



# TWICE

THE

*Rivalry*

DRAGON'S MC

EMILY ROSE

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# **TWICE THE RIVALRY**

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**DRAGONS MC SERIES**

**EMILY ROSE**

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 Created with Vellum

*To all my badass women that don't take crap from any man  
and have fun doing it.*

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## TRIGGER WARNINGS

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If you don't like a dark MC romance, turn back now. This book contains triggers including:

- Mentions of Sexual Assault (including an account of attempted rape, but not actual occurrence).
- Human/Sex Trafficking
- Graphic Language
- Mentions of Torture
- Graphic Sexual Scenes
- Murder
- Mentions of Drugs
- Violence
- Pregnancy & Birth



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## CHAPTER ONE

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### GLITCH

“That bastard,” she growled as she stared at the box Taz set on her desk.

“You don’t even know what it is yet,” Taz chuckled, his southern twang making the sound smooth as honey. “Maybe it’s from a secret admirer.”

She looked up at Taz with a *are-you-kidding-me* glower. The grin on his face stretched even further and his brown-green eyes sparkled with mirth. He was a jokester and their MC’s Road Captain, but that didn’t mean she had to appreciate his humor right now. At six-two with dirty blonde hair that he wore long and flipped to one side with the underside shaved, he was damn good looking. Not to mention he was covered in ink all the way down to his hands, with a thick, dark blonde beard that framed his grinning mouth. But even with all that hotness, the man was a pain in her ass. Out of everyone here, he was the one who most loved to drive her insane. And ever since this little battle with her archnemesis started, well, he’d been even more insufferable.

“Did you check it for explosives?” she asked Taz as she stood and inspected the box. It was on the smaller side, but it made her instantly wary. She and Code had a reluctant appreciation for each other, but she also knew he was pissed about her latest foray in their little war. Personally, she found it hilarious, but from the message she got, he did not.

Who knew that a man wouldn't appreciate a custom made blow-up doll decked out in full bondage gear, including a whip, paddle, and a giant strap-on dildo? Though, perhaps it wasn't so much the doll, but the fact that she had it delivered by a dominatrix who also handed him a bottle of lube for him and his "friend" to use, with the offer to show him how to best make it work.

She even hacked into his surveillance system so she could watch him receive it. She cackled with absolute glee when she saw the shock on his face, and that they were in the middle of what looked like a party. A party where, if she wasn't mistaken, there were a few extra people in attendance from a visiting club, and all of them lost their shit laughing.

Code's face was thunderous, and within the hour, she had been kicked out of his system—which she allowed, because why not let him keep believing he was as good as her—with the promise of retribution coming through their message system. Of course, she told him to go right ahead, but now that she was faced with a box, it was her turn to be wary.

"Would you just open the damn thing?" Taz demanded impatiently. "I already shook it. If he was going to bomb the place, I'm sure it would have already gone off."

That was a good point. She heard a ping on her computer and glanced at it quickly. Of course the bastard was trying to hack her systems to see her reaction. Turnabout was fair play and all that. She clicked a few buttons to let him in, without him knowing of course, then picked up the box and headed for the common room of their small clubhouse. "Then I guess we best give him a show, shouldn't we?" she replied with a grin.

Taz shook his head, but his grin widened impossibly further. "You two are fucked up, you know that?" But he followed her, shutting the door behind him. Everyone knew not to go into her space if that door was shut. Taz decided to test that once, and had ended up with a broken nose, and a gun in his face. She was fiercely protective of her space. She didn't care if they were a team, she refused to have them going in and messing up her stuff.

“But that’s what makes you get up and going in the morning because you love other people’s drama,” she tossed back at him as they made their way into the common room. The garage they bought was on the smaller side, with just enough room for them to remodel the top floor so it had a room for each of them, a communal bathroom, a room for Church, a bar, a small but nice kitchen, and a common room. That space had a few chairs and tables, a large leather sectional sofa, and of course a huge TV on the far wall. They weren’t the kind to host parties, so what did they need a bigger space for?

She, however, got her own bathroom, since she was the only woman on the team and she refused to share with the rest of them. Men were disgusting. She also refused to clean the communal bathroom. They could damn well do that themselves, but they recently hired someone to do it, and so far that was working out well. She did her own, since she wasn’t a messy person, and she hated clutter.

“Alright, everyone, gather around,” Taz called out. “Glitch’s secret admirer sent her another gift. Personally, I don’t know how he’s going to top the last one. Any guesses on what it could be?”

The other members of the club were milling around the room, a rare occasion they were all in the same building. Secretly, she enjoyed it. It was lonely at times when they were on the road and she was here working, but then again, she was used to being alone. Right now, as they all headed her way, some grinning, others rolling their eyes, she was glad she had witnesses if Code finally snapped and tried to take her out.

“What did you send him this time?” Simba, their club’s President, asked. He was always the leader of their band of merry mercenaries. The man was a born leader and a good man. Even when he was pissed at her and reading her the riot act or handing her ass to her in the training ring. To the point that it was almost sickening. Still, she appreciated that he treated her equally and not like she was a weak link because of her gender. He stood at six-two with dark brown eyes and hair that he kept long on top and short on the sides. His dark beard

was no longer scraggly now that they were back from their latest mission. Though, if she wasn't mistaken, she was starting to see hints of silver in there too. She'd have to mention that at some point. Currently he was wearing a simple black t-shirt that showed off the ink on his arms and the letters on his knuckles. Like everyone else, he was well built, and kept himself in shape.

She grinned wickedly as she told him exactly what she sent Code, making him shake his head and laugh. Simba rarely laughed when he was on mission, but here, he always seemed far lighter. "It was very thoughtful of me," she added, grinning at the rest of them.

"Well apparently he didn't think so," Ursa remarked drolly. Ursa was their Treasurer, and a whiz with numbers. Personally she thought he missed his calling with coding, because he was decent at it, but she knew he wasn't the kind of guy to sit behind a desk for long. He would get too restless. He was six-four with dark eyes that always held a calculating glint in them. He also had a thick long black beard, and two braids woven into his equally black hair. Add in the ink on his forearms, and he was the picture of a hot man with a rough edge. Women threw themselves at him daily. Well, except her, of course. She saw him as more of a big brother. One that liked to beat the shit out of her when they sparred, but that just made it more fun. Especially when she got the upper hand.

"Just open it already," Taz ordered, tapping his foot.

She gave him an arch look, which he returned, before she rolled her eyes and pulled out the knife from her boot to open it. She never went anywhere without a weapon, and she had some excellent places to hide them. She slid the blade across the tape and then opened the box, bracing. When she saw what was in it, she narrowed her eyes angrily. The men around her let out small laughs and a few curses. She might have even heard Taz mutter, "That dumb bastard, she's going to kill him."

Bastard was right, she thought as she looked at the bright red push-up bra. It was no secret she was lacking in the breast department, and while she normally didn't let it bother her,

this was a dick move. Knowing he was watching this whole thing, she picked it up with one finger and inspected it for show.

She'd give it to him that it was pretty to look at, being blood red with some diamonds along the seams of the cups and straps that criss-crossed in the back. At least the man had some taste. Still, the insult was not lost on her. The cups had so much padding that they would probably give some lift to her small A-cup breasts, but not much else.

He took this into dirty fighting territory, and her gut burned with excitement for this new field of battle.

"Excuse me, boys," she announced sweetly to them. "It looks like I haven't been clear to that asshole about just who he's messing with. I've been going easy on him, but now, well, he's only brought this on himself."

"What did we say about playing with your food, babe?" Jag warned, but his cast iron gray eyes were full of amusement instead of their usual hardness. Their VP, and former second-in-command, wasn't much of a talker, but there was no one else you wanted at your back when shit was going down. He was calm in the face of any danger, and little got past him. Well, except the one time Karissa got in one lucky slice with her knife during training a few years ago, leaving him with a scar on the left side of his jaw. The reminder of that lucky slice was now mostly covered by his beard, the black scruff starting to show a sprinkle of gray. His hair was equally dark, but no gray showed there yet. Secretly, she wondered if he dyed it, but she hadn't found any evidence, so for now she was chalking it up to genetics.

"He's far too lean and skinny for me to be interested in eating him," she said with a wicked grin, knowing the bastard could also access the audio on their cameras. She wanted him to hear this, and let him know exactly what she would do. She didn't do sneaky unless she absolutely had to. "I'd just be gnawing on bone. I like my men a bit bulkier."

"Considering you bit me the last time we sparred, I can see that," Warg drawled. He was one of their Enforcers. He was a

six-four black man with a thin goatee instead of a beard like most of the team. He kept his black hair shaved on the sides and thick on top, but last night he had decided to braid the top. It was something he'd been teaching her to do so she could help him on the days she wanted a break from the keyboard.

"You pulled my hair, what did you think I was going to do?" she sniffed. He shook his head and grinned at her, flashing straight white teeth.

Warg rolled his eyes, but his lips twitched. "Next time I'm just going to knock you out," he bluffed. They all knew they never sparred to the point that anyone was actually hurt, but it was common for them to threaten it. Especially her.

"You can try," she sneered, turning and heading back for her office space. "But we both know one shot to the balls and you go down hard."

"She does like to do that," Tiger laughed. Their Sergeant at Arms stood at six-one and was one of the shorter members, and still far too good looking in her opinion. He had a scruffy beard the color of straw that he had been working for a very long time to grow, with a few silver strands threaded in. His tawny brown eyes were normally easy going, but when you pissed him off, watch out, they went stormy quickly. The funny part to her was that he was a big tough man who hated needles with a passion. It was also why he only had one tattoo, and refused to get any more.

"Trust me, I know," Vulture grumped. "And don't think I didn't hear you assholes yell 'timber' the last time." Their second Enforcer, and tallest member at six-seven, the man definitely made some noise when he went down hard. He looked like a modern day viking with his long, thick, dark brown beard, whiskey brown eyes, and broad muscular body. But it was his hair that set him apart. He wore his hair shaved on the sides but full on top, and often kept it in a thick, intricate braid that fell halfway down his back. He was also teaching her how to help braid it for him. To top it all off, he had tons of ink all over his body and had small gauges in his ears. Those were newer, but suited him, so she didn't give him too hard a time about it.

“I’ll yell it even louder next time then,” the final member of their team snickered. Copper was Japanese-American and the shortest member at five-eleven. He wasn’t quite Taz when it came to being easy-going, but he was definitely not as serious as the others. He had dark brown, almost black eyes, with long black hair that he wore to his shoulders, and while he was lean and wiry, he was just as strong as the rest of them. He definitely gave her a run for her money when they were working out and sparring. The man was also a whiz at sneaking into places.

She ignored their bickering back and forth as she left her door open and tossed the bra to the other side of the room. Then she parked herself in her chair and started clicking away on the keys. Time to acknowledge that he was there.

Glitch: If that’s the best you could come up with, I should be concerned.

Code: You know, most would say thank you for such a thoughtful gift.

Glitch: I had no idea you loved my boobs so much that you wanted to push them up so you can see them better when you try to hack my systems. Missed them so much that you had to get your fix again, huh? Does your President know he has such a creep working for him?

Code: Sorry, honey, but the last thing I want to see is your tits. I prefer blonde, busty, and quiet. All three things you aren’t. And I didn’t try to hack your system, I did hack your system. Looks like you have some holes of your own to plug up.

Glitch: Oh, you stupid man, you really are special, aren’t you? There are no holes in my system. I let you in. Because I wanted you to know what my reaction was to your little gift. Now that I know we’re taking the gloves off, I hope you’re ready for the war coming your way. And seeing as I’ve been part of actual wars in the past, you should know I play to win.

Code: Bullshit. You just hate to admit that you're wrong. But that's fine, soon enough we'll see the truth. And I'll happily rub your face in it every chance I get. Did you really expect me to sit back after that stunt you pulled? The fucking doll is now a permanent resident here and no matter how many times I try to get rid of it, someone brings it back. So, yeah, I'd say the gloves are off, sweetheart. You're not the only one who plays to win.

Glitch: They all know it's the only action you can get with your tiny dick.

Code: Maybe you're the one who's been hacking my system to see my dick. What's the matter? Can't find a man to give you any kind of attention? Put on my gift and you might just get a few second looks.

Glitch: I'd need a magnifying glass attached to your webcam to see your dick, but nice try. And don't you worry about male attention, big guy. I can get any man I want, but you have to settle for used up club pussy. See you around, asshole.

Then she signed out, clicked a few buttons, and booted him out of her system completely. She grinned, knowing that would piss him off. But that was fine. She had plans to make.

She was serious when she said the gloves were coming off. Code was about to realize what happened when you messed with her. She was just glad that he was in another state, or this would likely be a hell of a lot messier.



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## CHAPTER TWO

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### CODE

*One Week Later*

“Package for you, Code!” someone yelled from the common room, pulling his attention from his screens.

He was hard at work trying to find the holes in his system Glitch oh so happily pointed out. He scowled at the thought of the woman who seemed to get under his skin faster than anyone else. And that was saying something when you lived and worked with a bunch of bikers, and had older brothers. Still, the infuriating woman found faults, and he wasn't about to let her continue to exploit them. So he was fixing them.

Which brought him back to the arrival of a package. He didn't need to see it to know who it was from. No one ever sent him anything, and ever since this little battle with Glitch started, his brothers had taken great pleasure in the whole damn thing. Hell, they were probably rooting for her, the bastards, he thought irritably. Which is why he had half a mind not to bother, but he knew they would come in and drag him out. So he gritted his teeth, stood, and headed to the common room.

Sending that bra was a dick move, but then again, he had every right to be pissed after her stunt a couple weeks ago. Especially when they had another club visiting. That took the embarrassment to a whole new level. Still, there was a low

level of guilt brewing in his gut that he could ignore... mostly. He wasn't the kind of man to go after a woman's appearance when they pissed him off, but there was something about Glitch that made him lose all sense.

He wasn't sure if it was her personality, or the fact that she insulted him and his system the first time they met, but she rubbed him the wrong way. And when they had to briefly work together, it became even more clear they would never be able to get along. So they were waging this little battle, and that was fine with him. Eventually they would have to call a truce, or set some rules, but for now, he'd have to deal with whatever happened.

Starting with the box that was currently sitting on a table in the middle of the common room, surrounded by his brothers and their women. Namely his President, Savage, and his Old Lady Royal, Steel, his Old Lady Harlow, Razor, and his Old Lady Karissa. The very same Karissa who was a former teammate of Glitch, and from the wicked grin on her face, she was enjoying the shit out of this moment. He narrowed his eyes at her, but she held his gaze and her grin widen even further.

"I'm almost thinking she might take it easy on you this time," Karissa speculated. With dark brown hair and eyes, cupid bow lips, and a smile that could stop you in your tracks, she didn't look like a mercenary at first glance. But, when you saw the steel in her eyes, and the confidence she held, it was easy to realize how much of a badass this woman truly was. At least to him anyway. "Depending on what you did to make her send it in the first place," she continued.

"Like you don't know," he snorted.

She lost her grin and arched a brow at him. "Actually, she wouldn't tell me, which means it had to be something that she plans on getting back at you for without involving me. But now you have me curious. What did you do?"

He shrugged. "Nothing terrible," he told her nonchalantly. He had a feeling, though, that if Glitch hadn't told her, it was probably so Karissa didn't kick his ass. The former mercenary

was not one you messed with, he'd seen that first hand. Hell, between her and Glitch, they could probably make all their lives a living hell if they wanted. Something that he wasn't going to allow to happen, if he could help it.

"Hmm," was all that Karissa said, but he could see the calculating glint in her eyes. He had a feeling when she found out, he'd have to be on guard. He shot Razor a look, but the man just smirked at him.

Razor worked in the garage with Rogue and Jax, and the man fought hard to keep Karissa here. Hell, Code had never seen a man so determined to keep a woman in his life. He stood at over six feet, with dark eyes, thick, curly black hair, and a well kept beard, which meant he never had trouble getting female attention. Before Karissa, the man had women in his bed every night, but then he met her, and that stopped altogether. The two of them suited each other surprisingly well, and Code saw that his club brother was happy from the glint in his eyes and the way he watched Karissa where she was.

"Open it," Harlow demanded impatiently. Code was sure she was ready to pop. Her belly had grown quite a bit in the past month, but she still managed to look cute, even when she was crying or screaming at Steel for whatever the man did to earn her ire. Today she seemed content, though he saw tiredness in her turquoise eyes, and instead of the intricate designs she usually styled her blonde locks in, today her hair was up in just a simple ponytail. He also didn't miss the way she leaned into Steel, who took her weight without question and put his large hand under her massive bump, lifting ever so slightly. The relief in her eyes was almost instant. Damn, he bet it was exhausting carrying so much weight around like that.

He turned his attention back to the box and saw it was pretty small. He narrowed his eyes suspiciously. Whatever she sent him, he had no doubt he wasn't going to be happy. He picked it up and carefully tore it open. When he looked inside, his mouth pulled down into a deep scowl, but at the same time,

he kind of wanted to laugh because it was so ridiculous. He didn't miss her barb, but it was kind of clever.

Inside was a magnifying glass, a small pair of tweezers, and, shockingly, the smallest penis pump he had ever seen. He had no idea where the hell she would have found such a thing, but there it was. Under all of that was a folded up note, which he pulled out and read silently.

*Dear Code,*

*I thought you might need these for the unfortunate ladies that think sleeping with you would be a fun time. I'm sure you have your own, but I wanted you to have another set. If you need a hand, maybe one of your club whores can help you. I'm sure they have lots of experience by now.*

*-The Better Hacker.*

He had half a mind to take a picture of his dick and send it back to her to prove that she was very wrong, but he wouldn't put it past her to post it on the front page of the news or something. Instead, he put the letter back in the box, but before he could close it and walk away, Karissa yanked it out of his hands. "Hey!" he cried, startled.

Karissa opened it and her eyes widened before she started laughing hysterically. Which, of course, had everyone moving closer to peer inside and also bursting into laughter. Code groaned and closed his eyes. This was the damn doll all over again.

“Alright, I need to know the story behind that,” Royal demanded once she got herself under control. “But if it’s going to be hilarious I need to pee first because both girls are sitting on my bladder right now.” Also heavily pregnant, and about a month behind Harlow, Royal was carrying identical twin girls, and she was constantly going to the bathroom. Not that anyone would dare say anything unless they had a death wish, because Savage would murder them. A little taller than Harlow with bright green eyes and red hair that she also currently had up in a simple ponytail, Royal was a tough woman. Hell, she shot at Savage when they were first together, and she killed her own sister because the bitch was going to take her son and sell him off to the highest bidder.

Code didn’t often think about that day because it still ate at him, but that was something to worry about later. Right now, he was being stared at by everyone waiting for an explanation about that stupid box.

“I don’t find it funny,” he said unemotionally. “She’s trying to get back at me for something I sent her in retaliation for the damn doll.”

“And that was...?” Karissa trailed off, looking at him expectantly. He shrugged, not answering. “Fine, I’ll find out for myself,” she said, pulling out her phone.

Savage pulled his attention away from her by asking, “Is this how it’s going to be from now on? The two of you going at each other by sending weird packages to embarrass the other?” Standing at six-five with a body of pure muscle, the man was formidable, but Code knew that no one else suited the position of club President better than him. Though, at the same time, he knew that Savage was realizing the tough part of being President.

The women that were becoming a part of their lives. And the fact that the brothers picked hard-headed women with balls of steel. Code wasn’t sure how many times, but Savage had a gun pointed at his head by almost all of them. Not that he liked to be reminded of that fact.

Code shrugged at Savage's question. "You've met her, what do you think?"

"I think I'm glad she's not someone's Old Lady," he griped.

On that, he could agree. If he had to spend much time in person with Glitch, he'd probably go mad. At least with this, they were doing it all online and without being in each other's faces.

"As long as it doesn't involve a gun I don't think Savage will care," Royal snickered. Her grin widened even further when Savage glared at her.

"I'm still convinced we should ban the damn things if a woman is in the building or on the grounds," Savage threatened.

"You go right ahead and try that, Mr. President," Karissa replied with a cool smile. Everyone knew that out of anyone, Karissa would make sure she had access to a weapon, no matter what Savage decreed.

As the two of them argued about it, Code picked up the box and headed back toward his office. They could argue while he figured out what he was going to do about Glitch and her obvious attempt at getting under his skin. Which she did, and now he was going to have to get creative in his reply.

His computer dinged, and he sat down to see what set it off. He scowled deeply once he saw what it was.

Glitch: I wasn't sure if what I sent was small enough. But based on your reaction, I'd have to say I hit pretty close to the mark.

Damn it, she hacked his system. *Again*. He was getting really tired of her doing that. He was going to have to step up his efforts on figuring out how the hell she kept getting in. He quickly typed back a response, while trying to find where the hell she was lurking.

Code: I'm starting to think you're becoming obsessed with my dick. Or with me in general, since you're spying on me all the time.

Glitch: Can you hear my laughter? You know, for a man who has no idea what the hell he's doing behind a computer, you're kind of funny. Maybe you should, you know, change careers. I've heard comedy can be somewhat lucrative. And who knows, maybe you can find a woman who can overlook your... inadequacies.

Code glared furiously at the screen. She always knew just where to land her barbs, and it only made him more determined to get the upper hand. He couldn't give a shit about the dick jokes, because hell, around here they were made about each other all the time, but talking about his skills, the one thing that made him who he was, that he had honed so carefully over the years, that was downright enraging.

Code: Speaking of inadequacies, how's that bra working out for you?

Dickish? Sure, but she pushed his buttons and he couldn't take it back now.

Glitch: See, I know you're pissed because you're throwing out stupid insults. But don't you worry, I don't lack for any kind of attention, sparkly bra or not. Some men are interested in a woman's skills and brain, not what they look like physically. It just shows again how behind the times you are. Though, that's no surprise, is it?

He didn't bother answering. Instead, he pounded his fingers on a few keys and kicked her out of his system. Petty? Probably, but it gave him a little bit of satisfaction to know she wasn't as good as she claimed.

He hissed out a breath and looked at the box he set down next to him. As he stared at it, he couldn't stop the kick of his lips into a slight smile. He was man enough to admit it was a clever insult, and if it was anyone else, he would probably take it in stride and just let it go. But this was Glitch, and nothing about her could make him give up so easily.

He could picture her now, sitting at her own computers, pissed at him for kicking her out of his system. At five-two with bright pink hair and equally bright blue eyes, she would look more like a pissed off sprite than a formidable woman like Karissa. But still, after seeing her take down a few of the men when they were here previously, Code knew her looks were deceiving.

Still, even knowing that she could probably kick his ass if she wanted, he wasn't nervous. He could take her, and right now, he needed to decide on his retaliation. She was right, the gloves were off, and it was time to see who was better.

He never lost, and he wasn't going to start now.



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## CHAPTER THREE

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### GLITCH

*Three Weeks Later*

“I had no idea you were so vindictive,” Taz drawled, his amusement clear as she continued to click away at her keys. “This is what, week two of you two trying to one-up each other?”

“Week three,” Glitch said absently as she narrowed her eyes on the screen. It seemed her nemesis had gotten a clue and figured out one of her ways into his system, and effectively walled it off. Not that it would stop her, but it did mean it was taking her a few more minutes longer to get in than she liked. She had plans, and they did not include wasting time on this bullshit.

“My mistake,” Taz mumbled sarcastically. “What did he do now? I’ve lost track of all the shit you two were getting up to while we were gone.” The team had been away on a rescue mission, this time to find a little girl that had been sold by her step-father to a pedophile in another state. The aunt had been the one to call, and the team refused to take any fee. They weren’t about to let that little girl, who was only four fucking years old, stay with that asshole one second longer.

Now, the little girl was with her aunt, and both the pedo and the step-father were six feet under.

That also meant that while she wasn't busy helping the team with the logistics, she was dealing with Code and his attempts to best her. Their little battle had turned into an all out war, and she was not about to let him think he was winning.

"Somehow, he figured out a way to set off every alarm in the building, all at the same time. He made it so I couldn't be the one to turn them off until I practically had to beg him." she groused.

"You don't beg, babe," Taz said with a snicker.

"I don't," she agreed with a tight smile as she typed faster. She was almost in, despite his many attempts to keep her out. *Take that, asshole*, she thought to herself happily. "But I can make him think I did."

"And what did you do in return?"

Her lips widened as she recalled watching her retaliation on the screen. "I sent Xena a creepy as hell Chucky doll that does the whole head turning thing, and had her hide it in his room. And, of course, I made sure to have a camera in it so I could see his reaction. I waited until he was asleep before I turned it on and started making it talk, saying all kinds of creepy evil shit. Then I had it turn its head, and I was able to activate a spring that I put in it so it launched at him. He screamed like a little girl, and had some of his brothers rushing in to help him." She watched that recording a few times just to give herself a good laugh.

Taz laughed loudly. "Damn, babe, that was a good one. And kind of insane. I'm glad I'm not on your bad side. What has he done since then that you're now going back at him?"

She lost her smile and scowled. "The bastard messed with my system," she hissed, infuriated all over again. He really had taken off the gloves this time, and she wasn't about to let him think he got away with it. She was out for blood, and she was going to make sure he was bleeding before she was done.

"Shit," Taz groaned. "How did he do that? And when?"

She glanced at him before continuing her work. She was in Code's system, and he was working to get her out, but that

wouldn't be happening. Not until she had done what she needed to do, and that was bring him to his damn knees. "He somehow managed to hack my system, and I'm pissed about that in the first fucking place, and then he changed all my app images to random shit that didn't make any sense. He also messed with my keyboard so I couldn't use any part of my damn computers. All while you were on your way back here with the little girl and her aunt. If he had been sitting here next to me, I probably would have shot him, I was so pissed. He's lucky I have a spare computer and access to my system or we could have been fucked. I'm not about to let him get away with it."

When she realized what was happening, she panicked for a moment, knowing that everyone was on their way back, and they were vulnerable without her having access to her systems. But that panic had been quickly replaced by fury at the realization of what he'd done. It was difficult for her to push it all aside and get herself set up on her spare computer, but she did it. It only made her more determined to make him pay, because no one messed with her system, especially when she was in the middle of a mission with her team.

So as soon as the team was in the clear, she signed off, spent all night fixing her system, making sure that Code would never get access again without jumping through some major hoops and scaling some thick walls. She hated knowing she had let her guard down and he was able to get past her. He was good, but he was nowhere close to her level, and it was time he remembered that.

"So what are you going to do?" Taz asked.

Glitch arched a brow and glanced at him, even as her fingers still flew over the keyboard. "Are you sure you want to know?" she asked. "Or would you rather have deniability?"

He stared at her for a moment and then scoffed. "Good one, babe. We both know that I never turn down the opportunity to mess with someone. Especially if it involves Xena and her man. So by extension, that includes the asshole who thinks he can take you down and live to tell the tale."

Glitch grinned. “Then prepare yourself, because we’re about to get some calls.” She hit a few more keys, then sat back and let out a sigh of satisfaction.

Taz grinned too. “And what exactly did you do? Just so I’m prepared.”

“I shut down his system,” she replied gleefully, standing and stretching her arms above her head. She felt her stiff muscles start to loosen and it felt so damn good. She absently thought that it was about time she booked another massage, to work out some of the more stubborn kinks.

“Gonna need a bit more than that, babe,” Taz admonished. “Why is that your best revenge?”

“Because he’s about to realize that he doesn’t have access to anything, and it’s also a nice reminder that he’s not as good as he thinks. It’ll probably be a couple of days before he gets back up and running, and in that time, he won’t be able to do anything else but curse my name. Nothing like a heavy blow to the ego to keep you humble.”

Taz laughed and shook his head, wrapping his arm around her neck as they left her office. She was so much shorter than him that the difference in their height was never more obvious than it was now. “How long until he calls you?” he wondered.

Glitch shrugged. “Don’t know, don’t care. He doesn’t have my number, so unless Xena gives it to him, he’ll just have to spew all his anger when he gets back online. Until then, I’m going to enjoy some peace and quiet for a few days.”

The sound of her phone ringing had her stopping, and she snickered when she saw her caller ID. Taz looked at her phone and took it quickly. “Xena, baby, you’ve finally come to your senses and are going to leave that man of yours, right?” he exclaimed excitedly into the phone, turning on the speaker so that they could both hear. It also got the attention of the other men in the room, who all made their way over. “It was my cock you missed so much, wasn’t it? Even though we haven’t slept together, you know that no one else could satisfy you properly.”

“I want your cock about as much as I want a hole in the head,” Karissa scoffed. “And why do you have Glitch’s phone?”

“I’m here,” she replied cheerfully. “He saw your name on my phone and couldn’t help himself. To what do I owe the pleasure of this call?”

Karissa cracked up. “Oh, I think you know very well why I’m calling,” she finally managed to get out. “I don’t know exactly what you did, but I know Code is cursing your name in some very creative ways and vowing to get the ultimate revenge on you. Care to fill me in?”

“He messed with my system. Turnabout is fair play, and all that,” she replied flippantly.

“And by messing with his system, you...”

“I shut him down,” she answered smugly. “It’ll probably take him a few days to get back online. And that’s if he’s smart enough to know where to look to do it.”

Karissa was silent for a moment before she finally said, “Bitch, I don’t know whether to be worried for your safety or impressed. Code is so damn pissed that even Rogue is giving him a wide berth, and that man is almost as scary as me.”

“You know how to brighten my day,” she clapped happily.

Suddenly there was a sound on the other end of the phone, and Glitch vaguely heard Karissa snarling at someone before a deep voice filled the other end. “You are going to pay for this, Glitch,” Code hissed, pure venom in his voice.

Glitch’s grin widened. “Am I?” she asked carelessly. “It seems to me, big guy, you’ve just had a very important reminder of why you can’t let yourself get stale. Or is it the fact that you got beaten by a girl that bothers you? You kinky lot over there are still stuck in the stone ages, so it stands to reason your ego is bruised from being outsmarted by someone with a vagina.”

She could all but feel the waves of fury coming through the phone. “I can’t wait to take you down, Glitch,” he

threatened frostily. “And when I do, you’re going to wish you never started this little war.”

“Ooooh, big words for a man who doesn’t have access to his system,” she replied haughtily. “Maybe instead of trying to sound big and tough, you should get back to work on fixing that. You know, before you really piss me off, and I make sure that you spin in circles for weeks.”

“You think you’re better than me, Glitch, but you’re not. And I’m going to enjoy proving it to you.” Then the phone died with a click.

Glitch pocketed her phone and glanced around at the rest of her team. All of them but Taz were looking at her like they were concerned. “What?” she asked, confused.

“Glitch, are you sure that whatever you have going on here isn’t going to end in shit?” Simba asked carefully, brows pulled down into a frown. “Code is a member of the Dragons MC, and if you’re not careful, you could put our relationship with them in jeopardy if they see this as an attack against all of them and not just one person.”

She paused and considered that. Did she just screw up and go too far? The attack had been at Code’s expense, but then again, Code was their security and computer expert, much like she was for her own team. Damn it, she thought with a frown. She had a habit of reacting and not always thinking things through, and it looked like she had done that again with this situation with Code.

Giving a low groan, she shut her eyes and rubbed a hand over her face. “Fuck,” she finally hissed out. “You’re probably right. But he messed with my goddamn system, Simba. You really expected me to let that go?”

“Nope,” he replied with a shake of his head. “Sometimes it’s a good idea to keep a man in his place and remind him he’s not the shit he thinks he is. But you’ve made your point, and the last thing we want to happen is for someone to realize they’re vulnerable and attack them. Especially knowing Xena’s there. She can handle herself, but it’s always nice to know there’s a back-up in place if something gets past her.”

She hated when he was right. “Fine,” she whined, turning and stalking back to her office, a small pout on her mouth. Childish? Probably, but she didn’t care. She never liked to know that she had to give in and fix something for someone that didn’t deserve it, in her opinion. Especially since she knew Code wouldn’t forgive her for it. It just meant that she would have to keep her guard up, because she had no idea what he was going to come back with. If he tried to shut her down, he was going to be in for a big surprise, but still, she wouldn’t put it past him.

She spent the next ten minutes putting his system back online so that they were at least operational, but she wasn’t about to go any further than that. He could handle that shit on his own. The man said he was better than her, so now he could prove it.

When she pushed away from her computer, she turned and saw Ursa standing there. He arched a brow at her expectantly. “They’re back online,” she grumbled, crossing her arms over her chest. “And I’m telling you right now, if their President gets pissed at me for this, you’re going to have to back me up. I’m pretty sure he hates me.”

“He doesn’t hate you,” Ursa replied with a roll of his eyes. “He’s just pissed you pointed a gun in his face. Apparently you’re not the only one to do that.”

She couldn’t help but smile at the memory of when she snuck into their clubhouse while they had been in Church. Karissa’s former foster sister was after her, and she had killed someone to send a message to Karissa. Glitch, though, received no contact from her or their team, and made her way there, thinking they were being held hostage. Lo and behold, the two MCs were working together and no one thought to let her know. She made sure that they all realized her displeasure with that, but it was the Dragons MC President, Savage, who had drawn the brunt of her ire with her gun in his face.

Nothing like making a good first impression.

“Makes you wonder why that keeps happening, doesn’t it?” Glitch replied easily.

Ursa chuckled. “I heard his woman actually fired at him, so she’s got you beat there.”

She heard that too. Karissa had been all too happy to share that little tidbit with her. “Well, this time, he doesn’t have to worry about me showing up and doing it, because I have no plans on heading over that way for a good long time. I love Xena, but I much prefer my own little cave.”

Ursa reached out his hand and pulled her to her feet. “I completely agree. Now, I need to redo my braids, and you need some more lessons.”

She nodded excitedly and followed him out. “Gotta pretty you up a bit more,” she teased him. “Find you a nice lady to settle down with.”

He gave her a *yeah-right* look. “Babe, we both know that no sane woman wants to settle down with any of us. So you’re the one who gets to deal with us for the long haul.”

“Don’t threaten me,” she grinned. “Or I’ll sign you all up for dating websites just to make sure that doesn’t happen.” He shook his head and they headed for his room.

A few hours later, when her hands were tired from the intricate braid work that he showed her how to do, she headed back to her inner sanctum for a moment before she went to grab something to eat in the kitchen. She shook out her hands and then logged in to her system to do a few quick checks.

She liked to make sure everything was running at full speed at least once a day. It kept her sharp, and it also made sure that she was aware of any potential problems as early as possible. It also gave her a chance to check in on some of her investments.

She had grown up wealthy, and while that meant many opportunities for her that many wouldn’t have, she never let it define her or allow her to think she was better than someone else. When her parents died in a plane crash when she was eighteen, she inherited everything, and it had been shocking. But instead of letting it make her lazy or entitled, she sought



out ways to use it to help not only herself but anyone else who could use it as well.

She invested a good amount, but most of the rest of the money sat untouched. Hell, she didn't think that she could spend it all in one lifetime. Still, she had no plan on finding out. Instead, she donated money to programs that were dear to her heart, and she set up a charity. She had people who ran it, and made sure she wasn't getting scammed, but mostly she stayed out of it. It was better that way.

Today, she was setting up scholarships for girls that wanted to get into computer science and computer-related fields. Full ride scholarships to the school of their choice to chase their dreams. Maybe they would be the ones to change the world. She was happy to help fund them if that was the case.

She got to work on getting the money transferred to the accounts she needed before reaching out to her lawyer and her contact at the local high school. When she finished, she sat back and smiled. This was what gave her joy. Knowing she was helping someone in some small way. It was exactly why she loved her job now with this team.

Suddenly, an alarm blared on her computer and she sat forward abruptly, mouth pulling down into a frown. Her gut tightened as she pulled up her screens.

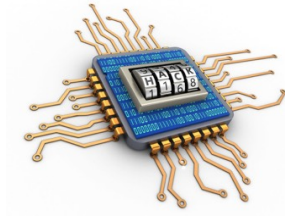
Her blood ran cold when she saw what it was, and her entire body stiffened in shock and panic. "Fuck, fuck, fuck," she chanted softly as she started clicking on the keys. No, she had to get this down, had to make sure it didn't get any further. She had never moved so fast in her life.

She knew this was Code's idea of revenge, but he had no idea what he did, or what he potentially unleashed.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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### SLIP

He laughed as he slit the man's throat. God, he loved this feeling. The power of knowing that he was the one to end this bastard's life. And, knowing the idiot never saw him coming. There was a reason they called him Slip, and he loved to prove why over and over again.

He let the body drop away from him and wiped the bloody knife on his pant leg before stepping back and away from the scene. He didn't care about clean up, or who might find the body. Not only was he great at getting in undetected, but he was just as great at leaving and making sure nothing was left behind.

He made his way out of the home and down the road, avoiding the street lamps so no one would get a good look at him. When he reached his vehicle a few blocks over, he wasn't surprised to find their team's leader, Hazard, waiting for him. He slipped into the car and they were off.

Neither of them spoke, not needing any chatter to fill the silence. This was why he loved his team. They didn't waste time with meaningless talking. The only thing he wanted was a drink, and a whore to fuck. Knowing Crisp would probably have a few already lined up, he didn't have to worry about finding his own. And with the way he was feeling, they were about to get a pounding they weren't expecting. For him, there

was nothing like making a woman cry and scream his name. It was another kind of power, and one he relished.

When they reached their temporary headquarters, they parked and made their way inside. His team was already there, enjoying themselves, the air thick with weed smoke and the sound of screams. Some were coming from the back rooms, but not all. Crisp had a whore pinned to the wall as he roughly took her ass. The woman's thick make up had been ruined by her tears, but she took him over and over, cries spilling from her lips in some kind of jumbled mess that sounded like begging for more. He watched the sight for another moment, letting the burn of desire work through him. First, he had to shower, then he would find his own whore to take this edge off.

When he entered his temporary room, he rolled his eyes when he realized that Maggot was already passed out with two women on either side of him, both naked and clearly coming down from whatever high they were on, based on the lines of what he assumed was coke on the nightstand. He'd get him back for that later, but he didn't really care. He'd find another place to fuck his own whore.

When he climbed out of the shower, he didn't bother with a shirt, just pulled on a pair of jeans, leaving them unbuttoned, and headed down to the main room. When he entered, he grabbed one of the women hanging around the entryway and pulled her with him to the empty spot on the couch. Hazard arched a brow as he pushed the woman to her knees and pulled out his cock. The woman took it in her mouth immediately and got to work.

He gave Hazard a smug look, making Hazard roll his eyes and take another drag on his blunt.

They were leaving tomorrow, so tonight was their night to party and celebrate another job well done. Their team worked in the shadows and had no problem getting their hands dirty with jobs that everyone else were too big of pussies to handle. No job was off limits if the money was right. They just kept on moving, and they made bank doing it. Between that and his hacking skills, he was set for life. Something his fucking

parents wouldn't ever know, but it was a nice, silent, fuck you to them for abandoning him all those years ago.

Even now, just thinking about it was enough to enrage him, and he gripped the woman's hair tightly in his fist as he fucked her face. She gagged, but he didn't care, too focused on his thoughts. He let her catch a quick breath when she made a sound of distress, then he started all over again. Her mouth worked on him as well as it could, but as blow jobs went, it was lackluster. Still, it would take the edge off enough for him to fuck her without seriously hurting her.

He did that when he needed to, but she wasn't his type for that. And, that wasn't what he needed tonight.

Instead, he allowed himself to spill down her throat before he let go of her hair and let her pull away. She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, and he told her, "Don't go far. I'm not done." She nodded, got to her feet and walked away.

His phone buzzed and he pulled it out, frowning when he saw the alert flashing at him. "Problem?" Hazard asked.

"Fuck if I know," he grumbled, pissed that anything would get in the way of him enjoying his celebration. He opened the phone, and then he stilled when he realized what he was looking at. Or, rather, *who* he was looking at. But just as quickly as the alert was there, it was gone.

A blip in time, really, but it was enough for him to smile that cold, cruel smile that came naturally to him whenever he thought about her. The very one she would see when he finally killed her the way he should have all those years ago.

It seemed she had finally gotten sloppy, and now she was on borrowed time. He knew her location. Which meant they were going to need a plan, because he wasn't going to let her slip through his fingers again.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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### GLITCH

She stood surrounded by her team, her gut churning with a mixture of fear and anger. Goddamn Code had gone too far. It was one thing to be pissed at each other and trying to best one another, but putting her name and face out on the internet, and on a fucking dating site no less, was too fucking far. Especially since he knew what kind of work she did. What their team did.

Code had no idea what he had done. Or how pissed her team was.

“I say we ride over there and kill him on the spot,” Taz thundered. It wasn’t often he got this angry, but he was furious knowing what Code had done. Hell, if Code was standing here, she was pretty sure Taz would shoot him and be done with it.

“Can’t risk our alliance with them,” Simba said with a grim look. “But he’ll have to answer for this somehow. He doesn’t get to fuck with Glitch this way and think nothing will happen.” There was a chorus of agreement from everyone, and Glitch felt it like a punch in the gut.

This was why she loved her team and why she was so fiercely protective of them. They weren’t worried about what kind of connection could be made to them, they were worried for her.

She took down the dating profile that Code set up, blocked him from posting any more, and had sent him one simple message to let him know that what he had done was damn stupid. Then she found her team and called an emergency meeting.

The entire premise of their team was secrecy. Not only because of the work they did, and still continued in other capacities, but because they all had enemies that would love to get their hands on them for one reason or another. When you did mercenary work, you weren't exactly in the business of making friends. She had more than one enemy who would jump at the chance to eliminate her.

She had to hope that none of those enemies had seen the page before she was able to take it down. Not only had he given her location, but he had somehow managed to dig up her legal name and use it on the profile. She had no idea where or how he got that information, but when she found out, she was going to make sure no one else could find it.

"I say we head on down there and handle this face to face," Jag suggested darkly. "That asshole published Glitch's name. If someone saw it, they could trace it back to us. We're compromised, and we need to get the hell out of town."

"We don't have any jobs right now," Vulture remarked with a nod. "And if we get any, we can put them off unless it's pressing. The biggest thing is, we need to get Glitch out of here, and fast."

"Then I'll shoot the bastard's ass," Taz agreed, nodding righteously.

"No one is shooting him but me," Glitch huffed, narrowing her eyes warningly at Taz when he opened his mouth to argue. Taz snapped his mouth closed, but didn't look happy about it. "And I'm not leaving until we talk to Xena and her club. Simba is right, we can't break an alliance because that shit gets around. So I say we call Xena, let her know the situation, and get her to arrange a secure video call with their MC. And we insist that Xena sits in on it. I don't give a flying shit about

their caveman ways, she will always be a part of our team, and that means she's involved in this too."

Simba held her gaze and gave a wry smile. "Who knew the little sprite would be the voice of reason," he joked. She flipped him off, but her lips twitched. "I agree with Glitch. We call Xena, and we get this set up. The question is, what do we do once they realize the magnitude of their fuck up?"

"We're going to have to leave town either way," Warg answered grimly. "Compromised is compromised. We lock up shop, and we head out of state. Considering that the Dragons are our allies, we head there and they put us up. And if we make that puny asshole squirm, well, all the better." He gave Glitch a sliver of a smile that was full of promise. The man didn't hold back when someone threatened any of them.

"Too big a target," Copper warned. "If they can track Glitch, and us, they can track Xena. Glitch would be harder for them to spot, because she's a secret hermit that rarely leaves her computers, but the rest of us, if they find out where we are, they'll come in guns blazing if they're after our whole team."

"Fuck, this is a mess," Glitch moaned. She scrubbed a hand over her face in frustration. "We can't just drive around with no purpose, that makes no sense."

"I wasn't going to mention it, but I received a communication from someone who is looking to have their daughter and grandson pulled out of a bad spot in Louisiana. It's not really our thing, and the man who messaged me can't pay, but this could be our reason for leaving the state without raising alarms," Simba announced.

Glitch frowned. Normally all requests came through her, and she narrowed her eyes at him. "And who is this person who messaged you?" she demanded, hands on her hips.

Simba gave her a cool stare in response. "Someone I knew a long time ago, and one of the very few I trust to have my personal number. Don't worry about it, Glitch. Everything was encrypted and encoded the way you set it up."

She huffed again, but didn't say anything. There was something there, and she would figure it out later, but right now they had more pressing issues to deal with. "Fine. If you want to use that as your way out of the state, that's a good reason. Still, I don't know that I want to spend any more time with the Dragons than necessary. Or do you think I can't protect myself?" she arched a brow at them all.

"No one is saying that," Tiger said with a roll of his eyes. "But if we're talking about all kinds of people coming after you, no way in hell you can take them all on unless you really are secretly Wonder Woman under all that nerd."

"If you are and you've been holding out on that sexy as shit outfit, I'm going to be pissed," Taz added with a wicked grin.

"Personally, I think she's more Harley Quinn than Wonder Woman," Vulture offered.

"Oh, yeah, I could see that," Taz agreed. "You'd make a hot Harley Quinn, babe."

"Jesus Christ, it's like a bunch of damn crows," Jag muttered in exasperation. "Can we get back to the task at hand? Glitch is a badass, but she's not a superhero or villain. So, no, Glitch, you can't stay here on your own. We need to keep you safe, and the easiest way to do that is sending you to the Dragons to make sure you're protected until we know no one is coming after you or us."

She frowned, but didn't argue. In a way, it made sense, but the idea of being near the one man that was the cause of all this, well, it made her feel kind of unhinged, and that was never good. "And if they don't want to have me stay there?" she countered.

Simba gave her a smile that told her he had no doubt they wouldn't agree. No one endangered his team and didn't pay for it. "I don't think that will be a problem," he finally drawled. "And if you happen to get a few more digs in while you're there, or remind him why he shouldn't have fucked with you in the first place, you won't hear any complaints from me."



Which was *carte blanche* for her to make Code see the error of his ways, she thought with a wicked grin of her own. Oh yes, she could definitely do that.

“I say we make sure she has a few guns with her,” Taz decreed, laughter in his voice. “Just to make sure none of those boys forget how deadly she is.”

“I bet they search her before she even steps foot in their clubhouse,” Warg smirked. “Savage won’t want a repeat of last time.”

On that, she had to agree. Savage would have a shit fit if she pulled a gun on him again. Though, if she was honest, it kind of made her want to do it again just to remind him she was no damsel. “I say we stop talking and call them. As much as I hate the idea of going there, I’m thinking that some time spent with Xena to make sure she’s not going soft is just the ticket. And it’s always helpful to know what your enemy is up to,” she added, rubbing her hands together in anticipation.

They all laughed, then headed into Church. She took a seat at the computer and next to Simba, who sat at the head of the table. Once everyone was seated, she turned on the outside cameras and all their security systems to make sure no one came in unannounced. Now that there was the potential of a threat, she couldn’t be too careful.

“Call Xena first, and then we can have her tell her man and his President what’s up,” Simba instructed. Glitch nodded and ensured the call was encrypted, and that their IP was always moving. She wasn’t taking any chances. Once the call went through, they waited until Xena answered, sounding slightly out of breath.

“If this has anything to do with why Code is stomping around like a bear with a thorn in its paw, I’m happy to put him out of his misery,” Karissa announced drily. “The man has been bitching and complaining nonstop.”

“We’ve got a problem, and he won’t be complaining much longer if he knows what’s good for him,” Simba told her grimly.

“Shit,” Karissa hissed, and they heard her moving around, then a door slam shut. “What did he do?”

“You alone?” Simba asked her.

“For now. Razor saw me on the phone and watched me come up here, so we’ve got about a minute before he comes up to check on me.”

“Glitch, you explain,” Simba ordered.

Glitch huffed and told her the situation. Karissa was silent until she finished. Then, she hissed, “I’m going to kill him myself. What the fuck is his problem?”

“No bloodshed until I get there,” Glitch warned her. “He’s mine to bloody.”

“But I could do it so much faster and cleaner,” Karissa whined, just in time to hear the door open in the background. “You’d make it all bloody and messy.”

“Yes, but he would suffer more if we make it bloody and messy,” Glitch pointed out cheerily. “Your problem is that sexy biker of yours would try to stop you out of loyalty to his brother.”

“Not if I tie him up first,” Karissa replied easily.

“Only one who is getting tied up is you, Rissa,” Razor’s voice said loudly over the line. “And you’re not killing anyone. Though, based on who you’re talking to, I’d say it’s probably Code.”

“Put your man on, Xena,” Simba ordered.

“You’re on speaker,” Karissa told him. “And you’re not getting rid of me, so if you think you’re going to have some manly kind of talk without the little woman, I’m going to kick your ass.”

“I doubt you could reach that high with how soft you’re getting,” Simba tossed back, no heat in his tone.

Karissa cursed him, while Razor laughed. “Don’t worry, baby,” he soothed, “you’re only soft in all the right places.”

“Before you two go getting all kinky and shit, can we get back to the reason for our call?” Glitch interrupted drily. “We all know you’re obsessed with her pussy, pretty boy. Got a nice view of that the last time I walked in on you.”

“Don’t remind me,” Razor muttered. “I’m installing bolts on the doors from now on.”

“As if that would keep me out,” Glitch scoffed. “Now, we have a problem; you and Xena need to arrange a meeting with your club. You have five minutes and then I’m calling. And you better tell your brother to make sure he answers the fucking call or I’ll be coming down there and we’ll be having it out, and only one of us will be leaving. Got it?” Her voice was rock hard by the time she finished.

“Why?” Razor asked simply.

“Your boy got his balls in a twist and compromised Glitch, and our team by extension, by putting her legal name, picture, and location on a dating website,” Simba gritted out, his tone deadly and menacing. “So you tell your President that unless he wants a major problem on his hands, he and your club will be ready for our call in 5 minutes. Oh, and you best make sure that Xena is in on that meeting, or we’re going to have an even bigger problem, because this involves her.” With a nod at Glitch, he indicated for her to hang up. Glitch did, and then sat back.

“I bet we get a call in less than five minutes,” Tiger predicted.

“But do we answer, or do we make them sweat?” Copper mused aloud.

“They won’t be able to call me back. The only person who can do that is Xena, and she won’t give away how to get in touch with us,” Glitch said confidently. “So they’ll have to sweat until we call.” And she was perfectly fine with that. Hell, if they weren’t in a time crunch, she would have let them sweat for a few days, thinking they were on their way.

She had half a mind to do a deep dive into Code and see what skeletons she could dig up, but she refused to stoop to his

level.

Finally, after five full minutes, Simba gave her the go ahead to call the Dragons MC. The call only rang twice before it clicked on, and they heard Savage say, “I hear you have a problem with one of our brothers.” His tone was calm, but there was no missing the irritation underneath, or the tightly controlled anger he was trying to hide.

“It would seem,” Simba began in a tone like cold, hard steel, “that we do. Considering that your so-called hacker not only endangered our own hacker but our entire team as well, because he let his emotions get the better of him.”

“Bullshit,” Code’s voice snapped furiously through the line. “She nuked my goddamn system and completely fucked us over.”

“I don’t give a flying fuck what she did,” Simba snapped back, that cold steel gaining a sharp edge.

“How about we all calm down?” Savage suggested tightly. “I want to know what the hell is going on, since no one has explained it to me. I know something happened to the system here, but otherwise I’ve been busy dealing with my Old Lady.”

“Is Xena there?” Glitch asked before Simba could reply.

“I’m here, but they aren’t all that happy about it,” Karissa announced grimly.

“This is club business and you’re not a brother,” another voice griped, but she couldn’t quite place it.

“She’s part of our team,” Jag replied coolly, “and this affects her.”

“How does this affect her?” Razor demanded, annoyance clear in his tone.

“How about you all shut the hell up and let Glitch explain?” Karissa snapped. “God, and they say women don’t listen.”

Glitch smirked. “They don’t think with the right brain enough, babes,” she drawled. “It means they’re a little slow on the uptake most of the time.”

“Fucking hell, just get to the goddamn point,” Savage snapped.

“It seems that in retaliation for shutting down his system, Code decided it would be a good idea to put my information on a dating site,” Glitch said tightly. “Now, I know you’re all trying to use those tiny brains of yours to figure out why that’s a problem, so I’ll explain it to you. The issue is he used my legal name, which he should have no fucking access to unless he was searching shit he shouldn’t. He posted my picture, and he gave my location. A location that was secure until that moment. Because, in case you forgot, or missed it when we were there, we are a former mercenary team. Our entire livelihood relies on security and anonymity. We have enemies, and that means anything with our legal names or pictures will set off alerts to those people and let them know who and where we are. I’m sure you’re finally starting to see the problem, but let me drive it home a little more. You currently have one of our teammates in your clubhouse. What do you think is going to happen if they figure out who she is, and where she is? So, because you don’t like to admit that a woman could be a better hacker than you, and you wanted to take out your revenge on me when you were pissed at me for making a point, you went too far. You not only put us and our team in danger, you put one of your own brother’s Old Ladies in danger. I hope you’re happy, asshole, because you’re about to realize how big of a mistake you’ve made.”

Silence echoed, and Glitch sat back, jittery with impatience.

Finally, after another full moment, Code’s voice filled the line. “I’m sorry,” he said, tone infused with shock, guilt, and surprisingly, sincerity. “You’re right, I wasn’t thinking. I was only thinking about how pissed I was at you for shutting me down. It was a reaction, and I should have fucking known better.”

“You’re right, you should have,” Taz returned angrily.

Savage interrupted, “Alright, it’s clear you have a right to be pissed, so what do you want us to do? How can we fix this?”

“I’m glad you asked,” Simba said grimly. “Because you’re about to have a guest while we handle a job, to make sure she’s not able to be found if shit goes south until we can get back and handle it.”

Silence on the other end. Well, other than Karissa’s delighted laughter.

Glitch grinned and said in a fake sad voice, “Well, that wasn’t the reaction I was expecting. A girl would think that you weren’t excited to have me. Especially considering how valuable I am to have around. And, you know, just plain fun.”

“I’m locking up all the fucking guns,” Savaged vowed darkly. “Fine, how soon will you be here?”

As Simba and Savage worked out the details, Glitch glanced at her screen and saw a message pop up.

Code: I’m sorry

Simple and to the point, and her gut said that he meant it, but the question was, would she forgive him? She might, but she was going to happily let him suffer for a little longer. They’d be in close quarters for a while, and she would take every opportunity to remind him of the fact that she was better than him.

And if she had to play dirty to make it happen, well, so be it.

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## CHAPTER SIX

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### CODE

A ball of lead sat in his gut as he listened to Savage and Simba figure out the details of Glitch's arrival and stay at the clubhouse. He knew he should probably be annoyed, but at the same time, he didn't have the right to be when he was the reason she needed to hide out. Because of a stupid decision he made when he was pissed off at her for attacking and shutting down his system.

This was why he tried to keep a tight rein on his temper. When he saw red, he did shit without thinking.

He sent an apology message to Glitch, but so far, had gotten no response. Not that he was surprised. Hell, she was probably plotting his murder. And if not her, then Karissa was. He could feel her glaring daggers at him, and when he glanced at her, her mouth was pulled down into a fearsome scowl. This wasn't Karissa, Razor's Old Lady, this was Karissa, the former mercenary, and he could admit it made him a bit nervous. Even sitting on Razor's lap, it didn't detract from what her eyes were promising to do as soon as she could get close to him.

Razor also scowled at him, no doubt pissed he also, unknowingly, put Karissa at risk.

A soft chime on his computer brought his attention back to his screen, and he clicked open a message from Glitch.

Glitch: You better make some space in your inner sanctum, because when I get there, I need a space to work, and I've decided that I'll be working with you to make sure you don't fuck up again.

Code scowled at that, the idea of her working with him not a good one. Not only because she would probably try to kill him, but he hated anyone working in his space or touching his things. Which meant he was going to have to set some ground rules. Or find her another space to work. Yeah, that was going to have to be the way this went, because he couldn't spend day in and day out with her in his space.

They'd done that once, and it had ended with the two of them fighting like cats and dogs and insulting each other all the time.

"Alright, we'll plan for you to arrive in the next couple of days then," Savage said briskly, pulling him out of his thoughts. "If you need anything in the meantime, let us know. Glitch, we'll get you set up in a space when you're here and —"

"I'll be working in Code's office," Glitch interrupted, making Savage scowl.

Code bit back a sigh. "Actually, I think—"

"See, that's the problem, you weren't thinking when you put my fucking picture up on a dating website," Glitch interrupted coldly. "So, no, I'll be sticking close, and you and I will be getting nice and cozy. Or are you not man enough to handle having me in your space again?" There was a taunting note to her voice that set him on edge.

"I can handle you just fine," he tossed back, temper pricked, even though he knew she was baiting him.

"Apparently not if you can't keep yourself in check," Taz's southern twang replied. "So I suggest you make some room, brother, or you'll be answering not only to Glitch and Xena, but to me, because I don't take too well to anyone who fucks with my team."



“And when they’re finished, it will be our turn,” Simba added warningly. “We’ll see you in a couple of days.” Then the call dropped and silence filled the room.

“I don’t know if I should laugh or beat your ass,” Savage remarked thoughtfully as he glanced at Code.

“I know which one I want to do,” Karissa bit out.

“Now that the call is over, shouldn’t you be out of here?” Code tossed back, glaring at her.

Karissa’s eyes went hard and flinty. “Let’s get one thing clear. This is your fuck up, not mine. You were the one who couldn’t take a hit to his ego like a man, and instead acted like a spoiled little boy and threw a tantrum. A tantrum not only put her in danger, but me by extension. Which means that if shit hits the fan, it’ll be your ass I hang out to dry.” She pushed off of Razor’s lap and looked around the room. “I thought you all figured this shit out when I was dealing with Sena, but apparently you need a reminder. My team and I did shit that most of you, even those of you who served in the military, would never do. So the next time you want to treat me like a little girl who can’t understand what the big men do in here, remember I’m a hell of a lot more lethal than all of you. And now, you’re not going to have just me to worry about, you’re going to have someone who can not only kill you in your sleep, but can also make your life a living hell, under your roof. So I would start sleeping with one eye open, boys, because shit is about to get very uncomfortable for you all. Your little boys club is about to get a good solid kick into the twenty-first century if you’re not careful.” Then, without a backwards glance even when Razor tried to stop her, she stormed out of the room, slamming the door behind her.

“Why the hell do I have to worry when I didn’t do shit?” Jax whined. He was the club’s resident jokester. He stood at six feet, and had ink covering most of his body. He didn’t have the same pretty boy looks as Razor, but enough that he never wanted for female attention. His hair was a dark brown, and he had green eyes that rivaled Royal’s, especially when he was laughing.

Everyone turned to look at Code, and he fought not to squirm in his seat. “Care to explain?” Savage asked, though by the tone of his voice, it wasn’t really a question.

“She hacked into my system and shut me down,” Code defended angrily. “What, did you expect me to just take it sitting down?”

“Of course not,” Savage returned flatly. “But I also expected you to use your damn head and not let a woman get to you.”

“It’s not like they haven’t been trying to one up each other,” Fury pointed out. “Something was bound to happen, with the two of them trying to piss the other off. Who’s to say that she wouldn’t have outed you in some way next?”

“I notice you’re only willing to say that with Karissa not here,” Razor remarked with a scowl. “Who the hell cares about them picking at each other? That’s no excuse, and I’m fucking pissed. You need to fix this, brother, or we’re going to have a major problem.”

“Fuck,” Code hissed. “Look, I’m sorry, okay? It was stupid, and I shouldn’t have done it. I was pissed and I let my anger get the best of me. I’ll apologize to Karissa, and I’ll apologize again to Glitch when she gets here.”

“I don’t see the point in beating a dead horse,” Savage said before anyone else could interject. “So let’s move on. Code knows he was an ass, and he’ll take his licks as they come. Especially with Glitch coming here and Karissa being here as well. So until then, we make a plan to keep both their location as quiet as possible.”

Ink snorted. At six feet, with blue eyes, long dark hair, and covered in tattoos, it wasn’t hard to figure out where he got his road name from. Also, he was their resident tattoo artist so they never had to pay for any of their tats. “Have you met them?” he laughed. “Them breathing will be enough to let people know they’re here. And as they hang out with the women...” He trailed off and let that point sink in. Savage, Fury, Steel, Rogue, and Razor all shared wary looks.

Code rolled his eyes. “Look, the best way to keep them safe is off the grid. They stay on the grounds, they don’t go shopping or whatever female shit women like to do, and we make sure no one mentions them. It’s not rocket science. And I’ll keep an eye out for anyone who mentions either of them online.”

“I think he’s been in front of his computers too long if he thinks it’s going to be that simple,” Razor drawled with a roll of his eyes. “Look, we’re going around in circles. They’ll be here in a couple of days, and we need to make sure we’re ready for Glitch.”

“Code, you get your system up and running again,” Savage ordered. “Probably best if you don’t interact with Glitch between now and when she arrives. And you’ll make space in your office for her.”

Code scowled. “Just because she said she was going to work with me doesn’t mean she has to,” he argued.

“You really want to piss her off more right now?” Rogue asked flatly. Their VP and one scary motherfucker, Code resisted the urge to roll his eyes at him. He stood at six-four with hard blue eyes, dark hair, a goatee, and a body that was made for crushing. He was not one you pissed off if you wanted to live another day. Though, Code had seen him settle down now that Scarlett was in the picture. And their twin girls, Win and Wren. Still, he didn’t feel like getting his ass beat by the man if he could help it.

“I don’t like anyone in my space,” Code maintained stubbornly. “And the last time, she just got in my way.”

“Tough shit,” Savage replied unsympathetically. “Maybe this way the two of you will work out whatever your issue with each other is.” He looked at Fury and Ice. “The two of you get to work on making sure we’re set up for any possibility.” Both men nodded. Savage looked at Steel. “I’ll leave the logistics to you on whether we need a sniper, but work with Fury and Ice if you need anything.”

“Done,” Steel said with a nod.

“Everyone else, be on your toes and keep an eye out for anyone that doesn’t look like they should be around. Keep an eye on the bar and the garage in case they try to get through our businesses first instead of an outright attack. Razor, do you think Karissa will tell us what we could expect to come our way?”

Razor gave a sardonic smile. “What do you think?”

Savage sighed. “Fine, wait until she calms down and doesn’t want to castrate you, or the rest of us, but we need to know what could be coming. We can ask the Predators when they get here, but it won’t hurt to get ahead of everything and get things sorted before they roll up. Especially since we don’t know if whoever is after them has already tracked Karissa here.”

Code felt another jolt of guilt. He really stepped in it this time, and he was going to have to work hard to apologize and make it up to Karissa and Glitch. Though he would worry about Glitch when she got here.

“What room are we putting her in?” Fury asked.

“She can stay with Karissa and I,” Razor offered.

“You really are a crazy bastard, aren’t you?” Rogue grunted. “You want two women that can slice your balls and throat at the same time in the same small apartment?”

Razor winced as if that thought hadn’t occurred to him before. “Yeah, okay, maybe not a good idea.”

“They should both be on the grounds,” Snake said with a shake of his head. A former Special Forces operative, the man was a quieter member of their club, but he was no less lethal. He was like a modern day Rambo, but with shorter black hair and bright blue eyes. He was built like Rogue, but had less ink.

Savage nodded. He looked at Razor and Rogue both. “Which means both your women, and the twins, need to stay on the grounds. And the girls will have someone driving and picking them up from school and school only.”

Rogue nodded. “Been meaning to talk to you about building a house on the grounds anyway. We spend more time

here than in town.”

Savage nodded. “We’ll talk about it.”

“And I’ll talk to Karissa; we’ll stay in our room here,” Razor added. “I think there’s a spare room near us.” Then he smirked at Code. “Though, I think that room is also near Code’s, so I guess the question is, will he be getting any sleep knowing that the two women most likely to murder him in his sleep are close by?”

Code glowered at him. “No one is going to be murdering me,” he snapped. “I can sleep in my office if I feel the need.”

“Do we have any other spaces other than that room?” Savage asked, redirecting the conversation.

“Not unless we want her to sleep with the club whores,” Ink said with a grin. “And after the last time, I don’t think that would go over any better. She’d probably throw a fit.”

One of the club whores made the mistake of getting in Karissa and Glitch’s way when they were heading into Church when dealing with Karissa’s former foster sister, and it had ended with both women making an example out of Loni, one of the women who were stupid enough to question them. Code knew her being with them would not end well.

“Then she’ll be in the room Razor mentioned,” Savage decreed. He arched a brow at Code. “And you two will have to play nice because I’m not dealing with a dead body.”

“Fine,” Code muttered.

“Alright, then we’ll call this meeting over. Everyone get to it. Keep your eyes open and your ears to the ground.” With that, Savage called an end to Church and stood.

They all filed out of the room and Code headed for his office. He had to make sure his system was back up and running to full potential. He also had to find any holes still left open, before someone else got in and screwed them over again.

When he entered his office, he slammed the door shut behind him, collapsed into his chair and scrubbed his hands

over his face. “Fuck,” he breathed out, as he let himself have a moment to digest everything.

He really fucked things up, and now that he was alone, he could let himself really feel the guilt and other emotions running through him. Then he told himself to get over it, and that moping wouldn't fix anything. So, he got to work.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### GLITCH

When they reached the gate of the Dragon's compound, she had a moment of excitement to see Karissa, but right behind it was anger at the need to be there in the first place. Sitting on the back of Simba's bike, she desperately wanted to tell him to turn around and take her back. Or take her with them. Her anger at the whole situation had only grown over the last two days. The team wasn't big on talking while they drove, so she had a lot of time with her thoughts.

That, and she was kind of miffed that Simba didn't want her to go with them. Sure, she didn't have the same field training as the rest of them - as they constantly liked to point out - but she was still valuable. Though Taz bluntly told her that she looked like a tiny stick of pink cotton candy with her hair, so unless she was willing to dye it, she would stand out like a sore thumb. And she wasn't touching her hair, now that she had it exactly the color she wanted.

So here she was, and she had to accept she was going to be stuck with Code for a while. Still, she was going to make sure it wasn't a comfortable stay for him. And she had Karissa on her side, so that was something - she had an ace in the hole if he really pissed her off. Between the two of them, they could make things very uncomfortable.

As they pulled up to the clubhouse, she wasn't surprised to find Karissa, Razor, and Savage waiting for them. Though she

was surprised to see the rest of the men weren't around, including Code. Huh, maybe he was hoping to lie low and avoid her for a little bit. Well, that wasn't about to happen, she thought to herself.

Simba parked his bike and then helped her off the bike before he turned it off and climbed off as well. She kept herself slightly behind him, knowing there was a protocol to these kinds of things. She fought back an eye roll, but shared a knowing look with Karissa who didn't bother to hide her own rolling eyes.

Savage moved down the steps and extended his hand to Simba. "Brother," he said simply as they clasped hands.

"Savage," Simba rumbled back. He turned his head and his lips quirked slightly as he looked at Karissa. "Xena, you're looking well, even though you're a kept woman now. I figured you'd have allowed yourself to relax a bit."

Karissa narrowed her eyes at his teasing, and said drily, "I can't decide whether to punch you in the face to remind you that I'm still very much a threat, or to wait until you're not expecting it to do something especially ruthless."

His lips stretched wider. "Xena, with you, I expect everything."

Karissa smirked and walked down the steps to hug him. Glitch looked at Razor and saw him scowl slightly before his expression smoothed out and he leaned against the porch railing instead, crossing his arms over his chest. Glitch snickered, drawing his attention. "Still don't like someone touching your woman, pretty boy?" she taunted. "Worried she might decide to leave your ass after all?"

Razor just gave her a bland stare and replied, "She likes my dick too much to leave me. That, and Esme would kill her."

"Why is it that men think their dicks are what makes us want to stick around?" Glitch asked quizzically. "I mean, do you really think that we can't get the same results with some silicone?"



Savage huffed out a sound that was a mixture of a groan and a sigh. “You’re going to cause trouble while you’re here, aren’t you?” he asked before Razor could reply.

Glitch looked up at him with a sweet smile and fluttered her lashes. Considering he was six-five, that was quite a ways up from her five-two height. “Now, why would you think that? I’m oh so sweet and nice and I would never cause any kind of trouble. I’ll be oh so perfect, you’ll barely notice I’m here,” she gushed in a high pitched voice that had some of her team snorting and laughing behind her.

Savage stared down at her, looking far from convinced. In fact, he looked resigned, and Glitch couldn’t stop the wicked grin from sliding across her face. “Fuck,” he hissed finally. He looked over at Karissa and then back at Simba. “You seriously want to leave both of them with me? How about we trade?” he suggested, and Glitch couldn’t quite tell if he was joking or not.

“And deprive you of the experience of having two strong, kickass former mercenaries under your roof?” Simba responded lightly. “I couldn’t do that, man.”

“I was afraid you were going to say that,” Savage groaned. “Fine. Come on in and we’ll get you settled. You guys staying for the night?”

Simba shook his head. “We need to keep moving. We’ll rest up for a couple of hours and then be on our way. This way, we can make sure that Glitch is all set up.” He lost his easygoing look and his eyes went flinty. “And I expect we won’t be having any more issues between your man and her, or our team.”

Savage held his gaze as he replied, “She’ll be fine here, and there won’t be any more issues as long as the two of them can play nice while they share the space.”

Glitch snorted, but he ignored her.

Simba merely nodded. “Fine. But just a reminder Glitch is a Predators MC member. She is not a club girl or just a tech

person. She's a member of our MC and she deserves to be treated as such. That's non-negotiable."

Savage looked pained at the mention of that, but said, "That's fine, but while she's here, she's not a part of club business unless we deem it necessary. You run your MC your way, and we run ours our way."

Glitch rolled her eyes. "Jeez, fine, we get it," she huffed. "While I'm here I'm reduced to the little woman role because I don't have a dick. Now, I'm tired, and I want to stretch and set up my shit, and all this posturing and politics or whatever is boring. So how about we wrap this up and go inside?"

Both men looked at her, then Simba chuckled while Savage scowled at her. That scowl deepened when Karissa wrapped an arm around her waist and said, "Damn I missed you, shorty. I'm so glad you're here. I bet the two of us can get some things done around here, and the other women will definitely help."

Savage and Razor both groaned, while Glitch's team laughed, knowing full well what that would entail. Glitch and Karissa made their way inside, but not before Karissa gave Razor a look that told him he was going to pay for that little noise later. He just grinned back at her, unrepentant.

Once inside the clubhouse, she smirked when she saw that the rest of the brothers were inside, along with a few of the women. She recognized them all and grinned when she realized the twins, Wren and Win, were also there and looking very excited, with mischievous glints in their eyes. Well, at least she would have a decent enough time while she was here, if she focused on training the two of them. They didn't have much time during their last visit, and she knew they were eager to learn.

"Look who's here, Scarlett," Wren—at least she thought it was Wren—said smugly. "Back up plans one through eight have arrived. Should we have them line up so you can check them over and see who we can eliminate?"

"I still think Viking Daddy should be top choice," Win agreed impishly. "Though Daddy Bear is a close second." The

twins were identical, right down to their honey brown eyes, strawberry blonde hair, cherubic faces, and identical clothes. The only reason she might be able to tell them apart was that Wren was the slightly more abrasive of the two, and she also liked to wear her eyeliner just a hair thicker than her twin. She was sure there were other ways, but it was the quickest way to figure it out for now.

Glitch and Karissa grinned wickedly, even as Scarlett buried her head in her hands and the glowering biker behind her glared at the girls with the promise of retribution. He put his hand on Scarlett's shoulder possessively, his blue eyes hard and glittering. Scarlett and Rogue were complete opposites at first glance, and as far as she was concerned, she wasn't sure why the sweet woman put up with the growly biker. If he was her man, she'd have probably brained him a few times by now for being an ass.

Scarlett was a stunner, with cinnamon colored hair, green eyes, and a knockout body with just the right amount of curves. Glitch could be honest enough with herself that she was jealous of those curves, but the woman was too nice to let it affect her view of her. When she finally lifted her head to look at Glitch, she gave her a small smile. "Are you sure you want to spend time here?" she asked tiredly.

Glitch grinned. "Something tells me it's going to be entertaining," she replied, tongue in cheek.

"Wait a minute," Taz cried, clearly offended. "Why the hell am I not at the top of the backup list? I'd be the best new dad ever. I'm the fun one too, not growly and grumpy like this guy." He jerked a thumb at Rogue, who was glaring daggers at him. Not that Taz cared. He was completely unfazed as he pouted dramatically for the girls.

"We think of you more like a fun uncle," Win told him with a shrug of her shoulder. "You know, the one we call when we want to get into trouble and then need help getting out of it?"

Taz grinned, mollified by their explanation. "I can get onboard with that. Damn, we're going to have some fun when

you're both of legal age."

"Remind me to kill him before he leaves," Rogue gritted out.

"Now, now, Uncle Ro-Ro," Wren soothed. "We'll still make sure you're the first call if we're in real trouble, and if we need to scare the boys away, but we are growing up and we need to spread our wings sometime."

"Sure, and spending time with a crazy ex-mercenary is just the ticket for that," Karissa laughed.

"I swear to God, I'm sending them to a damn convent," Rogue told Scarlett.

Scarlett patted his hand. "It amazes me how you know they're baiting and riling you, and yet you still fall for it every time," she teased with a soft smile. "Besides, I don't need a backup plan when I already have a dark, sexy biker of my own."

Glitch and Karissa shared a look at that, but didn't comment. Instead, they turned away when Rogue took that moment to lean down, haul her out of her chair into his arms, and kiss the life out of her. "Good to know the caveman gene is alive and well around here," Glitch told Karissa sarcastically.

"You get used to it," Karissa replied as she led her toward the back hall, and Glitch knew immediately who they were going to see. "Which is exactly why I'm glad you're here, because we need to remind them of why we won't put up with it."

"Does that mean I get to point guns at heads again?" Glitch asked excitedly. "Oh, please, let me do it to Savage again. It would definitely set the mood for my little stay."

Karissa snorted. "He tried to suggest banning any and all weapons while you're here, but I'm sure you know how well that turned out." She gave a cool smile. "As someone smartly pointed out, with our training, we don't need weapons."

Glitch returned her smile, completely in agreement. She might sit behind a desk, but Simba never went easy on her

training. Hell, she was still convinced that he went harder on her than anyone else. He was the protective sort, and she figured it was because she wasn't with them most of the time, which meant if shit went sideways, they wouldn't be right there to save her, so she had to be able to save herself.

At the time, she had cursed him, but now, she definitely appreciated it.

When they reached the closed door, Glitch stopped and looked at it for a moment. She almost wanted to turn around and walk away on principle, refusing to speak to Code, but she knew that was the coward's way out. And she was no coward.

She reached out and found the door locked. She chuckled, amused he would think that something so mundane as a lock would keep her out. She had half a mind to kick the door in, but instead, she reached into her back pocket and pulled out the spare bobby pin that she always carried, and made quick work of the simple lock. Throwing open the door, she clicked her tongue and said snidely, "If I didn't know any better, I would think that you weren't happy to have me here, dickface. I'm almost insulted you thought a simple lock would keep me out."

Code turned in his chair and gave her a cool look, arching a single brow. His green eyes were blank as he held her stare. "Normally, a locked door means to please knock, and whoever is in the room will choose whether to let you enter, but I guess your parents didn't teach you basic manners before unleashing you on the world," he replied mockingly.

Glitch fought to keep her temper under control. Instead of snapping back at him, she retorted, "Nah, they died before we got to that lesson. Bummer for you, hey?" Code's face lost some of its coolness at that statement, and a flash of guilt moved across his face as she made her way into the room. "Now, where am I setting up?" she asked him briskly.

They had plenty of time to get into it later, but right now, she was tired and hungry and she needed to get her things set up before she could allow herself to relax.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### CODE

He couldn't stop the scowl from forming on his face as he indicated the table they set up behind him along the opposite wall. It was the only space he was willing to concede in here, and it would also ensure that he wasn't facing her all the time. He didn't need her distracting him. As it was, her even being in the room would be distraction enough. She stood there with her pink hair in a sassy bob, wearing a pair of leather pants that fit her like a glove, and a black leather jacket over what looked to be a dark red shirt, but since the jacket was zipped almost all the way up, he couldn't be certain. He could admit that she was hot as hell, but she definitely wasn't his type.

"Right over there," he told her with a wave of his hand at the space he cleared for her.

Glitch looked at the space with narrowed eyes before she turned and gave him a cool stare. "You think that putting me in a corner with a rickety table is putting me in my place, huh?" she sneered.

"This is a tight space as it is," he argued, crossing his arms over his chest and glaring at her. "Since you've insisted that you have to be in here with me, you get what I give you."

"And you just so happen to have some brand spanking new equipment in here to prevent us from using the same layout as the last time I was here," Glitch said snidely. "From the shine

on them, I'd say it was only purchased in the last day or two. You know, if you're trying to make it clear you don't want me in your space, your attempts are juvenile, and only prove my point you still have some maturing to do."

Anger burned in his gut at her words. Mostly because he didn't appreciate her insinuations, but also because there was a small amount of truth to them. "Since you're planning on staying and working here for an unknown length of time, I needed to ensure the capability for both of us to do our work. That meant buying some new equipment. Equipment that you're benefiting from, might I add, at no cost to you," he informed her stiffly. "Space in here is limited. If you had been reasonable and let us put you somewhere else, then we wouldn't have had an issue. Care to complain about something else?"

"You know, you're awfully brave for a man in the presence of two women that could put him in a whole world of pain," Karissa announced thoughtfully as she stepped further into the room. "I can't decide if I want to call you brave or stupid."

"I know which one I want to call him," Glitch sniffed. "But right now, all I care about is getting some food and some sleep. I'll sort this bullshit out later." Then she turned on her heel, and she and Karissa stalked out without a backwards glance.

He stared after them, instantly suspicious. Maybe she was tired, but from the brief interactions they had before, Glitch never left without landing some sort of barb. He stood and walked out of the room, determined to figure out what the hell she was up to, but as soon as he started to clear the end of the hall, he was shoved back against the wall to face down a very unhappy looking Taz and Jag. *Shit*, he thought, as he stared into the eyes of the men who no doubt wanted to gut him and leave him for the damn wildlife to scavenge.

Surprisingly, it was Taz who leaned forward so that they were nose to nose and hissed, "You're lucky I don't kill you where you stand for what you did to her. You don't fuck with my sisters and get away with it, nerd boy. None of us give a flying shit about what could happen to us, but we will never

take it lightly when you go after the two women that mean more to us than anything else. So unless you want me to come back here and help you die slowly and painfully from methods you can't even fathom, then you will treat Glitch with the respect she deserves, no exceptions. Got it?"

Code held his gaze, refusing to look away or cower under that threat. "Yeah, I got it," he said tightly.

Taz's eyes held his, unmoving, with the kind of stare that sent a tremor of unease down his spine. He had a feeling everyone got it wrong with Taz. He might act like an easygoing jokester, but he was far more deadly than anyone gave him credit for, and that was what made him far more dangerous. The rest of them wore their lethality in the open, but Taz was the wildcard. "Good," he finally replied, stepping back. "And just so we're clear..." A fist came up and slammed Code in the gut hard enough that he let out a harsh grunt and slumped forward, trying to get his breath back. "There, I feel much better," Taz said brightly, sounding much more like his normal self. Then he turned and walked away, leaving Jag behind.

"You want your shot too?" Code gasped out, slowly straightening.

Jag gave him a frosty smile and said darkly, "I don't need to take a shot at you, you got the point. What I think you need to remember is that none of us are more dangerous than the two women you will now have to spend every day with for the foreseeable future. And if they decide to kill you and leave your body for the animals, well, who am I to interfere?" Then he turned and walked away, leaving Code to stare after him.

*Fuck*, he thought as he straightened to his full height with a wince. Damn, Taz had definitely not pulled that punch. He could give Rogue or Fury a run for their money with his force. He made his way out to the common room, heading for the bar to grab a beer, feeling the eyes of the Predators as he did. He set his jaw as he leaned against the bar and waited for Tom to get him a beer. This whole thing was a fucking mess, but it was one he caused. Unintentionally, but he had to take his lumps and live with it.



Didn't mean he had to like it, but he'd handle whatever they threw his way.

Tom handed him his beer without a word. Tom was one of the few prospects that might actually last and be a damn good brother. The kid was like a mini Rogue in the sense of how somber and surly he could get when people didn't follow orders, but he never shied away from doing anything that needed done or follow any order given to him. Personally, Code thought it had something to do with his past. He looked into him before allowing him to Prospect, same as he did for every Prospect, but that wasn't something he shared.

People's pasts were their own, and he was big on keeping those kinds of details to himself unless they would threaten or affect the club in some way. Well, except where Glitch was concerned, he thought to himself bitterly as he took a long gulp of his beer. With her, any of his preconceived notions flew right out the window. She was his blind spot, and he needed to shove her out of the way so he could see again. He would never let a woman have that kind of power over him again, and that included a certain pink haired hacker who was sitting in the corner with Karissa and the other women.

The sound of a baby crying had him looking over, along with everyone else in the room, and he couldn't help the smile that pulled across his face when he saw Harley being picked up by his father from the portable bassinet. Harlow and Steel had their son only a few short weeks ago, and already the baby had them all wrapped around his little finger. Especially his father, who was constantly taking him to hold and soothe. Hell, he got himself in trouble with Harlow because he didn't want to hand him over for his feeding, and Harlow told him in very creative terms how if he didn't hand him back, it would end with Harley being his only son as he'd never be able to have sex again.

