



BAILEY

UNTAMED SONS MC BOOK SEVEN

JESSICA AMES

BAILEY

UNTAMED SONS MC - BOOK 7

JESSICA AMES

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book contains themes of sexual assault, sex trafficking, murder, mayhem, and other topics that may be upsetting. Reader discretion is advised.

This book is set in the United Kingdom. Some spellings may differ.

BAILEY



GOING OUT WAS A BAD IDEA.

I thought it would be a chance to let my hair down for a change and have some grown up company outside of bikers and old ladies, but I realise my mistake an hour into the night. My work colleagues don't really want me here. I'm their boss, and they're acutely aware of my presence. I can see them holding back jokes and funny stories they want to tell because they're worried what I might think.

Considering I'm a biker brat, I find it laughable.

I probably have worse stories than they could ever conjure up.

I grew up in the Untamed Sons Motorcycle Club with my younger brother, Lennox—or Nox, as he's known. If these civilians knew the shit I've seen—the shit I've *done* over the years, they might not be so quick to ignore me. I'm sure they would interrogate me for stories, but all they know me as is Bailey Huckle, CEO.

Boss.

I'm not sure any of my employees know the telemarketing company they work for is owned by the Sons. I took over as head of it a few years back, and I run the company without any outside help, something I'm fucking proud of. The club just collects the revenue, but doesn't have anything to do with the day-to-day running, though technically, Ravage, the club's president, is on the board of directors. I can't imagine Rav ever calling a board meeting.

The thought makes me snigger as I take a sip of my wine.

The booze is the only thing keeping me in this shithole bar right now. That, and it's the first night I've had without my daughters in a while.

They're staying with Sasha, Ravage, and their two children overnight. Kara and Mollie adore Lily-May and Jasper. I should at least pretend I'm enjoying myself, even though I'd rather be tucked up at home with my girls.

"What's a gorgeous thing like you doing drinking alone?"

I twist towards the source of the yelled voice in my ear and realise the man who has sidled up to me is a little too close for comfort. I should step back and put some space between us, but he's invading me, and I don't move for anyone.

"Not interested," I dismiss him.

He's a small man, nothing like the men I'm usually attracted to. It's been a decade since I lost Laurence—Grinder, as he was known in the club. It feels like longer. I loved my old man. I would have gone to the flame for him, but he was taken before his time. Laurence was nothing like this man. He was huge, a gentle giant with me, but he had a savage temper that often got him into trouble. He was tattooed, bulky and sexy as fuck, with a strong jawline and a mouth designed for kissing.

I've struggled without him while raising our daughters, hoping I'm a good mum to them. Hoping I can love them enough for the both of us.

"Babe, you're interested," he assures me. He's drunk. I can see it in his eyes. I roll my eyes at the sleazy air he's got about him.

"What gives you that impression?"

He moves his hand towards my pussy and I don't think. I throw my wine in his face before he can lay a hand on me. It seems criminal to waste it, but I'm not about to throw down with this man in the middle of a bar. I know how to fight because of Nox, but I don't want to go home bruised up.

He wipes his face, and rage mars his beautiful features. Fuck. I poked the one bastard in this place with balls.

"You fucking bitch—"

As he steps towards me, his fist raised, a meaty hand captures his wrist. I glance up and see my saviour is a god. He's huge, with tattooed sleeves of artwork that disappear beneath a crisp white shirt that's rolled up to his elbows. His dark eyes are heated, filled with malice that is aimed at my attacker.

"Fuck off," he hisses.

The man growls but pulls his wrist free. For a moment, I think he might decide to fight my protector, but he thinks better of it and disappears into the crowd.

I give my saviour my attention, and for the first time in a long time, I feel a stir of interest in my belly. He reminds me of Laurence, though his hair is blond, not dark. He has that same presence, one that sucks all the air out of the room. The way he carries himself has every inch of my body standing up to take notice. He's like a deadly snake. Poisonous but beautiful to look at.

"Thanks for the save." I slide my empty wine glass along the bar and indicate to the bartender to refill it.

"Not sure you really needed it."

He moves closer and he smells so good. His aftershave is masculine, musky and sexy as sin. I didn't come out to get laid, but I can't deny the fact that my pussy pulses at the thought of his hands on me. I love Laurence. I will always love Laurence, but he's gone, and he's never coming back. Even so, I've never managed more than a string of one-night stands over the years.

I don't know why.

Misplaced guilt, maybe, or fear of what the other club brothers would say. As I'm a widow, they'll always take care of me and Laurence's girls—not that I need it. I make decent money in my job, but I'm also aware it's a job I got because of the club. Everything I have is because of the club. Sometimes, that makes me feel trapped, like a tiger behind a steel fence. If I'm being honest with myself, I'll admit I'm lonely. I want someone in my life to love me and share the little moments with. Someone to be a father to my daughters.

They have plenty of male role models, not least of all my brother, but they need more.

I need more.

"I'm more of a damsel than I look," I say, aware of how rusty I am at flirting. He doesn't seem to care and moves closer as I grab some money from my clutch purse. Before I can toss it down, he drops a ten on the bar. I cock a brow at him. "Saved me and bought me a drink. I really am in your debt."

He grabs the wine glass.

"What's your name?"

"Bailey. What's yours?"

"Jack."

I peer around the bar. I don't see sign of my colleagues, so I guess they must have left me here and moved on to another bar without me. That should bother me, but I'm enthralled by my new friend. He hands me the glass,

bringing my attention back to him. I take it from him and have a sip.

“So, Jack, do you make a habit of saving women?”

“Only the pretty ones,” he says.

I laugh. “You are smooth, aren’t you?” I take another sip of my drink, trying to think ahead. I can’t take him back to my place. Maybe a hotel.

Classy, Bailey.

“I try to be,” he says, “but I’m shit at this flirting thing.”

I let my eyes flare wide, as if surprised. “Is that what we’re doing? Flirting?”

His mouth quirks into a smile. “I’m obviously doing it badly if you can’t tell.”

Warmth spreads through me. It’s been a long time since a man flirted with me, and I can’t deny I’m enjoying the attention. He strokes up my arm as I take a long drink of the wine. It’s fruity, cool, and refreshing.

My head starts to feel fuzzy. I’ve clearly drunk too much, so I place the nearly half full glass on the bar, not intending to drink any more. I have to get myself home.

Jack picks the glass back up and hands it to me. “Drink the rest. You deserve it after the week you’ve had.”

Suspicion starts to race through me. I narrow my eyes at him. “Why the fuck do you care if I drink it or not?”

My legs feel unsteady and I blink through the haze that is starting to shroud me.

Drugs.

He’s fucking drugged me.

The thought comes unbidden and struggles through the molasses of my brain, but as soon as I think it, I know it’s true. Panic tries to push through the fog. My vision starts to wobble and I struggle to keep focus.

“I think I should go home,” I tell him.

My body feels fluid, strange, not like my own. I try to open my clutch to get my phone. I don’t know who I’m calling. Anyone. My fingers move over the screen, slow, listless.

He takes it off me easily, pocketing it.

“Hey!” My protest isn’t as strong as I would like.

I’m starting to fade. I can’t stop from sagging against Jack, my legs like jelly. He holds me against him.

“Okay, sweetheart. Time to go home.”

Home? Where the fuck is home? I can guarantee he doesn't mean the small property I own with my girls.

"Have... daughters...," I mumble, but my words run together. "Stop this...."

He picks me up like I weigh nothing and holds me against his chest, a gesture that to outsiders looks intimate.

"She's fine. She just drank too much."

I don't know who he's talking to. I try to open my eyes to tell someone to help me, but I can't. I feel sick, like I'm on the waltzes at the fairground. Fear claws a path down my spine, though the drugs numb some of the panic. I'm being abducted.

"My brother... Untamed Sons...," I try.

"I know."

Fuck. I didn't expect that answer. I am being targeted because of my club links, and that terrifies me.

The cold evening air hitting me is the only reason I know we've made it outside.

"Don't... do this."

"Sorry, darlin', it's done."

I'm put in the passenger seat of a car, and Jack sits behind the steering wheel. I slump against the window, unable to keep my limbs solid. I'm becoming more tired, my eyes nearly fully closed now. A few more minutes and I'm going to pass out completely.

I want to ask more, but my tongue feels too thick for my mouth. I can barely keep my eyes open.

I'm being abducted.

And my only thought is I'm never going to see my daughters again.

ZEKE



THE PLEAS of the man at my feet fall flat. I don't hear them. I never do. Begging is such an ungainly thing, even if it is for your life. Death is not something that should be shied away from. It comes for us all. It's the only certainty in an uncertain world. For some, it comes easier than others. For others, the end is terror and pain. I have no doubt my end will be bloody, but one thing I do know is I'll never beg anyone to prevent it. Pride is something we all must have or we're no better than animals.

Henry has no compunction about begging, and he's doing it fervently. The sound grates on my nerves, and I have to resist the urge to shut him up permanently.

It's clearly getting on my older brother's nerves too, because Kane smacks him across the head with a warned, "Quiet." The demons in his eyes, the same ones reflected in my own, tell me my brother is walking along a knife's edge and that the man at his feet had better fall silent or risk unleashing the full force of Kane Fraser.

The cunt does fall silent, but his whimpers still sound loud in the open space of the warehouse we're gathered in. It's the terror of a man who knows his end is coming.

I stare down at him without a hint of sympathy. He brought this shit down on his own head with his actions. His dark hair is matted with blood, and his face is a ragged mess from the beating he was given by me, Kane, and our younger brother, Lucas. It's not right for us to do our own dirty work, but Henry's deception warrants us getting down in the trenches for a short time. I'm not sure who we can trust, and the only people I do trust implicitly are

my brothers. Our father isn't afforded that same luxury. Anthony Fraser can be a mercurial master, and that has made me fear where I stand with him. I don't have this with Kane and Lucas. My father meant for his sons to be close, but he created a united force—sometimes one that stands against him.

"I swear I didn't do it, Kane. You have to believe me." Henry glances between the three of us, his eyes frightened of what he knows is coming.

It's inevitable.

Betrayal is paid in only one currency—death. Henry knew that before he went and collaborated with someone outside the family. We've been at war at one point or another with different crime families who call London home, and even with a few motorcycle clubs and gangs.

I may not see eye to eye with my father, but I have to hand it to him. He's a strong leader, one that receives the respect of his men.

Usually.

Now, one of them, a man I considered loyal previously, has committed the ultimate sin. How someone managed to turn one of our own, I don't know, but I'd guess they used heavy-handed threats. It's what we would do.

I slide my gaze in my brother's direction and watch as his lips curve down at the corners, fires blazing in his eyes. Then, I brace myself. That look on Kane's face never bodes well. It usually means he's about to unleash hell, and that's exactly what he does.

He slams his fist into Henry's face with enough force that the man reels back and hits the concrete. He lets out a moan that makes my lips quirk into a smirk. I've learnt over the years to switch the empathetic part of my brain off—particularly when his deception could result in Kane, Lucas, or even our sister, Aurelia, getting hurt. No one touches my family.

Kane pulls back after a moment, an unusually tempered response from him, and releases Henry's collar with a shove.

"You sold us down the river."

"I didn't." His voice sounds mushy, his lips swollen and deformed from the beating. He holds up his hands defensively. "You know I'm loyal."

"We have evidence," Kane says, his voice deadly.

We all have a flair for violence, a symptom of our upbringing, but Kane likes to create fear. He is enjoying this, despite the severity of the situation.

"It's lies."

It's not lies. We do have evidence of Henry selling information about our businesses and our movements, information that resulted in some pissant

gang intercepting one of our trucks. That wouldn't be an issue, except it was carrying four million pounds worth of heroin. We expect the risk of trucks not making it past border control. Out of every ten trucks, two can fail to get past the ever watchful eye of the port officers, but this is different. This batch of drugs was purposely sabotaged—by someone we're supposed to fucking trust. Henry has been with The Firm for years. I remember him working for my father when I was still a pimple-faced teenager. Learning he's sold us down the river fucking gores me. It feels worse than if one of the newer guys had betrayed us.

"I don't think so," Lucas interjects, pacing a little in the space in front of Henry's downed body. "You see, I think you did sell us out to the highest bidder. The question is why. What does the West Lake gang have on you that would make you break the oath you pledged to our father?"

