna come way too quickly. You’re too wet and hot.” He groans and pulls free of my body. Grabbing my legs in one hand, he twists me and turns me onto my hands and knees then slams inside of me. The new angle lets him get deeper, so he drags along those nerves that have me clawing at the bed and fighting like a wild animal.

“That’s its baby girl, take all of me. You look so fucking hot with my cock filling you,” he growls, slamming into me harder and harder. My head drops, but he snarls, circles my neck, and yanks me up until my back meets his chest. “Don’t you dare fucking close your eyes.”

He turns me so I face the mirror in the corner of his room. I watch as his big, thick cock pounds in and out of me and my breasts sway from the force. Those dark, hungry eyes meet mine in the glass. It’s fucking hot, and when I see another pair of eyes watching, I almost come on the spot.

Asher.

He’s in the doorway. His hand rests on the handle before it drops. Wide-eyed, he goes to back away as Bray’s other hand slips down my cum coated breasts to my stomach, making me

arch into his touch. His fingers swoop down and play with my clit, all while I keep my eyes on his brother.

I clench around Bray's cock from knowing Asher is watching, and when he smiles? When Asher's hand drops to his boxers and slips beneath? My eyes fucking cross, and I cry out.

I've always been good at putting on a show, but tonight is going to be my best performance yet. Fighting my orgasm, I force my eyes open again. Bray is too focused on fucking me, too consumed by me to notice our audience, but I'm not. The sight of Asher fucking his own hand as he watches me get railed by his brother is the hottest thing I have ever seen.

I didn't know what it meant to be owned by them, to be Crew, but tonight, I'm finding out exactly what those violent promises are...

I'm being shared by my three stepbrothers, and I'm more than okay with it. It's time I made them aware of that.

Licking my lips, I keep my eyes locked on Asher as I bend forward to my hands and knees, sliding his brother's cock deeper inside of me.

I flip my hair over my shoulder and push back, fucking Bray as much as he's fucking me. His huge cock rubs along my walls, making me cry out. With my eyes on his brother, I take his cock, moaning like the fucking whore I am. I love their reaction, their adoration, and the desire in their eyes as they both groan. Asher's hand moves faster. I wish I could see, and like he can hear my thoughts, he pushes his boxers down until I see his cock, and the sight has me swallowing.

Fuck.

I thought Cyrus and Bray were big, but Asher looks like a fucking porn star. Why is it always the nice quiet ones? It's topped with a huge ring piercing, and he has tattoos across his hips leading to and down it.

I moan, clenching around Bray at the sight. He groans and grips my hair, using it to drag my head back to a painful degree and slam into me. It drags my attention back to him,

and I forget all about Asher as I lose myself in Bray, in the painful grip on my hair as the pain mixes with pleasure, building inside me from each hard thrust of his huge dick.

“Fuck, Darling, a man could get lost in your pussy,” he growls in my ear, making my eyes shut and mouth open as I try to hold back to make this last as long as I can.

“Come for me,” he orders, slamming into me so deep and hard I swear I see stars.

My release takes me by surprise, exploding through me and leaving me screaming. He groans, fighting my tightening channel before he gives up with a grunt and fills me with his release. I remember something then—Asher. I was so lost in his brother, in his body, I forgot about our audience. I drag my heavy eyelids open, and I meet Asher’s gaze in the mirror just as he silently comes too, filling his hand and covering his abs as he continues to stroke his cock.

Collapsing to the bed with Bray’s cock still buried inside me, his chest pressed to my back, I close my eyes. When I force them open again, I meet Asher’s eyes in the mirror. He blows me a kiss before disappearing into the dark, leaving me with Bray who grabs my throat softly, turns my head, and kisses me so sweetly I almost come all over again. He pulls back and grins at me, still deep inside me, keeping us connected.

“We are doing that again and again and again,” he promises, making me chuckle. He lets go, and I fall forward again.

I close my eyes and fall asleep.

When I wake up sometime later, I’ve been cleaned, and I’m tucked in Bray’s bed with his arms around me. I startle and my heart hammers as guilt and worry fills me, but my exhaustion and the comfort of his arms has me slipping back to sleep before I can fight it and run away like I always do.



Chapter Thirty One

Asher

I wake up with my heart racing and desire winding through me like my ink on canvas. The sound of Blair's moans filter through my dreams to reality. Sighing, I close my eyes, but it won't be ignored, so I get up and have a quick shower, which turns into me having to let some of the lust out, yet it's still not enough. My imagination doesn't match up with the magnificence of her last night.

With my hair still wet, wearing my loose checked trousers, I pad into the kitchen on bare feet. I stop when I see Blair there. She's perched on the counter with a bowl in her hands. She smiles when she sees me.

"Morning."

"Morning," I reply, walking around until I'm opposite her. I pour some juice for both of us and lean back as I sip it.

"Have you seen some of my drawings lying around?" I inquire, tilting my head.

"No, why?" she asks, dropping the bowl into her lap.

"Some have gone missing is all. I must have misplaced them." I shrug, putting my glass down. "Not important." I

could have sworn I put them on my bed last night, but they were gone when we got back. I wonder if Bray is hiding them for a prank. He does that sometimes. Either that, or Cyrus, the mardy bastard, has submitted them again. We bought a gallery a while back—well, he did without telling me—and he displays my art. I don't often go there, I don't want the praise, I just enjoy painting and drawing.

I watch her as she watches me back, wearing nothing but Bray's oversized shirt which slips off one shoulder. She has one knee pulled up against her chest, and the other leg swings back and forth on the counter as she dips her finger in the yogurt in her bowl and then sucks it clean.

"You liked watching us last night," she purrs.

"You liked me watching," I reply with a smile, and she returns it.

"I did." She drops her other leg as I lean back into the island.

"What's for breakfast?" I tease.

"Me," she purrs, parting her legs to expose her pussy as she grabs her unused spoon from the side and holds it out. "Why not take a taste?"

My heart actually stops, and my cock hardens again as if I didn't just come last night and then again this morning in the shower.

"You shouldn't tease me," I growl. She leans farther back, her legs parted as she grips the shirt and hikes it up, exposing her to my hungry gaze.

"Who said I was teasing?" she replies with a lift of her chin and a smirk. "Thought you were hungry?" Her hands trail up her bare thighs as they spread wider, exposing her glistening cunt for my gaze. Flipping her messy morning hair over her shoulder, she watches me.

Moving closer, I just stare with my tongue caught between my teeth as I admire the different shades of pink and the way her cream glistens against her pussy.

“Just going to stare?” she queries, her voice slightly breathless.

“I was admiring you and trying to burn it into my brain so I can paint it later. Maybe I’ll have you sit still next time I paint, and then I’ll fuck you after. Or maybe I’ll fuck you on the canvas,” I murmur, still staring at her pussy. When I drag my eyes to hers, they are wide.

“Hell yes, let’s do that!”

“Next time,” I say. “I want my breakfast first.” I drop to my knees and settle myself between her thighs, gripping them as I lick a long line up her soft flesh. She whimpers, and her legs twitch in my grasp as I turn my head and do the same to her other leg before dropping a kiss right over her wet, aching pussy.

“Asher,” she whimpers, the sound heading straight to my already rock-solid cock. But I ignore it. This isn’t about me and my pleasure, this is about hers. I want to taste her, to see her go wild for me like she did last night with Bray. I want to feel her surrender, and I want her to let me past those perfectly built walls, even for a moment.

“So beautiful,” I murmur, dragging my fingers down her wet heat before sucking them clean. “You taste like fucking sunshine.”

“Fucking hell,” she mutters, lifting her hips to urge me on, and when I roll my eyes up, hers are closed. Her shirt gapes on one side, exposing one of her little rosebud nipples, and I arch up and suck it into my mouth, unable to resist. She jerks against me and cries out. Popping it free, I kiss down her belly to her pussy, unable to take how fucking beautiful it is. Would she be annoyed if I painted a picture of it and hung it over my bed?

“I swear, Asher, your tongue better—” Her threat ends on a moan as I dip my tongue inside her fluttering hole. She gasps out another moan as I grab her thighs and drag her farther down the counter, throwing her legs over my shoulders so I can gain better access to my new favourite thing—her cunt.

Forget painting, forget drawing. This is the closest thing to peace and heaven I'll ever be.

She grips my hair and presses her pussy against my mouth as she rubs against me needily. Dragging my tongue up her pussy, I flick her clit over and over until she's crying out. Then I pull back, spotting what I wanted.

I quickly fire her a look to see her cheeks and chest flushed and heaving. I grab the bowl and drag it closer, smirking as she opens her eyes to see what I'm doing.

Dipping my finger in the yogurt, I run it down her core and lap it up. Plunging two fingers inside this time, I circle her clit with them and then suck all of it away, humming. "Tastes so fucking good. You were right, this is the best breakfast I've ever had."

"Happy to oblige," she teases breathlessly as I coat her pussy in the sweet yogurt and lick every inch clean. Pressing two fingers to her hole, I hold them there as I flick her clit with my tongue, and just as she starts to speak, I slam my fingers inside of her and suck her clit into my mouth.

Hard.

When I catch my teeth on it, she cries out and bucks against me. Her pussy clamps around my fingers as I add a third, working it through her tight heat and stroking along her wall on that spot that makes her jerk so hard I have to grab her to keep her on the counter.

I pull my fingers out and thrust them back in, setting a hard pace as I release her engorged clit. I circle it with my tongue and tease her as she pants and writhes. Licking down her pussy, I trace where my fingers spear her cunt, catching her dripping cream before licking back up to her throbbing clit.

"Fuck, fuck, I'm so close, don't stop," she begs, like I had any plans to. Like I would ever walk away from this pussy.

Catching her clit between my teeth, I bite slightly, enough to make her scream as she comes, gushing around my fingers. Releasing her clit, I kiss it better and lick down to her pulsing hole, licking my fingers clean as I pull them out.

I kiss her pussy again and lift my head to see her panting. Kissing both of her shaking thighs, I grab the bowl and rest it on her pussy as I grin at her.

Staying between her legs, I dip my tongue into her bowl of yogurt. "Delicious."

She strokes my hair and grins down at me, her legs still wrapped around my body, and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else right now. For a moment, my fingers don't itch and my brain silences. There's no need to run to a canvas to preserve the moment, instead I live in it with her. She did that. She offered me a moment of peace, a chance to be the one living the scene, not just painting it.

I need to give her some of that peace back. I need to offer some happiness. Cyrus always says I'm too soft, and Bray says I have an affinity for emotions. I can always read what others need, which can be exhausting, especially in my life. But for Blair, I'd suffer it all. I'd bare my heart and soul to help her move past whatever happened to her. Not just Faye, but in her past. I don't think she has even really looked at the secrets she keeps so close to her chest. As if she lived through it, survived, and simply tried to forget instead of dealing with it.

I guess my brothers and her are alike in that respect. But we will start smart with Faye. It's evident Blair doesn't share well, doesn't open up easily. It took us this long to even get around her outside barrier, and now she's going to try and use sex to keep us at bay. It won't work, but it's cute she thinks it will. Like now, I feel her bricking herself back up. I don't let her. I sit up and kiss her until she groans, her hands threading through my hair and pulling me closer.

Blair is complicated, but I'll spend years if I must to peel back every layer of paint because she is something special. She is easily becoming part of this family and wedging herself into my once broken heart. I don't think I could survive another woman leaving me, giving up on me, but I'm willing to risk it.

For her.

Pulling my lips away, I peck her again softly as her eyes flutter open. I cup her cheek and stroke along her perfect soft skin as I stare into her eyes. “You should go to her,” I murmur, and she blinks, clearly confused. I smile. “Faye, you both need each other. Say sorry and figure it out. It’s hurting you like an open, bleeding wound. I can almost see it leaking. It will attract the sharks, Blair. Do you understand?”

“Like you?” she murmurs, her eyes darting to my lips and back to my eyes as she searches them.

“Yes, like me. Like us. We are the predators, baby, but we aren’t the only ones.” Kissing her again, I pull away. “Go fix your relationship with your best friend. We’ll be here waiting when you get back.”

I grab the bowl and the spoon and hop up next to her as she thinks through my words. She laughs breathlessly, leaning back as I scoop up some yogurt, eat it, and then offer her the next bite. My mouth still tastes like her cum, and I love it. Once we’ve finished eating, she drags her legs up and crosses them, turning to me as she leans into the fridge to prop her up. I turn too, keeping one leg dangling off the edge as I watch her right back. The sun streams in, lighting her up like a painting. My fingers itch to draw or paint her, but for once I stop myself, staying in the moment.

“Are you going to?” I prompt when she just stays quiet.

“I don’t know how. I’m not good at... relationships,” she admits, baring her vulnerabilities.

“Nobody is, not really. We’re all just trying to do the best we can, and that’s all you can do. So try, Blair. You clearly care for her and miss her, just be honest with her.” I shrug. “That’s what I would want.”

Knowing she needs to be left now and not pushed too far, I put the bowl in the sink and hop down. I grab a mug of coffee and turn to leave, then I hear her sigh. “You’re too smart, you know? It’s not fair. You can’t be both.”

“Both?” I reply, looking back with a grin. She’s sitting there with a grin on her face, her thighs parted and hair

mussed. I can't help it, I reach for my phone and quickly snap a picture, making her grin wider.

“Smart and sexy, it isn't fair.”

“You forgot lethal, babe.” I wink, pocketing my phone. “Now get that fine ass up and sort out your mess. We'll see you later. I can always lick those wounds better.”



Chapter Thirty Two

Blair

Asher is right, I need to fix this with Faye. I hold my phone, feeling nervous as I load our messages. The last one I sent her was a selfie we took together. I stare at our grinning faces side by side and gather my courage before tapping out a message.

Me: Hey, can we meet?

I watch the message, but it never says read, so I drop my phone and scrub at my face. It suddenly vibrates, and I throw myself onto the bed sheets, frantically searching for it. When I look at the notification, my heart drops.

Serina: Where are you, Blair? You were supposed to be on the day shift.

Shit! I was supposed to work. It's not like me to miss a shift, dancing is my passion. Asher is right, this is an open wound and it's affecting everything, including my job. I leap to my feet and rush into the shower, having a quick wash, not bothering with my hair. I leave it wavy as I grab some outfits, makeup, and supplies and then slip on some jeans, a plain shirt, and my leather jacket before I run to my car. I drive so fast to the club, I no doubt have a speeding ticket.

When I get there, I run into Serina who frowns at me. “Are you okay?”

“I’m so sorry!” I gush. “I didn’t mean to be late, I was just —”

“Hey, hey, Blair, it’s fine. It happens, I just wanted to make sure you were okay because it’s not like you,” she assures me with a soft smile.

“I-I’m fine, thank you,” I reply with confusion, still unused to her kindness.

“Good, then go get your fine ass ready. You’ve got thirty until you’re up.” She smacks my hip to get me going, and I move through the club to our dressing room, feeling a little more relaxed.

During the day, there are only a few dancers. They must be on stage, so I have the place to myself as I drop my bag on my dressing table and slump into my seat. I’m so lucky to have this job and a boss like her; she genuinely cares. I wonder if she would have still hired me had she known my past. Probably, she doesn’t care, she accepts everyone from every walk of life. We have an ex-junkie, an ex-sex worker, and so many more. She gives them a home, hope, and a better life as well as a family.

It’s only when I’m in the dressing room when I remember my text to Faye. Shit. I pull out my phone and notice the text.

Faye: Tonight? I’m going to the Rashems’ party.

Me: I’ll meet you there.

I drop my phone and pull out my makeup. It’s going to have to be a quick job today because I’m due on stage and it seems I have a date with my best friend tonight, one I can’t be late to or miss.

Work passes slowly. Usually, I lose myself in the music, but today I’m anxious—*anxious* to see Faye later, worried over the

fact that our friendship may not be salvageable, and apprehensive about trying to make myself vulnerable to her—so when my shift is finally over hours later, I'm almost relieved. I always keep spare clothes with me, so I get changed in the dressing room, losing my sparkly corset and tights and changing into an emerald-green silk dress. It stops at the tops of my thighs and is skintight apart from the top, which has a loose cowl and spaghetti straps.

I add a black leather choker and curl my hair and put it up into a high ponytail, wrapping strands around it to keep it in place. Pulling some pieces free, I frame my face before changing my makeup, adding a smoky eye and black lipstick. Once I'm done, I feel badass and sexy as hell. More importantly, I feel confident.

Something I need.

I slip on a pair of black stilettos, the five inches giving me added height, and the long leather straps that wrap around my ankles and calves make me feel like a goddess. With a smile, I put my other bag in my locker and head out to my car, waving to the girls coming in. Once inside, I crank up the music, watching as the streetlights flicker on and the sun sets between the buildings, throwing orange and red hues across the city. I shiver at the beauty, at the deeply rooted awe that is this world. No wonder Asher feels the need to paint it.

After a moment, I shake off my thoughts, turn on the engine, and pull out into evening traffic, making my way downtown and to another rich party. This time it's one I've never been to before, and I have to check my phone for directions as I pull into a gated community. The house is the last one at the end of the street with a circular driveway filled with cars. I park on the road and get out, my heels sinking into the artificial green grass as I stare up at the house with the music pumping from it.

The front grey double doors are open, and the large front windows are brightly illuminated as people move past them, enjoying the party. There's a well-kept garden on either side of the entrance, and above the front door on the second story is a circular, brick balcony with a window. It's a big house, not as

big as Crew's, but nice for sure. I can hear the laughter and screams from out here, so I square my shoulders and head inside in search of Faye.

The music is loud as I step inside, stumbling back to avoid a huge dude running past with a girl over his shoulder. Her whole ass is out, but it doesn't appear to bother her. Smiling, I shake my head and peer around. Before me are two sets of curling stairs leading up to a balcony that is equally as busy. My heels clack against the marble floor as I look to the left, spotting a giant dining room being used for drinking games. Past that is a pool table and games room with floor-to-ceiling glass doors, which open to the well-lit back garden. To the right is the living room, and past that is a giant kitchen. I head that way, smiling at the drunken, flushed faces I pass. One guy grabs and twirls me, making me laugh with him, but I duck out of his hands when he tries again and move past the dancing bodies to the kitchen.

More people are hanging out here, drinking and talking as they sit on counters and the floor, red solo cups in hand. But Faye isn't one of them. I grab a drink and return some of the greetings from those who recognise me, and when I spot one girl who's always been nice, I move over to her.

"Hey, have you seen Faye?" I ask.

She looks around, frowning. "Erm, yeah, I think she was in the games room last time."

"Thanks." I nod and walk through the other kitchen door, down some steps, and into the games room. I'm peering around the crowd when I hear shouting.

"You fucking slut! Look at you, playing dress up and thinking you're all that. You are just some loser freak with no friends thinking wearing old dresses is cool, when in fact it's probably all that fits your heifer ass."

Old dresses? Oh hell no, that better not be about Faye.

I push through the crowd that's gathering near the back door, elbowing people out of the way. I ignore their disgruntled yells and force my way to the front, where I see a

huge dude with a backwards cap and black jeans staring wide-eyed at two girls. He has red lipstick smeared on his cheek. The brunette, with long dark curly hair, a tiny, skinny body, tall heels, and a form-fitting dress has no lipstick on. But Faye, in a deep red dress and heels, is wearing bright red lipstick.

Ah shit, but it was just the cheek, so why is this bitch getting personal? Especially when I'm betting it was the guy urging her on to begin with, because Faye isn't like that. Women always blame other women, though, instead of dealing with the problem—the man.

"I didn't do anything. He cornered me and tried to kiss me! He wouldn't let me move away until I kissed him," Faye explains, being polite.

"Yeah, what a load of bullshit. Why would he want to kiss you when he can have me?" she sneers, looking Faye over in disgust. "Your fat, reject-looking ass is so desperate I can almost taste it. Can't get your own man so you have to steal someone else's?"

"Well, if I steal him, surely he wasn't really yours to begin with," Faye mutters and sighs. "I don't want your man. I just wanted to get away—"

"Shut the fuck up, you fat fuck!" the brunette screams. "You're embarrassing yourself, falling all over every dick just trying to get one. Maybe eat a salad and dress normally."

Oh hell no. I see Faye flinch, and her eyes lower to the ground as this random girl picks apart all of Faye's insecurities just to make herself feel better. Downing my drink, I pass the cup to a passer-by as the girl continues to rip into Faye. I step before my best friend and cross my arms, staring down the little cunt.

"Hey, shut your fucking mouth right this second," I snap.

"Who the fuck—"

I step closer, my eyes narrowed, and she stumbles back. She's so used to people backing down and being intimidated, she doesn't know what to do with someone who isn't afraid of her loud mouth.

“I wasn’t fucking finished,” I snarl. “If you ever dare talk to my friend like that again, you’ll find your stuck-up ass on the ground, understood?”

“You wouldn’t dare,” she hisses, stepping up to me, and I smirk.

“Honey, you clearly have no idea who I am. Let me change that, shall I? I’m Blair Crew” —I see the recognition in her eyes— “and this girl behind me is my best friend.”

She swallows then, silent for once, so I wander around her in a circle, looking her over in disgust like she did to Faye. The crowd is silent now, knowing what’s going down, knowing I tend to punch first.

“You are just an insecure little girl with a cheating creep of a boyfriend. Don’t blame the girls, blame the man, and stop acting like an entitled little fucking idiot. Tearing others down doesn’t make you a better person, it just makes you a cunt,” I whisper behind her, looking at Faye. She’s smiling widely at me.

“Y-Yeah?” she stutters, her voice quivering even as she feigns confidence. “You’re just a cheap pussy sleeping her way through the Crew brothers for fame.”

I laugh. If she thinks she can tear me down, she has another thing coming. I lean closer to her ear. “Babe, I don’t care what you say about me. I can guarantee it’s all been said before: I’m a bitch, I’m easy, I like cock and booze, and I dress like a hooker, but guess what? I don’t give a fuck. So what will you do now that you can’t make me feel bad about myself?”

The girl turns, reaching for my hair. Rolling my eyes, I grab her wrist mid-air and squeeze, making her yelp as she tugs to get it back, but I just add more pressure as I glare.

“Pulling hair? Really? What are we, kids? If you want to fight, then fight like a woman.” I shove her arm back at her and slam my fist into her face. She screams and falls back on her ass, covering her busted nose with her hands as I shake out my fists and crouch before her with a grin.

“That was a warning. Stay down,” I growl just as I hear shouts. I turn to see the boyfriend coming towards me, finally ready to defend his girl, so I get up, ready to take him on as well, when the Crew brothers are suddenly there.

“That was hot, baby girl,” Cyrus remarks as he grabs the man mid-run, holding the boyfriend effortlessly as he flirts with me. Bray grins at his side as Asher moves to mine.

I’m so distracted by them, I don’t see the girl get up, nor that she decides that Asher, who was going to help her stand, is a target. I turn in time to see her slap him right across the face. My heart stills and red fills my vision as he presses his fingers to his cheek, his eyebrows lowering in confusion.

“I was trying to help,” he mutters.

I step towards him and move his hand away to look at the red handprint on his cheek. “You should have hit her back,” I mutter.

“I can’t hit a girl.” He smiles. “I’m fine.”

“You can’t, but I can,” I snarl and turn, grabbing the bitch by the hair like she tried to do to me, and then I slap her again and again as she screams and tries to claw me. Releasing her, I bring my leg up, kick her to the floor, and press my heel to her heaving chest. “You think you can go around hitting guys? That no one will stop you? That because he’s too much of a good guy to hit you back, you’ll get away with it, little girl?”

I dig my heel in deeper, making her cry out, and she finally stills, her eyes wide as she stares up at me. Her hair is dishevelled, blood drips from her busted nose, and her mascara is running. She’s a fucking mess.

“If you ever, and I mean ever, hit a guy again, especially those three, I’ll break your hand. You understand me? You don’t look, and you don’t so much as fucking go near them, or you’re mine.” I get into her face, making her scream as I dig my heel in, no doubt leaving a mark. “They are mine, and I protect what’s mine.” Lifting my heel, I slam it down on her left hand, purposely stabbing it into the ground between her fingers as she jumps, expecting it in her skin.

Pulling away, I look at the crowd and raise my voice. “If you’re worried about what they will do for touching me, you should be more concerned about what I’ll do if you hurt, betray, or even talk shit about them. My girl over there included. They are under my protection,” I holler, and then I turn to look at them and wink. “As long as they stay in my good books.”

“I’m so turned on right now,” Bray mutters. Asher is smiling widely, and Cyrus just watches me, his eyes dark but his lips twitching.

“When aren’t you?” I snort. “A leaf blows and it gives you a hard-on.” The crowd laughs, and I turn to Faye, holding her shoulders. “Are you okay?” I ask sincerely. There’s so much I want to say, but I hold my tongue as she nods.

“Faye,” I prompt.

“I’m fine, I promise. He didn’t touch me too much, not enough to hurt,” she tells me softly.

“Blair, we’re just going to have a word with him outside.” Bray smirks at the man, and when I nod, they drag the struggling guy outside. I look back at Faye and smile. “Are you okay for a minute? I just need to make sure they don’t kill him.”

“Sure, go,” she replies, stepping back and wrapping her arms around herself. I narrow my eyes and point in her face.

“Don’t move. Once I’m sure there is no bloodshed, I’ll be back. I promise.” With that, I hurry outside, anxious to return to her after seeing the lost look in her eyes. The back garden is teeming with people, and the party is in full swing now that the show is over. I even see one couple fucking in the grass. Others kiss and touch, while some just drink or smoke, but I don’t see the guys. I look left and right and finally spot a side gate. Hopping down onto the grass, I hit the path and follow it around to the gate.

When I round the house, I see them. They have the guy dangling from Cyrus’s grasp as Bray and Asher stand before him. His lip is busted and bleeding, and his face is pale.

“Now, let’s talk about consent, shall we? When a girl says no, it means no. It doesn’t mean corner her,” Bray snarls, slamming his fist into his stomach, making the guy grunt and sag. “It doesn’t mean carry on and keep pushing and make her feel like she has no choice,” he growls, punching him again in the same spot.

The guy screams, and I’m pretty sure Bray busted a rib.

“It doesn’t mean you can force yourself on her. Too many fucking girls are terrified of guys because of you. They’re scared to come and have fun and relax because of fucking idiots who don’t understand that they can’t fucking touch what isn’t theirs,” Asher adds, slamming his foot against the guy’s knee. He screams as Cyrus releases him and falls to the ground, his leg bent in an odd angle.

I should stop them, but fuck if this isn’t hot. They aren’t doing this for an audience, for their reputation, or even for me. They are teaching this asshole a lesson, one I’m sure he won’t forget, and the fact that they are angry over consent and him cornering Faye seriously has me turned on in a fucked up way.

Cyrus shoves him forward and stomps on his back. “Consider this a warning. We have eyes and ears everywhere, so if you touch a girl again, you’re dead.”

Ducking my head, I hurry back inside, not wanting them to see me or, more accurately, for me to see more of them, because I would jump them, and right now, I need to talk to Faye. When I get inside, though, she’s not here. I frown, and some girl comes up to me.

“Blair? Faye told me to tell you she was going upstairs.”

“Thanks,” I tell her and move through the house, winding my way upstairs and down a corridor. I have no idea what room she’s in, but then I see her out on the balcony. Sighing, I step outside, the door partially shutting behind me, and find her leaning against the stone railing. I walk up to her and lean into it as well, staring at the otherwise quiet, gated neighbourhood.

“Is she right?” Faye whispers. “About me being weird?”

“So what if she fucking is?” I snap, but she flinches, so I soften my voice. “Never be ashamed to be different. You are who you are meant to be, and you are magnificent. This world would be a boring place if we were all the same. So embrace it, be who you are meant to be, who you want to be, you amazing weirdo, and don’t you ever let anyone make you feel like you’re less just because you don’t fit the mould. You inspire me, Faye. You are kind and caring. The world needs more people like you. You’re bold, unafraid, passionate, and kind. What they think are flaws are what makes you uniquely beautiful.”

Her eyes search mine, filling with tears. “You mean that?”

“Of course I do. There are billions of people in this world, but there is only one you. Never question yourself again because of someone else’s opinion. She is nothing to you, a stranger, so why put value in her thoughts?”

“You’re right,” she whispers, smiling at me.

“I usually am,” I tease and then sigh. “Faye, I wanted to apologise. I took time to really think about what you said, and you’re right. I keep people out because I’m so afraid of getting hurt. If I never take a chance, there is no possibility of pain.” Licking my lips, I forge ahead, even as my mind screams at me and flickers of memories push forward. “I had a lot of shit happen in my past, bad shit, Faye. Really fucking bad shit. The type that keeps you up at night and changes you and your entire world. I never used to be like this, and I’m learning how to survive as the new me.”

“Blair,” she whispers, reaching for me. I look at her hand on mine, and for once, I’ll be strong and bare myself just a little.

“I’m so scared I’ll never be that girl again, never laugh openly like she used to or smile as much. The world was so fucking exciting and big, and now I see the shadows instead of the sun. Do you understand? I’ve seen true evil, and now I can’t unsee it. That scares me, and more than that, I’m scared that my past might never truly be my past. I’m scared that it will somehow come back and bite me, but not just me,

everyone I care about. Being my friend, being loved by me, got people hurt, and I'm terrified it could happen again. I've... I've never told anyone about what happened to me. Not all of it, not even the police or therapists they prescribed. It's not personal, Faye, and it doesn't mean I don't trust you. I do, more than anyone. It just means... I'm struggling, okay? It's still so fresh. I have nightmares about what happened almost every night, and that's when I can sleep. I often don't because I'm scared of it, scared of the darkness, of the screams and pain." I wipe my eyes as they start to burn and look away, unable to meet her sad gaze. My voice comes out hoarse, raw, and vulnerable. "I don't want to lose you over my past. I've lost so much because of it already, but I'm not... I'm not ready to talk about what happened."

"Okay," she murmurs.

"Okay?" I repeat, looking at her.

She nods and wraps her arm around me. "Okay. All I need to know now is that you care for me, Blair, and I know you do. Especially after tonight. I was just emotional and scared I was losing you, and I didn't know what to do. I'm your friend, and if you say you aren't ready, I trust and respect that. I won't force it out of you, I can see you're trying to open up more, to trust, and that's all I ever wanted. Even if you can't ever talk about it, that's okay. I don't need to know your past to love you, Blair."

"So you forgive me?"

"Nothing to forgive, babe. Do you forgive me?" she questions softly.

"Always." I nod, leaning into her. "Now tell me everything. How have you been?"

"Ugh, just dumb parties, annoying men, and working like a dog. We have to do some repairs on the house, and since my uncle drank all the savings away, I've been pulling double shifts... but I missed you like crazy. This world is a boring bloody place without you, Blair. I don't know how I got through it before."

“I knew you loved me.” I grin as she laughs and knocks her shoulder into mine.

“So enough about me. You and Crew, huh?” she says, wiggling her eyebrow at me as I laugh and turn to lean back against the railing. “Which one are you sleeping with?” When I stay quiet, she smacks my hand. “All three? You lucky bitch.”

“Most people would judge me for that,” I murmur, peeking at her out of the corner of my eye.

“I’m not most people, remember?” Her expression softens. “Blair, I’m so proud of you for letting them close.”

“Yeah, well, I keep fucking it up.”

“But you’re trying, and that’s what counts, and if you’re ever ready to talk about what happened, I’m here. I, of course, want all the details of the hook-ups though.”

I hear a noise and glance back to the door to see it farther open. Frowning, I turn fully, but then I hear my name being hollered—Cyrus. “Another time. Let’s go down there before they beat anyone else up.”

Linking my arm through Faye’s, I lead her back down to the party, but with the looks being thrown our way, we decide to leave after only an hour. Cyrus takes my keys and I let him drive, not arguing for once as I sit in the back with Asher and Faye as she leans against my shoulder.

I have my best friend back, so now it’s time to work on myself. She’s right. I do want to talk about what happened and find a way past it, and maybe, just maybe, she can help.

After dropping Faye off at home and promising to text her when I get back, I snuggle into Asher’s side in the warm, dark car. He kisses my head, and as the streetlights flash across us, he leans down to my ear.

“We’ve never had anyone protect us, claim us, or threaten people for us before. It’s always the other way around. It was nice. You’re changing our lives, Blair, for the better.”

No, they are changing mine.



Chapter Thirty Three

Blair

That night, I end up sleeping alone, but around 2AM I wake up screaming from nightmares. Asher, Bray, and Cyrus rush in, and I cover my face in embarrassment.

“Are you okay?” Asher asks softly, reaching for my arm, but I flinch, and he pulls away looking sad, so I drop my hands and grab his, squeezing with a small smile.

“Baby girl,” Cyrus murmurs, and I drag my gaze to him.

“I’m fine, just a bad dream...sorry,” I offer lamely.

“You don’t have them when I sleep with you. Hey, I meant sleep beside her, nothing else,” Bray explains when Cyrus smacks him.

“I’m fine—” I start, but it’s too late.

As if Bray’s words were all the permission they needed, they climb into bed. Asher draws me into his arms, Bray lies between my legs as they push me back, and Cyrus reclines by my side with his back to the door to protect me, reaching for my hand under the covers and holding it tightly.

Reassuringly.

“Sleep,” he orders, and despite the protests on my lips, I do. I fall deeply asleep, safe in their arms, with no more nightmares.

I only wake up because I forgot to turn my phone on silent and it’s ringing. Reaching out blindly, warm and content, I manage to smack it on the nightstand and grab it. Forcing one eye open, I hit accept, realising it’s FaceTime too late.

Faye’s bright, made-up face comes on screen, and she laughs. “Still in bed? Lazy bitch.”

I groan and flip onto my back, and then I blink when a heavy weight settles on my waist. Crew. Shit. I lift the covers, and Faye’s voice fades as I see a tanned arm wrapped around my waist. Next to me is Bray’s half-asleep face.

“Who is it? It’s too early,” he grumbles.

“Wait... Is that Bray?” Faye squeals and I wince, pulling my face from the phone.

“Yes,” I mutter and tilt the phone down to show her. He lifts his hand and waves before dropping it to the bed with a thud. “You okay?” I ask, wondering why she’s calling so early, but then I realise it’s 2PM and I must have slept all day. The others must have woken up and left already, but as usual, I can’t get rid of my pervy shadow.

“I’m fine, just on my break at work. You working tonight?” she queries.

“Erm, what day is it?” I ask, and she laughs but doesn’t answer, even as I try to remember what today is and what I need to be doing, but my brain is slow, sleepy.

“Wanna do something tonight? I’m working a double, so we could meet after.”

“Sure thing, just text me a reminder so I can see it after I’ve had coffee,” I say, yawning, as she laughs harder. Bray groans, sits up, and blinks the sleep from his eyes.

“Women, it is too early—”

“It’s nearly two,” I tell him with an arched brow.

He scrubs at his hair, his nose wrinkling as he sighs. “Fine,” he mumbles, and I smile at Faye.

“Have something particular in mind?”

“Anything. We could go drinking, see a movie,” she starts, winding Bray up on purpose now, easily falling into our usual routine.

“Time for Blair to go. You woke me up, and now I’ve got a hard issue she needs to deal with,” he teases, blowing her a kiss as she laughs and hangs up.

“Hey!” I protest, but my phone is tossed to the side, my body is dragged down the bed, and his lips are on mine. This ‘hard issue’ presses against my pussy as I part my thighs and wrap them around his waist. I groan into his mouth, and he swallows the sound before pulling away.

“Good afternoon, Darling.” He grins. “Want to start the day with a bang?”

“Now that’s an offer I can’t refuse,” I retort, dragging him back down. Our lips crash together as I rub against him, and he starts to pull my shirt up just as my phone rings again.

“Ignore it,” he mumbles against my lips. But it continues to ring, and he snarls, grabbing it. “Faye, I swear to—oh, sure.” He hands it over. “Not Faye, for you.”

“Hello?” I say with a frown as he kisses my shoulder.

“Blair, it’s Serina. You are due at work,” she reminds me, worry lacing her tone. “Is everything okay?”

“Shit, fuck, I’m sorry! I’m so sorry.” I scramble upwards, knocking Bray back. “I’ll be there in an hour—”

She laughs. “Don’t worry, I covered for you, just get here as soon and as safely as you can. See you then.” She hangs up, and I swear. I can’t afford to lose this job, and she is lovely, but there’s only so many times I can turn up late or forget my shift before she has to replace me.

“I’m late for work,” I rush out, almost falling off the bed in my panic, but he catches me and tries to drag me back.

“No, you can be late another hour... maybe two for what I have planned,” he teases.

“I need to shower and get ready. You’ll have to deal with your ‘hard issue’ yourself.” I kiss him quickly and jump from the bed.

As I head to the bathroom, I turn to see him flop back to the bed with a groan. “At least let me watch!” he calls as I giggle.

By the time I get to work, I’ve missed two dances, but luckily Serina covered, and she doesn’t even seem mad. She asks if I’m okay, and when I assure her I am, she lets me dance. Hours later, during my break, she calls me into her office, and I start to panic.

I’ve never really been in the office, and I gawk at the leather sofas pushed against both walls, the TVs above each, and the small bar and mini fridge to the right of the door. There’s a fur rug covering the old-style carpet leading right up to the big, sleek, black modern desk with a Mac sitting on top of it. It’s tastefully done, if small.

Serina wanders around and sits in her chair, smiling at me, but I get a bad feeling, a really bad feeling, and although I don’t ever beg or apologise, I find myself doing just that right now.

“I’m so sorry. It’s extremely unprofessional, and I understand if you want to fire me, but please, I love this job. I never wanted to—”

She rounds the desk and hushes my ramble. “Blair, I’m not firing you, I just wanted to make sure you’re okay!” She holds my shoulders. “We are family, that’s all. I know this isn’t like you, and I wanted to talk to you to make sure you didn’t need any help or even just someone to talk to. I know you’re close with some of the other girls, but I’m here as well, okay? You are my world, my family, and I just want to help, and no

matter what, you will always have a job here, so don't even worry about that."

"I-I'm fine, I really am sorry. I promise I'm okay, just adjusting," I admit, unsure what to say. How did I get so lucky?

"Okay, if you're sure." She narrows her eyes, and I nod, wincing again.

"Serina, I mean it, I am really sorry."

"I know, try to not let it happen again." She grins, and there's a knock on the door.

"Sorry, ma'am, but there's a man here to see you. He's insistent," the bouncer calls through the door.

"I'll be right back, stay here," she tells me before straightening her back. Her face closes down, and she stomps out of the office, shutting the door after her.

I wander around, dragging my fingers along her desk, glad I'm not getting fired, when they catch on a hidden paper underneath a file. I don't mean to look, but, well, I'm nosy. I pluck it out and swallow hard.

FINAL WARNING.

Is... is the club struggling? She never let on to it. And why hire more if it is? Shaking my head, I put it back and sit down like a good girl, not wanting to dig even as those deep-seated fears fill me. I love this job, and I'll never find another like it. I just hope she has a plan and figures it out.

I wait there for a while longer before deciding she'll find me again if she wants to talk, plus I don't want to miss my final set. I get backstage a couple of minutes before, and when I take to the stage with the girls, I spot Serina at the bar arguing with an older, angry gentleman in a suit. I keep my eyes on her in case she needs any help, but she holds her own, so I refocus on the dance.

I let the rhythm flow through me, the beat slowing and calming my nerves. Out of everything that's happened recently, this is where I let out my confusion, hurt, happiness,

and desire. It all pulses through my body with each move until the final pose where I stand with two feathers covering me and a sultry smile on my face.

With a wave, a few kisses, and some bows, I head back down to the dressing room. Unpinning my hair, I shake it out, ready to add the wig for a bonus dance in an hour. Until then, I have time to relax as the other girls take to the floor to interact with the clients—luckily today is not my day. Instead, I attach the short pink wig, add more glitter to my eyeshadow, and change into fishnet tights and a leather bodice with tiny shorts and huge, glittery spiked heels. I'm just adding more highlighter when the door opens. Expecting one of the girls or security, I look into my mirror, blinking in shock when I spot Bray.

Turning, I gawk at him. “Bray, what the fuck? How did you get back here?”

“I was waiting for them to leave” —he kicks the door shut behind him— “so you were all alone.” I shiver at the low, lethal quality of his voice. “So I could have you all to myself.” His hands go to his belt, and I shiver as he unbuckles it.

“They’ll be back—”

“In an hour. You told me the schedule.” He smirks. “Until then, it’s just you and me, and we have a score to settle.”

“Do we?” I purr, leaning back. “Been thinking about me all day?”

“Every fucking day, Darling, and you see, I have this fantasy of you in your costume, bent over for me, so that’s exactly what’s going to happen. I’m going to have you screaming with your friends and adoring fans just metres away while my big cock is deep inside you, and then you’ll go out there like a good little girl and dance for them with your sore pussy dripping with my cum, knowing each move will tug on those wet muscles.”

“Promises, promises,” I tease. “That’s a lot of words for a man just standing there staring at me. Need a hand?” I lick my lips and run my eyes down to his cock. “Or maybe a mouth?”

“Blair,” he growls as he steps closer, hooking his finger under my chin and raising it, “your mouth will be too busy screaming.”

“Prove it,” I challenge as his lips descend, just out of reach of mine.

“Oh, I intend to, but first, Darling, we have a little issue to deal with. You left me hard and wanting in your bed this morning, so it seems only fair we get you just as wound up as I have been all day.”

“I had to work,” I snap, and he chuckles, pecking my lips.

“I don’t give a fuck. Fair is fair, so turn that sexy ass around now,” he orders, but I ignore it, and he pinches my chin as he nips my lips until I jerk back. With a laugh, he grasps my hips and turns me none too gently, pressing his palm against the top of my spine and yanking my ass out. “I love the wig and this fucking sexy as hell costume. It was the one I had wet dreams about slipping aside... just like that.” He pulls the material aside to expose my thong and pulsing wet pussy. “And you’re wet and needy, so it looks like I was right again,” he taunts as he runs his finger down the wet material.

“Tease,” I challenge, meeting his eyes in the mirror. The fact anyone could walk in and find us nearly has me dripping. They won’t understand. They all know he’s my stepbrother. They’ll think it’s sick, forbidden, but I don’t care. I want what he described. I want him to fuck me raw and then sit in the crowd and watch as I dance, knowing he filled me with his cum while I screamed for him.

“Payback, babe. You teased me all night with that tight little ass pushed against my cock. It was fucking torture. I spent the afternoon in your bed, trying to satisfy my need with fantasies of you, but nothing, fucking nothing, compares to the real you.” He leans forward and glides his nose along my pussy, inhaling. “The way you smell.” He moves the thong and licks a long line down my folds, making me shiver. “The way you taste and moan, the way you feel clenched around my cock, milking me like a good little girl.”

“I’ve never been a good girl.” I laugh breathlessly.

“Not for anyone else, but for me? Yes you are. You’re a fucking hellcat for everyone else, but a goddamn sinner in my sheets.”

Pushing my ass back, I urge him to fuck me, but he ignores me and steps back, leaving me cold and wanting like he promised. Smirking, he grabs something from the side, a prop, and when he brings it back into the mirror’s reflection, I groan. It’s a fucking crop, a tiny leather one we use on stage, but as he runs it through his hand, I almost fucking come at the promise. He reaches down and slides it along my pussy before bringing it to his mouth. His tongue darts out, swiping along it as his eyes close with a grunt.

“So fucking good.” He brings the crop down sharply, slapping my pussy as his eyes open. The resounding smack is louder than it stings, and I groan. He smacks me again, this time stroking the leather tip up my pussy and then spanking my throbbing clit before slipping it down to my hole. This time, he starts to push it inside me, impaling me on the toy.

I can’t hold back my moan, gripping the edge of the makeup table so tightly my knuckles whiten. My nipples are hard and aching for his clever mouth, and my clit throbs like a racing heartbeat. My pussy feels so empty it almost hurts until he starts to fill me with the cool leather. The contrast against my wet heat makes me gasp, and I struggle to keep my head up, wanting to watch him. His face is flushed, and his breathing is heavy. Knowing I make him as wild as I feel causes me to push back, slamming the crop deeper. The ribbed leather rubs along my nerves, making me jerk and clamp down.

“That’s it, my naughty little girl, take it.” He pushes the crop deeper, making me groan as I push back to fuck it. I feel his gaze on my exposed pussy, greedy and lustful as he watches my dirty little pussy clamp around the leather. Then, he starts to fuck me with it, slowly pulling it out and letting me feel every hard unforgiving inch before ramming it back in. I turn and bite down on my arm so that no one hears my screams.

Chuckling, he pulls the leather free and grabs the wig, dragging my head up until his cheek is pressed against mine. Meeting my eyes in the mirror, he shows me the dripping crop. “I’m going to make you come around this, over and over, until you can’t stand, and then I’m going to fuck you with my huge cock and fill you with my cum while your pretty little screams ring in my ears.”

I shiver at the promise, almost begging now, and with his eyes still on me, he brings the crop closer. Feeling his hard cock pressed against me is all the promise I need. I raise my head and drag my tongue down the leather tip, tasting my own wetness, then I wrap my lips around the tip and swallow it like I do his cock.

He groans, rolling his hips against me, as I take it all the way down before slowly lifting off and licking the top, my saliva and cream mixing together. “I taste good. Why don’t you see?” I purr as I pull away.

Turning his head, he swallows it too, licking it with a groan before he pushes my head down, drags the crop out of his mouth, and slams it back inside me. He twists it in my tight cunt as I push back to take it deeper. His other hand clutches my hip, holding on hard enough to bruise as he fucks me with it. He whispers dirty nothings against my skin as we watch each other.

“Fuck, I might come just from watching you,” he mutters. “Seeing you take it so deep like such a fucking slut? Goddamn, Darling, how are you this perfect? I bet even if I put it in your tight little ass you would come for me, wouldn’t you?”

The thought sends me over the edge, and I scream out my release, clamping around the leather. With a snarl, he works it through my fluttering channel, continuing to fuck me with hard, quick thrusts, and one orgasm rolls into the next. He presses his hand across my mouth to stifle my scream as I writhe and jerk from the force. When I finally slump, he pulls the leather free with aching slowness. I force my eyes open and look into the mirror to see him turning the crop and looking at my release.

“I can’t wait to have it across my dick,” he purrs, and with a cocky grin, he drags the crop across my aching pussy and up to my ass. “I think I had the right idea about putting this in your ass. I’ll fuck you with it while I feed you my huge cock so I can see both of your little holes filled.”

“Fuck,” I pant, closing my eyes as the idea takes hold. “If you don’t do that now, I’ll be disappointed.” I should say no and get this over with quickly so I’m not discovered like this, but I don’t want to. I want to take my time. I want to flirt, laugh, and scream with him. I want this; I want him in every single way I can get him, so even though it’s wrong, I don’t protest. No, I part my legs and relax as he presses the tip to my ass.

“Being with you is the closest thing to heaven I’ll ever experience,” he murmurs, his voice raw and so brutally honest I have to close my eyes against the feelings it stirs.

“Or hell,” I retort, and then in one smooth move, I push backwards. Impaling myself on the crop.

I can’t help but shudder and writhe. My ass feels too full, too stretched, but as he starts to work it in and out of me slowly, the pain fizzles to pleasure so deep that I claw at the wood of the vanity.

“I don’t know, Darling. You’re enough to make a man pray for either.” He groans, watching the crop pummel my ass. “I can’t take it anymore. I need to be inside you as much as I need my next breath.”

“Then fuck me,” I snarl, unable to take it any longer.

Bray, for once, shuts the fuck up and does as he’s told. His huge cock presses against my pussy, and then with only a second’s warning, he slams into me. He gives me no time to adjust to the stretch of my pussy and ass, starting to move instead. He fucks me in tandem with the crop so hard and fast, it rattles the vanity, and makeup spills on the floor, but I don’t care. My eyes close, the pleasure flooding through me over and over and building towards another release. My body screams for it, arching into him and doing whatever he wants as long as he doesn’t stop.

I can't help the cries of pleasure that escape my lips, but luckily Bray is cognizant enough to cover my mouth so we aren't found. It doesn't stop my moans nor the praise from leaving my lips. His grunts and groans fill my ears, and the sound of our slapping bodies is so loud I'm surprised the crowd can't hear us. They cheer while my friends dance two feet away, unaware I'm being fucked so hard I probably won't be able to walk, never mind dance.

"Such a dirty fucking girl." He groans. "Your pussy is so wet and gripping me so fucking hard. You love it, don't you? Having your ass being fucked while I, your stepbrother, is so deep in your cunt you don't know where I end and you start? You love coming for me, knowing they can hear us, find us. You want them to see me fucking you, don't you?"

The dirty growl of his words has me whining and biting his hand. Usually I'm in control, but right now, Bray is showing me just how fucking amazing it can be to let go, to be dominated for once.

I fucking love it.

When his other hand slaps my clit, it throws me over the edge once more, and I scream my release into his hand as his thrusts stutter. His hips slam against my ass, getting as deep as he can as he comes with a roar. As he does, he yanks the leather out of my ass, sending me spiralling into another orgasm. It's so intense, I swear I black out because when I come to, I'm slumped into the mirror, breathing heavily, with his panting lips kissing my shoulder.

"I swear, Darling, you're trying to steal my heart and soul."

I freeze at his words. "I want neither," I whisper.