Seeing the wisdom in not pissing off a postpartum woman, he handed him over, but he was right there to snatch him back up when she was done. The little boy was the spitting image of his father, right down to being a big kid—which Harlow had

been eager to hold over Steel's head—and surprisingly stubborn glint that isn't often found in a baby's eyes.

Steel nestled his son in the crook of his arm and expertly started to rock him, making the cries stop. “Just think, brother,” Code heard from Fury behind him, “that will be you in a few weeks, but with two screaming girls.” The taunting in Fury's voice had the rest of the room chuckle.

Code turned and saw Savage's face form its normal scowl, but there was a longing in his dark eyes as he looked over to where Royal was sitting beside Harlow on the couch. Royal was due to deliver their twin daughters any time in the next few weeks, and while Savage liked to grumble about having girls, it was clear he was excited to have more children running around. “My girls will be much more well behaved,” Savage predicted.

A flurry of snorts and laughs filled the room, making his scowl deepen. “Honey, they are your children, so I don't think there's a chance of that,” Royal said with a wicked grin.

“I just hope they don't take after him in size,” Karissa remarked with a wince. “Damn, could you imagine both girls being so tall? Your poor vagina is going to be paying the price.”

“Mine certainly did,” Harlow grumbled, glaring at Steel. Steel just held her gaze and continued to rock their son.

“Girls are generally smaller when they're born,” Esme said with a shrug. She was also pregnant, though definitely not as far along as Royal. If he remembered right, he heard her and Karissa talking that she was about two or three months along now.

“You had a boy, so how would you know?” Royal asked with an arch of her brow.

Esme rolled her eyes. “Because that's what the doctors told me after he came out. He tore me so bad, I had to have so many stitches that my pussy looked like a patchwork quilt. I'm surprised it still works,” she replied drily.

“I'm never having a baby. Ever,” Win declared firmly.

“Amen, sister,” Wren agreed, looking slightly horrified. Which was saying a lot for those two.

“Good,” Rogue called out, making both girls roll their eyes. Scarlett worked to hide her smile.

Code turned back to his beer, uncaring about a whole conversation on who might or might not have children. Pretty soon the place would be crawling with a bunch of babies, along with Ronin, Gabe, and the twins, so it didn't matter to him all that much. He liked kids, but he had no desire to have them. Besides, babies required women to make them, and other than the club whores, there were no women around for that. And the club whores were becoming increasingly problematic, so he had been avoiding them.

He finished his beer and set the bottle on the bar top for Tom to grab before turning and looking around the room. Most were talking in their own little groups, and he had no interest in being social. He didn't relish the idea of receiving more punches to the gut, so instead, he headed back to his space, the one place in this entire building he felt comfortable. Though he supposed that would be changing, with Glitch sharing the space with him. So he was going to soak up every moment of solitude that he could.

He sat in his chair and leaned his head back, closing his eyes and taking in the quiet for just a moment. He never felt more at home than he did in front of his computer, and after the past few days, this was what would ground him again. He opened his eyes, opened up his system, and got back to work on seeking out all the places that Glitch got in and shoring them up again. He had a feeling she was going to try again, and he wanted her to come up against as many walls as possible.

He wasn't sure how long he worked before the door opened, and he paused what he was doing to see who needed him. He didn't stop the frown when he realized it was Glitch. She had changed and was now wearing a pair of cutoff shorts that showed off tanned, smooth legs, and a white crop top that ended a few inches above her exposed belly button. On her feet were a pair of simple black flats, and when he finally

moved his gaze up to her face, he saw that she pulled her bob back in some sort of clip so her hair was completely out of her face.

She looked equal parts adorable and sexy as hell, and it was a combination he could have gone without knowing was possible for her. He needed to keep seeing her as a hardened former mercenary, and nothing else. That was safest for them both.

“Alright, let’s get a few things straight,” Glitch said briskly, slamming the door closed behind her. He glanced at it, but didn’t comment. Instead, he turned his chair to fully face her, crossed his arms over his chest, and waited. She put her hands on her hips and pinned him with a hard glare. “You don’t like me, and I don’t like you. Neither of us are happy about the fact that we are now stuck together, but since that’s your fault, you’ll have to suffer with that knowledge. Here’s how this is going to go. You are not going to try and fuck with my system while I’m here. I have enough to worry about without adding your pathetic dick swinging contest to the mix. Because we both know I have the bigger dick, and I will win. Which also means I won’t go after your system, either. For now, you’re useful to me, and battling with you isn’t on my list of priorities. You will stay out of any business I have with my team, because that shit has nothing to do with you or your club. My club business is just that - *my* club business. If you choose to disrespect that or try to interfere, I will shut you down so hard your head will spin, and then I’ll make you pay in a way that will have you screaming for your Mama so loud she’ll hear you from the other side of the country. Got it?”

He gave her a derisive look. “You seem to think that you’re going to be running this show. Guess what, sweetheart, you’re not. Sure, I fucked up, but that doesn’t mean I’ll be your little whipping boy while you’re here. You don’t touch my shit and I won’t touch yours, but if you step one toe out of line, I’ll make *you* pay, and while I won’t have you screaming for your Mama, I have other ways of making sure you get the point.”

Her blue eyes flashed as she stepped forward until she was only a few short inches away from him. “I don’t think you heard me,” she said in an icy tone. “So let me remind you. Because of your over-inflated ego, you put me in danger. You put my team in danger. You put the safety of our clients, past and present, in jeopardy with your stupid stunt. All because you were pissed at me for shutting you down. Because you can’t handle that someone without a dick can do the same things you can, but better. So no, you’re not going to tell me shit while I’m here.” Then she moved, and before he could react, she was in his lap with a knife to his throat, making him freeze.

*Where the hell had that come from?*

He stared at her calmly, even though he was silently cursing himself for letting her get the drop on him. Goddamn it. Her face was inches from his, and he could smell the soft scent of whatever lotion or soap she was using, as well as feel the way her smaller body pressed against him. For someone so small, she sure could pack a punch, he thought to himself warily. The sharp bite of the knife to his throat was enough to prove her point, but she didn’t break skin. *Yet.* Tension crackled between them, along with something else that he didn’t want to think about or look at too closely. Why was it that all the women around here loved to use weapons to get their points across?

“Do not forget who and what I am, Code,” she said in a low voice. “Do not think that because you are bigger than me, or because you believe your club will come to your rescue, that I will not hesitate to remind you. You fucked with my team, and while I’m pissed you outed my name and location, I care more about the people that I call family than my own personal feelings. So you had better get used to me being here, and to the idea that while I am, you’ll be learning a very important lesson on what it means to be second best.”

Before he could reply, the door opened behind them, and when he glanced over her shoulder he found Savage, Simba, and Taz. Well that was just great, he thought. With the angle they were at, they wouldn’t see her knife; it would look more

like she was in his lap and about to kiss him. Simba and Taz exchanged a quick glance, while Savage scowled, eyes narrowing in suspicion.

“Please tell me that you weren’t about to get frisky, babe,” Taz whined. “What did I say about that shit? I’m going to start calling you Black Widow.”

“I’d sooner sleep with you than him,” Glitch replied, not moving an inch.

“Why does that sound like an insult? You all know I have the best dick,” Taz boasted.

“Glitch, put the knife away,” Simba ordered.

“Code and I were just setting some boundaries,” Glitch said sweetly, slowly lowering the knife and turning, tucking it into a small sheath at the back of her shorts before she pushed off his lap and stepped back.

“Is that what you call putting a knife to my brother’s throat?” Savage asked darkly. “You know, one could consider that a threat.”

“There is no considering,” Glitch replied with an uncaring look up at Savage. “It was that or a gun to his head, but I figured after our last run in, I’d save the firearms for a more appropriate time.”

Savage glared at her, but didn’t reply. Simba shook his head and cautioned her, “Don’t piss them off, Glitch. They’re doing us a favor, so you need to play nice... somewhat.” He slid his gaze to Code, who held his stare, before he turned it back to Glitch. “With some exceptions. Now, we need to head out, so come say goodbye and give us the shit you need us to take.”

Glitch nodded and turned to follow him and Taz out without any further argument. She didn’t even glance back at Code, leaving him and Savage in the room to watch them go.

“It’s going to be a long fucking few weeks, or however long she’s here,” Savage huffed.

“On that we agree,” Code grumbled.

“You two going to be alright, or am I going to find the two of you with guns or knives pointed at each other all the time?” he asked warily.

Code shrugged. “Who knows? She’s pissed at me, and I imagine that will continue for a few more days. We’ll just have to learn to stay out of each other’s way as much as possible.”

Savage nodded. “Alright. But if it gets to be a major problem, let me know. Ally or not, I’m still President and my word goes around here. I don’t give a shit who she is.”

Code chuckled wryly. “Big words, but will you say them in front of her or the other women?”

Savage didn’t reply, and instead turned and walked out. Code shook his head and turned back to his computer. Savage was right, it was going to be a long few weeks or however long she stayed, but he could survive it, he could survive anything.

He just had to figure out how to keep her from getting under his skin, and right now, it wasn’t looking promising.

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## CHAPTER NINE

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### GLITCH

**A**s her team drove away, she bit back a sigh at the thought of them leaving her. Sure, she knew it was for the best, but that didn't mean she had to like it. And being this close to Code, she wasn't sure if she would rather kill him or torture him endlessly. Or maybe start with one and finish with the other. Either way, it was going to be a long however many days until her team returned and she could go back to her clubhouse.

Back to where she was treated like an equal and not like a helpless set of tits and ass that couldn't survive without a big strong man around to swoop in, save the day, and pat her on the head when it was all over.

Okay, so maybe Savage was right to keep the guns away from her, she thought sourly as she stared down the driveway and listened to the fading rumble of their bikes as they headed down the road. With the mood she was in, she was liable to shoot someone, and that probably wasn't the best way to start off her visit here. And she was using the term 'visit' loosely.

"At least we have each other," Karissa drawled as she leaned against the opposite post, crossing her arms over her chest.

Glitch snickered. "I think that's what has your club quaking in their boots. I don't know whether to be flattered or insulted."



“Probably a bit of both,” Karissa joked. “Though, with all the new babies coming, a lot of the men are distracted, especially Savage. He walks around like he’s ready to scoop Royal up at any moment and whisk her to the hospital. He has plans A through Z ready for any kind of issue or complication.”

Glitch rolled her eyes. “Which would explain why he’s a bit cranky with my arrival today.”

Karissa laughed. “He’s normally cranky, but I think he’s more upset with Code and this whole situation in the first place. He might be an ass, but he would never have allowed Code to compromise you. And speaking of Code...” She trailed off and looked at Glitch expectantly.

Glitch gave her an evil smile. “Considering that less than half an hour ago, I was in his lap with a knife to his throat telling him exactly what I thought about this situation, I’m sure he’s clear on how the next little while is going to go. I’m going to be watching him up close and personal, and if he thought he didn’t like me before, he ain’t seen nothing yet if he thinks he can push me around.”

Karissa grinned. “That’s exactly what I wanted to hear, Pipsqueak,” she replied happily, using the annoying nickname she had given Glitch not long after they first met. “Though, technically, since my man and him are brothers, I probably should be cautioning you and all that fucked up bullshit, but we both know I won’t mean it. These boys need to learn that women are no longer fragile flowers from the fifties that need a big strong man to protect us.”

“I’d like to see any of them try and shove us into a kitchen and demand we make them a sandwich,” Glitch sneered.

“Razor knows better,” Karissa said with a smirk.

“Speaking of the pretty boy biker, how are things going?”

Karissa’s eyes brightened at the mention of Razor, and that was all Glitch needed to know, but she listened as Karissa explained how well they were getting along. And about how Razor was supposed to be talking to Savage about building a

house on the grounds. It was clear that Karissa was happy, and that was all she wanted for her. Karissa was a tough bitch, but deep down, she needed a man like Razor to give her the things she missed out on when she was a kid. Love, stability, and the knowledge that they were going to come home to each other every day.

Karissa would always be a member of their team, but for the most part she was living her own life, and Glitch was happy for her. It wasn't something she wanted for herself, but that didn't mean she would ever begrudge her friend for it.

“So, yeah, things are good,” Karissa finished with a smile, pulling Glitch out of her musings. “Though, I think he’s a bit nervous that you’re here.”

“Worried I’m going to try and steal you away?” Glitch asked.

Karissa shook her head. “More like what kind of trouble we’ll get into while you’re here,” she said with a grin. “And that we’ll drag the other women into it along with us.”

Glitch chuckled. “Most of them are pregnant or new mothers, so I doubt we’ll be getting up to anything too wild.”

“Good,” Savage’s voice rumbled, making them both turn to find him and Razor standing in the doorway. Savage’s face was set in a stern expression, while Razor was grinning from ear to ear.

Glitch grinned slowly. “But I never said anything about the twins,” she added as she held his gaze.

Savage narrowed his eyes at her. “Maybe we should review the rules for your stay,” he suggested darkly.

Glitch waved that away. “I already know what kind of rules you’re about to lay on me, Mr. President, so let’s not waste time. Instead, how about we focus on the fact that right now I’m too tired to do anything other than eat, shower, and go to bed. You can give me all the rules you want tomorrow,” she finished sweetly.

Savage huffed out a breath, turned on his heel, and stalked away, leaving Razor to step forward and pull Karissa into his

arms for a quick kiss before turning to look at her. “Why do I get the feeling you’re going to keep us all on our toes while you’re here?” he asked with a chuckle.

“Because you seem like a smart one, pretty boy,” Glitch replied with a grin. “I was a little afraid that with all the sex that you two have, that she’d fucked those smarts right out of you, but good thing that’s not the case.”

Razor gave her a bland look, and Karissa rolled her eyes. “Alright, you two, play nice,” she admonished. “Now, let’s go inside and see what we can rustle up because I’m starving too, and then I need to head to the bar for my shift.” She led them inside, and Glitch followed her back into the kitchen.

Unsurprisingly, the kitchen was state of the art, with industrial size appliances—including double gas stoves—a large island in the middle, and a huge walk-in pantry that looked to be well stocked. The only other people in there were a couple of scantily clad women that Glitch could only assume were club whores. They looked vaguely familiar, and they both regarded her and Karissa with contempt, until they saw Razor behind them and their expressions quickly changed to sly and coy. The women were nearly mirror images of each other, with long, bleached blonde hair, heavy make-up, and bodies that were far too skinny to be healthy but somehow still able to hold up their giant man-made boobs.

Glitch rolled her eyes. God, she really didn’t have the mental fortitude to deal with catty bitches right now. Before either woman could say anything, she drawled, “DB-One, and DB-Two, how about you think before you let anything fly out of your mouths that could get yourselves in trouble with my girl here. Because if you piss her off, it won’t be just her you have to worry about, but me too. And I really don’t have the patience to deal with wiping your skinny asses all over the floor. You might break a few bones, or pop those giant balloons on your chests, and it would just be a big mess.”

Both women stared at her in shock before they quickly recovered and sneered at her. “At least we have boobs instead of tiny mosquito bites,” one of them jeered.

Glitch snorted. “Why is it that everyone goes for the small boobs as an insult?” she asked Karissa drily. “I mean, it’s just getting old at this point.” Then she turned and looked at Razor. “Have some of you boys fucked their heads into the walls a few too many times? Made it so they can’t come up with an original insult? Pillows are great protection, but everyone knows whores don’t get taken to bed.”

“Fuck you, bitch,” one of them cried.

“Call her a bitch again and we’re going to have a problem,” Karissa warned darkly, eyes hard and glittering as she took both women in. “And seeing as neither of you are supposed to be here right now, I think we both know that you’re already playing with fire.” She looked at Razor, who was watching the exchange with amusement. “Planning on jumping in here at any point, since apparently they only follow your orders because you have a dick?”

“You were doing fine on your own. Far be it from me to try and butt in,” he smirked, but when he looked over at the two women, his expression frosted over. “But she is right, and you both know the rules. No club whores out of your rooms or on the grounds until after nine o’clock. Especially if you’re dressed like you are now.”

“Savage said it was okay for us to come into the kitchen and get something to eat,” one of them whined. She seemed to be the talker of the two, because the other one hadn’t said much, content to take it all in.

“Then get something and get the hell out, Loni,” Karissa snapped.

Ah, so DB-One had a name, and now that she’d heard it, Glitch remembered she was the one who had tried to stop her and Karissa from going into the Church the last time she was here. And if she wasn’t mistaken, she had already taken her down once by tossing her across the room. She didn’t necessarily need a repeat, but she had no problem making sure this bitch knew her place.

“You don’t get to tell me what to do, you fat cow,” Loni sneered.

Razor's entire expression changed from icy indifference to fiery rage in a blink of an eye, and Glitch nodded in approval when he snarled, "Don't you dare insult my Old Lady, Loni. You can get the fuck out for the night. And if I hear you disrespect her again, I'll make sure you're out permanently. Got it?"

Obviously realizing her mistake, Loni tried to backtrack. "I'm sorry, Razor, I'm just so hungry," she whined.

"You heard him," Glitch interrupted. "Get out, or I'll forcibly remove you, since I know the men in this club won't lay hands on you in anger. They might be cavemen, but they have standards. Though, I suppose those standards are questionable since they choose to fuck you and your used up pussy, but that's far too much to get into right now."

"Who the fuck are you?" Loni demanded, eyes blazing with anger.

Glitch gave her a cold smile. "What? You don't remember me? I'm the one who fucked you up the last time I was here. I'm hangry, and if you make me wait any longer, I will fuck you up even more than last time."

"I won't tell you again, Loni," Razor snapped. He looked at the other woman. "Britney, get her out of here."

"Let's go, Loni," Britney said. "I have plans with Ink tonight, and I'm not letting you fuck that up for me." Loni looked like she wanted to argue, but instead she gave Karissa and Glitch furious glares and stalked out the back door, letting it slam behind her.

"Well, that was fun," Glitch said cheerily. "But I don't think I'm making any friends here today."

"There are one or two club whores that are fine," Karissa said easily as she moved toward the fridge. "But the majority of them need to be reminded of their place. The only ones safe right now are the twins and Scarlett, but that's more because they're scared of Rogue than actually being decent people. There's stuff for stir fry in here. That work for you?"

“Works fine for me, but you don’t have to cook. I can do that,” Glitch offered.

Karissa waved that around. “You hate cooking.”

“Yes, but that doesn’t mean I can’t do it,” Glitch huffed.

“You can make something tomorrow. Or, even better, you can make that cheesecake you’re so good at,” Karissa suggested as she pulled ingredients from the industrial sized fridge and set them on the island.

It had been awhile she made cheesecake, but Glitch nodded. “Alright. So how does the food situation work? Does everyone just fend for themselves?”

“Lately, yeah,” Karissa nodded before she shut the fridge door, moved around to the stove, and pulled out some pans from the cabinet beside it. “Most of us don’t live here, but I think the club whores were taking turns cooking for everyone at one point.”

“Nari and Cindi were doing the majority of it,” Razor filled in, moving to help Karissa, the two of them working together in perfect rhythm. “Those two are fantastic cooks, but I know Nari has been trying to take classes at the local college, so some nights she’s not here, and Cindi only comes on the weekends.”

“So the nights they’re not here, everyone fends for themselves,” Glitch summarized.

Razor nodded. “But I don’t think anyone would object if you wanted to take a turn,” he added with a coy smile.

Glitch arched a brow at him. “You think because I’m a woman, I should be in the kitchen slaving away?” she demanded, crossing her arms over her chest.

“I have no problem with that,” Code said from behind her, making her stiffen and turn to glare at him. “Especially if it keeps you out of my hair.” He walked into the kitchen, his dark blonde hair all mussed like he didn’t have a care in the world. “Maybe this is where you’ll actually be useful. Put those hands of yours to better use.”

“The best use they have is wrapping around your neck and squeezing,” Glitch replied menacingly, “but since that’s not an option right now, I’m afraid you’ll have to get used to me being around. Because I’m not spending my days in here just because you can’t handle being near me.”

“Brother,” Razor said warningly. “Don’t dig yourself into a deeper hole than you already are.”

Code ignored him and focused on Glitch. The two of them faced off from opposite sides of the island, neither of them glancing at the other two people in the room. “You seem to be thinking a lot about getting your hands on my body,” Code mocked. “Maybe because you can’t stop thinking about being close to me.”

Glitch gave a short burst of laughter. Then she gave him a mocking smile of her own. “The only reason I want to be in the same room as you is because I know if I’m not, you’re going to screw something else up, and I’ll have to fix your mistake. Maybe while I’m here I can give you a few lessons, huh? Really get you polished up in case a real threat comes your way. Can’t leave a fellow hacker hanging, after all. Especially one who thinks more with his ego than his brain.”

Razor and Karissa were both silent behind her, but she could feel them watching. Code’s face flushed with his anger, and his jaw hardened before he abruptly turned and stormed out of the room. Glitch turned back to Razor and Karissa. Razor looked uncertain on what he should do, while Karissa was grinning approvingly. “I think I’m going to enjoy this,” Karissa announced as she mixed her ingredients in the pan.

Razor muttered, “That’s what we’re all afraid of,” before moving to grab some plates.

Glitch glanced back at the door and wondered if she should lighten up on Code a little bit. They did have to work together day in and day out, after all. Then she remembered what he did to her and her team, and those feelings vanished as quickly as they appeared.

She meant what she said. She’d be watching Code and making sure he didn’t fuck up again, because whatever this

petty rivalry was between them, she wouldn't be able to forgive him for putting her team, her family, in danger.



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## CHAPTER TEN

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### CODE

**H**e groaned as he rolled and grabbed his phone from the nightstand to shut off the damn alarm. He rarely set one, but today was one of those days he didn't have a choice. He rolled back over and then let out a loud curse when he saw that stupid blow up doll in the corner of the room. The same corner he moved it out of yesterday before throwing it outside. Looked like someone saw him and put it back. He'd have to check his cameras to find out who, because he was going to make sure whoever it was woke up to a surprise guest.

Every time he looked at it, he couldn't decide whether to laugh or to destroy the damn thing. Hell, he still wasn't sure why he hadn't just wrecked it. Probably because it reminded him of why he was having this battle with Glitch. It kept him motivated. Nothing like inflatable bondage gear to get you going for the day, he thought to himself as he rolled out of bed.

After a quick shower, he stepped back into his room in nothing but a towel and headed for his closet to grab his normal daily outfit of jeans, a t-shirt, and his cut. Hell, he couldn't remember the last time he'd worn anything else. Though, from the state of his clothes, it appeared that it was almost time to throw some out and order new ones.

Tossing the clothes on the bed, he grabbed a pair of boxers out of the small dresser tucked in the back of the closet, let his towel drop to the floor, and froze when the door of his room

suddenly flew open. Considering he was buck naked, he could only stare when he realized who was standing in the doorway.

“Oh good, you’re up,” Glitch said casually as she stepped into his room.

“What the fuck?” he snarled, staring at her. He didn’t bother trying to cover himself. “Ever heard of knocking and waiting to be told you can enter?”

“Why waste time?” she said with a shrug of her shoulders. A smirk covered her face as she took him in slowly, her eyes lingering for a moment on his cock before they lifted back to his face. “I see you used that pump after all. What, were the magnifying glass and tweezers too hard for the club whores to understand?” she taunted.

He skewered her with a glare as he forgot about the boxers and turned to grab his pants. “Is there a reason you’re bothering me so damn early in the day?” he asked tightly. He could feel her eyes on him, but he ignored her. She could stare all she wanted. Any other time, he would probably make a comment about her seeing his dick, but he was too pissed right now to bother. The audacity of this woman was astounding.

“I have things to do, and since you decided to sleep in, that means I can’t get into your precious office without you opening it or giving me a damn key,” she sniffed.

“Why didn’t you just pick the lock?” he asked mildly. “You already have, once.”

“Normally I would, but I promised my team I would try and play nice,” she said carelessly. “Personally, I think being nice is overrated, but for now I’ll attempt it.” He turned to her as he pulled on his t-shirt, not bothering to hide his smirk when he caught her watching him, taking in the tattoos on his chest and arms. Her eyes lifted to his, not the least bit embarrassed. Instead she said, “Who knew that a computer nerd could have some muscle. Been working out, huh? Trying to impress the women around here since you have such little else to work with?”

He gave her chest a pointed look. She was wearing a black crop top, showing off her flat belly, but it had long sleeves and a square neckline with two thin straps that went up and around her neck. It showed off her toned body, but it also highlighted her smaller breasts. On her bottom half, she wore a pair of black yoga pants that hugged her like a second skin. His cock twitched in his jeans, but he ignored it. Women in yoga pants were hot, no matter who they were, and his body was certainly aware of that fact. “Is that what you’re trying to do with that top? Because I’m afraid you’re not going to be impressing anyone much with those,” he tossed back at her, pulling his cut over his shoulders.

She rolled her eyes. “You really think commenting on my boobs is going to piss me off? It just makes you even more of a dick. Now, as fun as this little banter has been, how about you let me into the office so I can get to work? My team is waiting on me, and you are getting in my way.” She glanced over, and when her eyes landed on that stupid doll, her lips pulled into a slow grin. “You can bring your friend too. Though I’m a little surprised you still have it.”

“Not for lack of trying to get rid of it,” he grumbled. “Let’s go. I don’t want you in my space any longer than you have to be.”

“Aww, you sure do know how to make a girl feel wanted,” she said sarcastically as she stepped back enough to let him close the door and lock it. She let out a light scoff at that, but didn’t say anything else when he glared at her.

God, it was going to be a long fucking day, he thought to himself.

As they made their way downstairs, he wasn’t surprised to find that most everyone was in the common room having breakfast. The smell of bacon cooking made his stomach rumble, but he ignored it and everyone’s stares as he made his way to his office and unlocked the door. “Don’t touch my shit,” he warned her with a hard glare, then turned on his heel and headed back toward the kitchen so he could get something to eat.

She didn't reply, and he wondered if that was a good thing or something he was going to regret, but he was tired and didn't have the energy to care. If she touched his computer, he'd kick her ass out, alliance be damned. He had been up late last night working, and he was not one to handle things well on little sleep, especially when someone was purposely goading him.

"Problem?" Savage asked when Code stepped into the kitchen and grabbed a plate to help himself to some of the breakfast that a couple of the club whores had made. Nari and Britney, it seemed, and thankfully that meant it was going to be edible. Britney was an okay cook, but Nari was the star. He gave them both an appreciative smile and filled up his plate.

"I'm always going to have a problem as long as she's here," Code grumbled to Savage on his way back out the door.

"Need me to speak to her?" Savage asked, though his tone said that he wanted to do anything but.

"Nah, it's fine," he said with a shake of his head.

"I think you need to grow a pair and suck it up," Esme said as she passed by on her way to the kitchen, Fury right behind her. Now that she was pregnant, the man was never far away from her, not that he'd ever given her much breathing room before. "You fucked her over, and now she has the right to make you uncomfortable for a while. The more you react, the more you're just going to make her want to do it. I swear, men never grow out of the toddler stage. You better have given me a girl," she added with a glare over her shoulder at Fury.

"Did my best, *mi tesoro*," he replied with a shrug. She huffed in annoyance and stalked into the kitchen.

"He better have a girl, because I'm not going to be the only one to suffer around here," Savage muttered as he headed toward where Royal was sitting holding Harley, while an exhausted looking Harlow sat next to her eating some breakfast. Steel didn't look any more awake, but he seemed happy enough. Code figured they had another long night of little sleep. "Look, the two of you need to try and play nice. Just do what you need to do to keep her from killing you,"

Savage told him bluntly. “Nothing about this situation is ideal, but I would think that you could handle one pain in the ass woman.”

He liked to think so too, but Glitch was a whole other level of pain in the ass, and he was going to have to figure out how to handle it. Short of finding a new space to work in, that wasn't going to happen quickly.

“You could always tie her up and stick her in a closet,” Ice said calmly as he walked by with his own plate of food. “She's small enough, she'd fit without much problem.”

Now there was an idea, Code thought with a smirk. “I'll keep it in mind,” he said. He looked around the room and saw that most everyone was eating, and while normally he would join them, he wasn't about to leave Glitch in his space alone for longer than he had to.

When he walked back into his office, she was sitting in his chair at her area, typing away. He scowled. She didn't even turn around as she said, “Apparently you think I'm going to stand all day. You want your chair back, you better find me one, and I don't mean some dinky chair that is going to kill my back.”

“Jesus Christ,” he snarled, setting his plate down on his desk and stalking out to find her a chair. Not that they had much to choose from. After a few minutes searching, he found an older office chair in their storage space. It would have to do for now. If she wanted something better, she could buy one herself or talk to Savage about it. When he pushed it in he barked, “Here. Now give me back my chair.”

She glanced at it and turned right back to her screen. “Oh good, you found a chair for yourself to use,” she said sweetly. “Don't let me keep you.”

He stared at her, his temper flaring. “Woman, get out of my chair,” he snarled, his grip on his temper slipping.

She paused, and when her head turned and her gaze clashed with his, she gave him a cool look. “Caveman, I have a name,” she informed him, “and unless you plan on using it,

we're going to have a problem. Now, I'm working, and while you're standing here arguing with me over a stupid chair, you're making me run behind. So instead of bitching and complaining, you can sit in that chair, and steal this one back when I eventually get out of it. Got it?"

He held her glare for a moment, and tried to remind himself that a chair was not worth the argument. But that look in her eyes, the one that dared him to try and move her, made him lose all sense. He stalked toward her, grabbed her under the arms, and lifted her out of the chair so fast, she let out a small squeak of surprise, but then she did something that made him freeze, giving her an advantage.

She smiled. It was a gorgeous smile, no hint of anger or guile in it, and it lightened her face in a way that hit him straight in the gut. Straight white teeth showed between full lips, and her bright blue eyes flashed with something like excitement and anticipation. It was disarming, and that was the exact moment he knew he screwed up.

She used that moment to twist her upper body, while also using her legs to kick out and catch him right in the groin. He groaned in pain, immediately dropping her. She landed on her feet in an easy crouch while he went to his knees, cupping himself and trying not to barf all over the floor. "I wondered if you were going to be stupid enough to haul me out," she said as she sat back down in the chair, regal as a queen. "Nice to know you do have some balls after all, caveman. They might be small, but maybe before I'm gone they'll finally grow into man sized. Now, I have some work to finish, and while this has been fun, your food is getting cold and I'm sure you have some work of your own to do." She turned back toward her computer, and what looked to be a second screen that he wasn't sure where she could have gotten. Though the pain in his balls could be messing with his head. Then she turned and added, "Oh, and just so we're clear, I'm not letting you have this chair the rest of the day. We'll see what happens tomorrow." She gave him a saucy wink and turned back around, dismissing him.

It took another half minute for him to be able to get to his feet, balls throbbing, and body shaking with anger. “You’ll pay for that, woman,” he gritted out as he pushed the other chair over to his keyboard and lowered himself gingerly into it. The old chair creaked under him, but he forced himself to ignore it and focus on the screen in front of him.

“Whatever you say, caveman,” she said easily behind him, fingers flying over the keyboard. “Now, hush, I need to concentrate.”

He had half a mind to turn on some loud music and really piss her off, but that would just be petty. And he hated too much noise in his space, so it wasn’t a great plan to begin with. He looked at his plate of food and scowled at it a few feet away on the far end of the desk. He rolled the chair over to grab it, but he already knew it was going to be cold, and he wasn’t about to get up and walk out to warm it up.

He shoveled the food into his mouth as he waited for his system to boot up, and tried not to think about the woman sitting only a few feet behind him. This room was pretty damn spacious, but with her in here, it was far too cramped. He could smell the sweetness of her soap, and it worked its way into his senses. He gritted his teeth and forced himself to ignore it.

She was a pain in his ass, and he couldn’t wait until she was gone.

With that thought firmly at the forefront of his mind, he got to work and tuned her out as best he could.

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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### GLITCH

She narrowed her eyes at her screen, trying to figure out where the hell her team was. The location trackers they had on their bikes said they were currently on their way to Louisiana. Considering they only left yesterday, they were making really good time. Which meant they had probably driven through the night. It wouldn't be the first time, but it made her worry. She shot Simba a message.

Glitch: Destination?

They tried to keep all messages as short as they could, or in code in case someone tried to hack her system, or got ahold of their phones. Not that either would happen, but still, it paid to be cautious. At least in her mind anyway.

Simba didn't reply right away, though that wasn't uncommon. If they were still riding, it could be a few hours before she heard back. So she pushed aside her worry and focused on her other tasks. Mainly, she needed to check in with her lawyer on the scholarships she set up, along with the people responsible for her investments.

As she sent out her emails, she half-listened to Code working behind her. She heard him cursing under his breath, and she wanted to ask him what he was bellyaching about, but she put him out of her mind and focused. She had other things to do today, and one of them was making that cheesecake for



Karissa. It was one of the few things she loved to make, but it was time consuming and if she wanted it done by dinner, she would have to get working on it as soon as she had a moment.

When she finished with her emails, she sat back and looked around the room. She hadn't really focused on the room much since she arrived, but as she looked around, she realized that the space was just as big as hers back at their clubhouse, but it wasn't set up as well as it could be. She took it in critically as she turned in her chair to look at Code's space.

He had four screens mounted on the wall, with the ones on the ends tilted so they were easily viewable for him. It was an interesting set up, but she could see where he could improve. Not to mention his desk was old and rickety and looked like it could fall apart at any moment. She frowned at that. If your job required you to be at your desk all the time, it only made sense that your station should be the best it could be. So she figured that either the club was strapped for cash and they were making due, or Code was. Or, maybe, to play devil's advocate, he just didn't care, and considering what she knew of him so far, that was a definite possibility.

The rest of the space, however, was mostly bare. No photos, no mementos, just bare walls. She wasn't big on knickknacks either, but her space at least had painted walls, while these were plain white and sterile. The space had no windows and minimal lighting. It was a typical hacker's cave, but still, she could see so many ways it could be improved. She had half a mind to just change things, but she also knew how protective people were of their spaces, so she was going to have to approach this carefully. As mad as she was at him, she wouldn't mess with his space beyond what she needed to function.

She wasn't heartless. Well, mostly.

Still, the small table and chair weren't going to work for her, so she was going to have to figure something else out. She wasn't an idiot though, and if she paid for anything out of her own accounts, whoever might be looking for her would be able to locate her. She could cover her tracks, but why take the

risk? Instead, she glanced behind herself at Code, and an idea hit her. It would piss him off, but then again, he was already pissed at her, so why not?

She turned back to her computer and got to work. She had to be careful not to set off any alarms, and when she finally worked her way into his credit card, she realized that the man was definitely not doing too bad, but there were quite a few charges on his account that she couldn't figure out. If she had time, she'd look into it further, but right now, she was running on a tight timeline before he realized what she was doing.

She paid for what she needed and then quickly, but carefully, backed herself out and covered her tracks. Then she shut down her system and stood, stretching her arms above her head. Code froze, turning to look at her warily. She gave him a smug smile. "Worried I'll attack you when you're not looking?" she taunted.

"More like I don't trust that you're not going to fuck up my shit again," he bit out.

"If you were actually good at what you did, you wouldn't have to worry about that," she tossed back, arching a brow at him. His eyes flashed with fury. He opened his mouth to blast her, but she interrupted him by saying, "I have shit to do, so don't worry about your precious system, it's safe for now. Though, really, you should probably make sure it's extra shored up, or I'm going to have to keep pointing out all the flaws with it. And I really don't want to reduce you to a crying mess over and over. Kind of wrecks the whole bad boy biker vibe, you know? See you in a bit, caveman." Then she headed out the door and shut it behind her.

She knew he wouldn't be able to get into her system if he tried, and her phone would blare if he did, so there was that. She smirked at the image of his furious face and not being able to get that last word in. That would stick in his craw, and she couldn't say she was unhappy about it.

When she reached the kitchen, the morning breakfast and dishes were all cleaned up, and Nari and Britney were sitting down talking in the corner. When she entered, they stopped

talking and looked at her in surprise. She glanced at Britney first, who averted her eyes and didn't say a word. Nari gave her a small smile, nerves behind her eyes. She had a dark complexion, with dark eyes and equally dark hair, and while her outfit was still a bit skimpy, it was tasteful. She wore a corset-style top with puffed shoulder sleeves and a pair of short-shorts that barely covered her ass, but she had a long cover up over them to give her a tasteful look.

Britney, on the other hand, was dressed in a bright pink crop top that showed off her stomach from just below her breasts to low on her hips where her own shorts sat, and those left little to the imagination. Glitch had to figure the only reason she was getting away with that outfit was because there were no kids around this time of the day.

“Ladies,” she said in greeting with a nod.

“Uh, hi,” Nari said with a hesitant smile. “Sorry, if we're in your way. We were just taking a minute to relax after cleaning up.”

“No problem,” Glitch said easily. “Though since you know this place better than me, can you point me in the direction of some ingredients?” She listed all the things she needed for the cheesecake, and Nari helped her grab them while Britney stood there like she wasn't certain what she should do. When Glitch and Nari set all the items she needed on the counter, Britney glanced at them and then frowned. “Problem?” Glitch asked casually.

“What are you making?” Britney asked, tossing her bleach blonde hair back over her shoulder.

“Cheesecake,” Glitch answered simply, turning to heat the oven.

Britney wrinkled her nose. “Why?”

“Because Xena likes it and I promised I would make her one.”

“Who the hell is Xena?” Britney demanded, jealousy making her eyes flash. “If there's some new bitch around here —”

“Cool your jets, DB-Two,” Glitch interrupted with a roll of her eyes. “Jesus, the way you all fight over these guys is damn embarrassing. Xena is Karissa, just so you’re aware, but sure, you go ahead and try to fight with her and see how far you get.”

Britney narrowed her eyes at her. “Seems stupid to me, calling her by another name,” she sniffed.

“Well it’s a good thing you’re not a former mercenary, isn’t it?” Glitch replied with a cool smile, a hard edge making the other woman’s eyes widen and her throat bob as she swallowed. “Hell, you wouldn’t have lasted one day in basic training, and I’d have probably slit your throat with all your whining.”

Britney stared at her, face going pale. “Wait, so you’re saying you were...” She trailed off.

Glitch cocked her head to the side. “I’m more of a computer nerd, but I’m part of the team, and that means I have the same training. So, how about you spread the word to the rest of the DB clan and then we shouldn’t have a problem?” Britney didn’t reply. Instead, she turned on her heel and hurried out of the room as fast as her ridiculous stripper heels would allow. “How on earth does she walk, much less run, in those things?” Glitch asked Nari, who was also staring at her wide-eyed. “Oh, did I scare you, too?” she asked curiously. “To be fair, I don’t consider you part of the DB clan, because you seem to have brains. I think I heard that you’re trying to get your degree.”

She nodded slowly. “Ah, well, I had heard the rumors about Karissa, but nothing was confirmed. They don’t really tell us anything. So, uh, yeah, I’ll remember that.” She paused and looked like she wanted to ask a question, but kept her mouth shut.

“Go ahead and ask whatever you’re thinking,” Glitch said as she put her mix together for her crust.

“What did you mean when you said I wasn’t part of the DB clan?” she finally asked.

“Oh, that,” Glitch said with a chuckle. “DB, depending on my mood, is the Dumb Bitch or Dumb Blonde clan. Seeing as you’re not blonde, you could fall into the former. Though, if I find out you’re going after my friend’s man when she’s not around, I’ll be changing my opinion and making your life hell, got me?”

Nari nodded hurriedly. “I, uh, I don’t go near the ones in a relationship,” she admitted. “None of them look my way, either.”

“See, you don’t belong in the DB clan,” Glitch said cheerfully. “So we can be friendly and never have an issue while I’m here.”

Nari just nodded and then said, “Uh, well, I better get upstairs and work on the assignment I have due today.”

“Sure thing,” Glitch said cheerfully. “What are you taking, by the way?”

“I love business but I like the computer security world, so I’m looking at a degree in Computer Science,” Nari answered shyly. “I know it’s more of a guy program but—”

“Nope, gonna stop you right there,” Glitch interjected, giving her a stern look. “The whole male or female role thing is a thing of the past, and as a computer science grad myself, I can tell you that it’s a great field, and women are far more involved than you think.”

Nari’s eyes widened. “Wow, really? What school did you go to?”

“MIT.”

“So, you’re super smart then?” Nari said with a slight teasing smile.

“Oh, don’t be telling her that,” Karissa whined as she came into the room, making Nari jump and flush in embarrassment. “She’s been hearing all her life how smart she is, and she doesn’t need a bigger head.” She looked at Glitch, grinning. “That better be the cheesecake.”

“Could be,” Glitch smirked as she moved to put the pan in the fridge to set for a few minutes. “But if you touch it before it’s ready, I’ll kick your ass and send you home to your pretty boy biker all bloodied and bruised,” she added with a sharp smile.

Karissa grinned, while Nari’s eyes got even wider. She looked terrified. “Now you’re just trying to bait me into having a good time,” Karissa snickered, coming around the island and reaching to grab the cream cheese on the counter, but yanking her hand back before Glitch could slap it. “Oh, please, I just want to help you go faster so I can have some before the horde arrives and discovers what you made.”

“Uh, I’m just going to, uh, go,” Nari told them nervously.

“Sure,” Glitch said easily. “But if you need any help with your course, let me know. I’m happy to help.”

“Thanks,” Nari replied shyly, before giving Karissa a small smile and hurrying out.

“I think you scared her off,” Glitch remarked to Karissa, hip checking her out of the way as she got to work on making the batter. “And don’t touch any of this. The last time you tried to help, you destroyed it and I had to do it all over again.”

Karissa scoffed. “I did not. You’re just anal. And I didn’t scare her off. Believe it or not, Nari is one of the few club whores I can stand, and we’ve never had a problem. The other bitches, especially Loni, need a good reminder from time to time, and between Esme and I, we make sure they remember their place.”

“Something tells me that it still doesn’t matter to them,” Glitch said drily. “And you over beat the mixture last time, which made it crack and look awful. So no, you’re not helping me with this. Besides, I need to double the recipe so there’s enough left over for me to have.”

“Calling me fat now, huh?” Karissa joked.

“As if,” Glitch scoffed. “Though we do need to schedule some time in the gym now that I’m here so that you don’t get

too soft. Sex only burns so many calories, you know.” She laughed when Karissa swatted at her.

“We can do that tonight while the guys have Church,” Karissa promised her with a roll of her eyes. “You know, the boys-only meeting where the little women aren’t allowed in to know all their secrets?”

Glitch shrugged. “I doubt there’s anything interesting going on in there anyway. Let them do their manly man work, and then we can watch them come crawling to us for help when they can’t figure shit out themselves,” she added with a grin.

Suddenly the door to the kitchen swung open, hitting the wall, to reveal Code stalking through, face red with anger, and his eyes blazing with the promise of retribution. Glitch just arched a brow at him as he stopped on the other side of the island. “What the hell do you think you’re doing?” Code barked at her. “You hacked my credit card and purchased shit?”

She shrugged. “I need a proper desk and chair to work in. And you also need a new desk, because yours is falling apart,” she replied calmly.

“So buy it your damn self,” he seethed.

Glitch looked at Karissa and said, “Remember how I said men have dicks and that means they can’t think things through? Perfect example.” She turned back to Code and added, “Let me explain it so you can understand. Because of your fuck up, it wasn’t safe for me to stay where I was, so I have to stay here. It’s not safe for anyone to know where I am. So I can’t exactly use my own credit cards to buy things and have them shipped to where I am, now can I?”

His expression changed only slightly, but the angry look didn’t leave his face. “And you chose my card because?”

“Makes the most sense,” she reasoned. “No one will think twice about you ordering a desk and new office chair, especially when you throw out your old one and get rid of that ugly ass chair you brought in for me to sit in.”

“You charged over six thousand dollars!” Code yelled. “Who the hell needs to spend that much on a desk and chair?”

“It’s not like you can’t afford it,” Glitch sniffed. “But as soon as I can figure out a way to transfer you the money without raising any alarms, I’ll pay it all back. Sheesh, you would think you would be grateful that I got you something that will be much better for your back. Ergonomics are important.” She looked at Karissa, who was fighting a grin. “See, dicks.”

“Stay the hell out of my shit,” Code warned, pointing at her.

“Oh, like you stayed out of mine?” Glitch tossed back, annoyance pricking at her. “Or did you forget already that this whole thing is your fault?”

“Stop tossing that shit in my face, I get it, alright?” he snarled. “You need to buy something, we have other ways of getting it instead of you using me like your own personal bank account. I have shit that I’m committed to, and thanks to your little stunt, I now have to think of another way to get it done.” Then, with a furious glare, he turned and stalked back out, slamming the door behind him.

Glitch stared after him, unmoving for a moment and digesting what he had just revealed. A small pinprick of guilt wormed its way into her gut. He was right, she hadn’t considered that maybe the money on that card was needed for something, and she hadn’t looked deep enough into his finances to know anything about it. She had been focused on herself and her comfort, and had completely ignored anything else.

“Don’t let him get to you,” Karissa told her quietly as she handed Glitch a measuring cup so she could continue making her mixture.

“I’m not,” Glitch assured her, telling herself she would get that money to his card before the end of the day somehow. That would ease her guilt, and then she could go back to work and at least be somewhat comfortable.



“I don’t know what’s up with him lately, but I’ve never seen him like this with anyone else,” Karissa remarked thoughtfully. “I want to say it’s just a bruised ego, knowing that you’re way better at this than him, but something tells me it’s more than that.” She narrowed her eyes at Glitch. “Are you sure you two didn’t sleep together and it went south?”

Glitch laughed outright. “You’re joking right? That man wouldn’t come near me if I was slicked up like one of the club whores and had giant fake-assed tits. Ever since I first showed up and made comments about his system, he hasn’t liked me, and this little battle we’ve been having hasn’t made it much better. Still, I don’t give a rat’s ass if he likes me, as long as he knows that he can’t get away with doing that shit again.”

Karissa nodded. “Code never seemed like the type to do that, that’s why it surprised me. Royal said that he’s always been super nice and sweet since she’s known him, and with everyone else he is, but with you, he’s different.”

“Men in our world don’t like when women beat them at what they consider their domain,” Glitch sighed. “I dealt with it all the time growing up, and even more so when I got out of college with my degree. Which is exactly why I never shy away from an opportunity to prove I’m better than them. Code isn’t any different. Only, this time, he’s going to be getting that experience up close and personal.”

Karissa chuckled. “You two are going to make things interesting around here.”

Glitch grinned at her. “Something tells me that won’t be a bad thing. Now, enough about annoying men. You can help me get this cheesecake done so I can get back to work. I haven’t heard back from the team yet, but I expect I will in a few hours. I want to make sure that I’m ready for when they do.”

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

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### CODE

**H**e slammed his office door and sank into his chair, infuriated. Both at Glitch for thinking she could help herself to his money like that, and at the fact that she did it without him noticing. It didn't exactly make him feel like he was doing a great job at security when someone could hack his credit card from 5 feet away and use it without triggering any alarms or notifications. The only reason he even noticed was because of the email confirmation of the order.

If she was trying to remind him she was better than him, she succeeded, and it ate at him. He didn't think of himself as sexist, because he saw for himself many times over with the other women that they could take care of themselves and do anything they wanted. But this woman, she was a whole other level he wasn't sure he could stand longer.

He glared at his computer screen, pissed that yet again she was getting under his skin. And also pissed that he was now even further behind. He was letting her distract him, and he was putting so much effort into making sure that she couldn't get into his system that he was focusing on the wrong places. He needed to get a grip, and he needed to do it fast before he made a serious mistake.

He now also needed to move some money around to ensure the upcoming draws from his family in the next couple of days would be covered without any issue. He wouldn't let

his family suffer because of a battle with a hard-headed, careless, entitled woman. Though, he supposed she was used to getting her own way.

He had looked into her background after he discovered her legal name. She came from the kind of wealth that made him look like a damn poverty case, and he was doing just fine. If he wasn't mistaken, Glitch was one of the wealthiest women in the country, and she had some of the best education money could buy. Though, in this field, money could only buy you so much without the skill to back it up. Still, he doubted she knew anything about what it was like to worry about your next paycheck.

Something his father had worried about plenty of times when they were growing up. After their mother died when Code was four, he and his brothers had watched their father struggle at times to make sure they had enough. He always managed it, but still, even now, he struggled. His father ran a construction company, and Code was the only one of his siblings not working at it, though he was a silent partner and made sure to contribute funds often.

Like now. Which was exactly why he needed to make sure that Glitch's purchase didn't screw things up. His family was counting on that money to get them through, and he wouldn't let them down.

He set up new alerts and restrictions on his accounts and credit cards, so that if someone even thought about trying to access them, it would set off so many alarm bells a dead man could hear them. Then he transferred money around and ensured the funds would be available when the payment needed to go through in a couple of days.

He sat back, feeling a small sense of relief, but he stiffened when he heard his door open and then close softly. He knew it was her without having to turn around. Instead, he focused on his screen, all the while listening as she stepped toward him. He heard the chair creak as she took her seat, and the soft clack of her keyboard as she began to type.

He shifted forward and told himself to get back to work, that nothing would get done if he just sat here and let her get deeper into his head. They worked in silence for almost a full hour, the tension in the room growing with each passing minute. He tried his best to ignore it, but every sound she made grated at him.

Suddenly, she broke the silence. “I apologize for using your credit card without asking you. I’ve already requested that my attorney transfer the funds to you in a way that can’t be traced back to me.”

He paused, his fingers hovering over the keyboard. “Thank you,” he replied stiffly.

He heard her turn, but remained in place, forcing himself to remain focused on the string of code he was working on. “So what is your issue with me, exactly?” she asked curiously.

That made him turn to look at her. “My issue with you is that you do shit without asking first,” he told her gruffly. “Did it ever occur to you that maybe I don’t want, or need, a new desk? That ordering one is just a waste of money because when you’re gone it won’t be used?”

She arched a brow at him. “Your desk is literally being held together with duct tape, so I think it’s safe to say you’re going to need a new one at some point. The one I picked has all kinds of ergonomic supports. It’s also U-shaped, so we can keep our current arrangement, but you can spread things out after I’m gone if you want to give yourself more room to work.”

He glared at her. “I don’t need a desk that big, it’s a waste of space,” he sniped. “I like my setup. I may not have all the fancy equipment you do, or the space you do back at your clubhouse, but that doesn’t mean there is anything wrong with mine.”

“I never said there was anything wrong with your equipment,” she huffed, annoyance making her blue eyes glitter. “I told you that your system had some vulnerabilities, and instead of taking it to heart, you acted like I cut off your dick.”

“There is nothing wrong with my system,” he gritted out through clenched teeth, his hands fisting on the arms of his chair.

“Obviously there is, if I can get in with no problem and without you even realizing,” she tossed back, giving him a haughty look that made him even angrier. “And like every other man in this line of work, you hate it when your weaknesses are pointed out by a woman.”

“You being a woman has nothing to do with it,” he growled at her. “My issue with you is that you strut around acting like you’re better than me, and everyone else for that matter. Like I give a shit you’re some goddamn former mercenary, or you went to some big fancy school with your family money. Some of us had to earn it all on our own, the hard way.”

The glittering in her eyes stopped and her gaze went stormy. “You don’t know shit about my life growing up,” she hissed, rising from her seat and stepping forward. He stood too, looking down at her, letting her see his anger.

“I know you had privileges that others could only dream of,” he tossed back coldly.

“Money doesn’t buy happiness, Code. And I don’t act like I’m better than anyone else because of it. I work in an MC clubhouse instead of in a home of my own. I don’t own anything brand new except my equipment, but I refuse to apologize for that. I’ve worked my ass off to earn it. Do you really think that because I have money, my team treats me any differently than your MC treats you? They don’t give a damn about my money, and I don’t give a damn about what they do or don’t have. We are a team, and if they needed anything, I wouldn’t even consider saying no. As for my skills, I have worked day and night for years to get where I am. Because other lives depend on it. I’m not doing it for my own gain, or to lord it over some man’s head that I’m better than them. I made sure it wasn’t my error that would get me, my team, or the people we were responsible for, killed. You have no idea what that kind of pressure is like. The level of perfection that’s required to endure it.”

Hesitation moved through him at her words. He hadn't thought about that. Again, because she always made him forget the most basic of logic when she was around.

She stepped back and shook her head. "Whatever, you don't want to listen to me anyway. You've made up your mind about me, and I really don't care what you think of me. If I overstepped with you, fine, I'm sorry, but that's all I will apologize for. I won't apologize for pointing out things that you need to work on, because if you were in my position, you would do the same thing, and you know it. You just can't see that because I have tits and a vagina."

"I don't give a shit that you're a woman," he told her in exasperation. "If I had been the one to break into your clubhouse and tell you your security was shit and then continue to try and poke holes in it and make it so that you doubt everything you do all the time, would you be spouting any of this? No, you'd be just as pissed."

She was silent as she regarded him. Finally she gave a small, but curt, nod. "Fine, I'll agree to that. Should we just concede that we won't bring that up anymore and move on?"

He regarded her carefully, not sure if he should take her at her word. Finally, after not seeing any hints of deception, he nodded. "Fine."

"Good. But just to be clear, this doesn't mean I like you, and it doesn't mean I forgive you for what you did to me and my team. You have a long way to go for that."

"Fine by me. I don't need you to forgive me, but I also want you to know that I wasn't trying to get your team in shit. So, since we still need to cohabit for a while, we're going to have to stay out of each other's way."

"Won't be a problem," Glitch replied, stepping back. "My team should be calling me shortly, and they'll be my priority. Then I have to check on my cheesecake and break some fingers if anyone touched it."

Unable to resist, he smirked and said, "Well, at least you made yourself somewhat useful today. Next time you're in the

kitchen, how about making me a sandwich?”

She gave him a withering glare and sat in her seat. Or, rather, his seat that he still hadn't taken back. “Your caveman jokes aren't funny, Code,” she sniffed.

“You were the one who said you had tits and a vagina,” he said with a careless shrug as he took his seat. “Well, a vagina anyway. Still not sure about the tits. Did you try that bra I sent you?”

“I think you're obsessed with my tits,” she tossed back. “Did you picture what they would look like when you bought it for me? I bet you did. At least mine are real, not fake plastic. Don't you get tired of sucking on a bag of saline and silicone? Or could the club whores not understand the instructions on how to use that magnifying glass and tweezers to find your cock?”

He would never admit that he indeed pictured her in that bra when he picked it. Hell, he was a red-blooded man, after all. “Between the two of us, the only one obsessed with anything is you with my cock,” he returned smugly. “You've mentioned it a few times now in less than twenty four hours. What, the view you got in my bedroom wasn't enough? Trying to bait me into giving you another look?”

She scoffed. “Whatever helps you sleep at night, caveman. Now, as entertaining as this whole back and forth is, I have work to get done, and then a cheesecake to finish. So you go on back to whatever you were doing and forget I'm here so you don't bother me.”

“Hard to forget you're here when you type so damn loud,” he told her offhandedly. “Guess with those tiny hands of yours, you have to press those big buttons extra hard.”

“Oh, now I know why you want me obsessed with your cock,” she said in a saccharine tone as she turned back to her screens. “You think it'll look bigger with my tiny hands around it, huh? I'm afraid nothing much is going to help you in that department, but I'm sure I could find you an alternative if you're not happy with the penis pump.” She turned and gave

him a sassy wink. "I have connections." Then she turned back to her screens before he could reply.

She was baiting him, and like the idiot he was, he jumped like a damn fish and caught it in one bite. Rolling his chair so that he was directly behind her, he leaned forward so he could murmur in her ear, "It's okay, babe, I know how much you want to see my dick. If you're a good girl, maybe I'll let you check it out for yourself. Up close and personal. In the meantime, I have connections too. We could get you some big girl boobs, instead of those little training titties. Or maybe you like having small hands so that when you touch yourself, they look bigger."

Her head whipped around before he could move back, and their faces were mere inches apart. Her blue eyes bored into his, and he could see that they had just the smallest hints of green in them. Also alive and well was her irritation. "I won't ever be touching your dick. I don't want to chance picking up any of the club whore's STDs. As for my boobs, the closest you'll ever get to seeing them is in your dreams. Now, leave me the hell alone and get out of my space, or we're going to have more than a little problem."

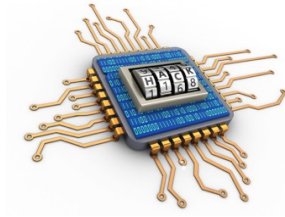
She turned away, but not before he saw a flash of something in her eyes that had him smirking as he forced himself to back away and turn back to his desk. He was getting under her skin. It only seemed right with how often she got under his.



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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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### SLIP

“Do you know where she is?” Hazard asked as they sat around the cabin’s small living room, in front of a roaring fire. Personally, Slip didn’t see why they had started the damn thing since it wasn’t like they were at the north pole, but it had been Hazard’s idea, and he had learned a long time ago to never question the man unless you liked having broken bones. The man was their leader and ruled the team with an iron fist.

“The alert I got said New Mexico,” Slip answered. “It was up and gone before I could even really look at it, but when I went back and triangulated the signal, it was in the lower part of the state, close to the Texas border.”

“And it was only her, not the rest of the team?” Crisp asked, playing with his lighter. He was obsessed with fire, and a few times it had almost gotten them caught. Not that the bastard cared, Slip thought with mild annoyance. The man was growing increasingly deranged, which at times made him unpredictable. Still, he shared Slip’s hatred for his former friend’s team, so his volatility would be put to good use.

“Stands to reason that wherever she is, her team is,” Maggot said casually, arms crossed over his chest and looking bored. “So how about we stop talking and start driving.”

Slip fully agreed with that sentiment, past ready to finally get his revenge.

“And what are we going to do when we get there?” Hazard asked calmly. “Just shoot them and run off? No, they’ll know that this alert went out and they’ll be prepared for us. We need a plan, and then we need a back-up plan. I want those bastards dead, but I ain’t about to lose my life in the process.”

“I’ll just burn them out,” Crisp said with an evil smile, the flame from his lighter flickering and glowing in the darkened room.

“Could make the place go sky-high,” Spook, their final team member, said casually. “We line that place up with some explosives and we take them out with one shot.”

“And have every cop and federal agent within 10 miles converging on us,” Hazard said with a deep frown. “You’re an idiot, Spook. I thought you knew how to use your brain, guess I was wrong.”

Slip glanced at Spook and caught the anger that crossed his face. It was there and gone so quickly that Hazard probably missed it, but none of the rest of them had. It was no secret that there was a power struggle between the two, always had been, but Hazard was their leader for a reason, and Spook never had the balls to challenge him outright for it.

“I’ve already started narrowing down their location,” Slip interjected, turning the conversation around. “And I’ve found a few potentials. We need to go and check them out. But, Liza is mine. No one else gets the pleasure of killing her but me.”

“Oh, so you think you can call dibs now?” Hazard asked, eyes flashing dangerously.

Slip held his gaze, unafraid. “I called dibs the day she fucked me over in high school, and then again when she and her fucking team fucked us on that mission. And you agreed, so no point in getting pissed off about it now.”

Hazard scowled silently at him until finally he shrugged and said, “Whatever, you can have the bitch. I want their team leader. I got plans for him after all that bullshit. Find us a way there that won’t get us recognized. We leave tomorrow.” Then he stood and stalked out, slamming the cabin door behind him.

Slip stood and headed for the small kitchen where he had set up his equipment. He was going to find her, alright, and when he did, he was going to settle things between them once and for all.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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### GLITCH

**H**er phone rang. Seeing it was Simba, she immediately protected and encrypted the call before she put on her headset and said, “About time you called me. I swear, you guys like to keep me on pins and needles when you leave.”

Simba’s chuckle filled her ears as she continued to ensure the call was untraceable. “You know how much I love to make you wait, darlin’,” he drawled.

“Edging is not an attractive habit,” she sniffed, though as soon as the words left her mouth, she could all but feel Code’s gaze on her. Not that she was going to give him the satisfaction of acknowledging it. He could sit and wonder, for all she cared. Though she could admit that after their banter earlier, she was happy to give him a taste of his own medicine. He got under her skin and made her think of things she had no business thinking of, and she wasn’t about to fall for his pathetic attempts at distracting her. The man might think that he was some great gift to womankind, but to her, he was a nuisance.

“But it’s oh so fun,” Taz called out, not far away from wherever Simba was. “I made this one girl wait an hour before I let her cum, and it was the most glorious thing I’ve ever experienced.”

“Might have been glorious for you, but it sounds painful and annoying to me,” she scoffed. “Now, where are you?”

“Just hit a small town called Cape in Louisiana,” Simba replied. “We still have a ways to go, but we should be there tomorrow. Gonna grab a quick power nap before we get moving again.”

“That’s where this family friend of yours is?” she asked as she pulled up her map, working out the specifics of where they were heading and how long it might take them. “You told me where you are, but not where your final destination is.”

Simba sighed. “It’s the town next to the one where I grew up,” was all he said, unwilling to say the exact location.

Glitch’s instincts told her there was something about this place that he didn’t want to share. She’d be digging up those juicy details as soon as possible. “Alright. You have a place to stay when you get there?” she asked, not wanting to pry.

“Yeah, it’s all taken care of,” Simba replied. “I’ll let you know when we’re leaving here and when we get there. Then we’ll talk strategy.”

“Alright,” Glitch agreed.

“Hold on!” Taz yelled, and the sound of a small scuffle sounded before Taz came loud and clear on the line, meaning he stole Simba’s phone. Glitch rolled her eyes. Simba would kick his ass for that, but Taz wouldn’t care. “How is everything there? Is that bastard giving you a hard time? Or did you just straight up kill him and be done with it? Hide the body until we get back so we can bury it where they can’t find it.”

Glitch snickered. “Not yet, but if it happens, you’ll be the first to know,” she assured him. “I’m actually making a cheesecake right now. I need to check it, so go away.”

“Damn it, I want some,” Taz whined. “Your cheesecake is almost as good as sex, and that’s saying something.”

“I’ll make you one when you get back,” she promised him. “Think of it as prolonged edging, since you love that so much,” she added cheekily.

Taz laughed outright. “Deal.” Then he was gone and Simba came back on the line.

“I swear, I don’t know why we don’t leave him on the side of the road somewhere,” he grumbled.

“Because he’s passable comic relief?” she joked.

Simba chuckled. “I guess. No alerts or anything that anyone has joined the hunt for us?” he asked seriously.

“No, but that’s not to say they won’t still try,” she replied. “It’s only been a few days, and anyone would know that I’d be watching, so if they’re worth their salt, they’ll be using other methods to track us down.”

“You let me know if anything comes up and we’ll get back as soon as we can,” he ordered.

“Promise.”

“Good. Talk soon.” Then the line went dead and she pulled off her headset. She shut down her system and stood, heading for the door.

“Didn’t realize you and your team were that close,” Code remarked just before she reached the door.

She stopped and looked over her shoulder at him, narrowing her eyes. “I’m assuming there’s meaning behind that. How about instead of trying to be clever, you spit it out.”

He turned and looked at her, completely unaffected by her words. “Oh, nothing,” he said casually. “If you’re heading to get food, bring something back for me, will you?” Then he went back to his computer and left her glaring at him. Instead of arguing, she stalked out and headed for the kitchen. The man was an idiot if he thought she was going to do anything of the sort.

When she got into the kitchen, she grinned when she saw Rogue with Wren and Win, the girls looking ticked at whatever he was saying. All three of them looked at her in surprise, and she said, “Don’t mind me. Just checking on something.” She made her way to the oven where she had taped a giant note that no one was to open the door. When she

turned on the oven light, she saw that it was all looking just fine. Glad to see that her directions had been followed, she turned and tuned back into the conversation.

“You’re not going to that damn place again,” Rogue told the twins firmly, arms crossed over his chest and a dark scowl on his face.

“Our knife skills are lacking and you know it,” Wren complained. “How the hell are we supposed to be able to protect ourselves if we don’t stay on top of our training?”

“That wasn’t goddamn training,” Rogue snapped. “That was some amateur playing with cutlery in the middle of a dangerous neighborhood late at night. Now that we’ve dealt with your threat, you don’t need to keep on top of your knife skills. The club and I will protect you.”

Both girls scoffed in derision. “Yeah, because you’re always going to be close enough to fly in and save the day when some guy decides he doesn’t want to take no for an answer,” Win sneered.

Rogue’s face flushed with fury. “Who the fuck didn’t take no for an answer?” he demanded.

“No one!” Wren yelled, glaring at him. “But that’s the point. It could happen, and if we have to protect ourselves because we can’t easily get away, a weapon would be handy to have. Don’t you think it’s important to know how to use them properly so we don’t accidentally hurt ourselves? Or murder the guy? I mean, I don’t look good in orange.”

“If you have to kill someone, there would be a reason, and you wouldn’t go to jail,” Rogue snapped. “I’d make sure of that. But you’re not going back to that dump.”

“You don’t need to go to that dump when you have a master with knives right here,” Glitch interjected excitedly. “Between Karissa and I, we can help you hone your skills.”

Wren and Win looked at each other and grinned. “Sweet!” Win said excitedly.

“Hold it,” Rogue barked. He turned to glare at Glitch. “I don’t know anything about you,” he said gruffly.

She shrugged. “I had a knife to your hacker’s throat not even twenty four hours ago. I’d say that’s all you need to know,” she told him calmly. “What, you think I’m going to coerce them into doing something they shouldn’t?”

“He’s probably worried you’re going to teach us ways to use them on him,” Win snickered, earning a narrowed-eyed glare from Rogue.

“Or worse, teach Scarlett how to,” Wren added with a laugh of her own.

“The first rule of knife club is that you can’t use your skills unless you’re practicing with me or Karissa, or your lives are in actual danger,” Glitch warned them sternly. “So no matter how much this guy pisses you off, you can’t go after him.”

“Says the one who just told them she had a knife to my brother’s throat a second ago,” Rogue huffed.

Glitch gave him a cool look. “My life is in danger because of him, that’s why I’m here. And it never hurts to remind you all that you might think you’re the deadliest ones around, but in reality, that’s far from the truth.”

“Well, I think our problem is solved. We don’t have to go to some dirty basement, we have two badass women to teach us a few things without even having to leave the grounds,” Wren announced cheerfully.

Rogue still looked like he wanted to argue, but instead, he pinned Glitch with a warning glare. “If either of them get hurt, I’ll hang your ass out to dry. Got it?”

Glitch decided she wouldn’t take any offense to his overprotectiveness. She looked into the twins and their history, and she knew this man cared far more about these girls and their guardian than he ever had for anyone else. So she nodded and said “Got it. But, let me make something clear.” She stepped forward, and even though she had to look up at him, she made sure he saw the danger in her eyes as she added, “You don’t get to threaten me, ever. I can kill you before you know it’s coming, so how about a little bit of respect, huh?” Then she stepped back and smiled at the girls. “We’ll get



started later. I have a few things to finish up, and a workout to get in.”

“We do too. Can we join you for the workout?” Win asked hopefully.

“Yeah, that sparring you did with Karissa in the ring last time was awesome,” Wren agreed, rubbing her hands together excitedly.

Rogue grumbled something under his breath and then stalked out, clearly done with the conversation. Glitch waited until he was out of the room before she said to both of the girls, “I’ll gladly help you. And Karissa will probably be happy to, as well.”

“We’ve actually been working out with her,” Win told her. “So we’ve been improving, but I really want to move on to the advanced stuff.”

“Not before you’re ready,” Glitch cautioned her. “No running before you can walk, babes. Men make that mistake all the time and get themselves in trouble, or even killed. And, as women are far smarter, we do it the right way so there’s no mistaking just how much better you are.”

Both of them nodded. “Got it,” they chimed in unison.

“Good,” Glitch grinned.

The sound of a baby crying pulled them out of their conversation, and they watched as a harried-looking Harlow arrived with a screaming Harley. “Someone, please help me get him to stop crying,” Harlow begged. “I don’t know what’s wrong, and I’ve tried everything. I can’t find Esme or Royal either.”

“Give him here,” Glitch ordered, moving around the island.

“Esme and Fury went to a doctor’s appointment,” Wren told her. “I think Royal and Savage did, too.”

Harlow transferred Harley to Glitch’s arms, and she looked down at the adorable little boy whose face was red and angry, big tears streaming down his face. He was clearly unhappy,

and she soothed and rocked him, trying to get him to calm down, to no avail.

“I’m a terrible mother,” Harlow sobbed, her own tears starting to stream down her face, shoulders sinking in defeat. “I can’t even get my own baby to stop crying. I’ve nursed him, changed him, walked the floors, everything.”

“You’re no such thing,” Glitch scolded gently. “He’s a boy, babe, and that means he’s just plain contrary and likes to give you a hard time.” She lifted him to her shoulder and patted his back, humming softly to try and soothe him.

“I guess,” Harlow hiccuped. “God, I thought I could handle it since Steel had to go on a run today, but I was so stupid. He’s the only one Harley likes.”

“Because he doesn’t let anyone else hold him,” Wren chimed in, coming around to sit beside her. Win moved to flank Harlow’s other side, sitting close. Glitch smiled, seeing the gesture for what it was. They had no idea what to do, but they were offering some comfort.

“Which means he’s gotten too used to Steel, and he needs to learn to be handled by everyone,” Win agreed.

“But I’m his mother,” Harlow cried. “Shouldn’t he love me just as much?”

“He does,” Glitch promised her. “Look, you’re tired and overwhelmed. Why don’t you go and have a nap? I’ll take him for a bit,” she suggested.

“I can’t do that,” Harlow said morosely. “What kind of mother leaves their screaming baby with someone else instead of handling it herself?”

“One who loves her son with all her heart, but knows she needs to make herself a priority too,” Glitch said firmly. “No one is going to think less of you for having a break and a nap, Harlow. That’s what the people around here are for. I’ll keep him with me, and if I need you, you’ll be right upstairs. I promise I’ll come and get you.”

Suddenly, Harley let out a very loud burp, and then an equally loud fart, and stopped crying. Glitch stopped moving

and stared at the other three women, who all looked equally shocked. Glitch couldn't help but laugh. "I guess someone just had some gas," she said easily, carefully pulling the baby away from her shoulder to look at him. His face was still wet, but he gave her a curious look, as if he only just realized that it wasn't his mother who held him.

"Fuck," Harlow sighed. "Why couldn't I have figured that out?" She put her head in her hands and continued to cry. Wren and Win gave each other panicked looks, like they weren't sure what to say or do.

Glitch took in the distraught woman and realized how exhausted the poor thing was. Her heart hurt for her. Decision made, she eased her way back around the island and said, "Because you are exhausted, Harlow. When was the last time you slept?"

Harlow lifted her head, eyes red and nose running. "He's been so fussy, Steel and I haven't had more than a few hours a night each," she admitted. "And I never nap because I have so much to do and clean up while he's finally sleeping. The laundry is ridiculous."

"It's time for you to go and have a nap," Glitch said firmly. Harlow opened her mouth to argue but Glitch gave her a steely gaze. "No arguing, or I'll call your man so he can give you the order. And if that doesn't work, the girls will help me tie you to the bed."

Harlow stared at her and then gave a watery laugh. "He'd probably tell you to do that anyway," she admitted. "I'm sorry, Glitch, I don't mean to bombard you. I know you have your own work."

Glitch shook her head. "I set my own hours, so don't worry. Now, Wren, Win, you take Harlow upstairs to Steel's room and help her get cleaned up and into bed. You are to sleep, Harlow, and don't you come back downstairs until you're good and ready. If we need you, I'll come up and get you, I promise."

Harlow slowly nodded, her expression softening with gratitude. "He's probably going to need to be changed soon,"

she said tiredly. “I didn’t bring any of his stuff with me.”

“I’ll go get it at your house,” Win offered. “Is it in the nursery?”

Harlow nodded. “Sorry about the house, I know it’s a mess,” she added, embarrassment tingeing her cheeks.

Win waved that away. “Trust me, I’ve been around way worse. I’ll be right back.”

“Come on,” Wren encouraged, helping her to her feet. “You can shower and I’ll get you some clothes to wear.”

“Thank you,” Harlow said gratefully. She looked at Harley, indecision on her face. Glitch moved forward and handed him to his mom, making him immediately sigh in content and burrow into her chest happily. Glitch beamed as Harlow smiled for the first time and kissed his head. She looked up at Glitch gratefully again before gently handing him back. Then she turned and left the kitchen with Wren, her head held a little higher than before.

Glitch looked down at the now awake baby and softly scolded, “You were giving your mama a hard time, little man, and we can’t have that. Now, I don’t know a thing about babies, but we’re going to figure this out together, got it?” He made a soft sound as he stared up at her, and she leaned down to press a quick kiss to his forehead. “Alright, we have some more work to do, little guy, so let’s get to it, huh?”

She headed out of the kitchen, and when she walked into the common room, she was surprised that no one was around. Even Rogue had disappeared. Instead of worrying about it, she headed for Code’s office and walked in, leaving the door open behind her. Which of course made him huff a sound of annoyance and demand, “Would you shut the door? The glare is messing with my screens.”

“Can’t,” she said simply, carefully sitting down in the chair.

“Why no—” He stopped mid-sentence as he realized she had the baby in her arms. His brow rose sharply. “You kidnapping babies now?” he drawled.

She glared at him. “No. His mama needs a break, so I’m taking care of him until she feels better. Not that I’d expect an ogre like you to understand,” she added disdainfully, rocking Harley gently when he started to fuss again.

Code didn’t say anything, but watched her with an expression on his face she couldn’t quite decipher. Finally he said, “Give him to me,” and held out his hands for the baby.

“Nope,” she replied immediately. “He’s staying with me. We finally got him to stop fussing. If you make him cry, his mother will come down here, and she needs to sleep.”

He rolled his eyes. “She won’t hear him. This room is soundproof. And I’m used to kids, so give him here.” He wagged his fingers and scooted closer.

She turned her body away and scowled at him. “I just got him, and he’s comfortable.”

“Jesus, I’m not going to steal him forever,” Code said in exasperation. “Just hand him over for a minute. Besides, your stuff was beeping a minute ago, so you probably need to check that.”

She looked back at her computer, and she did indeed see an alert waiting for her. She looked down at the now-doing little boy and sighed. “Fine, you can have him while I deal with this, but then I want him back.” She carefully transferred him over to Code’s arms and watched as he expertly shifted him to the crook of his elbow before turning back to his own computer, rocking his arm when Harley started to fuss.

Code glanced at her. “What?”

“You’re far too at ease with a baby, considering there’s none running around here,” she remarked thoughtfully. “Had some practice, have you?”

He shrugged. “My brothers each have two kids, so I’m used to my nieces and nephews, I guess,” he replied.

“Huh. I never pictured you as an uncle,” she said as she turned back to her computer.

“Why not? Something wrong with me?” he asked curiously.

“You just don’t strike me as the type to like kids,” she said as she opened her alert. It was a message from Simba to let her know they were going to sleep for a few more hours and then head out. She sent a quick message back to let him know she got the message.

“There’s a lot you don’t know about me,” Code said drily.

Oh how wrong he was, she thought. Though, she hadn’t done a deep dive; only enough to make sure he was who he said he was, but it looked like she was going to have to dive back in.

Win hurried in with a diaper bag and some kind of sling over her chest. “Got everything,” she said, a little out of breath.

Glitch stood and took everything from her, and smiled. “Thanks, babes. I think Wren is upstairs helping Harlow get settled down.”

“I’ll go up and see if they need anything. Are we still good to practice tonight?”

“Yep,” Glitch said with a smile as she set the diaper bag on the floor and picked up the sling. “I’ll message Karissa too.” Win nodded and then hurried out. Glitch looked at the sling and figured out how to put it on. Once she had it secured, she turned back to Code and demanded, “Give him back so I can get some work done.”

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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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### CODE

He looked down at Harley, who was fast asleep, clearly content to be where he was. “He’s fine,” he told Glitch with a shake of his head.

“It wasn’t a suggestion,” she said firmly. “Give him here.” She stepped closer so that she was in his space and her knees pressed against his outer thigh.

He glanced down at her knees and then back up at her face, arching a brow at her. “Just can’t stop touching me, can you?” he taunted her.

She rolled her eyes. “How about we not talk about how annoying you are, and get back to you handing him over to me before you wake him again with all your blathering.”

“Blathering?” Code repeated in amusement. “What is this, eighteenth century England?”

She narrowed her eyes at him. “Not my fault you have no culture in your life,” she sniffed. “Now, would you shut up and give me the baby?”

He had half a mind to keep arguing, but he had work to do. If she wanted to work with a baby strapped to her body, well, all the power to her. “Fine,” he grumbled, still wanting to at least appear disgruntled with the whole thing. Carefully, he eased Harley out of the crook of his arm and stood to hand him to Glitch.

She took him expertly, and then carefully maneuvered him into the sling. Code stood close just in case. He knew all too well how babies could squirm and wiggle with no warning. Hell, his youngest niece had done that and he almost dropped her, scaring the ever-loving shit out of him. Thankfully, Harley was more well-behaved, and settled into the sling with only a stretching sound and then a contented sigh.

Code stepped back and then let out a snort when he looked down at her. Glitch glared up at him. “What now?” she demanded as she moved slowly and carefully over to her seat and lowered herself down, being careful not to jostle the sleeping baby.

“Never realized just how small you are,” Code snickered as he looked her over. “One wrong move from him and I’ll be yelling timber as you fall.”

She glared at him. “Well, if his father wasn’t a damn giant,” she griped.

Code moved back to his chair and told her, “Compared to you, everyone is giant, short stuff.”

“Everyone loves to pick on my height,” she grumbled as she started to click away at her keyboard.

“What, all that money you have couldn’t buy any kind of stretching surgery?” he teased. “Oh, wait, I guess not, since you didn’t take care of your small breasts either. Harley’s probably annoyed that he’s laying against something flat instead of something soft.”

“You know, I think you’re the one with the complex,” she responded drily. “Going after traits that are genetic and can’t be helped. Says a lot about the kind of man you are, body shaming a woman.”

He rounded on her. “I’m not body shaming you,” he argued.

“You sent me a damn push-up bra, and you’ve made constant remarks about my boobs ever since. If that’s not body shaming, what would you call it?”



He was silent for a moment as recognition dawned on him. Damn it, he really was an asshole, he thought to himself. This woman got under his skin in a way that made him a downright jerk to her. He huffed out a sigh. “Sorry, you’re right,” he admitted. “I won’t comment on your body that way anymore.”

She turned and looked at him with an arched brow. “That almost sounded like a sincere apology,” she remarked.

He scowled at her. “Of course it was. I know better than that, but when it comes to you, apparently I lose all sense.”

Her lips pulled up into a smug grin. “It’s your obsession with me. I understand. After all, most men wouldn’t know how to handle a woman like me.”

He gave her a cool look. “You’re baiting me, but I’m not going to give you the satisfaction of answering you. Now, I have work to do, so how about we stop talking and get back to it.”

“Work? You mean your inferior system that you still haven’t figured out how to close all the holes in?” she taunted.

He glared at her. “There is nothing wrong with my system,” he gritted out through clenched teeth. “And there are no more holes.”

“Really?” she asked innocently. “Well, never mind me then.” She turned around and went back to her computer.

He stared at her back for a moment, unsure of what that abrupt change of tune was about, then shook his head and turned back to his own machine. *Damn women and their mind games*, he thought irritably. He opened up his screen, and then cursed when he saw the message waiting for him.

***Glitch: All fixed, huh?***

“Stay out of my damn system,” he barked at her, moving quickly to boot her out again.

She snickered. “Maybe if you were more focused on your work instead of your obsession with me, you would be further along,” she suggested.

He didn't reply, instead trying to figure out how she got in in the first place. He stewed in silence as he patched it, infuriated that she had once again pointed out another failure. He really was going to have to talk to Savage about this whole arrangement. She had been here less than twenty-four hours, and he was already getting distracted and sloppy. He couldn't allow that to keep happening.

Once he was sure he had it sorted, he told himself he needed to focus on something else and move on to his actual work. Namely, checking on the businesses that the club ran to make sure there were no problems, and also to make sure that the security for those businesses remained in place with no issues. It was something he loved doing, mostly because he had designed the systems himself, and as much as Glitch liked to mess with him here, he wouldn't allow her to undermine him there.

He worked for a few more minutes, but he had to stop when he heard Harley getting fussy again, and Glitch trying to soothe him. "What's wrong?" Code asked her, turning.

"I'm thinking he must have some gas again," she answered after a moment, standing and putting her arm under his body to help bounce and rock him a little. "That was the problem last time."

"Here, give him back to me. I learned a trick with my nieces and nephews that usually helps," he said, standing and moving toward her, hands outstretched.

She glared at him. "What, you think I'm not capable of figuring it out? I got him to stop last time all by myself."

He rolled his eyes. "I'm not saying you can't, but this will be faster, and keep him from waking his mother, who is hopefully sleeping by now. Hand him over."

She looked like she wanted to argue, but then Harley let out a loud cry and she winced. He bit back a smirk. She sighed. "Fine." Then she moved toward him and tried to carefully remove him from the sling, which wasn't as easy as she figured and she had to stop. Harley's cries got louder and

she started to look slightly panicked. He snorted and reached for her.