Henry swallows hard and I finally see the acceptance in his eyes, an understanding that he's not getting out of this alive, no matter what he says. He's right about that. My brothers and I will never let him stay breathing, not a chance in hell, and if Kane doesn't end him, me or Lucas will.

Henry laughs, a wet sound that speckles blood on his lips.

"You boys think you own London." Henry raises his head and glares at us with bright eyes—well, as bright as they can be beneath the steady swelling. "There are so many factions that are stronger than you, more organised, a better, safer bet. That's why I told the West Lake gang every little gritty detail about that fucking shipment." He spits blood onto the concrete and I see red staining his teeth.

I grind my jaw together to keep the expletives from erupting from my mouth, and rage builds in my gut. The man just signed his own death.

Kane growls and I see the fury in the tightness of his jaw as he demands, "What else did you tell them?"

Henry's eyes shift towards Kane as he grins. "I guess you'll have to find out."

He scrabbles forwards and snags the knife off the table. Before any one of us can move, he jabs it into his neck. Blood spurts like a fucking geyser. I step back to avoid the spray as Lucas curses. A coppery-iron smell fills the air, thick, cloying, and a balm to my restless soul.

"Fuck," I mutter. Since there's nothing I can do, I watch him gargle, choking on his own fluids, and then finally go limp, dropping face-first onto the concrete.

I didn't think that cunt had it in him to take his own life like this, but I guess a clean death is preferable to hours more of torture, which is what we would have delivered, and he knew it.

"Fucking West Lake," Lucas hisses.

I agree. How did those pricks gain loyalty from a man who has always been loyal to us?

What did they offer him?

We'll never learn that now, and that pisses me off. I don't fear repercussions. West Lake are a small gang with little to no reach in the city. They operate to the west of the Adams' territory, peddling drugs. They fancy themselves as up-and-comers, something Henry clearly agreed with, but I hate leaving loose threads that can be tugged. I hate exposing us to anything I can't control. We needed to know who else he was working with, if we have more men stabbing us in the back. We'll never discover that now.

I peer down at the pool of blood spreading around him, rage starting to swirl in the pit of my stomach. "Any bright ideas about what we do now?" I ask my two brothers as I shove my hands into my trouser pockets.

My suit, which I normally wear like armour to keep the world at my feet, is well fitted, tailored exactly to my measurements, and is of a quality that most people couldn't afford to buy. I have no doubt I live a privileged life, one made possible by our father, Anthony. As head of the Fraser family, he has the ability to move mountains, and at times he's had to do that. He rules our slice of London with our mother like he's an emperor wearing a mighty crown. One day, Kane will take over the empire and Lucas and I will stand at his side, ready to dirty our hands for him. I love my brother. I accept my place in the world he's creating. Together, we're stronger, and that strength will stop anyone coming at us.

"Who cares if that bastard is dead?" Kane says, kicking the dead man's foot.

"I care. He could have known more than he told us. I don't like not knowing."

Kane cups the back of my neck. "Always trying to keep us safe, brother."

"Someone has to," I mutter, irritation creeping up my spine. He never takes shit seriously.

My phone starts to vibrate in my inside pocket. I dig into my suit jacket and pull it out.

ANTHONY CALLING.

I answer, not bothering to step away from my brothers. There are little to no secrets between the three of us. “Yeah?”

“I need you to do something,” he says without preamble. Not that I expect it. Anthony Fraser is not a man who deals in small talk.

“What?” I ask, no hint of hesitancy. I may not always agree with him, but I am my father’s loyal subject. It was how we were raised. Everything for the good of the family and The Firm.

I respect that position. I respect what we’ve built as a family, and I have every intention of keeping a tight hold of it. Being unseated is a risky prospect, one that ends with people I love getting hurt. I’ll do everything I can to prevent that, even if it means dirtying my own soul. I’m no stranger to committing atrocities. I killed my first man when I was barely seven years old. It was a rite of passage all my brothers went through. We each put a bullet in our victim without hesitating.

We are Frasers.

We are not weak men.

I never want to be seen as that.

“I need you to go to the Untamed Sons’ clubhouse.”

I know the Sons. I’ve run into them before when we were trying to hunt down Greg Richardson. That fucker stole a shit ton of money from us and then went dark. I later found out Titch, ex-husband of Greg’s wife, killed him for beating her and their son. They’d paid up what Greg owed, and made that whole problem disappear.

Of the Sons, I mostly know Kyle—or Cage, as he goes by now. One of the ways we make money is through underground fights. He’s got in the ring more times than I can count over the years, and he wins more than he loses. He’s made a few people rich from his matches. He’s good people. Never makes trouble, just comes, does his thing and fucks off home. He tends to have a couple of brothers at his back while he’s at these things, so I know a few of the Sons.

I have a lot of respect for the club. I wouldn’t say we’re allies, but we’re not enemies either. So, meeting them has my interest piqued.

“For what?” I demand.

“Not sure. Their president called me, asked for a meet. Go see what the fuck they want.”

I’m curious myself, so I say, “Okay.”

There’s a pause, then my father says, “Did you deal with our ‘problem’?”

By problem, he means Henry. I peer over at where his body is lying on the ground surrounded by blood. “Kane’ll tell you more when he comes to the office.” That’s all I give him. Unfriendly ears could be listening to the call. I have no doubt the local police makes it their business to be in ours.

That’s not always easy. We keep our illegal dealings well hidden behind a legal front. Our family owns Fraser Holdings, the largest conglomerate of businesses in the UK. My father has our headquarters in Canary Wharf, among the giants of the business world. It’s where we manage both the legal and illegal activities, though to the outside we’re just men in suits sitting in our ivory towers. We try to keep our two revenue streams separate, but that doesn’t always happen. Sometimes, they cross each other.

Like with Henry.

Despite the façade we put on, I’m sure the name Fraser is synonymous with crime across London. Men in our organisation have gone to jail for assault, gun charges, and even murder. I don’t know how my father balances that with keeping our reputation in the business sphere, but we’re respected in both of the lanes we straddle.

“Don’t keep Ravage waiting,” he says before he hangs up.

I pocket my phone with a sigh.

“Problem?” Kane asks. As always, my brother’s protective urges flare to life—urges that only exist for me, Lucas, and Aurelia.

“Anthony wants me to go to the Sons’ clubhouse.”

His brows draw together. “Why would he need you to go there?”

“Not sure, but there’s only one way to find out.” I straighten my suit jacket. “You’ll clean up?” I ask, pointing in the direction of the body.

Kane’s dark eyes follow my gesture before coming back to me. “I don’t like you walking into the lion’s den.”

“Sons aren’t enemies. No reason to think they’ll do shit to me.”

I can see my brother isn’t convinced. “Take Lucas with you.”

I want to argue, but it makes sense to have backup. We have a mutual agreement with the Sons and our business with them was concluded a few years back. I can’t imagine why they’d be putting themselves in our scope now.

“Come on,” I mutter to Lucas, knowing Kane will take care of the body.

We head outside, and the two bodyguards waiting there follow after us. Ryan Malone is huge, ex-special forces, and has been my guard for the past three years. He’s loyal to The Firm, and I trust him to keep me safe. Lucas’s

bodyguard, Nick Winters, is just as bulky, but he's been with our family for a long time. He used to be my mother's guard until my father suspected things were happening between them. I don't know if it was true, but he was moved anyway. Winters is lucky all he got was a relocation and not a bullet.

The third man, Nathan Ford, will wait for Kane. My father insists on protection at all times, and understandably so. There have been a number of attempts on his life over the years.

The fresh air makes the smell of the blood clogging my nose disappear, and I breathe freely for the first time since I entered that warehouse. I climb into the front of the Bentley while Lucas takes the driver's seat. As I sit, I see a few blood spots on my shirt.

Fuck. I need to change.

"We need to stop at the penthouse first."

He nods and starts the engine.

The drive across London is slow, the traffic moving at a snail's pace, but we reach my building and head up in the elevator to the top floor. Inside, the apartment is lavishly decorated. It's ostentatious, disgustingly so, with marble floors and beautiful furniture made by designers with names that mean something in the industry. I barely spend any time here, if I can help it. I prefer to keep busy working. It's cold and sterile. Not a home. It's just somewhere to sleep. Somewhere to put my money legally in order to hide the illegal shit.

I walk towards the bedroom, the leather of my shoes squeaking on the floor. I grab a white shirt from the walk-in closet. I toss one to my brother who is also blood spattered.

We change in silence, and once we're buttoned up, our suits back in place, I toss both shirts into the washing machine. I don't often do my own laundry. Most of my shit is dry clean only, but I don't want some nosy fucking store clerk seeing the blood and calling the police.

"Ready?" I ask him. He nods. "Then let's go and see what the Untamed Sons want."

BAILEY



I'M TIED to a bed spread eagle. I don't know how long I've lain here for, but it feels like forever. The windows are boarded up, and shadows dance in the room which is only illuminated by the light coming in behind the boards where they don't quite fit flush to the frames. I can't see if the room is grubby or not, but there is a mustiness to the air. It smells like it hasn't been used in a while.

I stare up at the ceiling, watching the light flicker on the paintwork, my heart hammering beneath my ribs. When I first woke up, I screamed and yelled for help until my throat was raw. It didn't do shit. No one came, not even to shut me up. That was scarier than if someone had come to me.

Am I somewhere people can't hear me scream?

The thought makes ice collect in my belly.

My memory of what happened to me is fuzzy. The last thing I remember is going out with my work colleagues, and a guy coming up to me in the bar.

After that... nothing.

That terrifies me.

At least I'm still wearing the dress I put on to go out, though my heels are missing, leaving my feet bare. I don't feel sore between my legs, so I don't think anyone has touched me yet, which helps to ease some of the pressure inside my chest a fraction.

But from the memory loss and heaviness in my limbs, I'm certain I was drugged.

There's no other explanation for what happened, but why drug me and just leave me here, tied up like a sacrificial lamb? Being drugged in a bar is

usually for one reason only: rape. I haven't seen anyone since I came around.

What do they want with me?

Whoever "they" are.

Fear climbs through my veins, leaving coldness in its wake. As I lie there, I think about my daughters. I know if something happens to me, Nox will take care of them. They'll not be left to go into the foster care system. The club will look after my babies.

It doesn't ease the roiling sensation in my belly.

The thought of not seeing Kara and Mollie again makes me want to puke. Those girls are all I have left. They're my world. I don't want to leave them orphaned. It's bad enough they lost their father without losing me too.

A tear rolls down my cheek as I feel like my chest has been torn open, exposing my heart. I can't leave my girls. I have to survive whatever this is for them. Their faces dance across my vision. Their red hair is as vibrant as mine, though Kara's a darker red than Mollie's, whose hair is a deep copper colour. Both are so different in personality, and while Mollie is all Laurence, Kara is a good mix of us both.

I need to get back to them.

I tug on the chains attached to my wrists for the hundredth time, but they don't move. I can feel the skin is raw beneath, bruised and grazed, but it doesn't stop me trying. The physical pain is nothing compared to the mental anguish I'm suffering.

I can't panic. I need to keep a level head if I'm going to survive this.

Ravage and Sasha will be expecting me to pick up the girls in the morning. Has that time come and gone yet? How long have I been here for? Does the club know I'm missing yet?

A thousand questions assault me, and I don't have answers to any of them.

I freeze at the sound of footsteps outside the door. I haven't seen a soul yet, and I'm not keen to meet whoever took me. I hold my breath, shaking as I wait for the door to open.

I can do nothing as the handle is twisted but lie there and await my fate. I won't go down easily. I'm not weak, and I will fight tooth and nail to get back to my girls, to my family. To the club.

The light flicks on and I squint against the obnoxious brightness even as I blink rapidly to clear my vision. I need all my senses working to keep myself safe.

It takes me a moment to place the man who steps inside the room. It's the guy from the bar, the one who saved me from the first fucker who tried to grab me. This is what I get for thinking chivalry isn't dead.

"You!" I hiss at him.

His mouth pulls into a quirk, his lips lifting at the corners as if I just told the funniest joke he's ever heard. Blond hair, strong jawline that looks chiselled from granite... He'd be attractive if he wasn't a kidnapping bastard.