"Tough shit, you don't get to decide that." He nips my shoulder before kissing it better and slipping free of my cunt, making us both groan. My ass tingles, my pussy pulses, and I can feel our mixed releases dripping down my thigh.

With a gentle hand, he cups it, dragging the wetness back up my thighs, and then he thrusts three fingers inside me,

pumping them twice before pulling free.

“Fucking perfect.”

Panting, I duck my head, knowing I need to regain my breath to go out there and put on a show, but my legs are still weak. Gripping my neck from behind, he drags me back and kisses my pulse, holding my gaze in the mirror. “Dance for me, Darling, like the naughty girl you are. Let them see just what they can never have.” He turns my head and kisses me hard, and as I’m trying to regain my breath, he steps back, does up his trousers, and with one more cocky smirk, slips back out into the bar.

After just blowing my fucking mind.

Lying here for a moment, I feel his words echoing in my heart. I don’t want his heart or his soul. I’ve had someone’s else’s before, and I ruined them. I don’t want to break Bray or any of the Crew brothers despite what I first thought. But this path we are on, it’s only heading in one direction, and when it happens, I don’t know if I will survive it. Yet I can’t walk away, not now, not when I’ve never felt so happy, so alive, so needed and supported. I’m in too deep. Maybe that’s why I tried to fight it so hard.

But it doesn’t matter now, it’s too late.

So what do I do? I fix my makeup and I go out and dance my heart out for him, knowing he’s watching from the dark with my cream on his tongue and my release on his dick.

Like the used up, naughty bitch I am.



Chapter Thirty Four

Blair

When we get home that night, I spot Detective Dick again. Sighing, I get out and meet Bray as I lean against my car, the gates shutting behind us. Pulling off his helmet, he stores it next to his bike and follows my gaze.

“Don’t worry, they always try to follow us, but eventually they get told off or redirected and have nothing.” He grins.

“This one is different,” I mutter, looking at him. I debate telling him what I know, but then I remember my promise to be more open. “You remember when you first saw me and that cop arrested me?”

“How could I forget it?” he says, placing his hand on the roof of my car as he leans in, smiling at me as he pins me in place. I stroke his chest without thought.

“It’s that cop. He told me he was here for you guys, but I think it’s something else. He’s weirdly obsessed with me, always turning up and trying to find reasons to be alone with me ever since I turned him down.”

“You’re worried,” he states, searching my eyes, and I nod, nibbling on my lip.

“I might be making shit up—” He turns, and I grab his arm. “What are you doing?”

“I’m going to kill him.” He shrugs.

Laughing, I pull him back, and with a narrow-eyed look at the cop, he leans down and kisses me hard, making me groan as he presses his body against mine. While I’m still catching my breath, he pulls back and grips my chin. My eyes flutter open and lock on his serious ones.

“We’ll sort this, okay?” he whispers, and when I don’t speak, he forces my head to nod. “Trust us.”

“I do,” I admit, and he grins.

“I know, or you wouldn’t have told us.” He kisses me again before pulling away, twining our fingers as he tugs me to the house. I don’t know what he means by sorting it, but it feels good to trust someone else, to lean on them and ask for help. I’m not alone, and I’m beginning to realise how incredible that is.

As soon as we’re in the house, Bray whistles and cups his mouth. “Yo, assholes, get your asses down here. We’ve got work to do!” he yells, and a moment later, I hear feet as they stomp down the stairs without question.

Pulling me into the living room we never use, Bray falls back on the sofa, grabs me, and yanks me down so I’m lying across him and facing the others as they come in. They don’t seem surprised. Asher heads over and drops a kiss to my lips before kicking off Bray’s feet and dragging mine into his lap as he sits.

Cyrus runs his eyes over me, ensuring himself I’m okay before meeting Bray’s gaze. “What’s wrong?” he rumbles darkly, his eyes narrowing.

“You know the cop outside?”

“Yeah,” Asher replies, massaging my feet as he takes off my shoes, and I groan in bliss. It distracts them all. Cyrus’s eyes heat and Bray smirks.

“Erm, shit, yeah, okay, well, he’s here for Blair, not us. We need to get rid of him.”

“I was thin—” I start, trying to explain, but Cyrus holds his hand up, stopping me.

“No need to explain, okay? Let’s get rid of him.”

“Just like that?” I ask.

“You’re Crew, baby.” Cyrus leans in, pinning me to his brother. “We believe what you say. Your enemies are our enemies, and we will always protect and believe you. We only left him there because he’s nothing, but if he’s bothering you, he’s gone.”

I gulp, unable to help it, and with a snarl, I lean up and kiss him. I can tell it takes him by surprise, but he grins softly as I pull back. “Thank you,” I murmur.

He straightens and pulls out his phone, dialling someone as I watch.

“I don’t give a fuck about calling your office,” Cyrus snaps as a greeting, all edges of softness gone. “There’s a cop outside my house, has been for a while, following my fucking stepsister.” He winks at me. “Get rid of him or I will.” With that, he puts the phone down and Bray pushes up to his feet and rushes to the window. Confused, I follow, and Cyrus wraps his arms around me from behind as we all watch. For what, I’m not sure. Who did he call?

A few seconds later, there’s movement in the car, and then the engine suddenly turns on and he speeds away. I turn to gape at Cyrus. “Who the hell did you call? The fucking queen?”

“The head of the local police.” He smirks down at me. “Told you we were connected, baby girl.”

“Well shit, that’s fucking hot,” I mutter and throw myself at him. Luckily, he catches me, and I wrap my legs around his waist and kiss him. Chuckling, he holds my ass, and just as we’re about to turn away from the window, I hear another rumble.

“That asshole better not be coming back,” Asher growls, so Cyrus turns us so we can stare out of the window again. But it’s not the cop. No, it’s an Aston Martin rolling up to our drive. The gates open and it drives up the middle. The windows are blacked out, so we can’t see who it is until the lights turn on when the passenger side door opens.

“Meredith,” Bray snarls.

But sitting at her side is a random, rich-looking bastard, and I actually groan when she leans in and kisses him. “Not a surprise,” I mutter. “But damn if I didn’t wish we recorded this to show your dad. He deserves better, and honestly, I want revenge.”

“We could get it,” Asher offers and then turns to Bray. “The cameras cover that section, right?”

“They sure do.”

“Wait... you have cameras out there? So you watch me?” I demand, glaring down at Cyrus because he’s the closest.

“Damn right we do. I particularly like it when you bend over to clean your car,” he rumbles, making me smirk even as I try to remain mad at them, but it’s hard. They are like naughty little boys... just, erm, full-grown men.

Cyrus takes my hand, ignoring Meredith, and guides me through the house to a room I never noticed before. There’s a keypad where he scans his hand, and when we step inside, I gawk. It’s like a security room from a TV show, with screens covering a full wall and a desk before it with a computer. There are bright neon lights around it, and a small fridge in the corner—proof that someone is in here monitoring the feeds sometimes. It makes me wonder what they have seen of me, and I can’t help but grin wider. Cyrus grabs the huge leather chair and slumps into it before pulling me into his lap. His hands grip my hips and pull me back until I feel his hardness pressed against my ass.

It’s a reminder of what he wants to do to me at all times. Something I’m perfectly fine with.

“Asher,” he commands with a wink as Asher logs into the computer. “He’s better at this than us. I bet if you ask, he would admit to watching you through the cameras when you didn’t know. Especially in the shower, showing off those impressive curves. I wish I had thought of it,” he murmurs into my ear. His voice is like a smooth whisky, going straight to my clit and making it throb as I shift on his lap. He chuckles at my movement.

Placing a kiss on my jumping pulse, he begins playing with my hair as we wait, as if he didn’t just get me wet and ready as I stare at Asher, wondering if he really has watched me... and if he liked it.

Focus, Blair. Revenge time.

Ignoring Cyrus’s very hard reminder of what I could be doing instead, I concentrate on the screens that flash to cameras, all focused on every inch inside and outside of the property. “Paranoid much?” I laugh.

“Prepared so no one hurts what’s ours. This is just a deterrent. If they get inside, the cameras are the least of their worries, especially if we turn them off so no one will ever know what happened to them.” Bray smirks, and there’s a dark look in his gaze I would usually associate with Cyrus. It makes my eyes widen, even as my pussy clenches at the promise of violence.

Fuck me, these Crew boys don’t play around.

It makes me wonder what they have gotten away with, but it also makes me sad. I could have used them... before. Maybe they could have saved the old me, saved all of us from what happened. But then I wouldn’t be here with them. I wouldn’t have met Faye or got my job—and that’s when I realise for the first time that my past had to happen so I could be here, could be me.

I grieve what occurred and wish it could have gone down differently—it was a tragic waste of life—but it wasn’t my fault, and sometimes life throws you things you don’t think you can survive just to prove you can. It doesn’t mean I don’t

miss them or I'm not heartbroken and messed up over what happened...

It just means I'm finally starting to heal.

Thanks to them.

"Okay, how much evidence do we want? Just from today or as much as we can get?"

"Today, then we can go from there," Cyrus suggests, making the decision for me. I nod, and Asher returns to the footage. On the screen is a frozen image of Meredith coming in the front door. He rewinds it a bit but goes too far and the screen turns black.

"What happened?" I ask, leaning forward.

Frowning, Asher types in a few things. "It's a hole in the recordings. Strange, only we should be able to do that."

"Maybe it was Meredith," I joke, and Bray laughs. Asher nods, but he seems uncertain. With a mumble and a shake of his head, he forwards it to the car coming into the driveway and downloads it.

"Okay, one second, then it should be in your email," he says, typing away.

"What are you going to do with it?" Cyrus queries.

"I might tell her I have it and see what she says. If she's an asshole, I might just send it to your dad." I shrug.

"She'll be an asshole, you know that." Cyrus snorts, kissing my neck again. "Just send it now. You don't owe her anything, Blair."

He's right, I don't. She never protected me, not from the prying, persecuting eyes, the judgement, the harassment. She never comforted me or gave me a choice, moving me across the fucking country to escape it. She's never given a fuck about me, even when my dad died. No, all I am to her is a nuisance, and she makes that blatantly obvious. I could be the better person and give her a chance, but she already showed her hand when she brought my past up at the table. No, we are already deep in the game, and I just fucking got checkmate.

Raising my phone, I watch the footage before forwarding it to their dad's email with Asher included with the video. "There." I smirk. She deserves this, I know, after all the terrible things she's done to me and others. But as I sit back, I wonder if revenge is really the way. It won't change anything, and she might try to leave again, but this time, I wouldn't be going.

No matter what.

I've found my home in this city and with these men.

I'm staying no matter what happens to her.

She is no longer my problem.

"We should celebrate cutting the head off the snake," I joke.

"Good idea." Asher grins but keeps viewing the monitors before texting someone.

"I'll nip and get a jacket." I hop over Cyrus's knee and kiss him. Bray corners me on the way out, kissing me also and smacking my ass as I hurry upstairs. I grin freely, feeling happier and freer than ever before. I almost skip to my room, grabbing a jacket in a hurry to get back to them and the safety and excitement they provide.

When I spot my mussed bed, the indented pillows, and the unmade spread, I frown and hesitate before rolling my eyes. "Bray, if you sleep in my bed, make it!" I yell as I shut the door and rush downstairs, not giving it a second thought. He seems to have a weird obsession with my bed, especially with me in it.

That makes me shiver as I ponder what depraved, naughty things we are getting up to tonight.

Fuck, being Crew is amazing.



Chapter Thirty Five

Cyrus

“**W**here are we going?” she asks, climbing onto my bike.

“We have a stop to make first, then, baby girl, I’m taking you on a run to show off our girl,” I tease, squeezing her hands. She doesn’t protest, and the others follow as I pull out onto the road and turn towards the city and the destination I have in mind.

I need to see his reaction and know if he has learned anything, or if he’s still the same fool he always was.

Blair is right. My dad needed to see this, and Meredith needed to be taken down, but it’s not just his heart on the line—it’s hers. I have to put protection in place for her, to be free of her even if she doesn’t know that, and that starts with my father and understanding if he’s on our side... or hers.

By the time we pull up to the office, Bray and Asher know. I see it in the stern, sad expressions on their faces. When I swing off the bike, Blair stares up at the skyscraper with a whistle. “Where are we?”

“Crew headquarters,” I answer, offering her my hand, and she grabs it and swings off. I tug her after me, and she starts to walk behind us, but I pull her up to my side. Bray walks on her other side, and Asher is beside me, presenting a united front just like when we were kids. Now, though, Blair is in the middle.

I move through the swivel doors and across the pristine white floors. Most people are home now, so the lobby is deserted bar the security guard at the huge oval desk to the left. Next to it is an open-planned coffee shop, and to the right is a waiting area with sofas and TVs. The guard jumps to his feet, straightening his suit.

“Is my father in?” Bray inquires.

“Yes, Mr. Crew, sir. I mean in his office,” he hastily replies.

I incline my head, hopping over the turnstiles, and turn to grab Blair and help her over. My brothers follow, and we move to the bank of elevators which ding as soon as we arrive. Stepping inside the glass doors, I turn to watch as we begin to rise.

“Your father?” Blair questions. “What’s the plan?”

“To see where he stands and to see his face,” I explain, and Asher sighs.

“We have to know. He’s a fool with women, and for some reason, your mother—Meredith,” he corrects with a wince, “has a hold on him.”

She nods but becomes silent, which isn’t her usual trait. Bray notices as I watch, unsure what to say. He cups her chin, pulls her flush against his chest, and smirks down at her. “I’ve always wanted to do it in an elevator.”

The door dings then, opening, and she grins, leaning up as if to kiss him. “I would say me too... but I already have.” She turns, hips swaying, and saunters off. All three of us gawk after her, our eyes locked on her tight, plump ass.

“I’m going to marry that girl,” Bray declares in awe, adjusting his hard cock—we all have that same issue where

she's concerned.

"Alright, Romeo," I tease, smacking him and following her out. "One issue at a time."

When we catch up to her, I cuff her around the neck and direct her to the right door. Down the corridor, past the glass offices—the fishbowls, as Bray calls them—and to the huge wooden doors at the end. I don't bother knocking. I kick it in so I don't have to let go of her and storm inside. He's here, like I expected, pouring over some reports. His hair is mussed from his fingers, and he's squinting—he probably forgot his glasses again. His tie is gone, and the top buttons on his suit are undone.

Despite everything, I think about how weak my father is, and there is one thing I can't deny—he's a good businessman. He's dedicated, smart, and knows how to get work done and inspire loyalty in his team.

Never in women though.

The city skyline stretches out behind his huge, hulking brown desk. His Mac is untouched, and there's a glass of amber liquid at his elbow. Behind us are the leather sofas, mini bar, and en-suite bathroom. More than once, he's slept here when there are reports due or he didn't want to come home—usually hiding from us and the knowledge of what he's done yet again.

His phone is nowhere in sight, so he most likely hasn't seen it yet, and when his head jerks up and he blinks in shock, I realise he hasn't. Sighing, I drag Blair closer, the only sign of weakness I'll allow, letting the warm curve of her body against mine sooth the inner pain at having to break my dad's heart yet again. Bray sighs and flops onto the sofa, slinging his legs over the arm, while Asher hesitates at the door before shutting it.

"Boys?" he says, concern lacing his tone. "You okay?"

He does love us. He may be a horrible husband, but he's a good dad. He looks to Blair then and seems genuinely worried.

“Blair, are you okay?” I notice he doesn’t ask about Meredith, so maybe he’s not as clueless as he seems.

“Oh,” she whispers, understanding he hasn’t seen it. Squeezing her neck, I look down at her as she gazes up at me, searching my eyes. I nod, answering her question, and she gives me a soft smile. Despite my father watching, she stands on her tiptoes and kisses my cheek before moving to sit next to Bray who lays his head in her lap.

“Cyrus, what is it?” he demands, now standing as his anxious gaze roams between us.

“Sit down,” I order, and he does, dropping heavily. Once he was such a strong, sure man. I can’t actually remember the last time I saw him truly happy. When was the last time he smiled? Laughed? Why haven’t I noticed before now how unhappy he clearly is? The truth is, I didn’t care because I was the same, unhappy and destructive, just in different ways, and now Blair has shown me the truth. How to really live.

My dad has slowly been dying away, and we didn’t even notice.

“Meredith is cheating on you,” I inform him without cushioning the blow, and he flinches. “You deserve better than her.” Softening my tone, I step closer. “You deserve to be happy, Dad, to stop putting up with these gold-digging cunts.” His eyes dart to Blair as if to check her thoughts on that, but I know she doesn’t care. “You deserve to find someone who makes you laugh” —I look at her then too— “and who reminds you what it feels like to be free and revel in life again,” I finish, and she swallows but smiles as I turn back to my father.

“You deserve to be happy. You deserve better than her. Check your email when we leave. I’ll leave it up to you what you decide to do, but Father... remember who you are. Searching and failing is better than putting up with the numb emptiness of someone just because it’s easier, safer. I know that now.”

“I—” He shakes his head, rubbing at it. “I know she is.”

I blink, and he smiles sadly at me and then Blair. “Your mother isn’t very discreet.”

“Because she doesn’t care if she’s caught,” Blair responds and gets to her feet, stepping to my side and slipping her hand into mine. I see my dad’s eyes drop to our clasped hands, but he doesn’t seem surprised until I wrap my fingers around hers, and then they narrow. “She never does. She does this over and over. She drains them of money and gets caught and kicked out, and then we have to leave.”

I jolt at that, but she squeezes my hand.

“It’s who she is, like a snake sinking its poison into people. She has a way of making them blind to her at first until the venom fades away, but by then they are so pumped full of it, it changes who they are.” She sucks in breath. “You seem like a good man, maybe the best man I’ve ever been dragged to live with. Don’t let her ruin you like the others. She’s just an easy cunt, that’s all. There’s nothing special about her. Maybe once there was, her beauty unrivalled. She was even talented once before she gave it up because it was easy to fall back on her looks and use them to get her what she wanted. But everything fades, and soon all that will be left is the rot inside her. Don’t be around when it does. You deserve better, like Cyrus said. There are women out there who will see you for you.” She looks up at me. “Not your past. You just have to give them a chance, even when it’s terrifying to take the leap.”

“She’s right,” I murmur and raise my eyes to his. “We thought you should know.”

“Thank you, Son,” he mumbles tiredly.

“Sorry, Dad,” Asher says, and he smiles at him.

“Not your fault, my boy.” I see Asher beam like he does whenever Dad calls him that.

“Alright, enough of this heart-to-heart, we’re going to have some fun!” Bray calls. “If there are any hot bitches, I’ll get their number for you, Daddy!” he declares as he drags Blair after him, making her laugh.

“More like I’ll get them,” she teases.

I nod at my dad and follow them to the door where they are waiting for me.

“I’m not a total idiot,” my father calls, and I freeze. He looks at Blair then and seems to search for what to say. I wait, my muscles tensing. I don’t want to have to cut him off, but if he hurts Blair, I will. I would do anything for her. “People will judge you.” is all he says.

“People have been doing that for years. Let them.” She smirks, grabs Asher, and kisses him soundly on the lips, making me grin. “They are worth it,” she says, threading her fingers through Bray’s and tugging him after her. I let them go, hesitating as I watch them laugh. Bray picks her up and twirls with her, and I can sense the genuine love and happiness they feel, and it infects my dark, cold heart.

“Cyrus,” Dad calls, and I turn back to him. I can see him struggling for the right words before he smiles. “She reminds me of her.”

“Her?” I prompt.

“Asher’s mom. The only person I ever loved. She’s bright, confident, beautiful, and just has this way around her. It’s so easy to love people like that, just be careful, my boy. Don’t end up like me, jaded and broken, searching for even a hint of that infectious love in every passing woman.”

“I won’t have to,” I reply, and he nods.

“I hope not. Blair is like her but also different. She’s stronger. Don’t let her go, or you’ll regret it for the rest of your life. Trust me, I know.” He drops his eyes to the papers in front of him but doesn’t seem to be seeing them.

“We love you, you know that, right? That’s why we had to tell you.”

“I know,” he mumbles. “I love you all too. I just wish—I just wish I had done better.”

“I don’t.” I shrug. “It brought her to us.”

I follow them out to the elevator, and Blair turns to me, flicking her hair over her shoulder. That cocky, beautiful smile

stretches across her lips as her eyes sparkle. She's so fucking beautiful, so perfect, it steals my breath, even as she reaches for my hand without thought.

“Everything okay?”

Raising her hand, I kiss her knuckles. “It's perfect,” I murmur, and she smiles wider.

“Charmer. Come on, let's go have some fun.” She pulls me after her, and I go willingly. I'd go anywhere she wanted me to. I was a fool to try and resist, to ignore and hate her, but it was because I knew the truth. She's consumed me, changed me, and become everything to us. Without her, would there be any Crew? Without her laugh, her smile, her soft touch, and infectious personality? She makes us stronger, and she lightens us without clipping our wings.

No, our stepsister has fit right into our lives like she always belonged there, and maybe she did.

But there's one thing I know for sure—there is no future without her. No matter what my dad says, I don't ever plan on letting her go. She's ours now, forever, and always.

Crew.

Back on the bike, I nod when Bray says he knows of a party we can go to, both to have a good time and also make some quick money—not that we need it, but a man there also has the parts Bray needs to finish Blair's surprise. Speaking of, she's rubbing against my back, and I can almost feel the heat of her cunt on my skin. I ache to turn and bury my head between her thighs. It's been too long since I had her come on my tongue and cock while she screamed for me. It's been a day, but still, I need her every minute of every day, and right now she's testing my resolve as I squeeze the throttle and try to get to the party as fast as possible.

I grunt into my mask as her hands stroke across my abs and then lower, cupping my hard cock. I almost crash before I

swerve. I can't do much, so I gun it, knowing if I don't get inside her soon, we'll end up fucking on my bike in the middle of the fucking city.

She laughs freely, and I hear it. She knows what she's doing. She always does. She's not one of those innocent shy girls or even one who acts innocent to get what she wants. No, she revels in the madness, in the lust. She lights a fire and stands in it as it burns, and I want to smoulder right there in the flames with her.

We wind through the outskirts of the city to a mansion perched above it. It's one of the richest houses in the area, usually hosting celebrities, rock stars, and rich kids alike, known for its drugs and drink—hell, even the police avoid this place. The man's house, as they call it, is run by a music producer and his rich, spoiled son who goes to our university. But the man we need tonight, Jay, who owns the car shops in the city and has his fingers in every pie from weapons, security, to the latest tech, will no doubt be here schmoozing models and striking out. After all, he's a serious asshole, and not even his pretty boy tatted face, as Bray calls it, can make up for that. Oh, that's not even taking into account that he's the VP of the local motorcycle club and is known for his violent past.

By the time we get to the overly white, illuminated, all glass monstrosity, I'm ready to throw Blair down on the perfectly polished grass and fuck her right in front of the party. But I don't. I let her simmer in her own desire, even though my cock throbs uncomfortably behind my zipper. Turning off my bike, I pull off my helmet and swing my leg over the seat. I turn to Blair and cup her chin as I lean in, like I'm going to kiss her. Her eyes close, and her lips curve in satisfaction, so I smirk and turn to her ear at the last moment. "We are here." I step back with a chuckle as she pouts.

"Asshole," she mutters as she gets off.

"Two can play your game, baby girl," I taunt, so she turns to Bray and flutters her lashes at him. He instantly rushes to her side, besotted by her, and I snort as I turn away, hearing her whisper dirty nothings into his willing ear. So much for the

player in him. She has him wrapped around her little finger—me too, though I wouldn't admit it.

I reach out and lift her up the steps so she doesn't stumble, my hands lingering on her curvy hips before I force myself away. Once inside the door, I can't help but grin at all the scantily clad women walking around holding glasses of champagne and wine while rich bastards chase after them like dogs in heat. I turn, expecting to find Blair jealous, but instead she licks her lips as she watches a redhead go past. "Damn, that's a fine ass."

"Marry me, seriously," Bray says.

"And limit myself to your dick? No, thank you. You brought me to this party at your own risk knowing there were some sexy as fuck women here—damn, look at those tits."

Oh God, this was a bad idea. I forgot that she's even worse than Bray. I grab her, wrap my arm around her waist, and steer her through the crowd to the sofas at the back around the fire pits on the open balcony. But as soon as I sit, she straddles my waist, leaning in like she's going to kiss me. "I'm here, let me party," she taunts just as I did to her, and before I can grab her, she hops up and moves just inside where we can see her and starts to dance with the others.

Stretching my arm out on the low white sofa, my legs spread, I watch her hips sway and tits shake as she moves to the beat. I know Asher and Bray are doing the same thing, entranced by her like always.

A tall, willowy woman who looks like a model dances with her, and Blair glances at me as she grins before grabbing the woman's hips and grinding with her. Their bodies press together, almost dry humping.

"Fuck," Bray groans.

Asher sighs. "She even pulls more women than Bray. I thought it was just the men we had to be careful of."

"Men or women, I'll kill them if they touch her." I shrug.

Just then, the model slut drops as Blair holds her hand, and then, ever so slowly, she stands, dragging her ass up Blair.

Sighing, I crook my finger at her when she turns. She shakes her head, and I see her mouth, “Come get me.”

This fucking girl.

She’s going to get every fucking person here killed if she isn’t careful. As much as I appreciate the show, she’s mine, and no one else gets to touch her but us. They can look, they can want and be jealous, I don’t fucking blame them, but anything other than that, their souls are mine.

Standing, I crack my neck. “I’m going to go teach our girl a lesson, be right back. Keep an eye on Jay.”

“You’ve got it. Try not to kill her too much,” Asher teases as I storm away. I grab Blair and toss her over my shoulder, spanking her ass and storming through the crowd. People part, laughing and watching. She doesn’t care and neither do I. In fact, I take the long way around so they can all see that she’s mine and not to be touched.

A warning.

The first room up some floating glass stairs is a spare room. I kick the sliding door shut and move to the bathroom, and once there, I only partially shut the door before dropping her to her feet and then pushing her down to her knees.

“Want to tease, baby? Want to put on a show and defy me with that cocky little mouth? Then fine, I’ll put it to use.”

Undoing my belt as she reaches for me, I pop the button on my jeans and push them down, palming my hard, throbbing cock. She licks her red cherry lips, greedily meeting my gaze.

“Greedy fucking girl,” I mumble as I press the leaking tip to her lips and paint the fluid across them. Releasing my cock as she sucks the tip into her mouth, I wind my hand through her blonde hair, fisting it and forcing her to take all of me. “That’s it, baby girl, suck on that cock, show me exactly why I’m obsessed with you. Show me what they all wish they could have.”

Like a good girl, she sucks me all the way down, wrapping her hand around my base before she pulls back to the very tip

and pops my thick length from her mouth. “You’re too big.” She pouts teasingly.

“Open your mouth,” I demand harshly, my voice rough with desire. I yank her head back as she obeys and opens her mouth for me. The sight nearly makes me fucking come across her chin and neck before I control myself. Gathering my saliva, I lean down and spit right into her mouth. She whimpers as I tug her back down. “There, now suck,” I order.

Moaning, she does as she’s told, hollowing her cheeks and sucking my cock back into her mouth. Her eyes water slightly as I slam deeper and pull her back, fucking her mouth and taking control. I know she lets me, otherwise I wouldn’t get away with it. But her submission? Fucking hell. I lose control, knowing this magnificent creature is on her knees trusting me as I do whatever I want to her. She’s finally letting me past that last wall she has, and what I find on the other side?

Perfection, flaws and all.

I slam all the way down her throat, and she gags like a good girl. Seeing her choke on my cock has me panting.

“Good girl,” I croon, my hips jerking with the force of my thrusts as I use my hold on her hair to direct her movements. My hips stutter just as the door opens, and a shocked model stands in the doorway. It takes her a moment to look around and realise what’s going on, but I don’t bother stopping.

Instead, I tighten my hold on Blair’s hair and snarl, “Get the fuck out, this ain’t a free show,” as I slam down Blair’s throat, making her jerk back from the force even as she squeezes my cock, trying to get more like a greedy girl. The model quickly turns and hurries away as I laugh and pull my cock from her mouth.

“I don’t know who she couldn’t stop looking at more, you or me. I know for damn certain if it were me, I’d be watching you,” I goad as I tug her hair. “If you keep sucking me like that, I’ll come in that pretty mouth before I even get a chance to fuck that tight little cunt until you scream for me.”

“Hell yes, I thought you’d never ask.” She smirks and hops up onto the sink, parting her legs and dragging her hands up her thighs to her pussy. She starts to play with herself as I watch. “Just going to observe?” she teases, leaning back and parting her legs wider until I see her wet, bare, glistening cunt.

“Where’s your underwear?” I demand on a groan.

“Didn’t wear any.” She winks. “I was wondering how long it would take for one of you to bend me over and find out.”

“Fuck,” I snap and cross the space, yanking her to the edge of the sink as I drop my head between those thick, tanned thighs and inhale the sweet scent of her dripping cunt. She parts her folds, giving me a better view as I lick my lips. Done with waiting, I bury my hands under her ass and lift her to my mouth, sealing my lips around her clit and sucking as she moans. Her hands fall away, leaving me to my feast.

“Oh fuck,” she whimpers. “Cy, please.”

The nickname on her tongue has me digging my fingers into her supple skin until she cries out, her dirty little cunt clenching as I hurt her.

“Say it again,” I demand as I release her clit, running my nose down her pussy to her hole and circling until I get what I want.

“What?” she asks, confused. She sits up to look down at me, her eyes hazy with lust.

“Cy,” I grunt.

Smirking, she runs her hand through my hair before fisting it like I did hers. She sits up and then leans down, dragging me higher until her lips meet mine. “Cy,” she moans breathlessly before pressing her lips to mine. Her tongue sweeps along the seam of my lips before I take over, kissing her back. I lick along her teeth, nipping at her lips until I have to break away to catch my breath.

My hand automatically curls around her neck and squeezes—not to control or contain her, but needing contact. I need to see my rough, scarred hand against her perfect skin to know she’s mine. All mine. “Keep talking like, and you just might

have me falling for you, baby girl,” I rasp, the words coming out before I can stop them.

She blinks before forcing a fake smile. “Don’t go falling for me, Cyrus,” she says gently. “I’d hate to break your heart.”

Unsure what else to say and needing to wipe away that sad, distant look from her eyes, I do what I do best. I show her what we both know is true with my mouth. This is too good, too fucking perfect to be anything but forever, even if neither of us wants to admit it just yet to each other. We’re both scarred from our past and hate being vulnerable, but our bodies? They say everything our voices can’t.

I eat her pussy fast and hard, putting everything into licking and sucking until she’s crying out my name and begging for me to let her come on my face like a good girl.

I push two fingers inside of her and crook them, curling them against her bundle of nerves. Keeping her pinned to me as she thrusts into my mouth, I nip her clit, and she comes all over my mouth. I lap it up, wanting her taste to stay on my tongue forever.

Adding another finger into her fluttering channel, I fuck her through it, my tongue cleaning my fingers as I move them in and out of her. I need to feel her come again, to make her orgasm so many times that when I fuck her with my huge dick, she won’t be able to walk after. She’ll need to be carried all night, like a content little bitch, with my cum in her cunt. When it starts to drip out, I’ll push it back inside her in front of everyone for not wearing panties.

That thought alone has me reaching down with my other hand and gripping my cock so I don’t come.

“Cy!” she screams, trying to pull away, but I don’t let her. I attack her engorged clit, catching it between my teeth before kissing it better, all while my fingers piston in and out of her wet, dripping pussy until she comes all over them again with a yell.

I have no doubt everyone can hear us, even over the music, and as I surge above her, pulling my dripping fingers from her

cunt, I can't help but smile in satisfaction. Let them hear my girl's cries for more, for my cock. Hell, let them watch if it will make them all understand that she's mine.

She slumps back, her eyes closed and mouth slack in pleasure, and I've never seen something so beautiful in all my life. Seeing my marks on her, the proof of her desire for me... fuck. Without wrapping my cock, I grab her thighs, toss them over my shoulders, and slam into her drenched cunt in one smooth move.

She groans, opening her eyes as her hands scramble to get purchase on the vanity as I set a rough, fast pace. She loves it. Her pussy clamps around me, dripping down my cock and balls as she cries out my name. Her head falls back, her flushed chest rising and falling until I can't resist. I lean in, yank down her dress, and capture one of her tight nipples in my mouth. She groans louder, dropping her legs to my waist and hooking them around me as she lifts herself to meet my thrusts.

“Cy, God, please don't stop.”

“Never,” I snarl as I pull away before turning my head and biting the sensitive flesh of her boob. She screams, clenching around my cock, and my own pleasure grows until I feel it surging through every part of me. I fight it back, not wanting to come yet so I can be inside of her longer.

Gripping her ass, I slam into her harder, and the mirror behind her shatters, but we both ignore it, fighting for release.

“Cy,” she breathes, knowing what that does to me. “Fuck, your cock feels so good, so big,” she murmurs as she rolls up to nip my lower lip. “Please, stepbrother,” she purrs, and it breaks that last shred of control I have. With a roar, I fuck her harder, slamming into her with wild abandon. She just laughs through it, her perfect body accepting it and begging for more.

“You love, it don't you?” she goads. “Knowing you shouldn't want me but do? Knowing everyone else thinks it's fucked, thinks it's wrong. You love the fact you're fucking your stepsister and making her scream for you. Say it, Cy.”

My hand darts out and wraps around her neck, squeezing one more time as I lean in and slam into her so hard she moans in both pain and pleasure. “I fucking love it.”

And I do. I can barely control myself around her. We both know this is twisted, forbidden, and that others wouldn't understand, but it only makes me want her more. I want to see their shock and disgust as they catch us. I want them to know that my brothers and I own this cunt, and that this fucking perfect dirty bitch is ours.

It sends me over the edge, so I reach down and twist her aching red nipple until she screams and comes around my cock. I see stars as I fill her with my release, my hips stuttering and legs shaking. I fall onto her, unable to help it, unable to hold myself up, but she's there, holding me, and I blindly search for her lips, swallowing her moans and making them my own.

When I pull back, she kisses my face, the warm butterfly kisses making my heart clench. She restarted the cold dead thing, and no matter what we both want, she's the one who controls it now.

“Promise me something, Cy,” she whispers.

“What?” I grumble, still coming down from the high.

“Promise me you won't let me hurt you all. Promise me you won't let me break your hearts.” My head jerks up, and I meet her worried eyes. I capture her chin and pull her closer, kissing her.

“I won't,” I murmur truthfully against her lips, “because it would be worth the pain.”

She pulls back sadly, and I stand up.

“Come on, let's get back to the party.”

Just like I wanted, I have to carry her out of the bathroom, holding her tight in my arms. She's content and lazy in post sex bliss, unable to tease or flirt with anyone else. She smirks up at me. “You look so fucking smug right now.”

“I feel it, baby girl. I’ve got your cum on my fingers and cock and you in my arms,” I murmur as I step back into the party. “Why the fuck wouldn’t I be smug?”

When I reach the others, Bray laughs and Asher just shakes his head, opening his arms, so I deposit her on his lap where she curls up as he passes her a drink. Leaving them to their moment, I recline back.

“Anything from Jay?” I ask, unable to hide my smile.

“Not yet,” Bray answers. “I know he’s around here somewhere. I heard his bike pulling up, could hear that bitch from miles away.”

We sell a few bits, shake hands, and play nice. Blair goes back to dancing, grinding on Ash as he grins down at her like she’s the fucking sun to his moon, even with my cum inside her. We really are a fucked up family, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

“Damn, that’s one fine woman. She might even be hotter than the models,” Jay comments as he sits. I smack him without looking, the only person who would dare.

“Eyes off, she’s ours.”

“Fuck, you always get the good ones. Well, hello, sweetheart,” he purrs as Blair comes over.

I turn my head and narrow my eyes, grabbing my knife and jamming it against his balls. “One more time and they are mine,” I warn.

His hands come up, but he backs off as she sits next to me. I nudge him to be sure, and he winks at her. “No offence, love. You’re hot, I just like more meat on my girls’ bones. All those sexy ass curves to get lost in, you know?”

“Oh, I do.” She nods and leans back, stretching her legs out before crossing them. The silky movement catches my eye, distracting me like always without even trying. If I put my hand up her dress, would I find my cum still dripping from her?

She's my strongest addiction. The one I don't want to heal from.

"You got what we wanted?" I ask distractedly.

"Yeah, I'll drop it by in the morning. You need anything else?"

"Don't think so," Bray calls. "Thanks, man. No luck with the models?"

"Nah, they all want the clean-cut, rich-looking bastards like you. They like a taste of the dark side, but me?" He laughs, and I look at him, and I can't help but smile. He's right. He looks like a gangbanger or worse, with an unkempt brown beard, bright blue piercing eyes, and tattoos crawling up his neck, ears, and onto his face. The sides of his brown hair are shaved, and the top is styled, but even clean and prettied up, he looks like he drinks, fucks, and shoots up in his scarred leather cut, low-rise black jeans, chains, and big ole boots. It would take one daring bitch to go home with him, and it's usually only house bunnies. Yet deep down, Jay the badass only wants an old lady. He leans in like he knows my thoughts. "I see you caught yourself a keeper though."

"What do you mean?"

"There's word on the street you three are tamed. I see why now. She's a killer. Crazy like you, for sure." He laughs, clapping me on the shoulder. "Good on you, kid. You needed someone to come in and show you who's boss and give you something to fight for."

I roll my eyes, and he laughs harder.

"All's fair in love and war, brother. Trust me, I've spent enough time looking for something like that to know when it's serious. Too many bitches hopping on and off my dick for the status, but when you get a true one? Keep her safe and close, and fucking give her the world and don't ever let go."

My eyes go to Blair, who's flirting unashamedly with Bray. "I don't plan to."

"Good." He nods. "I'd keep your eyes to the ground."

“Why, you hear something?” I demand, turning my back to protect Blair.

“Just some rumours, nothing serious yet. Some players are thinking of making moves.”

“We’ve had some... small issues so far,” I admit.

He nods. “They’ll think she’s a weakness, so prove to them otherwise. Right, you grumpy bastard, I’m off. Blair, lovely to meet you. Bray, you twat, stop stealing my bikes. Asher, thanks for the new painting.” He leaves, and Blair grins after him.

“I like him.”

“No!” we all say at the same time, making her laugh as the music cranks higher and the rich flock to us for their hits. We sell, and the night moves on quickly, but in the back of my mind, all I can think about is who is gunning for us and when will they make their move. But Blair convinces me to relax and have fun—she’s the only person who could.

We chat and relax until Blair wants to dance again, and then she drags Bray away. As soon as they’re dancing, Asher pulls his phone out like he’s been doing all night, which isn’t like him.

“Asher, what’s wrong?” I ask. I recognise the worry on his face. He bites his lip and lowers his voice, which tells me it’s a Crew matter then.

“Don’t tell Blair, I don’t want her to worry, but it wasn’t any of us that accessed the security cameras. I had our guy check into it, and it was an outside source. A blunt hack and delete. Whatever they did, they didn’t want us to see, that’s for sure.”

“A target for us?” I snap, stiffening.

“Maybe.” He nods.

“Sweep the house now, a full team. Bugs, cameras, devices. I want it cleared.”

He nods, immediately returning to his phone. My eyes go to Blair, dancing and laughing with Bray, and my heart

stutters. I can't be too careful. It's not just my brothers I have to protect now, it's her too. Nothing can happen to her; I will ensure that.

Or this whole fucking city will burn.

I don't know who thinks they can get away with an attack on us, but we will find them, and when we do, they are fucking dead. Their blood will cover my hands and weapons before it even so much as pools near our girl.

Not that she would care.

But she's ours, and we protect what's ours.

I'll kill them all, and then fuck her in their blood just to prove it.



Chapter Thirty Six

Blair

The guys leave early the next day. Cyrus looks really serious for once, almost concerned. I feel sorry for whoever he's going for. Luckily, I'm not one of those girls who feels the need to be with them all the time, so after waving them off, I head upstairs to get ready for work. When I get back into my room, I spot a drawing on my pillow and can't help but smile, wondering what Asher has left me now.

I pick up the paper delicately, ready to place it in the box next to my bed with the others he has given me, but when I see the strong black ink lines, I freeze. Staring back at me isn't my own face, or even someone we know—or he knows, I should say.

No, it's Lucas.

Throwing the paper down like it burned me, I stumble away with my hand over my mouth. I try to breathe, to rationalise it. I don't know how he got a photo of him to work on, but he captured Lucas's likeness perfectly, right down to his crooked smile, simmering eyes, and wild hair. Maybe he thought he was being nice? That seeing him again would help me? But it doesn't, all it does is bring back memories. They

crowd my head, screaming for attention. I can almost taste my sweat dripping down my lip and feel the dried blood flecks covering my arms and face as I scream for help.

I can smell the hay, the shit, the decay...

Fuck.

“Red, blue, green,” I chant over and over.

It doesn't work. I can still feel the blood dripping through my fingers as I cradle his lifeless, cooling body, begging for someone to save us—but I know they don't. I'm alone, and he's dead. They all are. Because of me.

Because of him.

Spinning, I spot the drawing again, and I can't stop myself from ripping up the harsh lines. Asher drew him so angrily, why? That's not his normal style. But as I shred it, my eyes wet with tears, I can't seem to care. I finally calm down when it's in tiny pieces, but it's still not enough, the memories are still there, so I rush to get ready, to run away from the drawing and the memories it stirred—to run to work and try to forget in the music.

When I get there, I keep my head ducked, only nodding at the other dancers, including Lexi and Allegra who watch me worriedly, but before they can corner me, I move to the stage. When the music starts, I step onto the glossy stage and finally relax. Finally let go. With each twist, turn, and show move, my shoulders loosen as I let go. No past, no present, no future.

Only the sound of the thrumming beat.

One dance turns into the next. Lexi sings, but her eyes return to me continually as if she knows something is wrong. There's a promise in her eyes that she will find out later. She's a nice girl, and I really like her, but she's too innocent for my life. She would look at me differently. Allegra might not. I sense the same pain in her heart that I harbour in mine, but Lexi? She's just too damn sweet to mark her with my trauma.

I turn away, dancing around her as her sultry voice ensnares the crowd. I know the feeling. The first time I heard her, I could have sworn she wove a magical spell around me.

She's just that good.

After her song, I duck back through to the dressing room, grabbing some shoes before heading to the bar to escape her and Allegra's impending unstoppable questions. I don't normally, but I grab a shot and toss it back, ignoring the music and the patrons around me.

"You are quite the dancer," comes a low chuckle from next to me.

"Thanks." I nod without looking, gesturing for another. The bartender gives me a narrow-eyed look but refills it, and I throw it back before turning my shot glass over to let him know I'm done. I'm turning to return to work when a hand lands on my arm.

"I mean it, very talented."

I'm just about to hand this insistent asshole his ass when his next words stop me.

"I can see why Crew is so obsessed with you."

"What did you say?" I snap, yanking my arm away and finally meeting his eyes. His brown hair is tied at the nape of his neck, which is covered in tattoos. He has a cross under his right squinty eye and a lip ring. He's tall, probably the same height as Bray but skinnier, and he's wearing an oil-stained white t-shirt and some sagging jeans tucked into scuffed black boots. I see more tattoos under his shirt, and I know instantly he's bad news—not to mention the three men standing silently behind him. One of them is very tall but slouching with his hands in his pockets, and I can see the gun tucked under the waistband of his leather jacket. His face is squat and empty. The one next to him is skinnier and watching me with uncontrolled lust, and his eyes dart everywhere at once. The other just gives me the creeps as he stares into my soul.

"I said I see why they all have their dicks hard for the new dancer chick, why it's making them stupid. Can't say I blame them." His voice drags my attention back to the talker just in time to see his tongue run over his teeth. "Gotta say, I might have to try you before we ruin you."

“What do you want?” I demand, not willing to play games. How dare they come to my place of work? And Crew? Who are these assholes? Clearly not friends, which means enemies. I can imagine they would make some, since they aren’t exactly the friendly drug dealing types.

“Your boyfriends.” He laughs. “But you’ll do to send a message.” He reaches for me again, and I twist my hand, smacking his away with a glare.

“Touch me one more time and I’ll kill you myself,” I snap, making them all laugh as they circle me. I see Allegra watching me, but I shake my head, letting her know I’m okay.

“Oh, Darling, I’d like to see you try,” he taunts.

I don’t know if it’s the use of the guys’ nickname for me or what, but I lose it.

“I said get the fuck off me before I kill you,” I hiss right in his face. “You think what? You’ll come here, throw some threats around, and I’ll be scared? I’ll tell you everything and betray them? Fuck that. You wannabe gangbangers don’t fucking scare me, now get the hell out of my club before I take your guns and shoot you with them.” Some of it is bravado, but the rest is true anger and intent. With one last look, I turn and leave to go to the back, flinching at the whispered, “Damn, I like them when they fight.”

Once backstage, I swallow hard as a shiver goes through my body and quickly grab my phone. I may be good, but even I know I can’t take four of them with guns. Doesn’t mean I won’t try, but I’m betting they will wait until I finish work to catch me outside, so I text the only people I know who can help me—Crew. They will come, and they will help me.

They will protect me.

Me: SOS. Some creeps here at the bar are threatening me over you guys. Get here now before I kick their asses.

I send it in the group chat before pocketing my phone, turning back to the mirror, and shaking off the feel of his slimy touch. I have a show to finish, and no one, not four wannabe bad men, is going to stop that. Once upon a time, I would have

shit myself when I faced them, but that's the dead Blair, the one from before... this. Before all the death, pain, and suffering. The abuse and the late nights where I lay in bed, terrified of the handle turning. The hits, both physical and emotional. No, that Blair is dead, and right now I'm not scared. I'm fucking angry.

Just as my phone vibrates, the door flies open behind me. I already know who I'll find, and I rapidly look around, realising everyone else is on stage. Fuck.

Stupid, Blair, very stupid.

“Didn't think you'd get away that easily, did you?” He smirks, their bodies filling the door so I can't escape. I could go up on stage, but I refuse to run. I'm fucking sick of it, so instead I stand taller and grin at them. They expect me to be scared, to call Crew crying and just let them threaten and hurt me to get back at them.

Yeah, fuck that. They haven't ever met someone like me.

They move closer, and I nod at the door. “Might want to close that so no one hears you scream.”

“You think you're so brave? So fucking safe because you're hopping on all the Crews' dicks?” he sneers, pissed off. One of the guys reaches for his gun, and I keep track of them as I make sure I'm not cornered. If need be, I'll run onto the stage. Serina will understand after she kicks their low-life asses.

“No, I think I'm brave because I've been dealing with assholes like you my entire life. You think you're scary? Bitch, please, I've faced down a fucking murderer. You are just boys playing with guns too big for you. Last warning, get the fuck out before you get hurt. I won't tell you again. You might be scared to go after Crew directly, but there's a reason why they are obsessed with me and why everyone else in this city fears me—I'm just as crazy as they are.”

“Get the bitch. Let's show her what real men do with mouthy cunts like her,” he orders.

Cracking my neck, I move to the left and grin. “Don’t go crying that I didn’t warn you.”

They move towards me, and I duck the first set of hands, kicking out and using the dressing table for support. I catch him in the balls, and he goes down hard. The skinny fucker manages to catch my leg though, so I turn and kick backward until he falls, and when the other man hesitates, I slam my fist into the mirror over and over.

“What the fuck?” one of them yells.

I ignore the sharp pain and the feel of the skin on my knuckles splitting as the glass fractures, splintering. When it’s broken enough for me to extract a huge piece, I stop, cutting my fingers in the process. My blood coats my hand, making it slippery as I turn, holding the bloodied glass in my grasp. I gesture for them to come again.

“Come on then. I’ll cut off your balls and give them to Crew.”

“Fucking little bitch!” one of them hisses, and he grabs for me, but I’m too far gone. I’m consumed by anger, and my survival instincts are kicking in. I slash, stab, and swing like a wild woman until they have no choice but to stumble back and try to escape me. They thought they had me cornered, but instead, I’m like a fucking wild trapped animal.

Deadlier.

I manage to catch one across his cheek, cutting deep, and his blood sprays in an arc as he falls into the door with a scream. Panting, I watch them with narrowed eyes. “Get out now before it’s your throats.”

With one last look at me, they quickly race to the door. “Fuck this. The crazy bitch ain’t worth it!” I kick the door shut behind them before sagging against it, the glass dropping from my numb, bloody fingers.

“Shit, that was fun,” I mutter just as the girls troop off stage.

“Oh my God, Blair, what happened?” Lexi screams and runs to me. “Allegra, get security now!”

“Tell them it’s four assholes, one with a bloody face.” I nod at her. “Lexi, will you get me a first aid kit... and maybe some wipes? I got blood everywhere.” I laugh.

Allegra looks me over before smiling. “Hell of a fight, kid. Well done.”

I nod as Lexi leads me to the stool at my broken dressing table and starts to fuss over me. She speaks with kind, soft words as the other girls stare and whisper. Let them. It does make my cheeks heat in embarrassment, even though I don’t care what people think. I already know. They think I’m trouble, no good, trash.

Allegra comes back a bit later and tells me they are gone. I take over for a crying, worried Lexi and clean my hand and start to dress it, assuring her I’m okay. Allegra won’t let me dance, but the other girls and Lexi have to go back on stage, making me promise to stay close and scream if I need anything. I have no doubt security is right outside the door, so I settle back, wrapping my bloody hand with a wince. Now that the adrenaline is gone, it’s starting to hurt like a bitch, but it’s just another scar to add to my collection. Hell, if I don’t get a scar after surviving a near miss, is it even true?