“Here, I’ll just grab him out of it,” he told her, already reaching for the baby. The only thing he hadn’t taken into account was that by doing so, the back of his hand would come in contact with her chest and upper torso. He froze for a second, feeling the heat of her body through her tiny top and the sling, and it made him feel something he hadn’t felt in a long time. The fact that her breasts, though not very large, were indeed soft, was not lost on him. He had to force himself to ignore it as he pulled Harley from the sling.

Only, Harley had other ideas. The moment he cleared the sling was the exact moment the explosion happened.

Code wasn’t sure how, but the little baby let out the loudest fart, and the accompanying smell and feel of liquid coating his hands and arms were enough to set him gagging. “Oh fuck,” he gasped, staring down at the now smiling baby. He heard more gagging, and when he lifted his head, he saw that Harley had also managed to drench the sling in shit. But, because they were so close and it was dripping everywhere, shit was now on the front of Glitch’s top, and smeared across her skin as it dripped down her stomach. Her face was positively green, and the gagging sounds coming out of her mouth weren’t helping his queasiness. He looked at Harley again. “Dude, you’re an asshole,” he sighed. “I’m telling your father that you take after him.”

“Oh, God, I need to get clean. Oh God,” Glitch moaned, still gagging.

“Hold on,” Code told her as calmly as he could. “We are not trailing shit all the way through the clubhouse and upstairs. Also, I am not having this smell in my room, and since you’re next to mine, yours either.”

“So, what, we just stay like this and continue to stink up the place until someone comes to get him?” she demanded, turning her head away and trying to gulp in clean air, but not quite succeeding. “God, kid, what did your mother feed you? How can it smell this bad?” Another gagging sound.

That was indeed the million dollar question. But for now, he needed a solution. Making a quick decision, he said, “There’s a bathroom just down the hall, but it’s gonna be a tight fit.”

“I don’t care,” she gasped.

“Alright, take the sling off. We’ll put him in that so we don’t drip shit all the way down the hall,” he ordered.

“You want me to carry the shitty baby against myself?” she demanded incredulously.

“Fine, then take it off, but he’s going in that sling until we get to the bathroom. And since I already have shit all over my hands, I’ll carry it.”

With a grimace, she reached up and held it away from her body as much as possible so she could get her head out without befouling her hair. Any other time, he would be amused, but right now, he just wanted the now cooing and happy baby out of his soiled hands and into the damn sling. Once it was away from her body, she managed to hold it still long enough for him to put the baby into it and take hold of it. Harley lost all happiness as soon as he felt that he wasn’t being held anymore, and started to cry. “Oh sure, you cry while we’re covered in your shit,” Glitch muttered before looking at him. “Okay, now where are we going?”

“You grab the diaper bag, because we’re going to need to change him too,” Code told her as he headed for the door, wincing when he stepped in some droplets but refusing to think about it. Instead, he focused on holding the crying baby’s sling just far enough away from his body that it wasn’t touching him, but so that he still held it securely. He didn’t check to make sure Glitch had followed his order, but walked out of the office and turned to the right, down the very short hallway to the bathroom.

It was a bathroom that was only used by himself and sometimes the other brothers if they were desperate, but most of the time, people forgot it was there. Which was a bonus for this moment because it meant that they more than likely would be able to deal with this without getting interrupted. He was

also grateful that he had left the door ajar so he didn't have to open it with his shitty hands. He walked into the bathroom and told Glitch, "Turn on the light."

The light turned on and he heard her say, "Damn, you weren't kidding, this is tight."

It was small. There was a toilet with a cabinet over it, and a small pedestal sink, but also a small shower stall. They could both fit, but it was going to be very tight. "We're going to have to figure out the shower situation," he told her.

She looked at it and then back at him and sighed. "Well, we both need to get this washed off, and it looks like we can probably fit in that shower together."

He went to agree and then stopped when he finally clued in what that would mean. "You know you're going to have to get out of those clothes, right?" he pointed out.

She paused and then shrugged. "I'm not shy, but if you're worried that you won't be able to control yourself..."

He gave her an exasperated look. "I'm covered in shit and holding a screaming baby, but I'll try and control myself," he said sarcastically. "Now get the water going so we can get clean."

She, thankfully, didn't argue and did just that, rinsing her hands under the spray before turning back to the diaper bag. "I'll get everything ready for him before we get in," she explained as she pulled out a new diaper and all other odds and ends they would need. "Are there towels in here?"

"In the cabinet above the toilet."

She grabbed out a couple of towels and set them on top of the toilet seat. Then she looked at him and the baby. She swallowed hard, then got a look of grim determination on her face. "Alright, hand me the ticking time bomb," she ordered. "Then strip down and get in the shower so I can hand him back."

He couldn't help himself, and joked, "I knew you were obsessed with seeing my dick, but I didn't think you would cause an explosion to make it happen."

“Considering I forgot my magnifying glass and tweezers, I’m sure I’ll be fine,” she said sweetly. “But if you really want someone to admire your dick, I’ll take one for the team and run upstairs to grab your doll. I can slap her with a flogger to really get you going, make your dick easier to notice.”

He scowled at the mention of that stupid blow up doll, and handed her the sling, trying to somehow strip out of his clothes without getting shit all over himself or in his hair. His efforts were not very successful, and he cursed when he felt some of it leak onto his chest. Finally, he dropped his clothes on to the floor and stepped buck ass naked into the shower, the bath items they would need in his hand. The warm water hit him in the back after he put the soap and washcloth on the small ledge, then he turned to hold his hands out for the baby. “Okay, hand him to me. We’ll need to get this diaper and his clothes off of him. Grab the garbage bin for his diaper; you can drop his clothes onto the pile of mine before you get in here, too.”

“Thank God I don’t have as much on me as you,” she huffed as she moved toward him with the sling. Carefully, Code took Harley out of the sling, trying hard not to gag again, but he moved too quickly and the sling flew back and smacked her hard in the chest, and unfortunately, got more of the shit on her, making her gasp and then freeze as she looked down at herself in horror. When her eyes came back up to his, they were murderous. “You did that on purpose,” she hissed.

“I swear I didn’t,” he gasped out, trying so hard to control his laughter and failing. But really, could he do anything but laugh in this situation?

She didn’t look like she believed him, and she tossed the sling on top of his already soiled clothes. “I’ll get you back for that,” she vowed, even as she tried to find a way to get her top off without getting shit in her hair or on her face. She let out a small scream of exasperation when she finally realized she couldn’t. “Fuck,” she hissed. “Are there scissors or something in here?”

“Check the cabinet,” he told her. He was still holding a crying Harley, trying to keep any water from getting in his

face. She stomped over and yanked out a small first aid kit, opening and searching through it before finally finding a pair. She tossed the kit in the pile too, and Code stared at her in confusion. “What did you do that for?” he asked.

She gave him a look that said she thought he was an idiot. “I just touched everything in it with shit stained hands, do you really think we just seal it back up and call it good?”

“Okay, okay, I got your point,” he huffed impatiently. “Just hurry so we can get him cleaned up.”

“You *so* owe me a new top,” she hissed as she cut her top right down the front. “It’s one of my favorites and it took me forever to find.”

“Why the hell do I need to buy you a new shirt?” he demanded. “You’re the one who insisted on babysitting the weapon of mass defecation, not me.”

She cursed as she tried to peel off one side of the shirt, but got caught on the thin straps around her neck. She cut those, then peeled off each piece and dropped it to the floor. One thing became very clear, very fast. She wasn’t wearing a bra. Her nipples pebbled against the cool air, and he was powerless to look away, even as she stripped off her pants and tiny white cotton thong. He had to force himself to tear his gaze away before his cock got hard. He did not need an erection while holding a baby still covered in shit.

“Goddamn it, let’s just get him cleaned up so I can get some new clothes on,” she growled as she stalked toward the shower, perfectly confident in her own skin. Though he couldn’t take his eyes off her as she moved, trying hard not to stare at her waxed pussy, or the way her lithe muscles bunched and flexed with each step. He knew Glitch worked out, but he could now clearly see the results of her efforts.

Intense desire burned through him and he nearly groaned. God, why the fuck was he getting so turned on? He was around naked women all the time and he never had this issue. Sure, he would get aroused, but this was ten times the intensity. He wanted desperately to clean up Harley, find a safe place to lay him down for a nap, and then give her his full

attention. In the shower, bent over the vanity, against the wall, anywhere.

He gritted his teeth and forced himself to pay attention to the baby as she stepped inside. “Okay, now what do we do?” Glitch asked, looking at Harley apprehensively. He was still crying, but it wasn’t nearly as loud as before. He seemed to be tiring himself out, not that Code blamed him. The poor kid was probably exhausted.

“Well, you can hold him and I’ll get him out of his clothes and diaper, or I can hold him and you clean him up,” Code said simply.

Glitch shuddered and held out her hands. “Give him to me. You can get him out of his shitty clothes.”

“Oh, sure, leave me with the shit work,” Code grumbled, but did as she requested.

She gingerly held Harley in her hands with her arms extended away from her body and said, “Okay, get to it, caveman, because the last thing I need is to be around your naked ass longer than I need to be.” Her eyes moved down over his chest and then below his waist, and her gaze froze on his erection. He mentally cursed, but there wasn’t much he could do about it. She was standing here naked, and he was just supposed to ignore that? Not bloody likely, he thought grimly, as he tried to distract himself by figuring out the best way to get Harley out of his clothes. Thankfully he was only dressed in a onesie, but the problem was he was reaching for the area worst hit by the explosion.

He really was never having kids.

Glitch hadn’t said anything. Instead, she pulled her gaze back up to his and focused on helping to move the baby as he needed. He didn’t know whether to take that as an insult or not, and honestly, he really wasn’t sure he wanted to know.

It didn’t matter anyway. The two of them couldn’t stand each other the majority of the time, and no matter how attractive he found her, he wasn’t about to allow his body to rule his mind.



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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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### GLITCH

**A**ny other time she might have made another comment about Code's dick, but when you were holding a crying baby covered in poop, it didn't exactly seem like an opportune moment. Not to mention, there was something about watching him with Harley, and the way the steam surrounded him while water dripped down his body, that made her lady bits stand up and take notice.

Not that she should be noticing. Hell, she had seen naked men aplenty, and some of them with bigger and prettier dicks, but there was something about Code that made him indiscernibly more attractive. Why she was noticing that, she didn't know, but she would blame it on the fumes from the poo-pocalypse. Besides, he was the reason she was here in the first place. Well, at the clubhouse, but partially the shower thing. If he had moved a little faster and gotten Harley out of that sling and into his arms, then he would be the only one enduring a feces facial, and she wouldn't have had to cut up her favorite top.

She scowled at that. There were very few clothes that fit her just right, especially because of her smaller frame and smaller breasts, so when she lost a piece of clothing, it didn't exactly please her. That particular top had been one of her absolute favorites, and she wasn't sure they were making them anymore. Which damn well sucked. She'd have to do another search to see if she could find a replacement.

“What are you glaring at me for now?” Code asked in exasperation as he finally got the onesie off a now screaming Harley. The baby did not like having that thing go over his head, or his arms pulled out of the sleeves. Code tossed the soiled onesie out of the shower and into the pile of dirty clothes on the floor, before he looked warily at the diaper. “I don’t know why I have to do this,” he huffed. “I should be making you handle this disaster.”

“And deprive you of this joy?” she asked him with a snicker. “I don’t think so. Just take it off as quick as you can and toss it. Then we can work on getting us all clean.” Code glared but reached for the diaper. It took a minute, and there was some gagging involved, but Code finally got the diaper off. Thankfully, Glitch had dragged the garbage bin right up to the shower, and he dropped the rancid thing into the pail with a wet *slop*.

“There. Now you get to clean him up,” Code told her as he reached around to grab the baby soap and washcloth.

“And how am I supposed to do that, genius?” she asked drily. “Or am I just supposed to somehow magically maneuver him?”

Code sighed, set the bottle and cloth back down, then reached out and took a still crying Harley from her arms. “God, kid, you really do have a set of lungs on you,” he groaned. He looked back at Glitch. “There, try now.”

Glitch moved to grab the items, but she had to reach around him for them, which meant her body had to brush his. She heard him bite back a moan when her hip brushed against his hard cock, and she bit back a smug grin. Looked like someone didn’t have as big a problem with her small breasts as he claimed. Any other time, she might have said something, but there was a crying baby that needed cleaned, so she pulled away and resumed her task.

She cooed and soothed Harley as she gently washed him. His cries, thankfully, died down as she started to clean him up, and he stared at her. She grinned at him, lapsing into some baby talk as he started to smile at her. “You’re such a sweet

boy,” she cooed at him as she put some soap in her palms and started to spread it over his arms and chest.

“He might be sweet but he can give some of the guys a run for their money with the smells that have come out of him,” Code joked as he carefully moved him so the water could wash him off, mindful to keep the spray out of his face.

“But at least he’s cute when he does it,” she said easily as she moved down to clean his lower half. “Alright, turn him over so we can get his butt and back,” she ordered, easing back slightly.

Code expertly turned Harley so he was balanced over his forearm, his hand cupping the baby’s face and neck to keep him steady. Glitch watched him, and had a moment of realization that Code really was good with babies. And even though she normally wouldn’t care about such things, her ovaries were standing up to take notice. She really needed to get a grip, because she had no reason to be feeling this way toward this man. Instead, she focused on getting Harley cleaned. Thankfully she was able to get him done quickly and easily.

“Alright, you take him so I can get cleaned,” Code said briskly, carefully moving Harley back into the crook of his arm before extending him to Glitch. Glitch took him and put him to her shoulder, and watched Code as he turned and put himself under the water before reaching to grab the body wash in the corner. Glitch glanced at Harley who was starting to doze on her shoulder, and she smiled. But when she turned her gaze back to Code, her smile slipped when a fire roared to life in her belly that she wasn’t prepared for.

Maybe it was the steam in the shower messing with her head, but she had never seen a sexier ass than Code’s. It was perfectly rounded, muscular, and flexing with each movement as he cleaned himself. She had an unexplainable urge to lean forward, lick every droplet of water from his skin, and then take a nice big bite. She smothered a moan, pressing her thighs together to try and ease the sensations building between her legs, but instead only made it worse as her clit started to throb.

She cursed under her breath and forced herself to look away from him.

She needed to get a grip, she told herself. Code was not a man she needed to find herself attracted to. Was he hot? Yes, but he was also a pain in her ass, and she had no time for a man in her life. Her team was the most important thing to her, and they were her family. Not to mention, she couldn't forget he was the reason she was here in the clubhouse in the first place. That had to stay at the forefront of her mind.

“Alright, your turn,” Code announced, pulling her attention back to him. He set his things down and held out his hands for the baby, but as soon as she tried to pull Harley from her shoulder, he burrowed in further and let out a contented sigh.

“He’s sleeping,” she told Code.

Code looked at the sleeping baby, and his eyes softened slightly. “Gonna be hard for you to get clean if you’re holding him,” he pointed out.

“Just put some soap on a washcloth for me and I’ll figure it out,” she said with a sigh. “He’s finally not screaming, and I don’t enjoy the idea of him starting up again.”

Code glanced around and said, “I don’t think we have another one. Just the one I used and the one for Harley.”

She huffed. “Fine, hand me yours.”

He smirked as he got her the cloth and put some more soap on it for her. “You’re not afraid of what people will say if you’re walking around smelling like me?” he teased her. “People really wonder if you’re secretly obsessed with me.”

“I’ll tell them all about your tiny dick and they’ll realize how wrong they are,” she told him easily as she awkwardly washed her arm and the side of her neck Harley wasn’t slumbering on. She realized pretty quickly this wasn’t going to be as easy as she thought.

Code huffed out a sigh. “Give it to me,” he ordered, reaching out and snatching the cloth from her. “We’ll be in here forever if we leave this up to you.”

She glared at him. “Well, excuse me. It’s not like I’ve ever been in this situation before,” she sneered. “And don’t you dare try to get fresh with me, either.”

“Get fresh with you?” he repeated with a scoff. “High school called, it wants its innuendo back. Then again, I suppose that makes sense with you. You still look like a teenager.” He briskly got to work on washing her arm and hands, then moving to her stomach.

She’d be lying if she didn’t admit that she found the whole experience unnerving, especially with how close he got to the lower part of her stomach. Her muscles quivered under the movement of his hand; she just had to pray he didn’t notice. And, that he didn’t realize how his touch affected her. When he got back up to her chest, he paused and glanced down into her eyes. Her breath caught when she saw the desire burning back at her. The tension between them rose as they continued to stare at each other, the heat of the shower making her feel far warmer than she was.

At least, that was what she was telling herself. God, what was wrong with her? Here she was, naked in the shower with her enemy, and instead of blasting him like she should have been, she was letting him touch her and make her feel a desire she had no business feeling.

“You should probably put him on your other shoulder so I can finish,” Code rumbled, the gruffness in his voice sending a shiver down her spine. Without a word, she did as he suggested, soothing Harley when he let out a sound of distress at being moved, but thankfully he went right back to sleep, clearly exhausted after his ordeal. Code remained still for a moment, before he finally moved and pressed the cloth to her chest. She let out a soft hiss of breath at the way the cloth moved over her hard nipple, the sensation making her clit throb and her stomach clench.

Her breasts might not be the biggest, but they were definitely sensitive.

Code’s eyes immediately moved up to hers, and she gritted out, “Hurry up. I’m getting cold.” A lie, considering her body

was on fire, but he didn't need to know that.

He held her gaze as he moved the cloth back up over her chest to her collarbone, shoulder, and neck, quickly cleaning her off. It felt like she was having an out of body experience, because surely, this wasn't her. She wasn't allowing this to happen. God, she didn't even like him, so how was he making her feel this way?

Suddenly, as quickly as tension was there, it was gone as he blinked, seeming to realize what was happening. He quickly pulled away and tossed the cloth to the floor. "Rinse off," he said gruffly, before turning and stepping out of the shower, but not before she caught a glimpse of the hard-on he was sporting. Good to know she wasn't the only one affected, she supposed as she turned into the spray to wash off, covering Harley to make sure he didn't get any water in his little face.

When she turned around and stepped out of the shower, he stood there with a towel wrapped around his waist, and another one in his hands. When she stepped forward, he said, "Give me Harley, I'll get him dried off and in a diaper." When she opened her mouth to protest, he gave her a hard look. "Don't argue, Glitch. We've spent too much time in here as it is."

Glitch glared at him. "Well, excuse me," she sniffed as she placed the baby into the towel, something he did not appreciate, judging by the cry that came from his mouth. "Maybe if someone hadn't been so entranced by my boobs, we would have been a little quicker," she told him as she turned and grabbed a towel for herself out of the cabinet, since the asshole hadn't thought to get her one. "For someone who's kept up a running commentary about them, as soon as you saw them, your brain turned to mush. Men really do only think with their dicks." She dried herself off and turned back to find him just finishing up with the baby, then wrapping him in another towel that she hadn't seen on the vanity. *Asshole*, she thought as she huffed.

Before he could reply, the door to the bathroom flew open, and in stepped Steel with Harlow hot on his heels. Both of them stopped short, and Harlow gasped as her eyes went to the

pile of soiled clothes. Steel glared at Code as he immediately took his son, making Code roll his eyes. “You’re welcome,” Code said sarcastically.

“What the hell happened?” Steel demanded. “And why the hell are you two naked?”

Glitch glared at him. “Your son unleashed a literal shit storm all over the both of us,” she informed him in annoyance. She waved her free hand at the pile on the floor. “Or would you like to check those out for yourself?”

“And that required you both to shower together?” Harlow asked, looking a bit more relaxed than earlier, though still tired. Her lips twitched as she tried to hide a grin.

“It was that or we stood dripping shit everywhere,” Glitch told her with a heavy sigh. “I lost my favorite shirt too. I’ll probably never find another one like it.”

“What did that have to do with you being naked?” Steel demanded suspiciously.

Glitch gave him a bland look. “Well, considering I wasn’t wearing a bra, and the only underwear I had was a tiny thong, well, my only choice was naked. Any more ridiculous questions?”

Steel scowled at her, but Harlow laughed. “We’ve been on the receiving end of one of his blowouts already and we ended up in the exact same position as you,” she admitted. “Come on, Steel, don’t be a sour puss. Let’s get our boy dressed and head home. I need a longer nap, and you can handle him for a little while.” She gave Glitch a grateful smile. “Thank you, Glitch, for helping me earlier. I don’t know what I would have done without you.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Glitch said with a smile. “Happy to help. Though, I hope next time is cleaner. I think I have Post-Traumatic Shit Disorder,” she teased.

The two of them headed out after grabbing the diaper bag, leaving Code and Glitch behind. Glitch gave Code a sideways glance. “What are we doing with the shit pile?” she asked curiously.

Code smirked. “We have Prospects for a reason,” he reminded her. “They can clean it up.”

Glitch glanced at the pile. She certainly didn’t want to deal with it, so she nodded. “Fine. I need to go and get something new to wear, then I need to get back to work.” She made sure her towel was secure, then she headed out of the bathroom. She had a moment of apprehension at realizing she was going to have to walk through the common area and up the stairs in her bathwear best, but she quickly pushed that aside. Like she gave a shit what people thought.

She heard Code following behind her, and when she reached the end of the hall, Karissa was just coming in from the front door, Razor right behind her. Both of them stopped in their tracks. Razor’s eyes went wide, while Karissa narrowed hers. Glitch held up her hand and said, “Don’t get any ideas. Harley started World War Poo and we got caught in the crossfire.”

Karissa looked over her shoulder, and Glitch knew Code was directly behind her. “And you both had to shower?” Karissa asked skeptically.

Glitch rolled her eyes. “You want to know, follow me upstairs because I need to get dressed and then I need to get back to work. I’m running behind.”

“Oh, you bet your little ass we’re talking about this,” Karissa told her, stepping forward. “And then I’m going to send Taz a message and tell him he missed out, and make him insanely jealous. You know how much he hates missing out on hot gossip,” she grinned wickedly.

Glitch rolled her eyes and headed for the stairs. “Whatever.” As she made her way up, she glanced over the railing at Code who was watching her with an unreadable expression. Unable to resist, she gave him a smirk. She had a feeling that their moment in the shower was over for good, and she was fine with that.

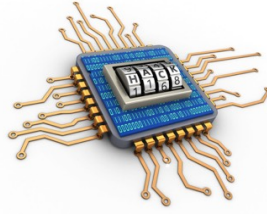
Hell, she even had a few ideas ready to make sure she didn’t do something stupid like fall in lust with her rival. She’d just have to convince Karissa to help her.



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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

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### SLIP

He had never wanted to find someone so much in his life. It was an obsession, one he had been harboring for over a decade. To find her and take her down. To make her suffer in the worst of ways for what she had dared to do to him. He wondered if she would remember him when he found her. When he stared down into her eyes and let her see that her death was coming, would she remember him as the boy who had spent so much time with her? Or would she remember him as the man she had screwed over in the jungle on the mission that had forced them all to flee for their lives, the one where he vowed he would kill her if it was the last thing he did. He wouldn't allow her to fuck him over a third time.

His fingers flew over the keyboard as he searched for her. His team was getting restless as they waited for him to do his job, but he wouldn't be rushed. This was important to not only him, but also his team. Because the last time she dared to screw them over, they all suffered, and Hazard wanted her to pay. Still, she was his, even if he let the other men have their turn with her. But they would not kill her.

No, that was reserved for him. First, though, he had to find her. He had a general location, now needed to narrow it down. He wasn't wasting time chasing his own ass.

Finally, hours later, satisfaction surged when he found what he needed. Now they had a direction, and he wasn't

going to waste any time in getting there. Standing, he hurried out of the room to gather his team.

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## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

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### GLITCH

“I can’t decide if I’m impressed or concerned at you being in a shower, naked, with the man who pretty much ratted you out and then put our entire team in danger,” Karissa mused as she stretched on the mat beside her. They were warming up for their training session with the twins, who would be here any minute. And, apparently, it was also the place that Karissa wanted to corner her for all the details on what had happened with Code.

“How about neither?” Glitch suggested drily. “Nothing happened, and nothing is going to happen. We were covered in baby shit, and there was no way I was going to trail that stench up to my room. I’m still pissed I had to cut myself out of my favorite top.” She pouted, still mourning its demise.

Karissa rolled her eyes. “It was a shirt, shorty. We’ll find you a new one. Hell, maybe one of the twins has one you can borrow,” she suggested with a wicked grin.

Glitch glared at her. “Don’t think that I don’t know that’s your thinly veiled way of telling me I have the body of a teenage girl. And we both know they’re bigger in the bust than me, so I doubt their shirts will fit. I’m going to have to try and find a new one and get you to buy it for me.”

“Me? Why?”

“Because I can’t use any of my cards,” Glitch said with an annoyed sigh. “Or did you already forget that I’m in hiding here? Are you sure you haven’t taken a header off Razor’s headboard? Or, wait, are you still using the gym as your personal sex playground?”

Karissa’s lips pulled into a wicked grin. “Maybe,” she replied coyly.

Glitch rolled her eyes. “I’m not sure if I’m impressed you found so many uses for all this equipment, or disgusted at the thought of you getting frisky all over all the guy’s other bodily fluids.” She gave the mats she was sitting on a wary look. “I’m not sure I like that my ass might be in the spot where you or anyone else tried something kinky.”

It was Karissa’s turn to roll her eyes. “The Prospects clean in here daily, so I’m sure you’re safe,” she assured her drily. “And don’t think I didn’t notice you trying to change the subject.” She rolled to her stomach and then got into a plank position. “What’s up with you and Code?”

Glitch followed her move, and she loved the burn as her body tightened and tensed as she held the plank. So far, she was the only one in her team who could hold it for longer than five minutes, and she took great pride in that. “You mean other than he’s a pain in my ass?” she said, turning her head to the left to look at Karissa. “Don’t worry, while we were in the shower, I made sure to get in some jabs about his tiny dick.”

“Wait, you saw his dick?” Karissa barked, eyes widening.

Glitch blinked at her. “Simba needs to get you in for a brain scan,” she said with concern. “You’ve lost all common sense. Of course I saw his dick! We were in the damn shower.”

“I just assumed you had your underwear on,” Karissa defended.

“Considering that we were literally drenched in shit, and Code apparently goes commando, and I pretty much was too, it wasn’t like we had underwear to cover us. Besides, I already saw his cock earlier this morning.”

“What?” Karissa screeched.

“Jesus Christ, I’m putting you and pretty boy on a sex hiatus while I’m here. I want to actually talk to you while you have some brains left,” Glitch huffed.

“Fuck off,” Karissa said without any heat. “How did you see his dick?”

“Picked the lock on his door and let myself into his room this morning when he wasn’t up so I could get into his office. Only, he was already up and getting dressed, so I got a nice eyeful. He has some nice muscles for a computer nerd.”

Karissa’s eyes sharpened. “Noticing his physique, huh?”

Glitch rolled her eyes again. “I can appreciate nice muscles, Xena. After all, I notice yours, and your man’s.” She grinned wickedly when Karissa scowled at her. “What? You didn’t think I would notice those nice, big biceps, or the way that gorgeous ass of his flexes when he walks? Maybe it’s the fact that I’ve seen what he can do with those hands of his. And his—”

Karissa dropped from her plank and launched at her, making Glitch laugh as the two of them rolled on the mats, both of them trying to get the upper hand. Of course, Glitch wasn’t about to go easy on her, and she wasn’t about to allow Karissa to get one over on her. She bucked her off when she managed to get on top of her, but since Karissa was larger than her, she didn’t go very far. Still, it was enough for Glitch to scramble back, but not before Karissa grabbed her by the ankle.

Glitch laughed as she used her agility to bring her other leg up and over, hitting Karissa in the side of the head, which made her grunt and let go. “Damn it!” Karissa barked, rubbing her temple and glaring at Glitch, who got to her feet and smiled triumphantly down at her.

“You really are getting slow,” Glitch tsked. “I probably just knocked all the good brain cells you had left loose.”

Karissa got to her feet. “More like we don’t need to be going at each other when we’re about to train the girls. And you only started that because you wanted to goad me, so I

would stop talking about Code.” She narrowed her eyes at Glitch. “I’m starting to wonder if there’s something going on between the two of you, and this whole enemy rivalry thing you have going on is just a ruse.”

Glitch scoffed. “Have you been dipping into Scarlett’s smutty romance books? Because that is definitely not what is going on here. There is nothing between Code and I, other than some annoyance, anger, and maybe some guilt on his side for being an ass and compelling me to be here in the first place. Not to mention, I’m not looking for a man, and if I ever want one, it won’t be a biker. I’m happy for you, Xena, and happy that you found your man, but that’s not the life I want. I won’t be happy to be away from the team, and there are very few men that could handle the life I live.”

“So, what, you plan to be alone the rest of your life?” Karissa asked, hands going to her hips.

Glitch shook her head. “See, the difference is, I’ll never be alone. I have the team, and I have you. If I want to scratch an itch, I’ll find a man to help me. Seriously, Xena, I’m fine the way I am, and as much as I love you and am happy to spend more time with you, I won’t be here forever. So that means I won’t be hooking up with Code, or any other single man in this clubhouse.”

“Awwww,” a voice said from the doorway. They turned to find Jax standing just behind the twins. Rogue was coming down the stairs behind him, a scowl on his face like he would rather be anywhere else. “Babe, you haven’t even tried me on for size,” Jax continued as he stepped further into the room. “I mean, we could be fated, and all that shit. You’ll be obsessed with my dick, and I’ll be happy to let you have it as often as you like. And seeing as I don’t like computers all that much, you’ll never have to worry about me touching your shit.”

Rogue slapped him upside the head, making him hiss. “Don’t be talking about your dick in front of my kids,” he growled at him.

Jax rubbed his head, but grinned and winked at Glitch. Glitch chuckled and shook her head. “Sorry, big guy, but no

bikers for me. Besides, you wouldn't be able to handle me anyway."

"Now that sounds like a challenge," Jax laughed.

Glitch ignored him and focused on the girls. "Hey," she said in welcome as they made their way over to her and Xena. Both were wearing identical outfits of black yoga pants and dark blue sports bras. The only difference between them was that Wren wore her hair in a tight French braid, while Win wore hers in two Dutch braids. The two of them had been smart and made sure to keep the braids as small as possible and close to their heads, making sure that they wouldn't be as easy to grab on to. She nodded at them approvingly. "Both of you start stretching and warming up, then we'll get to work," she told them briskly.

Karissa gave her a bland look. "What, you're running the show now?"

Glitch returned her look. "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought we wanted to actually teach them things. You know, since you're getting soft and a little slow on your follow-throughs." She let out a burst of laughter when Karissa made a swipe at her, jumping back before it could connect. "See? Slow," she taunted. Karissa glared at her, eyes promising retribution.

Wren and Win sat down on the mats and started their stretches, both of them looking excited and full of anticipation. "What are we going to start with?"

"You said you wanted to learn to work with knives, and we'll do that, but I want to assess your skills in hand-to-hand combat," Glitch said. "A knife is a tool to be used, but you might forget it some day or it could get knocked away from you. You need to be able to use it, but not rely on it, so we'll work on your self-defense skills as well." A thought occurred to her and she stopped, turning towards the men in the room. "Both of you out," she ordered.

Jax opened his mouth to argue, but Rogue gave him a hard glare and he left with a pout on his face. Rogue moved to the door and shut it. "I already know what you're going to ask,

and I'm not leaving them alone," he told Glitch in a hard voice when he turned back towards her.

Glitch had to respect him for that. He might not be their father, but he was filling the role, and he was going to protect them the best way he knew how. Glitch nodded. "Then you need to stay quiet while I ask what I need to," she told him sternly. "You might not like the questions I ask, and you might not like their answers. Still, you need to keep your opinions and reactions to yourself." Rogue silently narrowed his eyes at her in response. Knowing that was probably the best she was going to get, she turned back around and saw Wren and Win watching her with knowing expressions. "I'm about to ask you some questions, and they're going to be a bit uncomfortable. Are you okay with that? I'm not asking them to be nosy, I'm asking them so I know what to help you work on and what to possibly avoid."

Wren and Win both nodded. "We're good. We've talked it all through, and we figured this might come up at some point. Especially if we want to work with your team when they come back."

"Good. Nothing said in this room will leave it," Karissa added, Glitch nodding her affirmation as well. Both girls nodded and looked at Glitch expectantly.

"I know about your history, and I know what you've been through," she told them bluntly. "I looked into you carefully, but I have access to more information than most because of my background. I know you were raped, and the fuckers who took you did unspeakable things. I don't want to trigger you with the workouts we're going to do, so I need to know if there's anything that you absolutely cannot handle, or anything that will bother you enough to make you freeze or go into flight mode. Because while I'm here, I'm going to push you. I'm going to put you through your paces to make sure that when I leave, you feel stronger and more sure of yourselves. That also means facing the hard stuff, and while I can pull my punches on most things, on some things I won't. Women are more likely to experience sexual violence, and there are bastards out there that will take what you've been through as a



green light to do whatever they want because you've already been through it, and you should be used to it."

Neither girl flinched, and neither of them looked away. These two were made of some stern stuff, Glitch thought to herself proudly. A rare thing for young women that had endured things that most could never fathom.

Wren said calmly, "If you had asked us that a few years ago, I'd have probably told you that any boy or man touching me would have set me off. But we've both worked hard to get past that. We've taken classes and we paired with men during them so that we could work through it. And we have some guy friends, so we've gotten used to being around boys."

"Being around all the men here has helped, too," Win said seriously. "They don't treat us like we're fragile, and they already know we can take care of ourselves."

Glitch nodded. "Good. But have you ever had someone pin you to the ground with their dick against your ass, or against your crotch? Or have they always avoided that when working with you?" she asked bluntly. She turned and pinned Rogue with a hard, warning glare when he let out a low snarl at her question. He didn't say a word, but his jaw and his fists were clearly clenched.

"Sometimes in knife training, the guys would get behind us and have their crotches against our back when we were doing moves," Wren admitted. "But I was in the moment and I didn't pay much attention." Win nodded her agreement.

"Alright. And none of them ever had an erection?" she asked. Both girls looked startled at her question, but they shook their heads. "Knowing a man is behind you and is just working with you is one thing, but having a man behind you who is aroused is something completely different. The escalation of violence is going to be much higher. And in that moment, that is when you're most likely to shut down. So we need to make sure that that doesn't happen."

"So, what, you're going to bring in a man, and hope he gets hard while he's fighting us?" Wren asked, arching a brow.

Glitch held up a hand without even looking at Rogue. She could practically hear him foaming at the mouth. “No,” she said simply, “but I have ways of simulating the experience.” She paused. “Well, not me, because I’m shorter than you two, but we do have someone else who can,” she corrected, looking at Karissa, who nodded in understanding. “We won’t get to that point today, but we will soon. I want you both as prepared as we can make you, and we’re not about to take it easy on you.”

“You might hate us,” Karissa warned them. “At least for a little bit. But even after Glitch leaves, I’ll still work with you.”

“We’re okay with that,” Wren said, excitement tingeing her voice again. Win nodded as well.

“Good. Now, one final question, and this might be the harder one for you to answer,” Glitch warned them. “What is the one thing that will still trigger you? Doesn’t have to be a man in particular. It could be a phrase. A scent. A sound. Whatever it is, we need to know, and you can decide if you want us to help you get past it. If you decide that you do, you need to be fully aware that we will be purposely triggering you to get you through it. That can be traumatic, and I will not do that to you unless you are certain that you want it. Because once we start, there is no stopping.”

The girls looked at each other warily, and Glitch and Karissa waited patiently. Glitch glanced quickly over at Rogue; he was standing silently, eyes hard like granite, looking like he was torn between dragging them out of here or punching her for making them talk about this. But she knew he wouldn’t. Because as much as Rogue was protective, he could be reasonable, and she had a feeling that deep down, he knew that she and Karissa were the ones to handle this.

Finally, after a few moments, Wren said, “We have a couple of triggers each, but I’m not sure I want to discuss mine yet.” Her eyes were vulnerable, and even though Glitch knew that Wren liked to be a badass, she was still a teenager, and she still had her uncertainties.

“Me too,” Win said with a small nod. “I’m not ready to discuss them yet, either.”

Glitch nodded. She lowered her voice so Rogue wouldn’t be able to hear her. “Do you not want to discuss them in front of Rogue? Or at all?”

“Both,” Wren whispered. Win nodded.

“Alright,” Glitch said. “We’ll table this for now, but if you ever want to tell us, without anyone else present, you let us know.” They nodded again. She raised her voice back to a normal level and said, “Alright, let’s get started. First thing we’re going to do is run you through some drills to see where your strengths and weaknesses are. Wren, you’re with me. Win, you’re with Xena. Then we’ll switch.”

Both girls got to their feet, excitement filling their faces quickly and easily, clearly happy to be done with the conversation and getting to the fun part.

Over the next hour, they worked both girls through as much as they could stand. Glitch was impressed. These girls were quick learners, and easily took directions to correct things. She was especially impressed with their stamina. She figured they would tap out after the first half hour, but they hadn’t even looked like they were slowing down.

Finally she stopped them and grinned. “Damn, girls, you’re putting some of our boys to shame,” she praised. She glanced at Karissa who was also grinning. “I say we should send Taz a message and tell him that two teenage girls are far better than him,” she suggested.

“And whine less,” Karissa snickered. “That man can be such a baby.”

Both girls laughed breathlessly, panting and leaning on each other for support for a moment. “When are we going to work with our knives?” Wren asked, a slight note of impatience in her voice.

Glitch grinned at her. “You’re not too tired?” she asked, tongue in cheek.

Wren flipped her off, though it was weak, making Glitch laugh. “We’re young compared to you two old ladies,” she joked.

Glitch and Karissa shared a look. “Sounds to me like we need to give them a reminder not to disrespect their elders,” Karissa remarked, amusement coating her tone.

Glitch nodded. “Next time when we’re done with them, they’ll be crawling out of here. Then we’ll see who’s old.” She turned and headed for the mats, grabbing up her knife sheath and also Karissa’s. “Alright, girls, get yours, and we’ll start our next practice session. We’re just going through some basics today because we need to assess your skills, so that next time we’ll know where we need to focus.”

Both girls got into their stances, but before any of them could make a move, the gym door burst open and in rushed Code. When his eyes connected with Glitch, he looked concerned. “Your system is going off like crazy, so I took a look to see what was going on,” he told her briskly. “It seems you have some visitors at your clubhouse.”

Glitch was moving before he even finished his sentence. It seemed trouble had finally arrived. It was time to see who had shown up. She just hoped she could get a hold of her team.

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

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### GLITCH

**S**he flew into Code's office and dropped into her seat, her mind already racing as she logged in and pulled up her cameras. Then she got her headset on and called her team on the emergency line that she had set up for them all. She would make sure it was untraceable. Simba answered on the second ring. "We just got the alert too," he told her briskly. "We've pulled off so you can tell us what's going on."

"I've pulled up the camera feed," Jag added seriously.

"Good," Glitch said as she brought up the feed herself. She could feel Code standing behind her, but she ignored him. He wasn't important right now. Especially since she was liable to explode at him if he tried to interject himself. This was the result of his dumbass revenge after all. Karissa came in behind her, grabbing a headset as well and announcing her presence.

The screen filled with images of their clubhouse, inside and out, and a few from around the grounds. And no surprise, whoever was on their land was coming in from the east, where the most tree cover was. Which meant they surveilled the area before they decided to approach. Her stomach tightened as she looked at the feeds from their cameras in the trees. She made sure they weren't noticeable, and she was grateful because it meant she got to watch these bastards without them realizing it.

She counted five of them, all men, and all wearing black. The sun was setting there, but it wasn't pitch dark yet, so she had to wonder why the hell they bothered. If they were going for cover, they weren't all that smart about it. Then again, that area wasn't easily seen so she supposed they probably thought they were covered perfectly well. A rookie mistake, which made her wonder just who they were. Their faces were covered with balaclavas, a surprising choice considering the heat.

"Any ideas who they are?" Simba asked grimly.

"They're covered head to toe in black; hard to find any features that are recognizable," Warg replied. "Hell, they're even wearing leather gloves, which means they don't want to chance leaving any prints behind."

"Fuckers look like they're trying to roast themselves out," Taz remarked scornfully. "What kind of assassin wears all winter gear in the desert?"

"Stupid ones," Copper stated.

"Or we're thinking too American," Glitch said grimly as she switched to another screen, watching their slow and careful approach towards the back door. They moved in perfect formation, no one stepping out ahead of the other. It was tactical, and seemed practiced. "We have a lot of enemies from other countries. Could be that whoever they are, they're from a colder climate and this is all they had."

"Good point," Ursa agreed. "Look at them move. This is a team, one that's been together for a while."

"So we need to look at teams we worked with that had five or so members," Simba announced.

"Already on it," Glitch said absently, checking her databases for any crews that might have crossed their paths. It only took a few moments to get a full list, and she cursed. "I've got over a hundred here that we dealt with in some capacity or another. We'd need to narrow it down more. So unless one of them shows some skin or gives us a clue, we're

going to have to see what happens. They just hit the back door,” she announced grimly.

“Think they’ll be able to get through the scanners?” Simba asked her.

“Not if you want me to make sure they stay out,” she said determinedly. Already, one of them was kneeling at the back door, pulling out some gadget and plugging it into the device she had rigged there.

“Keep them out for now,” Simba ordered. “I want to know just how good they are. If they’re determined, they won’t want to set anything off until they know what they’re dealing with.”

Glitch cracked her neck and got to work. She kept her eyes on the code in front of her, getting ahead of whoever this asshole thought he was, though he was trying his best to get past her. She cursed when he almost slipped past her firewall, but she managed to shut him out just in time. She glanced at the security screen and saw the other men waiting, while the man on his computer worked furiously to disable her security.

“He’s not giving up,” Karissa remarked, finally speaking.

“He’s good,” Glitch agreed grimly. “But not as good as me. Still, he’s got enough skill to try and find back channels instead of just trying to break down the main wall. Which tells me he knows we’re not there, because if he did, he wouldn’t be wasting this much time.”

“Can they tell you’re the one trying to keep them out?” Simba asked.

“He’d have to,” she answered honestly. “And that’s probably why he’s trying to do this this way. He’s proving he’s good, and he wants to best me.”

“Sounds like he’s cocky,” Vulture grumbled. “But the guys behind him are getting impatient now.” She looked at the screen, and she saw that they were starting to fidget as they waited - sure sign that they thought it wouldn’t take this long. “Probably sweating their balls off in that heat,” Vulture added.

Suddenly, Code’s face was next to hers. Any other time she might have hissed at him, but she couldn’t focus on him

now. “I’m going to get into your system,” Code told her briskly. “I’ll see if I can spot anything and help figure out who they are. So don’t kick me out.”

“I don’t have time to just let you in,” Glitch snapped at him. “You’re just going to get in my way.”

Code gave her a cool glare. “I’m going to help you and you’re going to let me. You focus on keeping him out, and I’ll focus on helping you figure out who they are.”

She wanted to argue, to remind him that she was perfectly capable of handling this herself, but Simba said, “Just let him do it, Glitch. You can kick his ass later. Right now, I want to know who these fuckers are, and if his help gets us that information faster, so be it.”

“Fine,” she gritted out, pissed that he would agree to such a thing. Did he think that she couldn’t handle this on own?

“Don’t get in your head, Glitch,” Simba warned her, clearly knowing what she was thinking. “You’re still a million times better, but I want you focused.”

She settled and replied, “Yes, sir. Though I’d like to point out that if you were here I’d probably punch you in the face.” She smirked when she heard a few of the guys chuckle.

“Noted,” Simba said drily.

She focused on the task at hand, and she wracked her brain to figure out who the hell this guy could be. She knew some experienced hackers, but this guy had some skills that she hadn’t seen in a long time. That alone narrowed the possibilities down considerably. She’d have to check that list once she dealt with this asshole. When she glanced at the screen again, she grinned when she saw that the men behind him were waving their hands in some kind of signal, trying to get him to hurry the hell up.

Finally, after a few more minutes, Simba asked, “Do you think you can keep him out permanently?”

“Yes,” she said confidently. “But that also increases the chances of them coming back. And next time, they may just take down the door instead of going through this.”



“Let them in,” Simba ordered.

She nearly faltered, but thankfully managed to keep her composure. “You want me to let them in?” she repeated carefully.

“Let’s see what happens once they get inside,” Simba explained. “Maybe we’ll get something on who they are.”

“At the cost of them learning who *we* are,” she reminded him tightly. “All of our shit is there, Simba.”

“They already had information on us before they ever showed up,” Jag pointed out. “Maybe not who we are specifically, but we also took anything with our information before we left. There won’t be much for them to find. You took your hard drives and shit with any of our information on it, right?”

“Yes,” she agreed. “But that doesn’t mean we didn’t forget something.” She shut the guy down one more time, and she heard a curse on the camera audio. It was faint, which meant she couldn’t get much from it, but if she wasn’t mistaken, his accent was American.

“They’re not going to stop until they find us,” Simba said impatiently. “Let him in, Glitch. That’s an order. I’m tired of playing games. Let’s send a message to these assholes, and anyone else that might come after them, that we know they’re coming, and we’re not scared.”

“Yeah,” Taz agreed, a note of excitement in his voice. “I’ve been wanting a good fight, and sounds to me like this is the perfect chance.”

Glitch wanted to argue some more, but she knew better. Once Simba had an idea in his mind, there was no getting him off it. So on the hacker’s next attempt, she backed off, slowly and carefully, letting him think that he had finally bested her. She kept her eyes glued to the screen when she finally let him past all her security, and saw the triumphant look on his face as he finally closed his laptop and pulled the device from the panel, putting them both away in his backpack. They carefully

opened the door, all of them pulling guns and entering in perfect formation.

“Last guy in line has a slight limp on his right side,” Code said loudly behind her, pulling her gaze to the rear man, who did in fact have a limp. Glitch relayed that to the team. “I’m searching your database now for anyone who fits that description,” he added, and she heard him tapping away on his keyboard.

“Look for Americans,” she told him.

“Why American?” Simba asked.

“Hacker cursed, and I’m pretty sure, though it was faint, that it was an American accent.”

“We worked with a lot of American teams in the early years,” Karissa reminded them. “It was more foreign teams towards the end.”

Glitch focused back on her monitors and watched as they fanned out, moving quickly and carefully through the main common area, and then up into the rooms. Glitch activated all the cameras in each room. She kept them off unless she needed to have them on for some reason, and she hadn’t told any of her team about them.

“What the fuck? You spying on me now, shorty?” Warg growled.

“They’re only on when we’re not in residence,” she assured him. “Any other time, they’re off.”

“Well, now that I know it’s there, I’ll be giving you a better show,” Taz declared. “No more jerking off under the sheets or in the shower. Can’t deprive you of your view of the best cock you’ve ever seen.”

She rolled her eyes. “The last thing I need to see is your cock, Taz. I’ve seen it enough already,” she reminded him drily. “They’re moving back downstairs and checking out the other rooms,” she announced before Taz could retort.

“Heading for your office,” Jag said grimly.

She hissed at that. She hated anyone in her space, and she didn't want these assholes messing up her shit. She noticed, though, that it was the hacker that was leading the charge there. "I'm not about to let him in my system, Simba," she warned.

"Agreed," Simba replied. "Keep him out."

The hacker looked around her space, zeroing in on her computer immediately. Predictably, he moved toward it and sat down, booting it up and trying to hack in. "Not today, motherfucker," she muttered, fingers flying over the keyboard.

"I've got eyes on the other men," Code said loudly behind her. "They're tossing shit now." Glitch absentmindedly relayed that to Simba.

"Glitch, you got another headset?" Simba asked her.

"Yeah," she replied, slamming a wall down on her hacker before setting up another one just in case he broke through it faster than she anticipated.

"Tell him to grab it and put it on. No point in distracting you."

"Code, grab the headset in my kit," she barked at him. "You touch anything else in there, I'll kill you slowly with my knife as soon as we're done here. I'll make you suffer for days before I finally end you."

"Damn, it's hot when she's vicious," Taz joked.

Code got up to do as she ordered. "Should be all programmed," she told him absently.

Code sat back down, put on the headset, and announced, "Alright, I'm here. I've got eyes on the others, and they're definitely trying to figure out where you are."

Glitch tried to ignore the way his voice filled her head, how he sounded so calm and collected, like this was just another day at the office. She could admit to herself that it was kind of impressive, but she would never admit it to anyone else. She let out a low curse as her hacker once again attacked her firewall with everything he had, almost slipping past her

before she could stop him. Damn, this guy was good, which meant she needed to focus more on him and less on what was going on around her.

She would not allow him to succeed.

As she worked, she tuned everyone else out while she wracked her brain on who he could be. She allowed herself a brief moment to look at the camera feed again, taking him in. She figured his height was over six feet, though she couldn't quite tell from this angle with how he was sitting. An idea sprang into her mind, and she cursed herself for not thinking of it sooner. She slammed a wall down on him again, and she heard him curse again through the feed. Then she activated the webcam on her computer and finally got a full view of his face.

As soon as she saw him, she felt the familiarity. She had definitely seen him before. His eyes were a dark brown, almost black in the screen's light, and they were currently narrowed in concentration. His shoulders were a bit bulky, but from the tightness of his black shirt, she could see that his arms and chest also sported some muscle. She had to figure he was a gym rat, but his fingers moved over the keyboard at lightning speed, so he spent a good amount of time in front of his computer too.

She just couldn't quite place him.

"Who are you?" she whispered, stopping him once again from skirting her firewall. Anger flared in his eyes, and if she wasn't mistaken, hatred. Now that was surprising. Who hated her that much? Sure, she didn't really make friends, and she had some enemies, but this, this was a look of personal hatred that made her sit up and take notice.

"They're done tossing the place," she heard Simba remark, pulling her from her thoughts. She looked at her other screen and saw that they had indeed tossed all the bedrooms, and had done the same to the common room. Hell, they had even smashed their TV and gaming consoles. Seemed they were angry they hadn't found anything.

“They’re heading for your guy, Glitch,” Karissa added gravely.

No one said a word as they watched them head into her office. She took them in carefully. There was nothing distinguishing about them. No skin showed except for the small openings around their eyes and mouths. “No one’s here,” one of the men barked furiously as he stormed into her office. She was right, he was American.

“I can’t find a single fucking trace of them here, either,” another one cursed, bringing a foot up and kicking over her small shelf full of additional supplies. Anger simmered in her gut at that, but she knew it didn’t matter. Nothing there was extremely valuable, but it still pissed her off that she would have to replace it all.

“You think they knew we were coming and took off?” the first guy asked. “I thought you said they didn’t know we were even back in the country. You fucking slipping again?”

“I’m not slipping,” her hacker bit out. “And you fuckers need to shut the fuck up. They got cameras around here, and I bet they got audio, so you’re giving plenty to go off of.”

“Like I give a shit,” one of the men in the doorway scoffed. “Let them come. I’ll leave them a nice surprise.” To emphasize his point, he pulled out a lighter, and she saw a quick flash of glee in his eyes.

“Someone likes fire. That’s sure to have come up at some point in his career,” Vulture said softly.

“On it,” Code replied equally softly, already clicking away.

Something niggled in the back of her mind, but she still couldn’t place it. It was frustrating as hell. Who the hell were these guys?

“There were a few guys who were fire bugs,” Karissa remarked absently, clearly also trying to place him. “Can’t be that many though. Fuck, I wish I could remember that shit faster.”

“Why the hell is it taking so long to get into this shit?” the first guy demanded, pulling them all back to the present.

“Because she’s a fucking hacker and knows her shit,” hacker boy snarled. “And she knows we’re here, because she’s keeping me out.”

“Which means they’re probably monitoring the cameras,” the main guy summarized, glancing around the room. She saw the moment he noticed the camera, and she saw the evil smile that pulled his lips through the hole in his mask.

“They’re going to be dumbasses aren’t they?” Taz groaned. “It’s so cliché.”

“Can’t be too smart,” Copper agreed.

“I give it ten seconds before they all pull their balaclavas off like they do in those shitty gangster movies,” Taz predicted.

Glitch didn’t care about the rest of them. She wanted to know who the hacker was, because he was the one who seemed to have the most beef with her. And she really wanted to put a face to the man she would humiliate.

As predicted, all the men, minus her hacker, pulled off their masks and looked up at the camera. “Bet you don’t remember us,” the main man scoffed.

“Running facial recognition now,” Code announced. “Glitch, your guy still trying to get through?”

“Yep,” she replied gravely. “Though now that they’re talking to him, he doesn’t seem to be as focused.”

“Good,” Simba said. “Good job, Glitch.”

She accepted the praise, but didn’t pay much attention to anything else. Who the hell was he?

“Fuck,” the hacker hissed. “She’s fucking blocked me again.”

“Fucking cunt,” man number two thundered. His voice was loud, and it was clear he was irritated. “Maybe she’ll let you in if she realizes who you are,” he suddenly announced.

“I got them,” Code announced triumphantly. “Team name Ghost. Go by the names Hazard, Maggot, Crisp, Spook and—”

“Slip,” she interrupted, shock and fury burning through her, even as man two, who she now knew was Maggot, ripped off Slip’s balaclava.

Slip’s fingers paused over the keyboard and he stared straight into the webcam before giving her a sly smile. “Hello, Eliza.”

She stared back at the face of a man she hadn’t seen in almost ten years. It looked like the past had finally caught up with her, and knowing it was this man, she realized just how motivated he was to find her.

He wouldn’t stop until she was dead.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

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### CODE

**H**e didn't know the man, but whoever he could be, he clearly knew Glitch, and from the look on her face, she knew exactly who he was. Her eyes glowed with anger and determination. He wanted to ask the question, but noise coming through the headset brought his gaze back to his screen. Seemed that the team in the Predator's clubhouse was done waiting around.

"Let's get the hell out of here," Hazard ordered. "Grab whatever shit you want since they're not here to stop us." He gave a dark laugh and then turned to leave the room, but not before kicking the door off the hinges and tossing a grin up at the camera. This asshole clearly had an ax to grind with the Predators, and he was taking advantage of their absence.

"Looks like I'm going to have to hunt you the old fashioned way, Eliza," Slip remarked as he stared back into the camera again. Code instantly disliked him. He knew his type. Arrogant assholes who thought they were so much better than everyone else. That no one could touch them. "Just like old times. But this time, Eliza, I'll be taking you down."

"Not fucking happening," Glitch muttered harshly into the headset.

"See you soon, Eliza. Better get ready, because once I find out where you're hiding, I'm going to enjoy taking you apart piece by piece." With that final threat and an evil smile, he



retreated from the system, leaving them to watch him and the others through the cameras.

No one spoke as they watched them trash the clubhouse and take the things they wanted. Glitch cursed and fumed as Slip pulled apart all her equipment and took the pieces he wanted, most of them being the expensive stuff that Code knew would probably sting. Hell, he knew how much he had spent on getting his equipment to where he was happy with it, and he would be livid if someone dared to mess with it.

The team didn't leave the clubhouse for another ten minutes, taking what they could fit in their backpacks, or carry. Crisp decided that he would take a piss on their furniture, adding further insult. "Looks like I was wrong, Code," Glitch said absently as she watched the scene. "You're not the only one who needs a dick pump, a magnifying glass and some tweezers. Looks like this guy is in much bigger need than you. Maybe you can lend him yours."

The line filled with chuckles, and he turned to glare at her. She didn't even glance his way, but he saw the smirk on her lips. He'd make sure she paid for that. Especially when Taz's voice came through the line and added, "Damn, man, that's just sad. There are surgeries to help with that, you know. They won't get you to my level of perfection, but at least it would be something."

"Fuck off," he said mildly, though that only made the other man chuckle harder.

Finally, the other team left the clubhouse. "Can your cameras follow them, Glitch?" Simba asked her.

"Only about half a mile into the treeline," she answered grimly. "I didn't go further."

"Will still give us an idea of which way they're heading," Simba said, clearly not too upset. "Keep the audio going, maybe we can hear them drive away." Everyone went silent as they waited, and Code could faintly hear the sound of a vehicle starting and then fading off.

"Heading east," Jag announced.

“On it,” Glitch said, already clicking away. Code looked at his screen and saw the map she had pulled, tracking the vehicle’s path to the point where the road ended and split in opposite directions. “If they go right they’ll be heading toward the old saw mill,” she told them. “If they go left, it’s toward the center of town.”

“Anything out near the saw mill that they could use as a home base?” Simba asked.

“Nothing showing on the map, but this isn’t a satellite view. I’ll run a search shortly once I make sure that everything is shored up so Slip can’t try and get in again while I’m sleeping later.”

“Good,” was Simba’s reply.

“Now that we know who’s after us, we need to decide on our next steps,” Karissa pointed out seriously. “Because if they do figure out where we are, they’ll be heading here soon enough.”

“Code, you think you and your club would be willing to patch us into your Church so we can have a video meeting?” Simba asked.

Code pulled out his phone. “I’ll message Savage now. We can probably meet within the next hour or two.”

“Good. We’ll be close to our destination by then. Glitch, can you find us a spot to stop and have the meeting? Off the beaten path but with good reception?”

“Already on it,” she told him. “Why do you ask me unnecessary questions?”

“Because I like keeping you on your toes,” Simba deadpanned. “You know, because you’re getting old now. Can’t let those smarts of yours go to waste.”

“You can’t see me, but I’m flipping you off,” she tossed back, but Code heard the hint of amusement in her tone. It was very clear to him just how close this team was. “I found you a cabin just outside of town, far enough back from the road that you won’t be spotted, but still close enough to town that you

can get there within ten minutes. Oh, and there is a river behind the cabin if you feel like fishing or swimming.”

“Good. We’ll head there now, just send the coordinates,” Simba said.

“Couple of you might need to share. There’s only three bedrooms, but there is a pullout couch in the living room.”

“They got a cave nearby for Taz?” Copper snickered. “Less chance of him breaking shit that way.”

“Fuck off,” Taz shot back.

“I’ll message you when we get there,” Simba interrupted. Then they all hung up. Code pulled off his headset and quickly sent Savage a text, giving him a short run down of what happened and why they needed Church.

Savage answered within a minute.

Savage: Done. Two hours.

“Savage agreed to Church in two hours,” Code announced to Karissa and Glitch.

“Good,” Karissa replied briskly. “I’m going to have a shower, then I’ll be back down. Glitch, you need anything?”

“Can you take the cheesecake out and make sure everything looks fine?” Glitch asked her absently, fingers flying over the keyboard. “And set aside one piece for me where no one else will steal it.”

“No problem,” Karissa said, putting a hand on her shoulder. “You sure you’re good?”

“I’m fine,” Glitch affirmed, pausing to look at her with a small smile. “Tell the girls I’ll make up the knife lesson with them tomorrow?”

“They’re fine,” Karissa assured her. “Alright, I’ll see you in a bit.” Then she headed out of the room, leaving him and Glitch alone.

Neither of them said anything to each other while Code backed out of her system, though he was kind of curious to

watch her work. The determination on her face was intense. Finally he asked, “Wanna fill me in?”

She didn’t even glance his way. “You can find out along with everyone else. I don’t feel like repeating myself.” There was something in her tone that had him narrowing his eyes. She really was pissed, but there was something else under the surface that he couldn’t put his finger on. Worry? Fear? Neither of those seemed to fit her, but then again, it wasn’t often that an old rival came after you, and one of them clearly had it out for her specifically. There was a story there, and he wanted to know what it was. Sure, he could probably search it up, but doing shit like that had gotten him in trouble before. Instead, he stood and headed out of the room without a word.

He had some calls of his own to make before they went into Church.

He walked out of the clubhouse, ignoring all the stares, and went out to the front porch to make his call. He didn’t need anyone else listening in. The phone rang three times before it was finally picked up on the other end. “About time you damn well called,” his father griped. “You think I want to sit around here and worry about your sorry ass? I got more important shit to do.”

“You mean like making sure Ty and Mike stay out of jail?” Code joked. It was well known that his older brothers were a bit on the wilder side, and they liked to party as often as they could. Which had landed them both in the county jail a couple of times for drunk and disorderly, much to their father’s, and their wives’, annoyance.

“Those two need to stop spending so much damn time together,” his father huffed. “Just feeding off each other.”

Code smiled, because it was true. His parents had always wanted two kids, which is why they stopped trying for any more after Mike came along. He’d been a surprise just before his mother turned forty, and his brothers were eight and ten years older than him. Not that his parents had ever made him feel like he was unwanted or a mistake, but those were his brother’s favorite insults to hurl at him when they were all

pissed off at each other growing up. “Told you you should have traded them back in and just kept me,” he teased his father.

“Thought about it a couple of times,” his father chuckled. “Your mother refused, though. Said that it served me right that they were just like me. Good thing you take after your mother, son. Don’t think my old heart could take it if you weren’t.”

Code rolled his eyes. He had his own kind of wild, but he wasn’t as in your face about it like his brothers were. He just moved out of state to keep his under wraps. “Uh huh. I have all the payments set up for the month, Dad, but I saw you’re a little short for payroll, so I added that in, and a little extra to give you a bit of breathing room,” he told him, changing the subject. He didn’t tell his father all that much about his life as a Dragon, mostly because he didn’t want him to worry. His father was heading toward seventy, and the last thing he needed was the added stress of wondering what his youngest son was up to.

His father sighed. “Thanks, son,” he said seriously. “Things are slow around town now that the mill shut down. Might have to look at taking more jobs outside of town if things don’t pick back up. If that’s not enough, might have to close up shop entirely.”

Code could hear the worry in his father’s voice. Their construction company was their only source of income. They had a very small crew of hired help from around town, but his father and brothers did the majority of the work to try and keep the costs down. They tried to hide the fact they were struggling, but then his youngest niece had gotten sick, and it had come out that they couldn’t afford to pay her medical bills and keep the company running. Code had been pissed they hadn’t come to him sooner, and ever since, he had been a silent investor so that they could stay afloat, and afford his niece’s care. Which was partially why he worked so damn hard. He couldn’t afford to let them down. Too many people were riding on his help.

“Is there more work outside of town?” Code asked.

“Lots more, but you know Mike doesn’t like to be too far away from home,” Dad sighed. “But we might not have a choice. It’s been harder with Mary not working, but they can’t have her going back to work yet either.” Mike’s wife stayed home with the kids now that his niece needed home care, but Code knew it would be a strain. Mary had loved her job as a nurse, but family came first.

“Do they need anything?” Code asked.

“Son...” his father sighed, trailing off.

Pride was a big thing in his family, and his siblings hated that their little brother always seemed to be the one to help them out. Code didn’t care though. It wasn’t like he didn’t have money. Hell, he lived in the clubhouse. His only expenses were his bike and his equipment, which meant he had more than enough left over to help his family. “I know, I know,” Code sighed, running a hand through his hair. “How about you tell me what they need and I just send you the money? You can tell them you made a bit of extra cash and you want them to have it.”

“It’s not like they don’t know we’re not doing well at work, son,” his father pointed out. “They won’t believe me. Your brothers want to be able to handle this themselves.”

“I know, but I’m not about to let them suffer when I can help. It’s not pity.”

“And they know that, but you know your brothers have their pride. You want to send me the money, then you go ahead. I’ll make sure they get what they need.”

“Alright,” Code agreed. “And you’re doing alright? You need anything?” His father was never one to ask for himself, he was only concerned about his kids and grandkids.

“I’m perfectly fine,” his father assured him. “Not like I need much when I’m living on my own.”

“What, you’re not out there charming up the ladies?” Code joked.

His father snorted. “Don’t got time for that nonsense. I got my own hand if I need some companionship.”

Code laughed and said, “Pretty damn sad, but if you say so, Dad.”

“ I want to know what’s going on with you down there. You finally got a woman yourself?”

Code scoffed. “I don’t have time for a woman, Dad. Besides, women are nothing but trouble and pains in the ass on a good day.” He thought of Glitch and their little battle and smirked. She was definitely a pain in his ass, but at the same time, he couldn’t exactly let his father know that.

His father chuckled. “You’re right about that, son. Still, there’s nothing like the love of a good woman to keep you going. But I want to know what you’re up to in your neck of the woods. How are things going with your security business?” His father rarely asked about the MC life, more to protect himself if shit hit the fan, and Code respected that.

They spent the next fifteen minutes chatting and catching up, and by the time they hung up, Code was feeling more relaxed. He might not see his family as much as they would like, but he would never let them go without. He made a mental promise to get down to see them as soon as this was all over. He missed his father, and even though Harley had made his day a shitty mess for a little while, it made him miss his nieces and nephews.

Thinking about that shitty mess immediately brought up the memory of him and Glitch in the shower. He scrubbed a hand down his face as his mind recalled the sight of her naked body, and his cock twitched. Damn it, he really didn’t need to get turned on right now. He needed to get over his attraction to her, because there was no way in hell he would be acting on it. He’d rather stick his dick in a damn wood chipper than risk her slicing it off. Because she was crazy enough to do it.

He pushed all thoughts of Glitch away and headed inside, heading up to his room for a moment to himself. Normally he would go to his office, but since that was no longer an option for some time alone, his room would have to do. It ate at him, but at least it was only temporary. When he reached his room, he pushed open the door, and stopped just inside the

doorframe when he saw the book in the middle of his bed. How to Use a Computer for Dummies was the title, and it instantly pissed him off. She had broken into his room, *again*, just to play mind games. He heard Glitch cursing in her room. He glanced over and saw her door was ajar; he moved toward it, pushing it open, and stopped when saw her dressed in nothing but a bra and thong.

So much for not allowing himself to get hard around her, he thought in irritation. Her bra and thong were both white lace, but what caught his attention were the bruises on her ass. He wanted to reach out and check them, but quickly scolded himself. What the hell was he thinking? There was no way he was going to touch her. Hell, he didn't even like her. He forced himself to remember the book waiting for him on his bed. "Problem?" he asked her, then cursed himself. He had meant to make some kind of smart remark about her not being able to sit down, but clearly his mouth hadn't gotten the memo.

"Nope," she said simply, not even looking at him as she made her way over to the closet, her ass flexing with each step. Damn, her ass was fine. Fuck, he really needed to get a grip on that. He quickly lifted his gaze before she could catch him. "Something you need? Or did you just come to ogle my ass? I mean, I know it's fantastic, but I figured you already got a good look earlier." She glanced over her shoulder at him, making him scowl at her.

"I don't care about your ass," he snapped at her. "I came over to tell you to keep it down since you're being so damn loud I can hear you through the walls, and to tell you to stay the hell out of my room. Your pathetic attempts at jokes aren't funny."

She turned back to face him, and he had to force himself to keep his gaze on hers. Damn it, he really needed her to put her clothes on. "You're annoyed because I'm in here and making noise," she repeated, staring at him. "Do you even hear yourself? Are you sure you cleaned out your ears in the shower earlier? I think some of Harley's shit got in there and is starting to rot. And as for the book, well, clearly you need all the help you can get."



He clenched his jaw. “My ears and brain are just fine, thank you,” he gritted out. “My system is just fucking fine, and I don’t need your help to fix anything. Would you put some damn clothes on? Or do you like walking around in your underwear where anyone can see?”

Her lips pulled up into a wicked grin. “Awww, caveman, are you jealous? What, you think because you got a look at the goods earlier, that means you get to keep them from being seen by anyone else? Or maybe you want me to be quiet because you know that anyone else would appreciate this. I could be in here having myself a damn good time while you’re in your room with one of the club girls, struggling to get the deed done, while I make you listen to what it sounds like to actually get a woman off properly.”

He was moving before he could stop himself, even as his brain screamed at him this was a bad idea.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

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### GLITCH

She bit back a smirk as he stalked toward her. It seemed that she had gotten under his skin; one of her favorite pastimes. She should have covered herself up, or at least attempted to, but instead, she lifted her chin and stared up at the man who towered over her. His green eyes glittered with anger and annoyance, but there was something else there, and it made her blood heat. She really needed her body to stop doing that.

The tension between them ratcheted up as he stopped mere inches away from her. “You’re baiting me,” he said bluntly.

She widened her eyes dramatically. “What? Me? No! Of course not,” she gasped, putting a hand over her chest, which of course drew his gaze before it went right back to her face. “Why would you ever say such a thing, Code? I’m hurt. Just completely insulted.” She threw in a little southern twang for added effect.

His eyes narrowed. “You and your smart mouth are going to get yourself in trouble, sweetheart.”

“Is that so?” she replied easily. The look she gave him was a pure dare. She wasn’t afraid of him. Hell, she could kill him with one twist of her wrist the moment she got her hands on him. Still, this reaction intrigued her. Excited her somehow. The kind of excitement that made her want to push him *just a little bit more*, to see how far she could take it. “What are you

going to do about it, caveman? Are you going to put me in line?"

"I'll make your life here a living hell if you don't stop trying to piss me off," he told her in a low voice. "You don't want to start a war with me, Glitch. Everything up to now has been nothing more than child's play."

"You make life a living hell just by breathing, so we're well on our way," she goaded. "Care to try again? Because we have to be down in Church in a few minutes, and as much as this conversation is fascinating, I do need you to tell me quickly. Unless you want me to go down there in nothing but a bra and thong." She gave him a sharp smile. "You're the one threatening me with a good time, Code. Maybe think about that before you start laying down challenges."

"How does your team put up with you?" he wondered, smirking at her.

She gave him a big smile, waving at herself. "I'm Polly Pocket-sized with a wicked sense of humor and a brain, caveman. It's not that hard to figure out. And I'm starting to think you don't like that. What happened? Some woman in your past screw you over and now you're taking out that anger on me since she's not here? Because if that's what you're doing, it's going to be that much more fun to prove that you can't do shit to me. Sure, you could inconvenience me, but we both know you won't succeed in driving me out of here." Then she stepped closer and said in a low, sultry voice, "Or is this because you realized just how much you can't resist me? Did you think that I didn't notice the way your cock got hard when we were in the shower together?"

He scoffed. "I'm a man. When a naked woman is around, we get hard. If you had been a club whore, the same thing would have happened."

"Is that so?" she purred, glancing down at him. Yep, just like she thought, he was hard now too. And considering she knew exactly what he was packing behind that zipper, it made her body heat even more. Still, she ignored it. "Then what's your excuse now?"

He glared at her, but there was a heat in his eyes that matched her own. He might be pissed, but he was far from unaffected. Any other time she might be interested in exploring that, but not now. Not with him. They would probably kill each other before they even got into the sheets. “You’re standing here in a bra and thong. Doesn’t mean shit. I’m done with this ridiculous conversation. Stay the hell out of my room,” he ordered as he stepped back, then turned on his heel and stalked out of her room.

She stared after him for a moment before she started to chuckle to herself, turning back to her closet. She was definitely getting under his skin. The battle between the two of them had cooled a little since she got here yesterday, but she had the feeling it was about to pick right back up. It would definitely liven up the days as she waited for her team to return so they could head home and fix the mess at their clubhouse.

Which of course made her think of Slip. She pulled on a clean pair of leggings and a long t-shirt that she had bought a few years ago and fixed up to be the perfect length. She had worn a lot of clothes just like this in high school, which was when she had met Slip. Or, rather, Forrest Walton, as she knew him back then. It really was a small world. But she refused to be worried or afraid of him or his team. They could threaten all they liked, but they were no match for her or her team.

*But your team isn’t here, her mind taunted. Would the Dragons really be able to protect you if he showed up?*

That was the question wasn’t it? Sure, she had Karissa, and the Dragons had helped her with her situation, but Glitch and the rest of their team had been here. It remained to be seen what the Dragons would do if Slip and his team figured out where she was and came for her. But that was a worry for later. She glanced at her watch. She had a few minutes before she had to be down in Church, but since she was ready now, she would go and set up so everything was already set up when they called her team.

She shut the door and headed downstairs, only briefly glancing at Code’s closed bedroom door. He was going to be

pissed she was playing around in his system again, but well, that was the price to pay, wasn't it? She smirked to herself. Maybe she'd leave him a little present while she was in there...

When she got down to Church, surprisingly, Razor, Karissa, Rogue, and Fury were already there. Though Karissa was glaring at Razor, who had pulled her into his lap the moment her attention turned to Glitch. "I am not sitting in your lap, Razor," Karissa snapped at him, even as Glitch took the seat in front of the computer and opened it up.

"There won't be enough seats in here, babe, so this is where you're sitting," Razor told her easily. "Besides, you weren't complaining about being in my lap earlier," he added with a leer. Karissa glared at him, unamused.

"Apparently you were slacking, pretty boy," Glitch said with a snicker. "Sounds like you need to work on your technique. If you need some help, I know just the person to mentor you."

Fury gave a burst of laughter, while Rogue smirked. Razor glared at her, and Karissa snickered, earning her a look that promised retribution. Razor turned his attention back to her and said, "If anyone's ass is going to need help, it's yours if Code catches you. Or maybe that's what you're looking for after that shower earlier."

Glitch rolled her eyes. "Why does everyone think that just because we saw each other naked we're immediately going to jump in the sack together?" she asked drily. "Have you guys already forgotten we don't even like each other?"

"Don't need to like each other to fuck," Rogue pointed out bluntly.

She ignored him. "I'm not afraid of Code. I can handle myself." She gave Razor a cool smile. "Would you like another demonstration? I won't hurt that pretty face of yours, but I can't promise about the rest of you."

"I'm starting to think that having you around is a bad idea," Razor muttered.

“I think it’s a fantastic idea,” Karissa added. She and Razor glared at each other some more, and Glitch rolled her eyes. Those two loved to fight, and she had a feeling that the gym would be in use once this meeting was over. Those two loved to use gym equipment for activities other than what they were intended for, though she had to give them props for ingenuity.

So, instead, she focused on getting past Code’s firewalls and into his system. He had made some decent improvements, so it took her a couple extra minutes, but as always, she got through just fine. Then she used his to log in to her own. She was sure he had done some other work in his, but when it came to the safety of her team, she didn’t mess around. After she got everything prepared so they could easily call in with no problems, and ensured they had access to all the files they needed, she took a little time to look around his system to check out other improvements he could make. And to leave him a little something.

It wasn’t long before the men of the club started to file in. A few of them gave her knowing looks as they took their seats, while others just shook their heads, clearly not happy she was in their sanctified space. To them, she gave a wicked grin and a wink. When Code showed up, Savage was right behind him. Code’s eyes flared as soon as he saw her in his seat. “Move,” he ordered her.

She arched a brow. “I’m afraid this seat is taken,” she told him easily. “But I see one down there next to Rogue you could probably use.”

His green eyes flashed even brighter. Then he looked at the monitor and his face reddened with anger. “Get the fuck out of my system, woman,” he hissed.

“We really need to work on that,” she told him with mock concern. “I mean, I saw what you were trying to do, but it looks like you need a bit more help. How about you read that book I gave you? Maybe then—” She let out a screech when he reached down and hauled her out of the chair, but of course, she wasn’t about to let him get away with it. Wicked fast, she had her legs wrapped around his waist, and used her small body to break free of his hold and get around to his back,

wrapping her arm around his neck in a chokehold. She heard a few curses, and possibly some laughter. “That sure was stupid, caveman,” she told him, her mouth close to his ear.

“Jesus H. Christ,” she heard Savage growl. “Glitch, let him the fuck go. Now.” It was an order. Too bad for him, she didn’t take orders from anyone but her team.

“Afraid not, Mr. President,” she said, fixing him with a sharp smile. “He grabbed me first.”

Code then used her inattention against her and wrenched her wrist, making her loosen her hold, and somehow managed to get her flipped back around to his front, turning so that he pinned her to the wall. Any other time, she would have found that move hot as hell, but she was too angry. He held her there by gripping both her biceps, her feet dangling off the floor. His eyes were bright, roiling with anger and insult, but that same tension from before was creeping in. For a brief moment, she forgot all about anyone else in the room. She gave Code her best challenging smile, and of course, he took the bait. “Stay the fuck away from my shit, Glitch,” he hissed.

“If you want me to stay out, do better and keep me out,” she hissed back.

“I should have Savage lock you in the damn Box and be done with it,” he continued, bringing his face closer to hers. “Then I won’t have to worry about you at all.”

“You could try, but we both know the moment I get out of there, and I will, I’ll just kill you and be done with it,” she mimicked him, leaning closer so that their noses practically touched. She stared directly into his eyes, anger and heat making her feel things she knew she shouldn’t. “Then I’ll take your precious system apart piece by piece. Though we both know that won’t be hard since you don’t have my skills.”

“Is this, like, weird computer nerd foreplay?” Jax wondered loudly. “Because as weird as it is, it’s hot. Don’t worry, babe, I won’t touch your computer, but I definitely wouldn’t mind you and I doing a bit of wrestling.”

“Code, let her go. Glitch, you’re here as a guest. I suggest you remember that or I will put your ass out,” Savage growled.

“Again, this is why we don’t have women in Church,” Ice said irritably.

Code didn’t move for a moment, and she held his stare, lifting her chin in a dare. Finally, he let her go and set her on her feet.

“Good,” Savage said briskly. “Let’s get down to business. Code, let Glitch run the tech for now since she’s clearly got things set up.” Code’s eyes were like balls of fire as he stiffly moved to the chair next to the one she would need to sit in, his fists clenched tightly on top of the table. He didn’t like this one bit, and if he hadn’t just been a total asshole, she might have felt bad for him. Instead of antagonizing him, she focused on what she was doing and pulled up the video call for her team to join. Within moments, her team filled the screen on the wall, though they could technically only see herself and Savage when he moved himself closer to her to make sure he could be seen. “Simba,” Savage said in greeting.

“Savage,” Simba returned. They were seated at a large dining room table, and she could easily see everyone sitting down, and those along the wall behind. Seeing them, she immediately felt a wave of melancholy. She missed them, and she wished she was with them. Even if she knew it wasn’t safe.

“I hear we have a lead on who is after you and our guest here,” Savage remarked. Glitch gave him a cool glare at the inflection in his voice at the mention of her.

“We do,” Simba said. “Glitch, care to fill them in? This is your show.”

Glitch bit back a grin, ignoring Savage and his scowl. Yeah, he didn’t like the idea that she was taking the lead. As much as these guys liked to think they were progressive in some things, they were still stuck in the dark ages when it came to their precious Church. She clicked a few buttons and put the images of the rival team on the screen. “I probably don’t need to say this, but none of this information is



considered legal in my possession,” she advised. “These guys are traitors and aren’t supposed to even exist, technically. So don’t be blabbing to anyone about how you got this information. Meet Rogue Team Two, AKA Ghost.”

“Are we talking Casper ghosts, or some other kind of ghost?” Jax asked with a joking grin.

“The kind that would gladly slit your throat while you slept,” Jag responded, voice dark, “And then kill your entire family right along with you. Women, kids, pets, there is no one safe when they’re around.”

The room went silent. Glitch glanced over at Karissa, who was staring at the screen with an unreadable expression. Glitch looked back at her monitor and continued. “Their leader, Hazard, AKA Richard Mead. A real piece of work that got his name because he likes to leave a mass of messy destruction in his wake. He was trained by the Marines, but he got dishonorably discharged before he turned twenty five for trying to kill one of his bunk mates. Saw it as an insult that the bunkmate wouldn’t share money he inherited from a dead relative. But, he had the makings of a good leader, so the CIA scooped him up and made him into the killer he is. Gave him a team to lead, and sent him out on missions to deal with the kinds of things that the government couldn’t out in the open. His favorite method of killing is slow methodical torture, and he could make it go on for weeks if he wanted before he finally ended the person’s life.”

“Sounds like a real charmer,” Fury remarked.

Glitch looked at the picture of the man, though it was definitely out of date because he had hardened over time, and had grown a beard. Still, there was no mistaking the killer he was by looking at his eyes. “Next up, we have Jeremy Paul, nicknamed Maggot. He’s got a thing for bugs and insects, and he’s about as crazy as they come,” she told everyone. “He was a SEAL washout, mostly because he didn’t like to blindly follow orders, and he tried to punch one of the Sergeants in the face during a training exercise. Anyway, Hazard found him and added him to his team a few years later. Maggot’s love of insects comes in handy when it comes to torture. There is

nothing like making someone talk by covering them in creepy crawlies. Especially the more dangerous ones.” She gave a shudder at the thought.

“His name is apt because he’s a slimy worm of a man,” Karissa added darkly. “Fucker has a pet tarantula that he loves to scare people with just for kicks.”

“He does have beady eyes,” Jax remarked.

Savage indicated for her to keep going. She clicked again and brought up a picture of Crisp. “This is Crisp, or Kobe Cruz as his former Arson Anonymous support group called him. Crisp loves fire, and he’s gotten very creative in how he uses it. He was never in the Army or anything, but he was picked up by the FBI for trying to burn down one of their buildings after one of their agents crossed him during some sort of deal gone bad. One of the top FBI guys took notice of him, and he got in contact with Hazard’s team leader. They took him in and trained him. He’s the clean-up guy for the group, and he makes sure that nothing can be found wherever they end up. No bodies, and no building. It’s how they cover their tracks the majority of the time. But he’s fucking nuts, and almost got the team in trouble a few times before we met them because he sets people on fire for looking at him wrong, or some other perceived slight.”

“Not exactly the friendly sort then,” Ink joked.