I thrash against my restraints. "You drugged me, you prick!"

"Do I need to do it again?" he asks, not bothering to lie about the fact.

That makes unease unfurl in my belly even as I spit out, "Do you know who I am? Do you know who I'm linked to? I'm family to the Untamed Sons." He doesn't flinch at my name drop, doesn't even show any sign he's heard me. Usually, the club would be enough to put fear into someone. The Sons are well known. A vague memory that I'd told him this before flits through my drug addled brain.

"Is that supposed to impress me?" There's humour in his voice, which pisses me off.

"They're going to gut you for touching me. You're going to need a fucking feeding tube when they're done with you!"

He moves like lightning, climbing onto the bed and straddling my hips. Fear like I've never felt before smashes into me like a physical blow as I feel his cock press against my mound. He's not hard, but it's an unmistakable presence, and the fabric between us doesn't feel like enough of a barrier to protect me.

Panting hard, my breath tearing out of me, I try to steel myself, to show no weakness, but I'm sure he must be able to see my terror. I'm not that good of an actress.

His mouth pulls into a macabre smirk as his gaze roams over my face, taking in every inch of it. "What makes you think there will be enough of you left to find?"

I see the moment his demeanour changes. There's a flash of darkness in his eyes before his hands shoot out. He wraps his fingers around my throat and he squeezes so hard I can't get air past his hold. Instantly, my body goes into full panic mode. The need to survive flares through me savagely. I thrash against my bindings as my brain starts to freak out about the lack of oxygen. I kick my legs as much as I can, ignoring the pain as the chains tighten around my ankles, cutting into the skin. I don't care about that bite of pain. I'm

focused on the hands around my neck crushing the life out of me. Dark spots dance across my vision as my lungs burn. My skin feels like it's on fire...

And then he loosens his hold.

I suck in a breath, trying to flood my body with oxygen.

He dips his head to my ear and hisses, "You ain't in charge here, bitch."

The venom in his voice, the absolute malice, makes a shiver roll through me, an Arctic blast that chills me to the fucking bone. He wants to kill me, and he's in a position to do it.

"Who are you?" My voice sounds ravaged. I cough, trying to clear what feels like shards of glass shredding my windpipe.

"Someone who holds your life in my hands," he says. He slides his hand down my face. I turn my head away, the only defence I have against him. He doesn't care. He slips his hand lower. It comes to a rest on my right breast. He ruthlessly squeezes it, making me whimper despite my best efforts. "I'm going to fuck you bloody," he murmurs near my ear.

Claws clutch my heart. I peer into his dark eyes, my fear mounting with every passing second. I have no idea who he is or why he has me, but I'm too scared to ask more after what he just said.

I lie still as he rubs himself against my pussy, nausea settling in the pit of my stomach. I can smell his aftershave, a hint of sweat, and something else I can't place. I twist my head to the side as he licks down my face.

Disgusting.

He brushes his fingertips over my underwear, sliding it aside before he strokes through my folds. I stiffen, trying to block out what's happening, trying to ignore the horror and terror as he touches me in places he has no right to. A lone tear slides down my cheek, as I stare at the ceiling like it's a lifeline.

His phone starts to ring and the sound drags me back to reality with a jolt. I gulp air as I blink rapidly to clear my watery gaze. With a curse, he pulls his fingers free from me and tugs the handset from his pocket.

"What?" His voice is terse, annoyed.

I lie still.

I'm still breathing.

I'm still alive.

I still have a chance to get back to my girls.

He mutters a "Yeah, I got you," then hangs up. "Play time's over," he growls at me, clearly pissed about the fact.

I'm relieved. He gives me one last look, and I see the regret in his eyes that he's not going to get to do more to me.

He leaves the room and I let go of the breath lodged in my chest.

ZEKE



AS THE UNTAMED SONS' clubhouse comes into view, I can't help but wonder what the fuck is going on. We've never been allies, though we're not enemies either—even after our little run-in over Greg Richardson. I can't imagine why they would want a meeting with us, so as Lucas stops the car at the perimeter gate, I pull a gun from the glove compartment and slide it into the holster under my suit jacket.

Lucas eyes me. "Expecting trouble?"

"Aren't you?"

My brother looks like our mother. There can be no denying he's her son. The same sandy-blond hair, the same slope to his nose and bright blue eyes, but he's not as shrewd as she is, nor does he have her need to meddle. She's a first-class meddler.

"I don't like this," Malone says from the back seat. I can tell he doesn't. His body is wired tight like a coiled spring. Years of training from his days in the forces means I know he's seeing more than me or Lucas as he scans the Sons' compound.

"Me neither," Winters agrees.

Lucas shrugs, but he's looking everywhere and taking in everything. "The Sons have never given us trouble before."

"There's a first time for everything," Malone mutters.

"You're staying in the car," I say over my shoulder.

Malone growls, but nods anyway. No doubt he'll give me an earful about going off half-cocked when we're next alone. Fucker acts like my mother sometimes, or how a mother should act since mine doesn't give a shit about

me.

I glance at Lucas as a figure steps out of the main building and starts towards the gate. He's hulking with hair cut short to his head and a scruff of beard. He's wearing one of those little leather vests all bikers wear, with Untamed Sons and London on the back. He eyes us through the windscreen like we're live ammunition ready to blow. I recognise the man vaguely from past interactions with the club. Levi... I think that's his name.

We wait as he pulls the gate back and then Lucas drives through it, pulling into an empty space in the parking area. When he cuts the engine, he turns to me. "You ready?"

"Yeah."

We both get out of the car and make our way over to Levi, who is waiting at the edge of the kerb for us. "We were expecting Anthony," he says.

I give him a thin smile. Our father doesn't get his hands dirty, ever. The thought of him being out in the field is laughable. "We're what you have."

Levi doesn't seem impressed with this, if the tight set of his jaw is anything to go by. "Rav'll see you straight away," he says.

Rav being Ravage—their president.

Lucas and I follow him inside the building. It's a little tired around the edges, but the décor doesn't scream criminal den either. It has a homey feel to it that I didn't expect. We're led into a bar area. There are tables scattered around the room, a mismatched assortment of furniture. Most are occupied by club members as well as women and kids. Despite this there's a silence that seems unnatural.

The air is heavy.

Uncertain.

Distraught.

It puts all my senses on alert as I follow Levi, who leads us into a room off the bar where there's a long table, and a number of club members are sitting around it. I recognise most of them from my run-in with Richardson.

Including Titch.

He hasn't changed much over the years. His black hair is still kept short and he doesn't have more than a five o'clock shadow on his jaw. He eyes me with suspicion, which pisses me off. These fuckers called us here, not the other way around. The men shift around to make space for us at the table and we're offered two free seats. There's an air of menace swirling around them, but they're not the only ones who are dangerous. Lucas and I are hardly

saints. My brother has killed, just as I have, and both of us sleep easily at night. I don't feel their blood on my hands, and I don't consider the lives of those I've murdered as important either. It was just business, as everything is in my life. I'm not a good person, but no one sitting around this table is. They all have their demons. They all have monsters lurking in their eyes. I see it most clearly in Fury and Ravage. Both men are damaged in a way I don't think can be fixed. The same look is mirrored in my own gaze.

I shift my focus to Ravage, who is sitting at the head of the table. His dark hair is pulled into a tie at the nape of his neck and there is a thick beard covering his chin. He's every inch the leader of this bunch of fucking misfits. I can see the respect he commands in the confidence and fluidity of his movements. He's a man who doesn't like to be challenged, and I can tell Lucas's and my presence is putting him on edge. We're not a threat to his empire, but he sees us as one because, like him, we exude power.

He leans forwards, interlacing his fingers on the tabletop as one of the other brothers shuts the doors behind us before reclaiming his seat on the other side of Lucas. The air is charged, every particle heavy. I don't say a word. I just wait for Ravage to speak.

"We have an enemy in common."

His words are surprising. "We have a lot of enemies. You're going to have to be specific," I say.

"The Farleys."

Like us, the Farleys are a crime family that run out of London. They were big players until about a year ago when Archie, heir apparent to the Farley Firm, was murdered. After Archie's death, the Farleys retreated and I've not heard much about them. Truthfully, I didn't give those fuckers a second thought.

"The Farleys are cunts, but what does that have to do with us?" I demand, tapping my fingers on the table. This conversation is already boring me.

"We're going to war with them," Nox growls.

I snap my eyes towards him and see the anger in his face, an anger that tells me this isn't a joke. He looks like he's spitting fire. "Why?"

"They took my fucking sister."

The fuck? I didn't think the Farleys would directly strike at an enemy. I didn't think those pricks had it in them. Patrick Farley is a man who is full of bluster and no substance, yet he's taken a direct strike against the Sons.

Stupid prick.

“Why?” Lucas asks.

“They’ve been a pain in the arse since Fury took out Farley’s kid last year.”

My eyes flare. We all heard Archie had been killed, but no one knew any of the details, least of all my father—a man who has an uncanny ability to find out the deepest and darkest of secrets. I had no fucking idea the Sons took him out. I find myself looking at Fury with a whole new level of respect. Taking out a syndicate’s heir is a brave move.

I didn’t know the kid personally, but of course, I knew of him. It’s my business to know the ins and outs of the other players in our city. Archie was young, maybe twenty-one, twenty-two, and Patrick’s only heir. His death would have been a blow, but I do have one burning question: why didn’t the Farleys come at them before now?

“You’re wondering why the delay,” Ravage says, as if reading my thoughts.

“I’m wondering why it’s taken Patrick twelve months to attack you after you killed his son, yeah.”

“Fury fucked Patrick up pretty badly,” Nox says. “Carved him up like a fucking turkey.”

Fury grins at this, showing rows of white teeth like little tombstones.

Creepy fucker.

“And half of his men were arrested after they attacked the clubhouse,” Ravage adds. “He was down on numbers. I’d guess it’s taken him this long to rebuild his ranks. Now that he has, he’s coming at us hard.”

“Should have killed him too,” I say to Fury.

“Believe me, I’m regretting that action right about now.” His voice rumbles, as if it’s rusty from disuse.

“Why’d they take your sister? Why not Ravage’s wife? No offence, but your wife would be the better choice, if Patrick was looking to get your fucking attention, wouldn’t she?” Lucas broaches.

I glance at my brother, who looks so at ease sitting at the table, as if he has every right to be here.

“I suspect it was a mistake,” Ravage admits. “Farley wants vengeance on Fury for what he did. I think he meant to take Amalia, Fury’s old lady.”

At this, Fury bares his teeth. Wild, rabid—the man should have been put down a long time ago. I hope they know how to keep that fucker locked in his cage. I’ve seen darkness, felt it in myself at times, but this cunt puts me on

edge.

Titch leans forwards on the table so he can see me better. “He took her from a bar. Dropped something in her drink when her attention was elsewhere. It’s so fucking subtle we had trouble seeing it ourselves, but it’s on the CCTV footage we got from the bar.”

“You’re sure it’s the Farleys who took her and not just some fucked-in-the-head sex offender?” I query.

I don’t doubt they did their due diligence, but it doesn’t hurt to ask.

“Patrick sent us a video of Bailey. He’s asking for us to step down, disband the Sons. Ain’t negotiating with the cunt, but we want Bailey back.” The vehemence in his voice tells me how much the woman means to him. She’s family. I get that. I would tear the world apart to save my family too.

“And you want us to help with your war? Why shouldn’t we just step back and watch you both rip each other to shreds?”

“You hate the fucking Farleys as much as we do,” Ravage says. It’s not entirely true. I’ve never given those fuckers much thought. Lions don’t think about ants. “Consider this a chance to wipe them off the map for good.”

That is a tempting offer. Very tempting, but it’s risky and where there’s risk, there needs to be some form of sweetener.

“What is in it for us?”

Nox roars as he pushes up. His chair topples backwards.

“Fuck money, fuck it all! She’s a fucking person!”

I look from his face to his Vice President patch. From past dealings with him, I know this is not him. Nox is usually calm and collected, the voice of reason. The situation with his sister is unravelling him. I understand his outburst. If it was Aurelia who was missing, I’d tear the world apart.

But it’s not.

And his problem is not my problem.

“The recompense?” I ask again.

Ravage tugs Nox’s arm and the brother picks up his chair before slumping into it.