I can feel my phone vibrating like crazy. Fuck, I bet that’s Crew. I must have missed it in all the chaos. I’m just about to answer when the door slams open for the second time this evening.

They burst into the dressing room as I’m wrapping my hand. Cyrus is there first, sweeping me up and checking over every inch of me. All of them demand to know what happened, throwing question after question my way until I can’t help but laugh. I don’t know how they got through security, but it shouldn’t surprise me.

“Guys, guys, I’m okay. Let me breathe and I’ll tell you what happened.” Reluctantly, they let go, and Cyrus stands behind Bray as he kneels, taking over dressing my hand. Asher looks worried as he searches my face, so I shoot him a calm smile.

“I’ve had worse, baby. Anyway, I did this mostly to myself while stopping the bastards.”

“Now, baby girl. Tell us everything,” Cyrus demands.

“Some guys came in, cornered me at the bar, and followed me back here. They wanted to use me to hurt you.” I shrug.

“Who?”

“Didn’t catch their names, too busy scaring the shit out of them,” I reply with a laugh.

“That’s my girl.” He grins, but it quickly disappears. “Describe them.”

I describe the men to them, and it only pisses them off more.

“I know who they are. Get her bandaged up and checked over,” he tells Bray before turning to me. “Baby girl, call Faye and have her take you home. I want you both to stay there and don’t fucking leave until we get back, okay?”

I nod, knowing there’s no point in arguing. If he’s this angry and serious, it means it is deep shit.

“I got a few good licks in.” I grin and Bray smirks.

“Of course you did, Darling, because you’re a fucking badass. I’m surprised you didn’t kill them,” he murmurs after wrapping my hand and kissing the back of it.

Asher smiles slightly while Cyrus paces, pissed as hell. His eyes land on me every second as if to check that I’m still here and okay.

“So, what are you going to do?” I ask. I already texted Faye, and she’s on her way. They wait with me, and each second that passes only pisses them off more. I’m almost choking on their anger, their need for revenge.

“What we do best,” Asher replies.

Bray nods in agreement, but my eyes go to Cyrus who’s suspiciously quiet. What do they mean? They can’t mean what I think, right? They wouldn’t risk their lives for me, would

they? He finally turns to me, and what I see, well, it steals my breath. I wouldn't want to be those guys right now.

Cyrus isn't just angry, no, he's murderous.

I see it in his eyes. There is no rule or law he wouldn't break. No line he wouldn't cross... for me. The knowledge fills me as his fingers gently reach out and trace the back of my injured hand. His touch is so soft, so loving, so dissimilar to the death I see in his dark gaze. Even Asher, my sweet, sweet artist, is silent. His face is closed down, and he's watching my every move. Beyond his anger, I sense his terror that something could happen. In Bray I sense regret. He blames himself. His life, his name. It makes him pissed and reckless. I don't know what they are going to do, their dark gazes beg me not to ask, but I do know that tonight, the Crew is going hunting.

To keep me safe.

"Trust us," Cyrus murmurs, a scarred, tattooed hand coming up to gently touch my chin. "Go, be safe. I can't do what I need to if I don't know you're okay, baby girl. This isn't me doubting your strength or conviction, this is me needing to protect my family. To protect what's mine and make them pay for even daring to be in your fucking presence."

"Cyrus," I whisper, but his grip tightens on my chin.

"You're ours, baby girl, and anyone who tries to touch what's ours dies a painful death. Don't ask me not to go after them. I won't lie to you, not ever. I told you that. This is who I am—a killer, someone willing to do anything to protect their family. I'm not a good man, but I'm yours. We all are."

"I'm not asking you not to kill them. I know who you are, Cyrus, who you all are. I just wanted to tell you to be safe and to come home, to come back to me, even with their blood on your hands." I stand on my tiptoes and kiss him hard. My bloody, injured hand cups his cheek, and he leans into it for a moment before pulling away. With one final look at me, he turns and storms out.

I can still taste the revenge coating his lips, and I lift my fingers to wipe my own as if to rid myself of the stain... or to remember it.

I've never had anyone willing to kill to protect me. Why does it make my once cold heart clench?

Faye turns up a minute later, and I let her lead me to her car. She's rambling about getting me home and to bed.

"We aren't going home," I interrupt, cutting off her anxious stream of words.

"Wait, what?" she asks, blinking in confusion. "Crew told me I had to, even if I had to tie you down."

"I said we aren't going home. You really think I'm going to let those three go deal with the assholes who attacked me alone? Me? Not a fucking chance. They said we are a family, that we are in this together. Come on, we can still catch up and you can tie me down another time." I buckle up as she gawks.

"You want... to follow them?"

"I want to help them kill the assholes," I clarify.

"Sometimes you scare me," she whispers.

"Good," I say with a smile. "Let's go."

"They will kill me," she mumbles but starts the car.

"Nah, I'll protect you from them. Now let's see what being Crew is all about, shall we?"

"We are so fucking dead," she mutters, even as she pulls out into traffic to follow my three boyfriends.

"We're off to see the dead man, the dead man of the city," I sing-song, and she gives me a worried look.

"Okay, not just sometimes, you scare me all the time," she tells me, but it makes us both laugh. "But I can't say life is boring with you around. Okay, let's do this."



Chapter Thirty Seven

Cyrus

We brought the car to the club so we would all arrive together, but it works in our favour now. I drive while Bray and Asher make calls. I wouldn't be calm enough to. Even now I grip the wheel so hard I'm surprised it doesn't snap. Fury like never before flows through me.

How dare they come for her?

How dare they touch her?

This was always my worry, that they would think she is our weakness and try to hurt or use her to get to us. I should have known better. I slam my fist into the wheel, and Bray spares me a side-eyed glance before going back to talking, and I attempt to calm myself down to save it for them. What's done is done, and they will die for even being near her.

When Bray hangs up, he turns to us. "Okay, it seems it's the bag men, the money runners have split. Two sides. One thought taking us out would work better for them and get them men to run the product, the others disagreed. The ones we normally work with gave us an address and want to meet us there as a show of good faith to prove they were not in on it."

“More like to watch us get back their control,” I snarl.

“That too. We make a new deal with them after we’ve dealt with the greedy bastards who thought they could make more money by getting us out of the way... and tried to use Blair to do it.”

“Fuckers,” Asher mumbles.

“I have the cameras from the club. It seems that address is right. They are heading there now; I’m tracking them. Four guys, the ones Blair described, and they are packing.”

“That’s fine, it won’t help them,” Bray snaps angrily. “Fuck, I can’t believe they went after her.”

“I can,” I growl. “I knew shit would happen. This is why I didn’t want to let her close.”

“You claimed her too,” Asher retorts. “Don’t just blame us.”

“I know that!” I scream, smashing my hand into the wheel again. “But we are supposed to protect her.”

“And we will,” Bray soothes, “and we’ll send a message with these assholes. No one will come close to her again, not to mention her rep is already getting around. She’s not an easy target, Cy.”

He’s right, but it doesn’t lessen my anger. I should have been there. She should have never had to protect herself in the first place. We put her in danger, I can’t change that, but I can make sure no one ever comes after her again.

What started as a game, as claiming her for our own selfish needs, just fucking changed to something real and dangerous, because she is ours, she is Crew, and now we are going to kill to keep her safe. That’s a bond that is never broken. Even if Blair ever wanted to get away from us, she couldn’t.

Nowhere in this world would be safe from us. She’s the only person on the fucking planet we would never hurt, but would ruin and kill everything for.

The address is an old, run-down dive bar, but it’s closed tonight. When we pull up, though, blocking the one entrance

and exit to the parking lot, I spot their cars there as they argue. They know they fucked up, and when I flick on my headlights and light them up, I see them truly shit themselves. Climbing from the car, I lean against it for a moment.

“You the assholes who wanted our attention?” I ask and slam my door, the others following suit. The sound is loud, making the men jump. “You wanted Crew, right? Well, here we fucking are. Or are you pussies who can only go after girls?”

One of them pulls a gun and points it at me, and I notice the deep, bloody cut on his cheek.

“My girl do that?” I smirk, nodding my head at the fresh cut. “And I thought I couldn’t love her more.”

“We’ll kill you!” he screams, waving the gun around as if to make his point.

Idiot.

Moving closer, I press my forehead to the barrel of the gun, staring at him from inches away. “Pull the trigger and you’re a dead man walking. We are the only ones who can save you now.” His eyes flicker away, confused and scared, and I laugh as I back up just as I hear the low rumbles of the other cars. “Told you so. Being a fucking idiot traitor gets you nowhere. You didn’t only piss off Crew, but your entire organisation, and now they are coming for you.”

“Fuck, man, I knew we shouldn’t have done this!” one of them screams, and then he tries to get in the car to escape.

“Bray,” I order, my voice like a whip. He laughs, slides across the hood, and drags the man out, throwing him to the ground.

“Let us go!”

“Not a chance,” Asher scoffs, stepping into the headlights so they can see him. “You tried to hurt what’s ours. No one touches Blair but us.”

“Fuck, we’re sorry, man! She’s fine. The crazy bitch hurt herself—”

“She’s not,” I snarl and grab the man’s hand with the gun, yanking it to the side as it goes off. Snapping his wrist, I grind the bones together. “You hurt her, scared her.”

I hear the men we usually work with pull up, followed by the slam of doors as more lights surround us.

“Want us to kill them for you?” Aldridge, the leader, calls. I ignore him for now, staring into the screaming man’s eyes. My fury takes over, demanding I kill him and make it hurt.

“I’m not done yet,” I snap, and then I very carefully break each and every one of his fingers as he screams. Letting him go, I watch him drop to the ground as I crouch down before him. “I hope it was worth it. You’ll die here tonight knowing it’s for her.”

“Please!” he begs.

“Don’t fucking beg, it’s pathetic. Did she beg? Did she cry? No, she kicked your ass because she’s Crew! She’s ours!” I shout in his face. “And now you’ll send a message for me. You tell every stupid fucker in the city to stay away unless they want to end up like you fuckers. Dead, forgotten.”

I nod at Bray and Asher then turn to Aldridge. “You can have those three, this one is ours.”

He whistles, and his men collect them, dragging them over to talk while we surround the idiot who gave the orders, knowing it’s him from Blair’s description. “Anyone else trying to make a move?” I demand, knowing Asher’s fears about the cameras, not to mention the person behind the burner account posting photos of Blair. But that seems personal and petty, this is different.

“Just us,” he admits, but I don’t know if I believe him, so I look up at Asher.

“Could be the truth, but if not, we’ll find whoever it is and kill them too.”

That settles me a bit. “Get him up on his feet.”

Bray tries, but the man just hangs there crying, so he drops him with a disgusted snarl.

“Fine, let him die like a dog on his knees,” I say, grabbing his discarded gun. I fire two shots into his head before wiping it clean. “In the car,” I order, feeling nothing but emptiness at his death but a twinge of satisfaction that he’ll never touch Blair again.

Together, we get him in the driver’s seat and position the gun. Aldridge drags the other bodies over when he’s done and adds them. We make it look like a fight gone wrong before I stab the gas tank and let it flood the car, adding some from the boot so it’s drenched.

“Are we okay?” Aldridge asks as he watches me.

“Yes, as long as you keep your men in line. One wrong move, and next time, it’s you,” I growl as I light a cigarette and take a long draw on it.

Flicking my cigarette into the gasoline soaked car, I lean back with Bray and Asher, watching it go up in flames.

No one hurts our girl.

No one hurts our family.



Chapter Thirty Eight

Blair

We follow them all the way through the city and down some random side streets. God knows how they know where to go. We almost get lost through the trees before we see an old bar, a dive bar from the looks of it. The sign is switched off, there are no lights on inside, and the gravel parking lot is dimly lit with only one car there. Faye pulls into the trees to keep us hidden as Crew pulls up, turning sideways to block the entrance and exit. I lean forward, eyes wide, to watch.

“Maybe we should go?” she suggests as we spot the men, all four of them, as Cyrus gets out.

“Not yet, they might need our help.”

“Blair,” she whines, but I shush her and she hunkers down, turning off the lights so we aren’t seen.

We watch it all go down, and when he grabs the gun, I freeze.

“Blair,” she hisses, but I hear the fear in her voice. She’s not used to violence, to guns and death. She’s... innocent. I shouldn’t have brought her, but it’s too late to turn back now.

I'm just about to get out and help when I hear more cars. Cyrus doesn't seem surprised, which is the only reason I don't rush out. In fact, when they pull up, he speaks to the man. Who is he? I wind down my window to listen, and I catch the name Aldridge. They seem to be working together, so they're not enemies. I perch on the edge of my seat, observing what they are willing to do to make me feel safe, to stop anyone who hurts me. My pussy clenches as I watch the power Crew wields as they not only hurt, but kill the men who came after me.

"They—they killed him," she whispers. "Blair, they fucking killed someone!"

I turn to her and nod. "They did, and if they didn't, that man would have killed them and then done worse to me."

"I—fuck, I know you're right, but oh my God, I've never seen anyone die before."

"You're lucky," I whisper, and I feel her questioning gaze as we both turn back to the scene in silence.

"We should get out of here," she murmurs as we watch the car go up in flames, the smoke towering into the sky.

I nod absentmindedly as she starts the car and slowly backs away, leaving the scene as fast as we can, but not fast enough. One of the other cars spots us and gives chase.

Fuck.

"Turn here," I command, but it's a dead end, and when we look back, they've blocked us in.

"I'm betting gangbangers don't like witnesses to murder," Faye squeaks.

"Stay calm, I've got this. They clearly know Crew," I assure her and get out, ignoring her yell as she reaches for me.

I hear their car doors and see their shadows as they get out as well. "Who are you?" they call as I step into the headlights.

"Name's Blair, I'm Crew's girl."

“Bullshit, they wouldn’t let their girl follow them or be alone!” he yells, and I hear a gun click and know it’s pointed at me, so I freeze with my hands up.

“I’m Blair Crew,” I try again, just as I hear the rumble of engines and sag a little thinking they are here to save me, even though they will kick my ass for following them.

But it’s not Crew, it’s bikes, and I freeze. Fuck, we are outnumbered. What do we do? They pull to a stop by the car, and I feel them assessing the situation, even as I shuffle back towards Faye—but then I hear a chuckle.

“That’s Crew’s girl,” a man declares as he steps past the lights with a grin. “Hello again, Blair.”

I relax with a smile. “Jay, right?”

“That’s me.” He nods, smirking as he crosses his arms. “What are you doing out by yourself? Don’t you know these are dangerous roads?”

“Just having fun.” I smirk. “I’ll be going now.”

“You do that.”

The door opens behind me, and I wince. “Blair? Need me to kick some ass?”

“I’ve got this!” I reply, narrowing my eyes on Jay as he looks behind me, trying to see Faye. “Nothing to see.”

“Jay, what the fuck is going on?” comes a dark, rumbling voice. I hear another bike cut off, and then a huge shadow blocks the lights of the cars. “You heard him, go,” he orders the gang members, and they do, leaving us alone with the bikers. I stare at the huge shadow. He’s easily over six feet, maybe nearly seven. Clearly he’s muscular and strong. I can’t see his face, but Jay snaps to attention, still smiling.

“Nothing, Prez, just Crew’s girl, making sure she’s okay.”

“Are you?” the dark, low rumbling voice questions, and then I hear Faye storm up to me and I sigh.

“Listen up, assholes, let us go!” she yells, obviously thinking we’re in trouble. “I’ll kick your asses, I don’t care

how many steroids you shoot up!”

“Faye,” I interrupt with a laugh, taking her hand. “They are friends, and we are leaving, night boys.” I drag her back to the car as she grumbles under her breath. Once inside, she locks the doors and places her hands on the wheel, and then the man finally moves from the light so I can see him, and when I do, I hear Faye suck in a breath.

“Who’s that?” she whispers reverently, and I see him giving her the exact same hungry look through the window.

“Trouble, let’s go,” I demand.

“Yeah... yeah, go,” she mumbles, blinking like she’s in a daze before she starts the car and begins to back away—not without one last look at Jay’s prez though. Fuck, why does she always want the bad guys? And from the look of him, he wants her too.

Shit, and I thought I was in trouble. At least he might be able to actually handle her.

Faye drops me off at home, and luckily the guys aren’t here. I wave goodbye and head upstairs, flopping onto my bed. I’m exhausted after the day I’ve had, but I can’t stop thinking about what they did for me.

They killed for me.

Someone else did that once, but it wasn’t the same. They didn’t kill to keep me safe, they killed to keep me, to trap me, scare me.

They did something he thought he was doing—protecting me.

Even thinking about him has me sitting up, shuffling to the back of my headboard, and wrapping my arms around my legs.

He’s locked up; I’m safe. He’s rotting in prison like he deserves. I know that, and we even moved away, but it doesn’t

stop the fear and pain I feel at the reminder, at the memory of all the lives he took, and the way he destroyed mine... all while trying to make me his.

Closing my eyes, I try to remember good times. Not him, not that night, or all the nights spent in terror before and after. Not the stalking, the flowers, the messages, or the cameras. Not the times spent crying in Lucas's arms out of fear, wondering why me or who was stalking me. I didn't know then. I was so innocent as he wiped my tears and told me they would never hurt me.

He was wrong.

So were the police when they told me there was nothing they could do. The fucking useless assholes basically threw me at him and left me to fend for myself. Yet they took no responsibility when more lives than mine were ruined. It didn't matter, people still decided it must have been my fault. Even as a teenager, I must have been encouraging him, tempting him, and he couldn't control himself.

Bullshit.

He was a fucking psycho, and I know that now.

I know I did nothing wrong. I was just trying to live and he was trying to clip my wings. To put me in a cage and keep me until I wilted and died.

My hand drifts to the almost invisible scars circling my wrist, which mirror the scars on my other wrist, from the bindings. I fought hard with everything in me, and it still wasn't enough to stop him.

To save them.

My friends.

My family.

Lucas...

The only fucking people that ever gave a shit about me. My mum certainly didn't, but them? They fed me, made me smile, and showed me what living was about. They let me stay over, and we spent years together, making memories and

dreaming of our future with no parents. Then, suddenly, in one night, it was all gone, wiped away by his bloodied, monstrous hands. I was left alone in the world and so fucking angry it warped me.

Why me?

It's a question I ask all the time, I never got to ask him. I should have, and now it's burnt into my brain. Out of all the girls in our school, in our city... why me? What did I do? Was it something I said? The way I acted? A routine he saw? What made him ruin so many lives to try and have me? I need to know, I have to know, so maybe I won't do it again. So I can be safe again. Even knowing he's locked up, it's not enough. It doesn't stop my nightmares, it doesn't stop my triggers, and it doesn't stop all the ruined relationships and friendships I leave in my wake. I struggle to trust, to love, and to open up, terrified I'll lose those people again.

Tears form in my eyes, wetting my lashes, and I wipe them with the back of my hand. I've already shed enough, he doesn't get anymore.

It's just... one moment I'm fine, finally moving on and falling in love, and then suddenly I'm back there in the blood-soaked building, feeling his hands on my body.

I know logically it's not something I will ever recover from. The trauma will always be with me, like a wound across my soul, but one day, I hope it finally heals enough so it's not an open gaping wound, but I realise it's starting to close, to heal. I have less nightmares, my anger is waning, and I'm trusting, laughing, letting people in instead of abandoning them before they can desert me.

Am I moving on?

Why does that thought fill me with joy but also so much pain I struggle to breathe?

If I move on, does that mean I'll forget them? What if I can't do that? What if I want to remember them, even if it hurts?

Knowing I'm spiralling and will do something stupid, I grab my phone, trying to fend off the darkness. I hesitate before I hit send and drop it to the bedding. They will have questions, but as I sit here with tears in my eyes, struggling to breathe, I realise it's worth the weakness, worth trying.

Ten minutes later, I hear their footsteps, and it makes me cry harder as the door slams open. They find me wrapped around myself with tears spilling down my cheeks.

"Baby girl?" Cyrus murmurs.

"I need you," I confess, spilling the only weakness I'll allow before I choke back the sobs. Asher pulls me into his arms, replacing the cold, sticky feeling of *his* hands. Bray wipes away my tears and strokes my hair, whispering to me, and Cyrus clutches my hand, standing in the dark with me and holding my demons at bay.

They are all willing to fight for me.

Because... because they care for me. And I care for them.

I'm finally ready.

I'm finally healing, and I know I can't finish that without telling them everything, without knowing if it will affect how they feel about the true me and all the scars I carry.

Lifting my head from Bray's shoulder, I run my watery eyes across them. "I-I have PTSD."

"Darling, you don't need to tell—" Asher starts softly.

I shake my head, cutting him off. "I do, I need to tell you. You have to know. You let me into your family, you look after me, you make me happy, and you would do anything to protect me. You've never lied to me, never held anything back... but I have. There's a reason we move so often, there's a reason I am the way I am. Why I'm so fucking angry and hate everything and refuse to trust anyone." I take a deep breath, the darkness giving me courage instead of fear for once. "I've never told anyone the full story, I couldn't, as if it were trapped in my head. As if saying it out loud would make it real. But it's already real and speaking the words won't give strength to his ghost, it will only give me a chance to finally move on. And I

want to, I want to move on... with all of you. I want you to know, to know the real me.”

“Baby girl, we’re here now or whenever you need to talk about it. Don’t do this for us, but for yourself. Whatever you say, it won’t change how we feel.”

“We all have our pasts,” Bray offers sadly. “Things we wish we could forget... trauma we only think about in the dark.”

“You carry the same scars we do. Don’t be scared, Blair, take the jump, and I promise we’ll catch you.”

I search their eyes, which are open and sincere. These three men fill all those empty, broken pieces of me, making me whole.

Cyrus’s strength.

Bray’s laughter.

Asher’s hopes.

They have my back, my heart, but I want them to hold the broken pieces with their own. It’s time. I’m so tired of carrying this, of letting it ruin everything. I’m so scared of tarnishing this, so maybe if I can let go and tell them, they will understand and maybe stay.

As I look into their patient eyes, I know they will.

Nothing will turn them away. Once Crew, always Crew.

They will always be here in the dark with me, trusting me, loving me, and protecting me. That’s what family is. They help you hold the burden of your pain, even as they experience the light with you. It’s about trust, about give and take. You can’t always be happy, that’s not real life. Family is a dirty, bloody mess, and I fucking love it.

I love them, I realise, and that’s what makes my mouth open. The dread of losing them outweighs the terror of giving my past power through words. I’m finally understanding that although the fear is always there, it can’t stop me, not if I want to move on. I might always be terrified of him, but I refuse to let him control one more second of my life.

I won, not him.

With them.

My crew.

My stepbrothers.

“I-I was stalked,” I blurt, and Bray blinks as I roll my lips inwards. “It started in school with random, weird text messages that I would delete, thinking they were from jealous girls. I was popular, happy. I had friends and an amazing boyfriend. We were planning a life together; we were gonna get married.” Cyrus flinches. “We had picked out a house, and we were going to travel. I was happy, so fucking happy. Then the flowers started. I thought it was just my boyfriend or an admirer, but he knew nothing about it. Then I felt like I was being watched. Pictures would turn up on my phone or laptop. Some of me walking out and about or at parties... and then in my room while I was asleep. I reported it, but the police did nothing. I was so scared all the fucking time, and it only got worse. I’d wake up to find the sheets next to me mused. He’d break in and leave presents. Sometimes, I’d come home to my panties used and on my bed.

“One day, Lucas was almost hit by a car, and I knew it was him. I went back to the police, and I begged and pleaded for help. They couldn’t do anything. They couldn’t protect me, and then a week later, it happened. We were on our way back from a party when I started to feel funny, the others too. My friend who was driving passed out, and we flipped off the road. That’s when I realised we had been drugged. The last thing I remembered was hanging upside down with blood dripping down my face before everything went dark.”

“Blair,” Asher whispers as I drop my eyes to the bedding.

“Please, let me get this out,” I beg, needing to carry on before I choke on the words. “He kidnapped us. He was mad at me, at them. He thought they were stealing me from him, especially Lucas. He was angry that I called him my boyfriend, that I kissed him, touched him. He told me I was cheating on him. I was so fucking scared. He tied us up in this old, abandoned barn in the middle of nowhere. I was hanging

from the ceiling, barely able to touch the floor. My friends were tied to chairs in front of me, and I woke before them. I can still remember the smell of the hay and rain. When they woke up, they screamed, their eyes wide and mouths gagged. They tried to get free, and he laughed, watching the entire time, before he stepped into the light...

“S-Sir?” I stutter, eyes wide. My fingers curl around the rope holding my hands, trying to lessen the strain and stop my short dress from rising. I cut my eyes to Abigail, Cara, Jones, Jack, and Lucas. They all look as confused as I feel.

Lucas freezes, his eyes narrowing.

“Call me Ryan, won’t you?” he purrs, and I blink.

“Mr. Andrews?” I say, unsure if what I’m seeing is real. Why is my English teacher here? What’s happening?

“Ryan!” he roars, rushing over to slap me. My head jerks to the side as I cry out, and I hear the others yelling behind their gags, but my breath freezes as his cold hands turn my face back to him. In those once kind brown eyes, I see nothing. How could I have not noticed that before? The crazy hiding within? He grips my cheeks so hard my lips purse. “Say it, say my name.”

“Ryan,” I mumble out of my mashed lips, and he lets me go. I suck in a breath, blinking away tears as my heart pounds. “Please, what’s going on? We were in an accident—”

“Yes, well, I couldn’t knock you all out, unfortunately, but I didn’t expect you to drive so soon,” he grumbles and wags his finger in my face like he did during class when he caught me laughing or talking. “Very naughty, Blair.”

“Blair!” Lucas yells around the gag.

“Shut up!” he snarls, turning to them. “Unless you want me to be done with you now!” His body trembles as he stares at them, and my eyes slide to Cara as she cries. I see the moment she releases her bladder in fear. He steps closer. “What a disgusting—”

“Ryan,” I call, trying to keep his attention on me, knowing he wants me, not them. Everything finally clicks together. “It’s

you,” I whisper. “The flowers, the pictures—”

“Did you like them?” he questions, turning back with a smile, one that freezes my blood. “I couldn’t resist. You are just so beautiful, and when you sleep...” His hand drifts down to his trousers where I see his cock hardening. “Always teasing me, but it’s okay now. I’m here and we can be together. I know you were scared of showing you cared, worried about my job and what people would think, but I’ll keep you safe from everyone.”

“I-I am safe.”

“You’re not! They are using you! Hurting you! I’ve seen you cry because of him. They are just in the way. Don’t you see that we can be together now?” he screams in my face.

“Please let us go, I won’t tell anyone!” I implore, sobbing. I try to think of a way out of this as he places his hands on my ribs and stops the swaying of my body.

“I’m never letting you go, Blair. You’re mine now.” He turns away. “But first, I need to get rid of them. You don’t need them, only me. Forever.”

“Baby girl.” Cyrus’s voice brings me back as I wipe my face.

“H-He made them suffer. They screamed, they cried. I remember it all. I tried to distract him from them. I played along, pretending he saved me and that he was what I wanted even as bile clawed at my throat. He bought it, blinded with infatuation. It gave Lucas the chance to break one of his hands free, but somehow, he heard. He got mad—” I suck in a breath. “He stabbed Lucas. I screamed, I cried, and I raged. I told him I hated him, that he was a sick fuck, that I loved Lucas. I said shit I shouldn’t have, about how I was Lucas’s and that I would never be his. He didn’t like that.”

I meet their eyes again for a moment. “He raped me in front of them to show me I was his.” I snort bitterly. “Lucas... Lucas cried. I remember the sight of his tears. I kept my eyes on him the whole time to try and get through it. But it hurt him more than any stab wound because he couldn’t protect me.

Afterwards, he decided to go back to my friends to get rid of them so I would only have him. I kept hoping someone would find us, or that I could get free. Even if it meant enduring... enduring that again, I'd do it to keep my friends alive."

"I tried to get my hands out of the ropes while he was distracted, but I couldn't. I couldn't get free. I couldn't save them," I admit. "He killed them, Cyrus. He killed them all. He left Lucas for last, but he was already bad. He'd lost so much blood. God, the things he did to him. For touching me, for loving me. Yet even as he was dying, Lucas tried to save me, to tell me everything would be okay."

I can't help the sob that escapes as I shiver at the memories. "And then it was just him, their bodies, and me. I passed out at some point, and when I woke again, the sun was rising. Their bodies were still there, and I could see them clearly. Fuck, I-I can still remember their empty, dead eyes and the way they screamed for me to save them. H-He had a plan. He was going to burn the warehouse and make it seem like we went there to party and had an accident so he could run away with me. I knew if he did, I would never be free again, so I played him again like he had finally shown me the light with their deaths. I made it seem like he saved me, that I wanted to be with him too, and that night—that night when the sun set as he was spreading the gasoline, I got free.

"I had been working the ropes on the hook all day, and they finally snapped. I snuck up behind him. He turned just as I grabbed a shovel, and I hit him over the head, again and again, until I couldn't hold it anymore. But I couldn't leave them. I got his phone and rang the police, but I couldn't leave them," I whisper. "I got them free, and I covered them as much as I could. I sat with Lucas in my arms, telling him I was sorry, that I loved him. But it was too late, they were all gone, all dead... because of me."

"What happened after?" Bray asks softly.

"I hardly remember. The police came, and I was taken away in an ambulance. When I woke up, I was in the hospital. They said I was in shock, that I had injuries from the crash and from his attack. They—they told me they were unfortunately

all dead. I thought it had been a dream at first, a really bad fucking nightmare. For a split second, as I stared at those white walls, my friends and boyfriend were alive before reality came crashing down around me. The police assured me he was in custody and would never hurt me again... but I was so alone. No family, no friends. Just the police as I sat in the hospital bed, heartbroken, and the next day when I woke..." I shake my head, powering through, needing them to know.

"The day after I woke up in the hospital...there were the same flowers next to my bed with a promise. 'See you soon.'"

"Fuck," Asher snarls.

"I haven't been the same since. My mum blamed me, and there was a lot of bad press and attention about the schoolgirl who ruined the teacher's life, who got her friends and boyfriend killed. Well, I couldn't escape it. I could barely breathe. I-I tried to kill myself in the darkest moments. I was so alone, so tired and scared, I climbed up onto a bridge. I remember standing there as the rain drenched me, staring at the water below and wondering if anyone would even care. At least I could be free of their stares, of their judgement, and be with my friends again, but I couldn't do it. It felt weak, like the easy way out. If they had seen me—my friends, Lucas—they would have yanked me down and told me to keep fighting. I didn't want to. I was so exhausted and lonely, so fucking tired of fighting my own head, but I managed to climb back down." I suck in a wobbly breath.

Cyrus's hand squeezes mine. "We almost lost you before we even found you," he whispers.

"I'm so fucking weak. I tried to be better, to forget, but the only way I could was through drugs and alcohol. The only time I felt alive was with the high of pleasure. So I did it over and over, and Meredith eventually got sick of me embarrassing her. She moved us repeatedly, but it was always the same story. I got high, drunk, and fucked anything to forget, to feel strong. It was never enough... and then I came here and met you." I lift my head and meet their eyes, seeing my tears reflected in theirs. "I didn't want to hide anymore, to forget. I wanted to feel. To feel you and Faye. She reminded me what it

felt like to be supported, to be loved, and to have family again. I was so tired of fighting alone.”

“You never have to again,” Bray promises.

“I know that now.” I smile, and I do. “That’s me, all the fucked up scarred pieces and all.”

“And you’re perfect,” Asher says instantly, kissing me. “What happened to you, Blair... it was fucking terrible. I’m so sorry it happened, and that you’ve been dealing with this alone for so long.”

“None of it was your fault,” Bray tells me, his eyes catching mine to ensure I understand him. “It’s his fault. Don’t you dare carry that weight. You did nothing wrong, Blair, and if I have to, I’ll tell you that every single day for the rest of our lives.”

“So—so you’re not going anywhere?” I whisper, my fear forcing me to ask.

“Never,” Cyrus snarls, grabbing my throat and dragging me close. “Not ever, do you hear me? We’re family. You are Crew. We are for life, baby girl, so get used to it. No matter what happens, no matter your past, no matter what anyone else fucking thinks—it’s us, always, until the end. He will never hurt you again, do you understand me? Not ever. You are ours to protect, to love, to keep. He can’t touch you anymore.”

I believe him, so I melt into his arms as he holds me close and kisses my head.

“Ours,” they repeat as the others join Cyrus and me.

“No one will ever hurt you again, Blair. You are home.”



Chapter Thirty Nine

Asher

I hold her all night, her story ringing through my head on repeat. I'm astounded at her strength, her ability to survive. What she endured? What she survived? It's unbelievable. No wonder she's as strong as she is. She had to be, but knowing that, knowing what she went through, I look down at her and wonder how she was ever able to smile again, never mind being the incredible, caring, talented person she is now.

It makes me comprehend more than ever that this is where she is supposed to be—here, with us, so we can protect that precious heart and give her the life she deserves.

She whimpers in her sleep, and I meet Bray's eyes across her body. He looks pained as he reaches for her, stroking her skin until she settles.

We are all in shock, unable to sleep.

Cyrus sits at the end of the bed, his hands fisted. I know what he wants to do. He wants to track them all down—the police, the bastard that did this—and kill them for ever daring to hurt her, abandon her. But we can't. We can't change the past; we can only help her with her future.

We all know that, and under the light of the moon, we make a silent promise to always protect her, to be there for her.

To always love this incredible creature in my arms who just trusted us with her heart.

Bray

Pulling her close, I notch my head on her shoulder.

I finally understand why she hates the dark, why she struggles to sleep and let people in. But she doesn't see the difference, doesn't see how much she has changed since coming here. She is more confident, and she smiles and laughs often. She let us in, and that's how I know she will be okay.

It doesn't mean my heart doesn't break for her and what she went through. I thought we shared trauma, and I was right, but hers... I could hear the scars on her heart as she talked. I don't know how she kept that all in, but I am beyond astounded by her strength, beauty, and inner light despite it all.

I meet Asher's eyes again and see they are filled with the same awe and quiet love that pounds through my heart. Just when I thought I couldn't care for this girl any more, she shows me the fighter that has been hiding underneath all those jokes and bravado. She and I are so alike, but she's wrong, it wasn't her fault. She shouldn't have to live in the pain and chaos of her past, and I will spend the rest of my life pulling her back into the light and making her laugh by showing her the love she deserves.

I will prove that not everyone will hurt, betray, and leave her.

I might not have gotten to know the innocent young Blair from before, but I know the strong, sarcastic, scarred one, and she steals my breath and my heart.

Every single thing about her is perfect, pain and all.

Cyrus

I'm pissed.

No, I'm more than that.

I'm furious at the fucking world, at the bastard who did this, at Meredith for not protecting her or being there for her, at her having to go through this alone. I'm livid at her for not telling us, at myself... at every fucking thing. I want to rage, to hunt, but that won't help her. She doesn't need my anger on her behalf, she just needs us here for her right now.

I want to take her pain away. I'm so used to taking the blows to protect my family, and that includes her now, but I can't save her from her past. I can, however, ensure it never hurts her again. I will always be there, watching her back and holding her up when she feels weak.

I can still feel the dampness of her tears on my knuckles. I never want to see her cry again or feel her fall apart in my arms. But that's selfish, and I will. I'll put her back together over and over if that's what she needs.

She's a survivor like us.

More Crew than she realises.

I thought she had us before, but I was wrong. This girl, the one lying in the bed with us, she has us entirely, heart, body, and soul, for as long as she wants us. How could I not fall in love with her?

How could I not want her forever?

But is that what she wants? To be tied down again, even if it hurts?

I've never been so scared of anything before, because if Blair leaves, she'll be breaking three hearts.

And they will never heal, not from her.

Our darling.



Chapter Forty

Blair

I wake up expecting it to be awkward, but it's not. They are here, like they promised, holding me tight and protecting me, fighting off my demons for me. There's no judgement, only love—as much as that scares me. They claimed me as Crew, they promised to protect my heart and body, and now they are willing to fight my nightmares for me.

How can I stop myself from falling for them when they are so determined to make me?

I lie in their arms, trying to put up my shields, but they are well and truly shattered. I have no protection against them anymore, and as Asher wakes, lifting his head groggily and smiling, reaching out to cup my cheek so softly, I realise I don't want to. I want to be consumed by them, even if it hurts, even if it kills me.

I want this.

“Good morning, my love,” he murmurs, which makes Bray groan and roll over—only he rolls right off the bed and yelps.

“Who? What?” he yells, looking around, and Cyrus sighs as he sits up.

“I hate you all,” he mutters, making me laugh.

The sound elicits smiles from Bray and Cyrus, as Cy leans over and kisses my head. “I’ll go make coffee and breakfast. You’re not working today, are you?”

“No, I have a few days off. Serina said so,” I answer. Even though I hate it, maybe I need a few days off to recover and relax.

“Okay, want to do a chill day? We can lounge around, while Asher paints and Bray measures his cock or does push-ups.”

“Hey!” Bray protests. “It’s the other way around, okay?” He flexes his bicep, and Cyrus smacks his head again.

“That sounds amazing,” I say, and he smiles.

“Okay, baby girl. Relax and let us look after you today,” he murmurs, and then slips from the end of the bed, wearing only his jeans, and heads to the kitchen.

I’m left with Asher, who pulls me into his arms, and Bray, who jumps back onto the bed on his knees and flexes his abs, somehow contracting his pecs so they move on their own. “Welcome to the gun show, baby. Ticket please.”

“Oh God.” I cover my eyes. “It’s too early for this.”

“It’s never too early. Touch them, go on, you know you want to,” he goads, crawling up my body until I’m laughing and pushing him away. I know what they are doing, but it’s working. How could it not? By the time Cyrus returns, Asher and Bray are play fighting while I watch, commentating on the action.

He ignores them, hands me a mug and some breakfast, and slides behind me before pulling me into his arms. We share the food, and after, I get up and shower and brush my teeth. I grab the closest shirt, which looks like Asher’s. It has holes and paint stains, and it hangs to my knees. Smelling his scent on the fabric, I can’t help but grin as I head into the living room to find them.

“Should I invite Faye over?” I ask.

“She’s in trouble too,” Cyrus calls as he cleans up the kitchen.

Asher is setting up an easel, while Bray lounges on the sofa, and they both turn and groan.

“Great, now when I wear that shirt, I’m going to be hard,” Asher comments.

“Not sorry.” I shrug, then I look at Cyrus and ask, “Why?” as I throw myself down on top of Bray.

“Did you think we wouldn’t find out about you following us or you ignoring our orders?” Bray questions, peering down at me and wagging his finger. “Jay texted us, naughty little Blair. The only reason your ass isn’t spanked raw is because of your mental breakdown.”

“Bray,” Asher snaps, but I just laugh.

“Well, I’m not breaking down now,” I purr, and Bray swallows.

“Cyrus,” he whines. “She’s trying to fuck me, and I’m trying to be good like you said.”

“Both of you behave.” He sighs. “She doesn’t get to come, she was stupid.” He heads over to us, drying his hands with a tea towel which he gently slaps across my bare thighs. “Weren’t you?”

“Do that again but on my pussy,” I demand, but he just arches his eyebrow. “You’ll have to be more specific.” I grin innocently. “Do you mean when I finger fucked myself on your bed the other day? Or when I switched Bray’s shampoo with dye?”

“Or when you followed us last night?” he offers, leaning in to cage me. “You saw everything?” he asks.

I nod, and I see his eyes flare as Bray stiffens beneath me. They’re concerned it will change how I see them, but I simply lean up and kiss Cyrus. “Thank you for protecting me.”

“Always, baby girl,” he murmurs before standing with a smile. “But you still don’t get to come, that’s your punishment.”

“That’s just fucking mean, you psychopath,” I whine. “I need orgasms to heal.”

“Tough shit,” he retorts.

Mean.

I spend the morning being teased but never really touched. I help Asher paint—well, mainly I distract him until Bray kidnaps me and we play pool. I win his bike for a week, all his underwear so he has to go commando, and the right to peg him, which he looks both worried and excited for. Cyrus just watches it all, checking on me all the time. I’m not fragile. I broke last night, but I’m okay today. Amazing actually, like I can finally breathe with that off my chest, but under it all... there’s a feeling, a bad feeling, like I’m waiting for the other shoe to drop.

When I go to the toilet after dinner and realise I’ve started my period, I shrug it off as that.

Rolling my eyes at my own foolishness, I grab a tampon, and after cleaning up and changing my underwear, I wash my hands and head back to chill with the guys. I wondered why my nipples seemed sensitive, usually it’s a good indicator of when I’m about to start, but with everything going on, not to mention the stress of last night, it didn’t even cross my mind.

Oh well.

“Everything okay?” Asher asks.

“Yeah, just my period came on is all.” I sigh and flop down with Cyrus who instantly grabs me, pulls me onto his lap, and starts to massage my back where the pain is. Bray jumps up, points at me, and smiles.

“Don’t move, the Bray period pack to the rescue!” he yells and runs away as I stare at him in confusion.

“Bray period pack?” I repeat.

Cyrus winces, then he explains, “When you first moved in, he wanted to plan for your periods in case you ever needed anything—oh fuck.” He groans and closes his eyes as Bray

skids back into the room with, yep, an actual bag with a skull on the front labelled ‘Period Rescue.’

Fuck is right.

He drops in front of me and starts methodically pulling supplies out as he talks. “Okay, are you in pain? Do you need pain relief? What about an ice pack? Hot water bottle? I heard those are good. I also have tampons, pads, this little cup thing which I don’t quite know what you do with,” he offers, holding a Mooncup up and squeezing it.

It’s so adorable, I can’t help but laugh. “Not right now. The pain relief would be nice though,” I tell him when his face drops.

He’s up again instantly, grabbing a water and quickly handing me two pills. I take them as he watches like a worried mother before, without asking, he goes and makes a hot water bottle and settles it across my stomach.

“There.” He nods, his expression serious. “What else did the internet say—ah, chocolate!”

“Bray, I don’t need—” I start, but he’s already gone and back with a giant bar of chocolate. “Okay, yeah, maybe I do,” I say as he hands it over.

I end up sharing it with Cyrus and Asher as Bray covers us in a blanket and hands me the remote. “Put on whatever makes you happy.”

I put on a horror film, and Cyrus rumbles out a laugh. “That’s my girl.”

So, to the sound of screams of people being eaten, Asher paints a masterpiece, Bray gives me massages and chocolate, and Cyrus holds me. It’s the best period I’ve ever had. I hear my phone ringing, and Bray grabs it for me. When I answer the FaceTime, I see Allegra and Lexi, with club music playing in the background.

“Hey, babe, we wanted to see how you are,” Lexi says worriedly.

“Yeah, and to make sure you hadn’t been arrested.” Allegra laughs.

“I’m okay, and nope, for once,” I tease, grinning at them.

“Good, I was so worried.” Lexi sighs.

“I promise I’m okay, sweetie,” I assure her and wink at Allegra as she smiles at Lexi. I may be younger, but both Allegra and I look out for Lexi. She’s just too damn sweet and innocent, unlike us.

“Serina wanted to check in as well, so I’ll let her know you’re okay. She also apologised for them getting back here and has hired more security. Oh, and she handed the others their asses, so it will be like performing in Fort fucking Knox now.” Allegra laughs. “And some of those security guards? Girl, they are fine.”

“Nope, no more men. The bed won’t fit them,” Asher calls distractedly, making me snort, and Allegra grins as Lexi’s eyes widen. It’s then I realise I never really introduced them to the guys, but now isn’t the time. There’s a girls’ talk due first. My heart twinges at what they might think. Will they be disgusted or support me?

“Okay, well, we’ll leave you to whatever you are doing. We’re due on stage. Girls’ night next week at Lexi’s though?”

“Sounds good. See you guys!” I hang up and snuggle against Cyrus as another notification buzzes my phone.

“Fucking hell. Why did we decide to date someone with so many friends?” he mutters. “Tell them to fuck off.”

“I’ll just mute it,” I tell him, and I do it without looking at the message before tossing it to the other side of the sofa. I’m too comfy as I snuggle closer to give it a second thought. A few hours and several horror movies later, I find myself drifting off to sleep again.



Chapter Forty One

Blair

When I wake from my nap, I see Asher and Bray fell asleep as well, but as I move to relieve some pressure on my left arse cheek, Cyrus's arms tighten.

"You're awake. How are you feeling?" he whispers into my ear, making me shiver.

"Fine, I'm not dying. I ride the dragon every month," I whisper back with a roll of my eyes.

"Good," he snarls and extracts me from Bray's grip. I yelp but wrap my legs around his waist as he quickly and silently moves out of the living room.

"What?" I ask in confusion, staring into his determined, dark face. "Punishment time?" I joke.

"I've had your perfect ass pressing against my hard cock for hours," he growls as he kicks open his bedroom door and slams it shut behind us before tossing me onto the bed. I bounce before sitting up, my eyebrow arched.

"Period, remember?" I say even as I want to sigh, because damn if I don't want what he's offering. I always find I'm

hornier when I'm on my period, and Cyrus is a walking, talking dick stick for me to use.

“Baby girl, that’s what towels are for.” He smirks, standing above me. “You think a little blood is going to stop me from fucking my girl?”

“It does for some.” Even though I love period sex, a lot of men are uncomfortable with it, and I wouldn’t push it on them, but the hungry look in Cyrus’s eyes? He’s determined to fuck me, blood and all, and if that doesn’t make me wetter than hell, I’d be lying.

Leaning down, he presses his hands to the mattress on either side of me, getting right in my face. “When are you going to realise we aren’t like most, baby?” he purrs as he brushes his nose down my cheek and back to my ear. “I’m going to eat your cunt, blood and all, and then fuck you so good you’ll never doubt my intentions again.”

I inhale sharply and he chuckles as he pulls away before heading to the bathroom and coming back with a towel. I get to my feet as he spreads it out on his bed and pats it.

“Your throne,” he teases, but I apparently don’t move fast enough, because he grabs me and gently sits me down with my legs hanging over the edge of his bed.

He grips my ankles, and with a desire filled dark look at me, he drags his huge hands up to my hips where he hooks his fingers in my panties.

“Nothing could ever stop me, baby girl, okay? It’s a natural thing. It’s just your body, it’s who you are. There is nothing shameful or gross about a little blood. In fact, sometimes it’s a fucking turn-on, especially with you. Now lie back and let me feast on my cunt.”

“Your cunt?” I smirk, yanking off my shirt and leaning back on my elbows. I’m unashamedly turned on by his promises.

“You have our last name, baby girl,” he croons as he leans down and licks along my ear. “That makes you our property.” His hand cups my aching pussy. “And this cunt? It’s ours.”

His hand hooks into my underwear and yanks. He pulls them down my thighs and off my feet, tossing them away before he pushes me back to his bed and parts my thighs.

He slowly grasps the string of my tampon and pulls it free. I watch his face carefully, but there isn't a hint of disgust as he takes care of me. He wraps it up and places it in the bin before stripping off his clothes and getting back to his knees before me.

“There, now lie back and let me make you feel better.”

He does just what he promised—eats my cunt, attacking me with tongue, teeth, and fingers. I'm moaning in mere seconds, with his lips wrapped around my clit and his fingers spearing my tight pussy. My back arches as I cry out. Reaching down, I fist his hair and drag him closer as I rub my pussy across his face. He sets a hard, fast rhythm with his fingers, pulling them out and slamming them back in, over and over, as his lips finally release my clit. His tongue lashes it before sliding down to circle my hole.

That causes me to gasp. I'm bleeding everywhere, yet he groans in appreciation, eating me like his favourite dessert. My desire pounds through me as it builds higher and higher. His expert tongue only adds to my pleasure, and when he adds another finger, stretching me around him, the wet sound of him finger fucking me makes me whimper.

“Cy,” I beg, knowing he loves that. It makes him feral, like an animal eating me from the outside in, and it sends me over the edge. I come all over his face with a scream. He licks me through it, slowing his fingers before pulling them free, and when he sits back as I tremble, I see the blood across his lips and cheeks. He grins before leaning down and kissing me hard.

I taste the copper of my blood and the sweetness of my cum, and under it all, the earthy, masculine flavour of Cyrus. His hands drag up my body, squeezing my curves and pushing my breasts together before tweaking my nipples. I moan into his mouth again, accidentally catching his lip with my teeth, and he pulls back, his lip bleeding.

“Now we are both bleeding.” He groans as he slides his hand down to hoist my leg up before slamming his hard cock inside me. It forces a scream from my raw throat, the mix of pain and pleasure as perfect as always with my dangerous stepbrother. His hand slams down by the right side of my head as he pulls out of my clinging body and pummels back inside. He moves in the same pace he used with his fingers, not letting my body calm down, dragging that massive cock over the sensitive nerves inside me with each thrust. My blood and cum cover his bare cock as he captures one of my nipples between his lips, licking, sucking, and biting it, leaving teeth marks before doing the same to the other.

The pleasure steals my breath, and all I can do is hold on, gripping his shoulders and digging my nails in as I lift my hips to meet his wild thrusts. “Fucking” —bite— “perfect.”