“Then we have Jacob Stirling, AKA Spook. Spook is what I would call second in command in this little band of misfits. He’s a former SEAL who up and left after his final mission. Walked away from his pension, his honors, all of it. The government revoked them, yet still honorably discharged him because they felt he had earned it, but the man was done with following orders. He wandered around for a while, until he happened to run into Hazard and his team on one of their jobs overseas. Apparently they struck up a friendship, because Hazard got him added to the team without much of a problem. Spook is quieter, and he’s got an excellent mind for tactics. He’s the one that gets them in and out of anywhere they need to go.”

“Bastard is a fucking psycho, and that’s saying something,” Taz announced, tone grim. “The few times we interacted with him, you could just tell. He takes great pleasure in killing anyone he can, and he could give Hazard a run for his money on the torture. Not to mention, he’s one of those guys that can blend into a room and never be seen until it’s too late.”

“Guess we know why they call him Spook,” Fury remarked. “What about the last guy?”

Glitch looked at the screen and paused for a moment, the same anger and betrayal burning in her gut as they had all those years ago. “That,” she said tightly, “is an old friend turned enemy of mine from school. I taught him most of what he knows, and I’m the reason for their team having to go into hiding. It seems he’s finally come back to try and kill me.”

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

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### CODE

**H**e might be pissed at her, and pissed at Savage for dismissing him, but he still jolted at her words. Sure, he heard the guy, Slip, tell her that he was going to take her apart, but he hadn't realized just how well Glitch knew him. Or that she was the reason for all of this. Guilt prickled in his stomach again, but he pushed it aside. He was done worrying about that. It was done and over with, and right now, he wanted more details on who he was and why Glitch had screwed him over.

“This is Slip, or as I knew him growing up, Forrest Walton. Everyone called him Rest, and he was something of a golden boy back in school. His parents came from old money, and he was a trust fund baby. He had one sister, I think her name was Katherine or Anna, and they pretty much owned the school with all the money his parents donated. Anyway, somehow, we sort of became friends, and he took an interest in computers and hacking. I mostly started him on learning to code, but then we delved into hacking, and well, we both ran with it I guess. He liked it enough that he told his family that he didn't want to be a doctor or lawyer like they wanted, and he was going to get into MIT to become an elite computer scientist. Mostly he wanted to be a hacker and prove he was better than everyone else.”

“So you two were just friends? Never more?” Rogue asked.

Code tried not to let that question get to him. He didn't like the idea of that bastard ever getting his hands on Glitch, though he couldn't understand why. So he pushed it aside and focused on the rest of her story.

“He was a ladies man, and I had no time for him,” she said bluntly. “He tried, sure, but that was mostly in the beginning. After a while, he only wanted to talk to me about computers and coding, and I was okay with that. When I was in my senior year, I applied to get into MIT and I was accepted, but when Forrest applied, he was rejected. He hadn't been keeping up his grades, and he missed the qualifiers. Which of course pissed him off. No amount of money or threats could get him in, and his family refused to help him, I think mostly because they were hoping he would change his mind and give it up. He asked me to help him get in, but I told him no. I wasn't about to pull favors for someone that didn't seem to care about all the effort you had to put in to go to that school in the first place, especially when I had been on him about it for months before. So he decided to take matters into his own hands.

“He hacked MIT's system and tried to enroll himself in the program, but of course he was caught, which meant that he was blacklisted. It also meant he was blacklisted at all the other prestigious colleges that he could have gone to, including medical schools. It was a huge public scandal, and where I grew up, that was social suicide. His parents disowned him, and blamed me. Said that I purposely sabotaged him by withholding how to do it properly and wanted him to get caught. Like I had some kind of agenda, and I was out to get him. It got him exiled from his entire family, and left him with only his trust fund.”

“Did you hold anything back on him?” Savaged asked her curiously.

She gave him a withering glare. “I was seventeen and didn't know how to do half of this shit back then, so no,” she told him coldly. Savage held her stare, unfazed. “Anyway, I went to MIT and he came back begging me to use my connections or my money to get him back in because it was all my fault anyway. I told him to fuck off, which pissed him off,

and he vowed to get revenge on me. Not that I paid much attention. I didn't have time for that, and focused on getting my degree. I graduated and got recruited by the CIA, who put me through my paces before finally loaning me out to the military. I helped out on some classified missions, and it was decided my skills could be best used elsewhere, which is how I ended up with the team."

"Could have knocked me over with a feather when I saw the pipsqueak they sent me," Simba huffed, though Code could hear the amusement in his voice.

"A fact I quickly showed you didn't matter when I took your ass down," Glitch tossed back, but her lips twitched in amusement. "Anyway, I was with the team for a while before we got assigned a job in the Amazon to handle some kind of militia group terrorizing the locals, and also dealing guns and explosives on the black market. We were to clean it up, but our handlers felt that it was a two team job, so they paired us up with another team."

"Hazard and his gang," Code surmised.

She glanced at him, and he saw a flash of annoyance in her eyes at his interruption, but she nodded. "Exactly. Imagine my surprise when I saw my former friend standing there with them. He was pissed when he saw me, but I told him that we were on a job, and that meant whatever petty bullshit he had against me would have to wait and we could fight it out later. It also pissed him and his team off that our team was the lead on that particular mission. We didn't play by any rules, but we had common decency, and we refused to let them hurt anyone who didn't deserve it."

"Not that he didn't try," Karissa added darkly. "I went a few rounds with Maggot on that job, and he didn't take too kindly to a woman telling him what to do." Razor frowned at that, but didn't say anything. Code didn't miss the way his hand tightened on her hip though, or the way his other hand moved to her outer thigh and rubbed soothingly. There was a story there, but since neither Karissa or Glitch elaborated, Code doubted that they would be finding out about it.

“Slip and Hazard were both pissed they weren’t the ones running the mission,” Glitch continued. “And they made it known with all their questioning and complaints. Finally, Simba put them down hard, and they did not like it. Before we walked away, I saw that same look in Forrest’s eyes. Well, he went by Slip then, so I’ll use that name to keep it simpler. Anyway, Slip got that pissed off look when I told him I wouldn’t help him with his MIT issue, and I had a gut feeling that he was going to do something stupid. I told the team, and they told me to keep an eye on him and see if I could hack into his computer remotely to figure out what he was up to. Before I could do that, he tried to hack my system, and I let him in to see what he was up to. He just so happened to do it the night before we were supposed to launch our attack on the militia group and take them down. If we succeeded, there were some substantial rewards in our future, and Hazard and his guys weren’t ones that liked to share. They were trying to send through false intel to make us go in the opposite direction so they could be the ones to achieve the objective and get the rewards.

“Once I realized that, I told Simba, and worked on a plan to turn it back around on them. It took some doing, but I was way better at hacking, and Slip wasn’t anywhere near as good as he thought he was. I found other shit in there that exposed him for just what he was. See, his team was loaning him out as a hacker and hitman to some criminal enterprises for extra cash, and the idiot kept all the records on his system, certain that he would never get caught.”

“Idiot,” Jax scoffed. “Even I know you don’t do that.”

“So I made copies of it all and we sent it through to our handler to deal with. The next day, we took down our target while Hazard and his team were chasing their tails. When they figured it out, they were *pissed*. The whole team lost their shit and tried to start a fight, but we had three more people than them, and even with me not really being involved in the fight, they knew they had to walk away. But, as soon as we got back on home turf, men in black suits were waiting about the information I had sent through. There was a lot of screaming and vowing revenge from Slip and Hazard, who were both

arrested along with the rest of the team. The team was disbanded, of course, and they went to prison. I haven't kept close tabs on them, but it's clear they've been out and gotten the gang back together."

"Can you pull up their prison records?" Simba asked.

Glitch nodded, and within moments, had them all up on the screen for everyone to see. "Seems they all got out within months of each other. Hazard first, then Crisp, Spook, and Maggot. Slip was the last, but he got out two years ago. Then they all went off the grid. But no one can stay off the grid forever. Give me a few hours and I'll see if I can track their movements."

"Why wouldn't they have gone after you as soon as they were out of prison?" Ice asked. Code glanced at him and saw his icy blue eyes were sharp and curious.

"We were disbanded by that time," Karissa answered. "Had been for a couple of years, actually, and none of us go by those names anymore. The government put us behind so much red tape, very few people have that level of clearance."

"But I doubt they ever stopped looking for us," Copper added. "They're not the type to just let things go."

"Suppose this Slip guy was stupid enough to try and hack the government?" Fury asked.

"The government would have shut him down immediately," Code told him. On this particular subject, he had extensive knowledge. Hell, he had been one of those people who would have done it. "The government has teams all over the damn place and across multiple agencies, known and unknown, to make sure that information doesn't fall into the wrong hands."

"So now that he knows where you are, he's coming for you," Ink summarized, frowning.

"Slip is coming for me," she corrected. "Hazard and the others want the team as a whole."

"What are the chances that they'll figure out you and Karissa are here?" Savage asked as he leaned forward, gaze



hard and assessing. No doubt he was wondering how much danger his woman and children were in.

“Depends on them finding the connection,” Glitch answered honestly. “I know how to cover my tracks, and I can cover up the tracks of my team, but nothing is impossible. From what I saw earlier, Slip has upped his game, and he’s definitely got an ax to grind, so eventually he could figure out a way to get past me. I’m confident in my skills, but one off day and he could find me. Or, if he was smart, though I have my doubts about this, he could try to find someone in the team. Hell, a picture of one of us on the internet, even in the background, would be enough to give him a direction. The location wouldn’t even have to be obvious in the photo if whoever took it had their geotagging settings on.”

“Do you all look the same as when you were doing your mercenary gig?” Rogue asked.

“For the most part,” Simba replied. “Glitch and Karissa are the only ones to really change their appearance. And that was mostly just hair color.”

“Wait, you used to have a different hair color?” Razor asked Karissa, intrigued.

“Oh, sure, that’s what you heard out of that whole story,” Karissa huffed.

“What can I say? I have a thing for sexy brunettes, but I wouldn’t mind a picture,” he teased. Karissa rolled her eyes.

“Alright, so there’s a chance that they will recognize you if you’re seen or in a photo,” Savage summarized. “And from there it might be easier for them to find you. So, the two of you don’t leave the compound. We don’t want to give them a chance to spot you.”

Glitch and Karissa both scowled. “We’re not about to be prisoners for the rest of our lives,” Glitch told him. “I’m not staying here forever.”

“And if you think you’re going to keep me here forever with no contact to the outside world, you’ve lost your damn mind,” Karissa added fiercely.

“Then we need to go on the offensive and figure out where they are,” Savage said evenly. He looked over at Code. “You’re good at tracking people down. Do you have any objections to diverting a chunk of your time to help find them?”

Code shook his head. “I’ll do whatever’s necessary.”

“Because he wants to get her out of here sooner rather than later,” Ink snickered. Code didn’t bother denying it, even though Glitch glared at the other man. As far as he was concerned, he would be better off with Glitch far away from him. She was getting under his skin, and he was acting irrational, so he put the blame firmly on her shoulders.

“I don’t need his help,” Glitch protested, narrowing her eyes at Savage.

“Too bad,” Savage replied. “You want to go home faster, we need two sets of eyes on this, and that means the two of you are going to have to work together. Whatever your beef with each other is, figure it out or fuck it out. I don’t care, but I’m not playing referee. Royal will be having the babies any day now, and I don’t have time for this shit.”

Glitch fumed silently, and Code held his tongue. But they both glanced at each other, and their expressions shared the same sentiment. *Fat chance.*

“As soon as we handle our mission here, we’ll be heading back. If you haven’t found them by then, we’ll give you a hand,” Simba informed them. “Glitch, the more you let Code help you, the faster you can come back where you belong.”

“But if you need to kill him, wait until I’m there to help,” Taz called. “You know how much I love dead bodies.”

“Speaking of psycho,” Karissa sighed.

“Now, now, babe, you love my psycho,” Taz teased. “Why else would you have tried to climb in bed with me?”

“I’m not fighting with you about this again,” Karissa groaned. “Someone gag him for me, please?”

“Oh, now you’re just trying to get me all hot and bothered,” Taz laughed. “You know how much I love kinky shit.”

“Jesus Christ, I’ll fucking come through the phone and gag him myself,” Savage huffed. “Can we get back to the business at hand please?”

“Yeesh, sounds like someone needs some kinky shit himself if you ask me,” Taz said with mock concern. He let out a yelp when a hard thump sounded through the computer. “Fucker,” he hissed. Glitch snickered.

“Alright, so Code and Glitch will get started finding these assholes,” Savage said briskly. “Simba, I assume you guys are going to be focused on whatever mission you’re on.”

“Correct,” Simba replied.

“Alright, that leaves us on our own for now. Brothers, ears to the ground. Be alert for any rumblings of anyone looking for them or us. I’ll reach out to other clubs and allies to see if any of them have heard of these guys or know anything about them.” He looked at Glitch. “Can you give us those pictures of them?”

She glanced at the camera in front of her, and when she gave a subtle nod, she looked back at Savage. “The information shouldn’t be printed or housed anywhere other than my system. There are other people looking for them and us. I’ll give you the still images from the cameras at our clubhouse earlier.”

“Fine,” Savage said, clearly not about to argue. “We’ll see what we can find. Simba, we’ll have Glitch reach out to you if we hear anything.”

“Sounds good, brother,” Simba replied. “Glitch, we’ll talk soon.” She nodded, a sadness in her eyes at them leaving the conversation. As she backed out of the call, covering their tracks, he was up and moving so that as soon as she was out of her system and back into his, he was behind her.

She glared up at him, then turned back and left his system, but not before she opened up his lock screen, making sure to

leave it up on the monitor. The room erupted into laughter at the image of a photoshopped picture of him with a large head, tiny assed body, and a circle in the dick area with the words, “Still looking for it,” in a white text bubble pointing at it.

He skewered her with a hard glare when she turned to give him an innocent look. “Good thing I gave you that pump and magnifying glass. Might make it easier,” she suggested.

He didn’t bother answering her. Instead, he leveled her with a look that promised retribution, then stalked out of the room, ignoring the laughter behind him. If Savage thought they were going to figure this shit out, he was sorely mistaken. If Glitch wanted to start this little battle again, that was just fine with him. And this time, she was a hell of a lot closer. It would be that much sweeter to be able to watch as he took her down.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

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### GLITCH

*Three Days Later*

Esme, Karissa, Royal, Harlow, and Scarlett all give her amused grins as she stormed into the common room, once again furious and ready to lose her shit. “I’m going to kill him,” she hissed at the women as she stalked toward the bar, needing a stiff drink. “I don’t care if he is an ally of our club. He’s going to die a slow and painful death at my hands, and I’m going to laugh while I do it.” The prospect at the bar gave her a wide-eyed, fearful look as he quickly handed her a shot. She downed it, enjoying the burn of it in her throat. She knew better than to ask for another one, since she was going to need all her faculties to keep going for the day, but still, it was tempting.

“Dare we ask what he did now?” Karissa asked, amusement in her voice.

Glitch rounded on her, eyes narrowed, and pointed at her. “Don’t think I don’t know you’re enjoying my suffering,” she snapped, stalking back toward the group of women gathered around the larger table. It was mid-afternoon, but still, she was surprised to find that Scarlett and Esme were both here since they normally were working at this time of day. Then again, nothing in this club ever seemed to function in a normal way, so what did she know?

“Of course I am,” Karissa scoffed. “I’ve never seen you this worked up over anything. I’m starting to think that I never want you to go back to your own club. I’d miss all this endless entertainment.”

“I’m about ready to demand to go home,” Glitch told her as she slumped into the only empty seat. “Suppose if I put a gun to Savage’s head again he might reconsider?” she wondered aloud. It was crazy, but desperate times called for desperate measures and all that.

Royal snickered. “He’d probably lock you in your room if you tried,” she said.

“I’m fine with that,” Glitch said. “Maybe then I wouldn’t have to deal with a caveman asshole that takes great pleasure in pissing me the hell off.”

“And you have yet to tell us what he’s done for that to be okay with you,” Karissa added pointedly. “So spill it.”

“He touched my shit,” Glitch hissed. “No, let me be more precise. While I was in the shower, he hurried down, unplugged all my stuff, and hid it away somewhere. And considering that I saw more than a few laughing faces around here, I know he had help. No one, and I mean no one, touches my shit. I had to come out here and cool off because otherwise I’d have probably snapped his neck.”

“That would have left you without your stuff still,” Scarlett pointed out, but Glitch saw the grin she was trying to hide.

“I would have just taken over his shit,” Glitch sniffed. “Though, it needs a major upgrade so it’d be much more cost effective to buy all new stuff.” She ran a hand through her hair, uncaring that it was now all messed up after she just styled it. “Seriously, I’m going to kill him. He’s still refusing to assemble the new desk and chair that I brought in. And he won’t move his lazy ass so I can do it myself.”

“Razor and I can help,” Karissa offered. “We’ll make sure he’s not around when we do.”

“Your man already told me that he won’t help me,” Glitch gritted out. “Tried to get him to convince Code to move so I

could, and he said no one will fuck with Code's shit. Oh, but it's fine for them to fuck with mine. You know, I might just punch the next biker I see in the face on principle."

"Oh now, babe, you don't want to ruin this perfect face," Jax joked behind her. Glitch looked at him over her shoulder with cool eyes. He faltered slightly. "But then again, I've never been one to tempt fate," he added charmingly, stopping out of punching reach.

"Do you know where my stuff is?" she demanded.

"Babe, you know I don't involve myself in other people's domestics," Jax told her, but his eyes were sparkling with mirth, and that was all the confirmation she needed. "But I'm sure if you ask Code nicely, he'll tell you."

"The only way I'm going to ask him is with a knife to his throat," she threatened, pushing to her feet.

"To be fair, you did share that video of him dancing on that stripper pole to the entire club last night," Esme laughed. "And he was pissed."

Glitch grinned wickedly. "It helps to know people in the right places," she said casually. She had sent out a general call to some of the other local clubs the Dragons were affiliated with, and she had gotten plenty of responses, all too happy to help her out. But the best one had come from another club a few towns away, with video of Code on his initiation night after earning his full patch. He had tied on more than a few, and the man was one wild drunk when he wanted to be. She had to admit that it was pretty damn impressive what he could do on that pole. Of course, she couldn't keep that knowledge to herself, and had projected it on the large screen TV when the majority of the club was around to witness it. "But that was only in retaliation to him messing with my dinner." Code had decided it would be funny to sprinkle ground ghost peppers in her meal last night, which of course had just about killed her with the heat.

"And before he did that, you changed all the keys around on his keyboard, and hid his mouse in the damn fridge with the

cheese,” Harlow added with a snicker. “I thought that was clever.”

“And before that he was just getting back at you for the little gift you left him on his computer when we were in Church the other night,” Karissa snickered.

“Was that when he pinned your old yearbook photo on every door in the clubhouse?” Royal asked, eyes bright with laughter. “I will say, he could have picked a much worse one. You were a cute kid.”

“He picked the one where I was missing both front teeth and my mother had insisted on making me look like Laura Ingalls from Little House on the Prairie,” Glitch growled, turning and stepping away from the table. “He knew exactly what he was doing, because all my other pictures were much more flattering. I learned my lesson after that year. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to go and beat some answers out of one caveman biker. If you hear any screaming, don’t worry, I’ll make sure to leave him breathing,” she added with a lethal smile over her shoulder.

“Should we follow her?” Esme asked the other women.

“I want to, just to see what she does,” Karissa replied. “But probably best not to have too many witnesses. Plausible deniability and all that.”

Glitch smirked to herself. Karissa wasn’t wrong. After all, she had only just come out here to cool off so she didn’t kill him. Now that she had some liquor and a somewhat clearer head, all bets were off. Only, when she reached Code’s office, Savage, Fury, and Rogue all stood there behind Code, their backs to her, murmuring about something. Since they were all so damn tall, she couldn’t make out Code’s screens either to see what they were talking about. But considering that the only thing they were working on was finding Slip and his team, it wasn’t hard for her to figure it out.

Anger burned in her belly. Of course they were talking without her present. Oh no, they wouldn’t want to talk to a woman, the one who was leading this whole damn search. The one with the answers. Just because she had a vagina, she



obviously wouldn't know what she was talking about, she thought sarcastically as she stepped into the room and slammed the door behind her, making all four men turn to stare at her in surprise. She leveled them all with a hard, cold glare. "Oh, I'm sorry," she said frostily, "I guess I didn't get the memo that we were meeting."

Savage arched a brow, while Rogue and Fury gave her blank stares. She didn't even bother glancing at Code, but she could feel him staring at her. "Problem?" Savage asked her casually.

"Well now, let's see," she said, stepping further into the room. "Should I have a problem with you four having a meeting that doesn't include me? About a problem that involves me? And that's after you all helped this asshole hide my shit so I can't assist with anything. All because you don't like that you would have to talk to a woman. So yeah, I'd say I have a problem."

"We weren't," Fury began, but Glitch stopped him with a slash of her hand.

"Don't," she hissed. "Do not even think of lying to me. Were you in here discussing the Ghost team?" They didn't reply, but she saw it written all over their faces. "Did you come in here after you saw me leave?" Again, nothing, but still, no change in their expressions. "So don't you lie to me about any of this shit. You might not like it, but I am a part of the Predators MC. I'm not a sidekick, I'm a full fledged member, and you better be treating me as such or we are going to have an even bigger problem than we do." She whipped her gaze to Code, who was watching her without an ounce of remorse on his face. "And you, you better give me back my stuff, or I'm going to have no choice but to kick your ass until you do," she threatened. "I won't be kind or gentle, and I also won't promise that you will come back in one piece."

"Pretty sure you would have to reach me first," Code taunted. She itched to grab her knife from her back pocket sheath and chuck it at him. Not to kill him, but to make the point that she didn't need to reach him to hurt him. But then it would be a whole thing, and she didn't need the headache.

“I thought you two were going to work this shit out,” Savage snapped irritably. “It’s like dealing with two squabbling children.”

“Great practice then,” she replied with a toothy smile.

Savage scowled at her. “I don’t have time for this. As for us talking with Code, the only thing we asked is if there was progress, and then you walked in, so you can calm the hell down.” Fury flashed through her, but she managed to bite her tongue. Technically, Savage was President and she didn’t have that much power here, but she wouldn’t let this slide. He didn’t get to treat her as less because of her biology.

Instead of answering him, she turned her attention to Code and snapped, “Where is my equipment? And think very carefully before you answer, asshole.”

“I already told you that you’ll have to go and have a look,” Code smirked. “You hid my shit, I hid yours. Fair play and all that.”

“Did it ever occur to you that taking that shit apart would be dangerous?” she demanded. “That that was my connection to my alerts if the Ghost team finds me?”

“I set up my own safeguards and triggers in case they did,” he said smugly.

Glitch snorted. “Yeah, right, your version would be wimpy at best. They’d probably stroll right in and you’d never know it.”

His face darkened with anger. “Fu—”

“Jesus Christ, I don’t have the patience for this today,” Savage interrupted with a huff, stalking past her and out of the room. Fury and Rogue followed him, but Glitch didn’t miss the grin on Fury’s face. He was finding this all perfectly amusing. Rogue gave her a hard look, which she returned, completely unintimidated. When they were all gone, she looked back at Code.

Instead of saying another word to him, she turned and walked out of the room, heading for the stairs. She had a few places she would check first for her things, and if she didn’t

find them after that, then she was going to have to employ some of the torture techniques she had learned with the CIA.

When she got upstairs, she headed for Code's room. When she tried his door, she found it locked, but she picked it in less than a minute and entered, leaving the door open. She looked around the room quickly, but saw nothing that would indicate her things were there. So she got to work.

She had pulled out all the clothes from his closet and dresser, checked under the bed and mattress, stripped the sheets, and was just about to start on his desk when Code stormed in. "What the fuck do you think you're doing?" he yelled.

"What does it look like I'm doing?" she yelled back. "I'm looking for my shit. Only makes sense to start with your room."

"Stay the hell out of my stuff," he snarled as he charged forward, moving to grab her, but she sidestepped him.

"Then give me back mine," she snarled back, yanking out the drawer to his desk. Code let out a low growl, and suddenly he was rushing her and tackling her to the bed. Glitch let out a screech, but she used the momentum to keep them rolling so that they fell off the bed and onto the floor. Code grunted as she landed on top of him, but she was quick to put an arm to his throat, her body straddling his before he could move. "You really are stupid," she hissed into his face.

"And you're a fucking pain in my ass," he gritted out, despite the pressure she was putting on his windpipe. Suddenly, he bucked his body, making her fly up, and then he was rolling and she was flat on her back on the floor. Now it was his turn to have a hand around her throat, and his body pressed over hers. She struggled and bucked, but he was too heavy, and she wasn't at a great angle to get the upper hand. She let out a grunt of frustration. Code's face was close to hers and the smile on his lips was smug. "What are you going to do now, huh, Eliza?" he taunted her, his voice low as he pressed more of his weight into her, and his hand flexed ever so slightly on her throat.

“Fuck you,” she rasped, still struggling. No way would she give him the satisfaction of giving up and letting him win. Fire burned in her gut, though in any other circumstance, she might find this position hot as hell. She loved a man who took charge in the bedroom, though this wasn’t what she had in mind when it came to Code. First she needed to get him off of her so she could get the hell away from him.

“Aww, can’t get away like this, can you?” he murmured, lowering his head so that it was a hair’s breadth away from hers.

She stopped struggling and glared into his green eyes. “As soon as I get free, I’m going to enjoy taking you down,” she promised, determination ringing in her voice. “Maybe if you beg me loud enough, I won’t rip off your tiny dick and feed it to you. Since it’s so small, maybe you’ll choke.”

He narrowed his eyes at her, shifted his body, and she let out a small gasp when he pressed his semi-hard cock against her center. “We both know that small is not the word to describe me,” he rasped.

It was her turn to give him a smug look. “And you take the bait every damn time I say it. You’re too easy. Mention the size of a man’s dick, and he’s instantly out to prove you wrong.” And because he had put his hips into hers, he had to shift his weight, which meant she was able to bring her knee up and over enough to deliver a blow to his ribs, making him grunt and slacken his hold. She bucked, brought her hand around and down on his neck, and rolled him off her before scrambling back. “It also distracts you enough to get the upper hand,” she added breathlessly, triumph clear in her tone.

She turned and headed for the door, but suddenly a hand shot past her, slamming the door and making her gasp in shock. Then she was whipped around and she found herself pinned to the door, a very pissed off Code standing in front of her. “You are the most infuriating woman I have ever met,” he hissed, holding her in place, then shoving his thigh between hers. It would keep her legs apart and keep her from kneeling him in the ball.

“And you’re the most obnoxious man I’ve ever had to deal with,” she hissed back, glaring up into his angry face. Well, the feeling was mutual, she thought furiously.

“I had a pretty good life before you barged into it,” he continued, leaning his face in closer to hers so that they were almost nose to nose. “Then you come in and act like you’re better than everyone else, throwing your degrees and job in everyone’s faces like we should all bow down at your feet, and all I want to do is take you down a few pegs. You get under my skin like no one else, and your smart mouth comments make me want to shut you up.”

“I’d like to see you try, caveman,” she snarled at him. “You’re not the type to hurt a woman anyway, so just like everything else, you’re all talk and no action. You want to shut me up, then you better grow a set of balls, because we both know you’re not going to do anything about it.”

His eyes flashed at her, and it was the only warning she got before one hand was at her throat, and the other was on her hip holding her in place. “I think it’s time for you to realize that I’ll do more than shut you up,” he gritted out. “I’ll make you beg.” Then, before she could fully process his words, his mouth was on hers, and anything she might have said was instantly gone in the storm that rolled over her.

She knew she should be pushing him away, or kneeling him in the balls, but she would blame it all on her temper and the need to get this aggression and anger out of her system. It had nothing to do with the way he tasted like sin and possession, or the way his hand on her throat tightened as he plundered her mouth. Not that she wasn’t an active participant in this little challenge. She gave as good as she got, the heat between them rising to a fever pitch and making her reach up and grip his shoulders tightly, even as she nipped at his lip, making him groan into her mouth before doing the same thing to her.

It was like pouring gasoline on an already raging fire, because every primal instinct inside her reared its head, and she was hoisting herself up his body, her legs hooking around his waist and her hands moving up into his hair, nails digging

into his scalp as he transferred his grip from her hip to her ass, fingers digging into her cheek hard enough to leave bruises.

It was delicious, and she wanted more of it. She loved it a little rough, and surprise surprise, apparently so did Code. Who knew? Still, neither of them was willing to cede to the other, and the fire between them burned and raged. She moaned into his mouth when he pressed her harder against the door, his groin grinding hard against her, the friction and pressure on her clit making pleasure shoot through her. She ground herself against him, the only thought in her mind that she wanted more. More heat, more friction, and more of Code.

The hand at her throat tightened, stealing just a bit more of her breath, and while she should have panicked at the feeling, instead, it only heightened her sensations, making her impossibly wet. Code suddenly yanked his mouth away from hers, his eyes fiery as he rasped, “Ready to beg yet?”

Her lips pulled into a predatory smile. “Never,” she gasped out. “I think you’re holding back.”

His eyes flashed at the clear challenge, and his hand tightened more. She could still breathe, but it was definitely more of a challenge. Then his hand disappeared from her throat, moving to the back of her head, gripping her hair tight in his fist and yanking her head back, exposing her throat but also sending jolts of sensation from her scalp and through her body. God, she *loved* her hair being pulled. She let out a moan of pleasure, then a gasp of surprise when Code put his mouth to her neck, biting, nipping, and licking at her skin.

It was hot as hell, and her body shuddered at the onslaught of pleasure. She had a thing about her neck, and it seemed Code had figured that out. Her core clenched hard at one particularly stinging bite, and her legs tightened around his hips as she ground herself against him. He was so hard that all she had to do was shift her hips the right way long enough and she could probably get herself off just like this.

When he moved up to her jaw, he nipped at her, soothing the sting with his tongue before he slid his lips to her ear and whispered, “Mmmm, you like that, don’t you, baby? You like

it a little rough. I can practically feel you soaking me through those thin pants of yours. I bet you want to come so bad, don't you? Maybe I'll let you, but you have to beg me first. Beg me like a good girl and maybe I'll help you come."

"Fuck you," she gasped out, even as his hand in her hair tightened and made her body shudder against him.

"Not unless you beg," he said smugly, grinding himself a little harder against her clit, but not enough to send her over the edge.

"Then you'll be waiting a long damn time," she tossed back. She tightened her grip in his hair, yanking his head back, making him hiss and grind into her in reaction. Triumph flared through her, and a slow smile spread across her lips. Oh, it seemed that someone else liked it a little rough, she thought to herself smugly. Well, two could play at that game. "Maybe it should be you begging," she told him as she did it a second time, watching the desire in his eyes flame even higher. "I bet I could get you to beg me to suck your cock," she taunted, tilting her head forward to bite at his jaw, ignoring the pain in her scalp from the grip of his hand still in her hair. "You know, if I could find it," she added softly in his ear, provoking him.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

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### CODE

A snarl of outrage filled his throat, making him grind hard against her. “Oh, we both know you’ll be able to find it just fine,” he growled harshly as he thrust his erection against her clit, making her moan and gasp even as her blue eyes went hazy with desire. “Or are you missing the fact that it’s my dick you’re currently grinding against like a cat in heat?” He didn’t give her a chance to answer before he let go of her hair and put his mouth back over hers. He didn’t want to hear her insults; he wanted to hear her moans and gasps again.

She was a storm. Wild and crazy, ready to wreck him with everything she had. It was hot as fuck, and also terrifying as hell. Still, he was never one to back away from anything, and he wasn’t about to start with the woman he both despised and desired. Even as her tongue tangled with his, he could hear her breathless moans as he commanded the kiss. Glitch was a contradiction, and as much as he knew he shouldn’t, he wanted to peel back all those layers. Especially now that he knew how perfect she tasted. How much her desires seemed to match his own.

He was hard as stone, even as the two of them ground against each other like they were teenagers again, learning all about how good it felt for the first time. She was all woman, and she wasn’t shy about trying to get what she wanted. A part of him wondered what the hell he was doing, considering the fact that on a good day they were rivals, but on days like



today, they barely were able to tolerate each other. Another part of him wondered why the hell he hadn't done this sooner.

Unable to stand it any longer, he pulled his mouth from hers, and moved one hand to the waistband of her yoga pants. He wanted to feel how wet she was for him, because he had every intention of making her beg him for release before he gave it to her. Of course, she took that as his assent to undo his belt and go for the button on his jeans, but he didn't bother to stop her. Hell, his dick was screaming to be freed, and he wasn't going to give up the chance to have her hand on him. Let her think she was going to make him beg her, because he had far more self-control than that.

His hand cleared her waistband and pushed past her panties, but suddenly a shrill sound lit the air and they both froze. He pulled his mouth from hers, realizing it was his phone. Cursing, he yanked his hand out of her pants and reached to grab his phone from his back pocket. He cursed again when he saw it was Savage. "Yeah?" he barked, trying to tell himself to calm down. Glitch's small hand was now in his boxers and gripping his length, making him bite back a hiss. He glared at her, but she just gave him a taunting smile as she slowly worked him, clearly trying to distract him, the little witch.

"Need you over at the bar," Savage sighed. "Seems that one of the prospects wasn't paying attention when they were cleaning and pulled out one of your cables. Now the whole payment system in the bar is down and we have people trying to leave without paying their tabs."

"Fuck," he hissed, pissed and realizing that he had to get over there. "I'm on my way." Then he hung up and turned his gaze back to Glitch, who hadn't stopped working him with her hand, and grabbed her by the wrist to stop her. He couldn't stop the groan that slipped past his lips when her hand tightened on him, but then he pinned her with a glare. "I have to go," he informed her, yanking her hand away from him before setting her back down on her feet.

"What's the problem?" she asked him, eyes sharp despite the desire still burning in their depths.

He forced himself to step back from her and quickly button his jeans before doing up his belt. “Prospects fucked with a cable over in the bar. I need to get over there to fix it so people don’t leave without paying,” he told her briskly.

She nodded, stepping away from the door. “Are you going to tell me where my shit is so I can get some work done while you’re doing that?” she asked him as she opened the door and stepped out.

He had half a mind to still make her search for it, but he didn’t have time right now to listen to her bitching. “It’s in a box in the kitchen pantry marked suckers,” he told her as he followed her out, locking the door behind him. Not that it would keep her out, but still, it was a habit, and he planned on getting a newer, sturdier lock anyway.

She stared at him for a moment and then scowled. “You really are an asshole,” she huffed.

“You weren’t saying that a second ago,” he sneered at her.

She wasn’t the least bit embarrassed as she looked back at him and said, “A momentary lapse in judgment. It won’t be happening again.”

He scoffed as they headed down the stairs. “Tell that to your soaking wet panties, baby,” he taunted. “Like I said, you’ll be begging me for more.”

“In your dreams, caveman,” she taunted him back, glaring up at him as they reached the bottom of the stairs. She headed for the kitchen. “Oh, and I suggest you remember that, because no one touches my shit and gets away with it.”

He headed for his office to get his things, but took a second to toss over his shoulder, “I’m about as scared of you as I am of a little kitty cat, babe. So you go ahead and try your worst. Hell, I’ll just stick your short ass up on top of a shelf and watch you try to get down. Endless entertainment for everyone while you spit and hiss. Now, as much as I know you love being in my presence, I have real work to get to, so how about you get back to finding your things and leave me the hell alone for the rest of the day.”

He heard her stop, and despite his better judgment, he stopped too when she called his name. Only when he turned to look at her, he froze in place when a knife flew past his face, embedding in the wall right next to his head. When he glared at her, furious and still hopelessly turned on, she was giving him a look full of dangerous promises. “I think you best remember, Code, that this little kitty cat has some very sharp claws, and she will not hesitate to use them,” she hissed at him. Then she turned and walked right into the kitchen.

Code reached around, pulled the knife out of the wall, and then walked into his office, setting it on the desk as he quickly grabbed his supplies and laptop. Damn stubborn woman, he thought to himself angrily. What the fuck was her problem? He had half a mind to go back, grab her, and spank her ass, but he also knew that was a stupid and irrational reaction. She wasn't his, and he didn't want her as his either. Whatever this shit was between them, it was nothing but trouble, and he was insane to even have attempted it.

He could only blame it on his anger and the fact that she took great pleasure in goading him at every opportunity. So as he made his way over to the bar, he vowed that it would never happen again. Besides, after that little display, he had a feeling it was for the best. She was making him feel things he didn't need to feel, and distracting him from his work.

So when he reached the bar, he put her firmly out of his mind and got to work, cursing the Prospect when he realized just how much damage he had done.

By the time he finished, it was hours later, but thankfully he had been able to get the register up and running quickly enough so people could pay. The issue was that the Prospect had also pulled another cable that disconnected the club's security system in the bar, and had made it so that he had to do a full reset to get everything back online.

“I hope you're making that Prospect do some shit labor for awhile,” he grumbled to Savage as they made their way back from the bar toward the clubhouse. “Which one was it, by the way?”

“Sam,” Savage told him, scowling. Sam was still relatively new around the club, and the kid wasn’t great at thinking things through. Code had his doubts that he would last much longer. He was starting to show how lazy he was, and none of them put up with laziness. But they would need a new Prospect to replace him, so he would probably have to stick around until another one arrived. “And yeah, I am,” Savage assured him with a smirk. “Got him in there cleaning those bathrooms from top to bottom, and then he needs to clean every square inch of the bar tonight after everyone leaves. He thought about whining, but must have thought better of it.”

Probably when he saw the look on Savage’s face, Code thought in amusement. Savage was not a man to piss off, and the Prospects knew it.

“Speaking of pains in the ass,” Savage suddenly said, pulling Code out of his thoughts. “How is yours? The two of you work out whatever it is that pisses you off about the other yet?”

It was Code’s turn to scowl. He had done well to stop thinking about Glitch while he was working, but now she was back in full force, and his dick instantly started to harden at the thought of what had transpired a few hours ago. “No,” he said darkly. “That woman runs her smart mouth and acts like she can’t do any wrong.”

“You know, if you two called a truce and focused on finding that Ghost team, she’d probably be out of here a hell of a lot faster,” Savage pointed out drily. “Instead of you two squabbling and doing things to piss each other off even more.” Then he chuckled. “Though, I would have paid to see her expression when she found her stuff on the top shelf of the pantry.”

Code smirked. Yeah, he left that little tidbit out when he told her where her stuff was. He’d have to check the cameras to watch, because it was probably worth it. “She probably got someone to give her a boost up to get it,” he reasoned, but then frowned at the thought of someone lifting her up and having her ass in their face when she did it. Jealousy prickled at him, but he quickly shut that down. What the hell did he have to be

jealous about? After all, there was nothing between them, and what happened earlier wasn't going to happen again.

“ I heard she threw a knife at your head,” Savage continued, sighing. “I probably should be pissed, but all I can think is that I'm grateful it wasn't a gun. I don't need to be patching bullet holes. I just hope the women don't get any ideas.”

They reached the clubhouse, and headed up the stairs and inside. “Afraid that Royal is going to start throwing knives at you?” Code laughed with a wicked grin. “I'd pay to see that.”

Savage glared at him. “If she tries, I'll know exactly where she got the suggestion from,” he warned, “and I won't hesitate to kick your ass.” Then he turned and headed toward the couches, where his woman was sitting and talking to Esme and Scarlett. He didn't see Steel or Harlow, so he had to assume the two of them were at home with Harley. Though, on further inspection of the room, he didn't see Karissa or Glitch, and his gut told him that was not a good thing. Especially when he realized the twins weren't around either.

Maybe they were down in the gym sparring again, he told himself as he made his way toward his office. When he reached it he found the door shut. When he opened it and walked in, anger roared right back to life as he realized what was in front of him.

The entire office was rearranged and redone. The new desk that Glitch had bought— he had been purposely ignoring and refusing to build—was now assembled and in place. It was U-shaped so it lined all three walls, was completely free of any clutter, and strategically organized. It set his teeth on edge. All of his monitors were in different positions and placed on the wall instead of on the arms he had had them on previously. Glitch's set up was exactly the same and positioned directly behind him, her new chair also assembled.

The place looked fancy as shit, and he hated it. He didn't want or need this, and once again, Glitch completely ignored that this wasn't her space, and that she wasn't going to be here forever. Anything he wanted apparently didn't matter, and he

wasn't going to let that stand. He wanted to rip it all apart on principle, but he forced himself to set his things down on his side of the desk, take a deep breath, and then head out of his office to find Glitch.

As predicted, she was in the gym with Karissa and the twins, though from the look of things when he entered, they were just about done. He smirked when Wren managed to toss Glitch over her shoulder in a smooth move, making her land on the mats with a thud. Glitch grinned as she got to her feet. "Very good," she praised Wren. "Let's see if you can do it again." She launched herself at Wren without any other warning. Wren was a bit surprised, but she still managed to do the smooth move again, sending Glitch flying.

He looked over at where Karissa and Win were sparring, doing much the same thing, and it seemed Win was just as adept as her sister. He knew this was important to the girls, so he choked back his temper and returned upstairs instead. He'd hold off on giving Glitch a piece of his mind. Instead, he headed back to his office and changed his area back to the way he liked it.

He barely got to work before Ink wandered in and gave a low whistle. "Damn, what happened in here? You finally decide to make it look like an actual office instead of a dungeon?"

"No," Code snapped. "I didn't do shit. Glitch decided to do this, and I'm fucking pissed."

Ink was silent for a moment before he started to laugh. "I should have figured," he finally said. "Still, this looks nice."

Code glared at him. "No one touches my space," he reminded him darkly. "And that includes short hackers with smart mouths and ideas that they can do whatever the hell they want."

Ink grinned. "Damn, she's really under your skin, isn't she? I don't think I've ever seen you this worked up over a woman. You sure it's all just anger and nothing else?" he asked.

“What the hell are you talking about?” Code demanded.

Ink shrugged. “We’ve all seen how many relationships around here have started out with people hating each other.”

“I don’t want a relationship with Glitch,” Code stated darkly. “Do I look insane?”

“Well, I mean, I wasn’t going to say it aloud, but since we’re talking about it out in the open,” Glitch said drily from behind Ink, alerting them both to her presence. “I have no interest in a relationship with you either, caveman. One, because you’re no prize yourself, and two, because I’m not interested in anything serious with anyone. But just so we’re clear, you’d be damn lucky if I ever decided to give you a shot.” Her eyes were heated as she glared at him.

He glared right back. “What the hell did you do to my office?” he demanded, completely ignoring her little speech.

“I made it functional,” she replied with a smug smile. “Compared to what you had in here before, it’s a thousand times better. You’re welcome.”

The audacity of this woman, he thought to himself darkly. It still astonished him sometimes. “Did it ever occur to you that I didn’t want it changed?” he questioned coldly. “That maybe I had things exactly how I wanted them, because this is *my* office? Mine. Not yours. You are not here permanently, and that means you shouldn’t be changing shit without my permission. But you don’t care, do you? You’re so focused on yourself that the only thing that matters is what you want.”

Her eyes flashed with her own anger. “You’re an ungrateful ass is what you are,” she snarled. “I made this space comfortable and ergonomic, and instead of saying thank you, you’re bitching and complaining.”

“You spent my money to do it!” he shouted at her, unable to keep a leash on his temper anymore. “It’s my office. If I wanted a new desk, I would have bought one. And I would have bought one that *I* wanted. Because this is my fucking space, not yours.”

“Did you even sit down at it?” she demanded. “Or did you just walk in here and decide you were pissed? Instead of giving it a shot, you just want a reason to be angry with me and dismiss it. And as for how it was paid for, you know I already transferred the money back to you, along with a little extra for your trouble, so you can take that and shove it up your ass. But while I’m here, I’m going to be comfortable, so you can put up with it for now. Then, when I leave, you can take it all apart and ship it back to me. Or hell, you can use it for firewood for all I care.” Then she turned on her heel and stalked out, leaving him and Ink alone.

Ink gave another low whistle. “Damn, brother, that is one pissed off woman. You sure this is the hill you want to die on?”

Code didn’t look at him; his gaze was still on the doorway. He had half a mind to follow her and give her another piece of his mind, but instead, he turned back to the desk and resumed getting his space set up the way he wanted. Deep down he knew he was being irrational. His area and he had his reasons for wanting it to stay the way he wanted. “Would you tolerate someone completely rearranging your tattoo station, without asking for your permission or even your consideration, and then calling you ungrateful when you want to set it back to rights? I don’t think so. She’s ridiculously entitled, and I refuse to let her just do whatever the hell she wants. Her team wants to do that, fine, but I’m not about to coddle and baby her.”

“I get what you’re saying about your space, but I don’t think they coddle or baby her, brother,” Ink said with a frown. “She’s a member of their team, and she’s also their main source of communication, which means they rely on her to get them the information they need to do the jobs that they do. Without her being their eyes in the sky as it were, do you think they would still be around? Brute strength and skill are important, but they only go so far. Just like you were the same with us when we were looking for those pricks after the twins.”



Code felt a flash of irritation at the reminder. He didn't want Ink to make sense, he wanted him to support him. "Fine," he grunted. "I'll give you that, but that doesn't mean I have to like her."

"No," Ink agreed. "But it helps if the two of you can at least work together civilly." Then he grinned wickedly. "And if you ever need a break, just send me a text. I have no issue spending time with that little firecracker," he added with a salacious wink.

Code just nodded and continued to work as Ink headed out. He ignored the jealousy that started to burn again, before he firmly pushed it away. It made no sense, especially when he was this pissed at her. So he put his full energy into finishing his task, before sitting down to boot everything up and make sure nothing had been compromised when Glitch was moving shit around. He didn't put it past her to mess with it just to fuck with him.

By the time he finished, he was ready for bed, and some of his anger had simmered. He hated to admit it, but the desk she picked out was a much better height for him, and there was less pain in his neck from using the screens on the wall, which he had eventually put back up when he realized that the old arms weren't going to work as well with the new desk. Still, that did nothing to soothe his ire at her for presuming that she could alter his space.

He pushed away from the desk and then headed out and up the stairs. He shook his head when a couple of the club whores sang out to him, suggesting he join them with seductive smiles. He was too damn tired to even think about partying tonight. When he finally reached his door, he pulled out his key to unlock it but stopped when he heard a sound coming from Glitch's room. He paused to listen. That's when he heard it. A soft moan. The kind that he had heard her make only a few hours earlier when he had his mouth on hers and his hand down her pants.

He was moving before he could stop himself.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

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### GLITCH

*A little earlier*

“I think you two need to just have it out once and for all,” Karissa mused as she sat on the vanity in Glitch’s bathroom. The moment she had seen Glitch’s angry face, she had followed her up to her room, intent on finding out what happened. Of course, that meant Esme and Scarlett also followed. Royal had already gone home, feeling tired and cranky, not that Glitch blamed her. She couldn’t imagine carrying around one baby inside of her, let alone two.

So now, she had all three women in the small bathroom with her, insisting on knowing what the hell was going on with her and Code, and why they had been yelling at each other this time.

“I think if that happened the place would be destroyed,” Esme snickered. “I mean, Code wouldn’t go down without a fight. And I doubt Savage would let them use weapons.”

“He’d probably be worried we’d end up turning on him,” Glitch said loudly as she finished washing her hair. She would have to touch up her color or pick a new one soon, she thought to herself absently. She was kind of thinking purple for the next round. It had been a while since she had done that color.

All three women laughed at that. “So, what is the deal with you two?” Esme asked her. “I mean, I get wanting to be better

than each other, but you two seem to seriously hate each other sometimes.”

“I’m not all that convinced it’s hate,” Scarlett added, sounding thoughtful. “I mean, if they really, truly hated each other, I don’t think they could work together at all. But they are. Which means it’s something else.”

“I don’t hate him,” Glitch sighed. “I just have a very strong dislike at the moment. I get that I’m in his space, but the man is utterly infuriating. And don’t even get me started on all the jokes and jabs he makes about my boobs and my height.”

“Yeah, that’s an asshole move,” Karissa agreed. “I mean, I say that shit about you, but it’s kind of our thing.”

Glitch stuck her head out from behind the shower curtain and grinned at her. “Insults are our love language,” she agreed. “And, you know, it gives me something to distract you with when we’re sparring. I mean, those big boobs of yours make excellent cushions when you’re on your back behind me and trying to get me in a reverse chokehold.”

Karissa grinned, but flipped her off. “Considering when you’re doing the same to me, all I feel is bone,” she teased, making Glitch laugh and flip her off.

“I think it’s one thing when we do it, but it’s in good natured fun and not intended to be mean,” Scarlett remarked. “Code’s comments are not meant in fun, and make you feel insecure.”

“Maybe we should let you kick his ass after all,” Esme said with a scowl. She put a hand on her barely-there bump. “And you can give him a few extra kicks since I can’t.”

Glitch smirked to herself as she finished washing up. It was kind of nice to have women around to talk to and commiserate with. It wasn’t something she was used to, and even when Karissa was part of the team, they were so focused on their jobs and training that they didn’t have time to discuss men. Well, other than that one night in Tijuana, and that had ended with Karissa climbing into her bed and finding Taz in there, naked. Now that was a fun night, but this was just as

entertaining. And if she was honest with herself, she could admit that it was something she had missed in her life. Being surrounded by a bunch of men all the time wasn't the same.

Despite that, her mind still turned to Code, and her blood heated at the thought of him. She was woman enough to admit that their battle earlier had been hot as hell, and as much as she hated to admit it, probably would have ended with them fucking right up against his bedroom door. She'd have probably regretted it, but still, maybe it would have made things between them a little less hostile. No matter, though, it was done and over with, and she was back to being pissed.

She found her computer in a box on the top shelf of the pantry, which had pissed her off, but she climbed up and grabbed it without any assistance. Then she got Karissa to help her set up the desk and chair in the office since Razor had refused to help. He didn't want Code bitching at him about touching his stuff, so she and Karissa did it easily enough. Of course, Code wasn't happy about any of it, and had been pissed about the whole thing, *again*, but she supposed she shouldn't have expected anything different. She doubted the man was happy about much of anything when it came to her.

“So what are you going to do about him being all pissed at you about the office upgrades?” Scarlett asked, pulling her out of her thoughts.

Glitch turned off the shower, and reached out to Karissa for her towel before answering. “I'm not going to do anything. Like most men, he'll realize I was right and be perfectly happy with it. And when I'm gone, he can keep the damn thing and enjoy how much nicer it is to have more space to work,” she added smugly, wrapping the towel around herself before stepping out. “I'll continue to work with him the same as I have been. Just be prepared that we're probably going to continue pissing each other off until I finally leave.” Then she grinned wickedly. “Or, I'll keep throwing my knife at his head like I did earlier to remind him not to fuck with me.”

The other women all laughed. “Oh, damn, I would have loved to see his expression when you did that,” Karissa giggled.

Glitch smirked, drying off and then quickly dressing in her underwear and a long shirt that she normally liked to wear to bed. “Oh, don’t worry, I’m sure you’ll see it again before long, with the way things are going,” she assured her.

Scarlett suddenly groaned, making them all turn to look at her in confusion. “I have to go,” she sighed. “Rogue is with the girls in the apartment, and they are apparently driving him insane. He’s demanding to know when I’m coming home and threatening to ground them for life.”

They all laughed. Considering how little she knew about Rogue, it was amusing to see that he was so thrown off by two teenage girls. “Is he counting down the days until they head off to college?” Esme asked, chuckling.

Scarlett gave a soft smile. “Honestly, I think despite how much he gripes and complains, he doesn’t want to think about them leaving. Where they’re concerned, he’d love to wrap them up in a protective bubble and never have to worry about them getting hurt. They’re already talking about researching schools to apply for, and I think it’s putting him in a bit of a panic. Not that he would ever admit that, of course.”

“They have to leave the nest eventually,” Esme said with a knowing smile. “But most usually come home, so I doubt he’s got much to worry about.”

Scarlett nodded, standing. “He’s still got a few more years of them being around full-time, so maybe he’ll change his tune,” she chuckled. “Alright, ladies, have a good night. Glitch, keep Code on his toes. Something tells me it’s been a while since anyone has.”

Glitch nodded and smiled back at her. “No worries on that,” she assured her. “Good luck with Rogue and the girls.” Scarlett rolled her eyes and then headed out.

“I probably should get back home too, before Fury comes looking for me,” Esme groaned. “He’s so damn overprotective now that I’m pregnant, it’s driving me crazy.”

“You love it,” Karissa scoffed, helping her to her feet. Esme just grinned, neither confirming or denying.

“Glitch, if you need a break from Code, come over to my place or the garage anytime,” Esme offered.

“Thanks,” Glitch said with a grin and a wave. After Esme left, Karissa crossed her arms over her chest and gave her a pointed look. “What?” Glitch asked, grabbing another towel to start drying her hair.

“Those girls don’t know you as well as I do, and I know there’s something you’re not telling me,” Karissa said bluntly. “So spill it.”

Glitch regarded her in the mirror, wondering if she should keep her mouth shut, but she had never kept secrets from Karissa or the rest of the team. It was why they got along so well. “Code and I had a moment in his room earlier,” she said calmly. “Only reason it didn’t go any further was because he got a call to go to the bar and fix whatever was going on over there.”

Karissa regarded her for a moment and then nodded. “I’ve always thought that the two of you were just one big sexual bomb waiting to go off,” she admitted. “What happens now?”

Glitch shrugged. “We go back to being rivals or enemies or whatever we are, and forget it happened.” She pulled the towel away from her hair and tossed it aside, reaching to find the hair products she always put in before drying it. “I won’t lie, it was hot, but anything like that is just asking for trouble. I doubt he’s even thought about it.”

Karissa didn’t look convinced. “That shit doesn’t just go away, babe,” she warned. “But you’re a big girl so I’m sure you have it all well in hand.” Then she gave her a wicked grin. “Big in age and maturity, anyway. Size, not so much.”

Glitch gave her a bland look. “Considering I’m wearing women’s sizes instead of kids, I think that qualifies,” she retorted.

Karissa chuckled, then turned serious again. “I just don’t want to see you get hurt, Glitch. Code is a good guy, and I’ve dealt with him plenty in the last few months, but I’m not blind. The two of you have some serious chemistry, and sooner or

later, it's going to explode. I just don't want you to be a casualty in that explosion instead of the one who sets it off."

Glitch nodded. "I appreciate it, but I don't plan on anything happening between Code and I. The man infuriates me on a good day, and I'm only here temporarily."

Karissa nodded. "Alright. Well, I'm going to head out and find my man, see if he and I can have a *moment in our room*," she said with a saucy wink.

Glitch laughed. "Get it, girl." Karissa gave her a two finger salute and then left, shutting the door behind her.

Turning back to the mirror, she got out her hair dryer, but her mind was in a dozen different places. The fact they still needed to find the Ghost team, who had once again disappeared off the grid, clearly hiding their tracks; that she was going to need to convince someone soon to go and grab her a few things, including some new clothes, since she couldn't leave the compound or order anything online in her name; and finally, Code and the fact that despite her anger at him, she had been in a constant state of arousal all day after their little grinding session earlier. It was a low thrum in her blood, and every time she thought of Code handling her roughly against the door, arousal would flare back into full fledged desire and make her wet and needy.

She huffed out an annoyed breath. Damn it, why couldn't she have found another one of the single brothers attractive so maybe she could handle this, and at least clear her mind enough for her to focus on the more important things. But her body refused to get that memo. Any time she thought about someone else, her desire would cool, but the moment she thought of Code, whoosh, right back to life. It was a pain in the ass, but she'd ignore it like she did everything else. She had trained for most of her adult life to have amazing self control, so she figured keeping that control now would be a piece of cake.

A lie she realized an hour later when she was laying in bed, tossing and turning because she couldn't sleep due to the hot as hell dreams that plagued her. Her core was wet, her

nipples hard and aching, and her clit throbbed after waking up from yet another dream of Code finishing what he started. She let out a soft growl of frustration and decided enough was enough. Sitting up, she leaned over the side of her bed and pulled out her bag. She had just the thing to take the edge off.

Flipping it open, she rooted around until she found her favorite vibrator. Oh yes, who needed a man when you had this? It wouldn't leave her wanting more when she was done, she thought to herself in amusement. She stripped off her clothes, spread her legs and turned on her toy, pressing it right over her clit, letting out a small gasp at the sensations it immediately sent through her.

Oh yes, that was exactly what she needed, she thought as she closed her eyes and moved the toy over her aching clit. Her heels dug into the mattress and she gave a very soft moan as she moved it down to her aching center. At this rate, with the pleasure that was rushing through her, she was going to be coming in no time, she thought to herself vaguely, pushing the vibrator slowly inside her, her entire body shuddering.

A sudden sound at the door made her eyes fly open, and even as she pulled her vibrator out of her body and her lips parted to blast whoever it was, she stopped when she saw it was Code, her entire body stiffening when his eyes landed on her hand still holding her vibrator. Shock was quickly followed by a rush of desire and a tiny trickle of apprehension as he quietly shut the door, then clicked the lock in place.

His green eyes gleamed with desire as he moved toward the bed. "You think a little piece of plastic is going to help get rid of that need you have?" he asked in a low voice as he reached the end of the bed, staring down at her.

"At least he doesn't talk," she taunted, holding his gaze as she slid the vibrator back to her clit, deliberately moving it slowly so he wouldn't miss what she was doing. She pressed it over her clit, letting out a sensual moan and arching her hips into the delicious sensation as it made her body quiver. "He knows exactly how to get me off without any direction," she gasped out, still holding his gaze, "and he won't leave me hanging afterward. Can't say the same for you, can I,



caveman? Or are you here to learn how to actually please a woman? Need some lessons?"

His eyes flashed and he moved quickly to kneel on the bed, stopping her wrist when she tried to move the vibrator down to her entrance. She gave a small cry, because he put more pressure on her wrist, pressing the vibrator tighter to her clit and sending shockwaves of pleasure through her system. He gave her a smug smile and asked, "I don't know, do I?" His eyes stayed firmly on hers as he kept the pressure on her, but forced her hand to move just a little faster, making her hiss and her body arch into it again, even as her orgasm rose faster and faster inside her. Though she wasn't entirely sure if that was because of the vibrator or because Code was watching her with such unadulterated desire. It was a heady sensation.

"Fuck," she hissed, unable to do anything other than arch and move her hips against the device as it pushed her closer and closer to the edge. Suddenly Code pulled her hand back, and in her shock, she let the device go, which he instantly scooped up from the bed. She stared at him in disbelief, her entire body reeling from the loss of sensation. But of course, that disbelief was quickly replaced by anger. "Asshole," she spit at him.

He gave a low chuckle, and the sound was like a live wire to her senses, a shiver working its way through her. "Oh no, you're not going to come that easy," he told her, moving so that he was sliding over top of her, his body pressing down onto hers.

"Where the hell do you get off thinking you can tell me how to get myself off?" she demanded furiously. "I didn't invite you to touch me or to join my little pleasure party. So get the hell out." She stilled when his hand came up to collar her throat. Oh shit, she thought to herself as more arousal flooded her system.

"I think you've done enough ordering around today," he told her silkily, adjusting himself off slightly to the side, still hovering over her, but not before he pressed the vibrator back to her clit once again, changing the setting with a quick press of his thumb to dull the vibration. "And now, I'm going to

make good on my earlier promise. I'm going to make you beg before I let you come."

"Never," she gritted out, but her body was already straining toward the sensation he had given her before by arching into the vibrator.

He pulled it away instantly, making her snarl and hiss at him. He gave her an arrogant smile and promised, "You will beg, Glitch. Because unlike you, I have an infinite amount of patience, and I have all night." Then he put the vibrator back to her clit and turned it up full blast, making her cry out, but he silenced her with his mouth on hers.

She moaned into his kiss as her orgasm rose once again, and her body shuddered with the overwhelming sensations coursing through her. It was carnal and glorious, and she never wanted it to end. Unconsciously, she found her hand moving to grip the one he had around her throat, her nails digging into his skin, her cries and moans pouring down his throat as he kissed her passionately. Then he pulled the vibrator away, and she groaned at the loss.

Code pulled his mouth from hers, and he rasped, "Give me what I want and I'll let you come. Beg me, Glitch, and I'll make you feel so good." He moved the vibrator down to her entrance and rimmed it around for added effect.

Her body tried to clamp down on it, tried to draw it in, but he held steady, refusing to let her gain even a little bit of the friction she needed. "Fuck you, caveman," she told him instead, yanking her hand away from the one at her throat.

"Fuck me, huh?" he crooned. Then he moved his leg so he pinned her right one, pressing on it so that it widened her for him, and gave him the room to press the vibrator against her entrance, moving it inside her just enough to have her arching into him and moaning low in her throat. He moved his mouth down to her ear as he started to slowly, oh so slowly, work the silicone toy inside of her, and murmured, "Is this what you want, baby? Fill you up with this toy, let it hit all those spots inside you until you finally get to come?"

“Code,” she groaned, her hand clutching at his back, which was the closest part she could reach, her nails scoring at him through his shirt. The toy stretched her, and the vibrations were driving her crazy.

“That’s right, say my name,” he rasped, pulling the vibrator back enough that it was almost out of her before thrusting it back inside her quickly, making her cry out. He put his mouth over hers when she whimpered, and he gave a low groan as he started to thrust the toy in and out of her, pushing her closer and closer and closer to that peak. He yanked his mouth from hers, staring down into her eyes. “That feels so good, doesn’t it, kitten? Fuck you’re so wet I can hear it,” he groaned, moving the vibrator even faster and harder inside her. Her inner walls trembled as her release neared, clamping down on the toy, but she didn’t move her eyes from him.

“Code,” she gasped, her body straining and shuddering with the strength of the orgasm building inside her. It was all consuming, but she still wasn’t quite there. Oh, so close. His face was flushed as he stared down at her, but then he pulled the vibrator out of her completely, making her cry out in shock. Shock, though, was quickly replaced by anger, and outrage. “Fucker,” she snarled.

He ignored her as he turned the vibrator off and tossed it aside. “Fuck it,” he snarled, and before she could figure out what the hell he was doing, he was moving, pressing her legs as wide apart as they could go, and his mouth was between her legs.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

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### CODE

**H**e had clearly lost his mind, but he didn't care. The only thing that mattered was he needed to taste her. He wanted to hear her beg him to let her come, not because of some toy, but because of him. And just like he thought, the taste of her was his undoing. She was heat and spice, and so wet that it drenched his face. She gave a sharp cry when he latched onto her clit, sucking and licking, as she thrust her pussy into his mouth.

Glitch was far from shy, and he preferred it. Her hands came down to his hair, and angled his head so he was right where she wanted. Not that he was going to let her run this show. He still had every intention of making her beg, and it would make her surrender so much sweeter.

He pulled his mouth away when he felt the tremors start in her thighs, lifting his eyes to look back at her desperate, angry face. Despite knowing she was probably plotting ways to kill him for denying her yet again, he gave her a slow, smug grin as he leaned forward and pressed his tongue lightly to her clit before pulling away when she pulled in a sharp breath. "Ready to beg yet, kitten?" he asked her when he pulled away, turning his head to nip at the skin of her inner thigh. He was rewarded with a gasp and her heels digging into his back.

"Never," she said again. "But I might suffocate you if you don't stop teasing me," she threatened, squeezing her thighs on

his head.

He chuckled. He should be annoyed that she wasn't giving in, but damn, he loved a challenge. And Glitch was turning into the biggest one of all. "Here I was thinking you loved edging, after your conversation the other day," he taunted. "Just say the words, and I'll stop. I'll make you feel so good." He moved his hand so he could thrust two fingers inside her, making her drag in a sharp breath, and her inner muscles clamp down hard.

Fuck, he was so hard that he wasn't sure how he was going to stand it for much longer. His cock was pressing hard against his zipper, and he wouldn't be surprised if it was permanently bruised. But he didn't give a damn, because the only thing he could focus on was the woman currently squeezing the hell out of his fingers, and the panting gasps that came from her lips.

"Taz is the one into edging, not me," she gritted out, trying to arch herself into him, to drive him in deeper, but he quickly put an arm over her hips to keep her still as he slowly started to thrust in and out of her, shallowly, never letting her get close enough to release. "Fuck, Code, you better let me come or—"

"Uh uh," he tsked, cutting her off by pulling his fingers out of her.

Apparently that was the last straw for her, because the next thing he knew, she was bucking his arm off and sliding back and away from him. He blinked, shocked at the quick move, but then he realized he shouldn't have been surprised. She scrambled back, but he was moving quickly, tackling her back down to the bed. She let out a snarl, and the next thing he knew, they were tumbling over the bed, both of them trying to pin the other.

It was utterly ridiculous, and hot as hell. Especially because the entire time, she was rubbing herself on him, trying to get the friction she needed to come, but being denied. She looked wild and crazed, and the lust pounding through him was almost suffocating. He wasn't going to last much longer,

and he knew it, but he was determined to have her beg him, one way or another.

The next time he got her pinned down, he tried to grab her wrists to pin them above her head, but she managed to sneak one down between them, and he froze the moment her hand cupped him through his jeans. “Mmm,” she purred in his ear. “Someone is enjoying this. Maybe I should be making *you* beg, huh, caveman? I wonder what you would do if I squeezed just a little harder?” She followed up by doing just that, and he let out a low half groan, half snarl at the pleasure and pain that coursed through him. “Ready to beg yet, caveman?”

He would have laughed at her trying to throw his words back in his face, but he was too focused on the fact that he was about to come in his pants any second if he didn’t make her release him. “Never,” he bit out, which made her chuckle.

“Then we’re at a draw, and I’m done fighting,” she told him huskily, her icy eyes holding his. “So you can either get naked and fuck me or you can get the hell out and I’ll finish what I started. Which is it going to be, Code?” She leaned forward, her mouth brushing his. “Are you going to fuck me so hard that I come screaming your name? Or are you going to walk away and leave knowing that a toy did the job you couldn’t?”

He barely considered it. “Fuck it,” he rasped, reaching down to push her hand away from him, then reaching back and yanking his shirt over his head, tossing it aside.

Glitch’s eyes flashed with triumph, and she went to work on his pants. Within seconds, he was naked, and they were rolling so that he had her pinned to the bed. The feel of her heated skin against his was enough to have him grinding himself into her center, making her moan and arch into him. “No more teasing,” she demanded. “Today’s been one long foreplay.”

On that he could agree, but he stopped when he realized something. “Damn it,” he groaned. “No condom.”

She huffed and shoved at his shoulder, making him roll off her, then she rolled to her side and reached over the edge of

the bed. He immediately reached out and palmed her ass, before trailing his hand down between her legs and dipping his fingers in, pressing two of them back inside her. Her breath hitched, her body clamping down on them, even as she rolled back and tossed him a condom. "Suit up and fuck me, caveman," she ordered.

He pulled his fingers away and rolled on the condom in record time. He had a moment's thought about her having a condom so close and at the ready, but then it flitted away as he watched her lay back, spread her legs as wide as they could go, and put her hand over her pussy, rubbing at her clit slowly as she watched him. He watched her for a moment, until he couldn't stand it anymore. He reached out, pulled her hand away, and moved between her legs, lining himself up to her entrance. Her eyes burned into his as he pressed himself inside, her body stretching to accommodate him.

She was hot and slick, her inner walls clamping down on him, and he had to drum up every ounce of self control to not go too hard or too fast and risk hurting her. He had never been more conscious of their size difference until now, and he hooked his arms under her knees, spreading her as wide as possible so he could get up on his knees and drive himself into her. She gasped, then moaned as he angled her to make sure that he hit all the right spots inside her.

He kept his pace steady her meeting him thrust for thrust, but it wasn't enough. He loved the feel of her, but he wasn't a slow and gentle guy most of the time, and he didn't want to hurt her. Until she reared up, catching him off guard, and rolled them until she was on top, taking him even deeper inside her. They both groaned, and she looked down at him, eyes fierce and determined. "Since apparently you don't know what 'fuck me' means, I guess I'm going to have to show you," she bit out as she started to ride him, hard and fast.

He narrowed his eyes before grabbing her hips, lifting her off him, and tossing her to the bed before rolling and pulling her so that she was on her knees facing away from him. He put his hand on her back, forcing her chest onto the bed, before he lined himself up and thrust inside her in one hard stroke. She

gave a small cry, and she thrust herself back onto him just as fiercely as he hammered himself into her. He put a hand on her hip, then curled forward, powering inside her, as his other hand moved around the front of her throat. He pulled her up to him, her back pressed to his front. “Now what was that about me not knowing how to fuck?” he purred in her ear, nipping at the lobe before moving down to her jaw and giving it another nip.

Glitch groaned, her arm coming back up and around his neck, her hand weaving its way into his hair, pulling the strands and making him growl at the sensation and move harder and faster inside her. “I don’t know,” she moaned. “I can barely feel anything with that tiny—” She let out a low cry as he tightened his grip on her throat, and powered as hard as he could inside her, determined to have her crying his name as she came.

She gasped and moaned with each thrust of his hips, her body shuddering as he rubbed over all the right spots inside her. He could feel his release building, and he knew he wouldn’t last much longer, but he needed her there. Needed it with everything in him. So he tightened his grip on her throat and moved his other hand from her hip to her clit, rubbing it quickly. She cried out, her hand gripping his wrist, and he felt her inner walls start to flutter around him. “That’s it, kitten,” he rasped. “Give it to me. I want to feel you coming around me.”

“Fuck,” she moaned, moving frantically to meet his thrusts, her grip on his hair tightening painfully. Not that he cared. He only cared that she was close, and he wanted to push her over.

He put his mouth on her neck and bit down, and it was the final thing that she needed to go over the edge. “Code,” she gasped as her body shuddered and quaked with her release, and he was sure that he had never seen anything more beautiful. It was enough to send him hurtling over the edge into his own release, groaning her name.

Both of them sank slowly down to the bed, and he tried to catch his breath as he lay there, his face still buried in Glitch’s



neck and his heart trying to pound out of his chest. What the hell had just happened? He wasn't sure he could describe it. Not yet anyway. But he still had to take care of the condom, so he forced himself to lift himself away from her, pulling out of her and then heading into the bathroom to dispose of it.

When he came back out, she was laying on her back and she turned her head to look at him. Her expression was relaxed, but her eyes were shrewd. "This changes nothing," she told him firmly.

"On that we can agree," he said as he moved to pull on his pants, leaving them unbuttoned and grabbing his shirt. "And stop touching my equipment," he added for good measure.

She glared at him. "You didn't seem to mind me touching your equipment a few minutes ago. But since I doubt that's what you mean, then the same goes for you. If you touch mine again, I'll be in your bed, and it won't be a pleasurable time."

"Whatever you say, kitten," he smirked. "If you find yourself realizing that you can't sleep without me, you know where to find me." Then he unlocked the door and left, heading back to his room.

When he got inside, he shut the door and leaned his head back against it, closing his eyes and biting back a groan. What the hell had he just done? Did he seriously just have sex with the one person he couldn't stand, the one person he told himself he wouldn't touch? And yet, he felt far more relaxed than he had in a while. Still, he refused to believe that was because of Glitch, and more because it had been a while since he'd gotten laid. As nice as it was to have the club whores around, it was starting to get boring fucking them.

He tossed his shirt and boxers to the floor, shucked his jeans, and climbed into bed. As he pulled his blankets up over him, he could still smell Glitch, and still taste her. His cock jerked in reaction, clearly not getting the message they were done with her. He scrubbed his hands over his face in frustration, then sighed and stared at the ceiling.

He was an idiot, he told himself. Why the hell had he even gone over there? He knew better. And if he was honest with

himself, he knew what was going to happen. The last thing he needed was for her to be even more of a distraction. Because as much as he wanted to tell himself he could forget all about it, that was the fucking hottest sexual experience of his life, and a man didn't forget shit like that. Ever. Especially not when he was going to have to be around her for most of his days, and in close quarters no less.

This was why he stayed away from women for the most part. They fucked with his head. He made this mistake once before, and he wasn't about to make it again. The last time almost cost him everything, and while he knew Glitch wasn't the same, it was still a sharp reminder that he couldn't allow himself to be distracted. Sex was for scratching an itch - no feeling, emotions, or entanglements allowed.

He rolled to his side, shut his eyes, and tried to put Glitch out of his mind so he could get some sleep.

Of course, sleep was a long time coming, and even when it did, he was plagued with dreams of soft moans and cries, until finally he woke up, frustrated, hard, and aching, and headed for the shower. Fuck this, if he couldn't sleep, he would get in some work. He took a brisk, ice cold shower, cooling some of the heat in his body but nowhere near as much as he wanted. He had half a mind to jerk off, but he already knew that wouldn't help him. No, he needed to work, and put his mind on more important things. Like finding the Ghost team and getting Glitch out of his hair.

When he dressed and left his room, he glanced at her bedroom door, still shut tight, and scowled before turning away. He knew where every creaky board and step was, and easily avoided them as he made his way downstairs. He stopped short when he entered his office and saw that Glitch was not in fact in her bed, sleeping, but sitting in front of her computer, headset on, and already working. When she sensed him, she glanced over at him, arched a brow in question, and then went right back to what she was doing.

So much for getting some time alone to work, he thought to himself in annoyance. Still, he wasn't about to let her run

him out of his own office, so he just walked to his side and sat down, logging in.

They worked in silence for a good hour, the only sounds in the room the echo of the keys on their keyboards, or the occasional mouse click. Code focused on trying to use some of his old tricks and skills at finding back doors into information banks to try and find anyone on the Ghost team, or anyone that might have been in contact with them. It was a slow, tedious process, like looking for a needle in a haystack. These guys were damn good at what they did, and it seemed Slip had gotten very good at hiding his tracks.

Suddenly, Glitch let out a frustrated groan, and the sound of her flinging off her headset had him turning to look at her in surprise. She was glaring at the screen in front of her, but because of the angle, and her head in the way, he couldn't make out what had her so upset. "Problem?" he asked her.

"This whole fucking thing is a waste of time," she complained, running a hand through her hair. Hair that was still mussed and tousled, he noted, his cock twitching at the reminder of having his hands in it not too long ago. No, he scolded himself. He wasn't about to let himself get distracted. "Searching for them like this is stupid and tedious. We need to come up with a better and faster way. Facial recognition and searches through law enforcement databases aren't turning up anything, and it just means we're chasing our tails instead of making any kind of progress."

He had to agree with her. "So what do you propose we do?"

She spun around and glared at him. "If I knew that, do you think I would have said anything?" she snapped.

He glared at her. "Since it was you who said it, then it should be you who has a solution," he snapped back.

"Do you even hear yourself? If I had a solution, I would already be using it. Is your brain still in your dick? Because if so, you better figure a way to get it out of there, and fast, if you want to be helpful."

“My brain is just fine, thank you,” he snarled at her. “Now, are you going to stop trying to bait me, or is that the whole reason for this little outburst? You didn’t get enough earlier so you’re trying to goad me into fucking you again?”

Her eyes heated at his words. “I’m not baiting you,” she spat at him. “And that was a one time thing. It’s not going to happen again. Call it a lapse in judgment, whatever, but you and I need to keep things strictly professional. Sex blurs the lines, and we can’t afford that to happen right now. So if you’re hoping for a repeat, you’ll need to go and find one of the club girls to help you out, because it’s not happening.”

“Glad we finally agree on something,” he returned heatedly. They glared at each other for another long moment, and Code felt desire burning in his belly, despite his words and reminding himself it wasn’t going to happen. Instead, he arched a brow and asked, “So what are we going to do to find these guys? Because the sooner we find them, the sooner you’ll be gone and out of my space.”

She narrowed her eyes at him, but didn’t comment on the abrupt change of subject. Instead, she turned back to her computer and stared at it for a moment. Finally she sighed and said, “Short of sending a message out into the web and hoping he takes the bait, I’m not sure. He’s clearly learned to better cover his tracks since the last time I dealt with him.”

“What about the rest of his team?” he asked, trying to puzzle out any idea that might work.

“I’ve looked into all of them,” she replied with a shake of her head. “He’s covered their tracks too. And before you ask, I’ve also looked into their old handler and any contacts that I could find, but nothing. They cut off their old life completely.”

A thought suddenly occurred to him, and he straightened. “What if we’re looking in the wrong area?” he suggested slowly, making her look at him in confusion. “We’re hunting them like they’re still an active black-ops team and looking at their connections to that. But they’re not, and they’re not acting like one now. Sure, they’re a team, but they’re

technically on the run, so it's possible they've worked with other criminal organizations.”

“Which would mean there would be traces of their crimes with them,” Glitch finished, eyes bright as he could see her mind working. She turned back to her computer. “Damn it, why didn't I think of that before?” she muttered. She quickly put up her hand and said, “Don't even think about saying because I've been obsessed with you or your dick. It's juvenile and not true, so we'll dispense with it for now.”

It irritated him that she figured he was going to say that, but he took her advice and instead said, “I'll start scouting for national crimes or events that seem to fit if you want to look international. Your system is probably better geared toward that anyway.”

“Alright,” she agreed. She stopped again, glancing at him over her shoulder. Her lips were quirked into a slight smirk as she added, “Looks like your brain finally made it back home from your dick, caveman. Let's see if we can keep it there, shall we?” Then she turned away and got back to work.

He glared at her head for a moment before turning back to his own screen. He really was going to have to find a way to keep her smart mouth from affecting him, because now he was hard as a rock and he wanted nothing more than to grab her and prove her wrong. The only thing that kept him in his seat was that he knew it was a bad idea.

So instead, he focused on his task and tried to forget that the woman behind him was even there.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

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### GLITCH

**H**er fingers flew over the keys as she ran search after search trying to find even the tiniest sliver that could lead her to the Ghost team. But the data that came back was massive. It seemed that international crime rates were much higher than in the States. Still, she was able to set up a filtered search to weed out the ones that she knew absolutely didn't work.

When she finally sat back, giving herself a small break, she became aware that Code was still working away behind her, and every so often mumbling something under his breath. It was still odd to her, working in a space with someone else, but not necessarily terrible. Other than the fact that he was constantly getting on her bad side.

*Except earlier when he was fucking you into oblivion, her mind taunted.*

She bit back a sigh at the reminder. That had definitely been a mistake. She should have kicked his ass out of her room and just gotten off on her own. But if she was honest with herself, she knew it wouldn't have been the same, and she could admit that sex with Code was some of the best she'd ever had. Passionate and all consuming. The moment he had put his mouth on her, any other thought she had flew out the window.

Which was exactly why she couldn't let it happen again. She glanced over at him, allowing herself to look at him carefully. Why was she attracted so much, she wondered. She had no patience for men who didn't take her seriously, or were assholes to her or her team. But that didn't seem to be the case with Code. Though, to be fair, most of the reason they didn't get along was because she had insulted him and his system the first time they met, and it had never really gotten any better. Nor had she tried to make it better. She got great satisfaction out of knowing that she had gotten under his skin and had continued to even after she left with all her pranks.

Still, there were moments in the past week that she had seen another side of him. The ones where he had apologized for making remarks about her body, and she had to admit that other than the short joke and putting her things up on the top shelf, he had mostly been trying to live up to that. That didn't mean she was going to forgive him so easily for everything else, but she wasn't a complete bitch.

It was also her fault for him having so much animosity toward her because of her constant meddling with his system. No one, man or woman, liked when someone was constantly throwing their faults or weaknesses in their face. Damn it, she hated feeling like a bitch, and that was kind of what she had been up until now. She and Code were going to have to deal with each other even past all this; their clubs were allies now, so that meant there was a good chance she was going to be in his space, or him in hers, again at some point.

She scowled to herself. Why the hell was she being all thoughtful and shit right now? Especially when she should be focusing on finding Slip and his merry band of douchebags. Was she normally this sappy and shit after sex? She thought about that and realized nope, she normally kicked the guy out of her bed, or if she was at their place, she got out of there pretty damn quick. No fuss, no muss. She just needed to do the same thing here. Too much thinking never led to anything good.

Instead, she focused back on Code and asked, "Anything?"

Code paused and looked over his shoulder, expression frustrated. “Nothing. The States are full of crimes that could fit them, and sorting through them is going to take a lot of damn time.”

She nodded. “I’ve run my criteria, filtering out anything that I know can’t be them. Like eliminating the years when Forrest and Hazard were in prison.”

He stared at her for a moment. “Damn it, why didn’t I think of that?” he grouched, turning back and quickly typing away.

She knew she could make a pithy retort, but instead she said, “Probably because it’s the middle of the damn night and we’re both tired.”

He grunted. “Yeah, probably.” After another few minutes, he turned back to her and said, “Alright, I’m refining my search parameters. I also set up searches for any crimes that happened around the prisons they were released from in the month before and after. Could be they decided to stick around there for a bit to figure out their next moves.”

“Possible, but knowing Forrest, he would have wanted to get out of there as soon as possible. He’s not the most patient guy. Or, at least he wasn’t,” she corrected.

Code regarded her for a moment before he asked, “So what’s the story there? You gave a Cliffs Notes version in Church, but there’s got to be more to it. He’s pissed at you, but it’s been a very long time, and you’d think after all these years he’d eventually give up and move on. If his team is involved in organized crime, they’re probably making way more money now than they did as mercenaries.”

“It was so long ago now, I couldn’t even tell you where it went wrong,” she sighed. “Forrest came from a life where he got everything he wanted. If he did something wrong, his parents paid people off or got it buried. The only reason the college thing happened was because it made the news before they could make it go away. Otherwise they would have just bribed the officials, the press, and the college itself. Once it hit



the press, well, it was out of their hands and they cut him off for daring to embarrass them like that.”