“She’s my fucking sister, man. What would you do?”

I meet his gaze and let my eyes go hard as stone. “I’d tear the fucking world apart and destroy Patrick Farley and his shitty empire. I’d raze every business he owns to the ground. I would kill every person he gives a fuck about and then I’d kill him, pissing on his grave. But she’s *not* my sister and your problem is not mine.”

Nox takes a steadying breath, as if he's struggling to regain his temper. "Motherfucker," he hisses under his breath. I understand his frustration, but I mean every word I say. I don't give a fuck about his problems, so he needs to give me something that is going to change that viewpoint.

"You get to keep their territory," Ravage says. "Any associated assets will be split evenly."

I mull this over. Farley's territory isn't impressive, but it borders our own. Taking that land would expand our patch further and give us more wealth.

It would also bring war to The Firm...

It could result in deaths.

It could also rid us of a problem. If Farley is indeed rebuilding his empire, he might decide to strike out at his neighbours.

Decisions...

I let my gaze drift towards my brother, who is staring intently at Ravage. His cold eyes are glacial and it would unsettle most men, but Ravage isn't most men. He barely gives my brother a glance.

Instead, his focus is locked on me.

I examine my nails, keeping my tone light, even though I'm interested in their proposition. "We'll need to talk to Anthony first," I say.

Ravage grits his teeth, as if he expected I would make a decision here and now. That's never going to happen. The Firm is my father's domain, and while I'm high up on the corporate ladder within it, I don't call the shots.

"Don't take too long deciding. We need to act quickly."

He does. The Farleys' main business is selling skin. They have ways of making a woman disappear, ways that will ensure she never finds her way home again. Most of the Farleys' business dealings move through Eastern Europe, and once she's in that sphere, she's fucked. They'll never find her. Better to stop it at the source.

My family doesn't deal in skin. Drugs are where we make our money. Heroin, coke—if there's a market for it, we'll sell it. I'm sure many lives have been ruined because of what we do, but it's not the same. No one asks to be sold. We don't force anyone to take drugs. It's a line we won't cross. I may be a bastard, but I have some morality left.

"Give us an hour," I tell him and push up from the table. Lucas does the same.

Ravage also gets to his feet. "I know you're reluctant to step into a war. I know the risks it brings, but you won't get another chance like this to take

that prick out.” He pauses before he says, “You do this, and we’ll owe you a marker.”

Now that gets my attention.

A marker from the Sons is worth something. The Fraser Empire is limited to London. The Sons have chapters across the UK, US, and Europe. That could be used to our advantage, particularly since my father wants to move dealings overseas.

I don’t let my interest slide onto my face, though. I don’t give anything away. Cold as ice is a persona I’ve perfected over the years. “We’ll take that into consideration,” I tell him.

Lucas doesn’t say a word as we step out of the meeting room and into the common area. I feel the weight of the stares that reach us, heavy and cloying. Hopeless. The mood is bleak, broken and shattered like a pane of glass.

My attention is drawn to two redheaded girls who meet my gaze, their eyes wide and tearful. I pull my gaze away and move towards the door.

“We’ll be in touch,” I say as we move towards the exit.

As soon as we’re outside, Lucas turns to me. “What do you think?”

“I think we’re going to war with the Farleys.”

BAILEY



LYING IN THIS ROOM, unable to move, is exhausting. The fear is a constant pressure in my chest, making it hard to breathe. Being laid out like a sacrificial lamb is the ultimate humiliation.

Jack hasn't been back in the room since that initial visit, something I'm grateful for, but I've heard him moving around beyond the door. I'm not sure what he's doing out there, but I cling to the hope my brother will save me.

Nox will do everything he can; I know he will.

That thought enables me to keep my head above water, to stop from drowning in the pull of the current that's trying to drag me under. I will get out of this because my brother won't abandon me.

The club is my life. I've given everything to it, including my husband. I grew up with some of the brothers, while others came later to the club, but they're still family. I hope they really will put those bonds to the test. I want to go home. I want to see my babies again. I don't want to die in this shitty room alone.

I close my eyes and try to breathe through the pain in my chest as a lone tear trails down my cheek. This is fucked up. If I hadn't gone to that stupid bar, if I wasn't trying to show my team I'm one of them, I would be home right now, with my daughters.

I run through our morning routine, imagining making breakfast and getting them ready for the day. I do it over and over on repeat. It's all that keeps me sane. It's all that stops the darkness from encroaching on my thoughts.

I come back to reality as I hear Jack's voice behind the locked door to the

room that has become my cell. He's been on the phone a lot since I got here, but this time, he's not. Another voice drifts through the wood.

Fuck.

Is someone else here?

I tense, straining my ears to hear them, but there's nothing but mumblings through the walls. Who does the other voice belong to?

The boards outside the room creak and footsteps sound closer until the door opens. Ice douses me and my muscles lock as a man I don't recognize steps into the room. He's older, maybe in his fifties or sixties. It's hard to tell because his face is covered in white raised bumps.

A road map of scars, I realise.

They're not injuries received naturally. There's a pattern to them, a uniformity that tells me this was done intentionally.

Someone carved him up.

A shiver works up my spine. Who would do such a thing? And what would warrant such an action in the first place?

My anxiety ratchets up a notch as I watch him step closer to the bed. Despite the scars, he carries himself with an air of confidence I recognise. It's the same confidence I see around the brothers. It tells me this man is not one who is used to being denied a thing.

His suit is made from dark material and fits snug across his shoulders and looser around his torso. It's hard to make out much beyond that in the shitty lighting, but I get the feeling he comes from money.

The man peers down at me, and his gaze roams over my body, taking in my hitched up dress before coming to rest on my face. Even though I'm not naked, he makes me feel like he's just undressed me with his eyes. It makes my skin crawl, as if a thousand ants are walking over me.

Jack enters behind him, a smug look on his face as he takes me in, and I see something else. A desire that makes nausea pool in my mouth.

"It's the wrong girl, you fucking moron!" The man slams Jack against the wall. He lets out an oof as his back hits the plaster. His lips curve into a snarl. Jack isn't in charge here, but he's not a man used to being pushed around either.

"The other bitch was too well protected." Jack sneers. "She's still one of them. They'll want her back."

The suited man growls, "She'll have to do. You'll never get close to those bitches now." His gaze slides over his shoulder to look at me and he zeros in

on my hitched up dress. “Don’t fuck her up too much. I need her whole.” He releases Jack’s neck with a shove.

Anger floods my veins at the fact that he’s not going to let me free. I clench my fists into balls, making the chains bite around my wrists. “Prick,” I hiss. I didn’t inherit my brother’s calm demeanour. My temper is savage and it flares like oil to a flame.

The man smirks, his expression dark and terrifying. I grew up among men who are considered monsters, but there’s something so much more sinister about this guy. I get the feeling he doesn’t care who he hurts—women, children... it’s nothing to him, and that scares me, because the Sons have rules about this shit. They don’t hurt the innocent. This man doesn’t differentiate.

Looking into his eyes is like staring into nothing. There’s no remorse there for what’s happening, no empathy. He doesn’t see me as a person, and that is terrifying.

“If your stupid club complies with our demands, you’ll get out of here in mostly one piece. If they don’t...” The man shifts his shoulders and leaves the threat hanging.

“Who are you?” I demand.

He moves like a flash, gripping the bed frame over my head with one hand and wrapping the other around my throat. I squeak from surprise more than pain as he pushes me down into the filthy mattress. His grip is solid, but he doesn’t press hard. He wants to scare me, but he needs me alive. If he didn’t, he’d squeeze harder. He wouldn’t hold back. That knowledge makes some of the elastic bands tied around my ribs loosen a little. They aren’t going to kill me. They might do other shit to me, shit I might not recover from, but I will be strong for my daughters. They need me. They need their mother. I can’t fall apart, even though part of me wants to do just that.

“My name is Patrick Farley, and your precious club stole my son from me. I’m just repaying the favour by taking someone they care about.”

I have no idea what he’s talking about, and honestly I don’t care. I don’t get involved in club business. Women aren’t members. We’re family. We are taken care of, but we don’t get to know the ins and outs of what the brothers do.

“Fuck you!” I grind out through gritted teeth.

He proves me wrong by tightening his grip. Unable to get air past his hold, I thrash against him, trying to unseat him. It does nothing. My lungs

burn with the need to inhale, but I can't. Fear claws at my heart, which is racing in its panic. Black spots dance across my eyes and my peripheral vision starts to darken.

Patrick leans down, his weight on me increasing as he hisses in my ear, "You'd do well to remember I'm not one of your little biker friends. I will kill you."

Fuck. I let myself believe these men don't mean me harm. I thought my links to the club might protect me. I was so very wrong. I'm nothing. Just a pawn in this ridiculous game. That should curb my words, but it doesn't.

"So do it!" I spit out, fury and fear loosening my tongue.

He doesn't move an inch, but his grip releases enough that I can suck air into my oxygen-starved lungs. I cough, spluttering as I suck in breath after breath.

"Death is too fast."

"I didn't do anything to you." I gasp for air, trying to reinflate my lungs. I want to hold my burning neck, but my hands are held firmly in place by my bindings.

"You're one of them," he says in a callous voice. "That's enough."

He moves aside, straightening his suit and pushing his hair back from his face, preening himself as if he didn't just have his hands wrapped around me, as if he wasn't trying to crush the life out of me.

He pulls out his phone and I hear the unmistakable sound of a camera shutter.

Is he really taking photographs of me like this?

I try to pull my legs together to hide my body from him, but tied the way I am, I can't. Humiliation burns my cheeks.

"For your club," he says, as if reading my thoughts. "They need to know how serious I am about this."

"Why are you doing this?" I can't stop the sob that leaves me as my will to be strong is eroded away.

"Because your club tortured me and killed my son. These scars are where Fury carved into my face with a fucking knife. I've waited a long time to get my revenge, but now I'm strong enough to take them on." He peers down at me as if I'm shit under his shoe. A wave of terror rolls over me. "I wanted Fury's bitch, not a nobody's sister."

Amalia.

She was their original target.

A chill races through me. She's pregnant. Not far along, not enough to be showing, but enough that being hurt could make her lose her baby. I don't want to be here, but better me than her. The thought of her and Fury losing that child makes my heart hurt. Fury's never had anything good in his life. I don't know his past, but I know he was always sad until he met Amalia. She changed his world and put life back in his eyes. I don't want anything to touch them.

But Patrick is wrong when he says I'm a nobody. That's not true. I grew up in this club. It's in my blood, and I'm a part of that world as much as any other old lady. My parents were Sons. My brother is Sons. My children are Sons. I was married into the Sons. Laurence dying doesn't change my position. I mean more to the brotherhood than Patrick knows. The club will fight hard to get me back. They'll do it because I'm Nox's family, but also because I'm the widow of their brother.

Patrick runs a hand up my thigh, making my skin pebble. I want to curl inside myself. "I'll be back in a few hours," he says to Jack. "Don't fucking kill her and keep your dick in your trousers."

He leaves the room and Jack stares at me as he runs his thumb over his bottom lip. I don't miss the hungry gaze as he eyes my body like I'm a prize cut of meat. Then he steps out of the room, leaving me in the darkness alone.

ZEKE



MY FATHER, blood thirsty bastard that he is, is positively giddy at the prospect of the Sons owing us a favour. I understand why, but those fuckers don't have shit we can't get ourselves.

"It's always good to have someone in your debt," he says as he stares out of the huge floor-to-ceiling windows that look out over the London skyline. High-rises and skyscrapers dominate the landscape, creating a concrete horizon, a landscape of silent sentinels. He fiddles with his silver cufflinks before he turns and smirks at us.

His dark hair should be streaked with white and grey, but I know he gets it dyed regularly. He is a tall man, lean too, but a formidable monster.

"War with the Farleys might not go in our favour," I say, trying to be the voice of reason. Someone has to be.

"This is a good opportunity," he counters. "Get rid of those fuckers while being owed something by the Sons."

He's right, but the Farleys won't be easy to take down. No one knows how much strength they've regained, what size force they have. They may not be taken as easily as he imagines.

"What about the Eastons? Farley has an alliance with them."