When he lifts his head, I spot the blood smears across my chest, but I don’t care. In fact, the sight of my blood and his across my skin has me crying out and my pussy clamping around him.

“Oh fuck,” I whimper. “I’m going to come again.”

“Not yet,” he snarls, and without warning, he pulls out of me. I yelp as he grabs my hips and flips me, my ass and legs hanging off the bed. With quick movements, he pries my thighs apart, lifting my legs so I’m not touching the floor, and slams back inside me. The new angle only brings my release that much closer.

“Cy...” I fist the towel.

“Fuck, it’s so hot watching your blood on my cock, knowing every inch of you, no matter when, is all mine.” Leaning down, he licks my back, his rhythm never changing. He pounds into me from behind until I know I’ll have friction burn across my chest, but I don’t care. My oversensitive nipples love it.

“You dirty bastard,” I choke out. “You’re really messed up, you know that?”

“That makes you even more messed up for loving it, baby girl. Don’t you, stepsister? You love me fucking you, even when you’re bleeding, and you love me talking to you like this. Dirty, raw, mine,” he finishes with a snarl. And he’s right, I do.

It makes me wild for him in a way I’ve never been for anyone else. Cyrus calls to that fucked up dark part of me. Bray makes me enjoy teasing, and Asher reminds me to enjoy sweet love making, but Cyrus? Cyrus makes me want to raw dirty fuck at every hour of the day.

Just like now, as his huge cock splits open my bleeding pussy. His possessive hands grip my ass and hips so hard it will bruise. My cries fill his room until he leans down and slaps my clit, sending me spiralling under yet another orgasm.

I scream, milking his cock and, with a roar, he fills me with his release.

Slumping forward, I swear I almost black out, but I force my eyes open when I feel his cock pull from my fluttering pussy.

This time he gently turns me, leans down, and kisses me. His arm shakes next to my head with the effort, his lips puffy and bloodstained. “That was fucking amazing.”

“It was,” I whisper. “Let’s do it again.”

Laughing, he kisses me once more. “Later, now let me look after you.”

He gathers me into his arms as I tremble from the aftershocks and carries me to the bathroom. There, he gently lifts me into the shower, holding me in his big arms as he turns on the water. He lets it warm up before he sets me down and starts to clean me. His face is locked in concentration, and his hands are gentle and loving. Once he’s done, I return the favour.

When he gets out, he dries me and goes to the other room to get me some clothes. I find a tampon waiting on the side and put it in before washing my hands and pulling on the boxers he comes back with. Standing before him in nothing

but those, my breasts bare, I feel empowered—especially from the worshipping look in his eyes as he pulls me closer and leans down to kiss me.

It's so soft I almost cry. Stupid hormones. "Come on, baby girl, let's get you something big and greasy to eat."

Fucking hell, this man is making it very hard not to love him.



Chapter Forty Two

Blair

Walking back into the living room, I find Asher and Bray playing a game, but they smile at me before looking back at the TV. “Even on mute, your phone is going off.” Bray snorts.

“Weird,” I mutter, hearing the oven switching on as Cyrus begins cooking. I head to my phone where I tossed it and sit as I start to scroll through the notifications. Some are from Faye, some are from some girls at work, and some are from boys about a party. There are some random ones from Instagram, which make me hesitate, so I open them. The guys never said if they figured out who posted those photos, and for some reason as I wait for it to load, I know it’s going to be bad.

When the post loads, I close my eyes for a moment. The guys are still talking happily to each other in the background, but a cold shiver goes through my body. It’s only one post, but there are multiple pictures. I even saw the caption.

Fucking whore, Crew will get what’s coming to them.

Preparing myself, I force my eyes open to look, unable to make a noise or speak to alert the guys. My voice is once

again trapped in my throat as my heart begins to race and fear takes root.

The first picture is from the party the other night. I'm laughing as I lean into Bray. The next is of me dancing with Asher, his hands cupping my ass and his lips pressed to my ear with a dangerous smile. My own is wide, so free and happy. The last is what makes my stomach flip though. It's of Cyrus and me, and his head is between my thighs. Luckily it blocks the view of my pussy, but my head is thrown back in ecstasy. It's a fucking private moment, a sexy as sin memory that now makes me want to throw up.

I remember the model rushing away. Fuck, she didn't close the door, which means anyone could have taken this, could have watched us. Something that felt so intimate before now makes me tremble in anger. It feels like they are preying on private moments, on snapshots of my life where I am truly happy, and even though I hate the photos and what they stand for, they show me something—I am finally happy. I can't let someone ruin that or taint what I have. We have to get to the bottom of this and fast.

I finally found my voice again.

"Guys," I croak before clearing my throat. "Guys," I say louder. Usually I would keep this to myself and deal with it, but not anymore. We are a family. We deal with problems together, and that's what we will do.

Asher instantly turns off the game, but when he sees my face, he frowns. He rushes to his feet and drops before me, cupping my hands on the phone. "Babe, what's wrong?"

"Cyrus!" Bray yells, and I hear hurried footsteps before they are surrounding me.

"What's wrong?" Cyrus demands.

Bray plucks the phone out of my hand and swears, scrolling before he hands it to his brothers. "Are you okay?"

"No, I'm fucking angry!" I yell, getting to my feet and pacing. "Who the fuck is doing this? Why?"

“We checked, but we couldn’t find out who. The IP address was a dead end. A burner phone is posting it. It’s not an ex, we checked thoroughly,” Cyrus snarls. “Nor do I think gang members would stoop this low. It’s too petty for them, they prefer their fists. It’s like they are a ghost. It’s not just some stupid vendetta against us, it’s more about you. No, this is psychological. It’s someone smart and sneaky who’s willing to cross a lot of fucking lines. It doesn’t seem like something a stupid kid would do.”

As he talks, my blood cools until it turns to ice and I stand before him, my hands fisted at my sides. Terror like never before fills me.

“What?” he asks, noticing the shift in my emotions. “Baby girl, you look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“Blair?” Bray murmurs. “What is it?”

“It’s him,” I whisper, and even the words make bile rise in my throat. Logically I know it’s impossible, he’s behind bars for a very long time for what he did to me and for killing my friends and boyfriend, but this feels like before. It’s the same methods, the same stalking, the same build up. I can almost taste the anger, possession, and desperation in the posts. Even the angles of the photos are like his. As I think back now, it makes sense—the flowers. Fuck, it’s all his MO. But it can’t be, right? Even the idea... Fuck, I wrap my arms around myself as tears well in my eyes. My past surges up like vomit in my throat, taking over until it squeezes in on me until I can barely breathe.

“Who?” Asher asks, confused.

“It’s him, don’t you see?” I yell, the tears finally brimming over my eyes and falling down my cheeks until I taste them on my lips as I talk. “It’s him, it’s him, it’s my stalker.”

“Blair,” Bray murmurs, sharing a look with the others. “You said yourself he’s in prison—”

“I know what I said!” I scream, sounding crazy. “But this is what he does. He makes me paranoid, makes me second-guess everything. The pictures, the flowers—”

“The drawings,” Asher murmurs. “The missing camera footage.”

“Drawings?” Cyrus questions.

“I’ve been missing a lot, like *a lot* of my drawings of Blair. They are just gone.”

“But that means he would have been in our house...” Bray muses.

“The camera footage,” Cyrus snaps and looks at me.

“My bed, it was mussed that night. I thought it was Bray,” I whisper. “It’s him, he’s here. He found me and he’s doing it again. But he won’t stop this time until one of us is dead.” I begin to sob, and then I collapse.

They gather around me, but not even their arms or protection can save me from this.

My past is finally coming for me.

He’s coming for me.



Chapter Forty Three

Bray

I hold her, unwilling to let go, as Cyrus makes some calls, trying to find everything out. I've never heard him so worried, so fucking angry. His eyes cut back to Blair as she cries and whispers in fear. He loves her, and he feels helpless. We all want her to be wrong, but she's so sure, and her logic makes sense. Fuck, I've never seen her like this either, shaking with terror and so fucking scared.

Asher grabs his gun, and she yells after him, but he storms off, determined to check the house and our apartment before securing it.

"Phone," she croaks.

"What, baby?" I ask, pulling away to see her tear-stained face.

"I need a phone; I have to know it's him."

I hand her my iPhone with a frown, watching as she takes it in her shaking hand. She punches in a number by heart and waits as it rings. Cyrus stops his calls, waiting and watching.

"We're clear and locked down," Asher announces as he stops before us. She pulls the phone away and puts it on

speaker for us as we listen to it ring, each one making her jump as we become angrier. Fuck, hurry up!

The line finally connects, and after a moment, a deep, confused voice echoes down the phone. “Hello, who is this?”

“Detective Elba?” Blair asks in a wobbly voice before she closes her eyes and licks her lips. “It’s me, Blair Cre—Willows.”

There’s a moment of silence, and then his voice comes, sounding softer, more caring. “Blair, are you okay? I’ve been trying to reach you.”

“My number, I changed it.” She quivers. “It’s true then.”

“Blair—”

“He escaped, hasn’t he?” she demands.

He sighs. “Yes, over a month ago. He managed to bribe some guards, and, well, I won’t bore you with the details, but he killed someone in the process, then stole their car and identity. We tracked him, but he sent us on a wild goose chase. We have been after him ever since. There’s no proof he’s coming for you—”

“Of course he fucking is!” she yells. “He wrote me and called me every single day from behind bars, telling me I was his. I moved to escape it, and now he’s here, I know he is.”

“Blair, tell me your address, I’ll send police—”

“They can’t do anything,” she snaps. “It’s too late, he’s already here. He’s coming for me again. By the time they find him, I’ll be dead.” She hangs up and presses her face into my chest. I meet Cyrus’s eyes. They are cold and deadly.

“Blair,” he murmurs.

“What do I do? I have to run—”

“No more running, baby girl,” he snarls. “He’s here.” She flinches, and he crouches before her, cupping her cheeks so she looks up at him. “The police might be useless, but we aren’t. I meant what I said, we all did. No one will ever hurt you again. You are ours.”

“Cy—”

I cover her lips, turning her to face me. “He’s right. He won’t get near you. Now that we know it’s him, we know what to look for. You are on lockdown.”

“Tonight, we hunt him,” Asher states.

“No! He’ll kill you!”

“Many have tried, baby girl.” Cyrus smirks. “But he’s just another desperate man. That makes him weak and sloppy, and now that we know why and who, there will be no stopping us. We will find him, and we will end this like they should have back then. He will never get to you again. You’ll be free. Trust us to do this, trust us to protect you.”

“What if he hurts you?” she asks worriedly. She’s more concerned about us than herself.

“I’m sorry, baby girl, but we aren’t them.” She winces, knowing he means her old friends and boyfriend. “We can look after ourselves. He’s nothing but an obsessed teacher. We grew up on these streets, fighting for our name, our reputation, and family. We deal with gangbangers, criminals, and drug dealers on the daily. Everything here is ours, and he won’t stand a chance. We’ll circle a net around the city, have every eye watching, and chase him from the gutters to the streets and shoot him like the fucking rat he is.”

“But...” She shakes her head. “I can’t lose anyone else,” she finally confesses. “I just can’t. I lost everyone, so I stopped letting people in. I’ve just found you; I can’t lose you all.” She meets each of our gazes, and I see determination entering her eyes. “I’m tired of being afraid of him, but I’ve never been so scared as I am at the idea of you being gone. I’ve been in love before, I’ve cared for people, but never like this. You aren’t just boyfriends or friends. You’re my family, my everything.” She closes her eyes for a moment, and when they open, the old Blair is back, and she’s strong and angry. “I refuse to let him take that away from me, to take you away from me.”

“He won’t,” I vow. “No one ever could.”

My heart skips a beat at her admission. It was one so close to expressing love and what I feel for her, for the woman in my arms. For the one who makes me laugh, joins in on my adventures, and tolerates the crazy. For the woman who swept into our lives like a storm and washed everything clean and made it all so much better.

“We can do this, Blair, but not if you aren’t safe. He will come for you, it will be the first stop. We will take you somewhere so safe he could never get in. If, by tomorrow morning, we haven’t found him, we’ll come back and get you,” Cyrus tells her.

“We’ll take Faye there as well. If he’s watching, he’ll know you care for her and might use her to get to you,” Asher says, always the smart one.

“We will stop him,” I state. “We will make this world safe for you again so you never have to wonder. He won’t just be behind bars this time, baby.”

“You’ll kill him for me?” she asks, but she doesn’t seem surprised. If only she knew what we had and were willing to do for her, she might be disgusted and run the other way.

“I’d kill everyone in this fucking world for you,” I admit. “Anyone or anything, just to see that smile, just for you to sleep through the night again without bad dreams.”

“There is nothing we wouldn’t do,” Asher adds. “No law could stop us.”

“But what if you get caught?”

“Baby girl, we own the police, remember? They won’t catch us. We’ll cover it up. I don’t want to kill people, I don’t take enjoyment out of it, but him? I’ll fucking relish it, so you know you’re finally free from the monster in the dark.”

“Promise me you’ll come back, promise me you won’t leave me,” she demands, and when we share a look, she sits up on her knees, her eyes hard as she stares at each and every one of us.

“I promise,” Cyrus says.

“Me too, I promise,” I tell her.

“Asher?” she prompts.

“I promise, my love,” he vows, kissing her. “Now, text Faye, and we’ll get everything prepared, okay? You are safe.”

She nods, and we watch her go before sharing a look. “He’s dead,” Cyrus snaps.

“Seconded.”

“Third,” Asher agrees. “What’s the plan?”

“Text Jay. She might not like it, but the clubhouse is the safest place in the city. Then get the ears and eyes on the streets. Asher, you found him online, didn’t you? So we know what he looks like?”

“Yes, right after she told us last night, I looked him up. I’ll text you a pic.”

“Good, then we hunt this bastard, find him, and make him pay,” he finishes.

Nodding, we get to our feet, knowing what we need to do. Cyrus is right, this ends tonight. Our girl has spent too long with his ghost haunting her, and now that he’s free? The police were supposed to protect her, and they failed her, everyone did.

We won’t.

Not ever.

Tonight, we slay Darling’s demons.



Chapter Forty Four

Asher

After Blair showers and slips into some ripped black shorts, her boots, and a low-cut crop top with one of my painted leather jackets, we force her into the car. We swing by to pick up Faye, who looks worried but knows better than to ask what's wrong. Especially with the closed down, cold expression Cyrus is rocking. She does ask Blair if she's okay though, and Blair just sighs.

"I'll explain everything, I promise."

That is the end of that as we speed through the city.

It only takes us twenty minutes to cross the tracks and get to the clubhouse. We don't have a lot to do with the prez, he's a scary as fuck bastard, but I know he'll take the girls in and Jay would die for them.

Pulling up to the compound, we idle as we wait for the huge, hulking gates to open. The concrete extends as a barrier around the massive area, which includes a bar for the clubhouse, two working garages, a storage warehouse, a salon, and a deli, which are open during the day with doors operated through the gate. The cameras are on and no doubt watching us, and if not, then the perimeter senses have alerted them. I

can hear music, even though it's only late afternoon, so they are probably all in the bar. Good.

The gate swings open and we pull through, driving to the right just in front of the deli and salon, which are attached in a one story building. Getting out, I grab Blair's hand and smile reassuringly at her.

The brick buildings are nothing special. In fact, some are run down, but they are the best in the city if you can look past the lack of riches that so many upper class need. It's all about service here and not impressing people. Their clients are usually some of the most powerful or dangerous in the area.

The deli and salon sit to the left of the lot near the wall. Opposite us, with the huge metal door open to showcase all of the many bikes, is the warehouse. It has huge lights positioned above and contains their spare parts and offices.

Attached to it are the two large garages. The doors are shut, so no one is probably at work at the moment, but if you have car and bike trouble, here's your place. There isn't anything they can't fix, and, well, let's just say the mods they do aren't always legal.

"Damn, I should have brought my car and worked on it," Blair jokes, noticing my gaze.

"Uh-uh, because then we would never get you out of here. They would bribe you to stay," I tease.

"Why?" she asks.

"A girl who works on cars? To these men? Fucking gold dust," Bray explains.

She just laughs, probably not believing us. Hell, keep her? They may fucking kidnap her. They value women above anything, and they're protective and scary fucking bastards, but they are still criminals. A lot of these men are here because they don't fit in anywhere else. Here, loners, psychos, and people just looking for a home find a place where they can be free, can be themselves. That makes them wild, though, and unpredictable.

To the very back, set away from it all, is the dive bar called Renegades. Before the open wooden doors are more bikes. Some have members on them, probably newbies. There's more parking to the left with the BBQ, play area for kids, and grass—not to mention the torture hut behind it, but we've never been inside there, since that's a club secret.

“Come on,” Cyrus says. “Let's get you settled.”

“Shouldn't you say something like, they won't bite?” Faye offers nervously.

“That would be a lie, but they won't bark at least.” He winks, making Blair laugh.

“I'll protect you. I can beat up some big burly bikers if need be,” Blair says.

“Oh God, don't get killed, or worse, hitched to some besotted biker because you kicked his ass,” Bray mutters, only slightly joking.

“You're all weird,” Faye mumbles. “But I agree, no kicking anyone's ass. I don't want to have to patch them up.”

“Boring, all of you,” Blair comments, but I sense her nerves at being one step closer to letting us go out there.

I squeeze her hand and tug her after us, knowing the quicker we get this over with, the quicker we can get back to her.

Pushing through the door, I crinkle my nose at the smell of weed, cigars, old, spilled beer, and whisky. To the right is the bar with two club bunnies behind it, serving the bikers perched on the mismatched stools. The wooden floor is covered in scars, and the scattered tables aren't much better. To the right are some pool tables with flat screen TVs on each wall, and a dart board with a club bunny laughing and hanging from a man's bicep.

The bar is filled with members and family all bustling around. Club bunnies and old ladies are visible everywhere, the difference easy to tell. On a raised section are some long wooden tables, and that's where I spot Jay talking to the prez. He simply nods at me and holds up his hand. The prez hasn't

seen us yet, too busy talking, but Jay excuses himself and hops down, grinning at us as he comes closer.

“Hey, Blair. Well, hello there. Who the fuck is this beauty?” His eyes widen when they land on Faye behind Blair, who’s looking around with her head tilted in interest.

“Don’t,” I warn him, but it’s too late, he hops around Blair and grins at Faye, his eyes going to her ass as he almost falls to his knees and pants.

“Christ on a dick, woman. Aren’t you a fucking stunner? You come to play with Jay?” he flirts.

“Wow, is that really your pick-up line?” Blair teases.

It got the prez’s attention. He stands, and his men instantly shift into defence mode, so we close in around Blair and Faye. “These them?” he asks, his voice rumbling. He’s a big, scarred bastard. Hell, I don’t even think Cyrus could take him.

“Yes, Prez,” Jay answers with a grin, unafraid. “Come on, ladies, let’s get you settled.”

“Look after them,” Cyrus demands. “Not a hair touched, I mean it.”

“We know the stipulations; we aren’t idiots here. We aren’t fucking with Crew. Not to mention any woman is safe here and won’t be touched.” The prez’s scowl melts to a smirk. “Unless she wants it.” His eyes go to Faye, and Blair chuckles under her breath.

“Oh, they are so going to get laid,” Blair murmurs, and I arch a brow. “Not me.” Her eyes go to Faye, and we both laugh.

“Let’s get you a drink, sexy,” Jay teases and pulls Faye to the bar as the prez hops down before us, his gaze sweeping over Blair in a clinical way before he nods.

“You’ll be safe here. We’ll protect you,” he promises seriously, tapping his cut.

“Is that right? Then who will protect you from me?” she counters with a grin, making me laugh. He barks out one too.

“I get why you like her.” He nods. “We expecting trouble?”

“Maybe,” Cyrus offers.

“We’ll be prepared. See you before sunrise.”

“You’ve got it,” Bray replies. “Blair, no killing or scaring the nice bikers.” He laughs as he sweeps her into a kiss. I turn to give them a moment as they make eyes at each other. Cyrus waits too, and when Bray lets her go, I kiss her forehead.

“Behave.”

“Why do you all keep saying that?” She pouts, but I can’t help but grin.

Cyrus hooks an arm around her waist and pulls her closer, his eyes narrowed. “Stay here. I mean it, Blair. I’ve given them permission to tie you up if needed.”

“Kinky.”

“Faye needs you here. Please trust us, baby girl. We’ll be back,” he finishes before kissing her hard. The bikers whistle, but he ignores them and pulls away, his gaze cutting to the prez.

“If a single hair is touched on her fucking head, I’ll have yours,” he snarls before storming off.

“We all will,” I add, eyeing him seriously for once. I may like him and even their club, but Blair comes first. “She’s our entire world, our fucking family. Anything happens, you won’t be safe. None of you.”

He bristles at the threat before jutting his chin sharply in acknowledgment. With one last look at Blair, Bray and I turn to leave, our minds switching from her and the warm feelings to that of Crew.

Cold, dark, and cunning.

Hunters.



Chapter Forty Five

Blair

I watch Crew walk away, their backs straight and muscles tense. I swallow my fear for them, knowing I have to trust them. If there's anyone in this world that can do this, it's them. Plus, even I know I wouldn't be able to stop them.

They won't rest until I'm safe.

"Blair?" the firm, clipped voice calls, and I turn to see the prez. "They'll be okay," he says softly as if knowing my thoughts. "Want a drink?"

"I thought you'd never ask." I grin, and he chuckles and nods his head at the bar, but as I follow his broad back, seeing Faye already there, laughing and flirting with Jay, I can't help but wonder if it will really be all over tonight.

It almost seems too easy.

I hate that I'm sitting here in my protected fucking tower while my men go out to deal with my problem, but they are right. I'm the target. I wouldn't get close enough to stop him. So even though I hate doing this and feel weak, I do as I'm told, knowing that sitting back and doing nothing is sometimes the smartest move.

The prez watches Faye as he pours us a drink, and when he hands the cool glass over, their fingers brush. She gasps, her gaze darting up to his, and I see a smile tipping up his lips, almost hidden behind his beard.

Leaving them to flirt, I turn with my pint in hand and survey the others. I need to distract myself from what could be happening to my family right now, but they are right. They are stronger, smarter, and they have more at risk. He won't stand a chance, but my memories warn me not to discard him so easily.

He's a lot worse than they think. He doesn't care about anything or anyone but getting to me.

Downing the pint in a record time, I wipe my mouth with my hand and turn. "Another," I demand. Jay's eyes narrow on me, but he pulls me a glass and passes it over, watching again as I down it.

"Uh-uh. If you get drunk and start teasing the bikers, I won't be responsible for Crew's reactions," he teases as Faye leans in with him. She's smiling, but I see the worry in her eyes. I still haven't really told her why we are here, just that it's an emergency, yet she holds her tongue, even as I see the questions growing in those soft, caring eyes.

"He's right. Slow down, babe. You okay?" she asks.

"Peachy," I mutter and drop the glass to the bar. "Anyone up for a game of pool?" I jump to my feet, needing to be doing something, anything, other than wondering if those men, the men I care for more than I'm willing to admit, are going to come back for me.

Or if I'll be alone again.

Faye follows me, and it ends up being her and me versus Jay and Prez, who sticks around. We play pool and darts, and surprisingly, Faye is very good at it. I can't help but grin as I watch her flirt with both Jay and Prez, loving the attention—and attention is what she's getting. They are like dogs in heat, panting as they watch her bend over, her ample chest almost

spilling from her dress. Even the gruff, burly prez isn't immune to her, although he tries to play it cool.

Are they competing to show off for her?

Either way, it makes for great entertainment, until my phone buzzes. Turning away, pool stick in hand, I pull it out and my smile fades.

Unknown: Little bear, little bear, how I'll huff and puff until you come out.

I still, it has to be him. I screenshot it and send it to the group chat but don't hear back. I know I'm safe, but it makes me shiver. The memories and terror claw at my throat. He's taunting me, which means he either doesn't know he's being hunted, or he doesn't care. He can't possibly know where I am, right?

Even if he does, he'd have to get through a whole bar full of bikers. No, he'd wait until I come out. He's biding his time, but as he does, he's making it easier for my men to end this, so I text them once more.

Me: Be safe. I think he's waiting and watching. Don't you dare fucking die, I've just started to like you.

I put it away, refusing to watch for them to reply or wait for more taunting texts.

Faye notices and wanders over, leaving Jay to drink with Prez as other guys laugh. I even spot someone fucking in the corner. I love this place. It's like adult nirvana, with tits, beer, and plenty of muscles. But my mind still won't settle.

"Okay, what's going on? I've been waiting for you to spill for hours, letting you come to me, trying to be patient, but it isn't working. So either you tell me or I won't wax your butt hole anymore," she blurts.

A biker overhears and leans in. "I can fill that void."

I look at Jay, laughing, as he smacks the biker. "Down, dog," he teases. "But I am also available to assist in that matter."

“I bet you are. Can I borrow a room?” I ask Jay sweetly. He nods, knocking back his beer.

“Yeah. Come on, you can use the one I use when I’m here. I only really use it if we have late runs or I’m too drunk or fucking a club bunny...” He sees my face and laughs. “Don’t worry, the sheets are clean. It’s nothing special, but it will do.” He leads us past the bar, and I wave at the bikers who yell goodnight at us, noticing Prez’s eyes on Faye the entire time. He has two club bunnies on either side of him fighting for his attention, but he pays them no mind.

Jay leads us down the side hallway and past a lot of different rooms. At the corner of the hallway where it bends right, there’s a bike on display. I recognise the artwork immediately. “Asher?” I ask.

Jay nods. “Yeah, did that for my dad, the old prez, talented little fucker. He does most of our bikes, that’s why we’re so cool with them.”

Makes sense, I guess.

There are only two doors down this section of the hallway, one open to the left and one at the very end. “Prez’s room, don’t go in there. He’s very private, so he’ll kill you. Don’t worry, you’re safe. No back door on this side and cameras and alarms on every window. Get some rest, and Crew will be back before you know it.”

“Thanks, Jay, I mean it,” I say as Faye pushes the door open. With one last, soft smile at the funny biker, I follow her in. He wasn’t kidding, the room is small with a tiny en suite. On the back of the wooden door are Playboy posters, and more naked women cover nearly all the walls. To the right, pushed up against the grey walls, is a sagging dresser. That’s the only furniture bar a double bed with hardly any bedding, two pillows, and a mismatched side table with a lamp. There’s a window above the bed, but it’s locked and closed.

Minimalistic, but it makes sense if he doesn’t stay here a lot. I do wonder where they all live then. For some reason, I thought all bikers lived at the clubhouse, but I guess not. Faye flops onto the bed, and I sit next to her, crossing my legs.

“Prez likes you. He couldn’t take his eyes off your ass.” I smirk.

She rolls her eyes. “Yeah, right. The fat vintage girl and the biker overlord? Please.” She sits up then, and as I’m about to yell at her for talking down at herself, she arches her brow. “Now tell me why we are here. Why is Crew so worried? What’s happening, Blair?”

Blowing out a breath, I fidget my fingers into the threadbare blanket beneath me, wondering where to start. “Do you remember when I said I couldn’t talk about my past yet, but there was bad shit in it?”

“Yeah?”

“Well, the bad shit caught up to me, and right now, Crew is out there trying to stop it before you, me, or the people I care about get hurt again,” I mutter.

“What? What bad shit?” she questions, reaching out to cover my hand. “Tell me, please, how can I help?”

“You can’t—I.” Tilting my head, I meet her eyes. “I guess I told Crew, and it was easier than I thought, so what harm would it be to tell you? Just promise me something.”

“Anything,” she replies instantly.

“Promise me you won’t look at me differently,” I whisper.

“Never. Best friends, remember? Hell, we’re fucking sisters to the bitter end. I plan on being buried next to you. We can have matching coffins and everything and rock out in hell together. I might even let Crew come along.”

I can’t help but laugh as she grins at me. “Alright, alright, just don’t tell them our plans to live in a mansion with hot cabana boys, bars, and a stripper pole, okay? They are sensitive when it comes to sharing me. Ironic, I know.”

“Got it.” She winks. “Want a drink for this talk?”

“No, let me just ramble, okay? It’s easier.”

“Go ahead, I’m all ears,” she promises, sitting up like she’s ready for a blow, her mouth tilted down in worry.

She's right, we are sisters. There's no one besides Crew I would trust with my truth, with my past, other than her. She came tonight without hesitation. She dropped her life for me, and she didn't know it was to keep her safe. She deserves to know why she might be hunted, why he might try to come for her... because I love her.

"My past... it's fucked up, Faye. You know it's why I am the way I am, but it's worse than you can ever imagine. A teacher at my school became obsessed with me. He was nice at first, but I didn't know, and eventually, I realised I had a stalker, but I didn't know who. They sent flowers, pictures, and creepy texts. They called in the middle of the night. They got more and more threatening and increasingly angry at my boyfriend and friends, saying they were cheating on me and spreading lies. I know now it was to get me alone, to make me turn to him. It didn't work, and it got fucked up."

She reaches for my hand, covering it again.

"A lot of shit went down. He broke into my room so many times, and I felt him watching me. I went to the police, but they did nothing. I was so scared all the fucking time. And then one night, my friends convinced me to go to a party, to forget, and to be surrounded and safe. I went and I had an amazing time, but on the way home... Fuck. Why is this so hard?" Blowing out air, I meet her eyes again. "We were drugged. He rammed us off the road, and while we were out, he kidnaped us and tied us up in an old barn. I woke, cold, scared, and in pain, tied to a ceiling rafter, my boyfriend and friends before me..." The whole ugly story spills out, and for the second time, I cry.

It's not as bad as it was when I told Crew, as if I finally broke that barrier and released all the pain, and with every confession, it lessens. She listens, holding me, as tears fall down her face.

By the time I'm done, I'm choking on my pain and struggling to breathe. Her eyes well with more tears as she looks at me. "Oh, Blair," she whispers and then pulls me closer, leaning her head against mine, giving me her strength and comfort. "I knew something had happened. I never

thought...” She shakes her head. “It doesn’t matter what I thought, I’m just fucking proud of you, you know that, right? Proud of you for how strong you had to be to survive that, and how fucking much you had to fight. I’m so proud of the woman sitting before me. You did what it took to survive a horrible situation you never should have been in. He was an adult, Blair, a fucked up, twisted adult, and you were just a kid. I see it in your eyes, you blame yourself, and don’t you fucking dare. You are not responsible for his actions any more than you’re responsible for keeping everyone alive. What happened was tragic, really tragic, and so messed up, but you don’t get to kill yourself over it, okay?” She reaches up and cups my cheek in a sisterly way. “You fought so hard to stay alive, don’t give that up now.”

That’s it, the simplest form. For so long, I have been living in the grey, almost killing myself to forget, yet when it happened, all I wanted to do was survive. How could I forget that? I’ve spent so long killing myself slowly when under it all, I just wanted to live and be free of the pain. She sees that, she... she understands. She doesn’t judge, instead she offers me a shoulder to lean on, but she also gives me the harsh truth I need as well.

“It’s time to stop running from it. Crew will finish this, and then you can be free, okay? I know you’ll carry the memories and scars, but maybe when he’s finally... finally done, you can move on. All this time, I thought you pushed people away to protect your own heart, and it’s partly that, but it’s also partly to keep them safe. Deep down, you think if you let people close, they’ll die, but it’s just not the truth, babe. I’m alive, Crew is alive, and you are not the cause of anyone’s death. It just happens. It’s fucked up, but it does. It’s time to stop using that to keep people at bay. Right now, there are three men who adore you hunting your monster. Three men so fucking obsessed and in love with you, they are going to burn this city to the ground to find the man that hurt you. So stay with me, with them, and let’s fight this together. I know you want to run again to keep us safe. Don’t. That’s not your job.”

“I just—I couldn’t bear for anyone to get hurt again because of me.”

“They won’t, we won’t. And you know what, Blair? Even if we do, that’s our choice, not yours. You can’t protect everyone, and you can’t fight every battle alone.” She smiles. “And thank you for telling me, for trusting me with that. I’m so sorry, Blair, I really am. So fucking sorry.”

“I know,” I murmur, and I do. “I just fucking hate him so much. He ruined my life once, I can’t let that happen again, and yet I’m sitting here like I’m back at that barn, useless and scared and not doing anything—”

“But you are. You’re keeping yourself and me alive. You’re giving your family a chance to stop this without any bloodshed—well, apart from him. You’re not helpless, Blair. You are stopping a criminal, a murderer, in the best way you can by keeping yourself out of his grasp and alive. By letting the finest men for the job do what they do best. I know you hate letting others help, but this time you have to. If they don’t have him by sunrise, we can come up with another plan, but for now, let’s try this.”

And that’s what it comes down to, doesn’t it? Hoping Crew catches him by sunrise, even as some part of me hopes they don’t. Hopes they don’t meet him.

My past and present are colliding. Nothing good can come from it, and despite what they all say, this isn’t their battle.

It’s mine, and this time I’m ready to go to war.

This time, no one dies.

This time, I’m not the victim.

He is.



Chapter Forty Six

Cyrus

We've been searching for the asshole all night. I can't go back with him still free and stalking our girl, I just can't. I know the others feel the same, so even though we're exhausted, we keep pushing forward, checking every fucking hotel and shitty place to stay. We investigate some rented houses, police reports, even fucking neighbourhood watch reports. We show his picture around and ask our 'friends' in the city, closing the net tighter and tighter, and still nothing.

But she's not wrong, he'll come for her. He has to be here, and the taunting messages she's getting are only proof of that. He's finally admitting he's watching her, so he's not hiding anymore. He wants her to know, which means he's escalating. It won't be long before he makes a move on her, and we have to stop him before then. I refuse to let him touch her, never mind breathe in her direction.

She's spent so long healing; he can't fuck this up now. Not when she's finally learning to trust people and let them in again.

I'm still shocked by her past and unsure what to say about it. Nothing I can say, though, will make it better. I'm a selfish

prick. I'm glad it brought her to us, but I also hate that she had to survive something like that. I don't want her to go through that again, to add scars to her already big list, so no. Crew will stop this asshole in a way the police never could—for good.

“Fuck, where else could he be?” Bray slams his fist into a post as we pass. I roll my eyes, but inside, I'm worried. That's usually a me move, not something we see from our fun-loving, flirty brother. We are all feeling the pressure.

“We'll find him,” I repeat for the hundredth time, scanning the shady street we're walking down. At four in the morning, it's almost deserted except for the homeless and some druggies. We give them a respectful distance and continue our search.

“How can you be so sure?” Asher asks, apprehensive. “It's almost dawn, and we haven't even caught a scent of him. It's like he's a fucking ghost.”

“He's a convicted murderer, he'll slip up at some point. The whole city is watching for him now, we just have to keep looking,” I reply around a yawn.

“We're exhausted.” Asher sighs. “I hate to say it, but maybe we should call it a night and get some rest and then start again tomorrow—well, I guess today, with fresh eyes.”

Just then, we reach the car, and I turn to him. “Would you be able to sleep knowing he's out there coming for our girl?” I demand, stepping closer. My anger, helplessness, and exhaustion are making me easy to enrage.

“Not really, but we're going to make mistakes like this. Bray can barely think straight, you are slowing so much you can hardly walk, and we didn't sleep last night since we were watching over Blair. We need sleep. I don't like it any more than you,” he reasons, not reacting to my outburst or backing down.

“Guys, stop fighting, it solves nothing,” Bray inserts, and when I turn to him, I find his eyes are bloodshot and there are bags underneath. He does look wrecked. “Asher is right, I hate it, but he is. We are only going to hurt ourselves. We need to

sleep, even for an hour or two, and then we'll be right back out here. Fuck, she can sleep in our arms so we know she's safe. Come on, big guy, what do you say?"

I grind my teeth, scanning the dark horizon. I hate that they are right. "Dawn, we go to sleep at dawn." I won't sleep, not with him out here, but they need to rest, and she probably does too. I just can't stand the idea of going back empty-handed.

I promised to protect her, to end this, and that's what I plan to do.

I can't do that, though, if my brothers are suffering. It would be stupid to kill ourselves over this. We need to be sharp, rested, and determined.

"Deal," they both reply, knowing it's the best they will get.

So for the next few hours, while we race the rising sun, we search high and low. We split up but stay in contact by phone just in case. I check in on Blair, and she sends me a picture which has my cock hard, even as I smile. She's lying in a bed with Faye asleep next to her, but she's in nothing but her panties and a tiny tank top.

Me: Fuck, you're enough to make a man want to come home.

Blair: Soon, please.

I don't reply, knowing otherwise I'll race back to her like the pussy-whipped fool I am. This is more important than fucking her senseless until she finally sleeps like she clearly needs to.

Asher checks in with another gang, probably waking them up and pissing them off. I deal with the riskier people of the city, those we respect due to their violent nature. I almost get my head taken off for waking one up, but they all agree to keep their feelers out. They know this is important, and it means some will try to bargain with him if they find him. Let them. I'd give up everything, all my money, status, and rep just to see her wide, carefree smile again.

Bray checks in with some homeless people and some of the final hotels where he might stay. That's when he rings me,

excited. “Meet at the car!”

I hurry there, finding Asher already waiting. “What’s going on?” he asks.

“I don’t know, he didn’t—” Just then, Bray jogs down the block, a small smile on his lips.

“Okay, that hotel smelled like dead bodies, which was a good sign. They clearly take everyone and anyone,” he rushes out.

“Point, Bray,” I demand, tired and anxious and taking it out on him, but luckily as my brothers, they are used to it.

“He remembers the man, not under the correct name of course, but a fake one. I made him write it down so we can recheck the others. He stayed for a week about two weeks ago and moved on. He was really shady and creepy, the man said.”

“Looks like he’s moving around, trying to lay low. Smart,” I comment.

“But it’s something,” Bray offers excitedly.

“It’s a start,” I concede.

“It means he’s not as good as he thinks,” Bray says. “It’s something, Cyrus.”

“But not enough.” I look at the sky to see the sun starting to rise. “Okay, let’s go back, grab Blair, and get some sleep. Then we’ll hit the streets again, okay?”

“Good idea.” Bray nods.

“It will be okay, brother,” Asher assures me. “Let’s go get our girl, and she can wipe that look off your face.”

I snort, and Bray laughs. “She’s probably the only person who can handle this grumpy fucker.”

I smack him as I get into the driver’s seat.

We are quiet on the way back to the compound, all of us slumping at the fact we didn’t find him. We wanted this to be over—not for us, but for her. She’s suffered so much, we

wanted to lessen that burden, and now we have to go back with bad news and see the terror re-enter her eyes.

When we pull up to the compound, we wait for the gate to open. It's almost seven, but a lot of the bikers are up and about, especially those with families. I see some kids playing down the side, no doubt here for breakfast.

Pulling into a space, I get out and sigh, stretching.

"I'm going to check in with Jay," Asher calls, nodding at the open garage where I can see him working on a car.

"Me too. I'll catch you up, Cyrus," Bray tells me, and they move off to do just that.

Great, let me fill Blair in on the bad news. I know that's why they did it, the pussies. Rolling my shoulders, I march to the clubhouse, but I don't see anyone at the bar other than some old ladies making breakfast. One catches my eye and points outside, so I head around the building.

Blair is there in the sun with her hands propped on her hips as she watches some kids run around her, laughing. Leaning into the wall, I observe her for a moment as she jumps out to chase some of them, smiling widely.

When she stills as they run towards the swings, she's almost panting, but she must feel my eyes because she looks over her shoulder, straight at me.

She turns and races my way, making me smile as I push away from the wall and meet her halfway.

She jumps into my arms and kisses me. "Missed me, baby girl?" I murmur, cupping her ass to hoist her higher as her legs wrap around my waist. Her hands grip my cheeks as she checks me over, looking for injuries. "I'm okay, we all are," I promise.

"Good, I kind of got used to being Crew, but if you tell anyone that, you're dead," she threatens.

"Wouldn't dream of it."

"Babe, I better get a welcome like that," Bray says, coming around the building.

Laughing, she untangles herself from me and flings her body at him. I keep my eyes on her as I wander over to Jay and Prez who are sitting on a wooden picnic bench. I follow their gazes for a moment to see them staring at Faye's ass as she bends over, helping one of the club's kids play in the sand.

Blair kisses Asher and then looks between us, her wide smile dimming. "It's bad news, isn't it?" she asks sadly.

I nod and jerk my head at the bench to the right. It's situated upon a slight bit of grass and out of ear shot of anyone else. She nods, following after us, subdued now. She holds Bray's and Asher's hands as if readying for a blow.

Fuck, I'm so tired of being the bad guy to her.

She sits down heavily as I crouch before her, meeting her eyes as I lean in and kiss her hands. "We didn't get him."

She inhales, closing her eyes for a moment.

"We tried, baby. We looked—"

"I know you did everything you could."

"We won't stop. We are going home to sleep, all of us." My eyes cut to Bray who looks like a kicked puppy from her sadness. "Then we will look again."

She simply nods.

"Come on, let's get you home." I stand and gesture to Faye, and she rushes over, reading our faces and sliding her arm around Blair.

"Come on, babe, time for bed," she says cheerfully.

As we leave, I thank Jay, and he makes me promise to bring Faye back, with Blair of course. Thank fuck they didn't want our girl; I would hate to have to kill them.

We take Faye home with us after taking her to get some clothes, and then we set her up in Blair's room. As they get ready for bed, I check the security feeds, lock up everywhere, and sweep the apartment. By the time I'm done, Blair and my brothers are already in my bed since it's the biggest. They clearly won't sleep without her there. I feel the same, so I

change into some boxers and climb in after them, pulling her into my arms.

“We’ll get him, I promise, baby girl.”

“We will, my love,” Asher vows and kisses her. “Now get some rest, okay?”

“We’ll be right here. There is no way he can get to you,” Bray adds, probably knowing her fears. “And I’ll fight your nightmares for you.”

“Okay,” she mumbles, snuggling close. “Don’t go out without me tomorrow,” she mutters before she falls asleep. The poor girl looks exhausted.

I share a look with the others. “Sleep,” I command quietly, knowing they need it too.

It’s not long before they are all snoring, asleep apart from me. My worry keeps me awake.

As she sleeps in my arms, her head resting on my chest, I grab my phone and check in with everyone, seeing if they have heard anything—nothing. Slipping from her arms after an hour, I watch her grumble as she flips over, burying her head in Asher’s shoulder as he sleeps on his front. Bray is curled up on her other side. Her back is bare, the side of her breast is visible, and the sheets are twisted around her legs.

I can’t help but snap a picture of them, even in this dark time.

Shaking my head, I pad out to the kitchen, checking with the guards we hired full-time. They report nothing, which is good but also frustrating. I make a cup of coffee, sit down, and start the long, tedious task of calling every hotel in the city to cross-check with his name and the fake name he gave, even if I don’t hold much hope. If he’s smart enough to use a fake name, he probably changes it for each hotel, but it’s worth a shot.

A few hours later, I come up empty and Blair stumbles into the living room. Once she spots me, she straddles my lap, yawning as I stroke her back. “Did you get any sleep?” she inquires tiredly.

“Some,” I lie, and she cocks her eyebrow but doesn’t call me out.

“What are you doing?” she asks instead.

“Just chasing some leads. Want some breakfast, baby girl?”

“Why, are you going to cook?” She chuckles.

“Nah, I’ll wake up Asher.” I grin, leaning my head against her chest for a moment. She scratches her nails along my scalp, stroking across my tight shoulders and relieving some of the pressure for me. We sit in silence, just holding each other before she clears her throat.

“You aren’t going to like this.”

I groan, but she carries on.

“I was thinking I should go back to work. Back to normal life.”

“Baby girl,” I snap, leaning back. “No, that’s not a good idea.”

“I wasn’t asking, I was telling,” she counters sharply but kindly. “I can’t stop my life for him.”

“Give us a day, trust us,” I implore.

“I do, that’s why I need to do this. I ruined my life for so long because of him, and I refuse to let him now. I won’t be stupid. I won’t go out alone or to parties but I want to go to work and be normal. You can send guards or whatever, but I need to do this. I refuse to hide. Plus, it might bring him out. Like bait.” It’s clear she has her mind made up and is ready to fight me. She won’t back down, so instead I’ll have to compromise, even though it goes against my nature to let her out of my sight.

But she’s right, she wouldn’t be the woman I care for if she hid. It’s not who she is. She’s bold, reckless, and unafraid. She dares life to come at her, and right now, she needs that. If this is how... well, shit, at least she told me instead of just sneaking out. That’s progress for her.

“Okay, work and back home though, I mean it. One of us will watch you the entire time, with some extra friends there. You don’t drive alone, and after, you either go to the clubhouse or here until we find him, okay? And I want a tracker on your phone and on you at all times.” I hold up my hand as her face clouds in anger. “I trust you, but I don’t trust him, and this isn’t negotiable. If I have to fucking knock you out and sew one inside of you, I will. I refuse to lose you, okay? Those are the conditions.”

“Fucking hell, fine. But you’re not coming into the changing room, you’ll freak the girls out.”

“Fine.” I shrug, sliding my hands down to her ass. “I was really hoping you would fight me,” I tease, gripping her ass.

“Pervert, of course you were,” she scoffs but smiles just as Asher stumbles into the room in search of coffee.

“Grab Blair one,” I tell him, and he waves and grunts but grabs two mugs.

He wanders over a minute later and puts one on the table. Blair slides from my lap to another seat, draping her legs over the corner of the table so her toes rest on my thigh. I grip them as I lean back and watch Asher slowly wake up.

Several minutes pass before Bray comes in, staggering like a zombie before sitting and almost falling from the chair. He steals Blair’s coffee, so I make her another and then end up doing an easy breakfast for them all. Once they have eaten, Blair shoots me a look before diving into what she wants to say. I won’t stop her. They need to know, and I’ve already agreed.

“I already discussed this with Cyrus, but you guys should know as well.” That gets their attention, distracting Bray from trying to steal the last of Asher’s bacon. “I’m going to work today. I’m not hiding anymore. I won’t go alone or be stupid, but I refuse to stop my life for this psychopath. He’s ruined it once; he won’t do it again. We can keep me safe there as well as anywhere else. Plus, it might even bring him out of hiding.”

“So we are using you as bait?” Bray snaps, pissed, getting to his feet.

“A bit, but I’m volunteering—”

“I don’t give a fuck. It’s too dangerous!”

“Yet it’s not for you?” she screams back, and he sits, wide-eyed. He’s never seen her like this. “This is my life, my choice. I’m dealing with my own problems and refusing to hide. I’m letting you help, but do not think that means I’ll let you walk all over me. I refuse to hide, to sit and wait, to be scared all the time, and no one—I mean nobody, not even you—can tell me what the fuck to do, okay? Just because I let you in my pussy and sleep in your arms doesn’t mean you own or control me.”

“That’s not what I meant,” Bray mutters.

“I know,” she replies, sighing. “But I’m tired of being controlled, okay? I was letting you know, not asking for permission, because I care for you and know you would worry. Wherever I am, I’m going to be in danger, so why not just keep on living my life?”

“I don’t like it,” Asher grumbles, “but I understand.”

“Ash!” Bray protests before looking at me. “You can’t agree to this.”

“It’s her life.” I shrug. “She’s right. We can protect her there, and we’ve already agreed on some terms to make it safer for her. But she can’t hide forever, it’s not who she is, you know that.”

“You wouldn’t hide.” She reaches for Bray’s hand. “Don’t ask me to.”

He frowns deeply, staring at the table. His concern for her wars against his love for her, and he wants her to be happy. It’s a new thing for him, to actually care for someone else’s feelings, and he’s clearly struggling with the idea of losing her or her getting hurt. But loving someone means that you love every part of them, even when it scares you. To ask her not to do this would be like asking her to change who she is, and I refuse to do that.

We fell for Blair with her reckless heart, and I won't alter that to please my own emotions. Just because it was exciting at the beginning doesn't mean it's a burden now. She is who she is, and I will love her entirely.

"We can do this; we are Crew," I remind them. "Blood in, blood out. Family isn't always blood, but who you are willing to spill blood for."

Blair smiles and reaches for my hand before taking Bray's. He sighs as I look around. "We do this like we do everything—together. That's when we are the strongest. We will stop him because we have to, and then we can carry on with our lives."

"Together," Blair echoes.

"Together," we agree.

"I'm worried," Bray mutters quietly.

"We all are, but Blair is right, he'll show eventually, and when he does? We'll be ready." I end the argument with that sentence, and I hope I'm fucking right, because for once in my life, I'm worried for someone other than myself.



Chapter Forty Seven

Blair

After showering and packing my work bag, I confirm with Lexi and Serina that I'll be back at the club today, and then I wake Faye to tell her the plan.

"I have work too." She sighs. "I can't miss it."

"I'll let the guys know. We'll figure something out," I promise. "But you'll have to be watched. He might come for you. I have to know you're okay."

"For you." She nods. "I wouldn't mind one of those hot bikers doing it."

"I knew it!" I screech and laugh. "I knew you wanted to ride more than their bikes." I thrust my hips, and she hits me with a pillow as she gets up.

"Do you blame me? They had muscles for days. Jesus, and that leather? I'd take chafe burn for that any day."

Faye and I get ready, intending to chill at Faye's diner before my shift. The guys can still work and hunt from there, digitally at least, and I'll be in their line of sight, so they won't worry. It's the best of both worlds. We decide to take one car—mine. They let me drive so I feel more normal, which makes

me grin, so I reach over and grip Bray's thigh where he sits in the passenger seat.