“And he blamed you because he was stupid and did something he shouldn’t have,” Code summarized.

She shrugged. “I guess. Mostly, I think he was pissed that I refused to help him. Even then, I was good. I had figured out how to hack into some pretty high value targets with big security, but it wasn’t until I was in college and got in touch with a group of hackers and coders that my skills really took off. So even if I could have helped him, more than likely I would have gotten caught too, and it would have been both our asses.” She gave a short, dry laugh. “Hell, he even tried to hack into my high school and mess up my transcript so they’d revoke my admission and I would be as miserable as he was. Unlucky for him, I had an inkling that he was going to try something. I set up an alert for if he tried to mess with anything that was in my name. At the time I was insulted, and a bit confused. If he was going to do anything, I thought it would be to go after my money.”

“What, you had a trust fund?”

“I thought you looked into me,” she said with an arched brow.

“I did, but it was mostly so I could get your name, and I only got the bare bones of information. I know you’re twenty-nine, soon to be thirty in a couple of months, no siblings, and just finishing your first year at MIT. I also know that your full name is Eliza Marie Irvine, but you hate it and have gone by Glitch since college. Past that, I didn’t look into you too much.”

“That’s still a lot for a cursory look,” she said, slightly accusing.

“You really going to sit there and give me a hard time over that, when we both know that the minute you first met me and the others, you did a deep dive into all of us?” he asked her with a pointed look.

She rolled her eyes. “Fine, yes, I did. But that was a totally different situation. I needed to make sure you weren’t going to screw us over, especially since you had a member of our team under your roof and in a relationship with one of your men. If the situation was reversed, you’d have done the same thing.” He stared at her but didn’t reply. “Fine, whatever. Do you want to hear the rest of the story or not?”

“You’re the one going off on tangents,” he reminded her.

She glared at him. “Whatever. The truth is, I came from a very wealthy family as well, which meant I had multiple trust funds set up for me by my grandparents on both sides, and my parents. If he wanted to hit me where it hurt, Forrest should have tried to clean me out so I couldn’t afford to go to school, but he went after my high school transcript instead. All the damage he did, I fixed as soon as he was out of the system and made it right again. Thankfully back then the school hadn’t figured out how easy it was to hack in. No one was the wiser. Except Forrest, who was pissed and tried again, only to have the same result. It was like he couldn’t stop himself from trying to best me. Like it was some kind of competition.”

“Probably didn’t like to be beaten by a girl.” He held up his hand when she opened her mouth to blast him. “I’m not saying it’s right, but you know that a teenage boy’s ego is a fragile thing. Especially a boy that’s gotten used to having whatever he wanted and was terribly spoiled.”

She shut her mouth, but gave him a dark look. “Says the one who’s pissed that I best him on the regular. Maybe you should keep that in mind.”

He gave her a cool look. “I don’t care that you’re a woman and *maybe* a *bit* more skilled than I am. I’m not arguing with you about that now. We can go a round about it later, but I want to hear more about Forrest. Maybe something from your past experiences with him will help us find him.”

“Fine,” she snapped, though she wasn’t about to let that ‘maybe a bit’ comment slide. “What else do you want to know?”

“You said that the two of you weren’t a thing, but are you sure that he might not have misconstrued your relationship in some way?”

“What, you think he’s some kind of scorned lover bent on revenge?” she scoffed. “No. I never even kissed him, even though he did try in the beginning. I was a challenge. One of the few girls that weren’t sucked in by his charms and taking off my pants or on my knees sucking his dick not long after meeting him.”

“So you didn’t flirt or tease him?” She glared at him. He held up his hands, palm up placatingly. “Not saying you did it on purpose, but teenage girls don’t think things through and a lot of them do that shit to lead a guy on.”

“Well, I wasn’t one of them,” she told him firmly. “One of the things I always prided myself on in school was that I wasn’t one of the mean girls. Most of the other kids were only nice to me because I came from one of the richest families around, and they hoped that staying in my good graces would mean being invited on trips, or get them expensive things that their parents wouldn’t or couldn’t afford. Unlucky for them, I had learned to spot that shit a mile away after a few hard lessons in elementary and middle school.”

“How rich are we talking?” Code asked curiously.

She rolled her eyes. “Out of all that, that’s the only thing you’re curious about?” she asked incredulously.

He gave her a droll look. “Humor me.”

She huffed. “When my parents died, along with my already established trust funds, I inherited about five hundred million dollars.”

He stared at her, mouth dropping open. “I’m sorry, care to repeat that?” he gaped.

She scowled at him. “You heard me just fine. And before you ask, Forrest came from a family that was worth about half of that, so he was just as well off, but I was technically richer than him. So money isn’t that high on my list of possible motives.”

“Jesus Christ,” Code muttered.

“Look, yes I’m rich. Yes I have more money than God and more than I could ever spend in a lifetime. But it doesn’t define me or who I am. I like working, and I like living my life free of all those hypocritical societal standards. I’ve set up charities and organizations to benefit from the money, and I have some people who manage them and my money the best way possible. None of that means I’m any different now than I was a minute ago.”

He lost his shocked expression and smirked at her. “Well I guess I can cross ‘fucking a rich heiress’ off my bucket list now,” he mocked.

She rolled her eyes and flipped him off. “And I’m finally able to cross off ‘fucking an asshole’,” she tossed him back. “Now, can we get back to this please?”

“Kitten, I’ll never let you near my ass,” he told her. “But yes, we can. So you’re stinking rich, and you choose to still work despite the fact that you don’t need to. And you don’t think he was after your money then. But what about now?”

“If he was going to try that he would have by now,” she said confidently. “Forrest was never patient, and I doubt he’s blown through all the money in his trust. Especially not if he was in prison. And if he’s working for the criminal underworld, it stands to reason he has more money coming in, even if he did go through it.”

Code sobered and nodded. “That makes sense. So we’ll scratch off money as a motive. What about when the two of you worked together in Tijuana?”

“That was a goddamn mess,” she groaned, rubbing her eyes as she recalled it. “We got there first, and when they finally arrived, and I saw him, it was clear from the way he glared and told everyone I was the reason he was disowned, that he had never forgiven me. Not that I gave a shit. I made the statement that I hoped he had learned from his mistakes, because I didn’t work with amateurs.”

Code snickered. “Bet that pissed him off.”

She smiled coyly. “It did indeed. He tried to lunge at me, but Jag knocked him down flat on his ass. Was a damn good sight. Still, I tried to mend some fences with him when we all met later to discuss our strategies. Waited until it was done and everyone was going back to their rooms at the inn we were staying at before we headed into the jungle, and then I went to talk to him. It didn’t go well. He made it clear he never forgave me, and he never would. I had effectively ruined his life. I made it worse when I told him that he needed to grow up. He wasn’t a spoiled little rich boy anymore, and whether he liked it or not, we were going to have to work together on the job we were on, so it was time to put on his big boy pants and go over it.”

“Clearly you’ve always been a ball buster,” Code drawled.

“I have, so best be remembering that, caveman,” she said pointedly. “Anyway, that was the beginning of the end for him.”

“You figured he was going to do something stupid and checked in on him,” he mused.

“Not until a couple of days later, after all the complaints and incidents between their team and ours. But after our first run-in I set up safeguards, so that I would know if he decided to be sneaky and look at shit he wasn’t supposed to. And I’m glad I did, because that was how I found out what was really going on with him and them.”

“So, what, you built a trigger that alerted you if anyone tried, or did you make it specific to him?”

She shook her head. “I had some that were for anyone, but anything related to the mission I had it set up to be triggered by him or his team.”

“And how did you know for sure it was him and not someone else?” Code asked, slowly straightening.

Glitch stared at him as the pieces clicked into place. “Shit,” she hissed, spinning around and quickly logging back into her system, her fingers flying over the keys. “Shit, shit,

shit,” she repeated. “How the hell did this not occur to me before?”

She felt Code sliding up behind her, watching over her shoulder, and she had a brief moment where her mind tried to focus in on him, but she wrenched it back and ignored him. She just wished he didn’t smell so damn good. Or that he she didn’t know what all the muscles pressing against her shoulder as he leaned forward felt like under her hands. No, no, she scolded herself. She needed to focus.

“Care to share?” Code asked her. “Or is this one of those exercises where I’m supposed to read your mind?”

“The reason I knew it was him hacking my system was because he uses a particular line of code that not many hackers use anymore. It’s outdated, but it’s also easily hidden within newer strings so it’s not easily detectable. When I set up my filters, I used that particular string of code as a criteria so I would know for sure it was him,” she explained briskly. “And since he’s not the kind of guy to learn from his mistakes and change his habits, he’s probably still using it. So all I need to do is put out a search for that line of code, and I’ll get an alert any time he uses it.”

“It could help us track where he and his team are,” Code agreed. “Good catch,” he added, putting a hand on the back of her neck and giving it a quick, hard squeeze.

Cue her desire roaring back to life, she thought as she worked to keep the moan from escaping her mouth. Her nipples hardened in response, and she had to force herself to keep her fingers moving, though they were much slower than before. Damn it, the man was seriously messing with her concentration. “Thanks,” she muttered. He let go and moved back to his side of the room, giving her a brief reprieve to suck in a steady breath.

When she finally finished setting up the alert, and a few other safeguards just in case he did suddenly get wise that she had ways to find him, she sat back and stretched her arms over her head. Feeling accomplished, she stood. “I’m done for the night, and I’m going to bed. Try to keep the screaming down

to a minimum when one of the club girls tries to find that tiny dick of yours.”

He gave her a placid look. “I’d think by now you’d know if anyone was screaming, it wouldn’t be because they couldn’t find my dick, kitten. Or have you already forgotten how hard you came all over it? How your pussy was clamping down so tight around it you practically cut off all circulation?” he drawled. Slowly he stood and advanced on her. “Or, maybe, you’re just trying to bait me into giving you another chance to feel me inside you again?”

She held her ground, but her body heated at his words and the images they brought to mind. Her core went damp with arousal, and her heart pounded a little harder in her chest. “I think you’re the one who’s wishing, caveman,” she returned, tilting her head back to look up at him when he stood in front of her, his body brushing hers.

He gave a low chuckle, his hand coming up and cupping the side of her neck, brushing his thumb lightly over the pulse point in her throat. She had to fight hard not to react, but a small shiver still made its way down her spine, making him give her a slow, smug smile. It hit her square in the gut, and another flood of arousal washed over her. Damn it, at this rate, she was going to have to get herself off with the vibrator or she’d do something stupid like jump him again. A very stupid mistake that she couldn’t allow to happen.

“You need another lesson in begging, kitten, you know where to find me,” he said in a low, taunting voice.

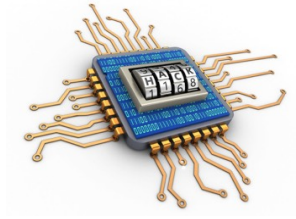
“I never beg, caveman,” she returned in the same tone. “Best remember that.” Then she forced herself to pull away, turn around, and walk out of the room. But even as she made her way up the stairs, she had the grim realization that staying away from Code was not going to be easy.

The man was under her skin, and she was going to have to find a way to dig him out - and fast - before she did something stupid like sleep with him again.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

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### SLIP

“**W**here the fuck are they?” Hazard screamed.

Slip gave him a cool glare. “I told you, they’ve gone off the grid. I haven’t been able to track them down yet. What the hell did you think was going to happen when you tugged off your damn masks and told them we were coming after them?” he spat, equally furious. Both at Hazard for questioning him, but also because they had eluded him. Not one search he had done was producing results. It was maddening.

“Cowards,” Maggot vented, cracking his knuckles. “I say we go back there and burn the fucking place to the ground. That’ll bring them out.”

“I’m fine with that,” Crisp said, with an edge of excitement and anticipation in his voice.

“Idiots,” Spook huffed. “We don’t have time for all this fighting shit. I say it’s about time to stop hiding out and just go track them down ourselves.”

“We’d get picked up on cameras and have to worry about the damn cops coming after us,” Slip reminded him impatiently.

“Then we figure out a way to make sure they don’t,” Spook replied.



“What, you want us to dress up in some kind of disguise or somethin’?” Crisp asked, frowning in confusion.

“I ain’t dressing up like an idiot,” Maggot added fiercely.

Spook glared at them both. “No, you morons. I’m talking we get Slip set up so we don’t even show up on the cameras. We steal a fucking van and get him hooked up in there so we can get on the move. I’m sick and fucking tired of doing nothing.”

“Me too,” Hazard agreed. He looked at Slip. “You can make that happen?” It was phrased a question, but Slip knew it was more of a statement. Hazard fully expected that he would be able to get it done.

Slip bit back a nasty retort. None of his teammates understood what all of that would involve, but it looked like he didn’t have much of a choice. Instead, he said, “Fine. Someone find me a van that won’t catch too much attention.”

“Done,” Hazard said, pulling out his phone. “We’re going to find these assholes one way or another. I don’t care if we have to comb through the entire country. They’re as good as dead.” Then he turned and walked away, phone going to his ear.

“I want to get my hands on that bitch, Xena,” Maggot proclaimed in anticipation. “She and I have some unfinished business.”

“Then I get the other bitch,” Crisp announced.

“No,” Slip said darkly. Both men looked at him in surprise. “Eliza is mine. It’s been a long time coming, and no one is touching her until after I’m done with her. Fair warning, there probably won’t be much left.”

“Fine,” Crisp pouted. “Then I want a piece of Xena. You’re not leaving me out of the fun.”

Maggot and Crisp walked away, arguing over who would get their turn first, but Spook remained behind. Slip arched a brow at him in question. Spook smirked at him. “Never seen you so pissed off over a woman, man. You sure you ain’t letting her get to you?”

Slip glared at him. “You questioning me, Spook?” he asked acidly.

Spook held up his hands in a peacemaking gesture. “Nah, man, just curious is all. You know I want to find them just as much as you. Just remember that before we can let you have your turn at her, we need to take down the rest of them.” Then he gave him a quick clap on the shoulder and walked away.

Slip stared after him for a moment before turning back to his monitor and scowling at it. He looked at the image of Eliza that he had put on the corner of the screen. It was her military personnel photo, where she stared straight into the camera, unsmiling, with her dark hair pulled back into a regulation bun, not a single strand out of place. Her blue eyes seemed to glare at him, and that familiar anger simmered a little higher in his stomach.

*I'm coming for you, Eliza. I'll find you, and you'll never be able to hide away from me again,* he thought to himself with a cruel smile pulling at his lips. *Soon. Very soon.*

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

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### CODE

He couldn't stop the smug smile that pulled his lips as he watched the Church room shut behind Tom as he stepped out. Just past him was a furious Glitch, who glared at him with promises of retribution in her eyes. Oh yeah, she was *not* happy that she wasn't being included in Church. He was perfectly fine with it. It was about damn time they had a meeting without any of the women present. It also meant that Karissa wasn't in the room, though she had been standing beside Glitch, also pissed off at being excluded.

He was going to enjoy rubbing that in Glitch's face once they were done.

After their late night work, his animosity toward her had cooled slightly, but that didn't mean he was any happier with her. It just proved they could work together when push came to shove, but otherwise, he was happy to be far away from her.

*Yeah right, his mind mocked. That's why you woke up hard as a fucking rock and reaching for her.*

He pushed that thought away immediately. That had been nothing, and he could have been reaching for anyone, not necessarily a smart-mouthed pink-haired former mercenary, he reminded himself.

He turned his attention back to Savage, who leaned forward and called the meeting to order. "Alright, let's get

down to business,” he said briskly. “I don’t want to be away from Royal too long. She’s having some false contractions, but the doctor said that could change quickly enough.”

“Business is up at the bar this month,” Ice announced. As their Treasurer, he was responsible for their books, though Rogue often handled his own from the garage. “We might even want to look at expanding or buying out another bar in town. The one on the outskirts is doing well too, so we wouldn’t be spreading ourselves too thin.”

“Not like we won’t have people wanting to drink,” Jax chuckled. “But if we’re going to do that, I say we should expand and look at opening a strip club. The only other one in town is run by that sleaze, Jerry, and from what I’ve heard, it’s going down the tubes.”

“Instead of opening a new one, we could just take his over,” Ice said with a thoughtful expression. “Saves us from having to front out the cost of renovating and establishing a whole new building and business. That place would need a major overhaul, but we’d already have the building, and most of the bones of the place could stay the same.”

“How much are we thinking?” Savage asked. Ice thought it over for a moment and then named a figure. Code arched a brow at the number, but he could imagine that a well run strip club in this town would bring in a ton of money, so they would probably make it back quick enough. “Anyone have any concerns or objections?” he asked, looking around the table.

“Does that mean we’re in charge of picking the girls who strip?” Jax asked with a gleeful smile. The fucker was more excited than a kid at Christmas.

Savage rolled his eyes. “Yes, you can be part of it, but remember that we need them to work for us, not run the other way screaming when you and your cock walk into the room.”

Jax scoffed. “Don’t worry, Prez. They’ll be screaming, but it won’t be from panic,” he assured him with a laugh.

Fury looked at Doc. “You better keep some damn good antibiotics on hand for the amount of STDs he’s going to pick

up.”

Doc snickered. “Oh, don’t worry, I’ll be on the phone with my supplier as soon as we’re finished.”

“No glove no love,” Jax sing-songed. Everyone laughed and scoffed at him.

“Alright, alright, let’s put it to a vote,” Savage interrupted loudly. “Everyone in favor of approaching that asshole Jerry to buy his place and set up our own strip club, say aye.” The room was unanimous and he nodded. “Alright, Ice, get it done. Fury, maybe you can go with him and press the point, since you have some history with him and Esme.”

“My pleasure,” Fury said with an anticipatory glint in his eyes.

“Good. Now, where are we at on our runs?” Savage asked.

“Everything’s going out on schedule,” Rogue answered. “And we just got approached by a dealer a couple towns over, wanting us to help transport his shipment to its final destination.”

“Guns or drugs?” Fury asked.

“Guns,” Rogue answered.

Savage looked at Code. “Is it possible to do that in the next few weeks without too much trouble?”

Code pulled up his system and took a look at the route Rogue gave him. After checking a few things, he nodded and said, “Yeah, should definitely be possible. How many people do we need on this one?”

“Probably four or five,” Rogue answered. “It’s a bigger shipment and the pay is going to be damn good.” Rogue gave them some more details on how the dealer wanted the run to go, and when he finished he added, “We can pay off the cops to make sure they don’t hassle us.”

Code nodded. “I’ll start plotting that out and getting everything clear on my end. There don’t seem to be too many cameras along the way but any that I find, I’ll make sure they don’t see anything they shouldn’t.”

“Good,” Savage said with a nod. “Rogue, reach out to your contact and let them know we’re good to go.” Then he turned back to Code. “Let us know when you have everything ready so we can send it to those going and make sure we have things in hand.”

“Got it,” Code said with a nod.

“Alright, any other business?” Savage asked.

“How are things coming along with Glitch and finding the Ghost team?” Steel asked curiously.

“Brother,” Razor groaned. “My woman is already pissed off because she’s out there, not being allowed in to talk about it.”

“Women shouldn’t be in fucking Church anyway,” Ink blustered. “At the rate we’re going, pretty soon we’ll be in here braiding each other’s hair and shit.”

“Glitch is a patched member of their MC,” Code reminded them. “So she’ll be in here if the team is here or if we need information. No way around that. Trust me, I’ve tried to think of one,” he added with a sigh.

“Right now, they’re not here, and if they ask what was discussed, they get the standard line of Club business,” Savage announced darkly. “I agree the women have gotten far too involved around here, but on this kind of thing, we’ve kept them out of it, just as we should. As for Glitch, it’s a dilemma on how to handle her, but she isn’t part of our club, and we wouldn’t invite her club in on this either unless we needed them for some reason. We don’t, so as always, anything said in here stays in this room.” He gave Razor a hard warning look, which Razor returned with a sharp nod of understanding. Savage looked back at Code. “What’s the progress on finding them?”

“We’re not any further in finding them, but Glitch had a thought last night when we were discussing them. That Slip guy uses an old piece of code that most don’t use anymore, even back when he was learning it. And from what she remembered, he was still using it then, so it stands to reason

that he'll be using it now. We have also expanded our search into crimes that have been committed both domestically and internationally that could possibly be linked back to them. They seem to be hiding out and haven't gone anywhere that we can find them using facial recognition software," Code added.

"Any chance they're out there in a disguise or something?" Razor asked.

"It's possible," Code replied. "Though we haven't found any record of them on the web either, so it's equally likely they've just gone completely underground."

"You think they're doing that because they think the Predators are on their way back to find them?" Fury wondered.

"Honestly, I don't know," Code sighed. "Glitch knows them better than I ever would since she had the interaction with them, but she said that this Slip asshole is clearly better than he was before, and he's good at covering his tracks. But now that she knows what coding he might be using, that could help us find him and his team."

"Let's hope they slip up soon," Rogue said with a grim look.

"Maybe we should reach out to our own contacts and see if anyone has heard or seen them," Fury suggested.

"You heard Glitch, we can't let anyone know we know who they are," Code cautioned. "The last thing we need is those names getting out there, bringing attention to us and how we got them."

"I say we leave it be for now," Savage proposed. "Soon enough, they're going to slip up and we're going to find them. Hopefully by then the Predators will be back and they can handle it. This is more their territory anyway." He looked at Code and smirked. "That might just mean you get your office back."

"None too soon," Code agreed drily.

"The way you two fight, I'm surprised you haven't killed each other yet," Jax scoffed. "You sure you don't want us

taking her off your hands, brother? I don't mind taking one for the team," he suggested with a leer.

Code kept his expression blank, but shook his head. The idea of Jax with his hands on Glitch was not one he enjoyed. "Nah, I got it under control, but I'll let you know if that changes," he said casually.

"Alright, we'll adjourn Church for now," Savage decided. "Everyone keep your ear to the ground for any trouble." With a quick bang of his gavel, they all were up and heading out of the room. When they exited, they realized two things. Tom wasn't there, and neither were any of the women.

That never was a good sign.

"They're over at your place," Fury told Savage, a resigned look on his face. "Gabe just messaged that he went with them and is playing with Ronin."

"You're telling me that all the women are currently over at my place, unsupervised?" Savage asked in resignation.

"I don't see Tom around, so I assume he's over there with them," Razor said. Then he grinned wickedly. "What's the matter, Prez? Worried that they're going to corrupt your woman?"

"They've already done that," Savage groaned. "I'm more worried that they've found my stash and I'm going to be walking into a bunch of weapons pointed at my face again."

They all laughed. "Good luck with that one, Prez," Ink snickered as he headed toward one of the club girls who was waiting with a seductive smile on her face.

Savage looked at Rogue, Fury, Steel, and Razor. "I hope you're coming with me to take their asses home."

"Wouldn't miss it," Razor grinned.

Savage looked at Code. "Are you going to come and take your woman off my hands too?"

Code scowled at him. "I don't have a woman," he said pointedly.



Savage gave him a cool stare. “As far as I’m concerned, you’re responsible for her while she’s here since you’re the reason she is in the first place. So if she’s at my place causing havoc right now, you bet your ass she’s going to be your problem.”

Code glared at him. “So, what, I’m now appointed her babysitter because you don’t want to deal with her on your own?”

“I think he’s more thinking that if she’s pissed off at you, there’s less chance that she’ll try to take it out on him,” Fury chuckled. “Come on, we’re wasting time. Besides, she’s what, barely five feet? I’m sure you can haul her out.”

Code stared at him. “She’s five two, with an affinity for bladed weapons, and I’ve already had them used against me more than I’d like since she’s been here. But fine, if none of you are willing to handle the tiny assed woman, I guess I will.” Then he stalked out, with the other men following behind him.

Truth be told, he was curious what the hell they were all doing over there. He had been certain that Glitch and Karissa were going to be in the hall waiting for them when they emerged from Church, but instead, it looked like they’d had another idea. It wasn’t like they had been in Church that long. Maybe half an hour. What could they have gotten into in that short amount of time?

When they all reached Savage’s place, they stopped as they heard the laughter that came from inside. It was loud, and Code could hear voices talking over each other into one big laughing jumbled cacophony. He glanced at Savage, who wore a wary, resigned expression. He turned to them all and said, “If any of them pull another gun on me, there’s going to be hell to pay.” They all chuckled—well, except Rogue, the grumpy bastard—before they trudged up the steps to the front door. Savage took a deep breath and opened it.

Walking in, Code took in the scene and had a moment where he wasn’t sure if what he was seeing was real. Tom stood just to the side of the now open door, leaning against the

wall, arms crossed over his chest, his face perfectly neutral as he watched the circle of women in the open living room. Code took them in as he stepped further into the room, not that any of them had noticed they were there, too excitedly talking and laughing.

Royal was reclined in the Lazyboy chair, her hands pressed down over her swollen belly. Her face was bright and happy, and for once wasn't tired or annoyed, which Code noted when he looked Savage, had made the grumpy bastard smile. Harlow was sitting on the couch, Harley asleep in her arms while she talked excitedly with Royal. Next to her sat Scarlett, who had her hair covered in something that made it look darker than before. Actually, now that he was looking around the room, he saw that both the twins and Karissa were much the same, and being done by Glitch and Esme. Both girls were grinning happily, and Glitch's hair was covered in the same stuff, but all over instead of just in some spots like the other girls.

"What are you ladies doing?" Savage asked loudly, making them all stop and look at him in surprise.

"Huh, that was fast," Harlow said. "We thought you guys would be hours yet."

"Apparently they didn't have much to talk about," Glitch remarked, shooting them all a cool look before getting back to spreading whatever was on her brush onto Wren's roots.

"To answer your question, Glitch decided it was time to change things up with her hair, and anyone not preggers wanted to do theirs too," Esme added with a wicked grin.

"What the hell do you need to change your hair for?" Rogue asked, stepping further into the room and giving Scarlett a hard look.

"Relax, it's temporary," she told him with a reassuring smile. "Besides, it can be fun to change things up."

"I like your hair how it is," Rogue continued.

"That may be, but it's her hair, and you, Mr. Grump, don't get a say," Glitch said in a saccharine voice, but her blue eyes

dared him to contradict her. Rogue glared at her.

“Glitch is helping us put some extra pink in our hair,” Win added excitedly.

“Pink?” Rogue repeated, making Code grin. He had a feeling that the pink involved was the exact same shade as Glitch’s.

“Yes, pink,” Wren sniffed. “What, you don’t think we’re girly enough to have pink in our hair, Ro-Ro?”

“Not very progressive of you, Ro-Ro,” Glitch added, her lips pulling up into a sardonic grin.

“Fucking hell,” Rogue muttered. “I’m going to get some work done at the garage. Let me know when you’re done.” Then he turned and stalked out.

“Is he mad that we’re changing our hair?” Win asked curiously.

“Nah,” Karissa said with a reassuring smile. “Rogue doesn’t strike me as the kind of guy who does well with abrupt change.”

Scarlett sighed. “I don’t think it’s the hair,” she admitted. “It’s more that he’s still not quite accepting that you both are growing up, when he’s only just found you and had you in his life. Once he sees it done and how happy you are, he’ll be fine.”

Wren and Win glanced at each other, and Code saw the relaxation in their shoulders. As much as they loved to bug the man, it was clear they loved and didn’t want to disappoint Rogue. He glanced at Glitch and saw her smile softly, obviously realizing the same thing. When her eyes lifted and connected with his, they held on for a moment before finally looking away and focusing back on her task.

The girls all started talking again, and Code followed the rest of the men into the kitchen to grab a beer. He wasn’t sure why he was staying, considering that it was clear the women weren’t getting up to anything dangerous, but for some reason he didn’t want to head to the door. He blamed it on wanting to

be around in case Glitch did start any trouble, but even he couldn't quite buy that.

*I wonder what hair color she chose this time*, he wondered silently to himself as he took a long gulp of beer. Would it be pink again? Or would she change it up? He couldn't see her in anything other than pink, so it was intriguing to think about. He doubted she was going to go with a dull color. No, Glitch was too vibrant, too in your face for plain, ordinary hair.

She expertly applied more dye to Wren's hair before proclaiming her finished, then headed out of the room to the bathroom down the hall. Esme followed her after a moment, having finished with Win too. When they emerged a few minutes later, they were both smiling and laughing, and Code had the thought that it was nice she got along so well with the other women. Though, maybe that wasn't such a good thing with so many strong personalities. Still, maybe things would settle down a bit with more babies coming along.

He glanced at Karissa, who was grinning at something the twins were saying to her. Or not. He had heard her say a few times that she wasn't having any babies for a while, and Razor seemed fine with that. Scarlett was much the same, but out of the two of them, he had his doubts it would be long before Scarlett and Rogue had a few more kids running around.

*I wonder if Glitch wants children*, he wondered. As soon as the thought entered his mind, he shut it down so fast he was surprised that his beer bottle didn't crack under the pressure of his hand. What the hell was he thinking thoughts like that for? What, now that they had slept together once, he was thinking about all that sappy shit? Fuck that. Wasn't going to happen, not with Glitch or any other woman. He was perfectly happy being footloose and fancy free, as they said.

He forced himself to look away and focus on the conversation between his brothers. Still, he couldn't help himself from glancing over at the women whenever they would laugh and talk animatedly. Damn it, he needed to get a grip on himself.

Finally, after another hour, Glitch announced it was time to rinse everyone off, which of course got their attention. Code glanced over sharply, and saw Scarlett, Karissa, the twins, and Glitch all heading down the hall to the bathroom. “No peeking either,” Glitch ordered, giving him and the other men a hard look. “Esme, you want to come help?”

“Sure,” Esme said, standing.

“How come you didn’t ask me?” Harlow pouted.

“Do you want to come help?” Glitch asked easily. “You looked pretty comfy, and as much as I love your kid, I’ve already been in a shower with that cute little shit bomb, and I really don’t want a repeat when I have this fantastic color in my hair.”

Harlow snickered. “Nah, you go ahead. I want to be surprised as much as the rest of them.”

“No one asked me,” Royal sulked.

“Girl, could you even haul yourself out of that chair right now?” Harlow laughed.

“No, but my man could carry me,” Royal sniffed.

“Baby, you need to relax,” Savage cautioned her. She glared at him in response.

“Dude, even I know you shut up and say ‘yes dear’ when a pregnant woman tells you they want something,” Razor snickered.

“Besides, the doctor told me to move around so that these babies get the message to get the hell out.” She sniffed, tears filling her eyes. “I’m so tired of feeling like a big fat whale.”

“Shit,” Savage muttered, hurrying over to soothe her. Harlow rolled her eyes, but considering she had said pretty much the same thing when she had been a few weeks away from delivering Harley, she wisely didn’t say anything else.

“And you want one of those,” Code muttered to Fury.

Fury shrugged. “The way I see it, I get to watch Steel and Savage and figure out what not to do. By the time Esme is

about to have our baby, I'll be a pro.”

Code and Razor shared a look, but didn't argue.

It was still another half an hour before the bathroom door opened and the girls all walked out. And he was not prepared.

Wren and Win emerged first, the pink in their hair bright and stylish, and sporting huge grins on their faces. It made them look a little older, and Code had a feeling that Rogue was going to lose his shit when he saw them. Oh, he was going to have to make sure he had all the cameras going for that, because he wasn't about to pass up the opportunity to see it. “Oooh, girls, you look amazing,” Harlow beamed. “You're going to have the boys at school in a tizzy.”

Wren scoffed. “As if we care what they think.” Win nodded her agreement.

Next up was Scarlett, whose color was more subtle, but the vibrant red strands woven throughout her hair gave it a rich fiery look that highlighted her face and eyes. She looked almost exotic. Oh yeah, Rogue was going to lose his shit when he saw her too.

Karissa came next, and he heard Razor's sharp intake of breath. Even Code was shocked as he stared at the woman who had her eyes on Razor, a smug smile growing on her lips. Oh yeah, she knew what she was doing. Her dark brown tresses were now a dark red, and if he wasn't mistaken, she had cut off a couple of inches and curled the rest. Looked to him like she was going for a dramatic effect, and she had succeeded.

Finally, out came Esme and then Glitch, and he stared at her as he took her in. She had trimmed her sexy bob style, and her hair was now a dark purple hue that set off her eyes so they popped. It was a striking change, and damn if the first image that popped into his mind wasn't her on her knees, his cock between her lips, his hand gripping her hair while her blue eyes stared up at him.

And considering how hard he was, he had half a mind to make that vision a reality.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY

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### GLITCH

When she walked into the clubhouse an hour later, she rolled her eyes at the whistles and catcalls that were sent her way. “Damn, you boys really are hard up if you get this excited over some hair,” she told them drily. She looked at a couple of the club girls who were scowling at her, clearly unhappy she had taken the attention away from them. “Don’t go getting pissed at me. Maybe you should try changing it up instead of trying to look like Stripper Barbie.”

“Fuck you, bitch,” Loni hissed at her. “You think some cheap hair dye is going to make up for your lack of tits and ass?” She gave her a scornful look.

Glitch laughed. “Seriously? You’re a one-trick pony, huh? At least I have a brain. It’s a hell of a lot better than a used up pussy,” she sneered.

“Oh shit,” someone muttered, just as Loni launched herself at her.

Glitch didn’t even hesitate, she just grabbed the woman by the hair and flung her aside, sending her crashing into the table and falling to the floor. Glitch gave her a pitying look. “You seriously haven’t learned, have you? Don’t fuck with me. I’m not a club girl, and I’m not an Old Lady. I’m a member of the Predators MC, which means you just attacked another club’s member. I could make your life miserable.” She stepped forward, hands on her hips as she glared at the woman. “Got

it?" she snarled down at her. She was getting tired of this ho thinking she could take her on to get some kind of sympathy from the men around here.

"Fucking bitch," Loni hissed.

"And proud of it," Glitch said cheerfully. "Now, be a good little skank and stay the hell out of my way, and we won't have any further problems." Then she turned and walked to the bar. If she was going to have to share company with her or any of the other club girls tonight, she was definitely going to need some liquor. Behind the bar was another Prospect, Sam, and he looked at her with unconcealed desire. She arched her brow and said, "Kid, you couldn't handle me. I'd chew you up and spit you out faster than you could get off."

"I wouldn't care as long as I had my cock in your mouth," he boasted, leaning forward.

Before she could reply, Code's voice growled darkly from behind her, "I suggest you rethink that statement fast, Prospect, or I'll make sure you do."

Glitch turned her head to look at him, pissed he had stepped in, but paused when she saw the look in his eyes. There was anger there, and something else that made her center flutter. Well, well, it looked like someone was jealous, she thought to herself. Why did that please her? It wasn't like anything was going to happen between them. They agreed last night was a one time thing, which meant he had no right to be butting in, and she had no right to be enjoying it.

So why was it turning her on so much that it did?

Sam looked at Code in surprise, then gave a stiff nod before turning away to grab him a beer. Code looked at it and his scowl deepened. "What the hell are you doing now, Prospect?" he barked. Sam looked at him in confusion. "You serve her before you serve me. Dumbass."

Sam looked like he wanted to argue, but thought better of it. Instead, he turned back to her and asked tightly, "What would you like?"



Glitch arched a brow at him and then at Code. “Something tells me that we need to keep this simple, so I’ll just have a beer,” she said mildly. Sam scowled at her and handed her a fresh beer. She took it, then turned and headed away from the bar, Code trailing behind her. “Is there a reason you’re following me?” she asked him once she stopped a couple feet away.

He glared at her. “I’m not following you,” he told her. “I’m heading to the office, and you’re in the way.”

She didn’t believe him, and made sure he could tell by the expression on her face. She opened her mouth to call him out, but her phone rang, and she quickly pulled it out. When she saw it was Simba, she forgot all about Code, set her beer down, and hurried toward the office. Looked like she was going to be getting some work done herself. “Go ahead,” she said tersely into the phone as she raced through the door, sitting in her chair and putting on her headset, transferring the call to her computer so she could work and talk at the same time.

“Need you to pull up the blueprints for a building we’re close to,” Simba stated. He gave her the coordinates and address, and she quickly got to work.

She pulled them up and saw it was an older mansion, surrounded by thick stone walls in a square shape. “Alright, got them,” she said, curiosity narrowing her eyes as she looked at the satellite image of the property. She vaguely sensed Code coming into the room and sitting in his chair behind her, but she tuned him out. Her team needed her.

“Good. Anything that shows an old tunnel, bunker, or cellar?” Simba asked.

“There is a basement,” she finally said after searching through the schematics. “No sign of a bunker or tunnel in any blueprints.” She pulled up the satellite image again and searched it quickly. “But there is a well about twenty feet from the back door,” she added. “Could be a concealed exit.”

“Not sure they’re smart enough for that,” Simba mused. “Can you tell me who owns it? Or at least, who’s on the

current deed?”

A brief silence as she worked. “It’s registered to an Abraham Murphy,” she finally answered. “Sixty-four years old, married to a Jane Murphy, fifty-three, and according to medical records, they have six children. Four boys, two girls. None of them attended public school, though, she homeschooled them.”

“Any records of him running a business out of his home?” Jag asked.

“Nothing with the IRS or online,” she replied after a moment. “It actually looks like he’s off work for a disability, and she’s never had a job, so they’re only living off that small amount.”

“They’re getting money from somewhere,” Simba said grimly. “They’re driving around in a new BMW. No way they can afford that kind of vehicle on the meager amount they get from the government.”

“You still haven’t told me what the hell this whole mission is about,” Glitch reminded him. “If I had some of the background, maybe I could help.”

“An old acquaintance of mine said his daughter was being held in an old mansion in this town by a man named Abraham. Said she was hired to work as a nanny and housekeeper, and she was allowed to bring her son if she wanted. Since she was a single mom, according to the grandfather, she took it without telling him much about it and hasn’t been seen since. The little boy has been spotted at the market, selling vegetables with one of Abraham’s sons, but by the time he gets to the market they’re gone,” Simba said grimly.

“You think she’s being held against her will,” Glitch summarized.

“Would seem so. She’s twenty-four, and her son is about three or four, so I doubt he’s really understanding what’s happening.”

“Did anyone report any signs of abuse or neglect?” she asked.

“No, he was well dressed, but quiet and wouldn’t meet anyone’s eye.”

She frowned. “So it’s possible he is being abused, or at least under their control enough to know not to say anything in case he gets in trouble.”

“Or his mother does,” Taz added soberly.

“Alright, let me see what we can find on the mother,” Glitch suggested briskly. “Name?”

“Amanda Pender,” Simba responded.

“Alright, got her. She has no record of employment past the age of twenty-two, so if this family did hire her legitimately, there’s no paper trail. And no activity on her bank account since then either,” she added. “She’s completely off the grid.”

“No record of an apartment or anything?” Jag asked.

“No, it looks like when she took the nanny position, she moved out. Says here she paid her last month a year ago,” Glitch said absently. “So she’s been there for at least that long.”

“This whole thing reeks of her being held against her will. Have any other women been hired by Abraham and never returned?” Copper asked.

“Not on record,” Glitch answered.

Suddenly Code’s voice filled her ear and she stiffened. “I just ran a search for missing women in the area and the surrounding towns. Two women around her age have gone missing from town, and two more from the next town over. All four of them have similar height and features to Amanda.” Her screen filled with images of the four women, who did indeed look like their girl. Still, she turned around and gave Code a steely glare.

“Code,” Simba said after a second of silence, no doubt digesting the fact he had once again inserted himself into their business.

“Get off this call,” she snarled at him. “This has nothing to do with you.”

“Maybe not, but I don’t see why I can’t help, since I’m right here,” he returned evenly. “The faster you get through this, the faster you can grab her. I might not have your experience in this kind of thing, but I did work for the FBI and CIA for a time, so I know the drill.”

She ground her teeth. The nerve of this man astounded her sometimes. “Is there any point in arguing with you?” she demanded.

He smirked at her. “What do you think?”

“Fine, but stay the hell out of the way. We’ll discuss this later,” she snapped at him.

Taz snickered. “Aww, sounds like you two are getting close,” he teased. “Better hide your balls, brother, because when a woman says that to a man, it never ends well.”

“I don’t care what she does as long as we get this woman and her kid out safely,” Simba said firmly, getting the conversation back on track. “Code, I don’t think I have to explain that anything said here isn’t to be repeated. Even to your own club. If that’s a problem for you, then get off the call.”

Code was silent for a moment and she watched him carefully. This was the moment that would show whether he was a man of his word, or not. This MC was not like hers. Her team kept secrets, but his didn’t, and this was firmly crossing over into territory she wasn’t sure he was ready for. She knew he wouldn’t care that they didn’t do things legally, especially since the Dragons were considered 1%ers, but keeping his brothers in the dark was akin to treason. His eyes met hers, and she saw the war in them, but then whatever he was thinking must have been resolved because he said, “Nothing in this conversation has anything to do with our club, so there’s no need for it to be shared.”

“Alright,” Simba continued. “So based on what Code has given us, we have a possible trend. How far apart did the girls

go missing?”

“Couple months in between each,” Code answered. “First was Lola Beattie, age twenty four, no family, but her landlord reported her missing after finding the apartment abandoned. There were possible signs of a struggle. Second was Marie Nazario, age twenty-two, no children, but her parents and older brother filed a missing person’s report. Both women lived in town. The two from the next town over were Lisa Costa and Penny Krouse, both twenty three, and both of them were local waitresses, but at different businesses. Lisa was reported missing first when her father couldn’t reach her and found her car abandoned on the side of the road. Penny’s sister said she didn’t come to pick up her nieces for a playdate she had just called to arrange. Her car was also found abandoned on the side of the road, but on the opposite end of town from Lisa’s, and not close to where she or her sister lived.”

“Glitch, are there any images of the property, or any of the surrounding area, that show what they could be up?” Warg asked suddenly. “Maybe we’re focusing too much on the house and the people in it.”

“See if you can find out who owns the neighboring land as well,” Jag added.

“Adjacent land is owned by AJM Enterprises,” Glitch replied after a few minutes of searching. “I’m sending you the images of the surrounding areas now. I don’t see anything out of the ordinary, but you have better eyes for that than me.”

“AJM?” Ursa repeated, his deep voice sounding thoughtful.

“On it,” Code announced. “Bet you anything it’s a shell company, and that’s how they’re getting away with hiding shit.”

“The area around them is all wooded. The satellite images show nothing in the backyard that is concerning,” Vulture added. “So if they’re hiding bodies or these women, then they’re not doing it where they could be seen by any kind of cameras.”

“The land along the back of the property looks too pretty,” Tiger remarked quietly. “Most tree cover is messy and overlaps. This almost looks like it’s been purposely planted that way. Just enough overlap so you wouldn’t think much of it, but it’s also so you can’t see the forest floor. Not with those kinds of trees.”

“You’re right,” Warg agreed. “There’s no diversity in the kinds of trees, either. Those are all the same.”

“Which means we now have a place to look,” Simba declared.

“Got the information on AJM,” Code interjected. “Set up five years ago by a J Champlin, and is listed as an agricultural wholesaler. They were going to clear the land and use it as farm land, but clearly they haven’t done that. They also haven’t filed any tax returns in a couple of years. Before that, they were abysmal at best. And Champlin just so happens to be the maiden name of one Jane Murphy. Though, technically, her father is named James Champlin, so it could have been him instead of her.”

“Something tells me that she doesn’t have much to do with money,” Glitch said.

“What I see is a bunch of land that could hide a hell of a lot of bodies,” Jag said soberly. “Glitch, how much land does AJM own?”

“In total, about fifty acres,” she said after a moment.

“And all of it is wooded,” he said thoughtfully. “Which means they either have buildings under that tree cover, or they’re doing everything in that mansion and then getting people out to the land somehow.”

“I may have something,” Code suddenly announced. “I found some old plans from a house that used to be on the land to the west of the Murphy house. It was also a mansion, but was torn down after a fire six years ago. Turns out, the same people built both of the mansions, and the original owners were slave owners.”

“There is no way they let slaves live in their big fancy mansion,” Warg said grimly. “There had to be another place for them somewhere.”

“Do you have any old blueprints of the torn down mansion?” Simba asked Code.

He sent them to Glitch, who forwarded them to the team. “Seems that they had a basement, and there were some tunnels going out of the house toward the back of the property and also toward the Murphy residence.”

“So it’s possible that if they’re up to something, and it sure as hell sounds like it, they could be using those tunnels. And since the trees cover the old site, it doesn’t show us if there is a door or hatch or something that comes up where it used to stand. We’re going to have to go look,” Simba summarized. “Glitch, do you have any more information on Abraham that could be helpful?”

“I’ve sent you everything I have,” she told him. “By all accounts, he keeps to himself and has stayed out of trouble. No arrests or visits to the home from CPS,” she told them. “But as far as I can tell, their daughters have never moved out of the home.”

“Alright, we need to do some more recon on these people and decide our next moves,” Simba decided. “We can’t make accusations, and I want to know what we’re working with. Glitch, we’ll be in touch, probably tomorrow night with some more intel. In the meantime, if you have time, run a few searches on Abraham and Jane’s families to see if there are any connections there, or maybe some dirt to tell us what they might be doing inside that big house? And run the kids. The boys should be adults by now, and it’s possible one or all of them have a past to unearth.”

“On it,” she promised.

“Good. We’ll call tomorrow. See if Xena wants in on that call. She was always good at seeing things the rest of us couldn’t,” Simba added.

“You want me to give her the file now, to review what we already have?” she asked.

“Go ahead,” he agreed.

“Alright. Keep me updated on any developments. I’ll stay on top of things on my end,” she told them.

“Never doubted it,” Simba replied. “How are things going with finding the Ghost team? Any leads?”

“No, but Code and I have a new set of parameters to look at,” she told them. She explained her thoughts on the signature of code that Slip liked to use.

“Hopefully we’ll be back your way in the next week or so,” Simba said. “If there’s still no sign of them by then, we’ll do this the old fashioned way and track them ourselves. Just keep us updated.”

“Will do,” she promised.

“Don’t worry, babe, I know how much you miss me,” Taz called out in the background. “We’ll be back together soon and you can hop on the back of my bike where you belong. Then we’ll go and have ourselves a good time.”

“You just want your dick sucked,” she scoffed, amused, and missing him at the same time.

“Nothing better,” he replied smugly. “And since it’s so pretty, well, I can’t just hoard it for myself, now can I?”

She heard a sound come across the line, and she turned to see Code with a scowl on his face, staring at her with green eyes blazing. Oh, now, he didn’t like this conversation one bit, she thought to herself in amusement. “I think I’ve seen it enough,” she told Taz, still holding Code’s gaze. Tension burned between them, and she wondered what he was thinking.

“Yeah, her and every other single woman on the planet,” Tiger scoffed. “Dude, you’re such a man whore that I’m surprised anyone thinks your dick is still pretty.”

“My dick is beautiful,” Taz cried, clearly insulted.



“Jesus Christ,” Simba huffed. “Both of you shut the hell up. Taz, if you take out your dick, I will kick your ass.”

“He’d probably like it,” Warg snickered.

“No one is going near my ass,” Taz said indignantly.

“Fucking hell,” Simba groaned. “Talk soon, Glitch.” Then they were gone.

Glitch snickered and pulled her headset off. Then she turned and leveled Code with a dark look, her irritation roaring to the surface. “What the hell were you thinking?” she demanded furiously.

He arched a brow. “Care to be more specific?” he asked mildly.

“You know exactly what I’m talking about,” she snapped. “You pushed your way into my club’s business. You and your club didn’t allow me into your little meeting earlier, but you think you can help yourself to mine?. Stay the hell out of my calls,” she hissed.

He narrowed his eyes at her. “You could say thank you for the damn help,” he suggested tightly. “You’ve been inserting yourself in my business—”

“But not your fucking club business,” she raged, incensed he couldn’t see the difference. Fuck, this was why she hated dealing with men sometimes. They couldn’t seem to think things through. “I was told today that I was not invited to join in your Church session because it had nothing to do with me, and I am a woman so that meant I was out. Then I have a call with my club, and you insert yourself into it even though it has nothing to do with you, because apparently you can do whatever you want because you have a dick.” She pushed out of her chair and put her hands on her hips as she glared at him. “Stay the hell out of my club business, Code. I won’t warn you again.”

Then she turned and stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

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### CODE

He stared at the closed door, pissed and uncertain on what to do. Not to mention he was still feeling unsteady after the conversation with Glitch's team. Especially her banter with Taz. Did they have a thing at one point? It stood to reason, after all, working day in and day out with an almost all male team meant there was a pretty good chance that she slept with at least one of them.

*You're being ridiculous,* his mind scolded him.

He closed his eyes and put his head back against the headrest of the chair, before scrubbing a hand over his face. What the hell was wrong with him? He was acting like an idiot. It wasn't like he wanted Glitch to be his, so he had no business being jealous. He chalked it up to being annoyed at her not thanking him for help. Again.

Still, her words echoed back at him, and they made him wonder if he overstepped. Hell, if she barged into Church and tried to offer suggestions, Savage would have kicked her ass out of the room. But the Predators weren't a regular MC. They didn't run like one, even if they used the same titles and shit. Hell, Glitch didn't even wear a cut. Did she even have one? Though, even if she did, it wasn't the same.

The Predators did shit that wasn't legal, sure, but other than that, he didn't know much about how they operated. In his mind they were more like a group of nomads, and when

she got the call, he naturally followed her, ready to help. And if he was honest, he was curious to see how they worked together. How Glitch's fit into it all.

She was damn good at what she did. He watched her for a moment before jumping in to help, and he had been impressed. It had been a long time since he had seen anyone with that kind of fast, adaptable skill. She knew where to find the information, and what would be important. It spoke to her training, but also to the fact that she was a true force to be reckoned with.

Since he was being honest, he had to admit to himself in the most brutal way that Glitch was right. She was better than him. Better in so many ways that even now as he thought it, his ego's first instinct was to dismiss it. Then again, if he were thinking logically, he'd have to concede she had a lot more on-the-job training than he did.

He thought back to the years he had spent working with the CIA and FBI. At sixteen when he had been arrested for hacking their systems, he thought for sure he was going to jail, and resigned himself to it. When he realized they wanted to recruit him instead, he jumped at the chance, ready to learn more, to prove he was better than even they thought. Eventually he would be the best in the world.

It had been a hard blow to realize there were far better hackers than him working there, and he was just a stupid kid who let his ego get the better of him. It had taken some hard knocks from his handlers and those around him, but after a couple months, he found his groove and realized he couldn't rely on blind luck to get him through, he had to work hard and put in the effort to be better. Still, by the time he left there and started prospecting for the Dragons, he had been a young twenty-three and felt wiser than before. He had no idea that it would land him here. Now, here he was, years later and realizing the exact same thing. He was in the presence of someone who knew more than him, both out of training and necessity. It wasn't like she could sit and learn things slowly at her own pace when she was hunting down some of the

deadliest people in the world. Lives depended on her, and he knew Glitch took that very seriously.

He groaned and looked around the room. God, he was an idiot, and once again he felt like he was sixteen again. And that meant he was going to have to apologize to Glitch. Still, he was going to have to talk to her about being on her calls, because he enjoyed it. He didn't experience that kind of situation very often with his own club, but when he had, it was thrilling.

Still, it would take some work to convince Glitch he was sorry, so there was no point in worrying about it right now. Best she calmed down before he approached her. He might not have a woman, but he spent enough time with his brothers and their Old Ladies to see the wisdom in that advice. Instead, he dived back into searching for the Ghost team.

After a few hours he pushed back, frustrated that once again there was nothing. No sightings, no crimes linked to them, and no chatter in the criminal underworld that suggested anyone was in contact with them. It was annoying as hell and he was ready for them to finally make a mistake. But until they did, they were at a dead end. So he set up another wide range search and alerts in case they did try to hack the systems, and then he stood and left his office. It was getting late anyway, and he was starting to drag. He was running on little sleep, and his eyes were tired and gritty. Yeah, he was going to bed. He would catch up with Glitch later.

Emerging into the common room, he saw that most of his brothers were there, along with most of the club girls. Off in the back corner were Glitch and Karissa, heads bent together and talking quietly. He saw the tablet in front of them, and he figured they were talking about the search the Predators were currently conducting. He thought briefly about going over to hear Karissa's take, but then dismissed the idea to head up to his room, completely ignoring the club girls as they made their way toward him. He had no interest in any of them.

When he got to his room, he immediately headed for the shower. He didn't linger, desperately needing to sleep as exhaustion weighed him down. As he emerged from the

bathroom with just a towel around his hips, he heard his phone ring. He groaned in frustration, but knowing he couldn't ignore it, he picked it up. "Hello?"

"Little bro, I'm going to kick your ass the next time I see you," his eldest brother, Ty, growled at him. "Stop trying to give us money. We're fine."

"Who said I gave you money?" Code asked mildly. Though he had been anticipating this conversation. His brothers hated that he helped out so much, especially when it came to their everyday lives. But as he had told them time and time again, he had the money, and he wouldn't let them struggle.

"Fine, you gave Dad money to give to us," Ty huffed.

"Oh, that," Code replied, tongue in cheek as he sat down on the edge of the bed. "Consider it an early birthday gift."

"My birthday passed four months ago," Ty said sourly. "And you gave me far too much money then. Just cut it out, okay? I know you mean well, but damn it, stop."

Code sighed. "Ty, don't argue, okay? Take it and treat your beautiful wife to a date night. Or buy the kids a toy they really want. I can't be there, and it doesn't look like I'll be getting home for a while yet, so this will have to be my way of staying in touch."

Ty was silent for a moment before he sighed. "Fine. But I'm not stepping in when Mike calls you to bitch and yell."

Code chuckled. "You never do anyway. But thanks for the heads up. How are the kids?"

"Growing like damn weeds," Ty said proudly. "Aiden is trying out for the soccer team next week. And Lila is at the top of her class in school. Though, I guess that's not saying much in elementary."

"Speak for yourself," Code teased. "I know for a fact that you and Mike were constantly at the bottom of the list in school. Not like me, the much more handsome and smarter baby brother."

Ty scoffed. “Says the kid that was always in trouble, getting sent to the Principal’s office for being a smart ass. I’m just glad my little girl didn’t take after her uncle in that. Though your nephew is starting to show some signs.”

Code chuckled. “Then he should have a much better chance.” Suddenly, a beep sounded in his ear and Code quickly merged the calls. “Hey, Mike,” he greeted. “I have Ty on the line too.”

“I’m going to take a switch to your ass the next time I see you,” Mike threatened.

“Yeah, see, Ty already said he was kicking my ass, so I’m afraid there won’t be much left after he’s through with me,” Code said drily. “And you’d have to catch me first, old man.”

“I’ll just trip you,” Mike replied without much heat behind his words. Then he sighed. “Look, man, thank you for helping out, but you need to stop. There are probably far more important things that you can spend your money on.”

Code rolled his eyes. “And I just told Ty that this is my way of being there without actually being there. I don’t know when I’m going to get home next, and I’m missing out on seeing my nieces and nephews growing up. Besides, you know I don’t have shit to spend my money on. Better to send it to your old ugly asses than letting it sit.”

“When did you become such a smooth talker?” Mike asked drily. Then he sighed. “Fine. Thank you. The kids will appreciate it, and so will Mary. We haven’t had a date night in a while. Maybe I can convince Dad to watch the kids so we can go out.”

“Or we will,” Ty offered. “With Mavie’s treatments and our work schedules being so crazy, I’m sure you and Mary need some time to yourselves.”

“How is Mavie doing with her treatments?” Code asked, concerned. His niece was eight and she had been through far more than many adults when it came to her health. She had cystic fibrosis. Her treatments were costly, and she was often in and out of the hospital, which meant Mike and Mary were

drowning in medical debt. He tried to help as much as possible, but Mike rarely let him, and he refused to share how much they owed. He felt even worse he wasn't there to support them, but he doubted he would be much help.

"She's doing a bit better now with some new medications," Mike answered, sounding tired. Code's stomach cramped and guilt rode him hard. "And she's feeling well enough that she can go to school a few days a week now. It's doing wonders to give Mary a break, but she worries the entire time."

"I'm sure being in school is one of the best things for her," Code reasoned. "And being around the other kids gives her important interactions."

"She has a few new friends," Mike said, happiness seeping into his voice. "And her teachers say she's one of the smartest ones in the class, even with all the time she's missed."

"She definitely gets that from her mama, because she doesn't get it from our side," Ty snickered.

"Maybe she takes after her smartest uncle," Code retorted. Mike scoffed but didn't argue.

They spent some more time chatting before finally they hung up, and Code set his phone on the nightstand and sighed. He was going to have to try and get home sooner than he planned. He didn't want his nieces and nephews to forget him, and maybe he could take the kids for a night and let his brothers and sisters-in-law have some time to themselves.

A noise had him looking over at the door, and he saw Glitch letting herself in. He had a flash of irritation again, but he was too tired to say anything. He just stared at her. She shut the door behind her. Her face was unreadable, but her eyes took him in, lingering on his chest and then the towel around his waist before moving back up to connect with his. "I've been a bitch," she said bluntly. "And I'm sorry."

He stared at her, shocked. "I'm sorry, who are you and what the hell have you done with Glitch?" he demanded, getting to his feet, hands going to his hips. "Because no way

would you come up here and apologize out of the blue. Wait, did one of the brothers put you up to this?”

She scowled, anger flashing across her face. “Fuck off,” she snapped at him. “You know what, forget it.” Then she turned back to the door.

He moved and grabbed her arm, stopping her, and twisting her back around. Then he backed her up against the door and stared down at her, even as she glared up at him. He gave her a slow, smug smile. “Well, doesn’t this feel familiar?” he remarked in a low voice. She continued to glare at him, unmoved. “Now, before you get all pissy, how about you explain this sudden change of heart? Because you have to admit, after your speech earlier, an apology from you to me wasn’t the next step.”

She narrowed her eyes. “I said I was sorry, what more do you want?” she demanded tightly.

He bit back his annoyance and arched a brow at her. “I want to know why. I think you can give me that.”

She looked away, pursing her lips slightly, and he could see the war on her face. She wanted so badly to refuse and argue, but something was holding her back. It was interesting to see this side of her. She was a ball buster, and he could admit that he liked seeing her a bit more vulnerable. But it made him wary, too. He didn’t have the energy to fight with her, and he certainly didn’t want another knife at his throat.

Finally, she looked back up at him, but he saw her walls were up as she said, “I realized you were right and I’ve been a bitch. You were helping me earlier, and I went off on you because I was mad that you and your club didn’t extend the same courtesy to me. But that wasn’t your call, and I shouldn’t be blaming you for that. As for the rest of it, well, I was so damn mad at you for what you did, and uprooting my life, that I went overboard on reminding you that you owed me. To the point where I gave little regard for your feelings or plans. So, yeah, I’m sorry, and I’ll try to be more mindful about it in the future.”



He watched her for a moment before he finally relaxed and said, “You’re not the only one who’s been a bitch. Well, a dick in my case. I’ve let my anger get the better of me where you’re concerned. If I kept myself in check, you wouldn’t need to be here in the first place.”

“You won’t get an argument from me there,” she smirked.

He rolled his eyes. “Look, I’m going to apologize for being a dick, and for inserting myself in your space with your team as well. But I enjoy that shit, and I want to help, so I hope you won’t be upset when I do it again. Because now I’m invested in this too.”

She sighed. “I’m not used to having someone to help me. Well, outside my team anyway, and even then, what they help me with is limited. None of them know shit to do with a computer outside of the basics. Hell, some of them can’t even handle the basics.”

He chuckled. “Same goes around here.”

“So, we’re good?”

“We’re good,” he said with a nod.

“This still doesn’t mean I like you. We’re not going to be besties,” she warned him with a smirk.

“Wouldn’t expect anything less,” he replied, stepping back. “Now, I think we need to talk about your habit of breaking into my room.”

She smiled slyly. “You probably shouldn’t make it so damn easy,” she suggested. “Though, I suppose there really isn’t any lock I can’t crack.”

“Looking for reasons to spend time with me now, huh? It’s alright, I get it. You’ve had this,” he said with a wave of his hand, “so now you’re looking for any excuse to get another look at me. Do I need to worry about you crawling into bed with me at night? Will I wake up and find you staring down at me all creepy-like?”

She scoffed. “Someone’s cocky. Trust me, I have better things to do than stare at you. Besides, if I’m standing over

your bed, then I'm probably about to kill you," she added with a slow, evil smile. "Now, I'm going to bed, so you and the club girls need to keep it down. If I have to break in again because of the noise, it won't be pretty."

He gave her a slow, smug smile. "Awww, jealous, kitten?" he taunted.

She rolled her eyes. "I see your ego is still alive and well, caveman," she replied drily. "Just keep it down." Then she turned and stalked out, shutting the door behind her.

He stood there for a moment, staring at it, before shaking his head and tugging his towel off, letting it drop to the floor. He crawled into bed and wondered what the hell he was going to do with Glitch. He was starting to see sides of her he hadn't thought existed. It was messing with his head.

She came up to apologize to him. Damn, he never expected that. He had a feeling that Karissa had played a part. Still, he wouldn't complain. It didn't mean everything was going to be fine between the two of them, but perhaps they were heading to a place they could co-exist without as much fighting. He chuckled softly as soon as the thought entered his mind. What was he thinking, they were always going to fight. Their personalities were too different, and he could admit it kept things interesting.

Suddenly, his door flew open, and Glitch strode back inside, eyes glittering with desire, and irritation. He watched her silently as she shut the door quietly, locked it, and then turned back to him. As she made her way toward the bed, she started to shed her clothes, and while he was surprised, his cock wasn't. It hardened immediately, and his eyes moved from her face down to her smooth skin. "This is nothing more than scratching an itch," she told him briskly as she shoved down her yoga pants and underwear so she was gloriously naked. "Tomorrow, we get back to hating each other."

As soon as she neared the bed, he was reaching for her, pulling her over him, and quickly rolling so she was pinned beneath him, the sheet barely providing any barrier between them. "Wouldn't have it any other way," he purred, leaning

down to nip at her neck, making her hiss and grip his shoulders tightly. Tight enough she might just leave a mark, and that made his dick even harder. “I knew you wouldn’t be able to resist me,” he rasped in her ear.

He didn’t even need to see her face to know she was rolling her eyes. “Jesus, are you going to talk all night? Because if you are, I’ll go back to my room and use my favorite toy to—” She trailed off on a moan when he sunk his teeth into her shoulder, then ground himself against her center.

“Now who’s talking too much?” he murmured, before moving down to take one hard nipple into his mouth, sucking firmly. She gave a soft gasp, her hand coming up into his hair as she held him in place. He lashed at her with his tongue before biting down, making her groan and arch into him. Oh yes, she loved the pain, and he was happy to give it to her. He moved to the other side to give it the same treatment before pulling away, lifting himself up, and yanking the sheet out of the way. He wanted nothing between them.

As soon as they were fully pressed together, she bucked and rolled them over. Before he could glare at her, she smirked down at him and pressed her wet center against his cock, making him groan. “I’ve changed my mind, you can talk,” she purred at him as she slowly moved down his body. “And we can start with making you beg.”

He nearly laughed, but then he felt her warm breath on the head of his dick as she wrapped her hand around it. “Never,” he gritted out, looking into her eyes. They were bright with challenge as she opened to slide him into her mouth.

*Jesus, he just might beg after all,* he thought with some desperation as she started to suck and move her mouth over him, her fist gripping him and moving in time with her mouth.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

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### GLITCH

She loved giving head, especially when the man enjoyed it. Then again, what man didn't? She might not have had sex in a while, but she had some tricks up her sleeve. She would have him begging in no time. She watched him as she sucked him deeper into her mouth, careful to keep him just short of triggering her gag reflex. Then she lashed at him with her tongue, finding that sensitive spot on the underside of the head, making him hiss and jerk in her mouth.

"Fuck," he groaned. "Damn, kitten, that mouth is something else." If she could have smiled, she would have. Instead, she got back to driving him insane. After all, he did the same to her last night, and turnabout was fair play. She knew she had him the moment that his hand clenched in her hair and he tried to thrust his hips to push himself deeper into her mouth.

She stopped him by pressing firmly on his hip, before moving her mouth faster and sucking hard. He moaned, and she could feel the strain in his legs as he tried to hold himself back. She watched him watch her as his abs contracted and his eyes hooded. Rumbles echoed up from his chest, and she could see his jaw clenched tight. She loved it, and arousal flooded her system.

Was there anything hotter than a man clearly trying to keep from begging? Slowly, she released him, and his hand came

out of her hair instantly as she gave him a slow, taunting smile. “Are you ready to beg yet?” she rasped, squeezing and sliding her hand along his length.

“Nope,” he said huskily.

“Too bad,” she purred, leaning down to run her tongue over the head of his cock. He jerked in her hand and she did it again. “Guess I need to work a little harder then, don’t I?” Then she lowered her body, trailing her tongue down his shaft, licking it like an ice cream and simultaneously twisting her hand.

“Fucking hell,” he muttered, and he briefly closed his eyes as he made a visible effort to control himself. She blew a soft breath over him and felt him shudder. “Glitch,” he warned her, eyes flying open to stare at her with dark arousal.

“That is my name,” she said, lowering even further to lick at the base of his cock, then trailing down to suck lightly at his balls.

“Glitch,” he groaned, his hand coming back to her head, though not putting any pressure on it. “Stop teasing me,” he ordered.

“Mmm, how about you beg me not to?” she suggested as she moved back up to the head of his cock, licking it once more. She was enjoying this, and she really did want to hear him beg.

“No,” he hissed. Then he groaned when she took him deep into her mouth and got back to work on driving him insane.

Soon enough, she was paying far more attention to how she was driving him crazy than actually making him beg. She loved the way his face flushed, and the way his body tensed and shivered as she worked him. It was intoxicating. So much so that she didn’t even realize he was pulling her up and off him until she was suddenly flat on her back. “Asshole,” she rasped, glaring up at him.

“The only place I plan on coming is inside you,” he grunted, pinning her in place when she tried to move him. “Now it’s my turn.” He moved quickly down between her

spread thighs, wedging his shoulders so that she was as wide as she could go before putting his hands under her ass and lifting her to his waiting mouth.

She gave a low moan at the feel of his lips on her clit. She didn't know whether to curse or cry out in joy that he was one of the few men she had been with that could actually find her clit without needing a map or any kind of direction from her. Instead, she gripped his head and arched her hips, grinding herself on his mouth.

He ate her until she was so close to begging that it took everything in her to hold the words back. He found all the right spots and focused on them until she was gasping and groaning. Her orgasm rose, then ebbed as he moved to the next spot, which would make it rise again. Damn him, he knew exactly what he was doing. "Code," she gritted out.

He gave a low chuckle, the vibrations making her shudder. "Ready to beg yet?" he asked as he eased back, looking up at her with those gorgeous green eyes.

"Never," she breathed. He grinned at her, then he moved right back to her clit, sucking and flicking it with his tongue while also pushing two thick fingers inside her, making her cry out.

"How about now?" he rasped, pulling his mouth away but moving his fingers harder and faster inside her, pushing her orgasm higher and higher. "You taste so good, kitten," he added as she groaned and ground her center down on his fingers. "I could spend hours tasting you. What do you think? I bet I could wring so many orgasms from you that you'd beg me to stop."

"Don't threaten me with a good time," she bit out.

He chuckled, then moved back down to put his mouth on her. She moaned and panted as he drove her higher and higher, until finally she fell over the edge and let out a loud cry as wave after wave flowed through her. When she finally opened her eyes and looked back down at him, Code lost all laughter and was watching her with unadulterated hunger. It sent another wave of desire through her, making her clamp down

hard on his still thrusting fingers. “Again,” he demanded hoarsely, moving up to his knees so that he had more leverage as he pressed a hand on top of her mound to hold her in place.

She didn’t try to fight it as another orgasm, even stronger than before, crashed over her, making her cry his name and grip the bedsheets with all her might. By the time she came back down, she was pretty sure she had indeed seen stars. Damn, had she ever come that hard before?

“I want another one, but this time, I want you to come on my dick,” he grunted, pulling his fingers from her and leaning over her toward the nightstand. She was feeling pretty comfortable, but the moment he leaned forward, she slid her body down to take him back into her mouth again, making him stop and his entire body stiffen. She lapped at the pre-cum dripping from him before sucking him down more. “Fucking hell, kitten,” he hissed. He braced himself on the bed, and his other hand went to the back of her head, moving her to take him deeper, but careful not to choke her. “I love this mouth. So hot and wet. Makes me want to fuck your face nice and hard, spill down your throat.”

She had no problem with that, and worked her mouth over him faster. But then he gripped her hair and pulled her back, making her grunt and glare up at him once he was free of her mouth. “Asshole,” she hissed as he let her hair go.

“I’m not coming in your mouth, Glitch,” he told her, grabbing a condom from the drawer. “Though we can definitely explore that later. Right now, I want to be inside you.”

She waited as he rolled on the condom before she moved up the bed and pushed at his shoulder. He willingly went to his back and she scrambled over him, gripping him in her hand, lining him up, and then lowering herself onto him. Code grunted, and she hissed at the feel of him inside her. Two orgasms allowed her to take him without any pain, and she put her hands on his chest as she started to move. Slowly at first, and then faster as she found her rhythm.

Neither of them looked away as they moved together. He put his hands on her hips, meeting her thrusts with his own, the sound of them slamming together filled the room. The connection was heady, and she found herself falling into the depths of his eyes as another orgasm rose inside her. Damn, three in one night, that had to be a new record.

Code watched her with desire, longing, and even desperation as she rode him. It was close to what she was feeling herself, and when she thought back on it later, it would worry her. There was something there, simmering under the surface, that she wasn't sure she was ready to face. She needed to remember this was just sex, nothing more.

All thought cut off as he moved harder and faster inside her, chasing his release, which triggered her own. "Code," she moaned as she ground against him.

"Give it to me, kitten," he grunted, his fingers digging into her hips. He hissed and then rasped, "Fuck, Glitch," as he shuddered through his own release.

She collapsed on top of him, burying her face in his neck, breathing him in, aftershocks coursed through her body. *Damn*, she thought again. She underestimated him, because the man definitely knew what he was doing. Embers of jealousy started to flare but she squashed them just as fast. She was too tired and content for any of that bullshit. Instead she murmured, "Pretty sure you begged."

Code barked out a short laugh. "I think the one who was begging was you, kitten," he replied, gently pulling out of her, then rolling her to the side so he could climb out and dispose of the condom. She was too boneless to force herself to get up. She'd need another minute or two to catch her breath. When he came back, he climbed into bed and pulled the sheet up over them.

She arched a lazy brow at him. "What are you doing?" she asked. "I'm not staying."

He turned out the lamp before rolling over to pull her into him. She stiffened. "Doesn't mean anything," he told her. "I'm tired, and I need a few hours' sleep before I take you again."



“Who says I want to stay for that?” she asked with a yawn, moving her head to a more comfortable position on his chest.

“Give me a couple hours and I’ll show you,” he replied tiredly. “Still doesn’t mean anything. Now shut the hell up so I can sleep.”

“Asshole,” she murmured sleepily, her eyes already growing heavy. She’d just get out of bed after he fell asleep, she told herself. She wasn’t the kind to spend the night, and she wasn’t about to start with him.

She bolted up when her phone started going off and jumped out of the bed. She didn’t care she was naked, though she scolded herself for still being here instead of in her own bed, but that would have to wait. She found her phone underneath her clothes. She drew in a sharp breath when she realized what the issue was. “Fuck yeah,” she hissed as she started pulling on her clothes.

“I got the alert too,” Code announced, drawing her attention to him. He had pulled on his pants and was currently putting a shirt on. “Let’s go.”

She nodded, yanked on her shirt, sans bra, and then she was running out of the room and down to the office. Code was hot on her heels. It was late enough that most already went to bed, but she noted a few of the men were still hanging around, and they looked at them in surprise and then in interest. She was sure that she and Code coming down together would send the tongues wagging, but she didn’t care. Another thing she would have to deal with later.

She flew into the office, slid into the chair and grabbed her headset. She called her team as she started the trace, hearing Code working behind her. “I’ll tap facial recognition in areas around where they are,” he told her briskly.

“I’ll trace their location, as her call connected,” she replied, her fingers flying over her keyboard as images and maps filled her screens.

“You found them,” Simba said without preamble. It was a statement, not a question.

“Just got the alert and I’m tracing them now,” she replied. “Code is here too. He’s running facial recognition and seeing if anyone or anything around them can give us a clue to what they’re doing.”

“Good,” Simba grunted.

“You think they’re doing this on purpose to try and lure us out?” Taz asked curiously.

“Probably got tired of waiting for us to finally show our faces,” Jag said tightly.

“Got them,” Glitch said excitedly. “Well would you look at that, they’re still in our town.”

“You’d think they would get the hint that we’re not around from us not showing up at our clubhouse despite them trashing it,” Tiger remarked sarcastically. “They never were all that bright.”

Glitch pulled up the feed and shared it with her team. They all watched as Hazard appeared on the camera outside a coffee shop, a scowl on his face. He wasn’t even trying to blend in. Then, just down the street, Maggot came out of another shop, also looking annoyed. She frowned as she looked around the area. Something didn’t sit right with her about this. “Code, you seeing any of the others on your end?” she asked.

“Nope, the others seem to be out of view. I’m not catching them on the cameras on the other side either,” he replied, and she could hear the frown in his voice.

“Too fucking easy,” Ursa muttered through the line. “Why the hell would they allow themselves to be seen? They’re on a lot of watch lists, and if any of the local cops or the higher ups knew they were there, that place would be crawling with badges.”

“You think they’re doing this on purpose? That they want us to see it’s them?” Copper asked.

Glitch stared at her screen, and then on a hunch, she did a deep dive into her firewalls, and that’s when she saw it. “Oh you fucker,” she hissed. “No fucking way.”

“What’s wrong?” Code asked, concerned. She heard his chair creak as he turned around but she didn’t bother to glance his way.

“That asshole Slip is trying to covertly hack my system,” she bit out.

“Fuck,” Code hissed. “Let me in and I’ll help.”

“No, I got this,” she barked. “You keep working on trying to track them. I can handle him, but if we’re going to catch them, we need to figure out how the hell they’re getting around.”

“That’s why they’re out and about,” Simba said grimly. “They wanted us to see them, and now you’ve just announced yourself online again. Can he track you to where you are?”

“No, I’m re-routing myself all over the world, and I’m behind some pretty damn big firewalls,” she assured him absently.

“Good. Less chance of him heading your way before we can get back,” Simba said.

“I think I found how they’re staying mostly out of view,” Code announced. “If you look just at the edge of the frame facing the coffee shop, you can see a flash of white, but if you look at the frame from another camera down the street, you can see it’s a white van. They haven’t approached it, but it’s a white utility van with no signage, and the license plate isn’t registered to the vehicle itself.”

“It’s big enough that Slip could be in the back, set up without worrying about being seen,” Glitch agreed as she slammed down another wall on Slip’s attempt to break past it.

“Sounds like a very cheesy FBI movie,” Taz remarked with a snort. “Damn, these boys need to get out more.”

“Code, you said you don’t see Slip or Spook?” Simba asked.

“Not yet,” Code replied grimly. “I’m wondering if they could be there but just in disguise. Hazard and Maggot were the bait in case Slip could track Glitch through her tracking

them, while Crisp and Spook are around somewhere asking questions to try and find you through word of mouth.”

“Well look at that, he does have a brain,” Taz drawled. “Damn, Glitch must finally be rubbing off on you.”

“Fuck off,” Code grunted, and Glitch snickered. Taz laughed, unfazed.

“Is there any way to run partial facials or anything that would pinpoint possible people to watch for?” Vulture asked.

“I can do partial facial recognition,” Code replied carefully. “But I can’t guarantee that it’s going to be accurate. If they’re wearing sunglasses, the most I can go by is their facial structure. And some people know how to obscure their face enough that the software would skip right over them.”

“It’s also possible that Slip is making sure you can’t spot them,” Glitch said thoughtfully, smiling smugly as she booted Slip out once again. Bet that pissed him off, she thought.

“I never understand any of this computer shit,” Warg groaned.

“All you need to know is that we know what he could be doing and since we know, we can work to get past it,” Code told him simply. “Still, from what I can see, they’re on Main Street, and they’re clearly trying to figure out if anyone knows who you are. Hazard went into another coffee shop down the road, and Maggot is in an antique store.”

“Like bulls in a china shop,” Taz snorted.

Glitch tuned them out as she continued to block Slip’s every attempt. He improved his skills through the years, but he still hadn’t learned the art of subtlety. It was tempting to taunt him, but she knew it wasn’t smart. It would just open her up to him trying to hack his way in and find her location. But with each attempt and each passing minute, she could tell his frustration was mounting. He was getting sloppy, and almost angry in his approach. Or at least, it seemed that way to her since she knew him enough to know that he didn’t like to be denied.

“Oh, they’re on the move,” Code suddenly announced, pulling her back to the present. “Both men are heading toward the white van.”

“So they are in there,” Simba remarked. “Glitch, is Slip still trying?”

“Trying and failing miserably,” she answered happily. “And he’s not happy about it, from how sloppy he’s getting.”

“Alright, Code, can you track them while Glitch continues to hold him off?” Simba asked.

“Already on it,” Code told him absently, clicking away furiously. She glanced over her shoulder at him, seeing him wholly concentrated on his screens. She felt a stirring in her gut and forced herself to look away.

God, she was getting to be such a sap, she thought to herself in annoyance. A little good sex and she was sleeping in the same bed, all curled up against him, and now thinking she liked seeing him like this. She was losing her damn mind. She turned back to the task at hand and nearly laughed when she saw that Slip had sent her a message.

Slip: I will find you, Eliza. You can't keep me out forever, and when you finally make a mistake, I'll be there to end this once and for all.

She knew better than to answer, but she couldn't help herself. Careful to make sure he still wouldn't be able to find her location or any information on her, she shot him back a message.

Glitch: You always did think you were better than you were. I guess some things never change. As for you ending anything, you'd have to actually be able to kill me, and you don't have the skill or the guts to take me on.

Slip: I think I'll enjoy listening to you scream for mercy. And when you beg for your pathetic life, I'll make sure that your entire team watches as I finally end you.

Glitch: What is it with men and begging? Do we look like dogs to you? I don't beg any man, and I won't be starting with you and your pathetic dick. Or did you forget that I saw just how much you were lacking all those years ago?

Slip: I'll gut you like the bitch you are. See you soon, Eliza. Because no matter how hard you try to keep me out, I'll find my way in.

She stared at the screen and rolled her eyes. God, he really was pathetic, she thought as she slammed down one more firewall, booting him out of her system completely. She was done with these games. If he wanted to find her, he was going to have to get a hell of a lot better. Instead, she focused back on what Code and her team were saying.

“They're heading south on Main Street,” Code announced. “But there are no more traffic cameras if they go left. If they go right, through the rest of the town center, we can keep track of them.”

Glitch looked at the screen and watched silently as the van headed to the end of the street. No surprise, it was going the exact speed limit, like it didn't want to attract any more attention than it needed to. Surprisingly, it made its way to the right, but she was watching the camera and didn't see the van. “Well, well, looks like someone grew some new skills after all,” she mused aloud as she got back to work.

“What?” Simba asked in confusion.

“Slip is keeping them off the cameras, and he's doing it in real time, which means he's still working in the back of that van,” she told them briskly, already working fast to try and intercept the signal. “Code, keep your eyes on those cameras. I'm working to get past him so we can at least figure out where they're heading.”

“On it,” Code agreed.

They worked together for the next few minutes, talking back and forth as she gave instructions until, finally, she felt triumph rush through her as she overrode his signal and got the

videos cleared up. “There,” she said gleefully. “Take that, fuckwit.”

“You talking to me or Slip?” Code asked, amused.

She glanced back at him and smirked. “That depends on if you piss me off, but at this moment I mean Slip.” He narrowed his eyes at her, but didn’t reply. Still, she saw his lips twitch in amusement. They stared at each other for a moment, and his expression changed to one more serious, with a healthy side of lust that made her own smile drop as she stared at him. It was the exhilaration, she tried to tell herself. Nothing more. The excitement of the chase, and not the man across from her.

“Alright, they’re heading down through the city center,” Simba announced, pulling them out of their staring contest and making them jump back into work.

“Suppose they’re doing this on purpose to throw us off?” Tiger asked.

“Could be,” Simba agreed. “Especially now that they know we’re on to them.”

Glitch snorted when she saw that Slip was once again trying to take over. “Oh, yeah, they know,” she snickered. “Slip is failing again to get control. God, will men never learn that they can’t hold a candle to a woman?”

“Amen, sister,” Taz crowed. “Men are just giant dicks anyway.”

“Present company included,” Copper laughed. “Too bad your dick is so damn small and it’s just your personality that’s so large.”

“Shut it,” Simba ordered them, sounding exasperated.

For the next few minutes they continued to track the van, until they finally lost sight of it going down a road that led out of the town center, well past camera range. Her screen pinged loudly with an incoming message.

Slip: Until next time, bitch.

“Jesus, the man never shuts up,” she grouched as she didn’t bother responding. She was done with this little pissing match.

“Glitch, you and Code can continue to try and track them?” Simba asked.