The Easton Syndicate has an impressive territory, but they are often at war with the Adamses, another crime family that exists in London. This prevents both families from gaining too much power and keeps them out of our hair. As long as they don't bother us, we're not going to start a war with them. Attacking the Farleys could draw them into a battle.

"Do you really think they will step between the three of us?" my father

scoffs.

I don't. If the Eastons have any sense, they'll step back and see who comes out on top.

"It is something we have to consider," Kane interjects from his seat in front of Anthony's desk.

"The Eastons will stay out of it."

I grit my teeth. My stubborn father will never believe we could end up in a war with both factions. He thinks no one will ever have the balls to come against us, but we're not as untouchable as he thinks. Men only stay on top because they are careful.

"Why in the fuck would they stay out of it?" I demand. "They would have a chance to get rid of us and the Sons."

He never looks at the bigger picture.

I see the moment the veil comes down over his eyes and the rage flares. Anthony Fraser has a hair-trigger temper. I know better than to stand against him, but for some reason this shit has unsettled me.

He moves like lightning, putting his hand around my throat. He shoves me against the wall behind me, the plasterwork digging into my spine. Kane moves instinctively, reaching for his gun under his suit, but I shake my head. I don't need his help. I can handle our father.

I bring my attention back to Anthony. I see the spittle collecting at the side of his mouth, the lava burning in his eyes as he sneers at me. "Are you fucking questioning me, boy?"

Always with the "boy" when he wants to belittle me. He thinks it will make me feel small, insignificant. It doesn't work. It hasn't worked since I was a little boy. I don't need his approval. I don't give a fuck about that.

I bare my teeth at him. "Take your fucking hands off me."

He finds my gun pressed against his temple. The demons that live inside me surge to the surface, urging me to pull the trigger. I have no compunction about doing so. There's no love lost between me and my father. He's a man who has bullied and broken my spirit over the years. A man I've come to loathe for the hell he's made of my sibling's lives and mine. Blowing his brains out, seeing them splattered across the wall, would be the highlight of my fucking day. I tolerate my father, afford him the respect his position warrants in public, but in private is another matter. He might be family, and I would die for my family, but long gone are the days of him being able to bully me into submission.

He doesn't loosen his grip immediately, though his eyes slide sideways towards the gun. There's no fear in his eyes, as if he thinks I'll not do what I'm threatening. He couldn't be more wrong.

"Let go of me," I repeat, my voice resounding with authority.

His lips pull into a snarl as he releases me with a slight shove. I let my focus drift to my eldest brother. Kane's expression is murderous. He's keeping his own demons locked down by sheer force of will, but I can see he wants to unleash his anger.

My eldest brother has always been protective of me, Lucas, and Aurelia. For all intents and purposes, he raised us, overseeing our care when our parents were too wrapped up in building their kingdom to notice our existence.

Kane's eyes flash, a deadly edge to him that would have most men pissing their pants. My brother is a man of action.

I re-holster my gun and the tension in the air starts to loosen its hold a little.

"So, we're helping the Sons?" Lucas asks as my father steps back. He says it as if our father didn't just have hands on me and as if I wasn't just pressing a gun to his head.

Our lives are fucked up.

"Yes," Anthony confirms, straightening his suit jacket. "Zeke, see what they need and how we can facilitate it."

I resist the urge to roll my eyes at him. I know he's given me this job because I've pissed him off. This is his punishment. I push away from the wall and head towards the door, trying to calm the rage eating at my gut.

As I exit, the air seems to clear, and I take my first uninhibited breath since I stepped into that room. Anthony's assistant, Talia, peers up at me over the top of her desk before quickly averting her eyes. Smart girl. She's been with the business for a long time, is trusted and comes from within The Firm. Her father is Parker Weston, one of Anthony's lieutenants. She won't speak, which is just as well because I suspect she knows more than she should about our dealings.

I don't acknowledge her as I move down the walkway, passing rows of desks. This open plan layout gives me a fucking migraine, but I'm not in charge of that shit. It's surprising how the main floor looks like any office building in the city. Up and coming employees trying to make a name for themselves, trying to climb the greasy pole to the top, vie for attention daily.

Most of our legal activities run through this business and we launder a good amount of our illegal shit through it too.

I step into a boardroom and close the door behind me. The long table has numerous chairs pushed underneath, the design sleek and modern like what you'd expect from an inner-city London business. I go to the window that fills the whole back wall and glance out over the city. Behind me, there's another glass wall that looks out over the main floor.

I pull out my mobile phone and dial Ravage's number. He picks up on the second ring. "We're in," I tell him.

Ravage lets out a breath down the line. He's relieved we're on board. "Farley contacted us. He's going to sell her through his trafficking networks because we won't comply with his fucking demands. We have to find her or she's gone for good."

Fuck, that's brutal, and completely Farley's MO. The thought of women being sold to the highest bidder makes me want to put my fist through the wall. It's sick, a level of disgusting I can't even describe, and it's completely something Patrick Farley would do.

Ravage huffs out a breath and I can hear his frustration. "I'd do anything to bring her home, but he wants me to hand over the club to him. That ain't happening."

I understand. One person isn't bigger than the institution, and if he gives in to that demand now, it'll mean the collapse of their London chapter. I can see why he couldn't submit to that.

It doesn't surprise me, though. Patrick is the type of man to make an impossible demand just so he can destroy lives with a shrug of his shoulders and an "I gave you options" speech.

Fucking prick.

"You know where the sale is going down?" I ask Ravage.

"We don't have the resources to find that shit out. Never dealt in skin. No idea where to even fucking start. That's why we need you."

My family haven't either, but I know men who can find out. I'm all too aware of how my sister could be used as leverage. I've done everything to protect her, to keep her safe. That means knowing shit I wish I didn't need to ever know. I have men who monitor those pages, so I know how to find out where the auctions take place if Aurelia is ever taken.

"I can get that information," I tell him. "Just send me over all the details about Nox's sister."

“I’ll do it as soon we’re done talking.” He pauses for a moment and I’m sure he’s mulling over his words before he speaks. “Bailey means a lot to the club. She’s got two kids waiting for her to come home.”

I hear the unspoken “Don’t fuck this up”.

“Send me the shit.”

“I’ve got to be honest—I don’t know how to handle this. I’ve never dealt with trafficking.”

His candour surprises me. Ravage doesn’t strike me as a man who admits his failings, but given how much Nox’s sister clearly means to the club, I understand why he’d tell me this. He’s looking for advice. He’s not going to meet the demands, which means Farley will sell her.

“We need to stop the sale.”

“How?”

I consider this for a second, trying to work out the best approach. “We could go in guns blazing and stop proceedings before they happen, but that might get Bailey or any one of us killed. Farley will have protection set up for that eventuality.”

“What do you suggest then?” I don’t miss the impatience in his voice.

“I go in as a buyer and walk out with her.”

There’s a long pause. I understand it. Me walking in there and buying her isn’t that crazy, but it’s not the ideal outcome either. Farley could get wind The Firm is helping the Sons. I’d be risking my life walking into the lion’s den and I know it, but I don’t see any other option. Joe Public can’t just waltz into one of these auctions. You need the clout, the contacts. The Sons can’t do it, but I may be able to. If I can’t, then we can think about a show of force.

“You want to buy her back?” I can hear the disgust in his voice. I don’t like the idea much myself. The thought of exchanging money for a person is abhorrent to me, but I don’t see what choice we have.

“It’ll be the quickest way to get her home. This is why you brought us into this, Ravage. To help. If you have a better idea, by all means tell me what it is.”

He mulls this over for a moment before he curses. “Farley has to pay for this shit.”

“And he will, but let’s get your girl home safe first.”

“What if you don’t win her?”

“Then we go to Plan B. Your men and mine will be waiting outside the auction and we’ll take her by force.”

There's another pause before he says, "Okay, we'll try it your way. Let me know what kind of money you need and I'll arrange a transfer."

I hang up and tap my phone against my lips as I gaze out the large floor-to-ceiling windows. Every room in this building has amazing views of the city, views I barely notice anymore, but I can't stop from watching the movement on the street below.

My phone pings and I quickly swipe the screen to open Ravage's message. The image makes me suck in a breath. Bailey is not just beautiful; she's fucking stunning. The soft tip of her nose and the brightness of her red hair capture my attention instantly. In the photograph, she's sitting outside what looks like the clubhouse, and her eyes are staring into the camera.

At me.

It feels like she's looking into my soul, even though it's just a photograph. Her soft gaze and demeanour interest me, especially considering the sadness that sits behind that look, barely noticeable, but it's there behind the smile. I know how a life surrounded by crime can shape a person. It shaped me over the years. Kane and Lucas too. Aurelia has been protected, but I know she still feels it. I wonder how this lifestyle has shaped Bailey.

I save the image to my phone and I dial the number of a man I know can help me.

Eric Granger.

It takes him a couple of hours to discover the auction where Bailey will be sold. He forwards the images posted to the site and my stomach fills with lava as soon as I look at them. She's lying on a bed, wearing a dress that is rucked up her thighs. She's completely on display and that makes my anger mount. No one deserves to be humiliated like that. Her hands are pulled over her head, tied somewhere out of the shot, but it's her eyes that my gaze is drawn to.

That hint of sadness from the other image is gone. In its place is something that makes my stomach clench with rage. There's a brokenness in her eyes as well as a hint of anger. She's damaged by what's happened to her, but she's fucking furious about it.

Good.

That anger will keep her alive.

I pore over the image, taking in the ring of bruises around her neck. Irritated rage rolls through me. I don't know Bailey, so it isn't personal, but there's no glory in hurting women.

I push up from the table and head back into my father's office, ignoring the eyes boring into my back. Over the years, I've got used to being watched by people, and I know the employees of Fraser Holdings find me and my brothers fascinating.

We're the mobsters who own this slice of London.

I get why it would interest them. It's not every day you come across a living breathing gangster. Not that I consider myself to be one, but the syndicate my family runs certainly is no Boy Scout troop either.

I don't knock on my father's door. I just push into his office like I own the place. He glances up from where he's standing in front of the desk, his eyes locking on mine, and I see the flash of irritation. He's still pissed at my earlier defiance.

"To cement the deal with the Sons, I'm going to need men. We need to buy their woman back."

"You have them." He waves a dismissive hand, as if I'm an annoyance. Fuck if that doesn't piss me off.

I grit my teeth, knowing getting into shit with my father isn't worth the fucking headache it will bring, and turn towards the door.

"I'll go with him," Kane says.

"No, you stay. I need you for something else." More likely Anthony doesn't want to risk his heir.

I'm not important.

"I'm not sending Zeke into this shit alone."

"Just sit the fuck back down." Anthony growls the words.

Kane starts to speak again, but I shake my head. "I can handle this," I assure him.

"See?" Our father waves a hand. "He's got this. You, I need elsewhere."

Kane gives me a look that tells me I'm a dick for not taking his side, but getting into it with Anthony is never worth it. Easier to just do what he wants and worry about shit later. Besides, he's right. I will be protected. There will be men with me. We also don't have time to argue. The sale is going down soon and I need to be there or risk Bailey slipping through my fingers. That can't happen, and not just because it will destroy the alliance with the Sons, but also because part of me wants to rescue her. I want to be the knight on the white horse. I'm usually the nightmare in the dark.

I head out of the office and put in the call to Parker Weston, Talia's father and one of my father's lieutenants, as I walk to the elevators. Malone is on

my heels as I go, an eternal presence. My father might despise me, but he does need me breathing.

“Weston, I need men.”

Parker doesn't ask for what. That isn't his job. He simply says, “How many?”

I consider this. “As many as you can spare.”

“Will ten be enough?”

I can make it work, so I say, “Yeah.” We'll only need force if the sale goes south. The aim is to buy her and keep things civil.

I'm hoping I can get her back without shedding any blood. We know where she will be. We know we can buy her and have the means to do it, as well as the opportunity. I don't want her in the line of fire. Afterwards, once she's safe, we will disassemble the Farleys one piece at a time. Two birds, one stone.

The usual adrenaline I feel before a fight starts to move through my veins, making me feel alive. The air is crisper, and my heart rate is excitable. This could be the final fight. It could be the day I die. I shouldn't think this shit, but whenever I go into a situation like this, it's the first thought I have.

I don't fear my mortality.

We all die.

It's the only certainty in an uncertain world.