He chuckles. "What? I feel like a girl," he teases and winks over at Cyrus. "She's grabbing my junk."

"No fucking while driving," he chides with a smile as I check him out in the rear-view mirror. He's pressed against the window to avoid touching Faye, who sits next to Asher as she chats with him.

Parking between the club and diner, I get out of my car, and we all follow Faye as she hurries in for her shift. It's strange to think this is the place where it all started, and now here I am with them. Faye ducks into the back to get to work as we take the corner booth. I'm sandwiched between Bray and Asher. Asher plays with my hair as he people watches, his other hand tapping on the tabletop because he's aching to draw. Bray strokes my thigh, leaning in to talk to Cyrus, who is going over places he checked while we slept.

Faye heads over and takes our order before rushing into her shift. They are clearly short staffed, and I watch her worriedly as she tries to do everything—restock, run food, take orders, and man the counter.

"She's okay," Asher assures me, still tapping, so I grab a pencil from my bag and a napkin.

He looks at me in surprise, and I shrug, feeling embarrassed. "I grabbed one a few days ago to keep in my bag." When he continues to stare, I sigh. "I thought you might forget one day, so I keep one in case," I confess.

His smile starts out slow before it grows into a wide grin. It makes me shuffle in my seat and my cheeks heat.

"It's no big deal," I grumble as he leans in, tilting my chin up so I'm looking at him again, and then he kisses me.

"It's a big deal. No one has cared enough to do that before," he whispers.

"I figured it was like my dancing, it's how you alleviate stress and let go," I whisper back before stealing another kiss. "So draw away, baby."

He does just that, holding the napkin at an angle with one hand as he leans in, and as he starts to sketch, his expression eases into one of peace. I leave him to it, knowing how annoying it is when someone distracts you while you are doing the thing you love. Instead, I lean into Bray to listen to their conversation, knowing if anyone out there could guess the crazy bastard's movements, it's me.

"He might have left."

"No," I insert with a sigh. "He will be close. We've probably even seen him a few times. He's brave and thinks he's untouchable. He'd want to watch me, and he undoubtedly already has a target on our backs after seeing us together. I'm betting he's in disguise or changed his hair to blend in."

"You think?" Cyrus asks.

I nod, worrying my lip. "He was almost buzzed when he—yeah, and clean-shaven. If I were him and trying to stay under the radar, I would have grown my beard and hair out..." I trail off.

"What is it, Darling?" Bray queries, squeezing my thigh possessively.

"I... Nothing," I mutter, but I remember seeing a raggedy man watching my show once. The only reason I noticed him was because his eyes were locked intently on me from the shadows. But that was over a month ago, so surely that wasn't him? Either way, I ignore it, since it doesn't help at the moment. "He's obviously using a fake name, like you said, and changing places so he doesn't get caught. He would also need money, not like he can access his old accounts."

"You are right." Cyrus nods. "Shit, I didn't think of that, baby girl."

"And how's he getting around? Not public transport, it would be too easy to be noticed. No, he'd want to be able to go anywhere whenever he wanted. He wouldn't buy a new car, but maybe an old one, so check second-hand dealers, sold vehicles, or doggy dealerships," I suggest.

“That’s a fucking great idea, baby girl, really,” Cyrus praises. “I didn’t even think of that. Fuck, you’re a genius.”

“I know.” I wink as my coffee arrives and I turn to stir it, leaving them to their phones as they do just that. I try to think of everything else I know about him. I’ve spent so long trying to forget him, but now I need to remember every detail, anything he might have mentioned or something I saw in passing to help stop him.

“I wish I could be more helpful,” I mutter out loud.

“You are helping,” Bray says distractedly.

“I just... I tried to forget everything. I blurred out that night and the days before to protect myself, but I need to remember it, and I just... I was so self-absorbed.”

“Baby girl, don’t you dare apologise for doing what you needed to do to stop your mind from fracturing. We’ll find him, don’t beat yourself up for something you had no control over. The car thing is a great idea, something we didn’t even think of.”

“You’re right,” I mutter, drinking my coffee before perking up. “Hey, I’ll contact some of my acquaintances from some races I’ve run, see if they know any unlisted dealers around here.”

“See? Fucking helping.” Bray kisses my cheek, and I pull my phone out, finally feeling useful.

I drop a few texts before answering the group chat with Lexi and Allegra, speaking of random things. The mundane conversation actually helps, and when the name Tyler crops up, I tilt my head.

Allegra: He’s a silver fox.

Me: Did you go and get yourself a daddy, Lexi?

Allegra: Nah, she would never call him that.

Lexi: I don’t know, he seems to like it when I do.

Lexi sends a snapshot of a broad-shouldered, half-naked man between her parted legs. His head is buried between her

thighs, and we can't see much, but I snort a laugh.

Me: That's my girl.

Allegra: About fucking time you got some real dick.

Allegra's right. Lexi's ex was a real fucking asshole. Hell, I don't think he even knew how to make her come, not to mention the night I caught them arguing outside the club because he hated other men watching her. A serious asshole. A real man knows that it doesn't matter because she's still coming home to him, and he's the envy of all of them. A real man knows that his woman is so sexy, she inspires hundreds of men and leaves them panting after her, yet she only wants him.

"Okay, I've got a few possible leads we can run down," Bray announces.

"Me too," Cyrus says.

"I'm still waiting for a reply. I'll let you know," I tell them.

"Here, for you, my love," Asher interrupts, and I turn to see him pushing his napkin at me. I take it, smiling, and open it. It steals my breath, and as I stare at the incredible drawing, tears form in my eyes.

On the rough, cheap napkin is my family—Crew. I'm in the middle with a smile on my face, and I look strong, happy. Cyrus is to my left, looking down at me with a stern expression, but his hand is wrapped around my neck possessively. To my right is Bray, who is hanging on my shoulder as he laughs, and next to him is a grinning Asher, who's also looking at me. Next to Cyrus, Faye is leaning around him to see us, and she's smiling. I lift my head to meet his eyes from inches away.

"So you never forget that you aren't alone anymore."

"Thank you," I whisper, and he leans in and presses a kiss to my lips again.

"Anything for you, my love," he mumbles against my lips.

Faye comes over to refill our drinks. "Go to work, I'm fine. I'll head home straight after."

“Erm, no,” I reply. “You come home with us.”

“What did I say about listening to your fucking?” She sighs dramatically. “Seriously, I’ll be okay at home.”

“Too late.” Cyrus smirks. “I knew you would refuse to come home with us, so I called for backup.”

The door opens, and in strolls Jay’s prez. Faye pales, her eyes wide as her mouth drops open. His gaze immediately locks on her and heats before he strolls over. He nods at us but never takes his eyes off Faye. “What time is your shift over?”

“Um, seven,” she squeaks.

“Good, I’ll wait.” He grabs the chair opposite us, turns it around, and straddles it. She swallows, looking at me for help, but I lean back with a smile.

“For?” she whispers.

“It to end,” he answers.

“Again, why?” she asks, blowing out an exasperated breath.

“You need protection, so you will stay at the clubhouse tonight. Cyrus said you didn’t want to listen to their orgies,” he explains like it’s simple, “so I’m here to watch you and bring you back.”

“I’m a grown ass woman. I can go home—”

“No,” he snaps like it’s the end of the discussion. “You are staying at the clubhouse, and don’t even think about trying to sneak out through the back, Jay is there. Now don’t you have tables to wait on?”

Her mouth opens and closes before she snaps it shut, throws him a glare, and storms away. He smirks, turning to watch her ass as she goes. Oh yeah, she’s going to have fun with that one.

When he finally drags his gaze back to us, he nods. “I’ve got this, do what you need to.”

“Keep her safe,” I beg. “She’s my family.”

“No one will touch her,” he promises, but then a dark smile crawls across his lips and his expression has me leaning back. There is something so cold, so lifeless about his eyes. He’s clearly insane. It’s a look I saw in, well, saw in the bastard’s eyes—dead, cold, cunning, and fucking dangerous. “Unless she begs us to.”

“Well, okay then.” I sigh and get to my feet. “I wouldn’t hold my breath on that one. She’ll hand you your balls before she licks them, especially with the way you’re going.”

He shrugs again, returning his gaze to her. “I like a challenge.”

Cyrus nods as he passes.

“Thanks, man,” Bray says. “We’ll be in contact.”

When we get outside, I turn to them, and Bray grins.

“Are we taking bets on her trying to kill him?”

“I’ll take it,” I chirp.

“Stakes?” Asher inquires.

“Five thousand?” Cyrus suggests, and I choke. He looks at me and frowns. “What?”

“Um, did you forget I’m poor?”

“What do you mean?” he questions, obviously confused. “You have our money.”

“Crazy bastard say what?” I gape, my head tilting in bewilderment.

“You’re Crew, you have access to Crew accounts,” he explains slowly, still clearly perplexed.

“That’s not my money!” I yell. “I don’t need pity—”

“Love, it’s not pity. It’s how Cyrus takes care of people, how we all do. It’s money we don’t need, and if you need it, it’s there. It’s not about buying you,” Asher clarifies when he sees me gearing up for a fight. “It’s about need. You are family, so we added you to the family accounts. We aren’t

saying you have to use it, but you can. We all do, we share everything.”

“That makes a lot more sense,” I grumble. “But still, I prefer to earn my own money, thank you.”

“Fine, how about winner gets head?” Bray offers, looking between us to try and defuse the argument he can feel brewing.

Cyrus is still glaring at me, genuinely not understanding why I won’t take their money. I don’t do hand-outs; I earn my own way. Just because they are rich and I’m fucking them doesn’t mean I should automatically take what’s theirs. I don’t even really like gifts for that reason. I don’t want to be indebted to anyone, including them, no matter what. It’s the last shred of independence I have. It’s a nice thought, though, and I can see why they did it. To them, money is nothing, just something they have and can share, but for me? It’s earned with blood, sweat, and tears, and even then, it’s not always enough, but it’s what I have. Each pound I earn and work hard for is satisfying.

“Deal,” I agree with a grin. “She’s definitely gonna kick his ass.”

“I’m betting he’ll have her on her back, screaming, before she tries.” Cyrus smirks.

“Me too,” Asher concurs.

“Two on two.” I wink and grab Bray. “It’s you and me, babe.”

“I’m not giving my brothers head.” Bray gags, making us all laugh.

“Come on, moron, you can all watch me dance and pretend you’re not thinking about stroking your cocks while you do,” I taunt and drag them after me.

I leave the boys at a small table to the side of the stage and head to the dressing room. It’s bustling with girls getting ready

for tonight. It's going to be busy, that's for sure. Lexi and Allegra are there, and they rush over as I sit at a brand-new dressing table—I'm thankful Serina replaced it without even asking.

"I'm so glad you're back!" Lexi squeals and hugs me. "It's not been the same without you."

"Yeah, no one pranked Sam in two whole days, it was almost quiet." Allegra snorts and hugs me too. "Happy to have you back, babe. No one entertains us like you."

Lexi smacks her but smiles sweetly at me. "We are doing the red set tonight, your favourite, so get ready, babe."

Their excitement is infectious, and I smile and hurry to get ready as I laugh and joke with them. We dance and sing along to the music we can hear thumping from the club as the audience waits for the show. My heart flips in happiness as Allegra grabs Lexi and dips her as we continue to sing and dance. The rest of the girls cheer us on or join in, and when they hurry to get dressed, I do what I usually do—prank Sam. It's something that started when I accidentally stole her lipstick when I first began, and her reaction had everyone laughing.

This time, I add a butt plug I bought just for this to her glitter before hurrying back to pull up my fishnets. Allegra sees and snorts as she shimmies into her leather corset dress. Her heels are impressively high. My own are only five inches, easier to dance in, but hers must be nearly eight.

My outfit is a similar style, but it's half a corset top that frames a sparkling tight shirt tucked into a tiny leather skirt which flares as I spin, showing off my long legs and tattoos. I add some high, leather booted heels, and the outfit is almost complete bar the hat and bright red lipstick. Staring in the mirror, I feel more like myself.

He can't take this away from me.

He ruined Blair, the scared schoolgirl.

He can't destroy Blair, the burlesque dancer and Crew.

He might be older, might still want the same things, but I certainly fucking don't. I'm older, wiser, darker, and a whole lot stronger, so let him come for me. I'll be waiting, and this time, I won't just stand idly by, waiting for others to save me.

No, this time this bitch will save herself.

With my red lips and narrowed eyes, I look nothing like the scared little girl who walked out of the barn that night. No, standing here is a stronger motherfucking survivor. He created me, the girl who races cars, who dances scantily clothed, and who revels in chaos and pain and anger. Now, it's time he faced that.

Allegra leans in next to me, Lexi doing the same on my other side. "You look incredible," she says.

"You look badass," Allegra corrects. "Come on, babe, it's time."

"It's time," I repeat, and with one last look at all three of us crowded in the mirror, I realise something. I was never looking for a family, but I was lucky enough to find not one, but two. My burlesque family and Crew. I guess life has a way of giving you what you need when you least expect it or want it. Otherwise, I wouldn't be surviving this now without them—okay, that's a lie. I would survive it, but I wouldn't be okay.

They make it okay.

They support me, love me, and protect me.

And I'll do the same for them all.

I go out and dance like he is watching, even though I know he logically can't be. But with each move, I show him the new me—my strength, my determination, and my new life that he won't take from me. Dance after dance, I perform my heart out, raw, passionate, and truthful, with my family on stage and my other watching, cheering me on from the sidelines.

After my fourth dance, it's time for a quick break, so I slip out of the dressing room and to their table, dropping into Bray's lap as he holds me, letting me feel his hard cock.

"Fuck, Darling, that was incredible."

“I’ll never grow tired of watching you dance. The way you move, like water across the stage, so fluid and perfect...” Asher blinks and smiles. “It’s so sexy.”

I look at Cyrus who simply runs his hungry eyes across my body until I shiver.

“Glad you’re enjoying it. We have five dancers to—”

Just then my phone vibrates, so I pull it free and check my messages. I sit bolt upright. “What is it, baby girl?” Cyrus demands.

“One of my friends,” I mumble as I read the text. “He knows of a chop shop on the south side of the city where they sell old and used cars to criminals. Not stolen, no plates, so hard to trace and track. He said he spoke to them, and someone who could have been him came in last month to buy a car,” I tell them and look up. “It’s him. It has to be.”

“We need to go.” Asher stands, but then he winces and drops back into his seat. “Erm, maybe later.” They share a look, and I hop to my feet, propping my hands on my hips.

“No, go now!” I snap and lower my voice. “This is our chance.”

“We can’t leave you, baby girl,” Cyrus starts.

“Don’t give me that shit. Go. You want to stop him? To keep me safe? We need this lead,” I argue.

“But we can’t leave you alone,” Bray counters sadly, watching me with big eyes.

I sigh and calm down, but I’m too wound up not to argue with them. They need to go, not sit here and babysit me. Why can’t they see this? I won’t try to go myself, they wouldn’t let me, and I can appreciate why, but that means they need to then.

“Seriously, go. Security is here, and you already said Prez has some guys here. I’ll wait to leave until you come back, and I won’t do anything stupid. If you think you have a lead, then you have to go.”

“Baby girl,” Cyrus growls.

“This could be how we get him, how we end this. I need this to be over,” I implore.

Bray leans in. “Stay here. If there’s any trouble, you call us. There are four bikers in the crowd, so be good, please.” It seems Bray has made the decision for them. Cyrus stands, annoyed but understanding, and kisses me hard.

“Go,” I whisper against his lips. “Kill the bastard.”

Asher hugs me and I watch them leave with my heart in my throat. It could really be over tonight.

It puts a skip in my step as I head back to the dressing room to change for my next performance. I’m nervous for them. I’ll be a worried mess until they get back, but we’re close. I can feel it. It’s almost over. It makes me straighten my shoulders, and I throw myself into the next dance, pouring everything into it.

I dance and dance until my legs ache and feet hurt, and when we finally have a break, I hurry to the bar and grab a fresh lemonade. Thanking the bartender, I turn to survey the club, trying to spot the bikers, but everyone looks the same in the dark unless you get close. It’s the appeal of it, the darkness and the deep, sexy lighting.

Sipping the drink, I watch the crowd before handing my glass back and winding through the tables as some of the girls perform on stage. Every eye is on them, so thankfully I go unnoticed. I’m almost at the doors to the dressing room and in view of security when it happens.

I’m just passing a table near the back corner, in almost complete darkness, when a hand strokes across my arm. The touch chills me to my core and makes me freeze. All the hair on my body stands on end, and my heart starts to race as my fight-or-flight response kicks in.

It’s him, I know it. I would recognise that touch anywhere and the slightly rough, scarred palm of his hand from cutting himself on a glass at school.

I turn my head slowly, as if I’m expecting him to leap out of the dark and carry me away, even though I’m surrounded by

people. But they all fade. All the music, laughter, and patrons disappear except for the dark figure in the shadows. I swallow hard, nearly hyperventilating from being so close to him.

And I know it's him even before his smooth, deep voice drifts out of the shadows.

“Hello, Blair.”

An untouched glass of whisky sits before him, and he begins to lean forward, but before he can do anything, I grab the glass, smash it over his head, and run, knowing it's my best course of action. I need to get out of here. He can grab me or make a scene here, but it doesn't mean I'm safe, and I know he's willing to do anything, even kill these people, so even though I hate it, I'm doing it to save them.

If it had just been me, I would have got this over with, but what would go down would result in others being injured or maybe even dying, and I can't have that on my conscience, not anymore.

So I run like a fucking pussy, right past security and into the empty dressing room. I tell them to call the cops, even though I know by the time they get here, he'll be gone. I dial Crew as well. Asher picks up as I stare at the closed door like I expect him to burst through at any moment.

“He's here,” I wheeze. “He's here!”

“Fuck, we're on our way! Hide, love. Our men went to help Prez at the diner, Faye got into trouble.” I hear him yelling at the others and the sound of the engine roaring. The seconds tick by, my heart slamming as I wait for him to come in here.

Then I hear it.

A loud bang.

It makes me jerk.

It comes again, and this time, there's screaming.

A gun.

Lexi!

Allegra!

They were due on stage! I drop my phone without thinking, and I sprint through the door and into the chaos beyond, hearing Asher screaming after me.



Chapter Forty Eight

Bray

Dead fucking end.

Not only that, but the man who told Blair's friend he saw him was lying. He was paid thousands just to say that, to get our attention or hers, I'm not sure. Cyrus wasn't the only one who took his frustrations and fury out on the pathetic wimp of a man willing to take bribes from murderers.

Not that we are any better. We'll kill him when we find him and not even blink.

Even now, being away from her has me anxious and wanting to hurry back. Especially since Prez's men had to leave to help him with some trouble with Faye.

Asher's phone rings, and he answers with a smile. "Baby, what?" he yells and rushes to the car without a word. Cyrus spares the moaning, blood-coated asshole a glance before we follow. Once inside, he puts it on speaker.

"He's here," she whispers.

Pop.

"Blair!" we all scream.

“Lexi!” she yells, and then there’s a crash as the phone drops before we hear footsteps leading away. The music and screams get louder for a moment, and then suddenly quieter, but we can still hear the gun.

Panic like I’ve never felt before races through me as we race back to the club. Every gunshot we hear makes us all flinch and go faster.

Blair.

Her name repeats like a mantra in my head. He’s there, he’s firing, and she’s not talking anymore. Every possible bad scenario flashes through my mind. We have to get to her, we have to. We never should have left her.

Fuck, I can’t lose her.

I can’t!

He won’t take her, he can’t, he can’t. He won’t kill her.

Will he?

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

“Faster!” I seethe.

“I’m going as fast as I can!” Cyrus shouts.

We all feel the panic, the complete terror of our girl being in danger when we’re not there like we promised.

We are going to be too late.

I can feel it.

My heart shatters as I grab Asher’s phone. “Darling, please, I can’t lose you! Just hide, please, Darling. Talk to us, please... please don’t leave us.”

Please, I beg the universe, don’t take the one being in this entire world that put my family back together and loved us entirely. Flaws and all.

Please.



Chapter Forty Nine

Blair

It's chaos. Screaming people scramble over tables and knocked over chairs, fighting to get to the doors. Security wades through the masses to find the shooter, while the girls duck on stage and scuttle behind the curtain. I scan them, but I don't see anyone who's hurt.

The same can't be said for the crowd though. I see at least two people on the floor covered in blood. My eyes flicker over the crowd until I spot him. He's calmly shooting, not caring who he hits.

Anyone, everyone.

To get to me.

Composed, cold.

It grounds me, and all my panic drains. Everything fades until there is only him and me.

My stalker.

My monster.

My nightmare.

I step towards him while everyone else runs away, and I watch a security guard go down.

Red.

I won't let him kill anyone else. This ends tonight.

Blue.

No more death, unless it's his. There have already been too many.

Green.

I'm close now, so close I have to fight the surging crowd to get to him, but he spots me and stops shooting, aiming the gun at me, but it does nothing. My heart doesn't even skip a beat. I've faced death before and survived it, becoming a woman with one foot in the grave. I've begged for it to take me and chased it ever since. Death doesn't scare me. What terrifies me is losing anyone else I love at this man's hands.

Red, blue, green.

Him.

"Stop," I order, and he does, lowering the gun.

"I just wanted to talk," he explains, his voice almost high and whiny. "Why wouldn't you talk? I had to hurt these people just to get your attention!"

The music finally cuts out, and the club empties until it's just him and me. That makes my heart stutter as I stare at him defiantly. At least no one else will get hurt, but then I hear a security man yell, "Hold on!"

I turn with my hand out to get him away. "No!"

The gun sounds as he reaches for me. I jerk as his blood sprays across me, and he crumples to the floor. I stand frozen in shock, my hands balled into fists as I feel warm blood dripping down my face, and then I finally understand.

This will never end until one of us is dead.

Turning back to him, I step closer, reaching for the gun. "Stop it now," I demand.

“We need to be alone to talk,” he defends crazily.

“We are. No more shooting anyone, or I’ll disappear and you’ll never find me again.”

“I’ll always find you. Don’t you see that yet, Blair?” He grins, looking all innocent and not at all like he just slaughtered people, murdered my friends, or broke out of prison and hunted me down like a fucking animal. “I missed you so much. Did you miss me? I saw those new fucking men,” he sneers. “I know you only used them to make me jealous. It worked, but I’m here now, so we can be together again. We need to lay low though, come with me now—”

“No,” I snap. “I will never come with you. I will never let you touch me. You are a fucking crazy obsessed stalker, nothing more. I don’t want you, like you, or love you. I fucking hate every inch of you. I hate what you did. I blamed myself for so long, but it’s not my fault. It’s yours. I was a kid! A kid just experiencing life, and you stole that! You tainted me and took my innocence until I felt like I was choking on death and blood. You did this! You ruined so many lives over a woman that was never yours to begin with. I. Am. Not. Yours!” I finish, my chest heaving.

“You are!” he roars, raising the gun to my head. “Even if I have to make you see it.”

“Then do it. Shoot me. Do whatever you are going to, but stop hiding behind innocents.”

“There are no innocents! They are keeping you from me, all of them!” he screams. “Now come with me or I’ll kill them all, all those so-called friends,” he sneers. “That Faye girl, she’d be first. She’s already dealing with a present I left her, then I’ll kill those three rich bastards. Don’t think I don’t know you fucked them like the whore you are, but that’s okay, I’ll kill them and make them suffer while you watch, until there’s nothing left for you but me.”

“You will never hurt any of them. I won’t let you, not ever again.” I stop before him, close enough to touch, even though the thought makes bile rise in my throat.

It's my body and my life, and I can do whoever and whatever I want, and not even this crazy asshole is going to stop that.

“And who's going to stop me?” he snarls. “You? You couldn't stop me before, you can't now. No one can. You will be mine, Blair, even if I have to kill everyone for it to happen.”

I hear the sirens then, as does he, as we have this little standoff. But I'm not running, not hiding.

“Then what are you waiting for? I'm right here. Or are you finally realising I'm not that same scared little girl, the one who trusted you like a child trusts an adult? You can't bully or threaten me to make me compliant this time, so either kill me or let me go.”

“I've been waiting for a very long time, Blair, and I can wait a little longer. Especially if it means making you suffer for putting me behind bars and trying to get away from me. No, this isn't over yet. It's only just the beginning.” He brings the gun down across my face before I can move away.

I fall back, my vision blurring. My head instantly blooms with pain as I fight not to pass out. I feel blood trickling from my head and near my eye as I reach up and cover it. The room spins, and my ears ring, so I breathe through it, knowing I can't pass out. When it subsides enough for me to see, I realise the front door is swinging and he's gone.

No!

Not again!

Stumbling to my feet, I fall over some chairs but continue to force my way through. I refuse to go down, even as my head throbs, but the more I walk, the clearer my vision gets. I can hear the laboured breathing and sobbing of the injured, and I won't let him get away with it again.

I can't.

I finally pull my foot from the grave and plunge myself into life.

Chasing him through the door and into the rain, I spin around, getting drenched. “Where are you?” I scream as I hear sirens rushing this way, his victims’ blood still coating me, but I ignore it. “I’m right fucking here, you pussy! Are you going to kill innocents now because you didn’t get your way? You’re so fucking weak! I’m right fucking here. You and me! Let’s go! You won’t hurt anyone else! I won’t let you!” I scream into the air, spinning wildly. I refuse to let him ruin any more lives, including mine. Even now, the blood on my skin tells me he might have done just that. This asshole is doing it all over again.

He’s isolating me and ruining everything good in my life until he’s all that’s left.

Well, fuck that.

“Come out here now! You want me? I’m here!” I’m still screaming when the police and Crew turn up.

He never shows his face. He’s gone into the wind again, leaving death and pain in his wake as I once again have to deal with the aftermath.

We got lucky, no one died.

There were some serious injuries, and the club was shut down for the investigation and interviews. I was taken to the hospital, and Crew refused to leave my side. Even though I wasn’t hurt, not fatally at least, they insisted on checking me out while the police asked me questions. I answered them honestly, telling them everything, including the contact information for the detective who dealt with it before.

When they leave, I sag into Bray’s arms as he strokes my back. “He did it again; he almost killed. I almost had more blood on my hands. Thank God they are alive,” I blabber. “I couldn’t stand to be the reason anyone else was hurt. This is so serious. We can’t do this, he’ll kill you—”

“Shush, let’s not think about it now, okay?” he murmurs. “We thought we’d lost you, Darling.” His voice cracks, and I pull back to see tears in his eyes. When I look at the others, they look equally as distraught and worried.

“You’re Crew though—”

“But you are the only person in this world we lov—care about,” Asher explains.

“We can’t lose you. There used to be Crew without you, but now? There is nothing. If you died it would break us. You put our family back together again, baby girl, and now you hold it in your hands. So please, let us just hold you for a minute.”

“There is no us without you. Blood in, blood out,” Bray reminds me before pulling me closer.

I let them hold me, but panic fills me.

They are in so deep. What happens when he comes back? He’ll keep his promise. He’ll go for Faye, for them.

All because of me.

I can’t let that happen. Even if it means leaving, even if it means breaking their hearts to keep them alive, I will, because I love them more than anything in this world, and that makes them vulnerable. But I feel the same, I’d do anything for them.

I would even ruin what we have to save them. Let’s just hope it doesn’t come down to that. I need to think of a new plan, but right now, they are right. I want to hold them, even if it makes my heart hurt. After I’m cleared, my head checked and dressed, I follow the guys outside.

As soon as I’m out in the open, I feel a prickle on my neck, but it’s probably my overactive imagination. He wouldn’t come here, not with all the victims and police. That would be suicide. Luckily, I managed to talk the guys out of getting me in an ambulance, so my car is here, which means we can go home and regroup.

I feel the need to hold them close, to let them wash it all away and make it better even though I know they can’t. My

mind is wavering between running after him and leaving them to keep them safe, and staying because I need them and they need me. But I won't make a rash decision. For once, I won't be reckless.

Not with their hearts on the line.

When we get to my car, more flowers are sitting on the bonnet.

I freeze before I collapse to my knees and scream.



Chapter Fifty

Asher

The attack at the club is all over the news. They plaster his face everywhere. Serina has checked in on Blair continually, as have Lexi and Allegra and some of the other girls. Luckily, none of them were hurt—hell, Lexi had even gone out back to meet her man, so she didn't know it had even happened. Lexi was supposed to be on stage but was distracted.

Faye is okay, and she's still at the clubhouse. It seems he used her as a distraction. He left a bloody pig's head in her locker with a note saying she was next. It got Prez worried, and he called in everyone far and wide, even from the club. I know he regrets that and has agreed to protect Faye as penance, even though we all know he's doing it for himself.

Blair is deflated and angry.

So angry.

She barely speaks, nor will she sleep or eat. She just paces and rants, snapping at us to let her go, to let her out, so she can go get him.

We try to keep her busy. Bray makes sure she has pain relief, and we keep an eye on her head. We are all angry we let him get too close, but we are more worried about her. Before, she was scared, but she trusted us to deal with it. Now? She's feral, angry, so fucking angry that we can't even reason with her. She's losing her trust in us, in the world again, and taking the blame and letting it rot her like before.

She is not responsible for another's actions, no one is.

Blair won't listen, though, no matter how many times we tell her. No, she memorises the victims' names. They lived, all of them, but she made a point about the effects. The PTSD, the nightmares, the healing. None of it would be necessary if it wasn't for him.

Him, not her.

The bastard is laying low somewhere, that's for sure. We've got people keeping an eye out and listening to police radios, but nothing. I don't get it. The whole city is on lockdown looking for him, and he's just gone. How?

"Blair," Cyrus begs, but she ignores his outstretched hand, instead pacing past him, lost in her own head. He looks helpless before he grabs his phone and gets to work, angry at himself.

I'm determined to distract her. She needs to rest and heal, not be obsessively watching TV and coming up with a plan. We have all talked about the fact he will be hiding right now and that the police are patrolling the city, searching for him. There is nothing she can do, and that's infuriating her. She's checked on Faye every five minutes and hasn't sat down for more than a moment.

Turning away from my easel, I get up and walk towards her. Cyrus hasn't let her out of his sight and is working at the table. Bray watches her like a kicked puppy, bringing her everything, including food and water, trying to get her to relax, but it's not working.

"Go to your rooms for a minute," I ask them. Cyrus is about to argue when he looks at her and sighs, nodding at me

as he stands.

“Go gentle on her, brother,” Bray pleads before smiling at her and following Cyrus, leaving us alone.

She immediately gets defensive. “What? Are you going to tell me to relax? I can’t, not with—”

“Come with me.” I take her hand, cutting her off mid-rant, and lead her over to the chair near my easel. “I need a muse,” I tell her as I coax her to sit.

“Asher,” she snaps, but she’s caught off-guard. I’m not arguing or telling her how she’s coping isn’t right. Everyone copes differently, but I want to help her, and if distracting her from blaming herself is how we do it, then fine.

I’ll be the best damn distraction she’s ever had.

Picking up the paintbrush again, I dip it in my water cup, keeping my eyes on her the entire time.

“What?” she eventually asks.

“Just looking at the most magnificent view I’ve ever got to paint,” I reply before dipping the bristles in my colour and getting started. She sits there, finally quiet, finally still, as she watches me, and when I glance over, her eyes are lost in what my hands are doing, but I still see her lips pulling down.

Fine, time for plan B.

Fuck painting, I’ll fuck her instead. In fact, I’ll do both.

I’ll make her forget, even for an hour.

“Sit still. Don’t move or you’ll ruin my painting,” I warn with a dark smirk. Wetting two clean brushes—one smaller, one thicker—I stand and head over.

“Ash,” she mutters, “what are you doing?”

“Preparing my canvas and brushes. What does it look like?” I wink as I kneel before her with the wet bristles poised above her bare knee. “Now be a good girl for once.” I slowly drag the smaller brush across her skin. She jerks at the contact, her eyes widening and dropping to my hand to see what I’m doing, but she doesn’t protest—not even when I continue to

drag it up her thigh and under the long shirt she's wearing, almost touching her pussy. Lifting the brush, I turn and do the exact same thing to her other leg. She parts her thighs for me and sighs. Rolling my eyes up to hers, I can't help but grin at the reddening of her cheeks.

“Does it feel good?”

“Yes,” she groans greedily.

“Do you know what would feel better?” I purr, and when she shakes her head, I drag the brush across her bare pussy. She gasps and shifts in the chair before stilling. I slowly nudge her shirt up to expose her pink, gleaming wet pussy. My dirty love seems to be enjoying her distraction.

“Is this what you needed? For me to make you come? To fuck you with my brushes until you can't think? To eat this pussy of ours until there is no more sadness in those eyes?” I ask, twisting the brush and dragging the tiny wooden handle down her glistening lips until she moans for me. “Is it, Blair?”

“I don't know, but I'm willing to try,” she teases, spreading her legs wider.

“A good muse is naked,” I murmur, looking at her shirt pointedly. “I need to see every curve and dip of my model.”

Sitting forward, she grabs the hem of her shirt, and with a knowing grin, she tugs it off and tosses it away. Just like the first time I saw her in all her nude glory, she steals my breath. I scan every inch of her soft, perfect skin, memorising her tattoos, scars, and marks. Poets would write sonnets for her. Painters would paint until their hands broke. Sculptors would model clay, and still, it would not epitomise her beauty.

Cupping my face, she drags my eyes back to hers. “Just going to stare?” she purrs before leaning down and kissing me. “Or are you going to do just as you promised?” Licking my lips, she swallows my groan before nipping and jolting me back to life.

With a solid hand between her breasts, I push her back into the chair. Chuckling, she leans back and throws one leg over

my shoulder like I'm her disciple, and maybe I am. My eyes go to her exposed core, seeing her wet pussy waiting for me.

Me.

No one else. My girl is giving me control and asking me to help, and I plan to do just that. I drag my hands up her soft, buttery thighs. My cock jerks, begging for her attention, but I refuse. I would wait thousands of years in agony just to get a taste of her cunt.

Seeing her come apart for me? Tasting it?

It's better than sex or even my own release.

My hands nearly tremble against her skin as I sweep the brush down her pussy, circling her hole as she groans. Her eyes are locked on my every movement, and her body is so attuned to my touch, it almost shakes with her desire. It's heady, the power she is giving me.

I want this to be perfect, to prolong it until her cries echo around our house. I use the hard edge of the brush and drag it up her pussy, catching her clit before sliding down to her puckered asshole over and over. She wiggles in frustration, her cream covering her thighs and dripping to the chair below.

"Please, Ash," she begs, reaching down to anchor her fingers in my short hair. She pulls on the strands as she tries to get me where she wants me, but I resist, having my own ideas. In punishment—or pleasure, I'm not sure which—I flip the brush and, with featherlight touches, drag it across her engorged clit.

She moans and sides down in the chair until more of her weight is on my shoulder, her legs opening wider. My other hand keeps her steady, gripping her skin so hard it will leave marks, which I know she loves. I do too. Seeing my marks on her skin gives me a sick sense of pleasure.

"Oh fuck," she groans as I brush her clit like I would a canvas with circling, soft touches. When I know she is going to come, I move away, ignoring her protests and clenching, needy hole. Instead, I dip my brush in her cream and paint

across her pussy teasingly until she calms, withholding her release until I am good and ready.

She grumbles about dicks and filling my pillows with Bray's dirty boxers, but I ignore her and continue my masterpiece. Slowly dragging back up and over her clit, I build her back up until her voice is hoarse from her cries, and only when she begs, her voice high and whiny, do I let her come.

"Please, Asher!" she shouts, so I twist the brush and tap her clit with the wooden end, and with another yell, she comes.

It's a beautiful sight.

I guide her through it with soft touches, and when she slumps, I continue my painting. I pull the brush away and swipe her cream down the wooden handle as she watches. With my other hand, I cup her pussy and grind, covering it in her release before pulling away and stroking the handle like I would my cock, watching as she whimpers.

"Stay still, and I'll let you come again," I promise as I press the wooden end to her hole, and when she opens her mouth to sass me, I slam it inside of her.

She cries out as I work the skinny wooden handle into her cunt before pulling out and pushing back in. I fuck her with it in quick, hard thrusts, knowing it won't be enough to set her off but will wind her up and keep her on edge. Her hips gyrate, lifting to meet my thrusts as she whimpers.

"More," she demands.

"When I'm ready," I murmur, watching the wooden handle that I have spent months painting with disappear inside my love's dripping pussy.

I tilt it and drag it along her nerves as she moans, and only when she stops begging and just takes what I'm offering do I pull the handle out slowly. She whimpers again, but I place the paintbrush carefully on her thigh and pick up the thicker one—thick enough that she can fuck it as I watch. Her eyes are closed, so she doesn't see me, but she jumps when I rub the

cool, hard wood across her cunt. I twist it and rub, wetting every inch of the handle.

“Fucking hell,” she rasps as I finally press the wider handle to her hole, and when she inhales, I impale her on it. She cries out as I start to fuck her with it.

I watch as a thin sheen of sweat covers her incredible curves. Her hips roll desperately, taking the paintbrush deeper and deeper.

“Good girl,” I praise. “Get it nice and wet for me, I want it dripping. I’m going to mix it with my paint and fill my canvas.” That has her moaning loudly.

“Shit, I’m close again,” she warns, winding her hips on the chair. I lean down and seal my lips around her clit, tasting her sweet cum and sucking.

She screams her release with her pussy pressed against my mouth. I pull back, licking her through it as I twist the brush and slow the thrusts until she slumps.

Spent.

Pulling the handle slowly from her body, I can’t help but lick my lips to catch more of her cum as she pries her eyes open.

“Yeah, that worked,” she croaks.

“I knew it would.” Kissing her pussy once more, I gently lower her leg and stand.

“What about you?” she whispers, leaning back in the chair, her hair mussed and cheeks pink. She has never looked so beautiful, but I ignore my throbbing cock.

“Feeling you come around my brushes is enough, my love. This was never about me, but you. Now don’t move.” I turn to the canvas, and with the cum saturated brush, begin to paint. Her cum makes the paint shine, giving it a pearlescent effect. It’s beautiful.

Eventually she drops into my lap, and I hold her as I continue to paint with a dirty smile on my face. I plan to hang

it in our living room for all to see, but only the two of us will know that her cream is mixed with the paints.

Proof of our desire.

In a house so open and close, it's our own little secret.

As she curls up on my lap, I feel her starting to pull away. She might be here physically, but Blair is preparing for pain, preparing to lose us like she has lost everyone else.

I won't let that happen.



Chapter Fifty One

Bray

As per her doctor's orders, we don't let her sleep alone or for too long in case she has a concussion. We all end up back in Cyrus's bed, the three of us curled around her, but she's playing with my hair, lost in thought. I share a look with Asher and he sighs.

"I love my mom," he whispers.

"Ash?" she murmurs in confusion.

"I don't know if she ever loved me, or maybe she did and that's why she left. I wonder what she's doing all the time. If she's okay, if she still thinks about me, if she has a new family... I used to be up all night wondering why I wasn't enough for her. Enough for her to stop, to get better, to be with me. I hated her a little, hated her because I loved her so much. I miss her."

She looks down at him as his gaze focuses far away.

"I love my brothers and my father, but it always feels like there is a hole in my heart where she should be. A parent should never abandon their child, never leave them wondering what they did wrong, why they didn't love them enough... and

I still do. It's silly. I know now as an adult that she made bad choices, that she had a problem and needed help and was doing the best she could, but it doesn't stop me from wondering how different my life would be if she had just fought. If she had just stayed." His eyes go back to her. "But wondering does no good. This is my life. Her choices and my own led me here, for good and bad, and if I could just find one ray of happiness in a day, then that's what I'll do. I'm lucky, I have two brothers who love me and would do anything for me, who have my back and helped raise me without ever looking at me differently. I have a father who loved me unconditionally, if not a bit distantly. I have friends, a good house, money, and life. I have you," he finishes and swallows. "But sometimes it's not enough. Sometimes you can have everything in the world and still feel so empty and alone. I do sometimes. I shouldn't but I do."

"What do you do when you feel like that?" she inquires softly, the dark closing in on us.

"I take a deep breath and look at my life. I remind myself of everything I did to get here. I remind myself that I have people who love me, even if she never did. I remind myself this is my life now, and I can make it whatever I want. The future isn't set in stone, it's what I make it. If I'm not happy? I can change it, it's that simple. And those who stay with you, they are the ones you need in your life. I'm not saying life is easy, Blair, and that we don't make mistakes. I'm not saying living is easy, because it's not. It's fucking hard.

"Sometimes just getting up in the morning and living is the hardest thing to do when it would be so easy to give in to the bad thoughts and numbness. But we can't. We can't let the days pass us consumed by doubts and what-ifs. That's not living, that's surviving. There is so much out there to experience, to love, to ask questions about. And ten years from now, I won't regret the things I did. I'll remember them, not the days I sat in my house being afraid. Your life led you here. You have a terrible fucking mother, you've lost and suffered, but you're here now. You have us no matter what. We aren't going anywhere, and no matter what you want to do, we will support you unconditionally. I'm not saying it won't hurt, my

love, because it will. We'll argue, you'll make mistakes, and so will we. You won't just heal from this, but ten years from now, you'll remember these days, remember your decisions and being surrounded by those who love you." She inhales. "You'll remember that you weren't alone. We are forever, Darling."

"What if we're not?" she asks, and my heart cracks as I move closer.

"I have no doubt we are. This thing? Us? Family? It's forever. But even if—"

"Asher," I snap, but he holds his hand up, keeping his eyes on her.

"Even if, one day, it does fall apart, at least we tried, at least we had it. We had something so real and beautiful that it could be nothing but perfect. I don't know about you, but I've spent years searching for a place to fit in, that one place that feels like home. But I've found it, in you, in them, in this life we are creating. So keep fighting, my love. Don't give up on yourself or us just yet because we never will on you. Your mother might not love you, and he might have hurt you, but we never will. We'll hold all the broken, bloody pieces of you together until you are able to." He strokes her head. "Pull away if you need to cry, scream, or whatever you need to do to survive, but remember, there's always a tomorrow if you fight hard enough. Fight for us, Blair. For you."

"What if I don't know how?"

"You do," I promise, and her eyes turn to me. As always, those orbs entrap me. "You have the strongest heart I've ever met. It's not pure, Darling, no one's truly is, but you will do whatever it takes to keep those you love safe. You've seen evil and you laugh in the face of it now. You've survived so much already, and it has darkened parts of you, parts that needed to survive, but it also made you unimaginably strong, and if anyone, Darling" —I reach out and grip her hand— "can survive this, it's you. When you do, when this is over, we will be here just like Asher said. I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know we will be okay. That we can handle it. I

heard you on the phone, Blair... You ran into danger to save those you care for. You're not his victim anymore, you're his end. But for tonight, rest and let us hold you. Tell us what you need. Lean on us."

"I don't know," she admits, and I hear the fear in her trembling voice. "I just feel so fucking lost. So fucking angry all the time. At him, at the police, at the fucking world for yet again ruining what I had. I'm just so fucking mad."

"Then use it," Cyrus says. "Use that anger. This world isn't going to give you anything, baby girl. You can walk through life thinking it owes you shit, but it doesn't. You take what you want, and you fight for it with everything you have. So fight, Blair."

"I want to," she murmurs, sliding back down into our arms as we hold her tighter. "I'm just worried it won't be enough."

"Then we make it enough. No matter what happens, we got to be together, and that's enough," Cyrus finishes, leaning in to kiss her. "Now get some sleep, we will be right here when you wake up."

She barely slept, tossing and turning all night until the sun rose, and then she finally settled down to sleep. Not wanting to leave her, I stayed with her while Asher and Cyrus got up to check in with the police to see if they found him. I'm holding her in my arms, yet she feels a thousand miles away. Even after our talk last night, it's as if she's mentally preparing to lose us or walk away.

I can't let that happen, but I don't know what to do, so as the sun rises and shines across her beautiful face, I try to come up with a plan to keep her with us forever.

She's ours, she's mine. She's Crew. If she leaves, she will break all three of our hearts and probably our family. I've tried talking, tried being vulnerable, so instead I fall back on the one thing I know I do best.

Sex.

I'll make her want me, make her want to stay by giving her the best orgasms she's ever had. It's what I did with other girls, used their desire to blind them to everything but me so they wouldn't leave when they realised how messed up I was. I never thought I'd do it with her, but it's all I have left.

This isn't about pleasure, this is about showing her how much she means to us. It's not about me, it's all about her.

"Bray?" she murmurs as I flip her so she's on her back with her head propped on the pillows.

I rip the covers back, grip her thighs, and yank them apart. She's in nothing but a tiny lace thong and tank top, and my eyes eat her up greedily as she tilts her head. Her lips curve into a small smile, and some of our usual sassy Blair enters her eyes which are locked on me.

Stroking the smooth skin, I slide my hands up her thighs and hips to grip her panties, then I place a gentle kiss on her belly as I start to drag them down. Wordlessly, she lifts her ass to help me, and I follow them down her legs, dotting kisses as I go before they reach her feet. Lifting each one, I lay a kiss on the arch before tugging her panties off and tossing them to the floor. She lies back, her legs spread and her pussy on display.

"How can you be this fucking beautiful? I don't even want to touch you sometimes, like I'll stain you," I murmur, massaging her ankles.

"Stain me all over, baby, I love it," she purrs, grabbing the bottom of her shirt and yanking it off. I can't help the groan that escapes me as she leans back, her breasts bouncing with the movement. Her rosy nipples tighten further as I watch.

Fuck.

I grind my hips, shoving my cock into the bed to try and release some of the desire that surges through me at the sight of my girl laid out before me like a feast.

She reaches up and cups her breasts, rolling her nipples before she trails her fingers down her stomach, over her bare pussy, and to her slit. Her deft little fingers slowly circle her

clit before sliding down to her hole. “Or would you rather just watch?” she teases.

With a snarl, I grab her hands and pin them to the bed on either side of her hips before pressing between her thighs as I stare greedily at her cunt.

Eyes fluttering closed, I inhale her musk as she settles back to let me do whatever I want to her.

“You smell like heaven,” I growl, opening my eyes to gaze at her pretty pink pussy again. I love eating pussy, but fuck, my new stepsister’s is an addiction. Her taste, her smell, the pink flesh... I’ve never enjoyed it quite this much, as if it’s a new hobby that I intend to master—one I’ll never grow tired of. Hell, I’ll happily go to sleep every night with her cream on my tongue, especially if it will keep her here with me.

Every inch of Blair is intended to arouse, annoy, and drive me wild, and her tight little cunt is no exception.

It’s enough to make even the most dangerous, stubborn man fall—just ask my brother.

“Now, this is a sight I could wake up to every morning. All it needs is you clawing at my head like a little kitten like you do when you come.”

“I do not,” she snaps, huffing.

“You do, it’s adorable, and your nose twists. I ache to see that.” I smirk as I lean down and blow air across her cunt before licking my lips. “Let me prove it to you.”

I shut up and eat my girl’s cunt like a champion, enjoying every minute as much as she is. Her moans get louder as I lick her over and over, circling her asshole and back up again to dip inside of her and taste a burst of her cream. I ignore her clit until she yanks on my hair, and I chuckle before lashing her clit and making her cry out. Her thighs shake in my grasp, letting me know she’s close, so I catch my teeth on it, and she comes apart so prettily in my arms, her thighs clenching around my head as her pussy gushes for me.

I don’t relent. Instead, I release her clit and seal my lips around her hole and suck and lick before pulling back to

breathe. As her pussy flutters and aftershocks shake her body, I press two fingers to her hole, and without warning, thrust them inside her.

I feel her squeeze them as I fight her channel before pulling out and thrusting back in. I twist and crook them to stroke those nerves that have her body jerking beneath me and a low, guttural groan filling my ears.

“Bray, fuck, more, please.”

Just then, I hear the door open. “Hey, so I brought breakfast... Well, it seems you’re already having yours,” Asher jokes.

It makes her laugh, which soon fades into a moan as I nip her clit. In retaliation, she reaches for Asher. “Want to play?” she purrs breathlessly. “Bray is going to let me peg him.”

I lift my mouth off of her and give her a warning look. “Be nice, or I’ll fuck your ass and won’t let you come.”

“Shit, that’s hot.” She groans before grabbing my head and pushing me back down.

“I’m both turned on and confused.” Asher laughs, but I hear the plates being set down before the bed dips. When I roll my eyes up, she lifts her head and kisses him in greeting. It soon turns from soft and flirtatious to hard and fast. He grips her cheeks, keeping her still as he dominates her mouth, swallowing her moans as I lick and fuck her with my fingers.

When she breaks free to breathe, her chest is heaving and flushed, and she’s close to coming again like a good girl. “What do you say, Bray? Want to fuck my ass while I suck your brother’s cock?”

Grunting against her pussy, I add another finger, stretching her and sending her into another orgasm. She writhes as I lick her through it before sitting back, her cream covering my face and dripping down my chin. As she watches, I lick my fingers clean, dragging my tongue along my digits and palm. Her eyes are blown, her mouth is wide open, and her breasts are swaying with the force of her breathing.

“Fuck,” is all she says as I smirk and look at Asher.

“What do you think, brother?”