“Yep, we’ll see what we can come up with,” she answered, glancing over at Code, who nodded his agreement.

“Good,” Simba sighed. “Keep us in the loop. And thanks for jumping in to help, Code. Maybe we won’t have to gut you after all.” He hung up with Taz laughing maniacally in the background.

Glitch chuckled. “Huh, well it looks like...oomph,” she cried as she was suddenly hauled out of her seat and into Code’s arms, his mouth on hers before she could even ask what the hell was his problem.

Then she was thinking of nothing at all, and the only thing that mattered was the adrenaline pumping through her. And apparently, Code had an idea on how to get rid of it.

She’d worry about the consequences later.



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## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

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### CODE

**I**t was a fiery, passionate clash, and nothing was safe. They tore at each other's clothes as they moved around the room, their mouths and hands all over each other. Something crashed when he picked her up and put her on top of the desk with only her underwear left on her body, but he didn't care. The only thing that mattered was feeling her skin on his. He yanked his mouth from hers and looked down into her hazy, lust filled eyes and rasped, "I hope these aren't special, because I'm about to tear them off of you."

"Oh fuck," she moaned as he put words into action. He reached down, gripped her panties in both hands, and shredded them. They were some kind of lacy number and gave little resistance. They came away in tatters. The moment her pussy was bared to him, he went to his knees, shoved her legs apart, and put his mouth on her. She moaned, her hand coming into his hair as she arched her hips against his mouth.

He didn't bother trying to tease her, because he wanted, no *needed*, to hear her screaming his name. To feel her clenching around his tongue and fingers as she came. He wanted her taste flooding his mouth. He pushed two fingers hard and fast inside her, curling them to reach that spot that had her gasping in shock and shuddering with desire.

"Fuck, Code," she hissed, her fingers gripping his head so tight that he was surprised she wasn't pulling his hair out by

the roots. Not that he cared. Some missing hair was nothing compared to knowing he had made her come so hard that she saw stars. Her thighs clamped down on his head, her cries echoing around the room as she ground into his face and her inner walls squeezed hard on his fingers as her orgasm hit her. “Oh fuck,” she moaned, a hint of desperation in her voice as her body shuddered and bucked with each wave.

He pulled away as she settled, but he barely got to his feet before she was pushing him back and launching herself at him. He caught her and stumbled back until he landed against his own side of the desk, and he heard more things crash and fall as he hit it hard, letting out a small grunt of pain. That the pain was quickly erased as she yanked her mouth from his and pushed out of his arms. Then it was her turn to drop to her knees and take him into her mouth, making him groan and bury his hands in her hair.

He let his head fall back at the sensation of her hot, wet mouth moving over him. God, he loved her mouth. She knew just how to work him to make the desire in his body rise to a fever pitch faster than anyone had before. His abs clenched with each suction of her mouth, and his toes curled as she reached down to cup his balls and roll them gently. “Fuck. I love your mouth, kitten,” he gasped. “So fucking good. Makes me want to come down your pretty throat.” She looked up at him, blue eyes flashing with desire as she began to work him faster in and out of her mouth. He clenched his jaw and gritted his teeth to keep himself from coming.

He knew better than to give in, and pulled her back and up to her feet. She glared at him, but he spun her around and bent her over the desk. “Don’t move,” he ordered, giving her a sharp slap on her ass before he turned and found his pants, rooting through them to try and find a condom. “Shit,” he hissed when he realized his pockets were empty.

“Let me guess, no condom?” Glitch asked drily.

“Nope,” he growled, irritated at himself. When he looked back at her, seeing her bent over his desk that way, ass out, legs spread so he could see all of her, he cursed himself again,

gripping his cock as it throbbed. Damn, he needed to be inside her, he thought desperately.

She looked over her shoulder at him, taking him in. “Check my desk drawer,” she ordered.

He turned and did as she asked, and let out a grunt when he saw two condoms there. “Do I want to know why these are in here?” he asked tightly, ripping one open and sheathing himself. He turned and stalked back toward her.

She gave him a slow, smug smile, and said huskily, “Probably because I was planning on seducing someo...” Cutting off with a sharp hiss as he grabbed her hip, slapped her ass, and made quick work of bending his knees to thrust inside her. She huffed out a laugh as she moved back to meet his thrusts. “Oooh, someone has something to prove, does he?” she taunted.

He moved fast and fierce inside her, jealousy and anger driving him to remind her that she didn’t need another man. No, she only needed him. And he was going to make sure she never forgot it. He’d bury himself so deep inside her that she’d never be able to not feel him. She gasped and groaned as he took her, until he gritted out, “Does this feel like something to prove to you, kitten? Because we both know you love my cock. Love what only I can give you.” He reached up to grab her hair, yanking her head back. He snarled at the way she tightened around him in response. “You feel that, kitten? The way your pussy is practically strangling my cock to keep me inside you? Do you think you’re going to find someone else to make you feel this way?”

“Fuck,” she cried as he powered harder and faster inside her. The desk shook with the force of his thrusts, and her body shuddered as she flew into orgasm. “Code,” she screamed, her fingers gripping the edge of the desk to keep herself steady as she bucked and clamped down on him like a vise. But he wasn’t done. Not by a longshot. He wanted there to be no question who was fucking her and that it was *him* her body craved.

Again,” he growled. She looked back at him in surprise, but the renewed desire in her eyes told him all he needed to know. So he set to work. By the time he was ready to let himself come, they destroyed the room. Things were shoved off all the desk surfaces, the chairs toppled over, and one of his screens had fallen off the wall when he fucked her hard against it. Which resulted in him moving them to the floor in the middle of the room.

He lowered them both to the floor, setting her on her knees in front of him, her back to his chest as he powered into her, his balls tight to his body and his cock so hard it was bordering on pain. Their bodies were slick with sweat, but he didn't care. She was leaning back into him, her arm around his neck as she gasped for breath and gave sharp cries as he rubbed her clit. “One more, kitten,” he gritted out. “Just one more.”

“Oh fuck, I don't think I can,” she cried desperately. But even as she said the words, her body was already trembling and shuddering toward another release. With every last ounce of strength he had, he powered inside her, hitting her G-spot and sending her hurtling into one more orgasm. She screamed his name, and he finally, *finally*, allowed himself to come. It was a rush like he never felt before, and he snarled her name, his teeth latching on to her shoulder as he emptied inside her. The sting of his bite prolonged her orgasm, and had him seeing stars.

They collapsed to the floor, with him lying half on top of her, chest heaving as he tried to draw in air. Glitch was gasping as well, spread out on the cool floor and unmoving except for the occasional shudder. His heart pounded so hard in his chest and ears, it was the only reason he was sure that he wasn't dead. God, he had never come that hard in his life.

With Herculean effort, he lifted his head and looked around the office. He almost laughed when he realized the state that it was in. They had destroyed the room. Things were shoved off all the desk surfaces, the chairs were toppled over, and one of his screens had fallen off the wall when he had fucked her hard against it. He was pretty sure it was shattered. He couldn't find it in him to be all that pissed about it though,

considering what they had just done. Instead, he leaned his head back down and rasped in Glitch's ear, "You owe me a new monitor, kitten. Hell, you might owe me a whole new office."

"Sure, whatever you want," she mumbled, not even bothering to look. "I think you killed me, so you can just take whatever you need out of my estate."

He chuckled. God, this woman really was such a smartass. "I'll keep that in mind," he replied, before easing out of her and pulling off the condom, tossing it in the garbage under his desk. Then he rolled back over and pulled her into him.

As soon as their bodies touched she lifted her head and hit him with a narrowed-eyed warning glare. "Do not even think about it," she warned him. "I think you broke my vagina, and if you try and go near it again before I say so, I'll find something dull and rusty to cut off your dick with."

He stared at her. "Anyone ever tell you that your violent streak is concerning?" he asked drily. "Maybe I just want to hold you."

She didn't lighten up at all. Instead she retorted, "Men only think with their dicks. The moment you get your second wind, you'll be raring to go. So keep that thing the hell under wraps or we're going to have a problem."

Before he could retort, the door flew open and both of them froze. "Oh shit," he heard Jax bark out in laughter.

Code quickly rolled Glitch so that she was facing him and pressed tight against his body so Jax didn't get an eyeful. Glitch snickered against his chest. "Get the fuck out," he barked at his brother. Though if he wasn't mistaken, Ink and Ice were right behind him, and they were all wearing identical shit eating grins.

"Sure thing, brother," Jax said, slowly backing out. "Let us know if you need any help righting this place."

"Maybe we should check that she's not holding him against his will," Ink suggested. "Brother, blink twice if you need rescued."

“Blink three times if she’s holding a knife to your balls,” Ice added, amusement in his voice.

“Oh, you’d know if I had something sharp against his cock, boys,” Glitch announced, looking over her shoulder at them with a smug grin. “But lucky for him, I currently have uses for it.”

All three men chuckled and then backed out, shutting the door with a snick. Code looked down at a still grinning Glitch. “This going to be a problem?” he asked her. “Knowing Ink and Jax, they’re already on their phones telling everyone. Bunch of gossipy women, those two.”

Glitch chuckled. “I’m not ashamed of sex, Code. And I’m not going to hide the fact that you and I have been messing around. As long as you remember it can’t be any more than that, though. I’m leaving to rejoin my team as soon as they’re back and the coast is clear.”

He ignored the pang in his chest at her words. He blamed it on the sex, because he should not care that she would be leaving. So he nodded and said seriously, “No worries about that on my part. I don’t want a woman, and I’m happy to fuck you as much as you want while you’re here. No strings, and no hurt feelings when you leave.”

She nodded, but her eyes were cool as she stared at him. “Good. Alright, well, now that’s sorted, I say we should get up and go to bed. As hot as that was, I’m in desperate need of a shower and some sleep.” He agreed and they got to their feet. He grabbed her pants and top, smirking at her tattered underwear. He quickly pocketed them, though he gathered from the knowing look on her face that she caught that. He didn’t acknowledge it, instead he led her out of the office. He’d worry about cleaning it up later.

When they headed up the steps toward their floor, Ink, Jax, and Ice all grinned knowingly and saluted them with their beers. Apparently they were pulling a late night, Code thought, but it wouldn’t be the first time. So he followed Glitch upstairs, but before she could go into her room, he grabbed her arm and pulled her into his. She gave him a cool stare. “Is

there a reason you're manhandling me?" she asked him darkly. "Who says I want to be in here with you? Did you forget already I don't want you near me?"

He kept pulling her until they were in his bathroom. "Just get in the shower," he ordered. "Then we're going to sleep, and maybe when we get up you'll change your mind about me coming near you."

She gave him a *yeah right* look, but didn't fight him and stripped back down. His dick gave a twitch at the sight of her naked figure, but then gave a much bigger jerk when he saw the marks on her skin. Small bruises formed where his fingers dug into her back, hips, ass, and thighs. A few claw marks, and possibly a hickey or two if he wasn't mistaken. A primal desire awakened in him to give her a few more, but he forced it back. One, he was too tired, and two, he really didn't relish the idea of waking up to Glitch holding a knife to his balls. Or worse, his cock. He wouldn't put it past her.

So he pulled off his clothes and climbed in with her. She gave him an arched brow, but merely handed him the soap once she was finished with it. The shower was big enough they could fit comfortably, but still tight enough that they were brushing against each other.

"So why the FBI and CIA?" she suddenly asked as she turned to wash the soap off her back.

"They were my only choices," he replied honestly, switching places with her to have the spray hit his chest and wash him off.

"Yes, but I know those kinds of placements only last for a certain amount of time before they give you a choice to stay or go somewhere else. And you stayed. I want to know why."

He looked down at her, unsure if he wanted to get into this right now. "It's a bit of a long story," he hedged.

"Then best get talking," she told him simply.

He sighed. "Any chance if I say I don't want to talk about it, that you'll let it go and we can sleep?" he asked hopefully.

“What do you think?” she asked drily as she turned off the water and then pulled back the curtain to step out. She handed him one of the towels and started to dry off as she watched him. “You might have almost sexed me into a coma, but your brothers snapped me out of it. Now my brain is spinning and I want to know the answer.”

He sighed again, though he supposed she had shared her history with him, so it was only fair he did with her. As annoying as it was. “I stayed because of a woman I was in love with,” he admitted. “Well, I thought I was. Turned out our whole relationship was a lie, and she fabricated everything so I would let my guard down.”

Her eyes sharpened as she finished drying herself off and then laid the towel on the edge of the tub to dry. “She was another hacker you worked with?”

He nodded and stepped out of the tub, laying his towel beside hers. They left the bathroom and headed for the bed, but if he was hoping she would just let it go and go to sleep, he was sorely mistaken. She propped herself up against the headboard, pulling the sheet to her waist, and waited expectantly as he turned off the lamp he left on when they rushed downstairs. “Her name was Hallie, and she was a hacker and coder on the team I was assigned to. She was another stupid kid like me, but she was eighteen to my sixteen. Bitter that she ended up there, but she was doing her time like all of us. I got paired up with her on a few assignments almost right away, and she was the take-charge type that didn’t like to be questioned. She also came from money and she was considered to be one of the best out there.”

“I feel like there’s a point to you saying that,” Glitch said drily, and though he couldn’t see her in the dark, he had to imagine she was glaring or rolling her eyes at him.

“You do remind me of her sometimes,” he admitted. “Moreso in the beginning, the way you barged in and told me my system was shit. She used to do things like that, and at sixteen, my ego was fragile. Still, I worked hard to prove her wrong, and did everything I could to beat her. She enjoyed our little back and forth, and I didn’t realize at the time she did



because she was looking for ways to make sure I fucked up so she could either take over or get me kicked off her team. See, I was a threat to her top bitch status, and she wasn't about to have a kid come in and fuck things up for her."

"Hmm," Glitch hummed. "I guess I can see why you were so hostile with me at first."

"I was an ass. And I'm sorry. I normally am better, but sometimes you remind me so much of her that I can't stop myself from reacting. She was good at getting under my skin too, and she figured out what buttons to push to really get me going. To the point that when I was eighteen and she was twenty, they split us up because others on the team had complained to our handler. But I guess we got addicted to that energy and feeding off each other, because she would make excuses to come find me only to piss me off. Finally, one day I snapped and messed with her computer because I was seeing red. She was furious and slapped me. Next thing I knew, we were fucking against the wall of the office and all of a sudden we weren't enemies anymore."

"You know, I'm starting to not like where this is going," Glitch said, a clear sour note in her voice.

He turned the lamp on again and looked at her. She was frowning, and her eyes were glittering with anger, annoyance, and regret. "My reaction to you isn't because of her, Glitch," he told her seriously. "Are there parallels? Sure, but with you, I knew what I was getting from the start. Hallie tricked and lied her way through life, and she loved to dangle carrots to get what she wanted. You don't do that. You do shit that annoys me, but you don't do it to deliberately use me or try to maneuver me so you can hurt me in some way."

She was silent for a moment. "But I have kind of done that," she argued quietly. "I do shit without thinking about how it will affect you, and I deliberately push your buttons and try to piss you off."

He reached out and pulled her into his lap so they were face to face. She didn't fight him, but she did give him a sharp look. "Glitch, you are not Hallie," he told her again. "And you

already apologized for that, and I accepted. That's the difference between the two of you. She would never apologize. She would deflect or blame me. And the shit you've done, sure it's been annoying, but it hasn't been malicious."

"Sending you a dick pump, magnifying glass, and tweezers doesn't count as malicious?" she asked, her lips pulling up into a half smirk.

"No," he replied with an eye roll. "You think you're the first to tell me I have a small dick? That's a woman's go-to insult with any man. Though I will give you points for creativity."

"Oh good," she said drily. "Fine, I'm not as similar to her as I thought. So what's the rest of the story?"

"We were in a relationship for the next two years. Though, the only one who thought it was a relationship was me. Unbeknownst to me, she was sleeping with our handler and some of the higher ups to get what she wanted on her team projects. I had no idea. I had blinders on when it came to her. We even got an apartment together, but I knew something was up because she was always working late. Only coming home to eat, sleep, and piss me off so I would fuck her good and hard. But then, I got put on a top secret operation that was bigger than anything she had ever worked on. Because while she was screwing all the higher ups to get her own way, I was growing and improving and they were taking notice, while she was stagnant.

"When she found out about the operation I was working on from one of her lovers, she confronted me. I was surprised she knew about it, but I figured our handler told her since he still was our supervisor despite us being on different teams. She was furious, even more so because she found out I was leading the operation. Couldn't understand how I could have something like that when I wasn't anywhere as good as her or her team."

"Bet that pissed you off," Glitch remarked absently, her hand moving up his neck and to the base of his skull gently

rubbing it. Like she knew he was holding stress there and was trying to help him ease it.

“Yeah, I was and we fought,” he admitted, forcing himself to pay attention to the story instead of the sensation of her fingers. “Anyway, she apologized the next morning, but I knew it wasn’t genuine. Still, being stupid and thinking with my cock about what I thought was love, I forgave her and didn’t pay any mind to her probing questions or how she showed up at my office all the time. I thought it was her trying to make it up to me, and I was happy she was finally acting proud of me.”

“But she was trying to get info on what you were working on,” Glitch summarized.

He nodded. “She waited outside my office until she overheard me tell one of my team members we were about ready to go after our target and I figured out the way to do it without being caught. That night, she went in, hacked my system, and stole all my information so she could take it and run the operation herself. Only problem was she didn’t know that I hadn’t entered the last bit of coding that needed to be finished before it would be safe to deploy. Needless to say, she destroyed the entire operation and everything blew up. She blamed me and tried to say I asked her for her help. Thankfully I could prove I hadn’t done any such thing, and my team backed me up, but it cost her because she was demoted to another unit.

“From then on, she made it her mission to constantly tell me how much she hated me. She kicked me out of the apartment, but not before she came clean that the only reason she was with me was because she had been taking my work for years and passing it off as her own, in addition to sleeping with anyone that could help advance her career. She never loved me and I was only a pawn in her game. Needless to say, that relationship went down in flames and it put me off of women for a long time. I was very pissed off and bitter.”

“Well, she was definitely a messed up bitch,” Glitch scowled. “Though I’m not surprised. Women in this field can be nasty. We’re competing against a lot of men and we want to

make a name for ourselves. But I never did that. I stepped over people, but I never stepped *on* them. I would never hurt them in that kind of way.”

“I know,” he said, reaching up and running his hand over the side of her head to smooth down her hair. “But I sometimes struggle remembering that it’s been a while since I’ve been that stupid kid. I’ve matured, and I need to act that way. Especially with you.”

She leaned forward and pressed a soft kiss to his mouth. “I’m sorry,” she murmured when she pulled away. “I really am sorry, Code, for everything I’ve done before and lately. I’ve been holding onto a grudge, and I need to stop. It’s not fair, and honestly, that’s not me. In our team, we work shit out because we can’t allow it to mess with our relationships or it could get someone killed.”

“I’d say we’ve done more than enough to get it out of our systems, with all the pranks and stuff we’ve done lately,” he smiled.

“So we call it even?” she asked with a soft smile.

“Done,” he replied immediately. Then he gave her a wicked grin. “That doesn’t mean I’m not going to piss you off, though. Especially if it means I get to rail you against any available surface.”

She laughed. “Oh, I’m sure we’ll be doing that plenty while I’m here,” she agreed. “How about we start now?” she suggested, grinding on his cock.

He was hard instantly. “Thought you said you were too sore?” he asked as he rolled her to her back.

She grinned wickedly at him. “I doubt you’ll be hard enough for me to notice,” she taunted. “What with being so small and all. I could still walk up here, so you definitely didn’t do as good a job as you should have.”

He let out a low growl and was on her in a heartbeat, even as her laughter turned to groans. He’d make her regret those words before he was done.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

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### GLITCH

The next four days were much of the same routine. Slip and his team would show up on the cameras, they would track them, and send the information to her team. And throughout all of that, she and Code were fucking each other as often as possible. To the point that she finally told him no more because her pussy ached and her clit was basically one big bruise.

Though she had to say, she was surprised at how concerned he was about that. He insisted on her having a hot bath to relax and eventually joined her. He kept his hands to himself, but she hadn't missed his hardness pressed up against her back. She appreciated his restraint. Still, it threw her off when he was nice to her like that. It was the complete opposite of what they had been doing, and she wasn't sure how to handle it.

They also talked more about their pasts, with her sharing tidbits about her time with her team and some of the more dangerous elements. He was fascinated by it, and she got the feeling that the work she did was the kind he always wanted to do. Though she noted that if she mentioned any fun with someone else, he was quick to change the subject.

She could be honest and admit that worried her. Especially because this couldn't go anywhere, even if they changed their minds and wanted it to. Not that she did, she told herself, but

the last thing she needed was a clingy man. That would never work out. They had their own lives, and their futures were headed in different directions.

She walked into the gym and found Karissa already there, stretching. Karissa gave her a slow grin. “Well, well, well, look what the cat dragged in. You finally got off his dick long enough to get in our training session, huh?” she teased.

Glitch didn’t reply, instead, she moved to sit beside her, acting like she was going to start her stretches. But then she launched herself at Karissa, who let out a grunt and then a wheezing laugh as the two of them started to roll on the mat. “Bitch,” Glitch grunted when Karissa elbowed her in the stomach.

“Someone’s getting soft,” Karissa taunted. “I guess that happens when you get dick on the regular, huh? Have you told Taz yet?”

Glitch rolled away from her and sat up. “No. Why would I? They’re finally getting close to getting into that damn place so they can get that woman and her son out. He doesn’t need to be distracted.”

“He’s going to kick your ass when he hears that,” Karissa snickered, sitting up and brushing her hair out of her face before she finally scraped it up into a high ponytail. “You know how protective he is of the two of us.”

Glitch rolled her eyes and started to stretch. “It’s not going anywhere, so there’s nothing for him to get protective about,” she argued.

“How do you know it’s not going to go anywhere?” Karissa asked, arching a brow at her.

“Because it can’t. We both agreed that this is nothing more than scratching an itch. No feelings, and when I go home, we’re done. Besides, even if we did try, and I’m not saying we would, we’ve got too much pulling us in different directions.”

“You know, I made a lot of those same arguments with Razor,” Karissa reminded her. “And look at us now.”

“It’s not the same, Xena,” Glitch said tightly. “You and Razor, you deserve each other, and you’re meant for each other. Code and I are just enjoying the moment, I guess.”

Karissa was silent for a moment. “So you’re saying that if you go home, and come back in six months time and find him with an Old Lady, you’d be perfectly fine with it?” she asked bluntly, pinning her with a hard, searching look.

Glitch kept her face blank, though her stomach cramped a little at the thought. A small flare of panic rose inside her. No, no, she couldn’t allow herself to get emotionally involved. So she gave Karissa a placid look as she answered, “Yes, I’d be fine.”

Karissa stared at her, then narrowed her eyes. “You know I’ve known you for a long time, right, and I can tell when you’re completely bullshitting me. I think this is one of those times. You think we haven’t noticed you’re smiling a hell of a lot more now than ever? Or that you’re making excuses to spend time in the office with Code, which of course we all know not to go in there unless we want an eyeful. What is your obsession with the office, by the way? After you destroyed it the other night, I figured you would avoid breaking anything else.”

Glitch shrugged. “What can I say, we like to be a little adventurous,” she drawled. “And there’s no bullshit here. It’s a fling, Karissa. Nothing more, so don’t go planning or spreading things around that aren’t true.”

Karissa glared at her. “When have I ever done that?”

Glitch sighed. “Sorry, I didn’t mean it that way. I meant, don’t get your hopes up, or the other girls’ hopes up. They’re all loved up, and the majority of them are pregnant, so they’re bound to make this whole thing more than it is.”

“I just want you to be happy, Glitch,” Karissa said seriously. “You have to admit that being on the team can be lonely at times.”

“I’m surrounded by a bunch of men almost twenty four seven when they’re home,” Glitch scoffed. “And even when

they're gone, I'm talking with them all the time."

Karissa gave her a droll look. "Don't be an idiot," she chided. "You know what I mean. As you like to say, they're men and they have dicks. Which means, as much as they try, they won't always understand that you need or want time to yourself, and you want to talk to someone that isn't in the life you are. Or at least, someone who might be and could understand it. I love the team, and you're all my family, but Razor and the women here filled holes that I didn't know I had."

Glitch snickered. "They filled some holes, huh?" she leered.

Karissa shoved her, but grinned. "And that right there is another reason to get you out and about with other people," she drawled. Then she turned serious again. "I just want you to know that I want you to be happy, Glitch. If that's not with Code, fine, but I don't want you to only have work in your life and nothing else. I'm not saying that men are the way to be happy, because Lord knows I want to murder my man a few times a day," she snickered, getting to her feet. "But having someone to talk to every day that isn't a member of the team, is damn nice."

Glitch nodded. "I'll keep it in mind," she assured her noncommittally. As much as she got where Karissa was coming from, they weren't the same. They had far different pasts, and she wasn't ready to give up her future for anyone. Not even Code. She loved her team, and they were her life for a reason. They were doing good in the world, and she wanted to be a part of that more than a relationship.

Karissa gave her a knowing look, but thankfully let the subject drop just in time for Wren, Win, Scarlett, and Rogue to arrive. Rogue had been part of every training session with the girls so far, keeping a watchful eye on them. Glitch could admit it annoyed her at first, but now she saw it was because he wanted to make sure the girls were comfortable. He never interrupted them, but there had been a few times that Glitch noted he got very intense when the girls told them things.



Which was exactly why they had asked Scarlett to come this time. They were about to work on some of the girls' major triggers, and they needed her here to keep Rogue in check if it came to it.

The girls had big, excited smiles on their faces as they walked to the mats. "I'm ready to kick some ass," Win announced, rubbing her hands together. Wren nodded her agreement, eyes bright.

The door to the gym suddenly opened, and the final person for their session entered the room, bag in hand. Rogue's head whipped around as he took in Tom, who looked at him calmly in return when Rogue demanded, "What the hell are you doing here, Prospect?"

"I asked him to come," Glitch replied, making Rogue's head whip back to her, eyes narrowing darkly. Scarlett frowned, but she didn't say anything, resting a reassuring hand on Rogue's arm. Glitch gave her a subtle nod of thanks, turning to the twins who were eyeing Tom with a mixture of wariness and curiosity. "Remember how I said we were going to work on things that might trigger you?" she asked them. Both girls straightened at that, but said nothing, waiting. "Well, today, we're going to do that. And I've asked Tom to help, with permission from Savage."

"Fuck this," Rogue snarled. "Stay the hell away from them," he ordered Tom furiously.

"Rogue," Scarlett tried to soothe. He glared at her.

"No fucking way is he touching them," he told Scarlett fiercely.

"Rogue," Wren said sharply, drawing his gaze. Glitch watched as his face softened fractionally when he looked at both girls. "We need to get past this, and if this is what Glitch and Karissa think is best, then we have to trust them. And honestly, I'm okay with Tom. Anyone else, probably not, but Tom's always been nice and respectful to us."

Win looked at Tom, a vulnerable look in her eyes, despite her brave face. "Are you sure you want to do this?" she asked

him carefully. “We really don’t know what our reaction is going to be, and I couldn’t stand it if you started to look at us differently.”

He held her gaze for a moment before he answered simply, “I haven’t looked at you differently, even knowing what you’ve been through. And I can take a lot. But if it helps, just know that I know what it’s like to feel powerless. I went through some shit growing up, and it took me a long time to understand that I needed to be the one to take my power back. Once I did, it changed things for me. It’ll be the same for you. But if you really aren’t comfortable with me doing this today, or if you want someone else to help you through it, that’s fine. My feelings won’t be hurt.”

Both girls stared at him for a moment, and then shared a long look. Glitch didn’t say a word, but she would call the whole thing off at any word from them. She wanted them to conquer their fears, but only when they were ready. Finally, after another moment of silent communication, and a few more pissed off growls from Rogue, they both turned back and nodded at her, Karissa, and Tom. “We’re willing to give it a try,” Wren answered, though her voice wasn’t as strong as it had been before.

“Are you sure?” Karissa asked seriously. “We can hold off on this. We’re not looking to traumatize you further, but you will have to face things eventually, and I’m sure you would like that to happen in an environment where you have some control, and know that you have people nearby who will help you.”

Wren looked at Tom seriously. “You’re okay with this, even knowing that Rogue is probably going to kick your ass afterward, or put you on shit duty?”

Tom didn’t even look at Rogue, who grunted his agreement, and said, “You don’t need to worry about any of that. I know exactly what I’m getting into, and what may happen as a result.”

“I also made sure he was okay with this when I approached him,” Glitch added reassuringly. “He knows exactly what I’m

going to ask him to do, and what your reaction could be. And he still volunteered, so I think that says something.”

Both girls nodded. “Alright,” they said in unison, and Glitch took that as affirmative enough. These girls knew their own mind, and she had to trust them.

“Good. Now, we’re going to establish a safe word before we do this,” Glitch added firmly.

Wren and Win both cracked wry smiles. “Scarlett, what’s a safe word?” Wren called, tongue in cheek.

“Yeah, maybe we should ask what yours is so we don’t pick the same one?” Win joked.

Scarlett’s face was bright red, but she lifted her chin and said sternly, “Girls, do we need to have the sex talk again?”

“We’re good,” Win laughed. “We’ve had enough of an education, thank you very much.” Glitch noted that Scarlett’s eyes flashed at the obvious reference, but she kept her face stern. Glitch had to give it to her, she was a strong woman. She glanced at Rogue, who pulled Scarlett into him, holding her tight, obviously realizing what she needed without her asking.

“Alright, let’s get to it. Wren, what’s your safe word?” she asked the first twin.

“Mercy,” Wren said after a moment. Win startled at that word, and a slight frown formed on her face, but she didn’t say anything. There was something there, but Glitch wouldn’t ask. Yet.

“Alright. Win, your word?” Glitch asked the other girl.

She was quiet for a moment and then she replied firmly, “Red.” Glitch nodded.

“Alright, we got our words. Tom, you hear either of those words from their mouths, you stop, I don’t care what you’re doing. You don’t, and it won’t be the scary biker you’ll have to worry about, it’ll be us,” she added with a very clear warning nod toward Karissa.

“Got it,” Tom said simply.

“Alright, go and get ready while we work on our basics.” Tom nodded and headed back out of the room, bag in hand. Once he was out of sight, Glitch and Karissa got started with the girls, running through their drills and working on anything that needed tightening up.

No one noticed when Tom came back into the room, which was exactly how she wanted it. They needed that element of surprise to make it as real as they possibly could. She shot Karissa a subtle nod, letting her know they were about to start. Then she gave Tom a signal with her hand while blocking a swing from Wren so he knew to begin. He was now wearing an all black outfit, skin tight to show off all the hard muscle he had, and left little to the imagination. He also wore a large, hard sports cup to simulate the feeling of an erection.

It was show time.

Tom exploded from the shadows of the room, running for Wren, who barely had time to register him before he was on her, taking her down hard and holding her down, trying to grab her hands to pin her. Wren screamed, fighting, doing everything she could to get him off her. Win, seeing her sister was in trouble, rounded and raced forward, but Glitch and Karissa both stopped her, dodging her kicks and punches, her screams of outrage and panic.

Karissa subdued her, though it was a struggle, even as Glitch moved back to where Tom and Wren were rolling on the floor. Like she predicted, Wren’s face was pale with panic, her breathing was erratic, and terror was alive in her eyes as Tom purposely ground himself against her and whispered things in her ears. Glitch got down, watching and listening very carefully, even as she heard Karissa grunt behind her from whatever Win had done.

Glitch saw the moment Wren started to slip back into her memories, and the way she froze. She got down on the floor near her head and hissed, “Don’t you let him win, Wren. You got this. You fight. You get this bastard because you are strong. You are brave, and you are not that little girl anymore. You are a badass woman, and you will not give him the satisfaction. You got me?” Wren didn’t answer, but her body

jerked and she bucked her hips, trying to dislodge him. “Push past the fear. Remember all that you’ve trained for. All you’ve worked for. Do not let him get the upper hand. And never let him make you beg for mercy.”

It was the final word that had her snapping back to the present, and Glitch felt a surge of relief and pride as Wren let out a warrior’s cry and somehow managed to get her hand from between them and punched Tom right in the mouth, making him grunt in pain. Using a strength that surprised even Glitch, she suddenly flung him off and over her head, using a move that she had been working hard on in their sessions. Tom went flying and landed with a thud and a groan, and Wren lay there for a moment, shuddering and trying to catch her breath.

Glitch put her hand on her shoulder and said, “You did it, baby girl. You did it.” Wren didn’t say anything, just stared at the ceiling. “Finish it, Wren,” Glitch ordered her. “Don’t lay there and give him another chance.” Wren immediately rolled, just as Karissa released Win, who launched herself at Tom with a wild look in her eyes.

Tom moved quickly, managing to grab Win by the arm and swing her around, her back to his front, subduing her. Now it was Glitch’s turn to keep Wren back from her sister and for Karissa to handle Win. The same way her sister had, Wren fought hard to get past her, and Glitch thanked all her training and stamina, because damn, the girl was strong and determined.

Win let out a scream as Tom took her to the ground, and much like Wren, she panicked, but this time, instead of Karissa or Glitch being the one to encourage her, it was Wren screaming, “Don’t you let that fucker beat you, Win. Fuck him up.” And just like her sister, she used her skills and got him off and away from her. This time, though, he got a punch in the eye for his efforts, hard enough that she was pretty sure it would be swollen and black and blue before the night was out.

As soon as he was clear, she let Wren go, but instead of the two stopping and comforting each other, they both went to Tom, hauled him up to his knees, pinned his hands behind his back and Wren pulled his head back hard, making him grunt.

“You didn’t win,” Wren gritted out, staring down at Tom. But from the dark look in her eyes, Glitch knew it wasn’t Tom she was seeing.

Glitch and Karissa moved quickly, ready to intervene. Once they were in position, they waited.

“I’ll always win,” Tom gasped out, starting straight up into Wren’s eyes. “You’re nothing. You’re just a scared little girl. You’ll never beat me.” He looked at Win. “You won’t either. You’re nothing more than broken toys. Used up.”

Glitch widened her eyes in surprise, but she waited to see why Tom was going off script.

“We are not broken,” Win snarled at him, that wild look still alive on her face. “We beat you. And we’ll keep beating you no matter how many times you try to take us down.”

“Because you are the one who’s nothing,” Wren added, suddenly letting go of his hair, and Win doing the same with his hands, both of them tossing and shoving him aside. “We won’t let you win anymore,” Wren finished, staring down at Tom.

Tom gave a mocking laugh. “Oh yeah? The first time you’re with a man, what do you think he’s going to say when he finds out you’re all messed up? No man wants to be with a woman who can’t give him what he wants. We’re all the same, you know. If you won’t give it, we take it, and there is nothing you can do to stop it. No one is going to come to your rescue.”

“That’s where you’re wrong,” Win snarled. “Not all men are like you. Not all men would beat and rape us. Not all men would treat us like a commodity to sell and abuse. We are more than a bunch of holes for you to fill.”

“We know what good men are. We’re surrounded by them every day. Ones who treat us like we’re normal and have something to offer other than our bodies. We have a whole club at our backs to help us. You can’t ever take that away from us. And that’s why we’re going to push ourselves until we purge you out of our lives forever,” Wren yelled, voice raw, and eyes wet with unshed tears. “You will not win. You

will not tell me to beg for mercy again. You will not tell me that if I only say that one word, you'll stop the pain. As you hurt me. As you took Win from me to do worse to her to keep me in line.”

“And you won't turn my body red from pain and blood again,” Win yelled, her voice raw as well, tears tracking down her cheeks. “Because we are not broken. We are survivors, and you will never take that from us. Every time you try to come back, we will beat you. We will kick your ass again and again. Because we're stronger, and we already beat you. We'll keep beating you.”

“You will never win,” Wren whispered and Win nodded, gripping her sister's hand like a lifeline.

Tom didn't say anything as he stood and regarded them for a moment. His face was flushed, his mouth was bleeding, and his eye already swelling shut. He didn't move toward them, didn't reach out to touch them. Instead he said, “That's something you need to remember at all times. Never let those bastards win. Never let them get in your head, to send you spiraling. If some asshole grabs you, you know you can protect yourself. And when you're done stomping him into the dirt, you have a hell of a lot of people in your corner that will join in.” This time he took a small step forward and said in a low voice, “You are not broken. You might be a little scratched up, but you have a strength that will never let you give in. Not everyone is that lucky. Got me?”

Both girls nodded, and Glitch watched as their eyes lost the desperate and wild glint and they crashed back into reality. They stared at Tom. “I'm sorry I punched you in the mouth,” Wren whispered.

“And I'm sorry I punched you in the eye,” Win added.

Tom gave them both a wry smile. “Just ups your cred that no one should be messing with you,” he pointed out.

They both gave watery laughs. “Yeah, I guess it does,” Wren agreed. “Won't it lower yours, though, getting beat up by two girls?”

“Nah,” he replied, wiping at his mouth. “I’ll just tell them I fought two wildcats instead.”

Both girls laughed again, and then one by one, they stepped forward and hugged him. Tom looked uncomfortable for a moment, but then hugged them back, understanding they needed it. When they stepped back, he nodded at Karissa and then Glitch before heading to doors of the gym. Glitch turned to watch him walk by Rogue, whose face was like a thundercloud, while Scarlett’s was full of pain as tears poured down her face. Tom didn’t even look at Rogue, but Rogue stopped him with a hard word. Glitch waited to make sure he didn’t overreact, then Rogue said something to Tom that had him looking at the man in surprise. Then he nodded and continued on his way.

Glitch wondered what was said, but instead, she turned back to the girls. Now that the whole episode was over, they were shaking and trembling, and tears were flowing down their cheeks. “You did it,” Glitch told them softly, cupping the sides of their faces as she spoke. “I am so proud of you both.”

“Me too,” Karissa said softly, taking their hands. “How do you feel?”

“Shaky,” Win answered automatically. “And a little sick.”

“That’s normal,” Glitch assured them. “You’re going to feel shaky and off for a few days, but you need to remember that’s okay. This was you pushing past a trauma, and you’re going to need extra support over the next couple of days. So you need to make sure you’re getting help if you need it, understand? You don’t want to talk to anyone else, you come find one of us or both, and tell us. Our doors are always open. And if I’m not here, you can always call me. Just know I’m on your side no matter what.”

Both girls nodded, and then they both broke down into sobs. Glitch pulled Wren in close, while Karissa did the same to Win. Glitch looked over Wren’s head to Rogue, who looked stricken. Scarlett made no sound, but she was gripping him like a lifeline. Glitch held their gaze and jerked her head for



them to come forward. Wren and Win would need their parents after this.

Rogue was to them in an instant. Within seconds, he had both girls balanced on his big arms, as if they were small children, their faces buried in his neck and both of them holding onto him for dear life. Then he was heading out of the room. Scarlett followed closely behind him, not sparing Karissa or Glitch a glance.

Once they were gone, Glitch sank to the ground, exhausted and shaking. “Fuck,” she hissed, rubbing her hands over her face as she realized she was crying herself.

“Yeah, I know,” Karissa murmured. Glitch looked over and saw her wiping her own tears. “Those two girls have been through so much. Did we just make a huge mistake in pushing them?”

“No,” Glitch said, though she wasn’t as sure now. “They needed to do this. For themselves.”

“I just hope they don’t hate us for too long,” Karissa sighed sadly.

“If they do, we’ll handle it. I’m more worried Rogue is going to tear me apart,” she said with a weak smile, wiping at more tears.

“I’ll protect you,” Karissa joked.

A noise sounded from the door and in strode Razor, concern etched across his face as he moved to Karissa, scooping her up off the floor. “I got you, baby,” he soothed, before turning and walking out, completely ignoring Glitch, his attention fixed solely on his woman.

Glitch watched them go, and a pang hit her. There wasn’t anyone to come comfort her. She would have to handle it on her own, like always. Sighing, she wiped her eyes and got to her feet, cleaning things up.

She put all their gear in her bag, but froze when she felt a hand on her waist. She looked over her shoulder to find Code behind her, appearing concerned. Neither of them said a word as they looked at each other, until finally he pulled the bag out

of her hand and set it down. “Come on, kitten,” he murmured, pulling her into him before lifting her up into his arms. “I got you.” Then he carried her out of the room and up the stairs. Her heart pounded in her chest, and everything inside her settled as she breathed him in.

Glitch laid her head on his shoulder, realizing she was in trouble. But at that moment, she didn’t care. She was glad to have someone hold her, even if only for a moment.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

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### CODE

**A**t the sound of a gentle knock, he eased out of bed and moved toward the door, glancing back at Glitch to make sure she was still sleeping. She was exhausted, and concern ate at him. She was a damn strong woman, but even she had limits, and helping the girls today had been tough. He also saw her expression on the camera when she was left alone in the gym after Razor collected Karissa. Resigned, sad, and a bit hurt that she was left behind. He hadn't thought twice before he headed into the gym to get her.

He quietly opened the door, and when he saw it was Rogue on the other side, Code slipped out, closing the door softly behind him. The two of them walked down the hall descending the steps into the common area, which was now quiet since it was the middle of the night. Code went to the bar and grabbed a bottle of whiskey and two glasses, before returning to where Rogue was still standing by one of the tables. Both of them sat, and Code poured them both a drink.

They sipped in silence for a few moments, until finally Code asked, "How are the girls?"

Rogue didn't answer right away. His jaw clenched, and his hands fisted on the table. Finally, he admitted roughly, "They're a fucking mess, brother. They didn't stop crying for hours, and I couldn't do shit to help. They finally cried

themselves to sleep an hour ago in our bed with Scarlett, clinging to her like a damn lifeline.”

Code nodded. “I imagine the whole thing was very, very hard for them. Maybe crying is good if they’re getting all the emotions out,” he suggested carefully.

Rogue gave a low growl and downed the rest of his whiskey before he snapped harshly, “I should never have agreed to this. They’re kids, Code, and your woman should have known better. She shouldn’t have pushed them like that. Do you have any idea what it was like to hear them screaming and having Scarlett holding me back? I could have fucking took her, Karissa, and that fucking Prospect apart. Those are my girls and I let that happen to them. How am I any better than those pieces of shit that took them? That hurt them?”

Underneath his anger and frustration, Code picked up another emotion from his battle-hardened brother: *anguish*.

“Because as angry and upset as you are, you know that it needed to be done,” Code replied calmly. “It was in a controlled environment where you could get to them. If they needed you, you were there. Think of it this way: what if it hadn’t happened here? What if they decided to sneak out and go to a party and some asshole started harassing them? Tried to hurt them? Or had their buddies do the same?” Rogue’s eyes went dangerously dark at his words, and Code held up a hand to stop him from snarling at him. “You know I’m right, as much as you don’t want to admit it. Do you think they would have fought them, or would they have frozen? Traumatized themselves more? It may not have been the gentlest method, but it worked. It gave those girls the reinforcement that they are strong. They beat it once, and they can do it again, if any fucker gets an idea to try.”

“Fuck,” Rogue hissed, downing another shot and then running a hand through his hair. “I feel like I’m never going to get the hang of this parenting thing, brother. Shit like this happens and I’m useless. I can’t pound anyone into the ground. And I’m so fucking mad. Mad at the situation, mad that the Prospect thought he could touch them and terrorize

them that way, and I'm pissed at Karissa and your woman for letting it happen. For instigating it in the first place."

"And you're allowed to feel that way, because I would too, if I were in your shoes," Code agreed. "But I'm not, so I'm only going to tell you what I saw on the camera footage. Which I've already erased and made sure will never be seen again," he added when Rogue's nostrils flared. "I saw two girls that had been traumatized and who finally got to take back pieces of themselves. Remember when they showed up down in the basement that night we killed that Slicer fucker?" Rogue nodded. "That night was the start of their healing. They let him feel the pain they felt. They took their power back. But that was just one person, one night. There are going to be other things, other people, they need to purge and take back power from, and they'll slowly have to do it. This was one of those times. They stood there even as he said things to make them want to break. To cower back and let him win. But they didn't. They yelled and screamed, and they realized how strong they are. And they also realized that you were there for them. You and Scarlett were right there to step in and protect them. Because as strong as someone is, they need to know they have someone in their corner."

"I was proud of them," Rogue said seriously. "So fucking proud, because damn it, they always seem so strong and put together. Scarlett is better in tune with them, but a few times one or both of them will come and talk to me, and I try to listen as best as I can. I probably fuck it up though."

"You listening is the most important part," Glitch's soft voice said, making them both jump and whip around. She stood a few feet away, hair mussed, wearing his shirt that was more like a dress on her tiny figure, looking exhausted and determined. He reached out his hand for her, which she took and stepped into him. He pulled her onto his lap, which she didn't fight. Damn, he supposed she really was tired, because he half expected her to sit in another seat.

She turned her attention to Rogue. "You have no idea how many women I've seen over my career that have no support and nowhere to go after something horrific happened to them.

How many go back to where they're from, and fall prey to abuse because they feel broken and worthless. Or it happens again and again, and they can't break the cycle, so they end it finally by suicide or drugs and alcohol. That won't happen to your girls," she added firmly. "Because they have you. They have Scarlett. They have the other women. And they have the club. They have people that will back them up, who will listen to them, and who will pull them out of any spiral that might start. People with strong support networks are the ones that do better after a trauma, and those two have some of the best support you could ever ask for. So don't sell yourself short. You listening is all that matters. Because they know you care, and even if you fuck up on the advice part, that won't matter as long as you're listening."

Rogue was silent for a long moment, his gaze drifting around the room in quiet contemplation. Code rubbed her lower back soothingly, waiting on Rogue's response. Finally Rogue said, "I know I'll thank you eventually, but right now, I'm still pissed about the whole thing." Glitch nodded, holding his gaze. "I know you were right to do it. I just don't like my girls hurting."

"And that's why you're a good dad," she said with a small smile.

He snorted. "Not sure that's what I am, but I don't give a shit about titles."

Glitch chuckled softly. "Are they alright?" she asked. Rogue repeated what he said to Code, and she nodded. "That's to be expected. But those two are strong, and you watch, tomorrow they might be a bit shaky, but they'll have a weight off their shoulders that no one saw before. They'll walk taller, and they'll be the badass bitches they always were. How's Scarlett? I know this was triggering for her too, but she insisted she wanted to be there."

He nodded. "Damn stubborn woman wouldn't hear of it when I told her to go. I knew it was hurting her too, but she refused to leave. And I'm glad she didn't, because as soon as we were at the garage, they clung to her like monkeys. She's going to be hurting, but she's got ways she copes."

“With your dick, you mean,” Glitch smirked, making Code choke. Rogue just arched a brow. “No judgment here,” Glitch continued. “I know people cope in different ways, and as long as she’s happy, that’s all anyone should care about. Besides, a little sex is a great sleeping aid,” she added with a wicked grin and a wink.

Rogue stared at her. Then he looked at Code. “I’m going back home. Goodnight.” Then he stood and stalked out.

Glitch turned and looked down at him. “Not the friendliest guy, is he?”

Code chuckled. “Nope,” he agreed. “But at least with him you know what you get. He’s pissed, but he’s also worried in his own way. Once the girls are awake and acting somewhat back to their normal selves, he’ll settle down.”

“Mhmm,” she said, reaching up to play absently with his hair. “Sorry for intruding on your conversation.”

“Nah, he needed to hear that,” he replied, sliding up the hem of his shirt to expose her upper thigh and hip. “Did I wake you when I left?”

She shrugged. “I felt you leave the bed, and then I woke up. Not used to someone sleeping with me, I guess.”

He nodded. “And how are you feeling now?”

“I’m fine,” she replied immediately. He leveled her with a look. She held it, until finally she rolled her eyes and said, “Jeeze, you could give Simba a run for his money.” Her lips twitched at her joke, but he didn’t reply, continuing to stare at her. “Alright, alright. I’m tired, and I’m worried I pushed the girls too hard too fast. Sometimes I forget they’re still kids and not grown women, because damn, they act like it the majority of the time. I’m also worried that they, or Rogue and Scarlett, will hate me for doing it. Or that the rest of the women will. I mean, they’re all pretty damn protective of them.”

“They are,” he agreed. “But they’ve also all been through some kind of trauma themselves, and I bet they’ll be more understanding than you think. And like you said, those girls are tough, and while they might be raw and unsure for a bit, I

think they'll thank you for giving them what they needed. Especially since pretty soon, they're going to be old enough to head off to college, and as much as Rogue and Scarlett want them close by, I think they're determined to be out in the world and on their own, which means they may not be here for all of us to protect them. The last thing they'll want to happen is some frat boy getting handsy and them freezing up and things going farther than they're ready for."

He saw her digest his words, and slowly she nodded. "Yeah, I know. Hard to see that far in the future though, when you're almost sixteen and going through something like this," she pointed out. Then she gave him a half smile. "But nice to know that when I'm not here, you can be the wise old uncle that can remind them of that."

He felt that sharp pang in his chest again, but pushed it aside. "Who are you calling old?" he asked drily, pinning her with a glare.

Her half smile widened into a full-on wicked grin. "You're over-the-hill old now," she taunted. "I've seen your age, remember? Soon enough you'll be looking for Doc to prescribe you some little blue pills because you won't be able to get it up."

In reaction, he shifted her on his lap so that her ass was pressed directly against his hardening cock, and he murmured, "Does this feel like I'm unable to get it up to you?" He held her gaze, and saw the answering heat start to rise in hers.

She turned herself around, straddling his hips and pressing her center over him, making his semi turn into a full hard-on. "I don't know," she purred, hands going to the waistband of his pajama pants. "Maybe I need to check for myself."

"Mmmm, maybe you should," he agreed, stifling a groan when she moved past the waistband and gripped his cock, stroking him slowly. He let his head fall back. "Fuck," he muttered as she teased him with her slow strokes. It was one of her favorite methods of torture; one he never wanted to end.

"I suppose this will do," she teased, running her thumb over the head of his cock, making him groan deep in his



throat.

Before he could reply, his phone blared with an alert, and they both froze, staring at each other for a brief second before she let him go, any trace of desire vanishing from her face as she jumped off him and grabbed his phone from where he had put it on the table, while he got to his feet. “Facial recognition for Slip and his team,” she told him, handing him his phone and racing toward his office. He was right behind her.

They got to work immediately, both of them barking orders at the other while they worked to figure out where Slip and his team were heading this time. “They’re looking outside your town,” he announced in surprise. “You think they finally realized you’re not there and not coming back while you know they’re close by?”

“That, or they think the clubhouse is one of many and they’re trying to figure out where any other ones might be,” she replied absently. “That was a tactic that every team used. We had multiple stashes and safe houses when we were working.”

“And do you have additional ones?” he asked curiously.

She paused and stared at him coolly. “You really think I’m going to tell you our club’s business?” she asked simply.

He tried not to be annoyed and hurt at her answer. After all, his club had their own secrets, and he wouldn’t be telling her or the Predators about them, so he just shook his head. “You’re right, my bad. Pretend I didn’t ask.”

She eyed him for another brief second before turning back to her computer. “They’re parking on Main Street,” she told him. “And it looks like it’s Crisp and Spook’s turn to get out and ask questions.”

He looked at the camera footage and kept tracking them. “Slip still trying to get into your system?” he asked Glitch curiously.

“Yep,” she replied with an aggravated sigh. “You’d think by now he would figure out that he’ll never get in, but he’s still trying. Same as always, he just can’t stand to lose.”

“Makes you want to let him in so you can boot him right back out again,” he joked.

“If I didn’t have so much sensitive data in here, I’d consider it,” she grouched. “And I’d send him another message reminding him he’s still as terrible as he was in high school.”

He zoomed in on one of the cameras as Spook exited from one of the shops, moving on to the next. One thing he noticed about the man, his face gave nothing away. He was cool as a cucumber. Crisp, on the other hand, who was going in the opposite direction and into a cafe, looked irritated, and he was continuously playing with his lighter. Someone was getting antsy, Code thought, and he wondered how dangerous that would make him.

He followed them for the next fifteen minutes as they moved from shop to shop, restaurant to restaurant, and when they finally returned to the van, Code saw the aggravation on their faces. “Someone’s not happy,” he remarked as they climbed inside.

“Neither is their sloppy hacker,” she replied, amusement in her voice. “This is child’s play now. He’s trying every trick in the book he can think of, and his mistake is thinking I don’t know them all.”

“Alright, well we know their next play is hiding the van on the cameras while still trying to go after you, so I’ll keep on them and see where they head. Maybe this time we’ll figure out where they’re hiding, or at least a direction we can look at.”

Neither of them spoke for the next half hour as they went about their respective work. Code cursed when they turned off onto another road, one without cameras, meaning they were done for tonight. As predicted, as soon as they were out of camera view, Slip retreated from trying to get to Glitch.

“Well that was exciting,” Glitch announced sarcastically. “You know, I’m getting really tired of this cat and mouse game.”

“Me too, but until your team is back, it’s for the best,” he reminded her. And it also meant she was stuck here with him. As soon as that thought crossed his mind, he pushed it away. What the hell was wrong with him? He needed to get some sleep, he told himself. Obviously he was delirious.

Still, the thought kept coming back as they made their way upstairs, and he followed her into her room. She looked back at him in surprise, and narrowed her eyes. “What are you doing?” she demanded. “If you think you’re getting any—”

“Shut up,” he growled at her, grabbing her and tossing her onto her bed before stripping down and climbing in with her.

“I don’t remember inviting you in here,” she huffed, settling in under the sheets.

“Yeah, and I don’t need to find you standing over my bed staring down at me all creepy,” he returned as he pulled her into his arms and closed his eyes. He refused to believe there was any other reason for him being here.

“Well that was stupid thinking on your part,” she snickered. “In here, I have access to more weapons than in your room. Maybe you won’t be waking up to me smiling, but to a knife at your throat or a gun to your head.”

He cracked one eye open and looked at her, barely able to make her out in the darkness of the room, but he swore her blue eyes sparkled in amusement. “I imagine you’re trying to piss me off so I’ll fuck you again,” he told her mildly.

“Gets you hard when I threaten you, huh?” she scoffed, but she laid her head down on his chest and looked up at him.

He looked down at her. “Test your theory and find out,” he taunted. “But in a few hours. I need some sleep.”

She yawned. “Yeah, yeah. But for the record, this is a one time thing. I don’t need you in my space all the time.” Then she snuggled in to him tighter, her arm draping over his middle, and her breathing evened out within seconds.

He didn’t move for a long time. What the hell was he doing? He should be easing out of bed and going back to his own, especially since this was supposed to be casual. So why

was his body refusing to move? This was all sorts of a mistake, and every warning bell in him was screaming, telling him to get up and run far away. That he was getting in deep, and it was not going to end well for either of them.

He laid his head back down on the pillow and stared at the ceiling, a sinking feeling starting to settle into his gut. Damn it, he cursed silently. He was doing the one thing he swore he would never do again. He was falling for her. The one woman he knew he couldn't have, and wasn't sure he wanted.

*Liar*, his mind taunted. If you didn't want her, you'd be in your room, or fucking one of the club girls.

He shut his eyes tight as he tried to quell the panic rising inside him. No, this could not be happening. He couldn't fall for his rival. Well, sort of rival. True, they still fought and bickered over things, but it wasn't the same as before. There wasn't that angry, hateful tension between them. This time, it was a whole other kind of tension. The kind that usually ended with her bent over the desk or up against the wall, with his dick buried inside her. All because of her sassy mouth and the way she loved to drive him crazy. Hell, he knew she was doing it on purpose to get a rise out of him, but he didn't care. Probably because he did the same to her.

He opened his eyes and looked down at her again. She was nothing like any of the women he had dealt with before. Even Hallie had been different. Sure, there were similarities, but Glitch was a ball-buster. She was reckless and wild, but she never intentionally hurt him. Telling him he had a small dick, or messing with his shit was one thing, but she hadn't toyed with his emotions, or tried to use him to advance herself. Hell, she didn't need to. She was fucking amazing at what she did, and she didn't need him. If anything, he needed her. And wasn't that a blow to the ego?

He bit back a groan. He sounded like a damn woman worrying over shit. God, he needed to get a grip.

He tried to think of everything going back to the way it was before without Glitch, and his gut cramped. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. He was in so much shit. He was falling for Glitch, if he

hadn't already fallen, and now he had to figure out what the hell he was going to do.

When this was all over and her team came back, Glitch wasn't going to stay with him. She had her team, her family, so where did that leave him? He blew out a soft breath and looked down at her again. She let out a soft sigh, and her arm moved so that her hand was on the center of his chest, her leg moved over his, curling farther into him.

His heart stuttered, and he knew it was no longer a question. He had fallen for Glitch. All her rough edges, and the soft heart underneath. Even her sassy mouth and the way she came in like a battering ram. But he saw her vulnerable, he saw her hurt, and he saw her happy. She was complex, layered, and he wanted to peel each back so he could uncover every piece of her.

Even the pieces her team didn't know existed. He wanted it all.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

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### GLITCH

She tried not to be annoyed that Code avoided her for most of the last day and a half. Sure, he said it was because he had to help plan the run the guys were leaving on today, but she wasn't stupid. There was something else there, and she couldn't quite place it. There was an underlying anger and confusion in his eyes, and last night, he went to his own bed, leaving her to sleep alone. She had half a mind to break into his room and demand to know what the hell was going on, but something stopped her.

Probably the fact that she was always doing that to him, and she needed to stop. He was entitled to moments alone, just like she was. Still, something changed after the other night, and she wasn't sure what it was. Had something happened while she was asleep? She had been out like a light, completely exhausted, not even waking when he left her, and she slept until almost noon.

Why was she worrying about it anyway, she scolded herself as she made her way back up to her room. She just finished her workout, and she needed a shower. She offered to help Code with his planning, but he assured her he had it under control. He thanked her for her offer though, which staved off any irritation at him for excluding her. Which made no sense. Why was she getting upset that they weren't working together on everything? They weren't a team. He had his own club business, and he didn't need her help with that.

Which begged another question, why was she wanting to spend so much damn time with him? She walked into her bedroom and shut the door behind her, locking it before stalking into the adjoining bathroom.

Standing in the shower, she stood under the hot spray and tried to sort through her thoughts. God, she hated being a girl sometimes. Most of the time, she didn't bother overthinking anything, she got shit done. Her team wasn't big on sharing feelings unless they had a beef with one another. Guess that was what she got for working solely with men. She rarely told people if she was having a hard time. Why bother them when they had so many other issues that were way more pressing? Like rescuing women from their captors. Her feelings were trivial in comparison.

Still, she could admit that she liked being around Code, having someone to talk to about the things they had in common. Most of the guys' eyes glazed over if she got too technical. But it wasn't just the tech stuff. It was the social aspect too. She liked that here, she could interact with the women, especially Karissa. That she had someone to vent and got a female's perspective. After all, talking to men was the same thing a lot of the time. Especially the men in her life. It was either bikes, the mission, or finding women to fuck, with the occasional sparring session thrown in for good measure.

Okay, so she was lonely and in need of female companionship, she thought to herself in exasperation. It wasn't something she needed to cry about, she told herself firmly. She was far better off than the majority of the world, and if that came with a little loneliness, so be it.

That, of course, turned her mind to Code. Damn it, she really needed to get a grip around him. Him sleeping in her bed the other night messed with her head. She had always gone to him, always had a space he hadn't invaded and was still her own. But she couldn't say that anymore. Now, she had his scent on her pillow, on her sheets, and the memory of wrapping herself around him. For the first time in a long time, she hadn't felt alone at night.

She gave a low groan and quickly rushed through the rest of her shower. This was stupid. Here she was, being a damn sap about this whole situation, when she was a badass bitch. She didn't need a man to make her whole, and no man was worth this much headache. She needed to get a grip, and if whatever she and Code had was done, then it was done. She would be leaving soon enough anyway.

So why did her mind want to reject that idea so badly?

She got out of the shower, towed off, and dressed in a pair of black yoga pants and an old t-shirt before climbing into the middle of the bed, grabbing her laptop and phone. She could hear a lot of moving around and noise in the hallway, but she ignored it. She needed some time to herself. Mostly she needed to look at her business and all the emails and correspondence from her legal team and advisors.

For the next hour she answered email after email, made notes, and then smiled when she saw the name of a scholarship award recipient. It looked like Nari did indeed plan on pursuing her education, and had responded to her call for applications. Sure, her grades weren't as high as some, but her recommendations from her professors were glowing. She sent through the approval to her team, and also gave them approval to increase the scholarship amount if she needed more. She might be a club girl, but she was obviously trying to do something she enjoyed, and if Glitch could make it easier for her, then so be it. And, you know, they needed more women in this field. Far too many men out there needed to be knocked down a few pegs.

Which of course, made her think once again about Code. Damn it.

She scowled at her screen, but picked up her phone when she heard it go off. Her scowl was quickly replaced with a smile when she saw the caller ID.

“About time your lazy ass called me,” she griped, even as she worked on blocking the call from any outsiders. Couldn't be too careful.



“Babe, if I had known you were pining for me, I’d have called sooner,” Taz drawled in that thick southern twang. “Tell me the truth. It’s my dick you’re missing, isn’t it? You’re still thinking about seeing all my goodies and wishing you jumped on them when you had the chance.”

She rolled her eyes but grinned. “Oh sure,” she replied sarcastically. “About as much as I want to catch whatever disease you’re carrying around from all the tail you get.”

“Ain’t nothing wrong with my dick, babe,” he tsked.

“Uh-huh. And how goes the mission?”

He turned serious. “We’re getting them out of there tonight, and Simba’s got some law enforcement buddies of his coming in to handle these fuckers. Turns out they’re not only keeping them against their will, but they have a whole damn underground tunnel system that lets them smuggle people out without being seen. They’ve gotten themselves in bed with a local trafficking contact. Only reason the woman and her son haven’t been sent out was because this Abraham shithead took a shine to her, and he’s using her son to keep her in line.”

“Fucker,” she hissed. “I hope you’re planning to make him bleed.”

“Him and his sons. Looks like the boys have taken after their daddy. Apparently they like to try out the women before they’re sent through the pipeline.”

“Oh please tell me you’ll cut off their dicks and balls before you kill them for me,” she begged, infuriated.

“You know it,” he assured her. “Though I feel like I should point out, there are a few of them, and that’s a lot of cocks and balls I’ll have to handle. You best be making it up to me somehow.”

She rolled her eyes. “Fine, I’ll make you some more cheesecake, and I’ll buy you that new saddlebag you want for your bike.”

“Well, now, if I knew you were going to be generous, I’d have offered up my castration services sooner,” he joked. “Nah, you know I’m good with just the cheesecake, babe. I

can buy my own damn shit. I might not have your money, but I got enough.”

More than enough, she thought. Hell, they all did. She had her financial team invest any funds the guys wanted, and there were no worries now if they fell on some rough or quieter times. Not that she was ever going to let that happen. Besides, who needed that much money anyway?

“Alright,” she said simply, though she was still going to buy it for him, and made a mental note to get that done as soon as she could have an online presence again. “So what’s the plan for after you’ve rescued them and dealt with the scumbags?”

“We’ll be dropping the girl off with her father and he’ll make sure they’re taken care of. Then we’re heading back your way. Time to deal with the Ghost team once and for all. I have some hard feelings about them destroying all our shit.” His tone was low and angry at the reminder.

“On that we agree. It’s been a daily occurrence, them trying to find us. Code and I—”

“Has he been treating you better?” Taz demanded, interrupting her.

She was silent for a moment. Did she tell him that treating her better meant fucking her six ways to Sunday as often as possible? “Yes,” she finally answered, preferring to keep things simple.

Taz was silent for a moment. Then he groaned. “You didn’t,” he whined.

“I didn’t what?” For being a bit wild, the man was crazy smart, and they were close so there wasn’t much she could hide from him.

“You slept with him,” Taz huffed. “Damn it, woman, what the hell? He screwed you over!”

She sighed. She wasn’t going to hide it, and there was no use in lying anyway. “It just happened okay? We were fighting, and well, anger makes for some great sex. At least we haven’t tried to kill each other.”

Taz said nothing, but she could practically hear him thinking through the phone. “Goddamn it,” he sighed. “You did it, didn’t you? You fell for him.”

“I haven’t fallen for him,” she barked. “It’s some hot sex, that’s all. We agreed. When I leave, we’re done, no emotions, no strings, nothing.”

“Glitch,” Taz said seriously.

“I’m serious, Taz, this isn’t going anywhere. When you get back here, that’s it. I’m going back home with you and the team, and that’s that.”

“Glitch,” he said again.

“No, Taz, I’m not going to argue with you about this,” she warned him firmly. “I don’t have time for a relationship anyway. We have a lot on our plate, and Code and I would never work. We live in different states, for God’s sake.”

“Fine, fine, but you know I’m going to help you get whatever you want right? If that means you want him, then I’ll support you. And if he hurts you, even if it is no strings, I’ll gladly gut him after you’ve had your crack at him.”

Her throat clogged with emotions. “Thanks,” she managed to get out tightly. If there was one person she could always count on, it was Taz. Well, her entire team, but she was especially close with him, and he was the big brother she had never had. Even when he was acting like an idiot.

“None of that sappy shit, woman,” he teased. “So other than banging the other nerd, what else has been going on? Been fucking forever since we got to talk.”

“Because you never call me,” she joked. “Some might think you were working and being responsible.”

“Being an adult sucks,” he groaned.

“Good thing you don’t act like one,” she heard Copper call out from somewhere behind him.

Taz ignored him. “So spill. What kind of shenanigans have you and Xena been up to? And even better, do you have it on video?” She grinned and gave him a quick rundown on

everything that had been going on in the past couple weeks. By the time she was done, and had told him about her recent session with the twins, he said seriously, “Don’t worry, babe. Those girls are made of strong stuff, and they’ll thank you. Might not be right away, but they will. You did the right thing.”

She really hoped he was right. Her door suddenly opened and she looked up, startled and on alert. She glared at Code when he walked in, smirking at her. “Excuse me, asshole, ever heard of knocking?” she demanded.

“Just returning the favor,” he returned smugly.

“What’s going on?” Taz asked, drawing her attention back.

“Nothing, just Code being an ass,” she said absently, still glaring at said man. “What do you want, Code?”

“The guys are heading out, so we need to go over some shit,” he said. “And that includes you. So hurry your ass up and get downstairs.”

“I don’t answer to you,” she tossed back.

“Are you looking to get your ass slapped?” he asked.

“Try it and see what happens, caveman,” she snapped, narrowing her eyes at him.

“Don’t tempt me, kitten,” he returned evenly. “Now hurry up or I’ll come and drag your ass downstairs. Then I’ll put you up on a tall shelf and leave you there until we’re done.” Then he turned and walked out, leaving the door open.

She glared after him, a part of her wanting to laugh, another part wanting to run after him and kick his ass, and the final part of her wanted to go out there and jump his bones. It was a strange mixture. She heard Taz snort, drawing her attention back to him. “Yeah, you’re not affected at all. I can practically feel you getting horny through the phone, *kitten*,” he taunted with a sneer.

“Fuck off, asswipe,” she said without much heat. “I need to go and see what the hell is going on, and I think it’s time for

a reminder of just what I will and won't allow around here when it comes to him.”

He snickered. “You do that, kitten.”

“Call me kitten again and the next time I see you, it will be my knife in your balls, shithead,” she warned him with a sugary sweetness in her voice that made him snort.

“Fine, fine. But if you knife him, I want picture proof. In the meantime, get ready for our call in ten hours for the extraction, then we'll be on our way back tomorrow. Got it?”

“Got it.” They hung up, and she blew out a breath. Irritation beat through her at being summoned this way, but she also wanted to know what the hell was going on. So she stood up and headed out of her room, shutting and locking the door behind her. Then, as she passed Code's door, she got an idea and quickly let herself into his room.

By the time she made it downstairs, she was smug at the knowledge that she had once again gotten the upper hand with Code. She had gotten complacent, lost in the dick fog, and now her mind was clear. Time to remind Code that he wasn't top dick. She was looking forward to seeing his reaction.

Tom saw her and said, “They're in Church waiting for you.”

She nodded and headed in, shutting the door behind her. Everyone looked at her, and Code gave her an arched look when her gaze connected with his. She smirked at him, uncaring. “Well, aren't I lucky,” she remarked to the room at large. “Invited back into the inner sanctum once again. To what do I owe the pleasure, Mr. President?” she asked Savage, taking the empty seat waiting for her.

Savage rolled his eyes. “Now that you've finally decided to join us,” he started.

“Uh uh, not doing that,” she interrupted, giving him a cool look. “I was on the phone with my team, my club. You don't get to act like I was wasting your time doing shit that you consider frivolous. I wasn't braiding my damn hair.”

Savage eyed her and then gave her a curt nod. “Fine. Now that you’re done talking with your team, we’ve invited you in because we have a few things to go over. Karissa is over at the bar, but I’ve given Razor permission to share this part with her before we leave.”

“Lucky us,” she chirped. He gave her a warning look. She rolled her eyes. “Fine, fine, you can cool it with the scary look. I’ll be quiet now.”

“That’ll be the day,” she heard Ink mutter, making her turn to pin him with a cold glare. He held it, but only for a moment before he looked away. Good, it was time that everyone remembered just who she was. *What* she was, she corrected herself.

“Alright, let’s get through this quickly,” Savage announced. “This run should only take about four hours total, but we need to be prepared for everything.” He glanced at Code and then at her. “Glitch, Code is going to be going with us for this one, so we’ll need you here, running comms and security for us if there are any problems. You good with that?”

She pursed her lips. “What kind of problems are we talking, and what exactly am I needed to do?” He looked over at Rogue, who gave a slight shake of his head. Anger burned in her gut, but she managed to keep her voice even. “You want me to run interference and be on the comms, you tell me what the hell is going on or I’m not doing it,” she told them firmly. “If we’re talking about a job where someone could be seriously hurt or killed, I won’t go in blind. You don’t want to tell me the whole scope of the job, fine, but I need to know what I’m dealing with at minimum.” She narrowed her eyes and said coldly, “And I don’t appreciate you bringing me into something last minute and using me as some kind of back-up. That is how things go wrong, and I don’t need that on my conscience.”

“We weren’t going to bring you in at all,” Savage replied darkly. “But the plans have changed, and we need some more men. Since you’re here, and you have experience with this kind of thing, we figured you would be able to handle it. But if you can’t...”

Insult and fury were a dangerous mix when she was already feeling far too many other emotions. And she was equally pissed Code hadn't given her heads up about this. Then again, what did she think was going to happen? This club was committed to its bros-before-hos mentality. "You think insulting me is going to get me to help you?" she asked quietly, her eyes never leaving Savage's. "Let's call a spade a spade shall we? You didn't want to involve a woman in your club business, nevermind that she is a patched member of another club. But now, you're stuck with no other choice so you're going to suck it up. Not because you value my expertise, but because that's your only option."

"Jesus Christ, this is exactly why I didn't want to involve you," Savage snapped. "You're taking everything too goddamn personal. It's a job, Glitch. You may not like how we run our club, but while you're here, you damn well need to respect it. You're a woman, and we don't involve women in our club business unless absolutely necessary. That's how it is, and I'm not explaining it again. If you want to help us, fine; if you don't, then that's fine too. But I don't want to hear any more bitching and complaining from you about how I run this club. Got it?"

"Savage," Code said in a low warning voice. Savage whipped his head to glare at Code, whose eyes were stormy. "I know you're stressed about leaving Royal, but you don't get to speak to her that way. She's not a club girl, she's not an Old Lady, and she's not some bitch off the street. We're asking her a favor, and that's as a member of another club, not because she's a damn woman. So unless we want a problem, show her some respect."

Glitch eyed him for a moment, though he didn't even glance her way. Did he just defend her? Something shifted inside her and she tried not to let it show how much his words affected her. Then she looked back at Savage and saw him eyeing Code curiously. Finally he sighed. "Damn it, not another one," he muttered. Code stiffened, but didn't reply. Confusion had her wondering what the hell was going on, but she didn't voice it. Instead, she looked at Savage when he turned back to her and said, "I'm sorry for that, Glitch. Code's

right, I am out of sorts because Royal isn't feeling well today and the babies could come at any time. I don't want to be away from her. I know you're a member of the Predators, but I'm not used to having women in here, in your capacity, and I forgot myself."

She gave a curt nod. "I'll accept that. And I'll make note that this was the day hell froze over and a man actually apologized in front of other men so sincerely," she added cheekily, making Savage glare at her while the other men in the room snickered. "Now, what exactly would you like me to do?"

As he explained the plan, she took some notes on her phone, noting that Savage and Rogue were as vague as they possibly could be. She had half a mind to tell them all she could just hack their phones and find out herself, but that probably wouldn't earn her any favors. Instead, she let them keep the illusion and let them tell her the information. When he finished the explanation, he said, "And all of that means that the only people here to help if shit goes sideways are the Prospects."

She arched a brow. "You mean in case the Ghost team shows up?" He nodded. "No fear of that. They're still two states away, chasing us with their heads up their asses. I don't see any issues arising in the next four to six hours, or however long it will take you all to get back here."

He nodded. "Alright, but you make sure your ass, and Karissa's, don't leave the compound."

"Well there go my plans for a shopping spree," she pouted. "And here I was thinking about buying you something pretty as a thank you for hosting me."

Savage rolled his eyes. "Why must all the women be smartasses?" he asked the men.

"Because we would be bored as shit otherwise," Jax snickered. "How come you're not offering me something pretty, babe?"



She ignored him. “I won’t leave the compound unless under duress,” she assured him. “But just to be safe, how about we all stop talking so you can get out of here and get this shit done?”

A few more snickers sounded as Savage glared at her. Then he looked at Code and said, “I hope you know what the hell you’re doing.” He banged his gavel and stood. “Let’s roll out, brothers. We leave in ten minutes.”

Everyone stood and made their way out of the room. Code slipped out behind her as they left. When they were back out in the common room, all the women, including the twins, were there, minus Karissa who was still at the bar, and their men headed for them immediately. She headed for the office. She glanced over her shoulder and saw Code heading up the stairs, and her grin finally broke free.

She wondered if he was going to come tell her what he thought of her little surprise.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

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### GLITCH

She didn't have long to wait before Code stalked into the office and stood over her, glaring. "Yes?" she asked innocently. "Is there a problem, caveman?"

His eyes narrowed. "When I get back, we're going to be having a discussion on what happens when you mess with my shit, kitten," he warned her.

"Oooh, the kind where you put me over your knee and spank me like a naughty girl?" she taunted him. "I always said you were a kinky lot. But bring it on, caveman. I might be small, but we both know I can take you down easily enough."

He put his hands on the edge of the desk and leaned down until his face was only inches away from hers. "Your ass is mine when I get back, Eliza," he told her in a low voice, his eyes promising all sorts of deliciously dirty things.

"Oh, well, now I'm just a puddle, what with you using my first name and all," she said in a mock southern twang, putting her hand over her chest for dramatic effect. She put her face closer to his. "Bring it on, *Milo*," she murmured.

Code barely reacted to her using his first name. Instead, he reached up, cupped the back of her neck, and murmured, "It's a wonder why I like your sassy mouth," before he put his lips to hers and kissed the crap out of her. It was hot, intense, and downright possessive. The grip on the back of her neck made

her shiver, and when he nipped at her lip, she moaned. He pulled away much too fast for her liking, but his eyes were bright and hot on hers when he murmured, “Stay out of trouble, kitten. We’re going to talk when I get back.”

“I hope that’s code for finishing what you started,” she murmured in return, easing back when he gave the nape of her neck a hard squeeze and then pulled his hand away.

He smirked. “Depends on what you get up to while I’m gone,” he replied. “Mess with my shit again, and you’re going to get more than a spanking. I’ll keep you on edge all damn night and into tomorrow.”

Her core heated at the thought. Who knew that edging would be such a turn on for her? Damn. “Promises, promises,” she taunted. “Now, get the hell out so I can get some work done.”

He eyed her for a moment, opened his mouth, and then shut it, before turning and walking away. Her gaze lingered on him as he did, then she cursed herself and told herself to get a grip. She needed to prepare.

It wasn’t long before Karissa was back from the bar and sitting in Code’s chair. Glitch glanced at her over her shoulder, arching a brow in question. “Figured I was more useful in here than out there,” Karissa said simply. “Royal is feeling cranky as shit, and Harlow and Esme are trying to help her get more comfortable. Scarlett and the girls went back to the garage.”

Glitch tried not to wince at the mention of the girls. She hadn’t missed that they had avoided looking at her when she emerged from Church. “How do you think they’re doing?” she asked carefully.

Karissa eyed her for a moment. “They’re handling it, but they’re both still raw. It was a lot for them, and Scarlett told me that they’re working through it in their own way. They don’t hate you, pipsqueak. They’re just not ready for the reminder of what they faced, and unfortunately, you’re part of that.”

She sighed. “I know. I’m doubting myself now. I think we pushed them too hard and too fast.”

“I think it was just the thing they needed,” Karissa countered. “We’re not easy women, Glitch, and they won’t be either. If you babied them, they would have resented you when they’re older and in the exact same situation, because let’s face it, men are fucking assholes, and there are a lot of them out there that can’t handle a woman saying no, or a strong woman in general. Those two are going to be able to handle themselves without freezing, and when they get free, they’re going to give a damn good fight. Might not look like it right now, but they’ll be coming and thanking you before long.”

Glitch was silent for a moment. “I hope you’re right.”

“Now, what the hell is going on with you and Code?” she asked.

Glitch rolled her eyes. “Why does everyone keep asking me that? We’re having some fun, and we’re not trying to kill each other. I think that’s all anyone needs to worry about.”

Karissa pinned her with a look. “Yeah, see, you said that before, and we both know that’s not true. Something’s changed. You’re not fighting and bickering all the time.”

“That you know of,” Glitch corrected. “We’ve just learned to keep it in here or behind closed doors.”

“Fine. But you’re definitely not acting like he’s public enemy number one anymore either. And the two of you are working together like you’ve been doing it all your lives.”

Glitch turned to stare at her in disbelief. “Seriously? That’s what’s got you all up in a tizzy? He apologized, and I accepted. You know we don’t hold grudges. Fucks things up, and I’ve decided to apply that principle to Code. Everyone keeps saying how they want us working together, and now that we’re doing that, it’s some big problem? Would you make up your mind?” she demanded in exasperation.

“If I thought that was all it was, then yeah, I’d accept it,” she agreed. “But it’s not. How about the fact that you’re in his

bed every night? Not just for sex, but you're sleeping there. You never sleep-sleep with a man. Ever."

"Well, apparently all the other men weren't doing it right, because Code definitely wears me out," she replied with a smug grin. "Is pretty boy not giving you the same, babe? Do I need to have a talk with him about how to actually please a woman? I'm sure I can find some lovely instructional videos on the subject."

Karissa rolled her eyes. "No, he doesn't need any help, thanks," she answered drily. "Look, if I thought this was all good fun, I would let it go. But I know it's not, and deep down, you know it too. I see it on your face when you look at him. Sure, sometimes there's annoyance or anger there, but under that is this look of content and longing. You enjoy being around him, and you enjoy the attention and affection he gives you. There is nothing wrong with that. I want that for you. But at the same time, I know you're never going to leave the team, and I don't want you to be hurt when you have to leave Code behind. Hell, I don't want Code hurt either, but my main concern is you."

"I appreciate it, but seriously, Xena, I'm fine," she assured her, though even to her own ears the words lacked conviction.

Before Karissa could push the issue any further, her comms rang with an incoming call, and she quickly turned back to her screen, grateful for the reprieve. She didn't want any more questions about Code. She didn't have answers herself.

For the next two hours, she guided the men on their run. Despite them not telling her specifics, she was quickly able to piece it together for herself when she heard the name Rogue said over the comms. She rolled her eyes. Seriously, they were that worried about some guns? It wasn't like she hadn't figured out in her initial investigation of them what they were doing for some of their money. Still, she managed not to say anything, keeping her thoughts to herself while she monitored the whereabouts of the local law enforcement, and ensured the club stayed out of view of any cameras.

By the time Savage announced they were heading back, she was ready to be done and take a nap, or at least find something to focus on that wouldn't involve people asking her questions about Code. Karissa had left not long ago, bored out of her mind from sitting and listening to Glitch give instructions and information through her headset, and not being able to hear the other end.

When she walked out into the common room, she saw that all the women, including the twins, were back in the main room, with Tom behind the bar and Sam standing near the door. She headed for the group of women, nerves building in her belly when they all looked at her. The twins gave her small nods before turning away. Scarlett gave her a tired and sad smile, but didn't look away. Glitch took a seat next to Karissa. "So, what kind of trouble are we getting into while the men are away?" she asked cheerfully.

Karissa snorted, while Esme and Harlow grinned. Royal's expression was strained and Scarlett just shrugged. "I doubt that one would let us get into much," Esme remarked, jerking her thumb at the Prospect behind the bar. "He's just as bad as the patched brothers."

"I think we could take him," Glitch predicted, looking over at Tom, who held her gaze and gave her a calm, blank stare.

"You'll have to take him without me," Royal said morosely. "I can't even get up on my damn own. I look and feel like a beached whale." Her eyes grew wet. "I just want them out. I'm so tired of being pregnant."

"They'll be here soon," Harlow tried to soothe her.