I live my life on a knife's edge all the time, walking a tight rope that I could fall off so easily. That thrills me. I live for that high.

The lift comes and I step inside, hitting the button for the basement car parking area. I lean against the back wall as the doors shut and it starts to move downward. As I wait, I pull up the image of Bailey again on my phone—not the one of her broken down, but the one where she's free. The one with the fake smile I see right through. I can't stop from scanning her face. What has she been through that she has to put up such a front?

I want to know.

The lift reaches the right floor and there's a ping as the doors slide open. I step out into the parking garage, Malone on my heels, and move towards my car. The sleek lines and chrome finishing look fantastic against the black paint. It's one of several vehicles I own. I have a parking garage full of more at the penthouse. It's frivolous spending, but I collect cars like most people collect everyday junk.

The temperature is lower down here, and it cuts through my suit as I open

the door and climb in. Malone walks around to the opposite side and climbs in beside me.

I don't start the engine right away. My thoughts linger on what I'm about to do.

"Okay?" Malone asks me.

"Yeah," I say. There's no other acceptable answer to give. "Let's get this shit done."

BAILEY



THE DAYS PASS IN A BLUR, and the longer I'm here, the less chance I think I have of being rescued. I held out hope of my brother riding in and saving me, but I've given up on that. The slither of light through the window boards has helped me to track the days and nights, and as far as I can tell, it's been six nights. I might be out on that count, but that's as close as I can figure it.

I've slept here and there, but I've not managed more than a catnap. Fear of Jack keeps me on the edge of panic and prevents me from sleeping too long. I keep my thoughts on my daughters. I have to survive long enough to see them again. I fantasise about killing Jack. I imagine his blood coating my hands. I imagine sliding a knife into his gut, twisting it until he screams in pain, and I imagine the light in his eyes dimming as I take his life. It makes a smile crack through the dark clouds.

I want him dead for tearing me from my life.

I want him dead for making me afraid.

I've come to the conclusion Jack is just playing with me, keeping me on the edge of fear. He's tormented me, hit me, hurt me. He's touched me in places I can't forget, but that's as far as it's gone.

For that, I'm grateful.

For now, I'm something to pass the time until... until they kill me? I have no idea what is going to happen to me and that terrifies me. I'm not ready to give up yet, but the more time that passes, the more hopeless my situation seems.

I can't stop the tears that roll down my cheeks as I stare at the shadowy ceiling, trying to empty my mind. My ribs ache fiercely from the last beating

and my stomach feels empty as starvation gnaws at my gut. I can't remember the last time I ate.

For the first time in my life, I feel despair.

I snap my head towards the door as I hear footfalls on the boards on the other side of it. I start to tremble uncontrollably. It's a reaction I can't stop and I don't try to. My body remembers what he's done to me, remembers the beatings and the lingering touches that churn my gut.

I grip the chains over my head, ignoring how they dig into my wrists. The skin is raw, chaffed and sore.

The door opens and his dark figure looms in the frame like a monster from my worst nightmare. Cold washes over me. Flashbacks of what he's done to me assault me as I shift as much as I can on the bed. The chains around my legs keep me in the perfect position for him to take what he wants without any way for me to fight him. It's only the threat he was given to leave me alone that has stopped him from going too far.

As soon as he comes closer I can smell him. There's booze on his breath, the sickly sweet scent of it turning my stomach. His beatings are always worse when he's drunk. I start to whimper, trying to escape the unescapable. I've tried to be strong. In the beginning, I was, but my resolve has been eroded and I don't have the strength to fight him anymore. What is the point? He holds all the cards and I am at his mercy.

His gaze roams over my body before he reaches out to cup my breast. I close my eyes, trying to block out what he's doing.

"You're being sold tomorrow," he says as he kneads my tits.

His words don't quite compute for a moment and then I realise what he's just said. "Sold?"

"I tried to fight for you to stay, but it's out of my hands. I want to keep you."

He wraps his fingers around my neck and squeezes, his smell making me feel nauseous. It's a game he likes to play. See how long it takes me to pass out. Before, I was someone in control of my life, of my future. Now, I'm just existing.

Even the flashes of anger I felt in the beginning have been doused like a candle.

I start to see black dots as my air is cut off, but before I pass out, he loosens his grip and I drag a breath in, coughing and spluttering.

"I wanted to keep you, but your club didn't give Patrick what he wanted."

My eyes snap to his face and my stomach sinks at his words. Did my family really do that? I refuse to believe my brother would stand by and let the club do nothing while I'm suffering. I can't wrap my head around it. Nox and I aren't as close as we were growing up, but we're not estranged either. I love my brother, and I know he loves me. I don't want to believe Jack's words, but something tells me there's a hint of truth in what he's saying.

My family has left me to deal with all this shit alone.

Without help.

It feels like an anvil sits in my gut.

I'm alone.

The club isn't going to help me.

That thought drains the last inch of fight out of me. What's the point of fighting a battle I can't possibly win? I have no way of getting back to my girls without help and the club isn't coming.

Pain clutches at my stomach as I turn my head to the side, a tear rolling down my cheek. Jack strokes down my face and I snatch my head away. "Don't touch me," I hiss.

His mouth pulls into a tight line before he lashes his hand out and hits me across the face. My head snaps to the side and my cheek instantly starts to burn.

Bastard.

"Ungrateful bitch," he growls, and I can hear the rage in his voice.

I don't sleep that night. My head is swimming with everything, so by the time Jack comes in the following morning, I'm exhausted and my eyes are gritty. He comes to the bed side.

"It's time." He pulls out a syringe and ice floods my veins. I don't know what is in that thing, but I don't want it in my body.

"What is that?" I try to move away, but the bindings hold me solid.

"I have to be sure you won't try to run." He sounds apologetic, but there's an insistence that tells me he's going to force me to take it even despite his pity.

"I won't," I promise, tugging on my chains. They don't move, like they haven't moved the whole time I've been here. The metal just digs deeper into my already sore wrists.

He doesn't look at me as he shoves the needle into my upper arm and depresses the plunger. Fuck.

"What did you inject me with?" I demand, my voice wobbling.

“A light sedative. It’ll keep you pliable.”

My vision starts to go hazy almost immediately. I blink rapidly, trying to clear it, but everything is fuzzy, like paint smeared down a canvas. “Please don’t do this.”

“This is how it has to be, baby.” He runs a hand down the side of my face and I tear my head away from him. I want to vomit at his touch, at the endearment too. I’ll never be his baby.

“I’m going to undo your bindings. If you try to fight or run, I will have to hurt you,” he tells me. To make his point he lifts his jacket aside to show me the holstered gun under his armpit. Even if my body wasn’t succumbing to the power of the drug he injected me with, the sight of the gun is enough to gain compliance from me. I might feel alone and abandoned, but I still haven’t quite given up the hope of seeing my daughters again. I miss Kara and Mollie so much.

My vision is erratic and my limbs feel heavy as he goes to the chains on my ankles and undoes them first. The pressure lessens and it’s a fucking relief. I don’t move as he does the same with my wrists. I want to fight. I want to kick him in the nuts and run, but my body is limp like a noodle. I can do nothing as he snaps a pair of cuffs around my wrists before he picks me up bridal-style and walks towards the door.

I try to fight the pull of the drugs, but I can barely keep my eyes open. I don’t want to wake up in a fresh hell. I need to know what is happening to me. I need to know where I’m going to end up. I need to know what my fate will be, no matter how bad it is.

As we step outside the place that has been my prison for a week, I try to take in all the details of the building, but I can barely see anything but watery shapes. I’m put into the back of a van, the metal floor digging into my hip, while he gets in the driver’s seat. My hands are tied and my feet are bound, stopping any attempt at escape. Not that I have the ability to fight what is happening right now. My body is numb and I’m barely keeping my eyes open.

I lie still, breathing in and out, my thoughts jumbled and unable to form properly. The first chance of escape, I have to take it, but that opportunity doesn’t arise.

I don’t know how long we travel for, but after what seems like quite a while, the van comes to a stop and the engine cuts. I listen as Jack gets out of the van and comes to the side door. He drags it open and I’m back in his

arms. The cold air barely penetrates the numbness spreading through me. I can't stop from leaning my head against his shoulder as he carries me inside the building. I'm struggling to keep my eyes open, though I try my hardest.

I barely take in anything as Jack carries me into a small holding room and leans me against the wall. There are a few other girls, haunted looks in their drug-fuelled eyes. One girl's head is turned to the side, her lids closed as if asleep. Most seem as if they know what is coming, what horrors await. Fear bubbles in my belly as I realise this is it. I'm going to be sold and my brother isn't coming to save me.

Jack stands next to me like a sentry. A constant reminder I am not going anywhere, that I'm trapped in this hellish nightmare—a nightmare that doesn't feel real. It's like I'm in a waking dream, one I can't escape. Through the fuzziness, I feel sick to my stomach.

They are really going to sell me like I'm a prize cut of meat.

Fuck. Me.

ZEKE



WE GET THINGS MOVING QUICKLY, mostly because there's no time to do anything but. The sale is going down in a matter of hours and we need to act fast.

Granger gets me into the auction without an issue. We're not enemies with the Farleys, even if we don't like them, which means Granger's attempt to gain me an invitation did not raise any red flags—that I'm aware of.

I messaged Ravage and told him to come with men but not to bring his entire club. As I stand at the edge of the wasteland meeting place, I watch the motorcycles pull into the parking area, glad to see he listened to me.

Malone is waiting at my side, a silent but obvious presence, as the brothers kick down their stands and cut their engines. I trust him with my life. I know he would throw himself in front of bullet for me. It's loyalty that is rarely seen these days and the kind of loyalty I expect from my father's men.

"You think these fuckers are going to toe the line?" Malone asks, his voice pitched low.

I shake my head. "I'd be surprised."

I move over as Ravage removes his helmet. Nox is climbing off the bike behind.

"Any news?" Nox demands. He seems like a decent guy—definitely a good brother. I'm not sure why that surprises me, but it does. There's nothing I wouldn't do for my siblings.

"Auction's going down in an hour. Six girls. Bailey is in the line-up."

"Fuck!" Nox scrubs a hand over his face, and I see the dismay in his eyes. "We have to get her back."

“We will,” Ravage tells him, touching his brother’s hand. He turns to me. “I transferred five hundred grand to you. That should be enough, right?”

“Yeah.”

Granger told me the average selling price is a couple of hundred thousand pounds. That’s the price of a human. It makes the bile climb up my oesophagus.

My job isn’t to look at the morality of selling flesh.

It’s to save Bailey, and I will do that no matter what.

I won’t fail.

There’s no room for fuck ups in this.

Not that I care particularly about the woman. Outside my family, I don’t give a fuck about anyone. Caring about people is a weakness, and one I can’t afford in my line of work. I’ve never felt attachments to a single person outside my immediate circle.

But I have to recover Bailey to ensure our agreement with the Sons. That I won’t fail at.

“I’ll go to the auction, buy her, and get her out of the building safely.”

“And if you can’t?” Nox drawls.

“Then your men and mine will be ready to strike.”

Nox seems appeased by that.

Ravage scrubs a hand over his face and eyes me like I’m a venomous snake. “Once Bailey’s safe we’ll hit the Farleys. Ain’t letting this bullshit stand. Old ladies, kids—they’re off fucking limits. We’re going to crush those fuckers.”

I understand that, though it’s not the way of my world. Women are pawns, used to solidify alliances. I love my sister, but I understand that one day she will do her duty, as I will do mine. She’ll marry to cement our position. My father will pick her husband. She’ll have no say in that matter, just as Kane won’t either. Everything we do is geared towards the survival of The Firm and the Fraser family. Lucas and I have a little more leeway, though not much. We are The Firm, and sacrifices must be made in order to keep power.

“What’s the plan?” Nox asks.

I run through everything I know until the men are all sure what is going to happen. The bikers climb into the back of one of the two vans we’re taking to the auction. They’ll be close enough to storm inside if needed, but out of sight, so they don’t cause any suspicion. The rest of my father’s men pile into

a second van.

I climb back into my Audi while Malone gets in the passenger seat as always. The man never leaves my fucking side, unless I'm at home in the penthouse.