“As long as you don’t bring your balls anywhere near me,” he teases before looking down at Blair as he kneels by her head. Reaching down again, he grips her chin and yanks her head back until she looks at him. “How can you even ask if I want her perfect mouth on my dick?” She shivers at his words as he leans down and places a soft kiss on her bruised lips. “I’m going to fill this dirty little mouth with my cum while you scream for us.”

Asher glances at me, and I nod. He grabs her shoulders, I grab her legs, and we flip her. She gasps, grabbing the bedding as I tug her perfect ass into the air and force my knee between hers to spread them more. Asher slides between her and the bed, scooting down until her head is above his boxers.

I watch as her head dips and she skates her lips over his length through the material before gripping the waistband and tugging it down. He groans, tangling his hands in her hair.

Sliding my hands up her thighs and across her peachy ass, I part her cheeks, staring at her tight little hole. My cock jerks at the thought of pummelling into that and forcing her mouth onto his cock.

“Drawer,” I snap, and Asher reaches out, yanks open the top drawer, and blindly searches before tossing me the lube. Luckily, it’s an unopened bottle, so I crack it open and squirt it onto her crack, watching as she jolts from the cold touch before whimpering as I drag my fingers through it. I circle her hole before slowly pushing inside with my thumb. As she plays with Asher, I thumb fuck her ass, getting the lube in before changing to two fingers. When she is pushing back, her pussy dripping and clenching, I wipe my fingers and pull out my hard length, stroking it as I gaze at her glistening hole and puffy, raw cunt.

Gripping her hips, I yank her farther back, and I watch as her mouth pulls away from the tip of his cock. She turns her head to watch me as I drag my dick through the lube and notch it at her ass.

“Push it in, I want it to hurt,” she murmurs.

Fuck.

I can't help it; I do as I'm told. I press in slowly, and her muscles relax before they let my length in. Deeper and deeper, I feed each inch into her ass before I have to pull out and thrust back in shallowly, until I'm finally in. Her eyes close, her head falls forward, and her ass pushes back to make me move, but I hold her still. Drool almost escapes my mouth as I squeeze her plump ass cheeks, watching my long cock splitting them. Claiming her.

"Bray," she begs.

"My love, I want that mouth," Asher orders, turning her head and pulling her back down. I watch as he drags her mouth up and down his length, setting a fast past.

Never one to be left behind, I start to move.

I push her forward from the force, making his cock slide farther down her throat until she can't even moan around it. She can only hold on as we fuck her holes.

"Not like you to be speechless. Guess all it takes are two dicks fucking you, huh, Darling? You like this? Like my huge cock splitting your ass, fucking it and filling it with my cum while you suck my brother's cock?"

She lifts her head, saliva dripping from her mouth to Asher's cock as she speaks. "I'd like it more if Cyrus was in my pussy, but beggars can't be choosers. Now, I thought I told you to fuck me?" Her eyes meet mine over her shoulder. "I don't want to be able to walk after, so fuck my ass hard, stepbrother."

I can't speak after that, only grunt. My control snaps. My hips jerk forward in a quick, sharp thrust before I pull out and slam back inside of her. She moans as she sucks Asher's cock like it's her favourite lollipop. His grunts join mine, and the wet sounds of my cock in her ass and her mouth slurping fill the air. Her thighs are drenched from her own cum, so I reach down and skate my fingers through it before rubbing her clit as I pound into her ass.

I can barely breathe past my hammering heart and the lust slamming through me. My release builds, even as I try to hold it back, but when she pushes back so quickly that she impales herself on my dick, I can't fight it anymore. I smack her clit, and she cries out around Asher's cock as she comes, her ass and pussy clenching. I roar and slam into her until my balls slap her and my cum fills her ass.

I hear Asher grunt, and then she's gulping down his release. Swearing, I slowly pull from her tight ass, watching my cum drip from it and down to her pussy where I rub it into her. Satisfaction fills me at having her every hole overflowing with it.

Asher and I well and truly fucked her until nothing but pleasure existed in that moment, but it soon fades.

When it's over, when we slump into a sweaty, tangled mess, I feel her walls starting to rebuild, and know it wasn't enough.

We are losing her.



Chapter Fifty Two

Blair

Cyrus has been hovering over me all day like an obsessed mother hen. It's getting really annoying, and we are butting heads and snapping at each other, so I leave him to calm down with Bray and go to find Asher, who disappeared a few hours ago.

The police still haven't found anything. They came back for more questions and told me to stay in the house and that there would be a police officer outside at all times. I just really hope it's not that dipshit asshole who's always trying to feel me up.

I find Asher in the garage, the music blasting. He's sitting so he's half facing the door on a little stool before a sexy as hell new bike I've not seen before. Paints in hand, with his tongue caught in his lips, he leans in to paint a line. I still for a moment, just watching him.

He leans back, checking his progress before running a paint-stained hand through his hair, then he shifts closer and carries on. He's so fucking adorable, and remembering the way those brushes and hands felt on my body? Well, it has me

shivering. Only Crew could keep me horny in a life-and-death situation.

“Whose bike is it?” I ask.

He jumps and spins, his eyes wide as he glances behind me. I follow his gaze, but there’s no one there. “What?”

“I thought you were with Bray and Cyrus,” he says, panicking. “They were supposed to keep you busy.”

“Busy?” Moving inside the garage, I give the bike another look. “Asher, what’s going on?”

The guilty drop of his eyes has me snorting. He’s a terrible liar. “I, erm, nothing.”

“Liar,” I taunt. “Come on, tell me.”

Sighing, he looks up. “If I do, you still have to act surprised, okay? We’ve been working on this for weeks, and I don’t wanna ruin the surprise.”

“Surprise? For me? Tell me!” I almost jump up and down, excited for the first time in days, and it takes my mind off my worries.

He must see that and decide it’s worth ruining the surprise for, lucky me, because he concedes, “Okay, come here.”

I do, leaning over his shoulder to look at the incredible painting. As soon as I see it, my heart melts. There, in his beautiful artwork style, is the name ‘Darling’ surrounded by skulls, flowers, and such beautiful, intricate work I can’t help but stare.

“It’s for you. Bray and Cyrus built it, that’s what we needed parts from Jay for, and I’m painting it for you. If you’re Crew, you have to have your own bike. Plus, Cyrus thought it might stop you from stealing his for joyrides.”

“I did that once,” I whisper, still staring.

“Five times last week,” he jokes, but I sense his nervousness. “Do you like it? I can change whatever you want ___”

“Don’t you dare! It’s perfect.” I reach down and cup his chin, dragging his head back until his eyes meet mine. “You are perfect.”

His grin is wide and sexy as hell. “Want to take it for a test ride?” he purrs.

“You bet your fine ass I do, but shouldn’t we wait for them?”

“Oh, don’t worry, we aren’t leaving the garage. Now bend your sexy ass over the bike,” he orders as he puts his paints down and gets to his feet.

What he means clicks into place, and I swear I’ve never stripped so fast in my entire life. As he laughs, I bend myself over the bike, wiggling my ass to entice him. My bare breasts press against the cold metal, making me gasp as it cools my overheated skin.

I feel him step up behind me, and suddenly, he kicks out, widening my stance as he grips my hair and yanks my head back. Then, he licks a long line up my throat to my ear.

“I’m going to fuck you until your cum covers the bike. You’ll remember it every time you sit your perfect ass on it,” he growls, the dirty, dark promise making me push back into him. Fuck, I love Asher’s dirty side, and he seems intent on making me come apart today.

“Promise?” I taunt, tilting my head to give him better access as he licks and nips my neck, sending shivers through me and making my clit pulse.

Anyone could walk in, could see us, even those driving past. I don’t give a fuck, let them get a free show. In fact, knowing they will see my stepbrother fucking me only makes me wetter. His tongue swipes teasingly down the shell of my ear.

“I promise, my love, you’ll be dripping and screaming in no time.”

Shit, my pussy clenches at his vow, and I know full well he will follow through. I’ve never fucked one man so talented with his cock, hands, and mouth before, never mind one so

intent on my pleasure. In fact, making me come only seems to make him harder—it's the same with all three of them. I got so bloody lucky. Three men begging to make me come?

Hell yes.

I used to use men and women, used to control their pleasure and only take mine if I wanted it. Now, I'm an equal. It's more than fucking and fighting, though we do plenty of that. It's about give and take, our joint pleasure. It's about learning each other's bodies so well that, with a simple look or touch, they could have me undone and begging.

It's something I never thought would happen.

But here we are, with my artist pressed against my ass, promising to make me scream, and instead of running, I'm bending over and waiting for it, letting him take control and have me in every way possible. Nothing compares to my stepbrothers and those hands of theirs.

They are making me an addict, only I'm not addicted to their drugs... but to them. To Crew.

His hands spread my ass before cupping my pussy possessively as he grinds his cock against me. His jeans and zipper are almost painful, but it feels so fucking good my eyes close as I let him hold me up.

Grinding his palm into my cunt, he whispers dirty nothings in my ear before he removes his hand and starts a slow circle around my clit. He winds me up and keeps me on edge until I'm pushing into his hand for more. I need to be filled, and my nipples are so hard they ache for his mouth and hands.

I'm wet as hell and practically dripping for him, but there isn't a time when I'm not. His fingers drag down my pussy, circling my hole, and I've had enough. I try to turn, to tackle him and ride him to my release, but he tightens his arm around me and pins me there with a grunt.

“What do you want, my love? You know you only ever have to ask.”

“To come,” I snap like it's obvious.

“Ask nicely,” he teases.

“Ash, make me come or I’ll go fuck your brother,” I snarl instead, annoyed and so fucking wound up I might explode with one stroke of his cock.

He chuckles, but it does the trick. He lets go of my pussy, and I expect him to fuck me hard in punishment, but instead, he grabs my hips and lifts. I have to clutch the bike and hold on as I feel him crouch behind me, and then his mouth is there, locked on my pussy as I’m held in mid-air.

He attacks me with his tongue, lashing, circling, and rubbing my clit before dipping it inside me and dragging it across my cunt. He eats me fast and hard, dirty and raw. There’s no rhythm or rhyme, just his tongue and teeth going at me until I’m grinding against his mouth.

Without even fucking me or touching me with his cock or fingers, I come apart for him. I yell as my release takes me by surprise, flowing through me, leaving me whimpering and shaking as he licks me through it. He drops my legs back to the floor and kicks them open, then I hear his zipper before his cock presses to my hole.

It’s a promise that has my eyes closing and a smile curving my lips.

Who knew being with the same dick over and over again could still be so exciting? Not me, that’s for sure.

His hand drags up my back, stroking along my spine before rounding my throat and pulling me up a bit so he can grip my breast.

Hard.

He squeezes, and as I moan, he slams inside me, stealing the rest of my breath. He doesn’t go slow, no, my sensitive artist boy is on a mission to claim my screams. My cream drips down his huge dick as he thrusts in and out of me hard and fast.

He pushes me into the bike, and the wet sound of our bodies joining makes me shiver in pleasure. The tight grip of

his hand on my breast is almost painful, flowing to mix with the pleasure of his cock inside me.

His arm is before me, braced on the bike, and I take it out on him, latching onto his skin. He grunts as I bite him, but he doesn't stop the slow roll of his hips as he hits that spot inside me over and over. It's not enough to make me come, and he knows it.

He tilts me and hits my G-spot with more force, rubbing his cock against it until, within minutes, I'm coming again.

With a snarl, he pulls free, turns me, and drapes me back over the bike as I lie limply in my haze, and then he slams back into my dripping cunt. I bend my knees, pressing my feet against his shoulders, and lift my hips, meeting his thrusts.

I can't get enough of him.

"Ash," I moan, gripping my breasts with my hands, trusting him to keep me on the bike as I twist and pluck my nipples. The spark of pleasure shoots straight to my throbbing clit.

He groans as he watches, his eyes darkening and chest heaving. He's a beautiful sight as he bends over, still fucking me hard, and captures one of my nipples in his mouth and sucks. The sight of his blond head between my breasts is too much to take.

My breathing stutters as I teeter on the edge of another orgasm, and when he stands back up and hammers into me, I can't hold it back. With one last hard thrust, I scream my release.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck," he chants. "Too fucking tight, too fucking wet. Blair—fuck." He groans, fighting through my pussy as it milks his cock. He keeps fucking me, but it's clear he's close, and I can't help but purposely tighten around him.

With a guttural yell, he pulls from my body and pumps his cock with his hand before spurting his release all over my chest. I jerk as the warm cum covers my breasts, each drop like melted wax as I ride through my own orgasm. As I come down from the high, I crack open my eyes to see him smearing

his fingers through his cum, which is dripping down my belly, and with a possessive, dark look at me, he skates his cum covered fingers over my pussy and shoves them inside me, making me cry out again.

“Filthy bastard,” I mutter, looking down to see my whole front practically smeared in his cum.

“You love it,” he retorts, and he’s not wrong. With a smirk, I lift a tired hand, run my fingers through his mess, and lift them to my lips. I suck them clean, and he groans again.

“Fuck, let’s get you back to the others before I fuck you again.”

“I’m not opposed to it,” I tease.

“I need to finish your bike, not cover it in cum, my love.” He laughs. “But hold that thought for later.”

I pout but let him clean with me a rag before he helps me to my feet. As I dress, he cops a feel, and then he spanks me as I turn to leave. Instead of staying to work, though, he follows me out. Only he stops outside of the garage, eyes going to beyond the gate.

I follow his gaze and groan. “Why would they even put that asshole on our house after—” I freeze, my heart stopping, as everything finally falls into place. “Asher... what if he’s not supposed to be? What if he lied to them or they saw him here and thought he was on protection duty and the real officers left? What if that’s why he’s always following me and using you as an excuse? What if he’s helping him?” I turn back and he frowns, looking from the cop to me.

“He’s dirty and an asshole for sure, but why would he help him?”

“I don’t know,” I admit. “But he gives me a bad feeling, always has, and it would explain how my stalker has managed to lay low and avoid the police.”

“Maybe, we’ll look into it. But he was here before Mr. Andrews even escaped, my love, so it could just be a coincidence.”

I nod and let Asher lead me away, but my brain is firing off alarms, telling me that I'm right. The feeling in my gut only adds to that. I don't know how or why, but Mr. Andrews has got this police officer doing his dirty work—which means he knows where I live and he's watching me, watching us.

It's only a matter of time before he strikes again.



Chapter Fifty Three

Blair

I accidentally let it slip over breakfast that I saw the bike. It gave Cyrus and Bray a free shot at Asher, and although they were mad, they loved how happy I was about it, so they let it slide. But I'm going stir crazy being stuck in the house. That's not the type of person I am. I like to be busy, out, and having fun, so when Cyrus tells me I'm being a pain in the ass and to go get ready, I don't question it. I don't know what we are doing or where we're going, but I don't care so long as it gets me even a little bit of freedom.

I debate what to wear. Are we going someplace on the new bike? Hoping that's true, I put on some black skinny jeans and a black crop top and grab my leather jacket. When I reach the living room and see Cyrus dressed in riding gear, I know I'm right. Laughing, he tosses me over his shoulder as I call bye to the others and carries me to the garage where he deposits me near the bike.

"Okay, here, wear your helmet." He grabs me one that has a skull painted on the side, and I pull it on, almost hopping on my toes as I stare at my shiny new toy. "Be careful. Stay with me, or I'll haul your ass home, okay?"

“Got it, big guy.” I nod, willing to promise anything in my excitement.

He leans down and kisses me before grabbing his keys and helmet, and then he gets on his bike. I quickly mount mine and turn on the engine.

I don't know where we are going, but as we pull out of the drive, I realise I don't care. The wind blows through my clothes and mask, which nearly makes me scream with happiness, and my soul soaks in the open roads as the sun shines down on us, so when Cyrus waves me right, I flip off the cop and gun it.

We are being watched like a hawk by the cop that may be working with Mr. Andrews, so instead of hunting or making a stand just yet, we're regrouping. We pretend to lay low and not care, just not today though, because today, I'm free, even for a moment.

I stay behind Cyrus like he told me, going the same speed as we wind through the streets and city. At stoplights, I dance for him, but he just rolls his eyes until he eventually joins in, shaking his ass on his bike and making me laugh. The sound is free and happy, and I see his lips twist up at that.

We ride and ride, uncaring about the speed limit. There's something about the purr of the engine between my legs that has all the days of worry, anger, and stress melting away. It's like the clouds are finally parting to let the sunshine through, and I can finally take a deep breath and look around at the beauty, hope, and life still thriving in this city, making my problems feel very small.

About two hours later, we head out of the city and up another winding road until we reach the top of a mountain where Cyrus pulls over at a looking site. We park near the fence and I get off, instantly heading to the edge to lean into the rail, awed by the view. The city sprawls before us, seeming so far away and small, and to the left, piercing the clouds and blue skies, are mountains. It's beautiful and so peaceful.

No crowds, no police, just us and nature.

“I come up here when things are bad and I need to think,” he explains from behind me as his arms go to the fence on either side of me, caging me in. “I’ve never brought anyone here before. It just has a way of making everything else feel unimportant and small. A way of making you rethink your worries and change your perspective.”

“It does,” I reply, leaning back into him.

“It reminds me that there is more to life,” he carries on, almost crooning in my ear. His deep timbre sends a shiver through my aching body. “More to fight for.” He drops a kiss on my pulse before running his nose up my throat to my ear. “More to stay for, even when it’s hard. This is my safe space, the one place I go to get away from everything, and now it’s yours too, like everything I have and own. I just hope it brings you the same peace it brings me, especially with you here in my arms, knowing you’re safe and okay.” He steps back and I turn, leaning into the fence as he looks me over with a wide, carefree, un-Cyrus-like smile. “There’s never been a better view.”

Bending my knee, I pose for him with a goofy smile. “Oh yeah?”

He pulls his phone out and takes a picture, making me laugh.

“Okay, stop.” I wave him away, but he steps closer, still taking a picture, and then leans in and kisses me, distracting me, and when he pulls away, he puts his phone back.

“Made you laugh,” he murmurs, stroking my cheek, still pressed against me.

“How about you make me scream instead?” I retort, and he groans as he lowers his head and licks my lips.

“Filthy fucking bitch,” he praises before hoisting me up, turning us, and depositing me on his bike as he strips off his jacket. The sun is basically a paid actress at this point as it flows over every hard line and dip of his muscles through his almost see-through white shirt and low hanging jeans.

No man should be this beautiful, but he is and he's all mine, from the tip of his usually scowling, dangerously handsome face, to his huge pussy destroying cock.

Effortlessly lifting me with one hand, he strips off my jeans and drapes them over my bike. My panties are next, going into his trouser pocket, and I'm left bare from the waist down. He cups my breasts and squeezes them hard as he kisses my neck.

"You are so fucking sexy, baby girl. These mouthwatering breasts, your big fucking ass, and tight little cunt—fuck, you're enough to make a man want to be good."

"I don't want good." I smirk, grabbing his hair and shaking his head back. "I want you balls deep inside me, here, where anyone could see."

"Baby girl," he groans, closing his eyes and clenching his hands as he tries to rein in his control.

Fuck that.

Reaching down, I stroke his cock through his jeans. "Fuck me, Cy, make me come."

"You're mine," he snaps, his eyes fluttering open and locking on me as he pushes me back.

"Prove it," I taunt.

With a snarl, he drags his eyes down my body as if deciding where to start.

The fact I'm half naked and he's fully dressed makes me moan as I turn and lean back against his bike. His arm wraps under me, lifting my ass and bringing my pussy to his mouth as he bends down, and just like that, he shows me that, okay, maybe I am his.

But that makes him mine too.

Reaching down, I drag my nails through his hair, making him snarl against my pussy, the vibration eliciting a moan from my lips. He eats me the same way he fucks and fights—hard and dirty. All tongue and teeth, he finds every little nook

that makes me cry out and relentlessly attacks it until I come all over his tongue.

He drops me as suddenly as he picked me up, and my legs almost give out, but he grabs me, turns me, and lifts me again. He seats me on the bike so I'm looking out at the mountains. I hear him stripping, and then he's behind me. He picks me up and sits me on top of him, his cock sliding against my core. Holding me still, he nips my neck.

"I want you to scream as loud as you can, baby girl," he orders.

"Then make me—" Whatever I was going to say cuts off in a scream as he impales me on his huge cock. The pain and pleasure nearly makes my eyes cross as my heart skips a beat.

My pussy clamps around him as he chuckles and starts to move, raising and dropping me until I catch up and start to help, using the bike for leverage as I bob on his cock.

I hear an engine, but I don't care. "Hear them coming, baby girl"? he snarls, his voice tight. "They are going to see you, going to see you getting your pretty pussy destroyed. They're going to see you come all over my cock and beg for more like the dirty little slut you are."

"Good," I purr, rolling my hips as I chase my next release. The idea of someone watching makes cream gush from me as I tighten around him.

"Dirty bitch," he snarls, biting my shoulder, and the pain makes me cry out.

My eyes close, and I feel him reach past me before the bike roars to life beneath me.

I snap my eyes open. "Cy?" I pant as he continues to fuck me.

"I've always wanted to try this," he murmurs, licking where he bit. "So be a good girl for once and shut the fuck up and let me fuck you."

How can a girl turn that down?

But I'm intrigued and curious, and then I don't have to wonder anymore.

Pushing me forward, still seated on his huge cock, he angles me until my clit presses against the vibrating engine of the bike. I gasp as it rumbles, the pulsations making me cry out and clench around him.

Chuckling, he nips my neck before wrapping his hand around it to keep me still as he fucks me hard. "That feel good, baby girl?"

"Fuck yeah," I slur, a dripping mess. The vibrations echo through my bones, and I already feel another release clawing at me from the stimulation. My clit throbs and my pussy clamps around him as he fights to thrust into me, filling me with his monster cock over and over.

I'm bare from the waist down for anyone that comes, but I don't care. I can't even sit up anymore, so I slump into the bike as he squeezes my throat until I can't breathe. He slams into me over and over, the vibration against my clit only seeming to get stronger until I shatter.

I scream my release to the city and mountains, sprawled across his bike, with his cock buried deep inside me as he roars and fills me with his own release. It's then I know I will never be free of him.

Or get enough of him.

Not ever.

It's official.

I'm theirs.

They are mine.

When he lifts me from his cock, I can't help but curl into his arms like a fucking kitten. I'm content and boneless, even as I see a car driving into the mountains, knowing they saw us. It makes me laugh, and he joins in.

We relax for a while before he helps me get dressed, and only when my legs stop shaking do we head back home.

Today was amazing and exactly what I needed. It does, however, leave me exhausted and in need of a shower, so after kissing Bray and Asher hello, I go to do just that.

When I get to my room to change, my phone goes off. I pull it out of my jeans and see messages from Cyrus.

They are images from today. One is of me posing, and the other is me laughing with my head thrown back, eyes closed, as the light shines on my form. I look beautiful, and I realise this is how he sees me—strong, sexy, and laughing.

So alive and vibrant.

The next is of us kissing. We both have our eyes closed, and his hand cradles my cheek as the sun illuminates the sides of our faces.

Cyrus: So you never forget how strong and beautiful you are. This is how I see you.

I sit down heavily on my bed and just stare at the photos, because leaking through every single image is nothing but love. Not just for him... but me. Especially in that first photo. My eyes are filled with it, and I practically glow with his attention and caring. It's so obvious.

I love him, I love them all, so much.

And that fucking terrifies me.

Because everything I love suffers.

Everything I love, I lose.



Chapter Fifty Four

Bray

It's been a few days, and we still haven't heard anything from the police. I don't know if that's good or bad, but Blair wakes up in a better mood, thank fuck. She's still determined to live her life as normally as possible, and I refuse to be the asshole who keeps her inside just to make us feel better. That doesn't mean we will leave her side or let her take stupid risks, though, not that she would. She's too fucking smart for that, but if she felt like it would stop him and protect us, she would do pretty much anything—hence us practically being tied to her at the hip.

“So what are we doing today?” she asks after hanging up with Faye. She is still staying at Jay's compound, and she's okay, though unhappy about ‘being in biker dick jail,’ as she calls it.

“What do you want to do, Darling?” I inquire, sipping my coffee.

She tilts her head in thought. “Something fun.”

“Fun, huh?” Asher grins.

“Not that kind of fun.” She laughs and then purses her lips. “No, I know.” She leans in. “I want to do something meaningful. Asher showed me his art, Cyrus his spot... Bray, I want to know something no one else does. Something no one else sees of Crew. There’s so much more than the rich pricks who run drugs, so show me.”

Swallowing hard, I share a look with Asher who encourages me with a nod. “I need to finish her bike. Go, show her.”

“Yes, show me,” she begs with big eyes and a pout.

“Okay,” I agree softly before clearing my throat. “Go get ready.”

“Yay! Thank you.” She leaps up and kisses me before rushing off to get dressed.

I text my friend to make sure it’s okay for me to bring her, and when she agrees, I get my shoes and coat on. Blair comes bouncing back, and I take her hand as she says goodbye to the others before we head out. We take her car, and I give her directions as she drives. She side-eyes me as we move from the city to the big, old-style houses. I don’t explain as we pull up to a wrought iron gate with a silver sign and call box. The house towers before us with a luscious landscape surrounding it, including an apple grove, cherry trees, and an outdoor swimming pool. There is a space for yoga and an outside gym that extends inside. It is its own community, having everything they need here so they don’t have to go out into the world if they don’t want to.

“Bray, where are we?” she queries, eyeing the gates that swing open with a buzz and then meeting my gaze.

“You wanted to see something real, well, this is real. This is us. This is the very thing we did with the money we earned. We bought this place and made it safe and nice for them.”

“For whom?” she presses as we pull up in front of the house.

We stop before the giant country manor. The old brick is aged but still beautiful, with custom murals surrounding the

pointed roof and huge, white windows. The covered entryway is filled with chairs, providing a perfect place to watch the world go by. I turn to see her staring too. It truly is one of a kind. We were lucky to fall upon the listing, and like the people who call it home, all it needed was some love and attention.

Just then, the door opens, and Mary, the older plump lady who runs this house, stands in the entryway with a wide smile on her face. She's carefree, happy, unlike the first time we met.

Turning off the engine, I look at her with a smile. "Why don't you come and see?" I get out and jog to Mary, who grabs me in a hug.

"Bray! We missed you!" she exclaims and pushes me away a bit. "Let me look at you. Your hair is getting long, boy," she teases.

"My girl likes it like that," I reply.

"Girl? You finally got a girlfriend? Where is she?" she demands, and I turn to the side to let her see Blair as she climbs out of the car. She has her hand above her eyes to shield the sunlight, which illuminates her like the goddess she is. I hold out my hand as Mary gasps.

"My God, boy, she's beautiful."

"Smart too," I brag as Blair approaches, and I take her hand and turn to Mary. "Mary, this is Blair. Blair, this is Mary. She's the mum of this house and sometimes us."

"Oh shush, you." She smacks my arm playfully. "He's too kind, I just like to make sure they are okay after everything they did for us." She embraces Blair, surprising her. "Come on, my girl, let's get you a drink and you can tell me everything about how you finally made this one calm down."

Blair grins and heads inside with her. "More like the other way around."

I hear Mary giggle, and I can't help but grin. Knowing Blair fits in here makes me so happy. This is my secret, my softness I don't let anyone see. It was originally my idea.

Cyrus helped with construction and finances, Asher with the layouts and décor, and I found her.

Mary, the woman who started it all.

She's a survivor, like Blair.

I hear the laughter and chatter of the other girls as we head into the huge entryway. We take a corridor next to the spiral staircase, the original restored tiled floor warm under our feet as we head deeper into the house and into the huge kitchen. It's big enough for everyone, since we wanted it to be the heart of the house. It has three fridges, four cookers, enough appliances to feed an army, and two huge picnic style tables at the back of the room, which face the open French doors that lead out into the massive backyard and lands. It also features the house's original fireplace and other elements that really make you comprehend how much history these walls hold. There's no one in here at the moment, but there are homemade cakes on display on the table with lemonade next to them.

"Sit, sit, I'll make Bray's favourite tea." Mary hustles us into chairs and steps into the kitchen, moving around quickly to get started on it.

"Hey, baby!" a young girl calls as she rushes through the kitchen, stealing a muffin as she goes.

"Heather!" Mary chides, but it's said lovingly with a smile.

"Thanks, Mom!" Heather says, kissing her as she pounds upstairs.

"Bray, where are we?" Blair asks, confused as a group of girls of all ages heads outside.

"You'll see." I shrug, a bit embarrassed to explain it myself. I didn't know it would be hard to bring her here. I've given her every other part of myself, but this... this has always been private. Not even my dad knows, so if she does... What if she thinks less of me? What if she thinks I can't look after her or protect her?

I guess I'll find out.

Mary comes back with a tray and lays out cakes, biscuits, and teacups and saucers before returning with a pot and leaning over to pour. It's her own herbal tea, and in my opinion, it's the best in the city. In fact, without even telling her, I've started selling it for her, using the excuse that I need some for home and buying as much as she can make. With that money, I've established an account for her and her girls, knowing she wouldn't want it any other way. That way, she has her own independence. She hates asking us for anything, even though we would gladly give her everything she desired.

When she bends down, her dress gapes slightly, showing the wicked scar from shoulder to shoulder where her husband tried to carve her heart out after she attempted to leave him, sick of his abuse. Blair must inhale loudly, because Mary looks down and simply smiles. Once, she would have covered up, but not anymore. This place is good for her.

"You can ask," Mary offers kindly as she sits down. "I'm not ashamed."

"What happened?" Blair questions bluntly, cupping the saucer and taking a sip. "Holy shit, this is incredible."

"Thank you, I made it myself." Mary grins and then sighs, stirring her tea. I reach across and place my hand on hers. "Thank you, my boy." She pats it. "It's so silly, you would have thought it would get easier. After all, I tell it almost every day to the new girls, but it never does."

"Pain never does," Blair whispers. "We just learn to get stronger."

"Very true and astute," Mary replies, smiling sadly at her. "You have the look of one of my girls, but I feel like that is a story for another time." Blair flinches, but Mary surges on. "I was married. He was an incredible man at first. So strong and caring, and he spoiled me and had an amazing job. I ended up quitting mine so I could stay at home and keep house like he wanted. That's how it started, it cut me off from my work friends and time outside. Slowly, he made me cut all ties with everyone. I didn't have family, none but him, and eventually, I lost all my friends too. I was dependent on him, like he

wanted. I started to sneak out, just to have a bit of freedom, but he would find out. Then, he would complain that the house wasn't cleaned the way he wanted, that I didn't cook fast enough, didn't move fast enough. It got physical, one hit and an apology. I believed him, thinking once was all it would be. Next, he threw me down the stairs. He was so sorry after, I had my husband back, and I promised myself it would just be that one time. Then the ones turned into twos until it was every day and I was living in terror. I needed to do something, to get away before that once got me killed."

It doesn't matter how many times I've heard this, it still pisses me off.

"That's when he realised I was slowly stashing money away. It was just little bits at a time, telling him it was things for the house. I hid it, but he figured it out. He came home, and I knew it would be bad. I tried to run, to leave, and he beat me senseless. The neighbour ended up calling the police, and I was rushed to the hospital. I had fractured bones and bruises, but they let me go home. I tried to stay at a hotel, but I had no money or support, so with no choice, I went back to him. He was waiting to finish the job." Blair gasps and Mary nods. "If I had known, I would have stayed on the streets, but I was so used to it, so dependent on him for everything and conditioned to think it was normal. Plus, I had no one. That's why this place is here, so that no one ever has to feel like that. Everyone is welcome here no matter their story, age, or anything between. It's a haven, Mary's Haven." She cuts me a look. "Bray's idea. But anyway, so yes, I went back... a mistake. He tried to kill me. He knocked me out, and I woke up on my kitchen floor, which I had spent so many hours scrubbing, to find him carving open my chest. Luckily, a nice police officer wasn't comfortable with me being sent home alone and had come to check up on me. He heard my screams and broke in. He saved me. I was in the hospital for months," she concludes, sipping her tea. I can tell Blair wants to ask, but she thinks it through and instead settles on something else. The fact that she's not prying makes my heart flutter for the incredible woman sitting next to me, so I reach for her hand and hold it.

“I’m so sorry that happened to you. I’m glad you were able to get free of him, despite what it took.” Mary nods sadly, and Blair sits up. “So, Mary’s Haven?” she prompts. “I like it. How did you two meet? Don’t tell me you picked her up at a bar,” she jokingly says, looking between Mary and me.

Mary laughs and the light comes back into her eyes.

“Thank you,” I mouth, and Blair winks then looks back at Mary.

“Oh, well, he’s a sweet boy, you see, and he was in the lawyer’s office when I went to find someone to help me. I wanted to start a charity, a place for women and girls just like me to give them a safe haven so they never had to be afraid like I was,” Mary explains.

“My dad’s office,” I insert. “It’s one we own. I overheard her. She told them she had no money. I knew instantly that’s why we were there that day, to give back to our city and help as many as we could.”

“Bray,” Blair murmurs and leans in to kiss me. “You are amazing.”

“It’s just money, babe. I can’t take it with me when I die, but I can help as many as I can while I’m still alive.”

“And he did. Without him, this wouldn’t be a reality. He bought this house, renovated it, and made it a haven. I was thinking of a community centre, but he built a whole community for us. They all did, and so I adopted those boys. I can’t have kids after... after the abuse, so they are as close as I’ll get. They are the only men we allow here. A lot of the women still struggle, but they help.” She looks at me then. “You help. We wouldn’t have a future without you.”

“You never have to thank me,” I reply truthfully. I didn’t do this for respect, thanks, or even people’s opinions of us. I did this because it was the right thing to do, because seeing Mary, this brave, astounding woman who refused to back down, inspired me.

She nods, knowing better than to argue, but she’ll make up for it in baked goods, tea, and hugs. That and her happiness is

all I'll ever need from her. She loves her job here, looking after everyone she can, and I'm happy to stay in the shadows and provide whatever they need.

"I..." Blair hesitates.

"You want to ask what happened to my husband." Mary grins. "I don't tell many because this isn't his story, this is mine, and he doesn't get another second wasted on him."

Slowly, a smile stretches across Blair's face. "I like that. I really fucking like that. You're right, I've spent so long telling his and my story together... but this is my life, not his. He doesn't get another word from my lips."

Mary tilts her head shrewdly, knowing another scarred soul when she sees one, but she doesn't ask. It's what makes her incredible. She knows when to ask and when to be patient. She knows how to connect and talk to people, and she finds ways to get them to open up when they are ready.

"Don't let me hog your attention. Go show her around, Bray, just remember to avoid the bedrooms, those are their safe spaces."

"Of course," I promise as I stand, and I kiss her cheek. "Thanks, Mary."

Holding out my hand, I pull Blair to her feet. She steals a cake and waves at Mary as I lead her out of the back door. I walk her around the gym, which is in use, waving at those who greet us. Some hesitate, and one looks outright terrified, so I quickly move away. "They teach some self-defence classes there too," I explain as I walk her around the swimming pool and loungers.

"Want to see why I bought this property specifically?" I ask her as I turn so I'm walking backwards, the sun behind me as I grin at her.

"Yes." She grins back, her arm stretched to keep hold of my hand, so I spin and start to jog. We head through the trees to an arch made of nature, and when we pass under it, we break out into the space I wanted to show her.

On the edge of a small hill where the manor sits, there's an old, wide swing hanging from a huge oak tree surrounded by blankets and pillows and puffs, and it overlooks the valley and countryside where the sun always shines. "This, for the view. I saw it, and all I could think was how could anyone not come here and feel safe?" I share and spread my arms. "With nature for healing, space, and time. Can you see it?"

"I can," she murmurs, looking around in awe. "It's beautiful. I see why you chose it." Her eyes slide back to me. "And her, she's incredible, seriously, what a woman to survive all that and dedicate her life to helping others. Bray, you are changing people's lives here. You're giving them a chance when they probably never have."

I turn away, embarrassed, but she cups my cheeks, pushes up on her tiptoes, and presses against me.

The sun shines on us as I look down at her, her warm curves pressed against mine. Her soft, perfect hands hold me tightly as she gazes into my eyes, her own shining with love. "You are a truly wonderful being, Bray Crew, and the world is lucky to have you. I'm lucky to have you," she whispers softly, and I can't resist, I lean down and capture her lips. Slowly, softly, tellingly.

As I pull away, she beams and then breaks free and skips past me. "Push me!" she yells, hurrying to the swing and hopping on. Laughing, I move behind her and start to push her. Her carefree laughter floats through the air like music, and her smile is so wide when she looks over at me, it stops my heart.

I was right, being here is healing. She needs this too.

She might think everything is going wrong, but maybe, like Mary, this was supposed to happen. Maybe life truly never throws anything at you that you can't handle, even when it seems impossible, so you'll end up where you're supposed to be. I know I met her for a reason, and that reason was to heal my heart and to give me my future like we have given so many others.

To complete my family and make me fall in love with the world again.

And her.

Lying next to her in the blankets and mass of pillows, I can't help but let happiness flow through me. She's lying on her front with her head resting on her crossed arms as I face her, propped up on my elbow.

She almost hums as I play with her hair and stroke the exposed skin on her back. "God, today has been amazing." She sighs, her voice soft and calm for once. "I don't want it to end."

"I promise you, Blair, every day will eventually be this good," I vow, leaning down to kiss her neck. She cracks open her eyes and flops onto her side, watching me.

"Don't make promises you can't keep," she replies sadly, so I reach out and kiss her, wanting to wipe that sad, hopeless look from her eyes.

That's not allowed here today. Today is about her, about trying to keep her mind off of it and showing her life goes on and that others have been or are where she is. She's not alone. Happiness can sometimes be found right in front of you if you just open your eyes and look.

"I don't," I murmur against her lips and try to pull back, but she leans up, wordlessly asking for more, so I kiss her again. She deepens it, cupping my head and pulling me down so I'm pressed against her. Heat slowly builds between us until we are both gasping.

"Bray." Hearing her name on my lips undoes me, and I yank her closer, gripping her breasts through her dress. I didn't bring her here for this, but I can't resist what she's offering. I never could, she's my biggest addiction. She's a habit, my fucking everything. I never knew I could feel this way. With her perfect body pressed against mine, it's all I can do not to throw her down and fuck her. I've never wanted anyone this much before. As if I would give anything, do anything, just for a chance to hold her again.

I've never felt so whole as I do when I'm inside her.

Her leg wraps around mine, and then the world spins and she flips us so I'm on my back in the sea of colourful throws and pillows. She's poised above me with each knee on either side of my legs. My heart pounds, and my cock is so hard it feels like it's going to burst out of my jeans.

When she grinds down as she lowers to kiss me, I can't help but groan. I trail my hands up her silky, strong thighs, but then freeze and open my eyes. She leans back, already grinning.

"Are you naked under this dress?"

"You bet I am," she purrs, reaching down to flash me. She quickly pushes it back down, probably realising she doesn't want one of the girls to stumble out here and see her. "Easier to ride you that way."

"Fuck," I grab her, flip her, and kiss her again as she laughs against my lips, but it soon fades into a moan as I drag my hand up her dress, touching her smooth, hairless cunt. I swallow her moan as I cup her wet pussy, grinding my palm against her as her hips twitch. She pulls back and nips my chin in warning, making me chuckle as I turn my hand, part her lips, and stroke her wetness. I catch her clit over and over before moving down and circling her hole, teasing her the way she always teases me.

"Fuck me," she demands, always straight to the point. She doesn't get to be in control this time, though, not here. She needs to let go, to be given a chance to fall and be caught, and that's what I'll do.

I take my sweet time stroking her pussy until she's fighting me, and only then do I settle between her thighs and drag my tongue across her cunt. My head is buried under her dress as she grips my shoulders, tugging me closer.

"Fuck, I forgot how good you taste," I mumble against her pussy as I lap at her clit before circling her hole and stabbing my tongue inside. She lifts her hips and grinds her cunt against my mouth until she is all I can breathe.

Her taste fills my mouth, and I know I would die a happy man between her legs. Sliding my fingers down her cunt, I press them against her hole and suck her clit into my mouth at the same time I push my fingers inside her.

I tease her, building her up only to stop and let her calm down until she's finally had enough. Eyes wild, hair mussed, she sits up and pushes me back to the blankets as I chuckle. Her taste still coats my mouth as she hikes her dress up and straddles my waist again. She fumbles with my jeans, and when she unfastens them, I groan as her hand circles my cock, stroking and squeezing, my precum already leaking from the tip.

"Blair," I warn, gritting it out through clenched teeth. Luckily, she's too wound up for revenge. Instead, she hovers above my cock, and with one last look at me, she drops, impaling herself on my length.

Her wet cunt feels like a glove, squeezing my cock until I throw my head back in ecstasy. Pleasure surges through me as she starts to rock and wind her hips. Reaching out, I grab them and help her ride me hard and fast. She's chasing her orgasm, but she won't get it, not yet.

"Oh God," she whimpers, speeding up, and I know she's close.

"Don't you dare," I growl, the bright orange, purple, and red rays of the fading sun splashing across her. "You don't get to come yet," I snarl as I drag her up and down my cock. "Only when I say so, Blair. You're mine, remember? This body, this cunt... even your fucking orgasms."

"Can't stop me."

"Want to bet?" I smirk and lift her off my cock, holding her still as she swears at me. When she calms, I slam her down, spearing her as she screams. I cover her mouth and jerk my hips up, pounding into her wet cunt. Her cries are muffled against my palm as her cream drips down my cock.

"Please," she begs, splaying her hands on my chest as she pants, her nails digging into my chest in punishment. "I need

to come.”

Snarling, I fight my own release, wanting this to last as I slam into her pussy over and over.

“Bray,” she groans. “Please, please—”

“Come for me,” I growl and then flick her clit, and it sends her over the edge. She cries out her release, the wind stealing the sound. Her pussy clamps down on my cock as I slam into her twice more before my own release surges through me.

I jerk beneath her, filling her with my cum until the pleasure finally stops and we both slump.

Catching my breath, I wrap my arms around her and hold her close as we pant through the aftershocks. I lay her out on the blanket and prop myself above her.

Looking down at her spread across the gingham blanket, her hair wild, eyes glowing, and lips bruised, I can’t help it—the words escape. “I think I love you,” I admit, only adding ‘think’ to stop her from freaking out.

It doesn’t work. She freezes beneath me, and suddenly, she feels a million miles away. Blair’s face closes and her lips tilt down into a frown.

“Don’t say anything. I know you worry that loving us means losing us, but it doesn’t have to be like that, Blair. I’m hoping once he’s dealt with, you can see that, but it doesn’t change how I feel. Since meeting you, it’s been the best, wildest time of my life, and I don’t regret one single thing. You brought me back to life, Blair. You made me a better man.”

“Don’t,” she begs.

“I brought you here to show you we aren’t just monsters; we are good guys as well. We aren’t perfect, but nobody is.”

“Bray, I never thought you were, but please, don’t,” she implores desperately.

“But I love you, Blair. Every wild, sarcastic, perfect scarred inch of you.”

“Don’t love me,” she whispers.

“Too late, babe.” I lean down and kiss her.

“I’ll break your heart,” she whimpers with tears in her eyes. Her gaze speaks volumes, telling me that although she doesn’t want to, she loves me too.

“It’s yours to break,” I vow.

And so, under the setting sun, our bodies joined, I hand my stepsister my heart. I lay my cards out on the table and hope she doesn’t fold and walk away.

I hope she stays, and that one day, she says she loves me too.



Chapter Fifty Five

Blair

Today was perfect, for lack of a better word. I don't usually believe in perfection, because it's the imperfections in life and people that make them real and so much better, but how could I deny that's what today was?

Even the car ride home is amazing. I drive with one hand out of the window, letting the wind flow between my fingers as day turns into night and the city comes alive. Music blasts through the speakers as we sing along, dancing at stoplights and just being silly. The smile never leaves my face, and I don't think about anything other than being in this moment with Bray.

It only takes us about an hour to get home, and I park on the drive like normal, noticing the cop car isn't outside like it should be, but I shrug it off and turn off the engine.

As I get out of the car, though, a bad feeling hits me. Every light in the house is on, and my heart slams as terror fills me. I know something's wrong. Bray calls for me, but the wind steals his voice as I stride towards the house, moving faster and faster until I'm almost running. I need to see if they are okay.

The door is open, and I burst through it, frantically looking around. I find them in the hallway, their backs to me as they mutter. “Guys?” I rasp and then clear my throat. “Cyrus, Asher?” I call.

They freeze. Cyrus turns with his arms crossed, blocking something from my view, and his gaze goes to Bray behind me. “Get her out of here now,” he snarls.

Asher turns, still impeding my view, but for a moment, as he turned, I saw a flash of pale skin, an arm, and for some reason, I think of Faye.

“Faye?” I yell, rushing to them. Cyrus catches me, grunting as I struggle to get past him.

“Blair, it’s not Faye!” he yells when he realises I won’t stop. I sag, suddenly filled with relief.

“It’s not?” I whisper, searching his eyes. He nods, but he’s silent, worried.

Stepping back, I pretend to cease my efforts, but as he looks at Bray, I rush past them. I hear them swear as they reach for me, but it’s too late. I drop to my knees and my heart stops.

The world around me disappears.

“Mered—Mum?” I whisper, staring at her motionless body.

Her skin is still warm when I reach out to touch her, but her chest isn’t rising. Her eyes are open and unseeing, and her hair is everywhere. For some reason, I focus on that detail. She would have hated that. She was meticulous about her hair. It was always perfect and in place, and now it’s in disarray.

Her mouth is parted and coated in blood and smeared lipstick, and she has mascara tracks on her once perfectly made-up face. Her dress is hiked up to her stomach, but Cyrus bends over and pulls it down, covering her.

She’s dead.

I know that, but I can’t... I can’t...

“Meredith,” I say.

Asher kneels behind me, covering my hand that’s reaching for her. “My love, I’m so—”

I shrug him off and grab her shoulders and shake. “Meredith, wake up!” I yell.

“Blair,” Cyrus whispers.

“Meredith!” I snap.

“Blair!” he shouts sharply, getting my attention. My disbelieving eyes fill with tears as I raise them to his. “I’m so sorry, baby girl, but she’s dead.”

“Did you do this?” I demand, needing to know. My voice is cold, empty.

He flinches like I physically struck him. “I’m capable of a great many things and have committed a lot of sins, Blair, but killing your mother isn’t one of them.”

The way he says my name has me recoiling, and Asher wraps his arms around me as I just stare at her. “Then how? Why?” I ask as the tears finally begin to fall. My heart is torn. I hated her, I truly did. She made my life hell, she hurt and used me, but she was still my mother, and despite it all, the little girl that once loved her is breaking at the sight of her lifeless mother’s corpse tossed so carelessly on the floor like the rubbish I once called her.

“We don’t know. She was left at the front door,” Cyrus tells me then sighs. “Shit, that was harsh. Baby girl, I don’t know, but we will—”

“Stop,” I mutter and reach down, pulling a piece of paper off her dress I just noticed.

I FIXED ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR YOU. SHE NEVER LOVED YOU, NOT LIKE I DO. WE ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO BEING TOGETHER.

I hold the plain white piece of paper in my hand, the black block letters stark against the frail sheet. “He did this.” I look up, my eyes stinging and lip quivering. “He killed my mum.”

“Shit,” Bray snarls. “Babe, move away, the police are on the way. Don’t touch the body—her, okay?”

“She’s dead,” I repeat, gazing at her limp body. I’m unable to stop myself from staring at her. The worst bit?

Under all the pain, anger, and sadness I feel washing through me like a tidal wave, there’s a tiny bit of joy that she can no longer hurt me.

I don’t remember the next hour, my ears ring and my world spins because despite what I feel, Meredith died tonight because of that fucking asshole. She might not have been a great mother or even a decent person, but she was a person, and now she’s gone.

The police arrive as I’m sitting in the living room with my hands around a mug of vodka—thanks to Cyrus. I have Asher’s jacket wrapped around me, and the stomping footsteps fill my ears as the ambulance workers, mortuary staff, and police do their jobs. All the while, I sit here, holding Asher’s hand while Bray sits next to me and Cyrus stands behind me, presenting a united front.

But I feel alone, detached.

I hear them discussing the cameras. Asher has already asked his security guy to find out how this was possible and to track her last movements, but I don’t care anymore. It won’t matter. It’s already done. I don’t need to retrace his actions; I need to stop them.

And this is not working. Bodies are starting to appear, which means it won’t be long before he comes for them. I was right; I need to protect them. They think they are protecting me, saving me, and that they can stop him, but I know different. They are so focused on saving me, they aren’t even worried for themselves.

He will never stop. I have to end this. I have to keep them safe, to... to protect my family.

The police ask so many questions my voice goes hoarse. My men start to answer for me and redirect until they eventually say enough is enough and tell them to finish up.

Without another look, Bray carries me upstairs, Asher and Cyrus on our heels. This time, Bray takes me right into his room, and as I sit numbly on the bed where he places me, he strips me and puts me in a comfy shirt before tucking me into bed and holding me in his arms. Cyrus slides in on the other side, and Asher lies between my thighs.

They all watch me keenly. For a breakdown? Maybe.

They won't get one.

I don't even know if I can cry right now. More than anything, I'm mad. Mad and so fucking cold. That's what he's done to me.

"I let my dad know. He's going to handle everything, if that's okay?" Cyrus whispers.

I simply nod. I don't want to plan or attend any more funerals, even my mother's. I can't, it will only remind me of the limited time we are living on before he comes for us.