"I'm about ready to yank them out," she moaned. She looked over at Esme. "This will be you soon, you know."

Esme rubbed her small bump. "I've been through it before so I know all about it. I promise it will all be worth it."

"Easy for you to say," Royal huffed. "You only had one, I'm having a whole damn litter."

"Two isn't a litter, babe," Harlow reminded her. Royal gave her a scathing glare, and Harlow winced and looked

away.

Glitch bit back a laugh, since she didn't want to deal with an angry pregnant lady. Hell, they were scarier than some of the worst criminals in the world when you got them going. "Alright, well, Royal, you can be our lookout. We can't have anyone interfering with our fun," she offered. "No one will dare to mess with you."

"Sure, I'll just threaten to sit on them," she sniped.

"I was thinking that you could go into labor, but sure, that works too," she joked.

Royal moaned. "I'm sorry, I'm just so tired and sore. My back is killing me, and I have to pee like every five minutes now. I just want to have them out so I can go back to feeling like me again."

"How about we take your mind off it and do something fun?" Glitch suggested.

She quirked a brow. "What do you mean by fun?"

Glitch grinned wickedly. "Well, see, I have this thing that I like to mess with Code's room. Earlier, he decided to barge into my room after picking the lock and tell me to get my ass downstairs while I was on the phone. Then he threatened to put me on a top shelf and leave me there, so I decided he needed a little reminder of who he was threatening."

The women all snickered, even the twins. "Oh, now you have to tell us what you did," Harlow demanded.

Glitch leaned forward, her eyes bright with laughter. "How about I show you?" she suggested.

"You mean I have to go upstairs?" Royal groaned.

"Yes, but maybe that will help those babies get moving," Glitch suggested. "And there are bathrooms all along the way. Including mine."

She looked like she wanted to argue but then nodded. "Yeah, you're right. The doctor said exercise could help. But no one gets to laugh while I struggle to get up the stairs."

“Of course not,” Scarlett assured her. “Tom,” she called out. “We’re heading upstairs.”

“I’m coming with you,” he said, immediately coming around the bar. “Someone has to keep you all out of trouble.”

“Guy is the biggest party pooper around and I don’t really want to take him down again. Savage would probably put me in the Box,” Karissa grumbled.

“I’ll protect you,” Glitch assured her, smirking. Karissa just gave her a droll look.

Tom, of course, refused to stay downstairs and followed them up, careful to stay at the back of the group. Personally, Glitch noticed him watching Royal with a hell of a lot of worry when he didn’t think anyone was looking, but she figured that was normal when your President’s Old Lady was about to pop.

When they reached the top of the stairs, Glitch unlocked her bedroom and Royal hurried in as fast as possible. Glitch grinned as she stood outside Code’s room and they all waited for Royal to come back. “You know Code is going to see this and he’s going to take it out on your ass later, right?” Karissa snickered.

“That’s probably what she’s hoping for,” Wren gagged. “Why is everyone around here so kinky?”

“Because apparently that’s a requirement to be a biker,” Win drawled, rolling her eyes. “Just ask Scarlett.”

Scarlett flushed and glared at them. “Would you stop?” Both girls grinned wickedly at her, and she rolled her eyes and sighed. She looked at Esme. “And you say you want girls?”

Esme grinned. “I’m watching you to learn what not to do. Then I’ll do the same with Royal and her two. By the time mine are teenagers, I’ll have everything under control.”

Scarlett scoffed. “Yeah, right. You come see me when that actually happens. Knowing you and Fury, any girls you have are going to be wild, and way worse than these two with all the men around teaching them bad habits.”



“I’d be more worried about them learning bad habits from those two,” Harlow said drily, jerking her thumb at Glitch and Karissa.

“Who, us?” Glitch asked innocently as she finished picking the lock on Code’s door and Royal waddled her way back out. “We’re excellent influences.”

“She says as she picks a lock,” Royal scoffed.

“You are not allowed to teach them any of that,” Scarlett told Glitch firmly.

Wren and Win snickered. “You act like we don’t already know how. She’d only teach us to be faster.”

Scarlett sighed and shook her head.

“You never know when you’ll need to get out of somewhere quickly, so it’s a good skill to have,” Karissa pointed out.

“Don’t encourage them,” Scarlett moaned.

“Enough talking,” Harlow huffed. “I want to see what Glitch did to Code’s room.”

Glitch threw open the door and waved her hand, grinning wickedly. She glanced up at the ceiling, knowing that Code would no doubt check the cameras at some point and see exactly what she was up to. If he wanted to talk when they got back, she was going to make sure there was something to talk about.

“Oh shit,” Karissa gasped, then started laughing maniacally.

“He saw this and didn’t lose his shit?” Esme wondered aloud. “Damn, that man has some strong nerves, because Fury would haul me out and spank my ass good.” Then she grinned wickedly. “Not that I would complain.”

The other women were still laughing as Glitch took in her handiwork. She had positioned the blow up doll in the middle of Code’s bed, and blacked out the room by drawing the shades and turning the lamp down low. She had also set up the bed so that it looked like the doll had been getting busy,

putting the dildo on, a condom over it, and Code's boxer shorts in her open mouth, along with some handcuffs and her paddle in each hand. It was a hilarious scene, and she was looking forward to Code's reaction in person when he got back. Maybe she would change it up a bit before then.

"That is genius," Wren laughed hysterically, bent over and clutching at her stomach. Win was doing much the same, leaning on her sister for support.

"It's too bad you didn't have another doll that looked like Code. You could have done some funny scenes with them," Karissa giggled.

Glitch grinned and pulled out her phone. "Oh, now you just gave me some ideas. I'm sure I could come up with something. You know, once I can buy shit on my own again."

"Oh shit, I think I just peed myself," Royal gasped out, making them all turn to look at her. But then she stopped and got a weird look on her face as she looked down at herself. Glitch saw the shock, then fear, and then excitement in her eyes. Glitch instantly sobered. "Uh, guys, I think my water just broke," Royal told them all.

All laughter stopped, and everyone stared at her wide-eyed. Then Wren and Win both snorted. "Damn, who knew the sight of a sex doll wearing a strap-on would get you going," Win gasped out.

"With this bunch, if it didn't, I would be worried," Wren added.

Royal grinned. "I don't care what got this started, I need to get out of these clothes and get to the hospital. My doctor wants me there as soon as possible in case of any issues."

"Prospect!" Karissa barked.

"I heard," Tom said calmly. "I've already alerted Prez, we just need to wait until they get back to take you there."

"I can't wait that long," Royal snapped, annoyed and sounding a little panicked.

“Of course not,” Glitch agreed, giving Tom a shut-your-mouth glare. “We’re going to get you to the hospital as quickly as we can.”

“Good... oh fuck,” she hissed, bending over and grabbing her belly as a contraction hit her. Harlow instantly took her hand and soothed her through it. Esme went to her other side, rubbing her back and murmuring soft words. Karissa, Glitch, Scarlett, and the twins all looked at each other, unsure of what to do. “Damn, that hurt,” Royal finally breathed as the contraction subsided. “I need my bag, and someone needs to stay with Ronin when he gets home from daycare.”

“Don’t worry, we’ll make sure he’s taken care of,” Karissa assured her. “Let’s get you downstairs. Tom, send Sam for the bag,” she added.

Tom looked like he was going to argue, no doubt because she wasn’t one of the brothers, but he must have thought better of it because he just nodded and pulled out his phone to text Sam. In the meantime, Scarlett and Esme helped Royal down the stairs, with Harlow carrying baby Harley right behind them.

Glitch glanced around Code’s room and saw a small puddle on the floor where Royal had been standing. She grabbed a towel from the bathroom and quickly cleaned it up before closing his door and heading downstairs. Royal was now standing in the middle of the room, breathing heavily and moaning softly as another contraction worked its way through her.

Glitch had no issues with kids, but this right here was one of the reasons she wasn’t sure she would have them. Damn, it looked like it hurt. And Royal was having two of them!

Harlow looked over at Tom and instructed, “Go get the car. We need to get her to the hospital.”

“We can’t until—”

“Listen here, Prospect,” Harlow snapped at him, irritation making her eyes spark. “You want to try telling that to the woman who is about to push two babies out of her vagina?”

Who is currently experiencing so much pain that you would cry like a baby yourself if you had to go through it? I don't care that Savage isn't here. We are going to the hospital. She is having twins. Twins means complications, and complications means she needs to be very closely monitored by medical professionals the entire time she's in labor. So you are going to go get that SUV, and we are going to the hospital. Do you understand me?"

"Damn, remind me not to piss her off," Wren whispered beside Glitch, who nodded her agreement. Harlow was one protective mama bear, and you did not get in her way. Ever.

Tom, though, had clearly run out of brain cells and common sense because he shook his head. "No. Prez said you need to wait here, and that's what we're doing. They'll be back in a couple of hours, and the babies won't be here before then. This stuff can take days, right? And her water only just broke, so we have lots of time."

"This is why we don't listen to men. They have dicks, and their brains seem to either reside inside them or in some hidden place because they're definitely not up top very often," Glitch sighed.

Tom glared at her. "I have orders—"

"Yes, and you don't want to piss off the big scary President," Karissa interrupted. "I'm telling you right now, we are taking Royal to the hospital one way or another. Help, or get out of the way."

Tom glared at her, unintimidated. "I'm following orders and—"

"Would someone just knock him the hell out already?" Royal snapped, before letting out a low groan. "Fuck, they're stronger and faster. We need to go. I'm not having these babies here."

"Done," Karissa said easily, reaching out and gripping the pressure point in Tom's neck, dropping him to the floor almost instantly. "Alright, let's get going," Karissa said, dusting her hands off.

Glitch looked at her and laughed. “Damn, I forgot how slick you were at that.”

“I’ll go get the SUV,” Karissa said with a smug smile. “Let’s get you to the hospital, mama, and have these babies. Glitch, you staying here?”

She thought about it briefly. Here, she was safe, but if Karissa was putting herself on the line, she was going to make sure they were covered. “I’m coming. Let me just grab my laptop, I’ll be right back.” Karissa nodded, and Glitch raced up the stairs.

When she came back down, Karissa was in the driver’s seat of the SUV, with Esme beside her, Harlow in the back with Royal, while baby Harley was strapped into one of the infant car seats, no doubt one of the ones for the twins. Scarlett, Win, and Wren were in Scarlett’s car waiting for her. She quickly jumped in the passenger seat, and they were off. Well, almost. The Prospect at the gate unwisely tried to stop them, and Glitch was done. She climbed out of the car and put her gun to his temple. “Open the gate,” she ordered. “Now.”

“You don’t have the balls to shoot me,” the stupid Prospect taunted, turning to stare down at her, the muzzle of her gun now pressed against his forehead.

“My God, every one of you are idiots,” Glitch huffed in aggravation. “You have ten seconds to open that gate or you’re going to take a little nap. So make your choice, and quickly, before I make it for you. Got it?”

He made a stupid one, trying to grab the gun, which of course resulted in her punching him in the gut. She followed it up with a swift knee to the balls, making him sink to the ground, cupping himself and wheezing. Glitch rolled her eyes, went to the gate, and pressed the button to open it, waving the two cars through before pressing the button again to have it shut. She zipped through before it did, then climbed back into Scarlett’s car.

Scarlett gave her a sideways glance. “You know Savage is going to be pissed you beat up the Prospects, right?” she asked drily as they drove down the road.

Glitch opened her laptop, logging in quickly and making sure that they weren't visible on any cameras. Then she grinned and told her, "Don't worry, they'll be fine. I'm sure once he realizes that the hospital was the best place for her and those babies, he'll be on my side. And if not, well, I have my own tricks to make him reconsider his anger."

The twins in the back both laughed. Glitch looked back at them and winked. They grinned back at her, no traces of shadows in their eyes, and she felt something settle in her soul. It was a good day.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

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### CODE

Code enjoyed the caress of the wind across his face as they sped along the open highway. The moment the message came in that Royal was in labor, she became Savage's only concern. Thankfully, they were already on their way back, and they were only a couple hours out. Still, he could see the tension radiating off Savage's form even from his spot in the back of the formation. The man wanted to be with his woman when she had those babies, and they would make sure he got there in time.

Their run went off without a hitch, and Glitch kept them abreast of any possible complications from the cops. Her voice in his ear rang through calm and precise, unruffled even when one cop got a little too close. She set them on a new route without any fuss. Even their contact had been damn impressed, because he had been sweating bullets for most of the trip.

Code realized in that moment it was one of the few times that he was actually on a run and not stuck back in the office doing the very thing Glitch had been doing. It also struck him that he was okay with it, and he hadn't felt resentful or angry that Glitch was involved in their business while he was doing something other than working on a computer.

Which of course made him think back to his actions over the last day and a half. Avoiding Glitch had been a bit tricky, but he managed it. He'd needed time to himself, mostly

because his mind was a mess of thoughts and emotions he couldn't seem to quiet or understand. He noticed Glitch eyeing him curiously, but thankfully she hadn't pushed him or tried to instigate him. Well, other than her little stunt earlier today, he thought in amusement.

He should have known she was going to do something like that, especially after his threat to spank her ass and put her up on a shelf.

All of that was enough to remind him of the decision he made. Hell, it kept him up for most of the night. That and a lot of self doubt, but he finally decided he needed to talk to Glitch when they got back, and he could get her alone. He had no idea how she would react, but he was ready for anything. He knew her team would be back soon, being close to wrapping up their current mission, and he didn't want to leave anything to chance.

He was fully aware that Glitch loved her team, and they were her family. They were the ones that would tell him to fuck off, and she would follow right along with them. He could respect it, but that didn't change the fact that he wanted her for himself. Which shocked him. It was enough to just about give him a heart attack the moment the thought slammed into his head while laying in bed last night.

He kept telling himself that he needed to let her go, that it would never work. That he could live without her. Until the thought of her actually leaving came into his mind, and hit him like a sledgehammer to the gut. Which of course made him want to pinpoint when things changed, but that answer had come pretty quick. Up until the moment he saw her sitting in the gym all alone after working with the twins, he hadn't realized how much she started to matter to him.

The thought of her sitting there, alone and uncertain she did the right thing by the twins, had gutted him. He wondered if she felt that way when she was with her team. Sure, he knew they were all close, but there was a difference between a familial closeness and one that was focused solely on her. It hit him that he had been seeing different sides of her, and he liked



them all, even when they pissed him the hell off. He wouldn't change one part of her.

Now, he had to convince her to stay, or at least give him a shot. He even considered leaving the club to be with her, just to see where things would go. It would hurt, but something told him it would be worth the effort. He could help her club, and he loved that kind of work anyway. Still, it was no small thing to think about leaving the Dragons. They were his family too, and riding with them, like they were now, felt right. Felt like home.

He had to figure out what the hell he wanted, all while trying to convince Glitch to give them a chance. It was a total mind-fuck. Who the hell would have thought he would find himself pining for the woman that, only weeks ago, he practically despised?

Still, even now, he was anxious to get back to her. It wasn't just the sex. He liked talking to her, liked bouncing ideas off her. Hell, he even liked it when he pissed her off and she threatened him. He had half a mind to ask Razor if this was normal, since Karissa often threatened him just the same. Though she was probably less stabby about it. Glitch did love her knife, and loved to remind him that she knew how to use it.

“Fucking hell,” Savage’s voice came growling angrily through the comms that they all still had in. “Just got a message from Tom. Karissa knocked him out, Glitch took down the Prospect at the gate, and Sam was left behind. The girls are taking Royal to the hospital. Her contractions were getting closer together and the Prospects were insisting on waiting for us.”

“Wait, they’re all at the hospital?” Code asked, quickly clueing in to what that all meant.

“Sounds like it,” Savage said grimly. “Let’s move it, brothers. We need to get to the hospital. Men with Old Ladies ride with me, everyone else, head to the clubhouse to make sure it’s secure.”

Code's lips thinned angrily. Damn stubborn woman, he thought angrily. She put herself in danger. She should have stayed at the damn compound. He was definitely going to be punishing her later when he got her alone.

It took them another hour to get to the hospital, and he, Rogue, Fury, Steel and Razor followed Savage inside the hospital. They didn't stop until they got up to the labor and delivery ward, getting all kinds of side-eye along the way. It dawned on him he hadn't argued that Glitch wasn't his Old Lady. Yep, he was fucked.

He wasn't sure they would get to that point, but the idea didn't scare him.

As soon as they cleared the elevator and hit the waiting room, Harlow handed her son to his father and then hurried Savage down to hall, while the rest of them moved to their respective women. He made his way over to where Glitch was sitting, laptop open and typing away furiously, a small frowning between her brows. "You're supposed to be at the clubhouse, kitten," he growled, hands on his hips as he stood in front of her.

She glanced up at him. "Babies being born kind of trump that," she said simply. "Karissa had to drive, and someone needed to keep us off the cameras. So far so good. You're welcome."

He narrowed his eyes, and then shook his head. "You really are asking for a spanking, kitten."

"Is that all you guys ever think about?" Win demanded in disgust from beside him. He glanced over at her in surprise. She arched a brow at him, Wren slightly behind her with the exact same expression on her face. "I can't tell you how many times I hear you all use that phrase. It's kind of losing its power. I'd probably just throat punch a guy if he said that to me."

"Fucking right," Rogue growled from where he was now sitting with Scarlett in his lap, in one of the chairs a few short feet away. "No one should be saying anything like that to you. I'll kill them."

“Don’t threaten people in public, Uncle Ro-Ro,” Wren tsked. He glared at her, which only made her grin. He hated that nickname, and Code knew they loved to use it to get a rise out of him. He took the bait every damn time.

“It can be nice when the guy knows what he’s doing,” Glitch told the girls with a wicked grin. “But there are very few I would allow to do it.”

“How about we not talk about spanking with teenage girls,” Scarlett suggested with a heavy sigh. “I swear, one of these days I’m going to figure out how to get you two to act like proper young ladies.”

Both girls looked at her and snorted. “We live with a biker, Scarlett, and we spend more time with the club than our own friends. I think that ship has sailed,” Wren pointed out wryly.

“Sailed and sank,” Win corrected. “As in, it’s never going to happen, so you probably should just accept it.”

Code smirked and then looked back at Glitch, who was once again working at whatever was on her screen. He sighed and sat down next to her. “Still annoyed you put yourself in danger, kitten,” he told her quietly.

She glanced over at him. Her expression was one of annoyance, but her eyes held a glimmer of amusement. “I wasn’t about to let Karissa be out here alone, caveman,” she told him drily.

“You could have protected her from inside the clubhouse just as well as here,” he reminded her. “It’s you they’re looking for, not her.”

“No, they’re looking for all of us,” she corrected. “And, while yes I could have, I weighed the risk and decided I was safe enough here. I have what I need to protect myself and anyone else that needs it. Between Karissa and I, not much will get past us.”

He tried not to get annoyed at her logic, acknowledging she was right, but knowing she deliberately put herself in danger still pissed him off. He brushed his lips to her ear and murmured, “Perhaps I need to start tying your ass to the chair

when we have to leave. Seems you can't obey the words 'no' and 'stay'."

Her head turned and she glared at him, making him smile slowly at her. Her blue eyes were fiery and she looked like she was ready to strangle him. Why the hell was that look so hot? Even now, his cock was twitching behind his zipper. "Try it and see what happens, caveman," she hissed at him. "The minute I got free, I'd be coming for you, and you'd be feeling the edge of my blade on your neck or your balls, depending on how pissed I was when I got there."

"Sure you would, kitten," he taunted, his arm going around the back of her chair as he leaned forward and gave her a quick hard kiss. When he pulled away, she looked slightly dazed, as if she hadn't expected him to do that, and he only smiled wider. He loved to throw her off her game. "Now, finish up what you're doing so we can get back to the clubhouse," he told her abruptly, pulling back even further and getting to his feet.

"I can't leave if Karissa is staying," she argued. "Can't risk her being picked up on the cameras."

"We're going to head back," Karissa announced as she and Razor came over. Razor looked annoyed that she was here too, but he kept his arm around her protectively. "It'll probably be hours before the babies are here anyway."

Glitch sighed. "Yeah, I know. Just let me work a little magic that will keep us off the cameras and then we can go."

She started clicking away, but stopped when they heard footsteps rushing down the hall. They all turned to find Harlow dressed in a medical gown, beaming. "The babies are almost here! Royal was farther along than they thought. It won't be long now." Then she raced back down the hall, just as they heard loud cursing coming from that direction.

"Well I guess we're staying," Karissa chuckled.

Razor and Code shared a look, neither of them happy with that declaration, but they knew it was futile to argue. Instead they just nodded and settled in with their women. Everyone

was quiet for a moment before another loud curse came from down the hall, followed by a guttural oath from Royal. “If you tell me to breathe one more time, I’m going to rip your cock off, Savage. This is all your fault. And you gave me two of them.”

None of them made a sound, then they all looked at each other and burst out laughing. “I wonder if she’d actually do it,” Wren wondered aloud.

“Oh, trust me, when you’re in labor and someone gets on your nerves, you’re capable of anything,” Esme snickered. She looked at Fury and gave him a wicked grin. “So take notes, baby, because Royal might threaten, but I’ll do it. And if I’m too out of it to take action, Karissa will.”

“Me?” Karissa asked in shock. “Why the hell would I be there, bitch?”

Esme gave her an are-you-crazy-look. “You really think, after everything, that you’re not going to be right there with me?” Karissa’s face paled and her eyes went comically wide.

“We’ll be just fine, *mi tesoro*,” Fury said easily. “You’re strong, and I can take whatever you dish out.”

“You say that now,” Esme snickered. “But we’ll see. We have a few more months before we get to that point anyway.” Fury laid a protective hand on her bump and gave her a soft smile.

Another yell and some more cursing came down the hall. “Damn, if that isn’t the perfect birth control, I don’t know what is,” Win said with a shudder.

Code glanced at Glitch and saw a smirk on her lips. “You don’t seem to be all that bothered by the screaming,” he murmured.

She glanced at him and shrugged. “You get used to a lot of things in my line of work. Screaming and cursing is nothing.” He paused, once again reminded that this woman was far from average.

“I thought you spent more time at your computer than doing field work,” he remarked.

She paused and gave him her full attention. “In recent years, yes,” she said quietly. “But in the beginning, I was right there with them for a lot of our missions. As technology got better, I could stay back more and more, but there were, and still are, times that I go with them.” She gave him an assessing look. “Why? Does that change your opinion of me?” she asked lightly.

“Not much would change my opinion of you, kitten,” he told her seriously. “You’re a badass. Just means I’ll keep myself on guard when I piss you off. Don’t need you practicing any torture techniques on me.”

She gave him a slow smile that was all teeth. “Caveman, if I decided to do that, you wouldn’t even see me coming,” she purred, leaning closer. “I can be quite creative. I’ve learned from the best, after all.” He just smiled at her, unfazed. He’d let her do whatever the hell she wanted as long as it ended with him inside her. Though, he had a few tricks up his sleeves that would keep her from actually stabbing him if he did piss her off.

“Bring it, kitten,” he taunted. “I still owe you some payback for your little stunt earlier. You’re not the only one who can be creative.”

Her eyes heated. “You really think just because you know how to use your cock, you’re going to get the upper hand, caveman?”

“I didn’t need to know that,” Win huffed, drawing their attention. “My God, can’t any of you talk about anything else? I don’t need to be back here a dozen more times in the next couple years because you all can’t keep yourselves from going at it like rabbits.”

Code fought not to squirm, especially when Rogue shot him a hard glare. Glitch, though, merely shrugged. “No promises,” she said easily. “I have a feeling there are a lot more babies coming. The floodgates have already opened. You should probably get used to it.” Win rolled her eyes.

“Well, put that out of your mind, because I have some questions for you,” Win announced. “I’m thinking about going

to school for either graphic design or computer software and security, and I want to pick your brain.”

“You mean you want to melt yours further,” Wren called out from a few seats away. “I know that’s why I’m so much smarter and faster than you.” Win gave her sister an annoyed glare and flipped her off, making Scarlett immediately scold her. Code didn’t miss the way Rogue’s eyes flared with amusement.

Glitch turned and gave Win her full attention. “Ask away. Let’s see if we can figure out where your best skills might lie.”

Code stood up so Win could have his seat, and moved to stand near where Razor and Karissa were now leaning against the wall. Karissa was glaring at Razor. “We are not having a baby right now,” she hissed at him. “I like my vagina intact, thank you very much.” Another scream came down the hall, and Karissa waved toward the noise. “There, see? You really want to hear me screaming like that? I’d be liable to kill you before I popped the baby out.”

Razor gave her an indulgent smile. “Don’t worry, baby, I can handle it. We won’t have any until you’re ready.” Though, from the look in his eyes, Code could tell that wouldn’t stop him from trying to convince her. Or at least practicing as much as possible.

Karissa looked at him and narrowed her eyes, then glanced over at Glitch. When she saw that Glitch was busy talking to Win, she turned her gaze back to Code and gave him a hard look. “You hurt her and you won’t have to worry about her killing you,” she told him in a low, menacing voice. “I’ll do it and then let the rest of the team take their shot at you.”

Razor tightened his grip on her. “Rissa,” he warned.

“Stay out of this, Razor,” Karissa snapped at him, still quiet enough so no one could overhear.

Code shook his head at Razor when he was about to reply. He gave Karissa his full attention and said simply, “I’m not going to hurt her.”

Karissa's expression didn't change. "And I'm just supposed to believe that?" she asked sarcastically. "What about when she leaves, huh? You're going to go back to doing what you always do, fucking the club girls like it's going out of style."

Code tried not to let his irritation show at her assumption. "You can believe whatever you want," he said evenly. He didn't owe her an explanation. Anything to do with Glitch was between the two of them, and Karissa, teammate and friend though she may be, was not part of that equation.

She regarded him silently for a long moment. Then, slowly, realization dawned on her face and some of the hardness in her expression fell away. "You want her to stay," she said simply. Code didn't answer her. He wouldn't discuss his desires with others before he talked to Glitch. He didn't think Karissa would blab, but he didn't want rumors and gossip getting back to her either. "It's going to be a tough road to convince her," Karissa warned him. "But if you're serious, I'll help you."

Code didn't reply. Instead he turned away and looked back at where Glitch was talking animatedly as she grinned at Win, who was listening with rapt fascination. Even Wren had inched closer, listening attentively. A small smile tugged on his lips. He liked seeing her so excited, knowing she was giving Win information that could shape her future.

He stood there watching them for the next hour, listening as she gave them excellent advice, and by the time Savage came down the hall, looking harried but excited, Win was looking at Glitch like some kind of hero. It looked like there was going to be another computer scientist coming into the field, Code thought in amusement. And any fuckers who got in her way were in for a surprise.

"They're here," Savage rasped as they all stood to greet him. "Royal and the babies are fine. Emerson Gray was first and she's six pounds even; her sister Eden Ivory is six pounds two ounces." There was a collective cheer and cries of excitement from everyone, along with lots of hugs and back



slaps for him. Savage grinned. “She’d like to see you all now, so come on down.”

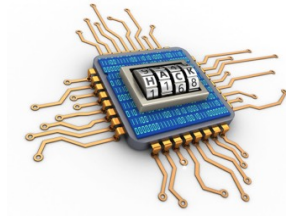
Code stayed back as everyone followed him, waiting for Glitch to pack up her computer and join the procession. Code took her hand and pulled her along, making her look up at him in surprise. He didn’t reply, and was pleased when she didn’t try to pull away. Instead, they went to meet the newest members of the club, and Code wondered briefly if they were destined to be overrun with girls before long.

He just needed convince one girl in particular to stay and give him a shot.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

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### SLIP

“**Y**ou better fucking find them fast,” Hazard snarled in his face, gripping him by the front of the shirt and hoisting him up in the air. A considerable feat, since he was no slouch. “I’m getting goddamn tired of waiting. If you can’t find them, then I’ll find someone who can.” Then he threw him down, making Slip crash into the table where Maggot and Crisp were sitting. Neither made a move to help him, their own irritation clear on their faces.

“I’m working on it,” he snapped, trying to keep his face as calm as he could, even though on the inside he was seething. Did Hazard think he wasn’t as pissed as the rest of them? He was only getting a couple of hours of sleep a night, because finding those fuckers was the only thing that mattered. He hadn’t even blinked when Hazard and Maggot had drug in some local women to fuck, and then killed them when they finished.

Their tempers were rising with each passing day, and he supposed murder was just another form of stress relief. Not that Crisp and Spook hadn’t joined in. Crisp got rid of the evidence with a bonfire, which of course had put him in a better mood. Though it didn’t seem to have rubbed off on Hazard, who was looking like he was ready to explode and do something stupid.

“Obviously not hard enough,” Hazard sneered. “Seems you’re losing your touch. That’s what happens when you get beat by a girl over and over.”

Slip’s temper frayed but he managed to hold on to it. Barely. “I’m the only one of us trying to find them,” he snapped. “You four had your fun last night, while I was in here trying to search them out. They’re fucking good at this, just like they were way back in the day. You really think they would have gotten lazy? They’ve bought off the whole town, and no one is talking.”

“Then maybe we need to start getting more forceful,” Hazard said with a cold, cruel smile. “Someone knows something, we just need to find the right someone. I’ve been itching to get my hands dirty. I’m sure we can make them talk.” He glanced at the others, who all nodded with anticipation. He looked back at Slip. “We’re going to find them one way or another. I’ve already got calls out to our contacts for anyone who spots them, but if not, I’ll find them myself. So I suggest you get out of my face and back to work, before it’s your ass I take it out on. Don’t think you’re not replaceable, Slip.”

Slip’s fists clenched at his sides, but he didn’t dare take a swing. That would only give Hazard the green light. For as much as he wanted to work his own frustrations out, he was out numbered and he knew it. The only one that might back him was Spook; the others were firmly in Hazard’s court. He fed their darkest fantasies, and it kept them loyal. “Fine,” he gritted out, turning and heading back down the hall of the cabin to the bedroom he set up as his headquarters, shutting the door behind him. He didn’t need to slam it, especially if he didn’t want Hazard running in here and destroying his shit. He did it once; it was the one and only time Slip went up against him. He landed himself a beating that almost left him dead, but Hazard kept him on, with the warning that if he ever did it again, he’d kill him.

He needed to kill Eliza before he went on a suicide mission by taking on Hazard. Days like these reminded him that working with his team wasn’t always fun. These were the

times it was clear where each stood in the hierarchy, and as much as it burned, he was at the bottom.

He sat down at the small desk, cracked his neck, and got to work. He was going to find them, and when he did, he was going to throw it back in Hazard's face. Hazard let his emotions rule how he ran things. Slip loved being able to prove to their team leader that he wasn't always the smartest in the bunch.

He worked for the next few hours, scouring all the records he could find on any of the team members. He concentrated too much on Eliza, and he needed to focus on the others. Of course Eliza could hide herself online, but it would take a hell of a lot of time to hide them all, and he doubted she would put that much effort into it. And even if she had, he was sure she missed something. Not even she was perfect.

It wasn't until three hours later he finally got the break he needed. The alert hit his system so unexpectedly he jolted and stared at it for a moment before he finally clued in to exactly what it was. Triumph speared through him as he latched on to the alert to trace it back.

It was a hospital record for Karissa Valentine, one of Eliza's teammates from way back then. He checked the time stamp and saw it was only a few hours old. He quickly hacked in to see if she was still there. He had a moment of disappointment when he saw it was just a signature on an intake form, stating she had dropped someone off. But it was still something. Taking note of the time, he started hacking into the hospital's surveillance system, going back to around the time she would have arrived. And that's when he realized not only had he gotten a break, he hit the jackpot.

Right there, in full view of the security camera, was the woman he had vowed to find, following behind Karissa Valentine as she and a few other women helped a heavily pregnant woman into a wheelchair. He would recognize her face anywhere. Excitement burned in his gut as he continued scrolling through the security footage until he finally saw what he needed.

He had a location, and he finally knew how she was hiding. She was with a fucking motorcycle club. Well, it looked like it was time to pay the Dragons MC a visit, because no way was he letting her get away from him.

*I'm coming for you, Eliza,* he thought as he stood and headed for the door. *You won't slip through my fingers again.*

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## CHAPTER FORTY

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### GLITCH

**B**y the time they got back to the clubhouse, she was exhausted, but she couldn't stop now. She glanced at the clock and cursed. Her team was going to be calling her any minute, and she had to be ready. She pulled away from Code and raced for the office, skidding to a stop when Tom and the other Prospect stepped out in front of her, scowling. She gave them a hard glare. "If you're expecting an apology, you're going to be waiting a long damn time," she bit out. "Now, unless you would like a repeat, I suggest you get out of my way."

Tom glared at her, but stepped aside. The other one, whose name she hadn't figured out yet, was a bit slower but she stared at him until he finally lowered his gaze and moved. Behind her she heard Code say, "Prospects, get back to work. I've got it from here."

She looked over her shoulder at him with an expression that told him exactly how she felt about that statement as she stalked into the office. "You really need to get some tougher Prospects," she told Code when he followed her in.

Code snorted. "Kitten, they're tough enough, but they're not used to you and Karissa and your, shall we say, excessive use of force when they get in your way. They were doing their job, and you've made them look weak in front of all of us by

taking them down. They're not going to meet you here with balloons and smiles."

She rolled her eyes. "Fine, I'll apologize, but we both know I did the right thing."

He arched a brow. "Did you? Because from where I'm standing, I see you putting yourself in unnecessary danger. Did you forget about the crazy mercenaries after you? Or do you just like the idea of serving yourself up on a platter for them?" He ended that last part with a biting tone and a scowl.

She looked up at him and glared. "Maybe you're the one forgetting I can take care of my own damn self. I don't need you and your MC to protect me, caveman." She shook her head. "I can't wait to be with my team again." She turned back to her computer and booted it up. When she looked back at Code, who hadn't moved, he was staring at her with an expression on his face she couldn't decipher. But his eyes told a whole other story, and she frowned when she saw the determination there. "Problem?" she asked mildly.

He didn't move for another moment, but when he did, it was to put a hand on the back of her chair, turn her around to face him, and then place both his hands on the armrests, caging her in. Her eyes widened in surprise as she stared into his gleaming green ones. Then, he rasped, "We'll finish this with your team, and then you and I are going to talk." Then he pressed his mouth to hers in a hard, almost punishing kiss, before pulling away and stalking over to his side of the desk.

She stared at him, dazed, confused, and a little turned on. What the hell was that? That wasn't him being pissed she went to the hospital, or even about what she did to mess with his room earlier. That was something else entirely, and though she didn't know exactly what else he would have to be pissed about, there was a little kernel of something starting to sprout in her belly. One she had no business entertaining.

Telling herself that she would deal with it later, she turned back to her computer and put on her headset. Then got herself ready for the mission. Karissa joined them shortly before the call, putting on her own headset to listen in.

Simba called her right on time. “We’re ready to go,” he said quietly. “Glitch?”

“I’m good. Code and Xena are here too and comm’ed in,” Glitch replied briskly.

“Code, you’re set?” Simba asked.

“Ready,” Code assured him.

“Good. Xena?”

“All good on my side,” Karissa replied. “Not that I can be of much help here, but I read the file and an extra set of eyes never hurts.”

“Good. Glitch, let us know when we’re green to enter. We’re just outside the treeline of the adjoining property,” Simba announced.

“I’ve got the drones ready to fly,” Jag added softly.

“Send ‘em up,” she ordered, and she dove in to connect to the drone. It was a handy piece of equipment for their missions, though it cost them a pretty penny..

Within seconds, the drone was in the air over the house, and she was able to see the heat signatures inside the home. “Five heat signatures on the top floor,” she told them, before she instructed Jag to decrease the altitude. “From what I can tell, most of them are small, probably children, one per room.” When the drone got to the main level, she waited for all the signatures to come through. “Four adults, and two children. The children are in the kitchen with one adult. The three other adults are moving around the main floor.”

“There’s a basement window on the opposite side of the house,” Taz told them. “See if we can get anything from there.”

“The basement is concrete,” Glitch warned. “This drone prototype is still experimental, and not great with those kinds of walls, remember?”

“Just do the best you can, Glitch,” Simba said simply. “Code, we set up cameras around the house when we got on the grounds earlier. You able to get any images from them?”



Glitch gave him access to her system with a click of a button, then went back to checking the house. The drone's sensors weren't penetrating the concrete, but she refused to let it upset her. She had the determination to see this through. She half-listened to Code as she continued her work. Vaguely, she heard him say, "We've got movement on the front porch. Looks like one of the sons."

Glitch let out a small sound of triumph when she saw heat signatures on screen. "I've got a reading," she told them. Then she scowled. "We've got half a dozen, one on top of the other. I think they've got people in cages in the basement."

There was a round of curses at that. "Alright, this mission just expanded beyond our original targets," Simba said grimly. "Time to take out the trash, boys." There were murmurs of agreement.

"Oldest son just cleared the front gate and got in a car down the block," Code announced. "No other movement."

"We need to move," Ursa murmured. "If he's bringing another girl back, we need to get in position to intercept him. And if he's bringing back a buyer..." He let that trail off.

"We make this quick, we make it quiet, and we get them free," Simba told them simply. "Glitch, be ready to call in law enforcement once we're clear. Let them handle the clean up."

"I'll be ready," she assured him. "The only signatures I saw were in the cages, but that doesn't mean there isn't anyone else down there, so be careful."

"We copy. Jag, you and Vulture take the lower level," Simba instructed. "Taz, you and Copper take the upper level, eyes open for kids. Tiger, Warg, you take the perimeter. Ursa, you're with me. We'll take the main level. Glitch, you're our eyes in the sky, keep that drone up. Code, same on the cameras."

"Got it," she and Code said in unison.

Tension beat through her blood as her team moved silently toward the house. This was the hardest part of operating remotely. If things went to shit, she would be helpless to do

anything but listen to it happen. It occurred only once in their time together, and she could live her life without it happening again.

Her body was tight as she relayed information over the comms, even as they breached the house. She heard yells and screams coming through the comms and each group made their way into their designated areas. Upstairs, Taz and Copper made entry through a window, and she heard Taz murmuring quietly to the children to quiet their cries. If there was one thing that Taz was good at, it was calming people down.

The next fifteen minutes were tense as they subdued the men and women in the home, shouts of anger filling her ears, and then sharp cries as flesh met flesh. Not that she cared, considering it was Simba who dealt the blows when one of the men screamed at a woman to shut up and be quiet as she sobbed and begged for them to be let go.

“Target and her boy are in the kitchen,” Ursa said quietly through the comms. “And another little boy, but he says he doesn’t know where his mother is.”

“We’re in the basement freeing the women,” Jag told them. “We’ll see if one of them is his mother.”

“Almost done, then I’ll be taking a look around,” Vulture growled. “I want to know if there are others hidden anywhere.”

“Let’s see what we can get out of Abraham here,” Simba suggested, a lilt of anticipation in his voice. “Code, how are we on those cameras?”

“No signs of trouble,” Code answered briskly.

“No calls in to any local police,” Glitch added after a quick search. “Almost makes me believe people walking or driving by are used to hearing screaming.” Her tone was tight at the implication.

Simba grunted. “Well, just to be safe, I say we move this party to somewhere a little more insulated. Jag, Vulture, we’re heading your way. Get ready.” There were sounds of a struggle and some curses, but finally, after another long few moments,

Simba said, “Alright, we’ve got Abraham and his boys here. Ursa, keep an eye on the women. We don’t know who is involved in this, and I’m not going to rule them out.”

“Give me the names of anyone we haven’t already looked into,” Glitch told them. “If they won’t give you their names, send me their photos. I’ll run them through facial recognition.”

After a few more minutes, her computer pinged with some images, and she did a quick search. “The two women are Jane Murphy and one of the daughters, Amy,” she announced.

“I looked further into them when I read the report,” Karissa chimed in, silent and observing until now. “Even though they don’t have much of a record, I’ve looked at the surveillance, and they’re often at the market where they go to sell their wares, and they watch the kids like hawks. I’m not certain they’re all that innocent.”

“Which begs the question, where is the other sister?” Taz said quietly. “There is no sign of her up here.”

“No sign of her down here either,” Simba said grimly.

“No record of her leaving on the cameras,” Code chimed in.

“And the brothers are gone,” Glitch pointed out. “So they’re either out having a party, or they’re coming back soon.”

“They’ve got to be in the tunnels,” Copper suggested grimly. “Question is, how do we find them and access them?”

“We’ll get our man Abraham here to tell us,” Simba said menacingly. “Ursa, the women are heading up to you. You get them, and Amanda and the two boys, outside to Tiger and Warg. You guys know the drill. Once they’re free, we’ll send the other kids out.”

“Roger that,” Warg said.

Glitch silenced her mic and turned to look at Code. “If you don’t have a strong stomach, now is the time to mute or take off the headset. I’ll let you know when to turn it back on,” she warned him.

Code muted himself before turning to scowl at her. “What? You think I’m a pussy that can’t handle a little torture?”

Glitch and Karissa shared a look, and she barely resisted rolling her eyes. Men and their fragile egos. “Fine, but if you puke or bail, I’m going to hold it over you forever,” she told him flippantly. He just grunted, turning back to his computer, clearly insulted that she even dared suggest it.

Turning her comms back on, she listened as Simba got to work on Abraham, who was already crying and begging. She and Karissa shared a disappointed look. They were both hoping he would put up at least a little resistance. “I’ll tell you whatever you want,” Abraham sobbed. “You want money, it’s yours. You can have the girls and the kids. Just let me go.”

“You sick fuck,” Simba growled. “You’re willing to trade the lives of your women and children for your pathetic life? I don’t fucking think so.” There was a hard thud, and Abraham screamed. “Now, you’re going to tell me everything I want to know,” Simba hissed. “How do we access the tunnels? And don’t even think about lying to me.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Abraham gasped out.

“Apparently he didn’t hear you the first time,” Vulture remarked darkly.

The sound of fists pummeling flesh filled their ears, along with the screams and pleas of the man on the receiving end. She had to give it to him, he was holding on strong, not giving them the information. No matter though, because if anyone would be able to break him, it would be Simba. When he finally let up, Simba demanded again, “Where are the tunnels?”

Suddenly, Jag called out, “Think I found one.” Glitch and Karissa leaned forward, listening. “There’s something behind one of these shelves. The floor is dusty, but there’s a curved groove in it, which means this thing moves.” There was a sound of something scraping on the floor. “Bingo.”

“Looks like we don’t need you after all,” Simba said darkly.

“No, no, stop!” Abraham cried. “You can’t do this!”

“And why can’t we?” Simba taunted. “You took women and held them against their will. You kept children against their will. Don’t think I didn’t notice those kids are bruised and malnourished. You’ll pay for every single bruise or hurt you caused any of them. Jag, gag him. We don’t need him calling out and alerting the others. Copper, Taz, as soon as the children and women are secure, head through the trees to make sure no one is trying to make a run for it.”

“On our way in two minutes,” Taz told them. “These kids are just skin and bones, Simba. We need to make these assholes pay.”

“Damn, I wish I was there to help,” Karissa said tightly. “I’d make those bastards sorry.”

“You and me both,” Glitch agreed.

Thankfully, the Murphy siblings weren’t all that smart and didn’t bother trying to escape. Simba announced that they were found at the end of the tunnel in an underground bunker, waiting for their parents to send the women through. The oldest brother had gone to bring their buyer in, which meant the team had to wait for him to arrive, because no way in hell were they going to let that asshole leave.

Glitch glanced over at Code, who was still scanning the cameras, until finally he announced, “We’ve got a car approaching. Looks like the same one the brother left in.”

“That’s probably the buyer,” Karissa said.

“Alright, we’re standing by to greet them,” Jag said darkly.

Within minutes, the oldest son walked up the front porch, another man right behind him. Glitch held her breath, but she knew that her team would be ready for anything. As soon as the door shut behind them, they pounced. The young man let out a shout of alarm, while the other man cursed and tried to fight. She chuckled when she heard him give a high-pitched screech and then groan. “Well looky here,” Simba chortled

darkly. “Looks like we nabbed ourselves another scumbag. This place is crawling with them.”

“Who the hell are you?” the unknown man demanded.

“We’re here to make you regret your life choices,” Simba told him simply. “But first, smile.” The sound of a snapshot and then a ping on her computer gave her his face, and she got to work.

After thirty seconds, she had her answer. “His name is Lewis Kroll. He’s got an affinity for breaking and entering, and some assaults. But he’s also a well known associate of a local thug and small-time gangster. A gangster who has a rap for pimping out women and smacking them around,” Glitch finished grimly.

“I’m getting tired of all these scumbags,” Simba grumbled. “Kill a couple and more come scurrying out. Like goddamn cockroaches. Well boys, time to start asking questions.”

Over the next hour, her team extracted all the information they could, sparing no one, not even the daughters or the wife. They couldn’t, not when they discovered the whole operation was their idea in the first place. Jane and her daughters were the twisted masterminds behind the abduction, rape, and sale of the women, and the enslavement of their children. It made Glitch’s mouth sour. Those women destroyed so many lives, and they didn’t care. They felt it was their calling. Abraham and the sons went along with it because they liked the money and power it gave them. They used the women however they saw fit.

“It’s worse when it’s women,” Karissa sighed as she disconnected her comms. “So much fucking worse.”

Glitch had to agree. “Simba, are you all wrapped up and ready to roll?” she asked.

“We’ll deliver our target to the rendezvous,” Simba told her. Glitch knew him well enough to decipher his meaning: they were going to escort Amanda and her son back to her grandfather, but he didn’t want the Murphys, or Lewis Kroll, to know that. “Then we’ll head back your way.”

“Law enforcement is about three minutes out, so you better get out of there,” she warned him.

“Don’t worry, babe, we got this,” Taz assured her. “We’ll be back to you before you know it. And then I’m taking you to the mats.” Glitch laughed.

“Take it easy coming back,” she cautioned them, then she disconnected. When she turned to Karissa, she grinned. “You know we are going to have to take his ass down when they get here. Asshole is going to come back cocky as shit for a job well done. Can’t let it go to his head.”

Karissa grinned. “Oh, I know. We’ll have to be strategic, though. Knowing him, he’ll suspect it’s coming.”

Glitch snickered. “As long as I don’t have to listen to him whine and bitch too much, I’m down for anything.” Before Karissa could open her mouth to reply, her system blared an alarm and Glitch froze. “Fuck,” she hissed, turning back to her computer. “What the fuck?”

“Let me back in so I can help,” Code ordered.

She ignored him, too focused on trying to understand what the hell was going on, but a sinking feeling built in her gut, until she found it. Along with a message.

Slip: Checkmate, Eliza. Time to pay.

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## CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

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### CODE

**T**he moment he saw the message over Glitch's shoulder, he jumped into action. Since they were trying to leave Savage alone with Royal and the twins, he messaged Rogue and had him call an emergency meeting. Then he sent a message to the Predators to let them know. Now, all of his brothers, along with Karissa and Glitch were sitting in Church, with the Predators joining through a secure call. Code fought not to panic, and instead settled for sitting as close to Glitch as possible without being overbearing. He caught her glancing at him in surprise and a bit of annoyance.

“Alright,” Rogue said briskly, making everyone shut up. “I don't got time to beat around the bush, so let's get down to business.” He looked at Glitch expectantly.

He expected Glitch to give a smart reply, but she just got down to business. Her mouth was set in a thin line. He knew her well enough to know she was pissed, but underneath, there was tension there. Still, there was no fear, and that settled a small part inside him.

“It seems the Ghost team has finally snuffed out our location,” Glitch announced grimly. “And they're on their way here. Which means we don't have a lot of time. Because they'll come in guns blazing.”

“There are only five of them,” Jax pointed out. “And there are a hell of a lot more of us.”



“Numbers don’t matter,” Karissa said grimly. “Not when it comes to these guys. There is a reason they got away with shit for so long. They know how to get in and out without being seen, and they’ll kill anyone in their way. Including women and children.”

“And then they’ll wait until you’re all asleep and slit your throats,” Simba growled through the phone. “These bastards are a whole other breed, and they aren’t to be underestimated.”

“There are quite a few of us with military experience,” Ice pointed out coolly. “I’d like to see them try and get past us.”

Glitch made an annoyed sound in the back of her throat. “You really think it’s that simple?” she asked irritably. “They also have military experience. Highly classified, deep cover, blackest-of-black-ops military experience. One well placed bomb, and we’re all dead. Every single one of them has the skills to pull it off. You can’t watch every inch of this property. You don’t have enough men, and the system here isn’t large enough.” She glanced at Code, even as he tried not to let her words bother him. “I’m not saying that to be a bitch,” she told him directly. “But you’re not set up here to handle this kind of attack. Your setup is great for keeping the average Joe off your property, but that’s about as far as it can go. The kind of equipment you’ll need to catch these guys isn’t easy to get your hands on. And we don’t have time to order it, anyway.”

“How long do you think we have before they show up?” Code asked her somberly.

Glitch shrugged. “Depends on how badly they want to get here. They were able to get state-side without triggering any alarms, and haven’t done anything to alert law enforcement since, so while it’s hard to say for sure, I don’t think they’ll waste any time.”

“Wouldn’t it be smarter for them to strategize before they launch some big invasion?” Ink asked.

“None of these guys are all that smart,” Taz drawled through the line. “Especially when they’re pissed off.”

“The only one who might still have his head is Slip,” Jag said.

“I’d agree with that,” Glitch interjected. “But Spook was also pretty level-headed, so we can’t rule him out, but he’s not the leader. Hazard was always a wild card, so I can’t see any of them acting against him. He’d just kill them and keep on going.”

“Alright, so we have a bunch of homicidal maniacs heading our way,” Fury summarized. “Glitch, you think they’re going to be here in the next twenty-four hours?”

Code watched her hesitate. “Possibly, but I’m leaning toward forty-eight. They’re going to need to steal some transportation. Once they get to town, they’ll need to get ready to attack, once they actually locate the clubhouse.”

“Alright, we’re talking any time between the next thirty-six to forty-eight hours,” Rogue clarified. He looked at Fury. “Have you heard from Savage when they plan to come home with the twins?”

Fury pulled out his phone. “He texted an hour ago and said Royal and the twins are doing well. They should be home sometime tomorrow, as long as nothing changes.”

“Alright. We’ll send a Prospect over to guard—”

“No,” Simba interjected, making Rogue pause. Code tried to bite back a smirk at the irritation on Rogue’s face. He wasn’t one that appreciated being interrupted. “A Prospect is not going to know how to handle these guys, if one of them gets bold and heads there. Assign someone that knows what the hell they’re doing.”

“We’ve had far too many Prospects get injured or die in recent months,” Fury agreed, looking at Rogue.

“I’ll go,” Ice offered. “I’ve got my training, and I’d dare one of them to get past me.”

“Fine, Ice, as soon as we’re done, head over to the hospital,” Rogue ordered. Ice nodded. “The rest of us will concentrate on securing the compound.”

“We’ll ride through the night to get there,” Simba told them. “In the meantime, Glitch, Karissa, don’t do anything stupid. If you do, I’ll kick both your asses all the way to Timbuktu and leave you there to crawl back. Got it?”

“Jeeze, you do one dumb thing and you never hear the end of it,” Karissa drawled sarcastically.

“Karissa,” Simba said warningly. “And Glitch—”

“Yeah, yeah, stay indoors like a good little woman and let the big bad bikers protect me, I got it,” Glitch sniffed.

Simba was silent for a moment. Then he finally said, “Code.”

Code knew exactly what he was trying to convey. “I got her. I’ll tie her ass to the bed or put her up on a shelf in a closet. She won’t get past me this time.”

Glitch turned and glared at him. “Try it and see what happens, caveman,” she bit out.

“Shut up, the two of you,” Rogue barked. “We’ve got more important things to worry about than your weird-ass foreplay.” Glitch glared at him, while the rest of the room broke out into snickers. Code smirked, not seeing any point in arguing. “Alright, let’s get to it. We’re not about to let these assholes get the jump on us.”

“Glitch, tell them anything they need to know,” Simba instructed. “We need to get on the road if we want to make it back, so we’ll sign off. Keep yourself safe, that’s an order. I find out that you did something stupid and got yourself hurt or killed, I’ll bring you back myself and make you regret it. Same goes for you, Xena.”

“Got it,” Glitch assured him.

“Yeah, yeah,” Karissa groaned. “Now go away so we can plan.”

They heard a few chuckles over the line before they signed off. Glitch grinned at Karissa. “You know you’re going to pay for that as soon as they get back here,” she joked.

Karissa gave her a toothy smile. “He can try. Now, let’s get this sorted, because I’m not about to let these bastards get the upper hand. Oh, and Maggot is mine. No exceptions.” She gave everyone around the room a hard look.

“Jesus, not this again,” Rogue snarled. “You know the rules, Karissa, no women in—”

“Enough,” Karissa snapped, pushing up from Razor’s lap before he could stop her. “I’m not doing this again. This isn’t a threat to your MC, this is a threat to me and my team. I might be an Old Lady in this club, but I am still a member of my team. Of the Predators MC. So, I don’t want to hear any more bullshit about what I can and can’t do because I have tits and a vagina. You don’t know the shit I put up with from that asshole, and you’re not going to deny me the chance to return the favor.”

Rogue’s eyes were hard, and Razor looked grim. Code had a feeling that Karissa told him exactly what Maggot did, and that was exactly why he wasn’t stepping in. His own stomach soured at the thought of what that could have been. When he glanced at Glitch, he saw her face was pinched, and her eyes were stormy. Yeah, she definitely knew something, and it made him wonder if something happened to her too. His entire body rebelled at the idea. If anything was done to her, he would happily kill all of those fuckers with his bare hands. “It’s not our way, Karissa,” Rogue finally said, pulling him from his murderous thoughts.

Karissa’s eyes flared and Code winced, preparing for the explosion. “I don’t give a flying fuck about your way,” she told him so coldly he was surprised the room wasn’t crusted in ice. “Out of everyone in here, I would have thought you would be most understanding, considering what your girls have survived. All three of them. They took their revenge, and I am taking mine. You may have done a lot of things and seen a lot of shit in your life, Rogue, but I can guarantee you’ve never woken up with a man on top of you, sticking a needle in your neck to inject you with drugs that kept you wide awake and paralyzed so you could experience everything he did to you without being able to fight back, or even scream. I guarantee

you've never been trapped inside your own body while a man peeled your clothes off, telling you everything he's planning on doing to you while mocking you the entire time. He almost raped me. Almost, because my teammates had a feeling something was wrong. They came crashing in to save me, but that fucker got away. See, that happened the night after we got back and they were arrested. Maggot was accidentally released, and he decided that if he was going to go to prison, he was going to do whatever he wanted until they marched him into his cell and slammed the door behind him. So, no, Rogue, you *will not* tell me that I don't get to do what I need to do, just because I'm a woman."

No one said a word, and Code saw the pain in Razor's eyes as he pulled her gently back into his lap. Code glanced at Glitch and saw an echoing pain in her eyes. Her fist was clenched tight on the table and he reached out to take it, gently prying her fingers open until he could interlace hers with his own. She struggled for a moment, but when he refused to let go, she settled, looking at him with both surprise and appreciation. It didn't take a genius to realize she was there that night, had been one of the ones to find Karissa and help put her pieces back together.

Finally, Rogue sighed. "Fine," he said gruffly, but Code saw the understanding in his eyes. He would want revenge if it were his girls, so he couldn't deny Karissa.

"We need everything you can tell us," Steel said. "Don't leave anything out, even if it might not seem relevant. We can't leave anything to chance." Everyone nodded their agreement.

Over the next two hours, they went over everything Glitch and Karissa could remember, along with Glitch pulling up additional information as they needed it. The more information they gave, the more he realized what they were going up against. Any other time, he would see it as a challenge, but knowing Glitch was a main target, it both terrified him and made him even more determined to protect her. He would not allow her to get hurt.

Finally, when everyone felt they had the information they needed, Fury spoke up. “Alright, we need to start pulling shifts along with the Prospects. We also need to make sure the Prospects are ready for this.”

“Tom will be fine,” Doc predicted. “Kid’s got some skills, and some damn good reflexes. Not much shakes him.”

“Agreed,” Rogue said. “And the other two?”

“Sam’s fine, but he’s still young and needs some more work,” Ink answered. “But he should be alright. I don’t know much about the newest one.”

“I say we make Tom our head Prospect for this,” Fury suggested. “He won’t go running at the first sign of trouble.”

“Have Sam and the other one rotate gate and perimeter duty,” Ink agreed. “Between the two of them, they can at least make sure no one is on the grounds that shouldn’t be.”

“We need more fucking Prospects,” Ice grumbled. “Three ain’t nothing.”

“Agreed, but that’s not a problem we can solve right now,” Razor said soberly. “Right now, the only thing I care about is making sure the women are safe. Yes, yes, we know you can protect yourselves, but that doesn’t stop me being concerned,” he added before Karissa or Glitch could blast him.

Code glanced at Glitch and saw she was slightly mollified, but annoyance still simmered in her expression. “What can you and I do to make things safer?” he asked her.

She looked at him in surprise, and everyone else went quiet. “If we had more time, I would suggest getting that equipment here as soon as possible,” she answered after a moment. Their hands were still clasped together under the table, and she focused only on him as she pursed her lips in thought. “But since we don’t, there are a few things we can do to beef up your security. And everyone should wear comms so we all know what’s happening. Phones aren’t reliable.” She regarded him for a moment and added, “That means you and I might need to take shifts, so at least one tech person is available at all times.”

He agreed. “We’ll figure it out.” He looked at Rogue, who nodded.

“Alright, we have a plan. We’ll put people on rotation, and we’re going into lockdown. No one in or out alone, and all businesses are shut down until further notice. We’re not taking any chances,” Rogue said darkly, his voice tight. “Anyone does anything stupid, you’ll be put in the Box,” he added, his eyes lingering on Karissa and then Glitch, both of whom glared back but didn’t argue.

“What are the rotations?” Fury asked. “Let’s get them figured out now and get this in motion.”

Over the next half hour, a schedule was created, but he was getting antsy. He wanted to work on the system with Glitch, to make sure they were ready. And he wanted her alone. He needed to talk to her, and all of this was delaying the conversation.

By the time they left Church, everyone had their assignments. Much to Karissa’s annoyance, she wasn’t on the perimeter guard rotation, and she wasn’t hiding her displeasure. Instead, they put her in charge of protecting the women, and made her their ace in the hole if these bastards got past the rest of them. She was only slightly pacified by that.

He didn’t waste any time in leading Glitch to the office, shutting the door behind them. He was still holding her hand, and it made it easy for him to spin her around and press her against the door, lifting her up. She let out a small gasp of surprise, but she didn’t fight him. She met him head-on as his mouth took hers, and he poured everything he felt into his kiss.

Desire. Desperation. Anger. All of it.

When he finally forced himself to pull away, he looked down at her, and her eyes were glazed with desire and something else he was too nervous to name. Fuck, he had it bad, he thought as he continued to stare at her. “I won’t let anything happen to you,” he rasped finally.

Apparently those were the wrong words to say, because she instantly snapped out of her daze and wrenched away from

him, shoving him back. “I don’t need you to protect me, Code,” she snapped angrily, skirting around him to her part of the desk. “I’m perfectly capable of protecting myself. Why can’t you guys understand that? I know you have dicks, and apparently you think those dicks are all you need to shield me, but I don’t give a flying fuck. Your cock isn’t going to stop a bullet. It isn’t going to stop them from grabbing me or slitting my throat. And it certainly isn’t going to stop a bomb. So you can take your macho bullshit and get the hell out of my face because I don’t want to hear it.”

His own irritation started to build, even as he tried to push it back down. “Never said my cock was going to stop anything,” he said in what he hoped was a calm voice. “And while you might be Wonder Woman, you’re not invincible, and you’re not immortal. If they’re coming for you, they are trying to kill you, you said that yourself. So how about instead of being all pissy about someone offering to help you, you just say thank you instead of clinging to this *I don’t need a man shtick?*”

“Because I am sick and tired of everyone thinking I can’t handle myself!” she yelled at him. “All you and every man in this MC sees is a tiny little computer nerd. Not someone that can take care of herself. I’ve had to do it before, and I’ll have to do it again. I get why Karissa was so fucking pissed with you guys about the whole Sena thing. You think that at the first sign of trouble I’m going to lay down and cry and beg you to save me. Well, if you’re waiting for that, you better get your parka because hell will freeze over. I don’t need you to do anything, Code. I don’t *need* you at all. I have specialized, tactical combat training, and I have a brain. That means these assholes won’t get the drop on me very easily.”

Perhaps it was the stress of the day, or the insult of her words, but he was done, and his temper flared to life. “Fucking hell, I can’t believe you,” he snapped. “You don’t give a shit that someone is coming after you, or you have someone in your corner. The only thing you’re focusing on is you’re a badass. Screw anyone else. Screw me offering to help you. I’m trying to get you to understand that I don’t want you dead, Glitch. Is that so hard to believe?”



She stared at him, then scowled. “Of course it is,” she snapped back, her voice rising. “We can barely stand each other on the best of days, Code.”

“That might have been true before, but not anymore.” He took a step forward.

Her eyes narrowed. “Don’t think that just because we’ve slept together, that changes anything, Code. You and I, we’re like fire and water. This whole thing is going to fizzle out as soon as I’m back with my team.” The mention of her leaving both pissed him off and made him anxious. Goddamn, he hated feeling this way. “Once they get here, we’ll handle these assholes, and you and I can go back to the way things were.”

“So that’s it?” he gritted out. “Your team gets back and everything is done?”

She stared at him. “What the hell did you think was going to happen? That I would stay? Why on earth would I stay here? In a club where I would be regulated to one of the women? Not a member of the MC. Where I would be treated like a nuisance because I voice my opinion. Because there is no way in hell they would allow me to be anything here. They’d probably regulate me to your assistant because no woman would be allowed to be a boss around here. Tell me, Code, why the actual fuck would I stay here, when *my* team treats me with respect. Like a valued team member. Who care for me. Who are my *family*.”

“You’re saying that we don’t? That I don’t?” he demanded furiously.

“Did you not heard a single fucking word that just came out of my mouth? That’s *exactly* what I’m saying, Code,” she hissed at him. “Us sleeping together doesn’t change anything. When the Ghost team gets here, I will be perfectly fine. I will take care of myself. You need to get that through your thick skull.”

“Us sleeping together changes everything,” he yelled back at her, pissed she dismissed everything like it was nothing, while at the same time trying to suppress his panic that she was slipping through his fingers.

“Have you lost your goddamn mind? We agreed to no strings for a reason,” she yelled back, hands on her hips as she stared at him. “Don’t change the subject. This whole conversation is about how you don’t need to protect me. I’m not going to argue about it anymore. You need to accept that or get the hell out so I can handle it myself.”

It was the wrong thing to say. A switch flipped in his brain, and he was done. Done with it all, and he wasn’t about to let her push him away anymore. He stalked forward, picked her up, and sat her down on the desk in a movement so swift that she didn’t have any time to react. Then he planted his hands on either side of her, trapping her in. “You’re right,” he said in a low, and relatively calm voice. “We’re done arguing. Because you’re going to sit here, shut up, and listen, or I will gag you, tie you to that chair, and make you. Do you understand me, *Eliza?*”

“Try it, *Milo*,” she dared him, already reaching for her knife at the small of her back.

He quickly grabbed her wrist and pinned it down, then grabbed the other one to keep it in place. She struggled for a moment before she finally settled enough to glare daggers at him. “I never said you weren’t a strong ass bitch that could take care of herself. You might have confidence in your team, but *they are not here*, and they might not be here when these assholes show up. Because as much as everyone seems to think they are, they’re not superheroes, and they can’t teleport. Which means you’re stuck with my club, and me. And you damn well better understand that I will not stand back and let you face these bastards by yourself. They come at you, I’m going to be fighting them too. If, God forbid, something happens to my club and your team, and it’s just you and me at the end of it, I’m going to fight like hell to keep you safe. Because you can’t take on five fucking men at once. Especially not crazy fuckers like them. As for the sex with no strings, I’m renegeing on that. Because, kitten, you and I? We’re going to have some major fucking strings.”

She narrowed her eyes at him. “You don’t—”

“Don’t tell me what I don’t mean, and don’t put words in my damn mouth,” he snapped, interrupting her.

“Then stop talking in fucking riddles,” she yelled in his face. “You don’t care about—”

“Of course I fucking care about you,” he yelled back, wrenching his hands away from her. “ I love you, so you don’t get to tell me I won’t do anything to keep you safe.”

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## CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

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### GLITCH

She stared at him in shock, unmoving, as his words slammed into her like a damn wrecking ball. She wasn't sure she was breathing, or if her heart was still beating. Her entire body seemed rooted to the spot. Did he just say what she thought he said? That he *loved* her? No, that was impossible. He didn't love her. How could he?

He thrust a hand through his hair, looking at the floor, his face a flurry of emotions. "Fuck," he sighed. "Nevermind." Then, without looking at her, he headed for the door.

Maybe it was the defeated look in his eyes, or the fact he wouldn't look at her at all after dropping his little bomb, but that state of frozen shock melted instantly, and she was moving. Before he could reach the door, she launched herself at his back, using a move that Jag taught her a long time ago to shift her momentum to pull him back and down, so that Code stumbled and started to fall back toward the floor. She braced herself for the impact, but somehow, at the last second, he managed to twist his body, get his arms around her, and fell so he took the brunt instead of her. It still knocked the wind out of both of them, but thankfully she recovered quickly.

She moved to straddle him, looking down at the man who was now rubbing his head and glaring at her. "What the fuck, woman?" he rasped, pain in his green eyes. "Have you lost your mind?"

“You clearly have,” she tossed back, glaring at him. “You don’t love me, Code. You can’t.”

Pain was quickly replaced by fury. “There you go again putting words in my mouth,” he gritted out between clenched teeth, his jaw hard as granite. “You don’t get to tell me shit about how I feel or what I think, Glitch. But like you said, you don’t need me at all, so what does it matter? Let me up before I make you.”

Her gut twisted but she didn’t move. There was something bubbling up inside her, something she was too scared to name. Something she had been suppressing for a while now. But staring down at this man, who was pissed at her but still careful not to hurt her, did weird things to her chest. To her mind. Because even now, with all that, she could see the hurt under his anger. The blow his ego took from her words and reaction to him.

Her mind was screaming at her to get up and walk away. Let him go, and get back to what she was doing. She was right, she didn’t need him. She had her team. But her gut was saying something else. Her gut was telling her that she would be making a huge mistake if she didn’t talk to him. If she didn’t ask the questions that were bouncing around inside her. But a small part of her almost didn’t want to know the answers, too afraid to hear what they might actually be.

She was no coward, though, so instead, she simply asked, “Why?”

He didn’t answer for a moment, his jaw clenching and unclenching a few times before he finally asked tightly, “Why what exactly?”

“Why do you think you love me?” she asked softly, her heart pounding in her chest. There was a vulnerable lilt to her voice she wished there wasn’t, but at the sound of it, she watched some of the anger fade and his jaw unclench.

He didn’t say anything as they stared at each other. It was killing her, and she desperately wanted to tell him to hurry up, but she couldn’t get the words past her lips. Like she knew they would only break whatever this was between them.

Finally, he said quietly, “Because when I look at you, I don’t just see Glitch, the expert hacker and former mercenary. I see a woman who cares deeply, who will work herself to the bone to keep everyone around her happy and safe. And when she runs that pretty little mouth and is a giant smartass, it’s because she’s standing up for what she believes in, even if everyone else disagrees. I also see a woman who is part of a team, a family, but who is also lonely as hell and wants someone in her corner. Someone to show up for her the way she shows up for them. I see someone who isn’t afraid to give as good as she gets. Even when it’s at my expense,” he added with a small smile. “Because all of that is you, Eliza. And I want that. I want it all, and everything else you’re hiding.”

Her throat was thick with emotion as she listened to him. He saw all of that? She couldn’t quite wrap her head around it, but a small kernel of something started to form in her gut, soothing some of the twisting. “You think I’m hiding something?” she asked him.

His lips pulled up into a knowing smirk. “Kitten, you’re always hiding something. That’s what makes you who you are. You’re damn smart, and because of that, you know how to hide things that most don’t.”

“All of that doesn’t mean you love me, though,” she pointed out, her mind still trying to sort through everything she was thinking and feeling. She felt like she was in the middle of a storm, desperately searching for something to hold on to until it passed. “Maybe we’ve just gotten comfortable with each other and realized we don’t have to hate each other,” she suggested.

She let out a soft yelp of surprise when he suddenly lifted and curled his body to sit keeping her straddling him. He brought his hands up to cup her face, staring into her eyes with amusement and determination. “Or maybe, all of that means I love you. Look, Glitch, I don’t say that to just anyone. The only ones I’ve said it to are my parents, my brothers, their wives, and my nieces and nephews. Growing up, those words meant something, and my father always said you don’t toss things like that around unless you plan to stand by them.

Because they can land you in a world of hurt, and make you bitter. I did that with Hallie because I was young and stupid, and I didn't know what love was. But with you, I'm not a little boy.

"I'm a grown-assed man, and I realized the other day when you were torn up about setting the girls back on their recovery. I saw you hurting, thinking that you damaged them somehow, and I saw the longing on your face when you were sitting alone in the gym after watching everyone else leave with people who loved and cared for them. You wanted that. You wanted someone who, when times get hard, would hold you close and make you forget. And it hit me that I wanted to be that man. I wanted to be the one that you felt safe with when everything weighed you down. Someone who would listen, who would understand, and who would distract you when you needed it.

"Then, when the Ghost team found you, I was so damn scared. The only thing I could think about was that you are in danger, and I couldn't let anything happen. I couldn't let them take you away from me before I got to show you how much you mattered to me. How much I want you in my life. And, you're right, this is damn fast and maybe I'm confusing love for something else, but I've seen it happen here, and my feelings aren't going to change. I see it with Razor, in the way he dotes on Karissa but lets her be the badass she is. I see it with Rogue, in the way he looks at Scarlett like she walks on water. I see it in the way Fury, Steel, and Savage look at their women as though they can't live without them. And I want that for myself. But I only want it if it's with you."

She swallowed hard. "But half the time we hate each other," she pointed out.

He sighed. "I know. And like I said before, in the beginning it was probably a little of that, but it was also because you came into my life like a damn tornado. All of a sudden I had this woman in my office, telling me my system was shit, and being all cute and sassy. Half the time I wanted to kick you out, and the other half I wanted to kiss your mouth to shut you up. It pissed me off, and I took that out on you. I'm

not going to say I didn't enjoy our little battle, as much as it pissed me off. But I'll give you points for creativity," he said with a chuckle.

"And even knowing that, you want to keep me around?" she asked disbelievingly.

"Even then," he said with a soft smile. "Just means I need to up my game, because I can't let you get the upper hand too much."

A small chuckle escaped her lips before she could hold it back. "I've been battling with Taz for years. You've got some catching up to do if you're going to beat me," she joked.

He moved the hand that was cupping her jaw into her hair, running his fingers through the strands. "Then I know who to go to if I need pointers." The feel of his fingers in her hair was soothing, and her eyes drifted closed briefly, enjoying it. "Glitch, I'm not saying we need to figure everything out now. It's probably the worst time for this shit. But I want you to know I want you, and I understand how important your work and your team are. I don't want to take any of that away from you. All I want is a chance to be important to you as well. However we have to make it work, we can figure it out together. I just need you to give me a shot. No pressure past that, alright?"

Slowly she nodded. Licking her lips nervously, she said carefully, "I don't know anything about love or how to give you what you need, Code. I'm not going to be easy, and I'm not going to sit back and let you take over. I'm strong-willed, I'm smart, and I may not always put you or your feelings first when it comes to the way the team works or the people we're trying to save. I have to be upfront about that, because it wouldn't be fair to you if I wasn't truthful about expectations. Because it's you that would have to bend and give, not me.

"My parents are dead. My team is my family, and they are the only thing up until now that has mattered to me. They are there for me, they trained me, and we have our own routines and ways of doing things. Not just out on a mission, but when we're back at our place and relaxing. I spend hours learning



how to braid and work on Warg and Vultures' hair. I spend time sparring and joking around with Taz. I go into private meetings with Simba and Jag. I work with a team of men. I know you boys around here are all about no one touching your women, or even making comments about the women, but that's not reality in my club. If you got jealous and said something about it, it wouldn't change. You would have to live with it, and not grow to resent me or consider me untrustworthy.

“And when it comes to missions, there could be times I have to leave and go with them. They're few and far between, but they do happen. You won't be coming with me. You can't. There could be times when I don't talk to you or see you for days. That's a lot of trust between the two of us, and I don't know you're really understanding or seeing that. Because if you ever gave me an ultimatum of them or you, I don't know that I would pick you. I know that's harsh, but I'm being as honest as I can. Because as much as you say you love me, I don't know if you'll be happy with what I can give you in return.”

He was silent for a long moment, digesting her words. “I know how important your team is to you,” he finally said slowly, and she could see him trying to piece together his thoughts before he voiced them. “I'm not going to ask you to put me above them. And right now, you're right, I won't be equal to them. That's just reality. Will I hope to be at least equal to them someday? Yes. Am I going to get jealous and act like an idiot? Also yes. But I can work on that. Maybe after a while, we end up going our separate ways, but I think we've already established that I don't give in easily, so if you give me a shot, you're not going to be able to kick me out without a fight.”

“I could just have the guys throw you out,” she joked lightly.

He smirked. “I have a feeling that while they would, they'd also let me right back in. As it is, we have more important things we need to get working on right now. You and I can put the two of us on the back burner for the moment,

get these scumbags taken care of, and then figure us out. Alright? When you're ready to talk, we'll talk."

Slowly, she nodded. He was right. She needed to focus on security right now, since that was the first line of defense against the Ghost team. Still, she didn't move away from him, feeling like if she did, the spell would break. Everything in her was screaming to do it. To give him a chance. Hadn't she been wondering about what it would be like when she went home and he wasn't there? Would they chalk it up to a fling and go back to only seeing each other when their clubs got together? Because if she was honest with herself, she didn't like the idea of not seeing Code. She got used to him being around, and she could admit she liked him. Liked the way he interacted with his brothers, with her, even if he was a pain in the ass at times and needed his ego checked. And she liked the way he made her feel. At first it had been anger, then lust, then something more.

Hell, she didn't kick him out of her bed; that should have been her first clue. She supposed it boiled down to, did she have feelings for him? Something past a friendship or a camaraderie? Something that could bloom into more? Instead of saying anything, she leaned forward and pressed her mouth to his in a soft kiss. It wasn't hurried, wasn't passionate; it was simple and sweet, but it said everything she didn't know how to voice. Thankfully, he didn't push her away. His grip on her head tightened for a moment before he pulled away and rested his forehead against hers.

That simple gesture alone made her body relax. "I don't know about love, but I definitely care for you, Code," she breathed softly. "You make me feel things I haven't before, and it scares the shit out of me."

He gave a soft chuckle as he released her and pressed a kiss to the tip of her nose. "Then you know exactly how I feel, kitten, and we can be scared shitless together. Okay?"

She nodded. "Okay." He pressed another quick kiss to her mouth, and then they were on their feet and he nudged her to take her seat. Neither of them spoke, until finally she told

herself she needed to get a grip, and cleared her throat. "Alright, enough mushy stuff, we have work to do."

He chuckled and gave her a knowing grin. "Let's get to it," he agreed, moving to take his seat.

They worked nonstop for hours, bickering and fighting over the best course of action to make the system as effective as they could in such a short amount of time. Neither of them were willing to give in on some things, but they eventually found ways to compromise. By the time they finished, it was late, and her eyes were burning from staring at their screens for so long. Finally, she stopped and said, "I'm done. I can't do any more tonight."

She turned in her chair and let out a gasp of surprise when Code was already there and moving to scoop her up and into his arms. "I think I should start calling you bunny instead of kitten," he said in amusement as he carried her out of the office and toward the stairs. She glanced around and saw that while the common room was empty, there was movement outside.

Looking back up at Code, she frowned and asked, "Why?"

"Because I was done an hour ago and you just kept going. You never even noticed. I was going to suggest we stop then, but you were so in the zone I didn't bother. You're like a little Energizer Bunny, and you never seem to run out of batteries. But I think I prefer you to be a kitten. Bunnies might fuck a lot, but they don't have a kitten's sharp claws, and you definitely can do some damage when you get pissed off," he teased as he headed down the hall to his room.

Glitch smirked at that reference. Since today was all about honesty, she could admit that she much preferred kitten to bunny. Bunnies were soft and fluffy. Kittens were cute and unpredictable, exactly the way she liked to think of herself. Of course, she never considered it for a pet name, but she liked when Code called her by it. It made her want to snuggle into him.

Damn it, she did have it bad, she thought as he unlocked his door. She couldn't stop her laughter when she saw the

blow up doll still in the middle of the bed. “Weren’t you saying something earlier about us talking about this?” she asked him, tongue in cheek when he set her feet on the floor.

His eyes heated at the reminder. “I did, but I think we’re going to have to hold off on that little chat. Don’t worry, I won’t be forgetting,” he assured her, eyes bright with promise.

She grinned at him. “Bring it on, caveman,” she purred.

Code turned and shoved the doll and its attachments off the bed. “Get your ass under the covers. I’m tired and we have more work to do in the morning.” She didn’t need to be told twice. She stripped down and crawled in. When she curled into Code, she smiled to herself when he groaned at the feeling of her naked skin against his. “You’re playing with fire, kitten,” he warned her, his hand moving cup her ass and give it a hard squeeze.

“Easy access for later,” she said tiredly. “I need sleep, so keep your cock away from me until I can actually enjoy it.” She nuzzled into him, laying her head in the crook of his shoulder, and draping her leg over his stomach. She felt a small burst of amusement when she nudged against his erection and he made another sound. “Night, caveman,” she murmured drowsily.

“Night, kitten,” he murmured back, kissing the top of her head and letting go of her ass to wrap his arm around her.

Just before she allowed herself to drift off to sleep, she realized how much she liked this, and how much she didn’t want it to end.

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## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

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### GLITCH

She was sure Code would act differently today now that they'd had a big moment, but he was acting completely normal, and she didn't know if she wanted to thank him or scream at him. It was messing with her head. She was constantly looking over at him, his declarations from yesterday echoing in her mind. She went over them again and again, pulling them apart, dissecting them until she wanted to scream. Especially because it felt like he knew exactly what she was doing and was amused by the whole thing, the bastard.

She turned her head to glare at the back of his for good measure, and she could swear that she saw his shoulders shake in silent laughter. *Asshole.*

She looked back at her screen and scowled as she tried to tell herself to let it go and get back to work. Of course, that was a futile effort. Finally, she pushed back from her computer and stood up. "I'm taking a break," she snapped, irritated.

"Alright," Code said simply, not even looking her way. She narrowed her eyes and opened her mouth to blast him when she again saw the slight trembling of his shoulders. Instead, she turned on her heel and stormed out, slamming the door behind her. Childish? Yes. Did she care? No.

She looked around the room and saw Karissa standing with Razor, smiling up at him all lovingly. Razor had a sappy look on his face, and it only pissed her off more. Damn it, she

didn't want to be surrounded by love all the damn time. It did nothing to help her. "Knock it off," she barked at them, making them jolt and turn to her in surprise. She pointed at Karissa. "I need to burn off some energy, so we're hitting the mats. You and Pretty Boy can kiss later." Then she turned and headed for the gym.

"What the hell?" she overheard Razor ask in surprise.

Karissa gave a soft laugh. "Don't worry, I got this."

"You sure? Maybe I should come down there to referee," he suggested. "She looks pissed. And not the normal pissed, the kind of pissed where she's ready to kill someone."

"Nah, I'm good. I'll see you later." She heard them kiss quickly, and she rolled her eyes as she stalked down the steps, storming into the gym.

When she reached the basement, she kicked off her shoes and moved to the ring. She grabbed one of the ropes and hauled herself in, turning and waiting impatiently for Karissa to join her. When she did, Karissa arched a brow at her as she took off her shoes. "What's got you all in a twist?" Karissa asked drily as she reached the ring. "Not that I'm not down for a sparring match, but I'd like to know why you want to pound on me. Because if it's something I did, I might consider pulling my punches a little."

Glitch scowled at her. "It's got nothing to do with you," she said with a shake of her head. "But since no one else in this place will fight me, you get the honor." She launched herself at Karissa, who met her head on. Karissa didn't pull her punches, and she didn't go easy, which was exactly what Glitch wanted. And needed.

After Karissa bucked her off and sent her flying, they both got to their feet and Karissa asked, "Going to tell me what your problem is?" Glitch threw a punch at her stomach, but Karissa blocked it easily enough. Glitch didn't answer her question. She wasn't even sure if she really wanted to. "You know you'll feel better once you do," Karissa told her, grunting when Glitch managed to land a knee in her thigh. "Bitch," she hissed.

Glitch sneered at her. “If you weren’t so damn tall, I’d have gotten you in a better spot,” she taunted, going in for another kick, but Karissa just grabbed her foot and twisted, sending Glitch to the mats, making her snarl in anger. Damn it, she should have seen that coming. “Bitch,” she hissed again when Karissa managed to pin her.

“Now,” Karissa said, a bit breathlessly, even as Glitch struggled to get free. “You’re going to tell me what the hell the problem is or I’ll just keep beating your ass until you do. So spill it, pipsqueak, or I’ll really start to get rough.”