This particular auction is being held in one of the Farleys' new hotels just across the city. It isn't open to the public yet, but even so, I have no idea how Patrick has the balls to parade their criminal activities so openly. We keep our legal and illegal shit completely separate, and for good reason. We don't want to be linked to the shit we're doing that could get us locked up.

I pull up outside the main entrance and head to the underground garage as I was directed. Once I'm parked, Malone and I climb out of the car. There are other vans and cars, but none I recognise. The club and my father's men are waiting up the street, ready to strike if needed. Hopefully, it won't come to that.

Malone glances at me over the top of the vehicle, and I see the disapproval in his face. He doesn't think I should be here risking my life for some biker bitch. Usually, I'd agree, but I want the land promised and the money.

Buttoning my suit jacket, I follow the directions I was given by Granger for how to find the auction. I have to walk through a side entrance that passes the kitchen to get inside. There are building materials lying around, bags of cement and tools, but no sign of any workers. The silence is deafening.

As I round the corner, there's a suited man standing outside the door to the Madison Suite—one of the few parts of the hotel that looks finished. Malone steps in front of me as we approach.

I give the man on the door the code word Granger gave me, and he opens the door. The room is huge and dark. There's a stage at one end, and a row of chairs in front of it separated by dividers to hide the identity of the bidders. There's a lone seat on the middle of the stage under a spotlight, no doubt for the women they're going to auction off.

The rest of the room is veiled in darkness. These fuckers coming today are the evilest of men, scum who think buying women is as normal as purchasing a car. They're the people who take their sons to football matches and their daughters to dance practice. They mask their sick minds behind a smile and poised words.

A man steps up towards me, his face hidden behind a mask that covers his eyes, like a macabre masquerade.

“This way, sir,” he says in a honeyed voice that instantly pisses me off. I don’t let the irritation show on my face as I follow him to the booth hidden from the other bidders.

I take a seat, keeping my expression neutral. Showing the disdain I really feel washing through me isn’t going to help with this deal between us and the Sons.

Malone takes the seat next to me in case there is trouble. I don’t expect there will be a problem. The men who attend these auctions like to keep up the appearance that they are business minded rather than the criminals they really are.

My plan is to bid on the girl, buy her, and get the fuck out of here. We will deal with the Farleys once she’s safely back with her family.

We could have stormed the building and taken her by force, but the hazard to her life would be too high. I’m not willing to risk war with the Sons because I got this woman killed in the crossfire. She’s nothing to Farley’s cunts. They wouldn’t think twice about making her eat a bullet, but there’s no doubt in my mind that the Sons would rip the world apart to avenge those who hurt her.

I glance around the room, noticing the men in suits guarding the doors. To Farley’s men, I’m just another buyer. Another depraved bastard. Besides, they have nothing to fear from us. My family might hate the fuckers, but we’ve not been a direct threat to them at any point, and for good reason. Wars cost money and men—neither of which we want to lose. Patrick stays out of our way and we’ve stayed out of his.

Until now.

This is directly inserting ourselves into a problem that is not ours, and that will open the gates of hell between us and them. Patrick will never allow this to stand. He’ll come at us and the Sons, but this is a war he can’t win, and when we defeat him we’ll have more land, more territory, and a greater scope to exploit.

“The guards don’t seem on edge or suspicious,” Malone says. He’s right, they don’t, which makes me feel more at ease, so I lean back in my chair, grabbing the iPad from the small table at my side.

As I skim through the girls up for auction today, my stomach roils as anger fills my veins. I swipe girl after girl, trying not to think about how they’re someone’s sister, someone’s daughter, someone’s friend. Each one has a dead look in her eyes, a haunted detachment, invisible tears burning

down her cheeks. Fuck. I try not to think about their plight, and focus on the only reason I'm here today.

Bailey.

She's the last listing in the catalogue and the image is one of her cleaned up, sitting in a new dress to the one she was wearing in the initial photograph the Sons were sent. She's pretty, with eyes that seem to draw me in like a Siren's call. The sadness is hidden behind her anger, which makes me feel a little at ease. She's still fighting, even now.

I drag my gaze from her as a few more buyers enter and take their seats, hidden from view by the dividers that grant them anonymity, something none of them deserve. They should be named and shamed, made to face the shit they've done.

I wait impatiently, jiggling my leg up and down as the auctioneer steps towards us and makes his introductions.

I bid on the first girl, just so I don't look suspicious. She's a small blonde, and I can see from her petite frame how easy it would be to traffic her. She wouldn't have stood a chance. Her ribs are showing and there are purple shadows on her pale skin that suggest she's been kept for a time. The way her eyes roll around her head and that faraway lost look in her stare make it clear she's drugged, but beneath that I can see a hint of fear swirling just below the surface. Even high as a kite, she knows what's happening to her. I can practically hear her silent screams.

Anger clutches my stomach as she's carried off stage once the bidding ends to join her new owner. The whimper that leaves her mouth almost makes me pull my gun out. I want to stop this, but I have to remember I'm not here to save these women. Even Malone has fisted his hands into solid balls as he stares ahead, his jaw tight. Fuck, hearing about these auctions and seeing them in practice makes me want to set fire to this place. It makes me glad we're taking this fucking bastard out. I don't have much of a moral compass—it's practically non-existent—but this shit is sick.

I want to prevent the little blonde's sale, but that would put Bailey in jeopardy. I have to focus on the task I'm here for. I can't think of these other girls and where they're going to end up.

I go through the motions of the auction until she's finally brought out.

The white dress she's wearing makes her red hair seem brighter against the starkness of the material. She looks like an angel, though one who has suffered through unspeakable hell. Her eyes are also heavy, like all the girls'

eyes have been, telling me she's drugged. They want them compliant, like dolls, but there's defiance in her gaze that gives me hope they haven't broken her completely in the time she's been with them.

Those eyes skim the crowd as if she's mentally killing everyone in the room before they come to me. I don't know if she can see me past the spotlight, but for a moment, it's like I'm staring into her soul. I swear I see all her worry, all her fear, all her pain in that one look. Then the anger flashes behind the foggy look glazing her eyes and her lips pull into a sneer. Even now, with a ring of finger marks around her neck and a bruised jaw, she is still spitting fire, and I fucking admire the strength she's showing. Most people wouldn't have the will to survive. I saw it in the other girls. They were defeated. They had lost their will to endure, but Bailey is still fighting.

"Who'll start the first bid?" the auctioneer asks, rubbing his hands together.

I fucking hate this cunt. I picture his death. I wouldn't make it quick. I would have him begging for mercy the same way the girls probably did, but I would never deliver it. I would let him think he was dying, only to bring him back to a new hell.

Malone elbows me, yanking me back to the present, and even though it goes against everything in me, I raise my hand and I place the first bid on Bailey.

Ravage gave me half a million to bid, and most of the women have gone for less than that, so I'm confident that will happen this time too. It's a small price to pay for a life. For most of these fuckers, it's probably less than the price of the fancy as fuck cars they drive.

The man in the end booth must like Bailey's fierceness as well as her looks because every bid I make, this fucker puts his hand up. Heat flames through my veins and I have the urge to settle this shit with violence, particularly when I reach the threshold of what Ravage gave me to bid with. I'm not losing her now, not when she's so close I can almost reach out and touch her. The bids go higher and higher. This prick isn't backing down and neither am I. We're at eight hundred and seventy thousand grand—more money than Ravage gave me to bid with—when he finally shakes his head.

Relief floods me as the auctioneer brings the gavel down and calls the auction.

I focus my gaze on Bailey, and I'm met with a look of pure hate.

BAILEY



I DIDN'T THINK my humiliation could get worse, but being bid on like a cow at market breaks what little is left of my resolve to remain calm. I feel anger humming through my body as the lights dim just enough that I get a look at the fucking bastard who bought me. I want to communicate with my eyes what I'm unable to say through the haze of the drugs running through my system.

I hate him and I'll never be compliant.

If he wants a meek woman, he's shit out of luck because I'll never ever be that.

I'm pulled off the stage by one of the suited men who are guarding the process and shoved into a back room where I'm left. I hear the lock engage, which fills my belly full of ice.

Captive again.

I try the door, which doesn't budge, before I slide down the wall, my legs wobbly. I'm still hazy because of whatever I was injected with and keeping my wits about me is proving tough.

My chest heaves as my fear starts to spread through my body. How can this happen? How can a person be bid on and sold? It's such a bizarre concept to me that I can hardly compute what is happening.

I try not to think about what fate awaits me. I try not to focus on anything but the positives. I'm still alive. I'm still breathing. As long as I have breath in my body, there's still a chance of survival. My family might have given up on me, but I haven't abandoned myself. I'll do whatever I have to in order to gain my freedom.

I'm going to fight the first person who comes through that door, even if it kills me.

I need to be standing.

Ready.

My head rolls and I close my eyes, trying to regain my equilibrium. How am I going to fight when I can barely move my head without feeling like I'm on a merry-go-round? I curl into a ball and try to concentrate on breathing, staving off the nausea that swirls in my belly—possibly from the drugs, possibly from anxiety about the calamity I'm facing.

I don't know how long I lie there, but after a while the door lock scrapes back. I jolt, trying to sit upright.

This is it.

My first opportunity to try to escape.

Somehow, I clamber to my feet, using the wall to steady myself, trying to ignore how the room rolls around me like a storm-tossed boat at sea.

I hold my breath as the handle moves down and the door pushes open. It's not a guard who steps in, but the man who bid on me.

The man who *won* me.

My heart thuds painfully in my chest and I back up as he steps into the small space, seemingly sucking the air out of it. He's bigger than me by quite a lot, with a jaw line that looks hewn from stone and a full mouth surrounded by a layer of stubble. He's gorgeous, I can't deny it, even with the hard eyes that appraise me like I'm a prize he's won. Essentially, that's exactly what I am.

He bought me.

He owns me.

He looks like sin wrapped up in darkness, and I can feel the confidence, the power radiating off him. He's not a man who hears *no*. I've known plenty like him over the years. I've always had a thing for those who walk in the darkness. Laurence was plagued by demons, like most of the men in the club. I'd seen those dark entities rise in his eyes a number of times in our marriage, and although he never aimed his anger at me, I'd seen him lose control. I've always been drawn to deeply damaged men, and this man screams problematic.

He has that same darkness, that same swagger in him. The one that says he holds the world back with the promise of violence.

I swallow hard as I try to control my thrumming heart and every inch of

my skin heats beneath his gaze. I shouldn't be reacting to him, but I can't stop myself. I feel alive in a way I haven't in years. As scared as I am, I'm also aroused. This isn't like with Jack. This isn't about control or taking what I haven't freely given. This man wants me to want him. I can see it in his eyes. He's desperately seeking that connection.

And I can't deny I'm drawn to his darkness like a moth is to the flame. I can't help but be taken in by the sinister charisma he exudes. I've never felt anything like this, and I blame the drugs for the way it takes all my strength to rebut him. They're fucking with my head, making it hard to think.

But this man isn't someone I need to be interested in.

He's the man who paid money in exchange for my life.

He's the man I'm supposed to hate, not want.

I snap my back straight and raise my chin high. This could be my only chance to escape, and while I feel drunk on desire, I have no intention of being owned by anyone, let alone a walking devil.

Without thought, I launch myself past him, aiming for the door, but the drugs make my movements sluggish and wrong. He hooks his arms around my waist before I make it, his grip solid as he turns me to face him, still holding me closer than is comfortable.

It's instinctive for me to fight, and I rake my nails down his face. He curses as blood bubbles beneath the claw marks I've left behind. I should feel guilty for marring his perfect skin, but it's triumph rather than remorse that roars to the surface. It's a small show of defiance but it feels like a monumental win in this situation.

"Get off me!" I snarl like a feral beast.

I'm ready to fight for my life and I'll do whatever it takes to reclaim my freedom. He might look like he's wrapped in shiny paper, but I see the darkness within him. I feel it beating in my own heart as he fights me.

I can tell he doesn't want to hurt me, even though I'm intent on inflicting as much damage on him as I can. He snags my wrists before I can attack him again, his grip like iron bands around them. I can't stop him from pushing me back against the wall hard enough to force the air from my lungs. He holds me in place, his hands shackling me as his hips pin me to the wall. Trapped, I can do nothing as my breath rips out of me in heavy pants.