"Just rest, there is nothing to do, and you're safe."

And maybe I am, maybe I'm the only one in this fucked up world that is. I'm safe from him, but they aren't. As I stare at the darkened ceiling, I promise myself there will be no more deaths, so I slowly begin to detach myself from them, cutting them off.

I know what I need to do.

The plan forms in my head overnight, and by sunrise, I'm ready to end this.

Once and for all.

*

I don't sleep at all, and my eyes burn as I tip my head back and let the water slide across my face and chest. I hear the bathroom door open, and then the glass screen.

"Hey, baby girl—fucking hell!" he cries, reaching in and switching off the shower. I blink my eyes open and turn to him, my lips turned down.

"What the hell?" I ask.

“Baby, the water’s so hot you’re burning your skin.” He gestures at my naked body, and I look down to see my skin is pink.

“I like it warm. I couldn’t feel it,” I explain.

Sighing, he reaches in, pulls me out, and wraps a towel around me before sitting me on the sink and inspecting my exposed skin for burns. I just sit here, staring, not even blinking, and when he’s done, he straightens and rubs my thighs, but I can’t really feel it. “You’re in shock, Blair.”

“No, I’m not. I didn’t even like her.”

“No, but you loved her as a child loves her mother, and you came home and found her dead body.” I flinch, and he softens his voice. “That affects you, even if you don’t know it. Do you want to talk?” I shake my head, and he frowns. “I can call Faye or Lexi—”

“No,” I snap before I close my eyes. “I-I just want to be left alone, okay?”

“Even from us? From me?” he queries sadly.

“I don’t know.” I hop down and grab a toothbrush without looking at him.

“Okay,” he whispers, wrapping his arms around me for a moment. “Whatever you need, baby girl, we are here. If that’s to sit in silence, we’ll do it. If you need time alone, we’ll do that too. If you want to scream, shout, or fuck shit up, we can do that also. Anything, just... don’t put the blame on yourself, please. I know what you’re like.” With a gentle kiss on my shoulder, he shuts the door as he leaves, and I lift my head.

“Already have.” I close my eyes. “Pull it together, Blair. Red, blue, green.” I repeat it again and again until I can function. I brush my teeth, wash my face, and brush my hair, braiding it before slipping into some low hanging joggers and a crop top. Feeling more like myself but still not okay, I force myself to go find Cyrus to make sure he’s alright. I didn’t mean to hurt his feelings. I know they just want to be here for me and help, but they can’t.

Unless...

Unless I'm wrong. What if we can't stop him? What if all we can do is survive and escape him? He can't chase us forever, he'll get caught, but we could run.

Together.

We could get away from this and start anew like I always wanted. My heart pangs at the thought of leaving Faye, Lexi, and Allegra, but they would understand if it was to keep them safe, and I'd come back once the coast was clear.

This could work.

Now, I just have to convince them.

I'm so confident I even start to pack a bag, but then I hear a commotion that has me abandoning my task and rushing downstairs. My eyes briefly go to the space where Meredith's body was, which is now sparkling clean, as if it never happened. I wonder if that's how it will look after I leave?

The front door is open, and there's a small trail of blood leading into the dining room on the right. For a moment, my heart pounds with terror, so I turn, grab the closest thing I can use as a weapon, which just so happens to be a giant candelabra, and rush into the dining room.

They all look up. Asher has gauze pressed to his cheek, which is leaking blood, Cyrus stands over him with an open first aid bag, and Bray is trying to block my view. They always do that, try to protect me from something hard. I fucking hate it. It makes me feel weak.

"What happened?" I demand, dropping the candelabra to the floor and striding over. I push Cyrus away and softly peel off the gauze. Asher hisses, and I freeze with my hands mid-air as I see the giant cut across his cheek.

"Erm, shaving?" he jokes weakly.

"Tell me now," I order.

He sighs.

"Don't you dare try to feed me a bullshit excuse," I snarl, stepping back with my arms crossed. "I'm not fucking fragile. I won't break. I want the truth."

“I went down to the station to give them the footage they needed, and he was waiting outside dressed as a fucking cop. I was getting in my car, and it’s the only reason he didn’t slice my neck—fuck, I mean he didn’t get me too badly, and I got the fuck out of there before he could do worse,” he explains as Cyrus cleans the wound.

“It doesn’t need stitches. It might scar, but you got lucky,” he mumbles.

“Chicks dig scars,” I tease before sighing. “Fuck, he’s getting bold. This is bad, really bad. Look, I’ve been thinking...”

“Always scary,” Bray teases.

“Shut the fuck up.” I roll my eyes. “I’m serious. I think we should leave.”

“We can’t leave,” Asher says softly.

“We have to!” I yell. “Don’t you see?” I gesture at his cheek. “This is only the beginning. He’s already killed Meredith; I can’t let him kill you too.” I hiccup, and Bray tries to embrace me, but I smack him away. “Please, for me. Let’s run, let’s go on an adventure. Let’s leave all this death and shit behind.”

“It has a way of catching up to you,” Cyrus reminds me. “This isn’t a problem you can run from, baby girl, and even if it was, Crew doesn’t run. We make our stand. We won’t leave, not even for you.”

“I can’t.” I shake my head, trying to voice that I can’t lose them, but it gets caught in my throat.

“Maybe... maybe we should think about it?” Bray suggests, clearly only saying it to be on my side. That starts an argument, their voices raising as they shout back and forth, and my heart tears apart at what I’m doing.

“We need to stay and fight this!” Cyrus barks.

“You will die,” I argue, and he throws me a glare before Asher gives his opinion. My phone vibrates. Faye has been texting me all morning, and I haven’t replied, so I check her

message—but it's not her. It's an unknown number. Feeling sick, I open it.

Unknown: She got what she deserved.

There's a picture. It's her, my mum. She's in a car, alive and screaming. I swallow the bile as another one comes through.

Unknown: They aren't what you think. They are using you, hurting you.

Then another image. It's of Bray kissing another girl at a party, their bodies pressed together. It's blurry but still recognisable. My heart cracks as jealousy and anger rise to compete with pain before I think it through.

He wouldn't, I know that, he just wouldn't, but it doesn't stop the unbelievable amount of agony pulling me apart.

He wouldn't cheat on me. Would he?

Yet here is an image. The closer I look, though, the more I question if it's even real. But that's when it hits me—it's what I need. They are still arguing, and they won't leave... so maybe I need to go alone and draw him away from them.

This will be the key. I push down my turbulent emotions and pocket my phone before stepping back into the hall. They don't notice, so I turn on bare feet and run.

I rush upstairs, grab the bag, and shove the rest of my stuff in it. A plan quickly rolls through my head as I get my keys and boots and race downstairs. Each step is like a hammer against my already cracking heart, but I know I have to do this. I have to save them, and to do that I have to leave them.

When I stop at the door, they all become silent, glancing from me to the bag.

"I'm going," I croak out before clearing my throat. I know what I'll do next will break their hearts, but it's the only way. I show them the picture. "I fucking hate you all. You cheated on me. You're no better than anyone else. I'm leaving, and you aren't following me!" I turn and head to the door. They do follow, of course, and shout my name.

“It’s not real!” Bray begs, reaching for my arm after seeing the photo. He’s right, it’s probably staged, but I don’t care. It’s the excuse I need to break their hearts so they will let me go. Because they would let me be free of them if it hurt me to stay. If they hurt me.

I yank my arm away and turn. “Looks pretty fucking real.”

“My love, let’s talk this through—”

“Fuck talking,” I snarl.

“Baby girl,” Cyrus starts, but I step outside. “Blair, don’t you take one more fucking step. Stop acting like a fucking brat!”

“Brat?” I growl, turning to glare at them. We are good at this, arguing. I’ve got to see it. “Because I don’t want to stick around with someone who’s been fucking other women behind my back? Excuse me!” I push Bray away when he reaches for me again, and I have to avert my eyes from his broken, kicked puppy dog eyes and the tears trailing down his face.

“Please, Blair,” he implores. “Let’s sort this out. Don’t leave us, don’t leave me.” He drops to his knees and stares up at me pleadingly.

Grinding my teeth to stop my tears, I turn away. “Fuck this, fuck all of you. I should have known better than to get into bed with three assholes who run drugs on their daddy’s money.” It’s a low blow, and not what I believe, but I want them to hate me, not pine after me.

“Blair,” Bray sobs.

“Don’t,” Cyrus spits. “Let her go if that’s what she wants so badly. Big, scary, brave Blair is running because she’s afraid and using excuses. Well, fuck that and fuck you. You don’t get to hurt him because you’re a vindictive little cunt.”

“I think that’s the other way around, stepbrother. I never touched anyone else, only you three. I should have known. If you pass me around, who else do you fuck?” That makes him flinch, so I turn and rush to my car, throwing my bag inside.

I need to leave to save them. I don't want to hurt them, but I twist the knife deeper, knowing it's the only way to cut them off completely. But I will always love them, will always be Crew, even as they detest me. I can handle their hate as long as they are alive.

If I'm gone, and I'm out there hunting him, then they are safe, and I won't let him touch them.

Cyrus follows me outside as Bray sobs in the doorway with Asher holding him. They're both sensitive, and they don't want to hurt me.

"I know why you're doing this," Cyrus snarls.

I ignore him, and he slams his hand onto the hood of the car.

"I won't beg you to stay. I won't make some grand confession that will change your mind. This isn't a movie; this is real life. If you want to go, go. I won't force you to stay, but know if you leave, you're walking away from the only people who care about you because you're scared—not because you don't love us, but because you're scared. You're a coward, Blair. A fucking pathetic coward."

"Fuck you!" I yell, putting all the pain and hopelessness I feel into those two words.

I thought I could choose my own path in life. I thought I could finally be in love and have a future.

I was wrong.

I can't have them. I can't have a good life.

"Fuck me? Fuck you, Blair. You came into our family, you made us fall in love with you, and you showed us what it felt like to be alive, and now you want to just walk away because it got too real? No, baby girl, fuck you. We don't need you, we never did, but we fucking wanted you. I won't keep holding onto something that's trying so hard to slip away. I won't keep cutting myself just to keep you from shattering. So go. Be scared and run as fast as you can, but when you stop, it will catch up with you. You'll have broken your own heart and walked away from the best thing that's ever happened to you."

He slaps my car, and I rush around it and get into the driver's seat, and like the coward he accuses me of being, I drive away. I keep my eyes on them the entire time. On Bray's broken face, Asher's crushed expression, and Cyrus's terror filled eyes as he realises he let me go.

As he grasps I got what I wanted.

As he comprehends his family is just as broken as the barely beating organ in my chest.

He roars, grabbing his hair as he falls to his knees.



Chapter Fifty Six

Bray

Why am I never enough?

First my mum, then my dad. The only people who have ever accepted me and loved me for me are Cyrus, Asher... and Blair—or so I thought. I told her I love her, and I meant it. She's my whole world, my everything, and now she's gone. Worse, she thinks I betrayed her, thinks I cheated and hurt her like everyone else.

I watch her drive away as my family crumbles. I want to chase her, make her understand and figure out what happened. I know who sent it, but where is that photo from? All I can do, though, is kneel here with Asher's hand on mine and think... I did it again.

I ruined another great thing, and now Blair will never trust another man again. Why would she? All she has ever had from them is pain and betrayal. I did the same things they did, so I have to let her go, even if it kills me and breaks our family apart. She deserves better. She deserves to be happy.

Even if it's not with me.

“Bray,” Asher whispers.

“I’m sorry,” I rasp, dropping my gaze to the perfectly tiled entryway. “I’m so sorry. I swear I didn’t—”

“Shh,” he murmurs, holding me as Cyrus storms past us. We both turn to watch him go, and not two minutes later, we hear the sounds of thudding fists and screaming rock music and smell the weed and booze. He’ll take this harder than anyone.

“We need her back, or we are going to fall apart,” Asher says, and I flinch. “It’s not your fault, Bray. Didn’t you see? She was looking for any excuse to run. She’s scared and worried that what happened to Meredith will happen to us. This wasn’t about you or even us, it was about her. Her old fears have taken over, and we can’t fight them, only she can.”

“I told her I love her,” I admit.

“Bray.” Asher kneels in front of me, his eyes filled with tears that make the light blue orbs glassy. “We all love her; you were just brave enough to tell her when she needed it most. She will know what we all feel is true, that she isn’t alone, and once she has slayed her demons, she will be back, and we’ll be waiting. But until then, we have to keep this family together—for her.” His gaze goes to the stairs where we can hear Cyrus.

“What if she doesn’t come back?”

“She will,” he assures me, his voice strong, adamant. “I saw into her soul. She wants to be loved. She wants to be happy. She wants to be Crew. This is just a defence mechanism.”

“But her stalker, this is what he wanted,” I say worriedly, looking back at the road. I could still catch up with her.

“You’re right, so we need to find him first. Come on, let’s go beat the shit out of Cyrus until he can think clearly.” He stands, offering me his hand, and I take it, needing to lean on my brother right now. But he’s right, he always is.

She will be back, and we will be waiting with open arms.

Asher

Everything I told Bray is true, though I didn't tell him how much I'm hurting, how angry and worried I am. I can't. Bray is sensitive in a way no one but us and Blair understands. He feels so deeply, and that's why he keeps his heart locked away. That's why he searches for the love he should have received from the one woman in his life—his mother—in every passing woman.

If Blair isn't careful, she will break Bray and Cyrus beyond repair. Many have tried, but she is succeeding because we gave her that power. We let her into our lives, hearts, and family. She trusted us, now it's time for me to have a little faith and trust in the woman I fell in love with too.

I have to believe she's coming back, or I'll be like Bray, sobbing like a kicked dog at the door, or worse, like Cyrus, destroying everything in my path to block out the emotional pain with physical pain. My brothers need me right now, so that's what I'll do. I'll be the voice of reason. I'll be the one who keeps us together for her. I'll save this family with blood, sweat, and fucking tears.

This isn't the end of Crew, it's just a new beginning.

I won't let Blair go, not like my mother. I won't spend the rest of my life wondering if she's okay, if she thinks of me. I won't live surrounded by what-ifs anymore. I'm all the way in with Blair until the bitter end, and I refuse to let her go. I refuse to give up on her like everyone else did.

I made a promise to her that night she slept in my arms, when I took her fears and past as my own, that I would never leave her. I vowed that she would never be alone again, and I meant it.

She's ours, even if she doesn't want to be right now.

Cyrus

Who am I if I can't protect my family? That's the only way I know how to show them I love them. I can't speak the words like Bray or Asher. All I have are my fists and the willingness to sacrifice my life for theirs. But that won't fix this. I can't even hold myself together enough to go check on my brothers. My fury and pain flow out of me until I want to kill someone, to chase her down and drag her back and tie her to my bed so she can never leave us again.

I fucked up. I shouldn't have let her barbs hit him. I should have listened, seen her fear, and helped her through it instead of pushing her away. We all messed up, and now she's gone.

Smashing my fist into the wall again, I feel my knuckles split. The sudden sharp pain blasts through the anger, but only for a moment before it swallows me again. There's no end in sight, only the red haze and the need to hurt something. Grabbing a bottle of Jack, I see my blood coating the glass bottle. Tossing more back, I swallow and throw the bottle at the wall watching it shatter like my heart.

I knew if I handed it over one more time, it wouldn't survive being broken again.

I was right. There's nothing left in me but anger. So much fucking anger.

Pulling my arm back, I smash my fist into the already cracked plaster over and over, watching my blood run down my hand and arm and splatter on the floor.

I would have done anything for her.

Killed for her. Stolen. Lied. Cheated.

I would have done anything just to say she was mine. And I did, over and over, and it still wasn't enough.

I'm not enough. When will I realise that?

I couldn't protect Asher.

I couldn't stop Bray from self-destructing.

I couldn't keep her.

The door opens, but I ignore them. I hate that they are seeing me like this, but I can't contain this, even if I tried. I spent so long holding back this rage, and now it's free all thanks to her. I know I would never hurt my brothers, not physically, but they are raw right now, like me. I could hurt them emotionally, and I don't want that, but it doesn't stop me from driving my fist into the plaster again and again until a palm blocks the wall. I swerve at the last moment, stopping my fist mid-air before meeting Asher's gaze.

"Enough."

"Move," I snap, but he doesn't. "I said fucking move." I shove him backwards, and he flies to the floor with a grunt but quickly gets to his feet, this time putting his entire body in the way of my self-destruction.

"No, I won't let you do this. I won't let you kill yourself like this. Hit me if you need to, but I'm not moving. I'm not going anywhere, neither is Bray. We are right here; we are still a family. We need you. She needs you."

"Don't!" I yell.

"Blair needs you," he states defiantly.

Rage takes over at her traitorous name on his lips, and before I know it, I've punched him square in the face. He goes down hard, groaning, and I stumble back. "Ash, I'm sorry!" I exclaim.

He waves it away and sits up, his lip busted.

"Just please don't say her name," I say, turning away in disgust at what I did. I grab another bottle and my keys, ready to get out of here so I can't hurt them. I'm an animal, and I should be alone.

Bray grabs my keys out of my hand and darts out of my reach. "No, you're not going to drink and drive. We won't let you kill yourself. Ash is right. We need each other right now. Don't pull away."

“I don’t know what else to do!” I scream, yanking on my hair. “I don’t—I’m scared,” I admit, my hands fisted, “of what I might do.”

“We aren’t. We know you, Cyrus. You’re crude, mean, and a fucking asshole.”

“Thanks,” I mutter.

“But you would never hurt us.” I look at Ash’s lip, but they ignore it. “You would hurt yourself first, so stop this fucking pity party. It helps no one.”

“Fuck you.”

“No, thanks, I’d rather fuck our girl,” Bray teases, but his voice is pained.

“Only she’s not our girl, is she?” I sneer, making him flinch.

“She will be,” Asher interjects, coming to stand at Bray’s side. “She needs us right now, maybe even more than before. We can either wallow and go back to how we were before her, or we can step the fuck up and show her we aren’t leaving her like everyone else. That we aren’t giving up on her, even when she does on us. So stop punching shit and drinking, and let’s fucking come up with a plan to get our girl back.”

Well, fuck.



Chapter Fifty Seven

Blair

It's the hardest drive I've ever done.

I've survived death. I've survived losing my love, my friends, and even my father. I've survived being harassed, assaulted, and degraded... but this?

It ruins me.

I can still hear Cyrus's roar, Bray's cries, and Asher's pleas. I can still see their broken, begging gazes and feel their hands trying to hold onto me.

I had a rule—leave before they leave me, get out before I get hurt. Well, I left, but I'm hurting more than I could have ever imagined. I never meant to fall in love with my stepbrothers, but life has a funny way of giving you exactly what you need.

I walked away from it.

It's a mistake I feel in my bones, but I can't go back, not yet. Instead, I grip the wheel and press the gas, trying to outrun my pain and desire to turn around. I crank up the music, even as tears drip steadily down my face. I don't know where I'm going; I know nothing beyond my next laboured breath.

When I finally come to a stop half an hour later, I realise where I am.

Mary's Haven.

I don't know why I linger, but the gates open, giving me a choice—go forward or back. I do the only thing I can, I head through them.

I sit in the idling car outside, watching the place that I fell in love with just yesterday. Not only that, but I also made love on the grounds while Bray promised to be mine forever. I broke his heart. I know that. I also know he didn't cheat. He might have been a man whore before we were together, but he wouldn't lie to me.

So no, he didn't cheat. I used it as an excuse to break their hearts, knowing it was the only way they would let me go. I thought if I could do that, my stalker would follow me and leave them alone. Faulty logic, I know, but at that moment, it seemed like a good idea.

Was it?

Did I do nothing more than just hurt us all? I'm bleeding from an open wound, and as if she knows, Mary opens the front door, smiles, and waits, letting me decide. How does she know that I need the choice? My life has been filled with decisions being made for me because of him and my PTSD. It's time I took it back, it's time I decided the direction my life is taking.

And it starts here.

He could come for me here, I know the risk, but for some reason, I feel compelled to talk to Mary. If I go to Faye, she would just call me an idiot, and I need someone who isn't biased. I need someone to tell me if what I'm doing is right.

Lexi and Allegra would support whatever I chose, but Mary? She wants the best for me, for every girl.

I can't change breaking their hearts, but I can change me not getting them killed. First, though, I need to figure out how.

I turn off my engine and get out. She smiles sadly and wanders inside. I follow her and find her in the kitchen. Sitting heavily, I turn my gaze wistfully to the side to see the empty seat where Bray sat. Suddenly, a mug is placed before me, and I grab it and take a sip, expecting tea, but the strong burst of vodka makes me cough in shock. She laughs, sitting opposite me with her own mug.

“Don’t tell the girls. I hide some for emergencies, and this felt like one.”

I take another sip as she watches me.

“Bray sent me a text telling me to keep my eye out for you.”

“That boy.” I sigh.

“He loves you.” She says it so easily.

“How do you know?” I ask.

“He wouldn’t have brought you here if he didn’t.” She raises her brow as if to say that’s obvious. “But you’re not here for that. What’s wrong, Blair?”

Looking down at the mug, I play with the handle, the vodka warming my stomach and throat. “How do you know if you’re doing the right thing? Is it better to stay even if it hurts that person, maybe badly, in the long run? Or is it better to leave, causing just a sharp, sudden pain they can get over?”

She hums as she thinks. “It depends. Do any of you end up happy if you leave? Or do you end up wishing you had done something different?”

“I-I don’t know,” I admit, and taking a chance, I meet her eyes. “What if I get them killed by staying? What if I stay and it ruins their lives? I’ve already ruined so many.”

“Isn’t it their choice to make? I won’t pretend to know what you’re going through, hun, but I’ve seen enough girls in this house and heard enough stories to know one thing.” She reaches for me. “That we are all just humans trying to survive, Blair, and if you’re lucky enough to find someone to stand at your side and gain a slice of happiness with them, then nothing

else matters. You could worry about the what-ifs until your face is blue, but the truth is you will never know unless you try, and those what-ifs usually don't end up happening. Take it from a woman who gave an asshole several chances, those boys are something special. They are loyal, incredible, and yes, rough, but they are worth the chance."

"I'm scared," I confess ashamedly.

"Who the hell isn't?" She laughs. "But what you have to ask yourself is this: do I fear the thing more than the fear of never doing it? Not everything will work out, but those are the things that teach you what being alive is about. You can't control the future, Blair, and you can't control how you feel. The fact you are worried about ruining their lives shows exactly that. You won't do it because you clearly love them enough not to. Have a little faith and hope. You've survived this long, and so have they. You are stronger together than apart."

Stronger together than apart. It echoes through my head as I finish my vodka and go sit in the gardens with Mary, who remains quiet at my side, somehow knowing I need her silent support to think through my complicated, twisted thoughts.

I'm so used to leaving to protect myself. This time, I did it to protect them because I love them completely.

After all, that's what love is.

Love is all-consuming. When you're in it, it's a beautifully imperfect high. Then when it's over, you feel like you might die, like you can't breathe or survive without them. But you do, you put yourself back together, and the pieces assemble differently than before, but they're all the more beautiful for it. The places you visited together become happy memories, and the fights and problems fade until you eventually remember the good, not the bad. You become something new with their presence changing you for the better.

Then you do it all over again. People spend their lives searching for that same high in bottles and drugs, but nothing quite comes close to the airy, happy sensation of being lost in love. Of being so connected to another person, they see you in

your darkest and brightest times. But there is something so beautiful about that, about how you impacted that person's life, even for a moment. You were able to experience their life and the light they bring into the world, and even when it's over, you can look back on it fondly.

I don't want to do that here. I want to spend my life with them, even in pain and uncertainty. I still love them. I love them so much I'm willing to leave, to die for them. But Mary is right, we are stronger together. How could I think otherwise?

Just because I left, it doesn't mean he won't hurt them or that they won't stop hunting him to protect me. I would do the same for them. That's what love means, what family means, what being Crew means.

"I have to go back," I murmur and look at her. "It doesn't matter what happens, I have to go back. I'd rather be with them for a short time and be truly alive and happy than be without them and live a long, sad, boring life. They are worth the risk; they are worth the pain."

"I hoped you would say that." She smiles and squeezes my hand. "Go home, Blair. It's time to face it."

In that one sentence, she lets me know she sees more than I thought. Leaning in, I kiss her cheek. "Thank you."

"Always," she promises, and without a backwards glance, I rush through the house and to my car.

I can't keep running, it won't fix my problem. That's what I've been doing for so long. I run from my memories, from my past, from people's love. I run so often I forgot what it's like to stop. But they are right, it's time to make a stand with them. Even if it doesn't end well, at least I won't be alone. I'm finally fighting back, and they will be at my side. For all my bravado, I'll admit I've been scared of the man who claimed to love me, but I can't let fear stop me now.

I've never driven so fast in my life. I will definitely have some speeding tickets, but I don't care. I need to get back to them, apologise, and beg for them to take me back and

promise never to leave again. Even if Cyrus puts me on my knees and wrecks my body and heart to earn his forgiveness. Even if Asher spends forever painting my sins, and Bray makes me scream my apology to the skies.

I love Crew, and I want to be theirs.

When I pull up to the house, the front door is closed and the lights are off, but I hear music. I don't know what state they will be in, but I have to try to get them back no matter what it takes. I can survive Crew; they would never hurt me. Not really. They may lash me with their words, hell, maybe even my arse with their belt—the thought makes me smirk and imagine all the ways they could punish me.

I'm still smiling as I push open the door. "Honey, I'm home!" I call to break the tension. I don't hear them, though, only the slow pounding of rock music. "Guys?" I call, sighing as I step farther into the house. "I'm sorry, okay? Can you come down so we can talk? I was wrong to run. I thought if I did, I could protect you. I'm an idiot, I know, so come down and you can tell me to my face—"

My words cut off as I look into the dining room, drawn by a muffled noise. My eyes meet their wide, terror-filled ones.

They are all tied to chairs, their mouths gagged as they struggle, trying to warn me.

I hear the door slam shut and lock, and then there's a warm breath across my neck.

"Welcome home, Blair," a dark, satisfied voice croons next to my ear.

Mr. Andrews.



Chapter Fifty Eight

Blair

I freeze, staring at Cyrus whose eyes are narrowed. If that's what death looks like, I'd be running if I were Mr. Andrews, but he doesn't care that every single one of my stepbrothers appears like they are going to murder him painfully as soon as they get free, which they are trying. The chairs, however, are sturdy, and the wood squeaks as they attempt to untie their hands and legs.

I need to help them.

It's my worst fear. They are in danger because of me. Unlike Meredith, though, I'm here this time. I won't let Mr. Andrews kill them, not like Lucas and my friends. I'm not tied up this time either, and that's his mistake because I'm not a scared little girl anymore, I'm a fighter, and he just touched the only three things I still care about in this messed up world.

"Let them go," I demand, trying to be nice first, even though I know it won't work. At the same time, I reach for my keys in my pocket, the ones with a knife on it. I slowly slide my hand down my side, playing with the jean pocket before slipping inside. I try to stay still so he doesn't see.

His breath blows across my neck again, making me shiver. “And why would I do that? They are the last things in my way, in *our* way of being together.”

I almost sag at the fact he isn't going after Faye, Lexi, or Allegra. Wiggling my fingers in my pocket, I curse myself for wearing such tight jeans and try to keep him talking so I have more time. “When are you going to learn? I don't want to be with you.” I finally touch the smooth silver and pull them free, hiding them before picking out the blade. Holding it tightly, I grin at my men. “I want you to fucking leave me alone!” I yell and turn, swiping out.

He ducks, but it slices across his eye, and he yells before backhanding me. My head slams to the left from the blow, but I hold onto the knife, ignoring the pain flaring through my face. I look back at him and slice again, but he's too quick. He grabs my arm and twists my wrist, making me scream and release the keys. I snarl in anger as I kick out at him, hitting him in the legs over and over as I yank my injured wrist from his grip. Twisting, I bring my elbow back into his face before running.

I'm trying to lure him away from them.

I hear his groan, but he doesn't follow as I press my back to the kitchen wall and wait. Shit, it didn't work.

“I'll kill them, Blair. Get back here, or I'll start with the pretty one.”

“Who's the pretty one-oh wait, It's me isn't it?” Bray taunts. “I know it is, you hear that Blair? I'M PRETTY!” There's a smacking noise followed by a grunt.

Bray?

Fuck, fuck, think.

I hear them trying to tell me to run, but fuck that. I scan the kitchen knives, but they are too big, he would notice. No, he undoubtedly has a weapon. I need to think smart. It worked before, so maybe it will work now?

Should I play nice? Act how he wants? I need to fake it and get close to end this. But I'm not stupid, so I scurry across

the kitchen and pull open a drawer. Wincing at the slight noise, I wait and listen, and when nothing happens, I quickly pocket a corkscrew and shut the drawer before moving back down the corridor.

Outside the dining room, I breathe deeply, calming my racing heart. *You can do this, Blair. Do what it takes to save them.*

I step from the shadows and into the doorway. I was right, he has a knife to Bray's throat. Cyrus screams and Asher's eyes close in pain when they see me.

"Don't," I whisper.

"You protect him?" he snarls, sliding the blade just enough to cut him.

"No." I flutter my lashes. "You. If you kill them, the police won't ever stop. They are rich and connected. How can we be together if they catch you?"

He frowns, thinking through my words, and I know it's now or never. I step closer, and he tightens his hold on Bray's hair, narrowing his eyes while Bray looks at me with nothing but love, as if he knew I would never leave them. He holds nothing against me; he just loves me wholly.

Completely.

"Don't you want to be with me?" I ask softly, peering up through my eyelashes to seem more innocent and cover my contempt.

"They are in our way! And they made you touch them," he spits, and I realise he's not going to just let them go. I need to convince him.

"You're right, they did, which is why I'm so glad you're here," I profess, my voice soft. "Take me away, please?" I hold out my hand, and he looks from it to me.

"You're mine," he snaps, pressing the knife firmer against Bray, who winces and makes a noise. It drags Mr. Andrews' attention back to him, and I panic.

“Make me yours again?” I blurt, glancing between him and them. “Please, Mr. Andrews, Ryan, I’ve been waiting. I was so mad at you for leaving me.”

“Never again,” he promises and lets go of Bray. I can finally breathe again, but then he walks towards me, and I have to rack my brain on what to do. I try to keep up the charade, even though it makes me sick.

“I’ve missed you.”

Ugh.

“I’ve missed you so much. You’re all I thought about every day, all day!” he exclaims as he grabs the back of my head and pulls me closer before smashing his lips to mine. I keep my eyes open the entire time, looking past him to a gagged Cyrus, promising him with my gaze I have a plan. I want to squirm, to be sick, but as he pulls back, I blink like I’m just opening my eyes and force a smile to my face.

“Every day?” I repeat, pulling him closer. I fist his jacket while my other hand slides down his arm, going for the knife, not that he notices. His pupils are blown, and his lips are parted—fuck, I can even feel his hard cock. Memories begin to resurface before I push them back, but my hand shakes from the quick reminder of what he did to me.

“Save me, take me away,” I murmur, my eyes wide as I reach his hand and clutch it, but then I feel it—he has a gun in his pocket. I decide to squeeze his hand and lean up to kiss him as I reach for that instead. Using what I learned in dance—misdirection—I get the weapon.

I yank it from his pocket and step back, wiping my mouth in disgust.

“Stop playing,” he orders with a scowl and reaches for me as I aim it at him.

“Fuck you,” I snarl. “Like I would ever want you, you crazy fucking bastard. You are so desperate for me you don’t even realise how easy it is to trick you. I fucking detest you. I was holding back vomit the entire time you kissed me.”

He roars and lunges for me. The gun goes off, and he shouts but keeps coming. He knocks me to the floor and grabs my hand, slamming it into the hardwood. I yell as pain sparks through me. It's the opening he needs. He grabs the gun and sits on top of me.

"I'll make you mine, even if I have to kill them to do it."

"No!" The gun smashes across my face, and everything goes black.

When I wake up, my entire head aches, as does the left side of my face and my wrists. Where am I? What happened?

It all comes back to me as a scream splits the air. My eyes open, and I blink away the crusted blood sticking my lashes together. I'm sitting upright, and I try to move, but I can't. Looking down, I realise I'm tied to a chair like my men were. My arms are secured to the armrests, but my legs are free—he probably thought I would be too weak to use that advantage.

Another grunt fills the air, and I slowly raise and turn my head, and what I see doesn't sink in for a moment. It's as if my mind is protecting me from it, or it's just in so much pain it can't process the scene.

It's Asher. He's covered in blood, as is Cyrus who's tipping his chair and snarling threats to try and stop him as the knife descends on Asher. I scream, and it stops inches above Asher's skin. Mr. Andrews looks up, grinning maniacally. "Welcome back. You're just in time to see me cut your boyfriend to pieces. A shame, really, since he is a very gifted artist. I have some of his work of you."

"Don't you dare fucking touch him!" I scream. "I'll kill you!"

"No, you won't. You threatened that last time, Blair. You don't mean it, it's just their influence over you, but once they are gone, we can be together." He stabs the blade through Asher's shoulder. Asher shouts behind the gag and finally

passes out from his many wounds. Tears stream down my cheeks as I sob his name and kick, trying to get free, my vision blurring from the head wound.

“Ash, please, baby,” I beg. “Look at me.”

“No! Look at me!” Mr. Andrews screams and lunges for me, almost knocking me back as he waves the bloody knife in my face. “We will be together, Blair. I killed everyone for you—your stupid friends who didn’t really care for you, your mother who didn’t even like you. Do you know she found me in your room upstairs? She didn’t even care, just called you a whore and walked away. It was the wrong thing to say. But don’t worry, she can’t call you that again.”

“Please,” I implore gently this time. “Don’t take them from me. You’ve taken everything. They are all I have, I love them... Please.”

“No! You will love me!” he screams and backhands me. My vision blurs again, turning black, but I try to fight the darkness as I hear more grunting as he returns to torturing my loves.

Fuck!



Chapter Fifty Nine

Cyrus

I watch him come towards me and ready myself. I'd rather it was me than Bray or Asher. I glance to check on my brother, who's waking up. Good, he's alive. That means I need to keep this asshole's attention on me.

The fucker gets into my face, his lips tilted down. "I saw you touch her."

I mumble around my gag, and he yanks it down. "I tasted her too, and I fucked her until she screamed," I taunt, and he roars, his spit hitting my skin before he smashes the handle of his knife into my face repeatedly. I feel my nose bust, my cheek split open, and my eye swell, but I just laugh.

"She loved it, loves my cock." My statement ends in a grunt as he flips the knife and slices my cheek, the force making me jerk to the side. "She finally met a real man, that's why—" He slices the other cheek, and I spit my blood at him, grinning when he stumbles back in disgust.

He's weak, so fucking weak. I hate that he got the drop on us with fucking drugs. It's a pussy's weapon, though I can appreciate the irony that drug dealers got knocked out by

them. I was pissed, ready to wait and watch to get free and kill him... and then Blair came in.

Fuck, I had never been so happy and terrified in my life as I was when I heard her voice.

She came back for us, and now she is as trapped as we are. Blair is trying to save us because she loves us. I know now why she left, and none of that matters anymore. All that matters is getting free, killing this asshole, and saving my brothers and my girl.

And I will.

The only one who will die here tonight is him, so I grit my teeth and endure the next blow, waiting for my moment.

Bray

I struggle in my seat, remaining silent as I work to get my hands free, grinding the rope into the rough edge of the broken chair I'm sitting in. I got lucky getting this seat—he didn't even notice. I feel the rope loosening, but I need time, time Cyrus is giving me, but I know it won't be long before that asshole lets his rage take over and kills him.

He wants us all dead, and then he'll leave with Blair. We can't let that happen. Not after she came back.

She came back...

When we get free, I'm going to kiss her all over until she forgives me. I'll never let her go again. I hate that she's here with us, but my heart soars at what that means—she still loves us.

He strikes Cyrus again, and I move my hands faster, even as the wood cuts into them. The pain is nothing compared to the idea of losing her or one of my brothers. Nothing. I urge Cyrus to stay alive with my eyes when he meets them, and when they flicker to my hands, he nods slightly before turning back to the man.

“How did you even escape prison? You are tiny, nothing
—”

It does the trick. I hear Blair waking again after passing out. That head injury doesn't look good; she needs to go to a hospital. She probably has a concussion and will need stitches. It's what keeps me going as my wrists are torn from the rope and chair. My blood drips to the floor and soaks the rope, making it slippery and all that much harder.

But I won't stop until I'm free.

And when I am?

He's dead.

No one hurts Crew.

Blood in.

Blood out.

Asher

I hear Blair sobbing and begging for me to wake up. I hear fighting and grunting, and I smell the coppery tang of blood filling the air. Oh, wait, that's mine. My head is slumped to my chest, and my blood is filling my nostrils from the lesions he inflicted on me, the biggest being a stab wound in my shoulder. Before that, he had just been giving me superficial cuts, but it's almost like he was waiting for Blair to wake up to do his worst.

Blair.

When I saw her walk in, my heart stopped. I knew she would come back, but when he knocked us out, I was hoping she wouldn't. I was hoping she was somewhere safe, even if it would hurt her to learn he killed us, but then she was there, beautiful and strong, and I wanted to scream. I wanted to rush to her and tell her I loved her. But I couldn't. We tried to warn her to run, but she didn't listen or understand. I saw her

promise not to leave us again in her eyes. Live or die, she's here now.

When he kissed her and then knocked her out... Fuck, I swear my heart stopped. I've never hated someone so much in my life, not because of what he's doing to my brothers and me, but because of what he's doing to her. Once again, he's putting a stain on her soul. Once again, she's tied up by a madman, watching as those she loves are tortured.

He's a fucking psycho.

So even though it hurts, I force my head up, knowing I can't cause her any more pain. We have to survive this, not for us, but for her. If we die, she will never love again. No. We are making it, and we will be a family again.

Together.

He's all that stands in the way.



Chapter Sixty

Blair

I fight my way through the surrounding fog and beckoning darkness as it whispers how much easier it would be to let go. But there's still a chance to save them, so I fight until I hear Cyrus taunting him. When I crack my eyes open, Mr. Andrews is so focused on my big guy he doesn't even notice me. Licking my lips, I look around for an idea. I can't reach the corkscrew, not yet. I need to get out of the chair.

The only way to do it will involve making noise, but I just hope I'll have a moment to grab my weapon. Ready myself, I start to rock from side to side, keeping my eyes on him. He hasn't noticed yet, so I speed up until the chair topples. Cyrus yells to cover the sound as I hit the floor and break the chair, but he hears it. Fuck. I yank my hands off the broken armrests just as he rushes for me.

"What are you doing?"

I fumble with my jeans, my numb fingers coated with blood, and just as he reaches for me, I grab the corkscrew and stab him in his chest. He screams and falls back.

"Run, baby girl!" Cyrus shouts.

“Like fuck,” I snarl, stumbling to my feet. Blood flows freely from my head wound, but I ignore the pain, frantically searching for something... anything...

My eyes land on the gun, and I know what I have to do. Suddenly, my heart rate slows as I move. I have to do this. I have to save them. It's up to me. Nobody but him will die this time. He will never hurt me again. Walking towards the weapon, I grab it, flick off the safety, and turn. He's on the floor, pulling the corkscrew free as blood pours from the wound.

Moving closer, I stand before him with the gun pointed at his head. He freezes and his eyes widen as he looks up at me.

“You won't do it,” he sneers.

“Want to bet?” I retort, but I'm unsure if I can pull the trigger. I hate him, detest him. He ruined my life so many times, and he's the thing I fear most, but could I really kill someone?

Weak. So fucking weak.

It's Meredith's voice.

Blair bear!

Lucas?

It's okay, pumpkin, you can do this.

Dad?

I stare into Mr. Andrews' eyes as their voices fill my head. I know deep down it's a bad sign for my injury, but it's comforting for a moment.

“You won't, and then I'll kill them all, and you will have no choice. I'll take you with me.”

Red, blue, green.

Red, blue, green.

Red, blue, green.

“You are mine!” he roars, trying to get to his feet.

Fuck the colours. They don't work.

Only stopping him will fix this.

“You won’t ever touch me again!” I yell, gripping the gun tighter. “Not again. Do you even remember their names?” He frowns, and I press the gun to his head. “The names of my friends you killed,” I clarify.

“They were nothing!”

“They were innocent! They were your students! They were good, caring people! They died simply because they loved me! Their names!” I scream.

“I don’t remember!” he admits.

“You fucking bastard. You took their lives, you will remember their names. Lucas.” I press the barrel harder against his skin. “Abigail, Cara, Jones, and Jack.” At the end, I’m breathing heavily.

“Baby girl, untie us and we can end this. You don’t need to,” Cyrus offers calmly, trying to get through to me. “You don’t need his blood on your hands. I can do this. Let me. I love you. Please, let me do this for you.”

I shake my head. “He’s my past, my demon.”

“Then do it,” he challenges. “I can’t live without you!”

“Then die,” I state evenly as I fire.

My hand jerks back from the recoil, and the shot is so loud my ears ring, but I feel nothing as his head explodes. Gore rains down on me, but still, I feel nothing. No happiness, no relief.

Just emptiness.

It’s over, he’s dead.

We are safe.

I drop the gun and turn to them. They watch me lovingly. There is no disgust, only relief that we are alive, that I’m okay. Licking my lips, I meet each of their gazes, then I try to stumble towards them to free them.

They are alive.

They survived, and the past is dead.

It's over.

“I'm sorry, I love you,” I slur, and then I fall, smacking my head against the floor to the sound of their worried yells.



Chapter Sixty One

Blair

I wake up slowly. Everything is foggy, but I feel like I'm flying. Hell, I feel better than I have in a long time, but something is wrong. The wisps of memory escape my grasping hands over and over. I hear murmuring voices, but I can't seem to lock onto them to remember who they are or why they make me want to cry.

Instead, I fall back into the fog.

When it parts again, like a warm duvet peeling back, I open my eyes. My vision is white, and I'm blinded for a moment as I try to blink, the action taking more energy than it should. I try to move, but I can't for a second, as if my body is sluggish to listen to my commands.

When it finally responds, I try to sit up, but I'm unable to, so instead I lift my head. I find Bray next to me, holding my hand as he sleeps with his head on my bed. To my left, Asher is curled into a chair with a drawing pad in his hand and pencils clutched to his chest. At the end of the bed, watching me with dark, weary eyes, is Cyrus.

"Hi," I rasp, and that makes Bray sit up with a yelp. Asher almost falls from his chair before rushing to my side, and I

start to laugh, but it ends in a cough. Asher grabs a plastic cup with a straw, and Bray raises me so I can sit up. Cyrus props pillows behind me as I sip the cool liquid.

“Not too much, baby,” Cyrus cautions as I lean back.

“Thank you,” I whisper, my voice hoarse but better, and then I frown. I check them over. They seem okay, apart from a slight smell, crinkled clothes, and their exhausted features. It stops my pounding heart, and I look around, wondering where we are. I ask as much.

The room is large, bigger than a normal hospital room. Now that I think about it, so is the bed, and the bedding around me is too thick, soft, and comfortable. There are no off-white walls either, instead they are a beautiful tan colour with golden paintings everywhere. There’s even a seating area to the left with sofas, chairs, and a table, which is placed just under the window with a view of the city. There’s an open door to a very fancy bathroom opposite me. It looks like a hotel suite.

“A private hospital,” Cyrus explains.

“Only the best care for our girl.” Bray winks, adjusting my pillows. “Comfy?”

I nod and glance around with wide eyes. Private hospital? How the rich live.

Flowers, balloons, chocolates, and more cards than I can count cover every surface. One with a dick on the front catches my eye, and I know it’s from Lexi and Allegra.

“They did a CT, X-ray, blood work, plenty of IV pain meds, and loads of other shit,” Cyrus informs me. “Apart from a small fracture, which should heal, and the wound sustained during the attack, you are physically okay.” The fact that he adds ‘physically’ makes me wince. “Faye is okay, she’s with some of the bikers, and Allegra and your friend Lexi are still in the waiting room. We tried to send them home, but they wouldn’t go. You don’t have to see them—”

“No, it’s okay,” I croak as Asher offers me another drink, holding the cup as I sip it.

“The police also want to talk to you, but not until I say so,” Cyrus says, squeezing my hand. “Only when you’re ready, not a moment before.”

I nod and swallow, wetting my lips. “He’s really dead?”

The question hangs heavily in the silence until Bray smiles. “He’s really dead. We made it look like he killed himself when he heard the police coming.”

“Police?” I frown.

“Faye had been trying to reach you. When she couldn’t and also couldn’t get us, she panicked. She rallied the whole fucking biker club and police force.”

“That’s my girl.” I grin, but it soon fades. “Am I going to go to prison?”

“What?” Asher asks.

“For killing him?”

“No, they won’t find any evidence. They are ruling it a suicide. Plus, they are just happy the manhunt is over and they can report that they stopped a mass murderer, so they really don’t care enough to investigate. Truth is, baby, you’re okay,” Cyrus promises.

“And you?” I run my eyes over them. Cyrus looks bad. His eyes are black, his broken nose is strapped, and gauze covers his cheek. Asher is favouring one shoulder, and Bray’s hands are bandaged.

“We’ve had worse,” Asher promises. “We’ll all be okay. There’s no permanent damage apart from a new scar on Cyrus’s pretty face.”

I can’t help but laugh, and even Cyrus, the grump, grins while Bray kisses my hand.

Just then there’s a knock, and a doctor hustles inside along with a nurse and a woman in a suit who introduces herself as the hospital CEO. The doctor explains my care plan, but honestly, I don’t really hear anything. I’m too overwhelmed, and luckily they notice and excuse themselves.

Bray gets me food, Cyrus makes me eat, and Asher keeps me company before another knock sounds on the door, and then a familiar head peeks around it, spots me, and rushes in.

“Blair!” Faye throws herself at me.

I grunt but wrap my arms around her, burying my head in her shoulder as she talks, her voice muffled by my hair.

When she pulls back, she’s crying. “I was so worried, you asshole! Don’t you ever do that again.” She smacks my shoulder, and Cyrus growls, but she turns her head and glares at him. “Cyrus fucking Crew, you shut your face. This is my sister, you dick.”

His mouth snaps shut, and I can’t help but laugh. I look over her shoulder and see the others crowding there, waiting to be invited in, unlike Faye. Allegra and Lexi are at the front, and when I grin at them, they hurry in. Faye moves so they can hug me.

Allegra grips my face, meeting my eyes as she says, “You are a crazy bitch. I’m glad you’re okay, life would be so boring without you.”

Lexi smacks her and kisses my cheek. “I’m so happy you’re alright. We missed you.” She looks at my men and winks. “Nice to officially meet you.”

Jay, Prez, and other bikers stay outside but nod at me. Crew gives up their seats for my friends and step over to the corner, watching me carefully while letting me have some time with my girls. We talk about nothing and everything—they’re clearly trying to keep my mind off shit. Allegra and Lexi regale Faye with tales of my club nights, and Faye returns the favour with party stories. Outwardly, I smile, but inside, I’m hurting.

I know they see it, but they know me well enough not to push, so instead they show me they are here, giving me their support, right up until Cyrus kicks them out. I promise to rest and call, and Faye gets in Cyrus’s face, pointing at him.

“I will let you manhandle me just this once, but I’m not leaving. I will be in the waiting room. Don’t think you can get

rid of me this easily. That is my sister in that bed, so get the fuck over it and also have a fucking shower. You stink, it's pathetic." She flips her hair, blows me a kiss, and storms out of the door. The bikers part for her like she's their queen.

I can't help but laugh until I'm coughing, tears escaping my eyes from the force of it.

Eventually, they take turns showering thanks to Faye's prompts. They all keep me company, showing me a TV that rolls up, holding me as I nap, and just being by my side. The day passes quickly, and I feel a lot better by nightfall, but the doctor wants to keep me overnight just to be sure.

I'm given a three-course meal for tea, which is better than anything I've ever eaten before, and we sit at the table to eat. I smile as they tease each other. After, I'm forced back to bed to rest and they surround me, putting on a film and calling it family time.

I've been okay all day, not spilling a single tear, but I worry for what's to come. I promised myself if I survived this, though, I would truly live, and I really want to, but when?

As night falls, they hold me. While they sleep around the bed, I stare out of the window, watching the stars. It's the first night I won't have to worry about him. He's dead by my own hands, he's never coming back, and I wonder if that will give me any freedom from my nightmares. I don't know, but it's like everything finally catches up to me.

I try to cry quietly before I draw my knees to my chest and press my face into them to muffle my sobs, but I must not do very well because arms surround me.

"Shh, you're okay," Bray murmurs.

"We are here," Asher soothes.

"We won't leave you. Everything else can be fixed, baby girl. Let it all out," Cyrus adds.

I wipe my face on my gown. "It's stupid. We survived, we're okay, and I'm not sorry he's dead or that I pulled the trigger. I'm sorry I left, but it's... Meredith. Stupid, I know. I

hated her. She was a horrible person, maybe not always, but recently...”

“She was still your mother,” Asher offers, and if anyone understands, it’s him. “It’s okay to cry for her, to mourn her.”

“It’s okay to be sad,” Bray agrees.

I nod, and Cyrus leans in to kiss me. It’s the first time they have all day, and I didn’t even know I needed that contact until his lips meet my skin. It reassures me they are really okay and that they forgive me. It also starts a whole new wave of tears, and they hold me through it all.