“Why does everyone need to talk about everything?” Glitch demanded, trying to roll and buck her off to no avail. “Maybe I just want to fight. Is that so hard to believe?”

“Sure, but we both know that when you get like this, you have something bottled up inside and you need to get it out. Sparring is only going to get you so far, so instead of ending up bruised and bloodied, how about you tell me what the hell is up your ass and we figure it out together?”

“I like sparring with Taz better than you,” Glitch sneered, finally managing to get herself unpinned and roll Karissa to her back, but not before Karissa managed to buck her off and send her flying away. “You’ve been practicing,” Glitch accused her.

Karissa grinned smugly. “Can’t have any of you saying I’m soft, now can I?” she taunted. “I’m done playing around, so talk, or I’m done for the day.”

Glitch stared at her mutinously, but Karissa gave her a steely look, and Glitch could feel herself crumbling. Finally she couldn’t take it anymore and huffed out an annoyed sigh. “Code told me he’s in love with me and he wants us to be together,” she rushed out. “And now he’s acting like everything is fine and he didn’t completely turn everything on its head, the son of a bitch.”

Karissa didn’t say anything for a moment, but the surprise on her face made it obvious that she hadn’t been expecting that. “He said he loved you?” she asked. “When?”

Glitch scowled. “Last night, after Church. I was pissed because he made some comment about protecting me. Next thing I know, he was yelling at me, I was yelling at him, and then he tried to leave and I jumped on him to stop him. We both ended up on the floor and he was telling me he loves me and wants me to give him a shot. I don’t know, it feels like a damn dream in my head because he hasn’t said a damn word about it all freaking day. And every time I look at him, he’s smiling or smirking, and possibly laughing. It’s driving me nuts, and I know he’s doing it on purpose. The rat bastard.”

“Alright, let me make sure I have this straight,” Karissa said with a thoughtful expression, ticking off each item on her fingers. “You’re pissed because he said he is in love with you, that he wants you two to figure out a future together, and because he’s not freaking out like you. Do I have that all right?”

She was pretty sure she hated Karissa at that moment, but Karissa just slowly grinned at her. “Fuck off,” Glitch hissed, thrusting a hand through her hair. “I know you’re laughing at me and I really want to kick your ass.”

Karissa flattened her lips, but her eyes were still bright with amusement. “Look, Glitch, I know you’re freaking out, but that’s normal,” she tried to soothe. “Love can be scary. Especially when you aren’t planning for it. Trust me, I know. It was the same with me and Razor, and it can be the best thing that’s ever happened to you if you give it a chance.”

“I thought women were supposed to support each other,” Glitch pouted, annoyed that Karissa wasn’t as outraged as her. She knew it was ridiculous, but she didn’t care.

“I do support you, but I also don’t support idiots,” Karissa said with a shrug. Glitch glared at her. “Look, it’s really simple, and I can say this because I felt just like you. That Razor couldn’t possibly love me, and I had a moment of panic. I questioned everything. I think that’s what you’re supposed to do when you love someone. You question it; you doubt it; you hate it; and you crave it. It wouldn’t be real if you didn’t have everything all wrapped up in one crazy package.”



“I never said I love Code,” Glitch protested, frowning harshly.

Karissa gave her a *yeah-right* look. “Babe, out of everyone here, I know you the most. Sure, maybe not as well as I once did, but we’re working on changing that. When you love someone, it’s evident in everything you do. You love the team, and you put up with their shit in ways that most women wouldn’t. You love those girls you work with through your foundation and the programs you started. You make sure they have everything they could possibly want. You love your job, and it’s a huge part of your life. But I also think that in the past few weeks you’ve been here, you’ve realized you can love someone for yourself, too. Namely Code, and all his geeky sexiness. Even when the two of you were pissing each other off, I saw it. You would glare at each other, but the tension between you two was off the charts. In the last week or so, it’s shifted. That anger has turned into affection, even if you won’t admit it, or can’t see it yourself. When you piss him off, you don’t go nearly as hard as you could. You’re not threatening him with your knife every five minutes, and you’re working together like you’ve been doing it for years instead of days. Not to mention when you look at him, he’s the only one in the room even if the room is full of people. You’re not paying attention to anyone or anything else. So let me ask you one very simple question. Do you love Code, and do you want to take a shot at something real with him?”

“How is that a simple question?” Glitch demanded incredulously.

Karissa shrugged. “Because when it comes down to it, it’s a yes or no question. Everything else can be worked out. Might take a lot of work in some cases, but in others it will be easy. Now, really think about it and then tell me, yes or no?” She leaned back against the rope, her legs crossed at the ankles and her arms crossed over her chest as she made herself comfortable.

Glitch wanted to get out of the ring and say fuck it, but she knew Karissa would chase her down and bring her right back.

Which meant she had no choice but to think about it. Well, think about it more. She'd been thinking about it all morning.

Could she see herself with Code? Yes. She admitted that to herself this morning when she woke up in his arms. She hadn't wanted to move, and instead nuzzled back into him for another few minutes, enjoying the feel of him against her in the quiet. She wanted that every day.

Would he try to change her? No. She knew that deep down. He never once tried to suggest she do something else with her life, or that she shouldn't be a part of her team. Though, really, she doubted he would dare try because that would be the end. She didn't change for anyone, especially not a man.

Would she be upset if he was with someone else and not her? The thought made her instantly angry, and her fists clenched as jealousy reared its ugly head. *Guess that was a hard yes*, she thought wryly.

Would she leave her team for him? That was the hardest question of all. She never wanted to leave her team, but really, she could work anywhere. Even from here. Though there would have to be some new rules in place, even if it did piss off one big bad biker President. But she loved being with her team all the time. They were her family, and she enjoyed their down time. It was a part of her, and she didn't know if she could give that up. But the thought of not seeing Code just as often made her stomach hurt.

*Oh fuck. She loved him.*

Panic hit her and she tried not to show it, but Karissa always was observant. "Oh yeah, there it is," she snickered.

Glitch stared at her, trying to stamp it down. "What am I going to do?" she gasped.

"You're going to be the badass bitch you are and you're going to accept it, tell him, and figure out a way to be happy once this whole fucking issue is over," Karissa told her firmly, straightening and walking toward her. "So man the fuck up and get your shit together," she barked.

Glitch snorted. “You’re not nearly as scary as Simba.”

Karissa shrugged. “Few are, but the principle of it is the same. So, again, grow some lady balls and figure it out. Because you are a member of our team and you don’t back down because you’re scared. You fight and you crawl your way up no matter what. Because you’re no coward, Glitch. Or are you?”

“No,” Glitch said firmly, straightening. No, she wasn’t. So it was time for her to stop acting like one. The first thing she was going to do was tell Code she was done with the silent treatment and his damn mind games. She stalked past Karissa and climbed out of the ring. Behind her, she heard Karissa chuckle.

When she reached the top of the steps, her eyes immediately locked on where Code was talking with Razor, Fury, and Rogue. There were a few others in the room, but she didn’t care about any of them. The only thing she saw was Code, and the way he was smirking at her. Like he knew exactly what she was thinking and was enjoying her frustration. Well that was over right fucking now.

She stalked forward until she was only a few feet away from him, then stopped and put her hands on her hips, glaring at him. “You’re an asshole, Code,” she told him angrily. When he opened his mouth she snarled, “Shut the hell up. You think you’re so smart don’t you? Telling me all that shit last night and then leaving me to question everything all day, knowing it was pissing me off and confusing me even more. All because you want to see what I’ll do, and how far you could push me. Well, I caught on to your little game, and now you’ve pissed me the hell off. So, guess what, caveman, I might love you too, but I’m not putting up with your shit any longer. You can go to hell.” Then she turned on her heel and stalked toward the office.

She snarled in outrage when she was grabbed from behind. She twisted her body so she could elbow her attacker in the stomach, before stomping on their instep and twisting out of their arms when they loosened her grip. “Damn it,” Code

wheezed. Her foot smarted from making contact with his biker boot, but she ignored it.

“Stupid move, caveman,” she sneered at him.

“Yeah, well, when it comes to you, I do a lot of stupid things,” he gasped out, glaring as he rubbed his stomach. “No way are you walking away from me after all that you said.”

“You don’t get to tell me shit,” she snapped. “You say you love me, so if you do, now’s your time to prove it. Because this is me, Code. I am pissy and bitchy on a good day, and when I’m truly pissed off watch out. Grabbing me is very stupid. Next time, I’ll remind you a hell of a lot more painfully than I just did.”

“Guess I need to keep myself in shape,” he said as he straightened and stared down at her. “Or at least build a few high shelves to put you on until you calm your ass down.”

Infuriated, she swept her leg out and he went crashing to the floor. She heard a few of the men make sounds of sympathy, but she didn’t pay them any attention. She stood over Code, glaring down at him. “Your short jokes are getting old,” she told him coldly. She put her foot right in the center of his chest. Realizing she didn’t have her shoes on, she put more pressure on his sternum. “You listen to me, Milo,” she hissed. “You made me feel things that I didn’t want to feel. You made me realize I can have more than I thought I needed. Now you’re stuck with me. I’m not giving you a choice. You made your bed, you get to lie in it. So you better get it through that thick damn skull of yours, because I will make your life a living hell if you break my heart, and not even your own club will be able to protect you. When I’m finished, there won’t be anything left of you for them to find. Understand?”

He stared up at her, saying nothing. People were talking around them, but she didn’t care. Though she did vaguely hear someone groan and say, “Not another one.” There was only him staring at her, the anger and determination rolling around inside her, and the underlying fear he would realize he didn’t want her after all. That she pushed him too far, and he would

reject her. But she would survive, she reminded herself, and she would be stronger for it.

She was focused completely on his face, which was a mistake because suddenly he gripped her ankle and shoved it off him, making her fall. He grabbed her before she could land on him and rolled her beneath him, his hand gripping her wrists and pinning her arms above her head. She glared at him, not bothering to struggle. “You done?” he asked her mildly. Her glare intensified, and her fear turned to hurt. This was the moment he would reject her. That he would realize he couldn’t handle her. That he didn’t want to put up with her after all. “Let’s get one thing straight, Eliza. I’m not letting you go. You’re right, I am an asshole, so you better get fucking used to it because you’re stuck with me. Because I love you, and if I break your heart, you won’t need to kill me, I’ll do it myself. Understand?”

Relief flooded her, but she didn’t move. Finally, she swallowed and said huskily, “I got it.”

He looked at her and then slowly smiled, lowering his head to hers. “I love you, Eliza,” he murmured so softly, just for her. “We’ll figure it all out. For now, this is enough.”

Her throat thickened. “I hate that name,” she whispered. “But it’s okay if you use it every so often, *Milo*.” He chuckled at the use of his first name. “I love you too,” she murmured.

“About fucking time,” he said, kissing her. She vaguely heard the laughter, catcalls, and cheers, but the only thing she could focus on was his mouth on hers. When he finally pulled away, he grinned down at her and said, “And just so we’re clear, I’m adding that hit to the gut and trip to the floor to the list of things I’m getting you back for when this is all over. You’re not going to be sitting comfortably for a long time, kitten.”

She grinned back at him. “Bring it on, caveman,” she taunted, her core heating in anticipation.

“Alright, get the hell up off the floor,” Savage’s gruff voice sounded. Both of them looked up to find him looming over them, a scowl on his face and arms crossed over his broad

chest. He looked tired, though she supposed that was to be expected when you came home with twins first thing in the morning. Once they were standing and Code had her tucked into his side, Savage glared at Code. “I don’t know whether to congratulate you or tell you you’re insane,” he told him bluntly.

“I think he’s worried I’m going to pull a gun on him again,” Glitch stage-whispered, making Code laugh and Savage turn that glare on her. She gave him a sweet smile. “Just think of all the fun we could have, Savage,” she pointed out wickedly. “And what I can teach your girls when they’re older.” He silently turned and stalked away, making her laugh.

“You’re going to be trouble, kitten,” Code laughed.

Exactly the way she liked it.

Suddenly, an alarm blared from the other room and their laughter died as everyone froze. She and Code didn’t even hesitate. They ran for the office. “Get ready everyone, because it looks like the fight has arrived early,” she yelled over her shoulder.

That was all it took to have everyone springing into action. Savage and Rogue started barking orders, but she didn’t pay them any attention. As soon as she saw her computer she was reaching for the keyboard. And there it was. A message from Slip.

Slip: Time’s up, Eliza. You want to spare your friends, you and your team have two hours to come out on your own or we come in. And then everyone dies.

“We have two hours,” she told Code grimly, looking up when she heard Savage come into the room, Rogue on his heels.

“Then we make them count,” Savage said simply. “Get yourselves ready. The assholes want a war, they’re going to get one. Glitch, try to reach your team and let them know the situation.” She nodded and started the call as he stalked out.

Simba answered almost immediately. “They’re there,” he said grimly.

“We have two hours to go out to them, all of us as a team, or they plan on killing everyone here,” she told him briskly. “The Dragons are already assembling.”

“Good. We’re a good three hours out, but we’ll pick up the pace,” Simba answered.

“You made good time,” she remarked.

“Wasn’t about to let you and Xena have all the fun,” he replied, making her chuckle. “Your man there?”

“Yes,” she answered automatically, then stopped when she realized what she’d said. “How the hell do you know about that?” she demanded, distracted. “Considering we only just decided that literally five minutes ago.”

“Babe, I’ve known for a while that you two were going to figure your shit out. We can discuss that later, but right now, you make sure you stay safe, and don’t pull any stunts. Where is Xena?”

“She’s in charge of keeping the women safe in the basement.”

He snorted. “She won’t be staying there,” he predicted. “You watch her back and we’ll be there as soon as we can. Remember, if you die, I’m kicking your ass. Xena’s too.”

“Got it. Get here and let’s take these assholes down once and for all.” They clicked off and she looked up at Code with a toothy smile. “Alright, caveman. I have a few tricks up my sleeve, and we only have two hours to make them happen.”

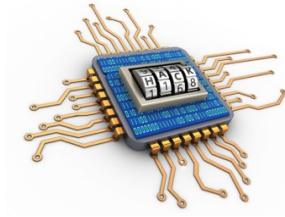
He grinned down at her. “Let’s get them, kitten. Something tells me they’ve made a critical error in thinking they’ll be able to get to you easily.”

“Slip certainly has,” she agreed as she turned back to her computer. “It’s time for my rival to realize why he was always second best. He couldn’t beat me in high school, he couldn’t beat me as a mercenary and he’s not going to beat me now. Let’s get to work.”

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## CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

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### SLIP

“They’re a decent size club,” Spook noted softly from where they were hidden in the trees across the road from the compound. The stupid bastards weren’t even looking for them. Almost like they didn’t know they were there. Slip didn’t like it. If they knew what was coming, there should be some signs of panic. Something that indicated they were battering down the hatches.

It set him on edge. They were up to something, he could feel it. But for now, he kept his mouth shut. It wouldn’t matter in the long run. This club would be wiped off the map when they were through.

“Any signs of them?” Hazard asked.

“Nothing,” Spook replied. “But it’s a huge ass place with lots of buildings, so they’re probably hiding out in one of them.”

“And you’re sure they’re in there?” Hazard asked Slip for the millionth time.

“Yes,” Slip gritted out, pissed that he was being questioned again. “You saw the video. The two whores arrived together, and that bitch Xena was wearing a cut. She belongs to one of these fuckers. And where those two are, the others will follow.”



Hazard stared at him for a moment before nodding. “Fine. They have another half hour left on their deadline.” He gave a cold, lethal smile. “But we’ve never claimed to be honest men. I say we get this show on the road, don’t you?”

They all shared a smile. Slip eased back and out of his position. *I’m coming for you, Eliza, and when I find you, I’m going to enjoy hearing you scream as I kill you.*

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## CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

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### CODE

He watched as Glitch checked her gun and knives, her movements quick and methodical. It was clear to him she had done this thousands of times. Despite the imminent danger, he found it hot, and he wanted to see her do it for him naked. It was probably odd, but he didn't care. When it came to Glitch, her breathing alone could get him half hard.

He forced himself to look away and pay attention to his own work. He tucked the gun in the waistband at his back, and then put in his comms link. The plan was for him and Glitch to stay back to monitor the cameras and give direction as much as possible, but he wanted to be ready. And if he was honest, he had a feeling that Glitch wasn't going to stay put.

Her or Karissa. Karissa was in charge of protecting the women, but they all knew she wasn't about to stay out of a fight. Especially with that asshole Maggot. Code saw the fear in Razor's eyes before it was replaced by determination. He wasn't going to let anything happen to her, and Code would do the same for Glitch. There was no other option.

Their little show out in the common room was one he hadn't seen coming, but he was happy it did. Knowing Glitch was going to give him a real chance settled something inside him. But at the same time, his fear at what might happen

refused to subside. He only just found her. He couldn't lose her.

“Do not underestimate them,” Glitch suddenly said, looking over at him with eyes bright and fierce. “They are not like me or even my team. They will not fight fair. If they see a chance to put a bullet in your skull, they will. If they see a way to slit your throat, they'll take it. And you might not see them coming. So do not take any stupid risks, got it, caveman? Or I'll have to come save your ass and I really don't feel up to having our first fight so soon.”

Code arched a brow. “I feel like I should be repeating that little speech to you,” he said drily. “Because I'm going to be pissed if you do something stupid, and I'll be adding to the list of what you need to answer for as soon as this is over. I'd hate to have to wait any longer because you got yourself hurt.” He stepped forward and gripped her chin, staring into her eyes. “Be careful, kitten.”

“Well since I'm supposed to be stuck in here, I think we'll be fine on that score,” she said, voice tinged with annoyance.

“We both know as soon as you see some kind of danger you'll be trying to fly out that door,” he countered, letting go of her chin. She didn't deny it. Instead of fighting, he gripped her by the hair, yanked her head back and gave her a hard, desperate kiss. She submitted enough for him to invade her mouth with his tongue, claiming her, before he yanked his head back and rasped, “I love you, kitten.”

Her eyes gave a quick flash of amusement. “I love you too, caveman, but don't be going sappy on me now.” Then she gave him another quick kiss and stepped back once he let go of her hair.

They sat down in their respective spots as the door opened and Savage walked in with Rogue right behind him. Both men were grim, but wore fierce expressions. “All set?” Savage asked.

“Everyone is hooked into the comms system,” Code answered. “Glitch has made it an open system for us. If one of us is in trouble, we all hear it.”

“Good,” Savage said with a brisk nod. He gave Glitch a narrowed-eyed look. “Do I need to remind you that you need to stay in here? Not go off half cocked?”

“Well, now, see, if I want to do something with a cock, I want it to be a full cock,” Glitch replied with a slow, wicked grin. “There are very few things I do halfway, Mr. President.”

Code snickered, even as Savage glared at her. Then Savage looked at him and said, “Seriously? This is what you want me to put up with? I’m going to end up throwing her in the Box for my own sanity.”

“I’m starting to think you’re all sex obsessed,” Glitch said before he could answer. “Cocked. Box. Seriously, the amount of kinky shit you guys are up to. Have you considered hiring a therapist? I mean, I know no one’s complaining, but I’ll happily find someone if anyone wants to figure that out.”

“Jesus Christ,” Savage sighed, scrubbing a hand over his face. Glitch winked at Code, and he grinned at her. She was definitely going to keep him on his toes. “Just don’t get yourself killed,” Savage snapped at her. “When this is over I’m going to call a meeting with all the single brothers to tell them that when they pick a woman, I need to meet her and approve first. We have enough smartasses around here to last a lifetime.”

“Is now a bad time to point out it’s only going to get worse as the girls get older?” Glitch asked innocently. “I mean, with all these strong minded women around, I think you should probably accept the inevitable. Adding some quieter women to the bunch won’t change much.”

Savage looked at Rogue. “Your idea about the convent is sounding better and better,” he grumbled. Rogue didn’t reply, but the look on his face was enough to say he agreed with the sentiment. “Alright, let’s wrap this up.” Then he and Rogue stalked out.

Glitch turned and grinned at Code. “I think he’s starting to come around,” she suggested.

Code chuckled. “Kitten, all I see is me putting out fires every time you open your mouth around him.”

She shrugged. “Means this place is going to be pretty damn lively,” she replied flippantly, before turning back to her screen. “Now stop distracting me. We need to focus.”

Code resisted rolling his eyes, but barely. Instead, he focused on ensuring everyone could hear them once they turned on their comms, and checking people’s positions. The other fun thing about the comms was they had a tracking chip in them, so he and Glitch could see exactly where everyone was on the grounds, and he already noticed one person wasn’t where they were supposed to be. He turned off his mic and said to Glitch, “Seems Karissa isn’t waiting around. She’s moved from the basement to the top of the steps in the common room. Razor’s with her.”

“Did you really expect anything else?” Glitch asked sarcastically. “But Tom is down there now, so they’re not unprotected.”

He had to agree.

Suddenly, a loud boom filled the air and the entire compound shook with it. Code and Glitch were both moving before the sound cleared. “Looks like they’re not waiting that last half hour,” Glitch said grimly as they hit the door.

“What are the chances of you staying here?” he asked her, drawing his gun and carefully opening the door. That explosion was far too close for comfort, which meant there was a damn good chance those bastards were already in the compound.

“What do you think?” Glitch snapped, pulling out her own gun and looking at him with a calmer expression than he would have expected. Then again, she was far better trained, and this was exactly the kind of thing that she would be damn good at. He bit back the urge to order her to stay. The rational part of his brain knew it was stupid to argue with her, but still, the rest of him wanted to scoop her up and take her down to the basement so she was safe.

“They blew up one of the old warehouses on the property,” Ice’s calm voice said through the comms. “No sign of movement from any of my direct angles.”

“They won’t come in directly,” Karissa said evenly through the comms. When they reached the common room, he saw she was near the front windows, looking out, her gun firmly in hand. “These bastards are hoping for you all to rush out there to see what happened so they can pick you off. Stay the hell away and keep your eyes open.”

“They may have more explosives planted in the other buildings,” Glitch added grimly.

“How the fuck did they get in?” Savage snarled angrily from against the wall near the front window opposite Karissa and Razor, who was right behind his woman, looking pissed off and grim.

“They’re called the Ghost team for a reason,” Glitch told him tightly. “More than likely they slipped past the sensors, or deactivated them without triggering an alert. Are there any other big buildings on the property where they could easily hide?”

“We have some outbuildings scattered around, but none are visible from here,” Fury answered. Code didn’t see him, so he assumed he was out there somewhere trying to figure out what the hell was going on.

“Steel, Ice, any signs from your vantage points?” Savage demanded.

“Nothing,” Steel answered grimly. “These bastards are either still outside the compound, or they’re damn good at camouflage.”

Suddenly the sound of bullets filled the comms and everyone ducked for cover. He hit the floor the same instant as Glitch, and he instinctively covered her body with his own. “They’re aiming at the back of the clubhouse,” Ink’s voice said through the comms. “Fuckers brought some heavy artillery.”

“And are on the opposite side of the building they just blew up,” Ice noted.

“They’re spreading out,” Karissa told them as she got up from her crouched position, looking outside. “Which means they’re going to try and draw us out.”

“No one show yourselves,” Savage ordered. “Do not give these fuckers a shot. Ice, Steel, you see anyone who isn’t one of ours, you shoot. Got it?”

“Roger that,” Steel affirmed. Ice echoed him, and then they went silent.

Within minutes, more bullets flew, this time at the bar down the road. “Fuckers,” he heard Jax mutter. “They’re going to shoot up every building we own. Good thing we secured the garage door. That thing will blow if they hit one of the gas tanks.”

“Then we need to make sure they don’t get that far,” Rogue said darkly.

Glitch pushed at Code, making him roll off her. She slowly got to her feet and, staying as low as possible, headed to the side of the room, her back to the wall. He followed. She gave him a knowing look, but didn’t call him on his overprotective instincts. If she thought he was going let her go about doing whatever the hell she was doing with no backup, she was crazy.

Everything went quiet, and the tension in the room rose even higher. “What the hell are they doing?” Savage muttered impatiently.

“They’re waiting us out,” Glitch told him. “I bet they figured you or us would have gone to meet them head on.” She looked up at Code. “I need to look at my screens. I might be able to spot them, or at least give us an idea of where they are.” Code nodded. “Xena, stay sharp,” Glitch told her. “Everyone else, get ready, because I’m going to find these bastards and we’re going to get the upper hand.”

“I love it when you get all bossy,” Karissa joked lightly, but her eyes never changed as she continued to stare out the

windows.

Glitch tossed her a smirk, then she went around Code and headed for the office. He was hot on her heels. When they entered the room, she ordered, “You check the south and west sides and I’ll check the north and east. Let’s find these bastards.”

They did just that. He checked the cameras, scanning for anything out of the ordinary, but it was late in the day and the sun was setting, casting shadows and making it hard to spot much. It was frustrating. Until finally, he heard Glitch mutter, “Gotcha.” He spun around to look at her screen, and there was a group of men, hunkered down in the trees across from the clubhouse gate. “Alright, everyone, I’ve got a visual,” she announced. “But I can only see three of them, which means the other two are probably on the grounds.”

“I say we go round them up,” Fury said darkly.

“You’re going to need to be careful,” Karissa warned. “They do this shit on purpose. Whoever isn’t with them is here, and they’re waiting for the moment that they can pick you off or get in here. So watch your ass.”

“I’ll cover you,” Steel offered.

“We want to keep some of our trained men here,” Savage said. “In case they sneak by us.”

“Fury, I’ll go with you,” Jax offered.

“I’ll meet you too,” Trax offered. “Everyone else, stay the hell back and make sure none of these bastards get inside.”

“Steel, go with them, but hang back and make sure no one gets the drop,” Savage ordered.

“Coming down,” Steel answered.

Code looked at Glitch. “Any signs of the other two?” he asked her.

She shook her head, a frown on her face. “And I don’t fucking like it,” she said quietly.



It was a tense few moments as they waited for the men to leave the clubhouse through one of the back exits and head into the woods. Code tracked them on the camera, eyes sharp in case anyone burst out from somewhere along the way. When they reached the roadway, they moved out of camera range, but then showed up again when they started to make their way toward the men from behind. Barely any noise could be heard through the comms, and Code was on edge. Behind him, he heard Glitch clicking away, but he was too focused on his brothers to pay much attention.

“Fuck,” Fury hissed. “They’re fucking decoys,” he snapped out.

No sooner did the words leave his mouth than they heard gunfire outside, and the sound of the doors in the common room being kicked in. “Fucking hell,” Code hissed, standing up. “Stay here and lock the door,” he ordered as he ran out.

It was pandemonium. Guns were firing, and even though there were only five of them, they were knocking people back and off of them like it was nothing. He rushed at the closest one, who was fighting with Savage. He tackled the man to the floor, the momentum of his body sending them crashing into a table behind them.

“Fucker, I’m going to gut you like a pig,” the man snarled as they struggled to their feet. Code realized quickly the man was Hazard, and his eyes were just as wild as they were on the security camera at the Predators clubhouse.

“Good luck with that,” Code taunted, bringing his fist up fast and punching him in the jaw.

Hazard’s head snapped back but he just let out a roar of anger and came back swinging. Code had never been so happy that he used to wrestle with his brothers growing up, because he was able to duck and weave out of the way, giving Savage a chance to get in and grab him, tossing him aside and into the wall.

Behind him, he heard a cry that he recognized and he whipped around to see Glitch grabbing the railing of the stairs and using it to launch herself at one of the men as he

approached the basement steps where Karissa and Razor were battling with Maggot. Even as small as she was, Glitch hit him with enough power to have him staggering forward, his body crashing into Razor, who used the movement to get him to the floor. Code saw a flash of steel as Glitch brought her knife up, while Karissa brought out her own. Unfortunately, Maggot was able to deflect both and send them flying back.

Code let out a snarl as Glitch slammed into one of the tables, but then grunted in pain when something hard came down on his head. He staggered and dropped to his knees as his vision went spotty. “You bastards are idiots for thinking you could hide them,” Hazard sneered as he put his boot on Code’s back and shoved him to the floor. Code tried to rear up and get him off, but there was too much pressure from the man’s weight. “You should have picked your friends more wisely, because now you’re going to die for nothing.”

“I don’t fucking think so,” Savage’s furious voice thundered as he slammed into Hazard again, relieving the pressure on Code’s back and sending Hazard flying. Code staggered to his feet, his head swimming with pain and his vision blurry. He could just make out Glitch, Karissa, and Razor holding off Maggot, but panic welled inside him as Glitch slammed hard into the wall, Maggot delivering a kick to Razor’s gut that had him slamming back hard enough to smash his head on the edge of one of the overturned tables. Razor slid to the ground unconscious.

Karissa let out a warrior cry as she launched herself at Maggot, pulling moves that Code was sure he was going to wonder later if they were real. It was enough to have Maggot turn his attention away from Glitch and back to Karissa. Code looked at where Savage and Hazard were fighting it out, and Rogue rushed over to join the fray.

Decision made, Code turned his attention back to his woman, and getting to her and Karissa. He headed for them as fast as he could, weaving around all the overturned furniture, but shouted another cry of pain when someone else slammed into him, taking him back to the floor. He came face to face with Crisp, who was looking far too pleased with himself.

Blood ran down the side of his face, giving him a maniacal look. “What have we here?” Crisp asked, grabbing him by the collar and hauling him up. Code struggled, trying to get his heavy limbs to cooperate, but the pain coursing through his body was almost overwhelming. Crisp dropped him, letting him bash his head on the floor, and Code could feel the darkness slipping in.

Panic gripped him and he tried to fight it with everything he had, especially when he saw Crisp turn to walk toward where Maggot was still struggling with Karissa and Glitch. He wanted to scream at her to run. To get away, but the words wouldn't come. All he could do was watch helplessly until the darkness overwhelmed him and dragged him under.

The last thing he saw was Crisp grabbing Glitch by the hair and dragging her back, as another body came slinking out of the shadows. Despair seized him as he sank into the dark, even as he prayed she would be alright. That he would wake up and see her again.

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## CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

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### GLITCH

She reminded herself that she needed to stay calm, but considering she was tied to a chair in the middle of the common room, surrounded by broken furniture, with Karissa in the same position behind her, calm wasn't easy to achieve. Most of the men were bound and gagged in the corner of the room. She couldn't see Code, but she saw Hazard drag him over there. He looked like he was unconscious, his face dripping with blood. She wanted to scream, but her training kicked in and she knew she wouldn't help anything if they knew he meant anything to her. As it was, they already gave Razor a few extra blows since they knew he was Karissa's man.

Karissa remained remarkably silent the entire time, but Glitch could feel the all-encompassing rage that burned through her. Her entire body was shaking with it, and Glitch knew it was feeding her desire to take these assholes out. It was up to the two of them to do it, because their team was still miles away.

"The others aren't here," Spook announced as he emerged from upstairs. "No sign of them." He gave Glitch a cruel smile. "It seems they didn't think these two were important enough to take when they took off." Glitch glared at him, refusing to say a word.

“We’ll deal with them later. At least we have these two.” Hazard looked downright pleased with himself. He came around to stand in front of her. “When they finally decide to show their faces again, they’ll find your bodies in pieces. Think they’ll care then, sweetheart?” he sneered. She didn’t reply, unafraid. Predictably, he didn’t like that, and lashed out with a hard slap across her face. She didn’t make so much as a gasp of pain at the stinging in her cheek.

She’d been trained for it. They could withstand brutal methods of torture for hours and internalize the pain. She wasn’t about to give any of them a reaction unless she could use it against them.

“Fucking bitch,” Hazard hissed, slapping her again for good measure. “You still think you’re better than us. And even all these years later, you’re still wrong.”

“Hazard, that one is mine,” Slip’s voice reminded him darkly, drawing Glitch’s attention. She looked at him assessingly. He was damn proud of himself for being the one to grab her and knock her out when she was trying to help Karissa with Maggot. She could see the triumph in his eyes, like he knew he was going to win and finally get to kill her. Well, he was in for a surprise, because she wasn’t about to go down without a fight.

Hazard didn’t like what Slip had to say, because he whirled around and snarled, “You don’t give the orders. I do. You can have her when I’m finished.”

“We had a deal,” Slip reminded him mildly. “I got shit on her from years before this team, and you aren’t taking that away from me.”

“You fucking piece of shit,” Hazard seethed, turning on him. “I’m about done with your attitude.”

Slip’s expression didn’t change as he lifted his gun and fired, his bullet finding its mark right in the middle of Hazard’s forehead. Hazard dropped like a stone, dead instantly. “What the fuck?” Crisp screeched behind her.

“He was a liability,” Slip said easily, putting the gun down. “And I’m tired of taking orders. Spook and I are in charge now, and we decide what happens with these two.”

Glitch used that moment of distraction to try and wiggle her hands around to the small of Karissa’s back. They were close enough together that she could feel they missed the knife in the hidden compartment of Karissa’s waistband. She just needed to grip it. Karissa didn’t acknowledge her, but pressed back as far into the chair as she could, bending her torso forward and subtly arching herself. Glitch managed to hold back her sound of triumph as she gingerly pulled it out and pressed it into Karissa’s bound hands. Slip’s attention was going to be on her, so Karissa would be the one to get them out.

Glitch turned her attention back to the men who were now arguing, two of them pissed their leader was dead, while Spook and Slip made it very clear if they didn’t get on board, they would be joining him. The room was ripe with dissension, and that was the very thing she needed to use against them in this mess. “Would you all shut up?” she barked at them, making sure to sound bored. Anything to keep their attention on her and not Karissa, who had already managed to saw through some of the thin rope. They really hadn’t been prepared for this, judging by how flimsy it was.

All four men stopped arguing abruptly and turned back to look at her. “Shut the fuck up, bitch,” Spook ordered, lifting his gun to point it at her.

Glitch rolled her eyes. “You know, I’m tired of being called a bitch all the time,” she told him. “How about you, Xena?”

“It does get old,” Karissa agreed, her voice also bored. “I mean, you would think smart men would be able to come up with more interesting insults, right?”

“I think we’ve already established they’re not very smart,” Glitch added. A blow to her face was her reward for her insolence, blood pooling in her mouth as she spat it out to the

floor and looked up at a furious Crisp. “Truth hurts, does it, big guy?” she taunted. Another blow. She just laughed.

“I’m going to enjoy burning you, cunt,” he snarled, getting into her face. “And I’ll make sure you’re still breathing as I do it.”

“You’re not doing shit to her until I’ve had my turn,” Slip told him coldly, shoving him aside. Crisp snarled, but when Slip pointed his gun at him, he stepped back. Slip looked at Glitch and gave her a slow, smug smile. “You know, Eliza, it’s refreshing to see you haven’t changed.”

“I like to think I’ve only become sharper and smarter, Forrest,” she smirked back at him. “You know, by making sure I don’t keep things in places where people could hack in and find them, and by not joining up with the three stooges over here. How was prison, by the way? Make any new friends in there? Or did you have to become butt buddies with someone to keep that pretty face intact?”

His eyes flashed with fury, but unlike Crisp, he didn’t lash out. Instead, he put his gun under her chin and lifted it until her neck was craned back and he could tighten his grip around it, stealing her breath. She shut down the instinct to panic, holding his gaze as he said calmly, softly, “I’m going to enjoy killing you, Eliza. I’ve been dreaming about it for years, so I won’t make it fast. I’ll make it so slow and painful that you’ll beg me for mercy. Beg me to end it. But I won’t. Because you need to suffer. You need to experience the kind of pain that will break you.” He gave one more hard squeeze, making her see spots, before he finally shoved her head away and let go.

Her head fell forward, and she heard a vague grunt of pain behind her. “Bitch,” Maggot snarled.

“You’re not touching me without a fight, fucker,” Karissa hissed at him. “When I get out of this chair, I’m going to kill you.”

“If you get that one, I get this one,” Maggot announced darkly. “She and I have a score to settle.”

“You mean you want to drug me and try to rape me again?” Karissa tossed back.

“I’m going to take every damn one of your holes until you’re bleeding and broken,” Maggot vowed. “Then I’ll slit your throat and let you bleed out all over your man. Let him be helpless to save you.”

“Fine,” Slip said with a shrug. “Spook?”

“I want my turn,” Spook said coldly. “I don’t care which one, but I figure it’s the least I deserve after all this fucking mess.”

Glitch looked at Slip, trying to draw his attention back. Karissa was almost through the rope and none of them noticed her small movements. They needed to keep it that way if they were going to have a shot at getting out of this alive. Though chances were slim, considering there were four of them and they all had guns, but it was a chance they were going to have to take. “As lovely as all that is,” she said impassively, “how about we get back to the matter of hand, huh? What’s the plan here, Forrest? Because we both know that even if you kill us, our team is going to be after you for the rest of your pathetic lives. They’re not going to just let it go.”

“Seems to me they already did,” Slip remarked, looking back at her. “Why else did they leave you here? You’re not worth anything to them. You’re just pieces of ass to keep their dicks wet. Women aren’t worth shit anyway, and if they left you here, I’d have to say that they don’t care what happens to you.”

“Possible,” she agreed carelessly, unfazed. *Almost there.* “So tell me, what have you been up to the past few years? Because you certainly haven’t been improving your skills. You couldn’t get into my system at all.” She gave him a condescending smile, which had his mouth pulling down into an angry scowl. “Just like back in high school, you never could figure out how to best me.”

“You fucked me over,” he flung at her angrily, showing the first crack in his cool facade.



“Slip,” Spook tried to interject.

“Shut up,” Slip snarled at him. Spook’s eyes flashed with anger, but Slip didn’t seem to care. He looked back at her, lowering his face to hers. It was exactly where she needed him. She felt the rope start to give as Karissa got through, both of them gripping the strands to keep it appearing tight until they could make their move. “You’re going to pay for everything you’ve done to me. Because of you, I ended up here instead of being the best hacker in the world. You deprived me of what I deserved.”

“You did that to yourself,” she countered coldly. “You were the idiot that tried to cheat his way into a school he wasn’t good enough for. I practiced for years, and you came in all cocky thinking the world owed you everything. You were no better on that mission we ran together. You fucked yourself over because you were too lazy to hide your shit, and you went down. Not to mention you were practically bragging about it.”

“Shut up,” he ordered her, fury turning his face an angry red. His fist came up and he slammed it into her jaw, making her head snap to the side.

Damn that hurt, she thought as her eyes watered for a moment before she blinked them back. She wouldn’t give him a single tear. She heard Karissa struggling behind her, and she knew she needed to speed this up if they were going to get out of here in one piece. She needed to get her hands on one of their guns so she could at least stand a chance. She gave a humorless laugh and shook her head. “God, you really are pathetic,” she taunted him further. “You will never amount to anything, Forrest. Your parents had such high hopes for you too. And what did you do? You disgraced them. You sullied their good name, and instead of acting like a man about it, you threw a giant fit like a toddler in a tantrum. And now, here you are, a killer for hire, and still unable to handle getting shown up by someone better than you. You’re not a hacker, you’re just a hack. Fucking pathetic. If you want to kill me, you go right ahead, but it won’t change anything. You’re still a pathetic excuse for a man, who will always be known as a

cheater and a fraud who got beaten by a girl. It will follow you around for the rest of your pitiful life.”

Her words did the trick. He let out a roar of outrage, bringing the gun up, ready to fire. But before he could pull the trigger, the roar of bikes sounded through the clubhouse, and relief swamped her. Their team was here, and they were going to end this once and for all.

The sound of the bikes stunned them just long enough for her and Karissa to launch into action. The ropes fell and she used every ounce of strength she had to swing her chair up and send it crashing into Slip, who let out a roar as his gun went off and the bullet whizzed past her head. Her ears rang, but she ignored it as they both fell to the floor, sending the gun flying. She heard Karissa behind her, and another shot went off, a cry sounding. She couldn't look or worry, because Slip let out another roar as he bucked her off and she flew into the air.

She managed to twist her body to keep from hitting her head. “You fucking cunt,” Slip raged as he staggered to his feet.

“Again, you need to get more creative,” she taunted him as she climbed to her own feet. “You want to kill me, Forrest, go ahead and try. Because we both know it won't be me dying today. It's going to be you. Because you're no match for us. You'll have been beaten by me *again*. And this time, there's no coming back. You're done.”

He let out a cry and launched himself at her. She met him head on, landing a solid punch to his throat followed by a knee to the gut, and then shoving him backward. He fell back gasping, and she continued her assault with a roundhouse kick to the side of his head, making him fall to the ground. She was on him fast, pressing her knee to his chest as she pulled out the knife she kept stashed in a hidden pocket at the front of her jeans. She put it to his throat, pressing hard. He struggled, digging it in deeper blood pooling under the blade. “You don't have the guts to kill me,” he gasped out, eyes wild.

“See, that's where you're wrong,” she said calmly. “I have all the guts in the world when it comes to those who mess with

people I care about. Remember how you said you were going to enjoy slicing my throat and watching me bleed out until the life faded from my eyes?” With pain staking slowness, she slid the knife across his throat, cutting deep as blood sprayed, and panic flooded his eyes. “See you in hell, Forrest. Make sure you tell the Devil you were bested by a girl. Again.” She swiped the knife away, standing up and watching as he desperately clawed at his throat, like he could somehow seal it shut. Then he tried to reach for the gun a few feet away, his fingers just brushing it. She brought her foot down hard on his hand, feeling bones crunch under the force of it.

She turned her head when she heard a noise, seeing Karissa was standing over three downed bodies, but she was turning her back as she moved to greet their team who burst through the doors. Spook roused just enough to lift his gun. Glitch didn’t even hesitate. She let her knife fly, sinking it into his hand, making him scream in pain and drop the gun. It went off, but Karissa dove back, narrowly avoiding being hit. Then she was moving, picking up the gun and firing a final shot right into Spook’s head. He fell back lifeless to the floor.

Glitch nodded at Karissa when she gave her a grateful look, and then looked back at Slip, who was still bleeding out, gasping and gurgling in rage, shock, and pain. She stared at him, wondering briefly how it had come to this. “You could have been something, Forrest,” she told him calmly. “Instead, you let power and greed get the best of you. I hope it was worth it, because you’re going to die and no one is going to greet you on the other side. You’ll be alone once again.” She shook her head when he moved his lips but no sound came out. “I hope it was worth it.”

His eyes held hers, there was anger and fear at knowing he was dying, she couldn’t drum up an ounce of sympathy. Not for the kid she used to know, or the man he became. He made his bed, he tried to kill her, and he hurt her friends. Her family. That alone meant he deserved nothing from her. As the life drained from his eyes, nothing came. If that made her cold and unfeeling, well, she could live with that.

Finally, she turned and saw her team untying all the Dragons MC members. “About time you assholes showed up,” she drawled as she moved toward them. “Leaving the women to clean up your mess like always.”

Simba gave her a quick once over, and she saw the relief in his eyes that she wasn't too worse for wear. She was going to be damn sore and sporting some interesting bruises on her face and body, but overall she was fine. She hurried toward the men, looking for Code.

He wasn't among the group who were standing up, and panic gripped her. “Code?” she called desperately, moving through the sea of bodies.

“He's out cold,” Doc told her, pulling her attention to where he was leaning over a prone Code. Fear consumed her when she realized he was the only one not awake. He lifted Code's eyelids one by one. “He's unconscious, and he's definitely got a concussion, but he'll wake up in a few hours,” Doc assured her when she fell to her knees beside him. “Someone help me get him into the infirmary,” Doc barked. “The rest of you can line your asses up and I'll get to you as I can.”

“Someone check on the women,” Savage ordered.

“They're fine,” Tom's voice suddenly called, making them all look over to see that he was standing at the top of the stairs, looking grim. “But someone needs to get down there and calm them the hell down. The twins were talking about breaking down the door and coming up here to handle shit themselves. The babies are screaming, and Ronin and Gabe are trying to help the girls out.”

“Tell them we'll let them out shortly, that we're cleaning up the mess,” Savage ordered him. Tom nodded and turned to head back down the steps. “Get these bodies the hell out of here,” Savage ordered.

“We'll handle it,” Simba told him. “See to your men and your women and kids, brother. We've got the clean up.” Savage gave him a grateful nod. When Karissa and Glitch made a move to stand, he cut them both fierce looks. “You two

stay with your men. We'll talk after." Too tired to argue, Glitch nodded and turned her attention back to Code.

Rogue lifted Code like he weighed nothing, and hauled him to the infirmary room where Doc got him comfortable and hooked him up to some of the machines there. The steady sound of his heartbeat was comforting, beating strong. She laid her head down on the side of the bed, bone deep exhaustion rolling through her.

It was over. Finally. Now she just needed Code to wake up.

"So he's the one, huh?" Taz's voice asked quietly a few hours later when he came to sit with her. The mess in the other room was being handled, and while she felt bad that she wasn't helping, she didn't want to leave Code, who was still out cold. Doc was confident he would wake up soon, but with each passing minute, she wasn't so sure.

She looked over at him tiredly. "Yeah, he's the one," she replied softly, before looking back at Code. Doc bandaged his head and cleaned up most of the blood, but his clothes were still stained with it. "I never thought I'd find someone like him," she admitted.

Taz chuckled softly. "Babe, I always knew you were going to meet someone, and as much as I hate the idea, he's who you belong with. As long as you're happy, then I'm happy."

"I don't know what I am at the moment," she admitted. "I need time to process it all, I guess."

Taz reached out and took her other hand in his, drawing her attention back to him. "You made me so fucking proud, coming in and seeing you standing there, babe," he told her with a smile. "You handled your shit, and you proved you don't need someone to help you unless you ask for it. Looks like all those hours in the gym and our sparring sessions paid off," he teased. "You're welcome."

She chuckled. "That ego of yours is going to get you in trouble," she warned him. "If I can find room for a man in my life, then you can find room for a woman in yours."

He lost his smile and shook his head. “Nah, I’m not relationship material,” he said easily, but there was something in his eyes that piqued her curiosity. “Besides, like I told the twins, I make a far better Uncle anyway. Now, I’m going to help finish getting things squared away. We’re going to debrief with the Dragons tomorrow, so don’t stay up here too late. Got me?”

“Got you, but I’m not leaving him,” she told him firmly.

He nodded. “Alright, I’ll come back and check on you later.” Then he leaned down to kiss the top of her head before he walked out.

She looked back at Code and murmured, “You need to wake up, caveman. We have some shit to figure out, and we can’t do that if you’re sleeping.” He didn’t wake or stir, and she sighed. She glanced at the bed and saw there was enough space, so she toed off her shoes and crawled up into the bed with him, laying her head on his chest and closing her eyes.

She would be here when he woke up, she vowed, and then they were going to figure some shit out. Because after all of this, she wasn’t going to waste another second. Almost dying was enough to make that abundantly clear.

She just hoped he was ready.

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## CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

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### CODE

**H**e winced as he lowered himself into his seat in Church. God he was sore, and his head was still pounding.

Though, when he looked around the room at the rest of his brothers, a few of them were also a little worse for wear. Savage was sporting some dark bruises on his cheek and around his left eye, though at least it wasn't swollen shut. Most everyone else had bruises, cuts, and in the case of Rogue and Fury, torn up knuckles.

The only ones who weren't in some sort of pain were the Predators, but they at least had the good sense to not say a word about it. Though he saw Taz fight back a grin a few times when someone would moan or groan.

He turned and saw Karissa sitting in Razor's lap, and despite the badass that she was, her head rested in the crook of his neck, holding on to him. Code was knocked out for a short while, but other than a giant bump on the back of his head, he was fine. Still, he knew the terror, especially considering he hadn't been able to help Glitch before Crisp took him out.

He hoped he never had to feel that again as long as he lived, but he knew with Glitch and her team, that wasn't realistic. He glanced down at where she was seated in his lap, facing forward as she worked on getting things back to rights with the security system. Considering the bruising on her face and all the cuts and lacerations on her body, he was surprised

she was still so sharp. Though, his woman was definitely a different breed.

When he woke up last night to find her wrapped around him in the infirmary bed, relief flooded through him knowing she was okay. It was so overwhelming that despite the pain in his head and body, he hugged her as tight to him as he could, waking her. She woke up instantly, eyes wide with her own relief when they connected with his. She scrambled to call Doc back in and have him checked out, refusing to leave his side the entire time. Though he had to laugh at her bedside manner when she told him to buck up, when he moaned and groaned as Doc poked and prodded at him. Still, she was attentive and careful with him all night, refusing to leave his side even when Doc gave him the all-clear to go to bed, with instructions for her to wake him up every couple of hours.

That interrupted sleep put him in a shit mood this morning, but he'd sleep it off later. It would take more than a few blows to the head to keep him down.

Now, he was grateful that none of their own weren't dead, and that while they had some major repairs to do, the Ghost team were dead, and thanks to the Predators, there was nothing left of them for anyone to find. The bastards were very thorough.

Savage banged his gavel loudly, and he and a few others winced at the sound. "Damn it, Prez, how about a little sympathy?" Ink groaned, lowering his head into his hands. The Ghost team tied him up and threw him against the bar, making him hit his head pretty hard, and he had been groaning about a headache ever since.

"Man up," Savage told him unsympathetically. "Alright, let's get this done and over with so we can start getting this place cleaned up. Ice, what are we looking at for damages, financially?"

Ice grimaced and named a figure that had them all wincing. "We got it, but it's a hit, so we're going to need all hands on deck to get it finished. For the outlying warehouse, thankfully they picked one that was mostly empty. We were



only using it for some minor storage. It's a write-off, so it's really our choice if we rebuild it. We could save ourselves some money and leave it as an open space for something later if we want."

"I say we demo it and leave it if we don't need it," Jax agreed. "I mean, what's the point of wasting money to rebuild something we might not use."

"But could it be used for something?" Doc asked curiously. "I mean, we have the space, maybe we can build something that will generate some money. Sure, it'll cost us upfront, but depending on what we use it for, it could pay off."

"We already got a bar and garage on site," Rogue said grumpily. "We don't need any more outsiders coming on to our land. That's asking for trouble." Code had to agree with his point.

"For now I say we table the idea and focus on getting everything operational again. We can hash out the non-essentials later," Steel offered.

"I agree," Savage said. "Alright, we'll table that and focus on getting the clubhouse, garage, and bar back in running order. Everything else, we sort out later. All in favor?" Everyone but the Predators, Karissa, and Glitch voted, though Code would be surprised if Glitch even heard anything because she was so focused on what she was doing. "Good," Savage continued once the motion passed. He looked down the table at Simba. "Thank you for helping us take out the trash and get shit cleaned up."

Simba gave a nod and said, "Least we could do since you were watching out for our members here." He looked at both Karissa and Glitch. Karissa gave him a smirk, and Glitch ignored him. "Hopefully there wasn't too much trouble while we were gone."

"Fuck off," Glitch said mildly, not even glancing his way. "We both know you were directing that at me."

"Just making sure you were paying attention," Simba replied, unfazed, even as a few people snickered. Glitch turned

and fixed him with a narrowed eyed glare. Simba gave her a smug smile and then turned his attention back to Savage. “If you’re alright with it, we’d like to stay a few days, get things sorted and rest up before we head home to clean shit up there.”

“God, I’m not looking forward to dealing with that,” Taz whined.

“The place probably reeks, since they pissed on our stuff and no one’s been there since,” Copper agreed with a grimace.

“Hire someone to go in and clean it,” Fury suggested. “Are there no cleaning companies your way?”

“We don’t let anyone in our space,” Jag told him. “Too much shit for them to snoop around in that we don’t want anyone else to see. We’ll clean it up. We’ve done worse.”

“Speak for yourself,” Taz sniffed. “But if those fuckers touched my toy collection, I’ll resurrect them and kill them again.”

“Toy collection?” Jax repeated with a scoff. “You playing with dolls over there, Taz?”

Taz gave him an affronted look. “Do I look like the kind of man who would play with dolls?” he demanded. He sliced a finger at Glitch and snapped, “Don’t even start.” Glitch snickered, and Code couldn’t help but grin. Yeah, he figured that his woman would have something sassy to say about that. “And no, I actually collect all kinds of different, shall we say, pleasurable toys from our many adventures,” Taz announced smugly.

“It’s so that when he can’t find a woman who wants to put up with him, he has something to help pass the time other than his own hand,” Karissa snickered. “Hope you clean those things with how often you probably use them.”

Taz flipped her off, making her laugh. “It’s times like these that make me glad you found your own man to annoy the shit out of,” Taz sniffed. “I’d end up suffocating you if I still had to put up with your annoying ass twenty-four seven.”

“If anyone killed anyone, it would be me killing you,” Karissa tossed back, but her lips were twitching. The affection

in her eyes was clear.

“How about we get back to the task at hand, and you two can finish your weird argument later?” Savage suggested impatiently. He looked at Simba and asked, “So, now that we’ve dealt with your little problem—”

“We?” Glitch scoffed, looking up from her computer and giving Savage a cool glare. Karissa did the same. “What do you mean, *we*? As I recall, you were tied up in a damn corner and not doing shit when *we* handled it. And by *we*, I mean Karissa and I. Not that anyone would admit that, of course”

Savage ground his teeth and Code saw his jaw clench. Code bit back a grin because he knew that would eat at most of the men in here. As much as everyone liked to say they backed the whole women’s progressive movement, when it came to MC life, there wasn’t much movement at all. “Fine,” he gritted out, though it sounded like it cost him. “Now that *Glitch and Karissa handled* things, you guys are welcome to stay here as long as you need, and if you need help with your place, we could send some brothers back with you to help out. Least we can do.”

“Thanks,” Simba said with a nod. “Our team has some things to discuss first. We’ll let you know when we plan on taking off.”

“Alright,” Savage nodded. “Code, since you’re incapacitated for now, how long do you think it will take to get security back online?”

“I swear, it’s like I’m invisible,” Glitch grumbled irritably before he could answer. She turned toward Savage. “Or did you somehow miss the fact that I’m sitting here, working on that very thing, since he can’t?”

“Maybe if you were human sized instead of so damn small, I’d be able to see you,” he tossed back.

To stave off any arguments, Code said loudly, “Glitch is handling it for now, and from what I can see she’s almost done. We won’t have to worry about anyone sneaking back in.”

“Good,” Savage said, ignoring Glitch’s eye roll. Code gave her hip a squeeze in warning, and she glanced back at him innocently. As much as he enjoyed this little display, pissing off Savage wasn’t in anyone’s best interest after everything that happened last night. “Rogue, did you reach out to your contacts in the force to make sure we don’t have anyone sniffing around that shouldn’t be?”

Rogue nodded. “All set. As far as they or anyone else is concerned, the garage had a small accident with a gas tank and we got it under control.”

“Then I think we’re done for now,” Savage said, banging the gavel, again incurring curses and complaints from those in the room. “I’m going home to my woman and kids.”

“You need help with the babies, let me know,” Taz offered. “Kids love me.”

Savage eyed him for a moment. “I don’t know that I want you giving them ideas,” he returned. “Especially not someone who collects sex toys.”

Taz grinned wickedly. “I’ll be on my best behavior,” he promised. “I’m Uncle Taz, remember?”

“Yeah, only because Daddy Bear and Viking Daddy were already taken,” Karissa snickered wickedly. Both Ursa and Vulture glared at her, while Rogue’s face darkened into a deep scowl.

“Savage, with your permission, I’d like to use your Church for our team to go over a few things,” Simba announced. “I’ll need Razor and Code too.”

Savage frowned. “That’s fine,” he said finally. “But if you’re trying to poach our men…” He let that trail off.

“Nah,” Simba said with a smirk. “But it does involve their women. Figured it would only be respectful to include them.”

“If that means you’re taking said women off my hands for a while, you won’t get any argument from me.” Then he dismissed Church, and everyone except the women, Code, Razor, and the Predators left.

“I’m going to put a rat under his pillow,” Glitch sniffed. “He acts like I’m a pain in his ass.”

“Probably because you are,” Razor grinned wickedly, ignoring her when she flipped him off. “You held a gun to his head. He’s not about to just let that go.”

“So? Royal, Esme, and Karissa all did and he let that go,” Glitch pointed out.

“He let it go with Royal and Esme because they’re not likely to do it again,” Code corrected her. “You and Karissa, kitten, you’re a whole other story.”

Karissa and Glitch shared matching grins. Yeah, they were fine with that. Code and Razor shared a look. If Glitch was going to be around, they were going to have to figure out some ways to keep Savage from losing his shit or taking it out on the two of them. It would be interesting.

“Alright, let’s get our shit sorted,” Simba said briskly, interrupting any further commentary. He looked at Karissa and Glitch with assessing eyes. “You good?” There was a wealth of depth to that question, considering they had been beaten and each killed people just the night before.

Guilt filled him over that, and he instinctively moved his hand from her hip to her arm where one of her larger bruises was forming. Glitch didn’t even look at him as she moved her hand to cover his and gave it a reassuring squeeze, making him settle just a little. She was fine, and that was all that mattered. “I’m good,” she promised Simba.

“Me too,” Karissa said with a nod. She glanced at Razor and saw him watching her with concern. “I promise, I’m good,” she told him sincerely. He nodded, but Code could tell his worry remained. And if he was honest with himself, his worry for Glitch lingered, too. She seemed so calm, so collected.

Simba nodded, clearly accepting that as it was. “Alright. We need to talk about what happens now.” He looked at Code, those dark eyes pinning him in place. Code felt Glitch stiffen, but she didn’t say anything. He squeezed her arm reassuringly,

holding Simba's gaze and refusing to back down. "What are your intentions with our girl?"

"Now hold on—"

Simba cut her off with a hard look. "Stay out of it," he ordered her. Surprisingly, she quieted, but her body was vibrating with tension. "Glitch is not just a woman, and she will not sit back and let you run off to do whatever the hell you want with your club," Simba said simply. "And neither will Xena, for that matter, but she's been out of the game a little longer, and it stands to reason she's adjusted a bit better. Though if that ever changes, you know you're always welcome with us," he told Karissa, who nodded gratefully. He turned his attention back to Code. "Glitch is different. Glitch is very much a part of our team, and that will always be the case. Not only because of her skills, but because she's family."

"I understand that," Code returned evenly. "I don't want her to change who she is. I like her this way, even when I want to strangle her."

"The feeling is mutual," Glitch muttered, but quieted when Simba skewered her with a look.

"We have a lot to figure out, and it might mean some visits up your way, or she comes down here for a time until we make a permanent decision," Code continued.

"And if she said she wanted to stay with us full time?" Simba asked. "Would you give up your club for her?"

Well that was direct, he thought. But did he really expect anything less? Glitch stiffened, then turned to look at him. He looked into her eyes and saw the caution harbored there. She fully expected him to realize what being with her meant, and then decide that she wasn't worth it. He looked away from her, back at Simba and the rest of her team. "I hope it won't come to that, but if it's the only way for the two of us to have a real shot, I'd leave to be with her," he told them.

No one said anything, Simba's eyes assessing him. Then he looked over at Razor, who was glaring daggers. "Something to say?" Simba asked.

“I think it’s a dick move to ask him something like that,” Razor said stiffly. “Our clubs are different, sure, but we’re a family here too. If one of us needs to do something to be happy, we support that. We make it work. Any club worth their patch wouldn’t make it all or nothing.”

“We’re not a typical MC,” Jag reminded him, voice calm considering the tension in the room.

“Maybe instead of focusing on what Code would do, you should ask the other person in this equation?” Karissa suggested rigidly.

All eyes turned to Glitch, who was listening and remaining surprisingly quiet. Finally, she said, “We both know the only reason you’re asking is because you want to test his loyalty to me,” she said snippily. “And it’s bullshit. We agreed to be together just before this whole shit show went down. We haven’t had time to make any plans of our own, let alone figure out our places in our clubs. And you’re aware of that, so now you’re just being a dick. For all we know, we crash and burn and it won’t matter anyway, but if Code doesn’t want to leave his club and we need to make some hard decisions, we’ll make them. I see no point in this stupid pissing contest.”

Simba cocked his head at her. “That’s not the way bikers work, babe. When they find the woman they want, they go after them, no holds barred. If Code is asking you to be his Old Lady, then that means you’re his. He wants you forever and he’s not planning on leaving, and if he has any stones, he won’t let you go without a damn good fight. So while you think I’m being premature, I’m not.” He looked at Razor. “If I asked you the same question, and Karissa said she was done here, wanted nothing to do with your club anymore and was coming back with us, what would be your answer?”

“She will always come first,” Razor said simply. “But I’d damn well tie her to the bed and convince her to stay here with me.”

“When did you know she was the one you wanted?” Tiger asked.

“Not long after the whole thing with Esme and her family,” Razor answered immediately. “And I was after her ever since, even if she did try to push me away.” Karissa gave him a sly smile, which had him rolling his eyes at her.

“See what I’m getting at here?” Simba asked Glitch wryly. “The point is that you and Code might be new, but he’s said he wants you, and now it’s put up or shut up time. He put up. You say you want him too, so are you willing to do the same? Xena didn’t come back with us when we left last time, choosing to stay here. You have the same option, though it would be under slightly different circumstances. Are you willing to give up your life with us to stay here, being on call for when we need you? Not seeing us every day?”

Glitch let his question hang in the air, looking away toward the wall, lost in thought. Code tried not to let worry settle in. Glitch was a thinker, and while she could be impulsive and make rash decisions, she didn’t dive head first into anything important without thinking it through. Still, it smarted a little that she was taking her sweet time deciding. And from the amused looks shared by some of her team members, they knew it was eating at him. Assholes.

Finally, after what seemed like eons, Glitch turned back to Simba. “I love you guys, and you’re my family,” she finally told him. “But the one thing I realized, being with this club, is that while I’m happy with my life, I was lonely. You go off on missions together, and I’m back at the clubhouse by myself with no one to really talk to outside of you and my business team. Here, there are always people around, always something going on, and I miss that. Code’s offering me that, even if he doesn’t really realize it. But at the same time, I never want to leave you guys, because that’s not what family does. I’m not leaving this team, so I need to find a solution where I’m happy, Code is happy, and you’re happy with my decision. I just don’t know what that is yet. Because while I like it here, I also want to be with you, and be a team. Spending time sparring and doing stuff that I love to do. I don’t want to give that up either.”



Code relaxed at her words, but he knew they were hard. He could see the confusion and pain in her eyes. In some ways, they were talking about giving up her identity. Her place with her team was important to her. The work they did, equally so. But she was alone when they were gone, and he didn't want her lonely when she could be with him.

"There is a simple solution," Taz suddenly said, looking around. Everyone looked at him expectantly. "We could just move closer," he said with a shrug. "I mean, I don't know about two clubs coexisting in the same town, but we could go a couple towns over or something. I mean, it's not like we're at our clubhouse a crazy amount, and Glitch could move her shit over. There's nothing tying us to New Mexico. We can move around anywhere."

No one said anything for a moment as they all gaped at him. Glitch broke the silence. "Huh. Who knew that such a tiny brain could come up with such a brilliant idea?" she joked.

Taz scowled at her and flipped her off. "I take it back, woman," he huffed. "Here I was offering you a way to be around all this goodness all the time, and you're making jokes."

Code looked at Taz thoughtfully. "It's rare for you to say something so, you know, smart," Simba agreed, smirking when Taz glared at him. "But you make a good point. We're not tied to the place we are now, and those bastards already destroyed most of our shit. Could take this opportunity to start fresh."

"I'm good with it," Copper offered, smiling. "We've never been ones to sit around in one spot anyway, and this way we'd be close to the Dragons and have allies nearby if we need them."

"And when Glitch eventually stabs Taz for being a dick, she has somewhere to go," Karissa snickered.

"Shut it, Xena," Taz growled at her. "No one is fucking stabbing me. I thought we already went over all the reasons I'm better than everyone else."

“Your cock is not a reason, Taz,” Karissa tossed back. “That thing is fucking tiny.”

Taz gave her a hurt look. “We both know you’re lying, woman,” he blustered. “My cock is a thing of beauty. Not my problem you picked a man lacking the proper equipment to keep you satisfied.”

“Enough,” Simba growled at them before Karissa could retort, eyes fiery and angry.

Code shook his head. “Is it always like this?” he asked Glitch quietly.

She turned her head and looked at him with an amused smile. “Pretty much. You sure you can handle it?”

He smiled at her, leaning forward to kiss her quick but gentle, considering her lip had a small cut and was swollen. “As long as I have you, I can handle anything, kitten.”

“We need to work on your cheesiness, caveman,” Glitch chuckled. He rolled his eyes.

“Alright, let’s put it to a vote,” Simba announced, pulling their attention back. “All in favor of packing up our shit, finding a new place to land, and moving closer to our allies, the Dragons?” No surprise, the vote was unanimous. “Looks like you guys are about to have some new neighbors,” Simba announced, a smile spreading across his face.

Code felt an echoing grin spread across his face, and he glanced down at a now beaming Glitch. But of course, it was never as simple as her being able to be with him. Instead she said, “As amazing as that is, please let me be the one to tell Savage.”

Code and Razor burst out laughing. Oh yeah, that was going to be a fun conversation. He’d be recording it for sure.

“You’re going to be such trouble, kitten,” he told her, nuzzling the side of her head.

“Probably,” she agreed. “But that also means I’ll be keeping you on your toes, caveman. Are you ready for that?”

“You still have a few things you need to answer for,” he teased, nipping at her earlobe. “We’ll see how things are once I’m able to fuck you good and proper.”

Her eyes were heated as she looked at him. “Bring it on, caveman.”

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## CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

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### GLITCH

*One Month Later*

**W**hen her team made a decision, they didn't waste time. The day after their meeting, they loaded up their bikes, determined to get back and get things underway. She went with them, much to Code's annoyance, but he understood. Especially knowing she was coming back. There was a lot of talking on the phone, video calls, and constant texting, to the point she finally told him she needed to focus, and put him on silent for a full day so she could finish what she needed to do.

The biggest decision was where they were going to land. They owned the clubhouse they were in free and clear, so it wasn't like they had anything tying them down, but there were some definite logistics to be hammered out. Thankfully, her team was great in a crisis. After some debate and careful consideration, they finally decided they would put down stakes one town over from the Dragons, where no other MC was located, and had gotten permission from the other club to operate within their territory. They wouldn't get involved in their club business, but they would provide backup and support as needed.

Then came the task of actually finding a new property they could be happy with. One with privacy and enough space for all of them, and some extra room since now that they were

close to the Dragons, there was a good chance the other club would visit. Thankfully her team had some contacts, and they managed to find an old piece of farmland on the outskirts of town that a family was trying to sell. It was no longer a functioning farm, but the couple who lived there died with no heirs and the county was trying to recoup some money. Once they got the pictures, it was a no brainer. The property came with a huge farm house that had been renovated over time, with enough space and bathrooms for them to live comfortably until they could build on and add on if necessary. It also came with a huge barn that would be perfect for storage and use as a meeting space. Not to mention, the whole place came with well over a hundred acres of land.

It cost a pretty penny, but they all pooled their resources and made the investment. Today was move-in day, and she already called dibs on the room with its own bathroom, and a den area off to the side that would be perfect to set up her equipment in. And the views were damn nice too, if you asked her. Though, it was having her own bathroom that really sold her. If she didn't have to share with any of the men, then she was all for it.

She glanced out the window at the action happening outside. They had to haul a lot of their bigger belongings, like beds and furniture, using two moving trucks, while also putting their seldomly used truck and trailer to use, bringing the bikes that weren't being ridden. It had been a huge pain. But now that they were here, it was all worth it. She hadn't seen Code yet, but she knew he was on his way.

It was only a forty minute drive from his clubhouse, which meant they had options on where to spend their time. It also meant she would have to start looking for a car to drive since she rarely drove a bike. Most of them she was small for, and it looked weird to her driving a sport bike with a bunch of Harleys. But that was a worry for another day. Right now, she needed to get her stuff set up before he got here so that when he did, they could finally focus on each other.

Being away from him for the past month gave her some perspective. She worried that while they were apart, he would

realize that he didn't want her. That the stress of the whole situation pushed them into feelings they didn't actually have. Or she would change her mind, but that didn't happen. Instead, she missed him desperately, and was now behaving like a kid on Christmas, waiting for Santa to arrive.

Well, in this case, Santa was a nerdy sexy biker that knew how to fuck her into oblivion like no one's business. Which was exactly why she was wearing a little something special just for him under her clothes. She already installed a high-tech biometric lock on the door, in case any of her teammates had any funny ideas about trying to interrupt them. Deadbolts didn't hold up to motivated mercenaries, after all. She also kept some space in her walk-in closet clear for him to put his things.

In the past month they made a tentative plan to see what would fit best for the two of them. The idea was that for the next couple of weeks, he would travel back and forth to be with her for a few days a week, and then when she found a car she liked, she would do the same and stay with him at the Dragons clubhouse. And if her team was away, she would go to the Dragons until they came back. They set aside space in her den area for him to work, and she had her spot already in place at the Dragons clubhouse. And if she wasn't mistaken, Razor and Karissa were looking at doing something similar themselves. It was a bit harder since they both had jobs on the clubhouse grounds, but Karissa wanted to spend more time with her team, and Razor wanted her happy. There was already a room here with their names on it.

Surprisingly, Savage was perfectly okay with the arrangement, though she figured that was because he was happy she and Karissa had another place to go to stay out of his hair all the time. Not that they were about to make it that easy for him, but it was nice to let him think that way.

For now, she was going to focus on arranging her work station to her exact specifications, because then would come the task of setting up all the sensors, cameras, and security measures around the property. That was going to be harder to do since they had so much land to cover, but they crafted a

plan to handle the areas nearest to the house and barn first, and they would expand over the next few months. Which is exactly why she wanted Code here to help her. It was a lot of work for one person, and at least with him around, it would get done in a reasonable amount of time.

And, the technologically-challenged members of her team wouldn't mess anything up.

By the time she was halfway through her project, she heard the rumble of bikes, and a grin pulled at her face. She moved to the window and watched as Code and Razor rode up, Karissa quickly climbing off the back of Razor's as soon as they parked. Taz went to meet them, picking Karissa up and swinging her around, making her laugh, and Razor glare at him jealously. Which is exactly why Taz did it, Glitch thought to herself with a roll of her eyes. One day he was going to do that with the wrong woman and get knocked on his ass, but it looked like today wasn't going to be that day. Probably because Karissa went right back to Razor's side.

Code looked around, smiling, but then his gaze moved upward and captured hers through the window. She saw the hunger on his face and grinned. She crooked her finger at him and watched as he moved past everyone, not even stopping when someone called out to him, and headed for the front steps. He was on a mission, and she was perfectly happy to be his target.

When he finally found her room, she was waiting in nothing but a new pair of lace panties and the same red push-up bra he sent her all those weeks ago. Where once it outraged her, now it made her feel sexy and confident, and from the hungry look on his face, he agreed. Other than a small scar on his temple, he was fully healed from his concussion, and her body heated at the sight of him. "That's the bra I sent you," he announced. "Fuck, it looks better on you than I ever imagined." Then he was grabbing her and crashing his mouth down on hers.

She jumped up and wrapped her legs around his waist, hands going into his hair as their mouths fused together and he gripped her ass tight enough to leave bruises. She loved it. It

had been too fucking long since she had tasted him, felt his body moving over hers. She was desperate for him, her body on fire, and arousal pooled between her legs. She needed him. *Now.*

She wrenched her mouth away from his, her hands trailing between them to tear at the button of his jeans. “Off. All of it off,” she ordered gasping. “Need you naked and in me now.”

“Fuck,” Code hissed the moment her hand got his button open and his zipper down enough for her hand to get inside and wrap around him. “I still owe you for that shit a month ago, and all the teasing you did in the past month.”

“Later,” she bit out, stroking him as much as she could, even as she felt his hands moving to her legs to unwrap them from around him. “Right now, I need this inside me. It’s been too damn long.”

“Damn right,” he groaned as he set her on her feet, tearing her panties from her body with a twist of his wrist. Fuck that was hot. “The bra stays on,” he told her as he backed them up toward her bed, which was still only a bare mattress since she hadn’t had time to make it yet. She didn’t care. She just needed him inside her, and she’d worry about the mess later.

But just as her legs hit the edge of the bed, she heard a deep voice say, “Hands off that cock, woman.” She and Code froze, both of them turning to look at Razor and Karissa in the open doorway. Karissa’s eyes were bright with laughter, while Razor had a smug look in his. “At least until you learn to close the damn door,” Razor added drily. “Or are you providing some free entertainment?”

She knew exactly what he was referring to, and she had to admit it was funny. Code, however, did not, and glared at them both. “Get the fuck out and shut the door behind you,” he ordered, shielding her body from view.

Razor and Karissa laughed as they obliged. Glitch chuckled. “Guess we got carried away,” she said cheekily, leaning forward to give his chest a little nip with her teeth.



He hissed at the sting and pulled away, turning her around so she was bent over the bed. Only she was still a little low, so he ordered, “Step up and put your feet on the bed frame.”

She complied, and realized quickly that this was the perfect height, since she liked a taller bed. She braced herself and looked over her shoulder at him with a slow, sensual grin. “Like what you see, caveman?” she breathed, spreading her legs a little wider to make sure he got a good view.

“Fuck, I’ll never get tired of it,” he rasped as he shoved his pants and underwear down before lining himself up and thrusting hard and fast inside her. She gasped at the intrusion, a little pain heightening the pleasure. “Hold on tight, kitten, this is going to be hard and fast,” he warned her, increasing his pace.

“Bring it on, caveman,” she moaned.

And did he fuck her. So hard that she was sure she was going to have a hard time walking later. But it felt so good. He knew how to hit all the right spots, and it wasn’t long before her orgasm started to rise inside her. But it rose to fever pitch when he gripped her by the hair, pulled her head back and sunk his teeth into her neck. She gave a cry of pleasure, clamping down tight on him as her orgasm erupted. She felt him as he came inside her, his grip on her hair tightening even more with each thrust, until finally he stilled and released her hair. She let her head fall forward, and she slumped onto the bed.

Her body was coated with a thin sheen of sweat, but she hadn’t felt this relaxed in a while. “Damn, I missed your cock,” she moaned, turning her head so he could hear her.

He huffed out a laugh, pressing a kiss to her shoulder. “Kitten, I’ve missed this pussy, so I know the feeling,” he told her. “Give me a few minutes and I’ll show you how much.”

She liked the sound of that. And he indeed lived up to his promise a few minutes later, but this time he took her bent over her window seat, looking out as everyone below was getting things put away. She probably should have felt guilty

about that, but she couldn't find it in her to care after the third orgasm.

He finally carried her into the shower in her adjoining bathroom and set her on the bench seat as he turned on the water from the jetted shower heads. "Damn, this thing is fancy," Code remarked.

"But it will feel so good," she pointed out lazily. She looked at the bench. "I think we're going to need to christen this bench, too."

Code grinned wickedly at her. "I agree," he purred. "But right now we need to get cleaned up so we can help the others finish putting things away."

She hated that he was right, so she forced herself to stand and move under the spray with him. She wrapped her arms around his waist and looked up at him. "I missed you," she told him. "I worried I wouldn't, but I really did."

His grin softened to a warm smile. "I missed you too, kitten," he said, leaning down to press a soft kiss to her mouth. "But it was worth it now that you're so close. We'll find a balance that works for both of us. We'll figure out all the little shit later, but I'm not planning to be away from you much now if I can help it."

She smiled. "Good, because I've decided you can't be rid of me."

He chuckled. "You did huh?" he drawled. "I have no choice?"

"Nope," she smirked. "So best just accept it, and I won't have to get rough." Then she stepped back and reached for the body wash she had set in the corner. She handed him the new bottle of the kind she knew he liked.

"Mmm, I do like it when you get rough," Code rasped, giving her ass a light slap. She gave him a knowing look and a saucy wink.

After a couple of moments of comfortable silence, she asked, "How are things at the clubhouse?"

Code grinned wickedly. “The babies are driving Savage up the wall. They cry all the time, and the only ones who can settle them are Royal, Harlow, and the twins. It’s got him panicked that they’re going to rub off on them and turn them into hellions. He’s already talking about grounding them.”

Glitch snickered. Yeah, she could see that. “Your club is going to be overrun by strong women,” she predicted. “Wanna bet he’s going to start going gray soon?”

Code smirked. “Pretty sure he said he found a few already.” Then his face suddenly grew serious, and she stopped, uncertain. He watched her for a moment and then murmured, “I know what you did for my brother and Mavie.”

She schooled her reaction, uncertain of what she should do or say. She couldn’t quite get a read on Code’s face either. Was he pissed? Happy? Upset? “How did you find out?” she finally asked, not seeing the point in lying or hiding it.

“I got a call from my brother, who was practically foaming at the mouth that I dared to pay off their medical bills without talking to him first. Apparently they sent in a payment, and it was returned with an invoice from the hospital marked ‘paid in full,’” he answered calmly. “I told him it wasn’t me, and at first he didn’t believe me, but then I told him I had a feeling I knew who did...” He trailed off, watching her.

Glitch shifted uncomfortably. She didn’t like to discuss her money, because it could be a sore spot with people, and she and Code hadn’t talked about it at all, other than the few times she mentioned in passing about what she liked to do with it, and that she used some of it for purchasing her share of this place. “I heard you and your brothers on the phone that night when I went to apologize to you,” she admitted. “I was coming to apologize to you anyway, so that had nothing to do with my apology, but when I heard you talking about your family and how much they were struggling, I wanted to help. I also told the hospital that they weren’t to let anyone know who paid, just that it was an anonymous benefactor. I figured they wouldn’t have to worry about the bills, and could focus on being a family and doing fun things together. If you’re mad about that—”

He shut her up by hauling her against him and pressing his mouth to hers. It wasn't an overly heated kiss, but it definitely made the words in her head disappear. When he pulled away, he said, "I was pissed when I figured it out, but then I heard the gratitude in my brother's voice and the relief in my sister-in-laws, and it went away. They've struggled for a long time, and they missed out on doing so many things with their kids.. So thank you, but don't do that shit again without at least giving me a heads up. Mostly because I don't want a punch to the face from one of my brothers."

"I didn't mean to cause trouble," she told him awkwardly. "But, I mean, I have money, Code, and I like to be able to put it toward things that I think are important. Your niece is important to you, so she's important to me, and if I can make things easier, then I don't see any reason why I shouldn't." She paused, hesitating, before finally asking, "Does me having money bother you?"

"No," he replied immediately. "The majority of the time, I forget about it until you mention that you have to meet with your people, and it hits me that my woman is a multi-millionaire. Money doesn't define who you are, and you don't use it for things that don't matter. And you don't throw it in people's faces." He gave her a teasing smile. "But it also explains how you have some of the best equipment. And, you know, now I can tell everyone I have a sugar mama for an Old Lady."

She rolled her eyes but laughed. "Uh huh," she scoffed. "Sure." She gave him a sly look. "So is this your way of telling me that you want me to be your Old Lady, officially?"

He cupped her jaw, gazing into her eyes. "Eliza, you are my Old Lady," he told her softly. "Maybe you're not ready for that title yet, and that's fine, but in my head and my heart, that's exactly what you are. And some day I'll put a ring on your finger and make you my wife."

Her heart pounded at his words. "Okay," she whispered. "I was a bit worried you might not be ready for that step."

“I’ve been ready, kitten,” he reassured her. “I don’t plan on letting you go, ever. We’ll take things as they come, but you and I are a team. I love you and that won’t be changing. Got it?”

“Got it,” she said, smiling. “I love you too, Milo.” He kissed her, and of course, after that declaration, they ended up christening the shower bench after all.

When they finally emerged from the bathroom, wrapped in towels, they both stopped in their tracks when they saw someone let themselves in and positioned Code’s blow up doll on the bed, complete with some interesting looking sex toys and a sign that said, “Threesome?”

Code groaned while she laughed. “I’m going to kick Razor’s ass,” he vowed.

“I think he had some help,” she gasped out, just as the door flew open and Taz strode in, a huge grin on his face.

“I hear this is the sex party room,” he boomed out on a laugh.

“Get your freaky sex toys out of our room,” Glitch ordered him, still laughing.

Taz pouted. “So, what, no threesome option?” he whined. “I thought this was the cool room. You couples are no fun. Xena and her man wouldn’t let me either.”

Glitch shook her head and pointed to the door. “Get out so we can get dressed, and we’ll come down to help.” Taz grumbled and huffed as he left, slamming the door shut behind him. Code was shaking his head in exasperation, and she sighed heavily in defeat. “I installed a deadbolt for that reason. We’ll need to make sure we always use it or we’ll be getting constantly interrupted.”

Code nodded, then he looked at the sex doll again. “Is this my life now? I’m going to have not only my own brothers doing this shit, but your team too?”

Glitch grinned wickedly at him. “Probably. And if you really piss me off, don’t think I won’t join them.”

He gave her a heated look. “You better get ready for some payback, kitten.”

She grinned, more than ready for it. After all, what relationship didn't benefit from a little friendly rivalry? She just had to make sure that she always won...

***THE END***

***Next up: Jax!***

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I live in New Brunswick, Canada with my husband and our two dogs, Remi and Sako. When I'm not writing, I'm playing fetch with the dogs, talking to my parents for endless hours, annoying the crap out of my husband, or just enjoying life with my friends.

*For more books and updates, check out my Facebook Group, Emily's Bookworms. All news is shared exclusively there first.*



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