We stay like that until morning, and when the sun rises and my tears dry, I know I won’t cry for my mother or Mr. Andrews ever again.

It’s over, and it’s time to start the rest of our lives.

Together.



Chapter Sixty Two

Asher

The next day, we bring Blair home, using the back entrance of the hospital to avoid the nosy journalists. As Crew, the richest men in the city, we sometimes catch a news story, but Blair's blew up on social media. People are annoyed with the police for not helping. The press doesn't know all of it, but enough to want to catch a picture of Blair, and we are determined to protect her from that.

When we get her home, we set her up in the living room to rest, even though she snaps at us that she's not weak. It does make her smile, though, when she sees every surface is covered with flowers and gifts—some from us, some from work, and others from people she knows.

“You're a popular woman,” I joke as I tuck her in and sit next to her, making her roll her eyes. “Indulge us,” I beg, knowing if we would let her, she would probably go back to work today. That's Blair for you.

“Fine,” she mutters and leans into me.

Cyrus comes in, and when he nods, I sigh, knowing we were right. Blair too. Bray is close behind Cyrus, and they sit before her, stern-faced.

“What?” she asks, sitting up in panic.

“Shh, it’s okay,” I promise, pulling her back gently and kissing her head.

“That was the chief of police. We thought about something you said to Asher while you were in the hospital, and we had concerns about that police officer. He was just around too much, and Mr. Andrews must have had help.” She flinches at his name but nods. “There’s no other way he could escape that much police attention. It turns out we were right.”

“What did they say?” she inquires softly, not surprised but definitely saddened.

“They arrested him on your hunch. It seems he had already been suspended due to drinking on the job and defiance but had wormed his way back in. At his house, they found images of you, lots of them. It seems he helped take them. But when they interviewed him and told him how serious this was, he admitted the truth. Mr. Andrews hired him. Apparently his brother works at the prison, and Mr. Andrews overheard him mentioning he had money troubles. Mr. Andrews offered him our money, said he would get it if he helped him. He also called the patrol off after Meredith’s death, saying he would take over. That’s how he got in without alerting the police. He helped protect him and watch you. I’m sorry, Blair. There was a reason he was always there, always trying to get you alone and away. He’d also used some pictures he had captured of us when he truly was investigating us to hurt you—that picture of Bray specifically.”

“Fuck,” she mutters. “But I guess that makes sense.”

“I’m sorry,” I murmur, holding her close.

“What will happen to him?” she queries, holding me closer.

“He lost his job, and most likely, he’ll go to prison for attempted kidnapping, murder, fraud, accepting bribes, and whatever else they can pin on him.”

She nods, watching me for a moment before blowing out a breath. “It’s finally over then.”

“It is, my love,” I promise. “All you need to focus on now is healing okay.”

“Don’t the police want to—” Her question is cut off when Bray leans forward and covers her mouth with a cheeky grin.

“They can wait. They know better than to annoy us. You will talk to them when you are ready, not a moment before, and where you feel comfortable. But for now, Asher is right. Rest, heal.”

She nods, biting her lip. “I have something I need to say.” We all watch her carefully as she sits up. “I was coming back —”

“Baby girl, you don’t need to—”

“I do,” she interrupts. “I hurt you all, I’m sorry. I thought I was protecting you.” She looks at Bray. “I know you didn’t cheat.” Tears fill his eyes as he deflates like he needed to hear her say it.

“Thank God. I swear I didn’t—”

“I know, babe.” She smiles sadly. “I think I even knew in the moment, but I used it to get away. It was the only way I could, and with Meredith’s death, well, I wasn’t thinking clearly. I thought I could protect you by leaving and he would follow me. I was wrong. I came back to tell you that, to say sorry... to say I love you.”

I freeze. I heard her say it in the moment before she killed him, but I thought it was just from heightened emotions. “Are you sure?”

“I’m sure.” She smiles, beaming up at me. “I love you, if you’ll still have me.”

“Say it again,” Cyrus demands, drawing her attention to him.

“What? I love you.”

He swallows, his eyes misting. “Again,” he growls slowly.

Leaning in, she cups his chin. “I fucking love you, you asshole.”

He groans and kisses her hard. “I love you too, you stubborn brat.”

Pulling away, she looks at Bray. “I love you too, Bray. I promise never to leave again. You’re all stuck with me for life.”

“Thank God.” He grins. “Who else would bully Cyrus with me?”

“Or be my muse?” I tip her chin up and kiss her softly. “I love you, my perfect painting.”

Bray sits next to her, turning her head and kissing her also. “I love you forever, even when you steal all the covers.”

She laughs, smacking his chest as he kisses her before blowing a raspberry on her cheek. “Now, let Cyrus go make us some dinner and we can be lazy as fuck together.”

“Why me?” he demands.

Bray leans in and whispers something to her. She turns to Cyrus, pouting. “Please, Cy, I’m hungry.”

His eyes narrow, and he points at Bray. “I know what you’re doing. The only reason it’s working is because she’s so fucking cute.” He grumbles all the way to the kitchen. Bray, Blair, and I share a look before bursting out laughing.

After kissing her again and forcing her to say she loves him, Bray gets up to put on a movie as I snuggle closer to her. She smiles softly at me, and her eyes sparkle in happiness. She’s never looked so fucking beautiful. I don’t need a painting or a pencil to capture this moment. I’ll remember the moment my girl told me she loved me and would be with me forever for the rest of my life.

“I love you forever,” I murmur, stroking her cheek. She leans into the touch, closing her eyes.

“I love you,” she promises.

Bray

I can't stop asking her to tell me she loves me again. The sweet, patient way she says it has my once broken heart healed and better than before. Blair put us all back together again and made us better versions of ourselves, but more than that, she loves the broken parts of us just as much. She lives in the shadows with us. She laughs, she cries, and she celebrates. Most of all? She settled right into our family. Before, there was a hole, and we know now it was for her.

She's feeling stronger the next day, so we do a workout together. She seems sad and didn't sleep well, but when I ask her about it, she tells me she's okay. After working out, where she got sweaty from something else other than typical exercise, she sits with us at the table while Asher draws, Cyrus works, and I watch her.

Suddenly, her voice splits the air. "I'm ready."

Asher's and Cyrus's heads lift in unison, and they blink in confusion, but I know what she means, so I grab my phone.

"I'm ready to talk to the police," she explains.

Cyrus sighs, but I've already sent the message. "Okay, we'll be here the whole time. Remember, if you feel uncomfortable, we will end it."

"Okay, I'd like for you to be there with me," she says, reaching for our hands. "Once I do... It's just finally over, you know? I can finally move on. I can finally be free... with you."

"You don't have to explain yourself to us," I inform her with a smile. "But we are glad you did. Let's get this over with and then you can show Asher that thing you just did to me with your tongue." I wink as he grins.

"Tongue, huh? Well, shit. Are you sure we need to talk to the cops now?" He stands, and she laughs, which is why he did it.

It doesn't take the police long to arrive. We sit at the table, all three of us near Blair, as they ask her questions and take a statement. I can sense their nerves as their eyes dart to us

every time they ask a question that might potentially upset her. They know the sway we have and don't want to risk their jobs, but we understand they are doing what they need to, and unless Blair says so, we will allow her to handle it.

"Only a few more questions, Miss... Crew." The older gentleman coughs. "Did you ever encourage or interact with Mr. Andrews outside of what was explained?"

"No," she snaps angrily.

"I have another question, just one more, I promise," the younger woman next to him asks. "Did he truly kill himself?"

She sits up taller, her expression unchanging. "He did, once he realised he couldn't have me."

She nods, rolling her lips in. "Figured as much, he was crazy." She stands then, shaking Blair's hand. "Thank you for your time and honesty. Again, we are truly sorry this ever happened, and I would personally like to apologise for the failing of the police force—"

"Miranda," the older man snaps, but she narrows her eyes on Blair and continues.

"I truly mean that. We should have listened, should have protected you better. It never should have come to this. This is our fault, and I hope one day you will forgive us, and if I may... forgive yourself." With those parting words, she leaves. The other cop smiles before running after her, no doubt to ream her out, but she was right to apologise. They fucked up. She owned that mistake, and that's what matters.

Blair sighs, slumping. "I guess it's done then."

"It is," I offer, kissing her hand. "It's over, Blair."

"Over," she repeats and looks at me, her expression a mix of emotions. "I want to be happy, and a part of me is, but all I keep thinking about is everything that's happened. I hope that goes away." She stands and wanders off, leaving all of us to watch her with concern.

He might be gone, but that doesn't mean the memories he left behind are. Only time will tell how she manages to deal

with them. The healing process is only just beginning, but we will be here the entire time, ready to help her, love her.

Her family.

Cyrus

Blair is distant after talking to the police, so we give her some space. She's clearly reprocessing everything that happened, as if talking to them has made it all that much more real.

We stay close in case she needs us. I work on the bikes, Asher paints, and Bray cleans in a tiny maid outfit to try and cheer her up, but she's like a ghost ambling through the house. It worries us, that's for sure. The doctor comes by to check on her and states that she's healing well. He even removes her stitches and lowers her medication, but after he leaves, she silently goes back to bed again.

I hate it. I feel helpless.

I make sure she eats. I help her bathe and pick out comfy clothes. I try to make her smile and laugh, but it's useless.

I watch our girl struggle. She's healing physically, but I don't think she is mentally. She barely sleeps, even with the drugs the doctor prescribed her, and she wakes up crying or screaming. She jumps at little sounds and always looks so far away. I know her recovery won't happen overnight, but she isn't talking to us, and I think... I think she needs to talk to someone to work through her feelings. I wish she would lean on us, but maybe she feels like she can't right now, and although it hurts, I love her enough to want to fix this even if it means it's not me who helps.

So instead of being a jealous, possessive asshole for once, I pull out my phone and dial the only other person she might confide in and ask for her help.

Faye.



Chapter Sixty Three

Blair

Facing the window with the sheets pulled up to my chin, I release a heavy sigh. I close my eyes for a moment, knowing I need to pull myself together. The guys are worried.

He's dead, for fuck's sake, and the police officer was arrested. It's over.

So why am I so fucking sad? And angry? And worried?

My emotions are all too much, and I don't even know why. It's like I'm falling apart, but that's stupid, right?

The door cracks open, and I flinch, expecting Cyrus, Bray, or Asher. They keep checking on me, clearly wanting to help, but I don't know how they can. "I'm fine."

"No, you're fucking not." Faye snorts, and I hear the door shut as I sit up in surprise.

"They let you in their fortress of solitude?" I joke as she sits on the bed, watching me with the same worried eyes they give me.

"They made an exception this once." She winks. "What's wrong?"

“Nothing,” I reply automatically.

“Liar.” She grins and takes my hand. “Talk to me, babe, or let me find someone you can open up to. You can’t keep this inside.”

“I’m fine, I just... Fuck, I don’t know, Faye. I’m not fine, but I don’t know why. It’s so stupid!” I yell, throwing my hands up and slumping back against the headboard.

“Babe, did you ever consider that you have been in survival mode all this time? Since the first incident happened, you haven’t stopped, haven’t let yourself just... feel, grieve, or allow your emotions out. Maybe now that you know it’s over for sure, they are all coming to the surface, and since you held them back for so long, they are powerful. You need to break to be put back together, and then move on, otherwise you’ll never get any better. You’ll never truly let go of what happened, and you need to. You need to accept it, talk about it, be sad, be angry, be fucking terrified if you need to. It’s time to let it all go, Blair. It’s time to leave it all behind. You have three men who love you, an amazing best friend, if I do say so myself, an incredible job, and everything to look forward to. But how could you be excited while you’re still living in the past?”

“When did you get so smart?” I groan, flipping onto my back. “I know they are worried. I couldn’t even begin to explain to them what’s wrong because I don’t know, I really don’t. I just feel...”

“Confused? Everything? Not surprising. Healing isn’t a straight line, babe, but it starts here. Talk to me, we can do it together, and when you’re ready, they will listen too. They will do anything for you, and you for them. You survived, Blair, you all did. You are okay.”

I don’t know why, but hearing it from her lips finally makes me explode. I cry, and my emotions burst out of me like a dam.

“Oh, babe.” She pulls me into her arms and holds me as I sob into her shoulder, the force racking my body. It’s not for Meredith this time, or Lucas and my friends, but for me.

From what I went through.

And when it's over later, I know she was right.

I feel better, cleansed.

I'll never be the same girl as I was before, but that's okay. I've survived a lot, I've lost a lot, but I've also gained a lot, and now it's time to finally live again.

A few weeks pass, and we start to heal together, spending our time sorting everything. I return to work, and even though the guys hate it, they support it. It does mean they follow me everywhere, though, continually. I mean continually. I can't escape them. It seems I'm not the only one healing from our brush with death. Puckering my lips, I finish up my red lipstick and blow myself a kiss in the bathroom mirror. I decided to do my makeup for work today at home.

Looking behind me, I spot Asher lingering in the doorway, watching me in my tight shorts and tank top. "Are you sure you can't stay?" he flirts.

"No, stay back. I can't be late again." I grin, laughing as he steps inside, picks me up, and sits me on the counter, stroking my face as he watches me lovingly.

"Fine. We won't be there tonight, we have something to do, but Jay is coming—"

"I'm fine—"

He covers my mouth, grinning. "Get over it."

Grumbling, I pull my head back. "Fine, but you know you can't watch me every minute of every day."

"Want to bet?" he teases, swooping in for a kiss before stepping away. Hopping down, I move closer, stroking his bare chest before I lean in and kiss his pec, right over his heart, my red lipstick staining his skin.

“I appreciate you looking out for me, but I’ll be fine,” I insist, grabbing my bag and waving goodbye. This is the first time in over a week they have let me drive to work. Maybe they are finally getting the hint.

When I get there and see Jay, Prez, and four other bikers in the crowd, I know I was wrong. Groaning, I roll my eyes as I head to the back, running into Serina on the way.

“You know, you are good for business. All those bikers...”

“Don’t encourage them.” I point at her, making her laugh as she waves me on and heads out to introduce the next act.

Lexi and Allegra are working tonight, and when I step inside the dressing room, they rush over. “Girl, did you hear?” Allegra nudges Lexi who rolls her eyes. “Lexi here has bagged herself a daddy.”

“Kinky.” I wink. “Silver fox? It’s official?”

“Fuck, you spotted him?” She groans.

“Bitch, he watched you like a hawk. I thought he was either going to kill and eat you or, well, just eat you. Guess I know which,” I tease, and she smacks me as her cheeks redden.

“Next up, we have the singing angel, Lexi!”

“That’s me. Catch up next week?” she calls as she rushes to the stage.

“You’ve got it, good luck!” I yell after her as I drop my stuff at my dressing table and grab my first outfit.

“I guess we only have to get you hooked up now,” I tease Allegra as she helps lace up my corset.

She snorts. “Not a chance. I’m a loner for life, thank you very much. I practice walking marriage,” she replies, and it’s the same thing she’s said before.

“Uh-huh, only for one night, I hear ya. Me too... until I met them.” I wink as I grab my hat and wait to be called. “You never know, life has a funny way of messing with you.”

“Don’t hold your breath. Now go shake that sexy ass.” She spanks me as I laugh and head to the wings.

I wait for Lexi’s solo to fade, then the lights come down, and I run onstage as she moves to the side to sit on the piano and sing as I dance. Nerves fill me for some reason. I no longer have anything to fear, but as I stand in the dark, waiting, they consume me. My usual chant fills my head.

Red, blue, green...

No, it never worked anyway. Maybe it’s time for a change.

Cyrus, Asher, Bray.

Their names make me smile as I chant them internally, and my nerves disappear. My heart beats in time with my internal countdown, and just as the beat explodes and the lights come on, I jerk my head up, wearing a sultry smile.

I flow into the song, losing myself in it, and for the first time in forever, no pain follows me with my moves. No, this dance is happy and filled with excitement for the future, filled with love and laughter. The crowd cheers and screams as I get them on their feet and dance with them as I spin and twist. When it’s over, I stand in the middle of the stage, grinning with my arms held wide. My heart races as they applaud, and I know my future is bright.

I can’t fucking wait.



Chapter Sixty Four

Blair

Crew doesn't even pick me up from work, weird. When I get back home, the lights are off in the apartment, and I linger in the entryway, worried. As I look around, I see something on the floor, and for a moment, I think it's flowers, until I realise it's a series of tiny little drawings leading away in a trail. My eyes lock on the huge painting above the kitchen, the one Asher and I did together, and heat fills me at the sight of it being so proudly displayed, knowing it holds a deep dark secret between my artist boy and me.

Grinning, I drop my bag and grab the first picture.

It's of the moment at the diner.

The next is of the first night at the club.

Each drawing I pick up is another moment, a snapshot in our love story.

And it leads me to them.

They are in my bedroom, only now there's a giant bed covering most of the wall, and above the bed, the word 'Crew' is stencilled with a heart around it. They stand before it, Bray in jeans with bare feet and a button-down shirt, Asher in

ripped low-riding jeans and a tank top still covered in paint, and Cyrus in black jeans and a black shirt, like always. They all look nervous.

“We love you,” they say in unison, and then with a glance at each other, they strip their shirts off.

“I didn’t know it was that kind of party, let me catch up,” I start, ready to remove my shirt, but then I see it. It took me a minute in the low lighting, but right over all three of their hearts is my kiss—my red lips, like the ones I marked Asher with earlier—and written in black cursive below it is the word ‘Darling’ with a crown at the top.

I gape, open-mouthed.

“We finally shut her up.” Cyrus snorts.

“I did that once with my cock,” Bray teases and winks at me. “Do you like it?”

“That’s—that’s for me?” I gawk. “Fucking hell, that’s so hot.”

My pussy clenches, my heart cracks, and tears fill my eyes. “I fucking love you all too, now someone better fuck me senseless while I stare at those tats.”

“I volunteer!” Asher yells before the others can, making us all laugh as he rushes over, throws me over his shoulder, and races to the new bed. Throwing me down, he lets me bounce as he stares at me, his piercings sparkling in the light. “Want to ride me?” He smirks.

Oh fuck.

“Hell yes.” I lift my head, and he meets me halfway. His lips crush against mine as he kisses me, slowly at first. He licks at the seam of my lips before tangling his tongue with mine, and then there’s a grunt before he’s suddenly ripped away and replaced by a grinning Bray who grabs me, turns, and deposits me on his lap as his lips take Asher’s place, making me giggle against them. Working with him, I strip myself quickly. Needing to touch them and them to touch me.

I'm abruptly plucked from Bray's lap and held tightly in a pair of strong arms.

Cyrus.

He turns and sits me on his lap, letting me feel his naked skin. When did he even strip? His rock-hard cock presses against my ass, leaking precum as he pulls me so my back rests against his front.

"Let's show our girl just how much we love her," he orders.

Bray smirks and watches me as he strips. He slowly pushes down his trousers, and his hard cock springs free. With a kick, he steps out of them, stroking his cock as he walks towards me.

Asher comes up to my side, also naked and so fucking perfect.

There's so much skin, so many muscles and cocks, my brain short-circuits. I'm also pretty sure there is drool coming from my lips as I wiggle in anticipation.

"She already looks ready to come, brother," Bray teases as he stops before me and glides the tip of his leaking cock across my lips, painting them like lipstick. When he steps back, I lick them clean, making him groan before he drops to his knees before me like a peasant before the crown. Only these aren't followers, these are my kings, the kings of the whole fucking city, and they drop to their knees for no one but me.

Only me.

It's heady. I spread my legs to let them see my wet pussy like the dirty bitch I am.

Cyrus keeps me locked against his chest, and my back arches, my neglected breasts begging for their touch. His mouth brushes up and down my neck, biting and licking until I'm wiggling on his lap.

"Stop teasing them," he murmurs against my skin.

"Never," I vow, gripping his huge thighs and digging my nails in as he groans.

“Then let’s do the same to her,” Cyrus flirts, and there’s an unspoken moment as everyone moves closer, their eyes dark and hungry, their lips tilted in a sinister, yet, sexy as fuck smile.

Like predators coming to eat their prey.

I really hope they fucking do.

I feel nothing but powerful as their hungry eyes devour every inch of exposed skin. I’m wet and naked, yet I’m not vulnerable. I never am with them. They are my strength. I needed walls before them, and now they are my walls.

“Darling,” Bray coos, staring at me with his head tilted. “Be a good girl and sit back.”

Smiling, I do as I’m told, watching them as they move until they touch me.

Asher’s mouth descends on my left breast, licking, sucking, and biting before he switches to the other one. I’m dripping simply from their kisses and Asher’s mouth. He pulls back, pushing my breasts together, and licks them both, turning his head to switch nipples. Then I feel Bray. His hands slide up my legs so softly, so possessively. They push open my thighs, and then his mouth follows the same path his hand did before his warm breath blows across my quivering pussy.

My eyes want to close, but I refuse, needing to watch as Bray’s head descends. His tongue drags down my core and back to my clit, lashing it. I cry out, jumping in their arms. It only encourages them. Bray’s teeth catch my clit then soothes it with his tongue, again and again, before dipping it inside me to get more of my cream.

It should feel wrong, watching them work together to make me come, to make me feel good... but it doesn’t. It feels right, so fucking right. Like I’m finally where I was always supposed to be.

I kissed a whole lot of princes before I found my kings.

But still, I know what others would say if they saw us. I know what they would think. Cyrus must feel me stiffen.

“What?” he murmurs against my skin.

“Just thinking of what others” —gasp— “would think,” I murmur, grinding my pussy against Bray’s talented tongue. “They would think it is so wrong.” I laugh, but it’s true.

“Who cares if people think this is wrong? If they think it’s forbidden or taboo? All that matters is that we are happy. Are you happy, baby girl?” he demands, gripping my chin and forcing me to look at his brothers worshipping me with love in their eyes.

“Yes,” I whisper, my answer ending on a moan as Bray nips my clit. “Yes, I’m happy.”

“You’ve never cared about what anyone thought, it’s one of the reasons we love you so fucking much, so don’t start now. What we have is real, so fucking real and amazing, I wouldn’t give it up for anything. Let them talk, let them judge, let them whisper. The kings of this city have finally found their queen, and we are never letting you go. I don’t care how messed up and dirty it makes us. You are ours.”

“That makes you mine then,” I reply, resting my head back on his shoulder.

“Always,” he vows as Asher bites my nipple, no doubt leaving teeth marks, and Bray finally thrusts his teasing fingers inside my dripping hole.

He’s right. My happiness doesn’t depend on anyone’s opinions. They’re not the ones who have to live this life. Everyone has secrets behind closed doors, little fantasies they would never let anyone know about, or a dirty stolen moment. I’m just choosing to display mine and live my desires instead of being afraid of them.

With them, Crew.

My stepbrothers.

Fuck what anyone else thinks. This is love in all its raw, unfiltered glory, and I’m not letting it go no matter how many side-eyed dirty looks we get, no matter how many rumours and whispers go around about us. They are mine.

My darkest desires, my reckless heart's wishes, and my fucked up brain's comfort.

Fighting yourself because you don't want to stand out and denying what you truly want since it's different only leads to your own unhappiness, not anyone else's. As long as you can live with yourself, as long as you can look back on your life and say that you were truly happy, that you did everything you wanted to and lived with no regrets, then who cares? Will it matter a month from now? A year? Two? Twenty? No, people will forget, but we will still be us.

Let them judge. Those who are most envious lash out in jealousy.

"Say it," Cyrus murmurs.

"What?" I ask in confusion, lost in my own hazy, desire filled thoughts.

"Say you are ours."

"I'm yours," I say proudly. "I'm Crew."

It seems to be what they all wanted to hear. Suddenly, I'm thrown back to the bed, and then sets of hands and mouths caress my body. I can't even see who is touching where, but it doesn't matter as pleasure pounds through me, stealing my breath.

Someone's tongue drags down my pussy to my ass, circling, tasting, and licking. A mouth locks on my nipple and sucks roughly. A set of lips kisses every inch of skin. Hands touch every part of my body until I'm moaning loudly, desperate to come. I'm unable to think of anything beyond my desire.

And then it happens.

Expert fingers push into me, knowing exactly where to touch. They stroke me with hard, quick thrusts as a mouth locks onto my clit, and one fastens on each nipple. I feel like electricity is flowing through me, until suddenly, it sparks.

And sets alight.

I scream my release, scream their name for everyone to hear.

Crew.

It only takes the edge off though. I need more. I need them all inside me. So I sit up and push the closest one away, controlled by my desire for them. Asher falls back, and I climb on top of him, swinging my leg over his hips so I'm poised above his hard cock, and before he can speak, I lower myself onto him. We both groan as I lift and drop again, working him in an inch at a time until he's in to the hilt. Leaning forward, I brace my hands on his chest, watching the tattoo as I start to roll my hips. I move slowly at first, feeling his huge cock sliding inside me before I start to bounce on his dick.

His hands go to my hips, helping me, and I see Bray move to the side to watch, so I lean back and roll my body, putting on a show, my tits bouncing as I ride his brother's cock. Bray licks his lips, stroking his cock, and I can't help but reach out and take over, pumping his length as he groans.

A big, warm hand presses against my back, pushing me down until my chest meets Asher's. He groans and holds me still as the warm hand drags down my spine to my ass.

Cyrus.

I feel his breath blowing against my overheated skin. "Tonight, you get all of us. Every" —lick— "hard" —lick— "inch," he promises. Abruptly, Asher's cock is gone, and I feel Cyrus's big one replace it. In one hard thrust, he fills me, stretches me as I writhe. He fucks me hard and fast for a few strokes before pulling out.

"Good girl, make my dick drip with your cream so it fits in that tight little ass," he murmurs, spanking my ass cheeks.

My eyes go to Bray, and when I lick my lips, he groans. "Cy, hurry up. She's looking at me like she wants to eat me alive."

"Then let her." He laughs, even as I hear him spit. It hits my ass, and a moment later, two fingers play with my hole before pushing past my stinging ring of muscles with a pop as

they work into me, stretching me. I can't help but moan, the filthy feeling of it only making it that much better.

“So fucking tight. I can't wait to see my dick buried here while you fuck them,” Cyrus growls as he twists his fingers inside me before pulling them away, and then his dick is there. I barely breathe or move as he slowly pushes into my ass.

He works in every hard inch with tiny little thrusts. It takes a while, since he's so big, and I get tired of waiting, so I push back, impaling myself on his cock with a groan.

“Shit, baby girl,” he rasps, gripping my hips as he starts to move before suddenly stopping again. “Ash, get inside her. With the way she's gripping my dick, I won't last long.”

Knowing I can unravel Cyrus makes me giddy as Asher slides me back onto his cock. This time, though, it's a tight squeeze with Cyrus in my ass. Both of them stretch me so much it borders on painful, but when they start to move, the burning pain fades to utter bliss.

I feel so much pleasure I'm choking on it.

I blindly reach out and guide Bray to me. “Need you,” I whimper, and then his wet dick is rubbing my lips. I open automatically, swallowing him down as he groans.

My every hole is filled with them as our slick bodies move together. Cyrus sets a hard pace, fucking me farther onto Bray's and Asher's cocks until all I can do is take it.

The pleasure flows through us, from one body to the next. There are no more words from me, but it seems Cyrus can't stop.

“Fuck, baby girl. You feel so good. You should see what I can.” He grunts. “Your raw pussy is squirting around Ash's cock, and this ass?” His hand comes down in quick succession in a hard spank. The sharp sting is rubbed away by his big hand, and it turns into a low burn which only adds to all the sensations until it's too much.

“So fucking perfect,” Asher murmurs beneath me.

“And she’s all ours,” Bray growls. “I don’t know if I love her or her mouth more.”

I whimper around his cock, unable to speak. My release builds like a tidal wave, starting at my toes and rolling through my entire body.

“She’s so close. I can feel it.” Cyrus groans, hammering into me.

I force my eyes open and see Bray on his knees before me, his head thrown back and chest heaving as he feeds me his dick.

Like he feels my gaze, he lifts his eyes and locks them on mine before he pulls back slightly. I gulp greedily, my saliva dripping down my chin before I lick and suck his tip, running my teeth down his length until he growls. He fists my hair, forcing my mouth open, and slams back down my throat.

When my gaze connects with the tattoo again, I finally fall over the edge. I come so hard I actually black out, their roars of pleasure sounding as I choke on Bray’s cum, Cyrus’s fills my ass, Asher’s overflows my pussy.

When I can finally see again, we are a sweaty tangle of limbs and covered in cum, but I am completely sated in a way I never have been before. I always wanted more. Faster cars. Harder drugs. Better sex. Now I have it and I’m... content.

“I love you all,” I whisper as I fall back to sleep surrounded by their sleepy admissions of love.

I wake up sometime later and head to the bathroom to clean up. I’m sore, but in the best way. When I finish, I climb back into bed between Bray and Asher who are snoring, but I can’t sleep. I stare at them, drinking in their faces and wondering how I got so fucking lucky.

I don’t care what they drive, how much they make, or what they wear, I fell for their hearts. I fell for the men who could keep up, who could challenge me and did, who brought me back to life. I make a promise to myself as I stare at them that I’ll always do the same for them.

I hear a shuffle and Cyrus sneaks back in with a glass of water and hands it to me. “I heard you wake and thought you might need this, baby girl,” he whispers, leaning down to kiss me. I can’t help but melt as I sip it, staring at his handsome face. How could I ever think he was anything but perfect? He’s spent so long protecting his brothers and his family, and now I’m here to help, and I can see the burden starting to lift from his shoulders.

“I love you,” I say, and a wide smile crosses his lips, making my heart pound as he reaches out for me in the dark.

Once, I was afraid of the night and barely able to sleep surrounded by shadows, but now I thrive in them.

Cyrus takes me by the hand, helps me from the bed, and puts the glass down. “Come with me,” he whispers.

Uncaring about my nudity, I follow after him. He leads me through the silent apartment and down some stairs I didn’t notice before. He carries me up another set then, and at the top is a partially open door, which he nudges open. Once inside, I gasp.

We are at the top of the house in the circular structure I saw on my first day. There’s a bookcase to the left, sofas to the right, and a huge telescope in the middle with rugs and pillows. The whole ceiling is glass, showcasing the sparkling stars.

“My mother built this,” he murmurs as he sets me on my feet and wanders in. “She loved the stars.” He touches the telescope. “I want this to be your happy place too. If you ever need to get away from us, you can come here. We don’t come up here... but she would have loved you before she became a cunt.”

“It’s amazing,” I tell him. “I love it.”

“Good.” He pulls me close, wrapping his arms around me as we look up at the stars. “No matter what happens, Blair, remember the stars always come out, the sun always rises, and the world keeps turning. That’s what she used to tell me. You will never be alone again. Wherever you want to go in this

world, we will follow. You are our life now.” Turning me, he cups my chin and raises it. “I will protect you until the day I die, and I will love you even longer, in this life and the next. It’s time to start our forever.”

“Together,” I whisper, kissing him under the stars.

And just like that, I know we are going to be okay.

Better than okay.

We are going to be amazing.



Chapter Sixty Five

Blair

I'm going to kill them.

I love them, but holy fuck, they are annoying me.

It's been a month, four whole fucking weeks, and I still can't go to work without them either coming or sending someone to watch me. Hell, they even roped Faye into it. Tonight, however, all three of them are here, and I just need a break before I rip them a new asshole.

I step outside and light up, taking a draw. I see Lexi with her man and wave, and then the door opens. Without turning, I know who it is, and I groan. They surround me, and I watch Lexi drive away.

"Where did you go?"

"Are you okay?"

"What happened?"

They shoot the questions at me rapid-fire, and I hold my hand up. "Shut the fuck up." I take a draw and exhale. "Okay, we need to talk. I love you, and I know you want to protect me, but this is too much. You are crowding me. I can go to work alone, and I can go out alone. I'm an adult. I know you

worry, but I can't live my life in a protective bubble you create."

Cyrus's face darkens. "We almost lost you."

Bray's expression drops, and Asher winces.

I narrow my eyes and square up to them, knowing I will have to fight them. "But you didn't. You want me to move on, right? To be happy and live my life?"

Cy reluctantly nods, grinding his teeth.

"Then you have to let me. I can't live like this. I'm not a prisoner, I'm a free woman. You fell in love with the reckless, wild Blair, so let me be her. I miss myself, and right now, I'm torn between kicking your asses or leaving." I hold my hand up to stop Asher when he begins to protest. "I'm not going to, but it was a quick thought. If you don't stop this, you're going to ruin what we have. I can't live like this. I nearly died to avoid being his prisoner, and I refuse to be yours."

"I'm sorry, Darling," Bray murmurs. "You're right, we worry, but this is overboard."

"I didn't fucking—" Bray gut punches Cyrus mid rant to cut him off.

"Bray's right, we're sorry. We don't want to lose you, but we don't want you to feel like that either. I'm glad you told us instead of just pulling away or running. We promise to be better," Asher says solemnly.

"We do?" Cyrus wheezes, bent over.

"We do," Bray snaps at him, making my eyebrows rise. "You too."

"I'll try," he grumbles, and I slump back into the building. "That's all I'm asking, thank you."

"Doesn't mean I won't follow you sometime or worry, but I'll try," Cyrus warns, holding his hands up when it looks like Bray is going to punch him again. "Are we okay?" he asks.

"We are now." I grin. "Come on, I have one more dance left, and then you can buy me food as an apology and fuck me

senseless later.”

“Deal,” Bray agrees with a laugh.

Today is important, I feel it in the air. I woke up knowing it's what I needed to do, and I'm dragging the guys with me for support. We went to a party last night, and Bray is hungover, but he doesn't complain as I pile them into my car and drive, never telling them our destination.

I know it will take a while, but we get an early start. Bray naps, Asher draws, and Cyrus plays with the music, never once asking where we are going. I don't stop at all, feeling like I need to get there or I might turn around. I do speed though, so we arrive just before it closes. Idling at the curb behind the other parked cars, I look through the open wrought iron gates and to the land stretching beyond.

“A cemetery?” Bray questions, leaning forward with a yawn.

Nodding silently, I turn off the car, pocket the keys, and get out. The cool windy breeze makes me shiver but also wakes me up. I pry my lips open to speak, my voice almost weak from the silence. “It's where they are all buried. I never came here. I never saw their funerals, never got to say goodbye. It's time I changed that.”

I walk inside, hearing them follow. There's a cobbled path winding through the rolling land, with rows of graves to the left and right. The ones at the front are older, worn with time. Some are unreadable and forgotten, decorated with crosses, babies, or angels until they fade to the new, cleaner designs. There's a small maintenance hut to the right of one aisle, and I spot a few people sitting by graves, but the air is quiet. This may be where you come to remember, but it's also where you come when you miss someone. It's a reminder that their life is over, but yours isn't.

I lived with one foot in the grave, and it's time to remove that one now.

I walk up and down the aisle until I find Lucas first.

Lucas Miller

2002-2020

Beloved son, gone but never forgotten.

There are fresh flowers on his grave, and for some reason that makes me smile as I lean down and wipe away some grime. “Hey, babe,” I whisper as tears fill my eyes. “I missed you.”

I swallow as my voice cracks, and I feel a heavy hand on my shoulder. Without looking, I reach up and clasp it. “I brought some friends, I hope that’s okay. I’m sorry I never came. It was just too hard, and I wasn’t ready, but I am now. I’m so sorry our last moments were filled with such pain, but I still remember all the good. The memories we made together were so happy, and those are the ones I will remember when I’m sad. Your booming laughter that turned heads, your geeky sense of humour, and your just un-fucking-willingness to give up.” Licking my lips, I kneel down, gazing at the grass for a moment. “I don’t think I’ll be back here again, I just needed you to know that I miss you and I’m sorry. I know it wasn’t my fault, but I’m still sorry, sorry that you loved me so much and all it did was lead you here. Maybe in another life, you’ll find someone to love you even more and you’ll do everything you always wanted to. I promise to live now, truly live. These men behind me, I love them, Lucas. I know you wouldn’t be angry at that, you’d probably smile and introduce yourself. You’d like them, assholeness and all.” I laugh, wiping my tears.

“I’m finally ready to move on with them, and even though I won’t come here anymore, it doesn’t mean I’ve forgotten you, Lucas Miller, nor the love and laughter you showed me. It just means I’m learning from our lessons and letting them guide me.” Leaning forward, I kiss the headstone. “May we meet again, just not too soon. I want to live a little first.”

I stand, and without a backwards glance, I find the next grave. Abigail. “Hey, cutie,” I greet her. “These are my boyfriends. Three, I know. You’d laugh at that. I guess I never

did anything by halves, did I? I have a new friend, a sister, Faye. She's so kind and funny; I wish you could meet her. She's bringing me back to life. I miss you so fucking much. He's gone, babe, he's dead. It's finally over, I just wish you were here to see it."

I say goodbye to them all, filling my heart with the good memories, not the bad, and with my head held high, holding my loves' hands, I leave them once again.

This time it's not filled with pain and unsaid things, but with peace.

Back in the car, I turn to them. "I have one more stop to make."

They don't object, and after another really long car ride back, we find ourselves at a private cemetery. It seems their dad paid for her to be buried here. Even if he was hurt by what she did, he honoured her in the end. It's a beautiful spot, and the guys show me to her grave. There are flowers too. At least someone cared enough to bring them.

I didn't, and that thought only saddens me.

Staring at the grave, I'm lost for words unlike before. I have so much I want to say to her, and most of it is not good. I want to ask why she didn't love me, why I wasn't enough, and what I did to make her hate me so.

But that's not healthy. She's gone, and she can't answer, and if I continue to hold onto this hate, I'm not starting fresh like I want to. I can't hold onto the past and move forward. I can't hold onto hate and be so deeply in love without it tarnishing it.

I need to clear my heart first. "I forgive you," I start. I hear them inhale behind me, but I forge ahead. "I forgive you for everything. I don't understand, but I can't hate you and carry on. I want you to know that one day, if I choose to have children, if I have a daughter, I will be better than you ever were. I'll be an amazing mother. I will learn from you and do everything you never did. I'll be there for her, I'll hold her as she cries, and I'll never doubt her, hurt her, or leave her. We

will have a good life, and I will love her unconditionally, the way you could never love me. You told me this a lot, but I'm sorry I ruined your life by being born. Maybe you would have been happier without me, or maybe not, but either way, Meredith, I forgive you." With that, I leave her there. I won't be back here either.

Not ever.

At the car, the tears finally fall, and they surround me with their loving arms, letting me cry it out until I can finally pull back. Asher wipes my face, Bray kisses me, and Cyrus nods.

"Let's go home."



Chapter Sixty Six

Cyrus

The next day, we all head to the offices to see my father. He doesn't seem surprised when I present him with the paperwork that will sign over his half of the company. He hates it here, so we are buying him out, hoping it will lessen his stress and he can finally do whatever he wants.

When he signs it, he smiles.

"I hope you find your happiness again, Dad. You supported us when we needed you, but we don't need you in that way anymore, Dad. What we do need, however, is for you to be happy again. So find that, find the person who helps." I look at Blair and she smiles. "We did." I look back to see him smiling at her then.

He stands and shakes my hand. "I'm so very proud of all of you. I can't wait to see what you will achieve. You as well, Blair. You are a very talented, determined young woman. Thank you for loving my sons and giving them a chance to show you the love they have to offer. You're right, I'm not happy, but I want to be."

"Good." Blair steps forward, takes my hand, and nods at him. "Go find it. Life's too fucking short." Winking, she looks

back at Bray and Asher. “Find it, even if it’s unconventional, even if it scares you—the best things always do. You can’t take money with you, and at the end, all that matters is who is at your side.”

“You’re right,” he agrees, nodding at her. “Smart, this one. Keep her.”

“I plan to,” I murmur as I look down at her.

With the papers signed, we leave our dad there. We will still see him, but I’m hoping he does find happiness, whatever that means. He gave up everything for us, built this empire with us, and was hurt, betrayed all in the name of our family. He gave us each other, he gave us family, and now he needs to find his own.

Our next stop was Blair’s idea. She wanted a tattoo as well. Not the one we have, but she won’t tell us the design. As we watch her get inked, I admire the grinning woman staring at my brothers with so much love I can see it in her eyes.

She never asked us to change, not once, but we want to. For her. It’s time we stepped up. I’m not saying we are going to be perfect, she fell in love with the bad boys of Crew, after all, and that’s what we will always be, but we finally have a bright future ahead of us. We finally have something and someone to fight and plan for... with her. And that’s what we will do.

We can be anything in this world.

But all I want to be is hers.

Bray

We do everything together now, and although we grew up in this house and have good memories, I know it also holds bad memories for all of us, so without telling them, I take them to a plot of land.

“Okay, dirt... Are we mud wrestling?” Blair laughs, turning to see the huge plot of land. It’s close to the city, but also high up to look over it and the incredible views.

“It’s ours,” I tell her. “If we want it.”

“For?” she asks.

“Us.” I shrug and look at my brothers. “A full new start. A house designed just for us. Can you see it? We could have a pool and a bar for parties, a dance studio for Blair, a studio for Asher, and a garage for Cyrus.” I turn and point at places, and when I look back, Blair appears shocked.

“A house?”

“Our own, no bad memories, only good. What do you think, Darling? Want to build a house with us?”

With a squeal, she runs and leaps at me, making me laugh as I catch her. My hands go to her ass to hoist her up as she kisses me. When she pulls back, I chuckle. “I take that as a yes?”

“Yes!” she yells, and I turn her to face the others.

“What do you think, brothers? Want to build a place just for us?”

“I love it, the lighting is perfect here,” Asher comments with a grin. “Good work, brother.”

“Cyrus?” I ask as he looks around critically.

“I like it. It’s a great idea, somewhere new... somewhere we can be together. Our own haven. It will have to have security, of course, but... yes. Let’s buy it.”

I whoop and dance Blair around as they laugh.

“I guess it makes sense, the kings overlooking their kingdom,” she teases as we stand hand in hand in the dirt, my brothers at my side.

“And their queen ruling it all.” I wink, squeezing her hand before cupping her cheek, looking down at her with nothing but love. “Who knew when I saw you dancing around in those tiny shorts this is where we would be, stepsister?” I tease,

making her laugh as I kiss her. “I can’t wait to hear that laugh for the rest of my life. I love you so fucking much. I can’t wait for our life together.”

For our adventure.

Asher

Blair’s hips move in my hands as the music blares. Her head is thrown back in wild abandon, the golden strands shining under the lights. Normally my hands would itch to paint her, but they are filled with my love, and I don’t want to let go, not ever. She’s my new compulsion. I twist her as she laughs, her eyes alight. There are no more shadows in her gaze, and I cannot help but love that we did that.

We gave Blair back her fight, and we will never take it away.

We are hers completely.

I was nothing but a broken artist when she found me, still pining after the mother I never got to have. Not anymore. She healed me, and she made this broken boy into a strong, sure man. One who doesn’t need a woman who never wanted him. She might have loved me, but not enough, and I know Blair will.

I have all the family I need right here.

Bray twists her, stealing her as Cyrus watches, leaning next to Faye and laughing with her. The party is in full swing. We are still so young, and we have so much to experience and learn, and I cannot wait to do it with her—the woman who stole my heart.

Our darling.

Our stepsister.

There’s a commotion, and we all turn to see Jay walking towards us. He winks. “Sorry, I came to steal your bestie.” He

grabs Faye and throws her over his shoulder. “It’s important, she’ll be okay! Have a good party.”

“Hey!” Faye protests, smacking his back, but Blair just laughs and waves.

“Have fun! Isn’t that what you told me?” she calls as Jay moves through the crowd, catcalls following after them. Looking down at Blair, I can’t help but laugh too.

“She’ll be okay,” I promise, knowing she worries.

“I know she will. It’s time for her adventure, after all. I have my very own right here.” Standing on her tiptoes, she kisses my lips. “Speaking of, want to throw me over your shoulder and have your wicked way with me?”

I can’t help but groan. “I thought you’d never ask.” I throw her over my shoulder and grin at my brothers. “Duty calls.”

As we head to the stairs, Walker, Blair’s friend, waves. He has a cute brunette on his lap. I also spot Leigh, who’s kissing and flirting with another guy.

Seems everyone is getting their happy endings, and mine is in my arms, where she will stay for the rest of our lives.

My muse.

My love.

My everything.



Epilogue

Staring out at the incredible view before me, I know I got lucky.

If you're not careful, this world can suck the life right out of you. It can be a dark and lonely place, but for me? It's not anymore. I still have my demons, but now the sun soaks into my skin, warming me. I have three men I love more than life itself. I have a family, friends, and a bright future to look forward to. I'm never alone, and I'm excited for what is to come.

I know it won't be perfect, no one's life is. We will fight, I'll cry, they'll cry, and I'll probably call them assholes, but standing on this mountain, watching the sparkling lights of the sky, I know I've come a long way from the woman who used drugs, sex, and alcohol to try to forget her past. She was running so fast she almost left the best thing that had ever happened to her.

Them.

Crew.

I hated those three royal bastard kings so much, hated everything about them, and now I know it's because they were everything I wasn't.

Happy, rich, together. Now I'm one of them; I am their queen.

Their love.

I'll never want for anything again, but it's more than that. It's the dedicated, crazy, wild bond we share—one forged through blood and pain. We share the same scars, and we share the same fears and hopes. Some say we are too young to know this is real, but I know it is. This is a forever kind of love, one that can withstand anything. We will be judged for it, but I don't give a fuck. I've been judged all my life, so let them look and comment. Those who envy us the most are the ones who, deep down, are so unhappy with their own lives they look to tear others apart.

And I refuse to let them ruin this, or me. Now that I know my own capability for self-destruction, I can monitor this because I love them and I don't ever want to hurt them again. I've felt what it was like to lose them, not ever again.

They are my forever, my crew.

My family.

Blood in, blood out.

There is still so much to see and do in this world, and I can't wait to do it by their side. We've lost so much, all of us, but it led us here.

They are busy working on our clubhouse, as they have deemed it, as well as expanding their business. Me? I'm still dancing at the club, but I also got offered a side hustle. It seems my dancing abilities didn't go unnoticed. One night, the very same night of the attack at the club, there was a scout. I'm now working freelance in music videos and performances, and I've never been so in love with my passion before. Seeing others like me, inspiring people, and expanding my skills... it feels like a daydream. I went from a lowly street kid to a dance performer for millions to see. It just proves that when you believe in yourself, you truly can do anything. And along the way, you might just find someone to come along for the ride.

“Are you ready, baby girl?” Cyrus calls. Turning away from the view and my own thoughts, I find them waiting for me. We’ve been on a ride all day. I’ve been riding my new bike they built and painted for me. Cyrus is sitting on his, his visor up and leather jacket zipped. Asher is next to him, his bright, paint splattered jacket making me grin. Bray winks as he ties back his hair.

“Yeah, I’m ready,” I call, and with one last look at the view, I head to my bike, straddle it, and grab my helmet. “Where to?”

“Wherever you want.” Asher grins.

“I’ll race you,” I tease.

“What do we get?” Bray asks excitedly.

I run my eyes over all three of them, a shit-eating grin tipping up my lips. “Me.”

“Oh, Darling, we already have you.”

They aren’t wrong.

I’m theirs, wholly, fully.

Crew’s queen.

My stepbrothers’ darling.

AFTERWARD

700, 000 women are stalked each year, though many more are believed to have never reported it.

1% of cases of stalking and 16% of cases of harassment recorded by the police result in a charge and prosecution by the CPS.

89% of femicide victims who had been physically assaulted before their murder were also stalked in the last year prior to their murder.

54% of femicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by their stalkers.

If you have suffered any form of stalking or need advice, please see these agencies that help below.

Don't remain silent, you are not alone.

Always report stalking to the police

<https://paladinservice.co.uk/>

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/stalking-and-harassment/>

National Stalking Helpline

Telephone: 0808 802 0300

<http://www.protectionagainststalking.org/>

<https://www.victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk/>

TRIGGERS

Sexual Assault

Stalking/Harassment

Drug Misuse

Alcohol Misuse

Graphic murder/torture

ABOUT K.A.

K.A Knight is an indie author trying to get all of the stories and characters out of her head. She loves reading and devours every book she can get her hands on, she also has a worrying caffeine addiction.

She leads her double life in a sleepy English town, where she spends her days writing like a crazy person.

Read more at K.A Knight's website or join her Facebook Reader Group.

Sign up for exclusive content and my newsletter here <http://eepurl.com/drLLoj>

ALSO BY K.A.

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- The Wasteland
 - The Summit
 - The Cities
 - The Nations
-

- The Forgotten
 - The Lost
 - The Damned
 - Boxset
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DAWNBREAKER SERIES

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 - Dreaming of Ayama
-

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- Aurora's Coven
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- Pretty Stormy
- Pretty Wild
- Pretty Hot
- Pretty Faces
- Pretty Spelled

STANDALONES

- Scarlett Limerence
- Nadia's Salvation
- The Standby
- Den of Vipers
- Divers' Heart
- Daddy's Angel
- Stepbrothers' Darling

CO-AUTHOR PROJECTS

- Circus Save Me
- Taming The Ringmaster
- Dark Temptations Volume One (contains One Night Only and Circus Saves Christmas)
- The Wild Interview
- The Hero Complex
- Shipwreck Souls
- The Horror Emporium
- Capturing Carmen
- Stealing Shiloh
- Harboring Harlow
- Gangsters and Guns