Frustration rolls through me that I didn't manage to escape, although my plan had no chance of success.

He keeps hold of my wrists as his gaze roams over my face. "Who knew

the kitten had claws,” he murmurs.

I feel like he’s sucking all the air from me or maybe the air got lighter. I don’t know. Either way, I feel light-headed. “I won’t let you take me.”

He smirks. “Oh?”

“You’ll have to kill me first.”

If it comes down to a battle of strength, this isn’t a fight I can win. Even if I wasn’t drugged, I can’t fight him. He’s bigger than me, and stronger. I’m entirely at his mercy and we both know it.

He peers down at me, his eyes softening. “Today isn’t the day you die, princess.”

The nickname pisses me off, mostly because I like how it sounds on his lips. Like a soft caress that seems at odds with his granite persona.

“You bought me,” I hiss at him.

“And you were expensive,” he complains.

“I’m not a possession.”

“No, you’re not.”

“So let me go.” I’m running on pure adrenaline right now, which is dulling the haze of the drugs.

“And allow you to attack me again?” He brushes a piece of hair from my face. “You know I’ve killed men for less.” His thumb moves over my pulse point, a gentle caress that is at odds with his words.

The shiver that races through me is unmistakable. This man is unstable, and he’s staring at me like I’m his next fucking meal. “I was scared.”

“I know.”

He releases his hold on me and steps back, giving me space. I use the wall to steady myself. For a moment, he just watches me, as if wondering whether I might attack him again. In truth, I don’t think I have it in me.

“I’m not here to hurt you. I’m here to take you home.”

I snap my eyes to his. “Home?”

“Your brother is waiting for you.”

“You’re here with Nox?”

Overwhelming relief floods me and I sag back against the wall as my legs turn to like jelly.

“Your club sent me to get you out.”

Irritation snaps at my heels. “Why the hell didn’t you lead with that? I wouldn’t have attacked you.”

“You didn’t exactly give me a chance, princess.”

There's the endearment again. It makes butterflies flutter in my belly, especially now I know he's here to rescue me and not own me.

"You just bought me. What was I supposed to think? Besides, *they* told me the club wouldn't meet the demands. *They* made out I was alone in this. I wasn't expecting a rescue."

"The club wouldn't meet the demands." His candour surprises me. Most people would have lied. That he doesn't tells me the exact kind of man he is. One that doesn't fear the repercussions of his actions or words.

I stare at him, trying to fathom if he's telling the truth, even as my heart breaks. I don't want to think my family left me to this fate without help, but that's what this man is implying. "They wouldn't?"

"Farley asked for something impossible." I wonder what, but before I can interrogate this man further, he adds, "But they were never going to leave you to rot, Bailey. They made a deal with the devil to get you home."

"The devil?"

He grins a macabre smirk that makes ice fill my belly. "The Frasers."

His words stagger me. I know the Frasers, and I know the club has dealt with them before. Rachel, Titch's old lady, was threatened by Zeke once. I've never dealt with him, but Rachel told us about it afterwards, told us of her terror. I understand it now; I'm facing the man himself. He's a demon in an angel's body.

The Frasers have a reputation, one I'm all too familiar with. Ruthless and cruel, they are deadly. I might live among men who are hardly angels, but it's not the same. I grew up with the club. I may not always agree with how things are done, nor did I like being kept in the dark so much, but the club took care of me and my girls after Laurence's death in a way I can never thank them enough for. After he passed, I was lost for a time. Distraught. I could barely take care of myself, let alone Kara and Mollie. The club stepped up until I was able to get my shit back together and look after my babies again. In the years since, the Sons have done so much to keep my daughters healthy and happy.

I should have known they would not truly abandon me.

I should have known they would never leave me to the fate I was facing.

My brother would never allow it. Even if the others would, Nox would have come after me himself.

"I can tell by your face you know the name," he says, drawing me out of my thoughts.

“I don’t live under a rock. Everyone knows about the Frasers.”

He smirks and unease ripples through me, filling my stomach with ice. I’m alone with a man who just bought me. A man who is even more treacherous than my previous captors. What is he going to do to me?

He steps towards me and I move back. It’s a subconscious reaction, one I can’t control. I would have done it even if I hadn’t been subjected to the hell I have been, but now, I’m even more wary of men. He says he’s here because of Nox, but that doesn’t mean shit. He could be lying.

“Are you scared of me?”

“No.”

The lie makes him shake his head. “You should be.”

I lick dry lips and try to seize control of the situation. I don’t want him to have the upper hand, which he seems to have right now. “My brother. He sent you, so where is he?”

“Outside. I’ll take you to him.”

Little alarm bells start jingling, telling me not to go with a man who I just met, a man who bought me from an auction, a man who has threatened my family before, but what choice do I have? I can either stay in this small room and wait for Jack to come and find me, or trust that this man in front of me isn’t lying.

I straighten from the wall and wobble. He moves quickly, latching onto my bicep to steady me with one hand, the other going to my hip. I jolt at his touch, but this time he doesn’t let go of me.

“I’m dizzy.”

I’m more than dizzy. I’m barely able to control my vision. I feel like weights are hanging off my eyelids, trying to force them closed. I will myself not to pass out, to stay conscious.

“Fuck it,” he mutters before he sweeps me into his arms.

I let out a small shriek of surprise. “What are you doing?” I hiss at him.

“Quiet,” he orders and I fall silent. Then he murmurs in my ear, “This is the fastest way to get you out of here.”

I do clamp my mouth shut, mainly because I want that very much. This place is making my lungs feel constricted, the air difficult to get past the lump lodged in my airway. I can feel the tears burning the backs of my eyes.

He carries me from the room and down half-decorated corridors. I keep my face buried in his neck as my eyes get heavier and heavier.

I’m barely aware of anything as he heads into the car park area. He

slowly lowers me to my feet, but doesn't release me even as my bare soles touch the asphalt. Then he guides me into the front seat of a dark, sleek car.

"Where's my brother?" I mumble.

"I'm taking you to him," he says.

It's a lie.

I know it the moment he speaks it, but as he pulls my seat belt around my body, I know I can do nothing but what he demands.

He meets my eyes and the look in them scares me.

"Do as you're told and I promise you'll get to go home again."

"And if I don't?"

"You don't want to find out."

Cold floods my body at his words, and I realise just how fucked I am.

ZEKE



I HAVE no idea what the fuck I'm doing. I'm supposed to meet Nox on the street outside the hotel and hand Bailey over, but the moment I laid eyes on her, I knew that wasn't going to happen. I tell myself she's leverage, and I can use her to ensure we get what is owed to us by the Sons. I'm not big on trusting people's word. That hasn't served me well in the past. It won't serve me well now either. Taking her as an insurance policy seems like a good idea, apart from the fact it's going to leave the bikers spitting fire.

It's more than that though. I don't want to give her up. For the first time in a long time, my heart started to pump, and not from adrenaline, but need. I want her. I don't know how to explain it, but I knew she was mine from the second she launched at me, clawing at my face.

I glance over at her in the passenger seat as the London landscape whizzes past the windows. Her eyes are closed, her head leaning against the car door, light lashes against pale skin. She should seem at peace, but there are big black smudges beneath her eyes that tell me sleep is something that has eluded her for a time.

I should feel bad. She left one hell for a worse one. I have no doubts about the kind of man I am. I know there's darkness in me, one that pushes me to do things most people would never consider.

Like kidnap Nox's sister.

This shit is crazy. My father will kill me for going off script, but I tell myself I have to do what I must to protect my family. This will ensure the Sons don't start a war with the Farleys and leave us to clean up. It will assure best behaviour, and that's what I need.

That's not why she's sitting in my car.

I don't know what came over me. I've never felt that strong of a pull towards anyone before, but I'm not giving her up until I know the threat to her is gone.

Why?

I don't know.

What I do know is she made my body sit up and take notice. My blood felt heated and my heart started to pound in a way it never has before. The unmistakable chemistry between us is nothing I've ever experienced. I've never had an instant attraction to someone, but I know, deep down, this woman is meant to be with me. Call me crazy—fuck, I think I'm crazy too—but that thought entered my head the second I saw her in the flesh and hasn't left since. Even when she attacked me, I didn't feel anger, but pride at her spirit. I can't imagine the shit she's been through with Farley, but she was still fighting. She's strong, and I'm drawn to that. She's the forbidden fruit I want to taste, and she's going to get me killed.

I peer at her again, taking in her beautiful features. Even beneath the bruises—and there are enough to make red film my vision—I can see she's attractive. A slightly upturned nose, a smattering of freckles over her makeup-free face, and perfect eyebrows arched over her eyes greet me.

I pull my attention back to the road and concentrate on driving. I try not to be hyperaware of her presence next to me, even though all I can hear is her steady breaths. Fuck. I shouldn't take her home, not to my inner sanctum, not to a place I never take anyone, but I have nowhere else to go. I can hardly stash her at Fraser Holdings, under the nose of my father. He'll give her back just to keep the peace. That can't happen. Even if I'd allow it, the chance at peace between us and the Sons disappeared the moment I took Bailey from the hotel. Even if I return her, Ravage and his men will come for us. It's a matter of principle. If the shoe was on the other foot, I'd tear them apart for the disrespect.

Most people would fear that.

I don't.

There's very little that scares me.

My sister being taken. My brothers being killed.

And now Bailey being out of my grasp.

My phone starts to ring and I glance at the central console to see it's Malone calling. I'd left that fucker waiting in the corridor of the hotel. I shouldn't have done, but I hadn't been thinking straight. I hit the hands-free

button on the dashboard.

“Did you forget something?” he growls down the line.

I understand his frustration, but my sole thought had been getting Bailey out of there. In truth, I forgot Malone was with me. I know he’s tracking my car back to my penthouse apartment.

“I’m fine.”

“I know you’re fine. I can see you’re fucking fine. Why are you heading to the penthouse?”

“I need to lay low.”

“Why?”

I don’t know how to explain why I took her, so I don’t try. Instead, I say, “I took an insurance policy.”

He lets out a low breath. “You took the woman?”

I glance over at Bailey. “It seemed like a good idea.” It did, and it still does. At least now I know she’ll be safe while we deal with that shithead Patrick fucking Farley and his syndicate.

“I’m coming to you.”

“That’s not necessary, Malone.”

“You think those biker fucks aren’t going to come for you after they learn you took her?” I can hear the hint of worry in his tone just under the anger. He might be my bodyguard, a man willing to take a bullet for me, but I think on some level we’re more than that. Not friends. I don’t have those, but if I did, Ryan Malone would be at the top of that list.

“I’ll be fine,” I tell him, knowing that the penthouse is protected, and I’m capable of taking care of myself.

“I’ll be there shortly,” he says and hangs up.

I sigh. Fucking Malone.

As I pull up on the street where my penthouse is located, I glance over at Bailey and see she’s still out of it. Good. That will make it easier to get her into the building. I drive into the underground garage and park in my secure area amongst the line of cars I own. I cut the engine and run a hand over my jaw.

Is this a mistake?

Maybe, but the bigger mistake would be doing nothing, waiting for the bottom to fall out of things, and not making contingencies for every eventuality.

The biggest mistake would be letting her out of my sight and wondering

if she's safe.

I climb out of the car and come round the front of the bonnet to her side. I open the door carefully, and she nearly slides into my arms.

"Where...am..." Her voice is sluggish and slurred, and I ignore her query as I unbelt her.

"Shush," I tell her, "It's okay." This situation is as far from okay as it is possible to be, but the lie falls easily from my tongue.

I grab her under her legs and around her back, picking her up. It's a bit awkward, but I manage to get her out of the car and carry her towards my private elevator.

I step inside and hit the button for the penthouse. The doors slide shut and I peer down at her as the lift starts to move upwards. She's struggling to come out from under the pull of the drugs, and I can see how hard she's trying to focus on what's going on around her.

She has guts, something I would expect from a woman who lives in the world she does, but what I didn't expect is how much that interests me.

Most of the women I know are people pleasers. They don't want to get on the wrong side of me or my family. They go out of their way to be compliant, thinking that's what we want or need. Bailey seems the opposite of that, and I want to explore that more.

The lift doors open into the wide hallway that leads into the main space of my suite. There's a large open-plan living area, with a U-shaped sofa in the middle of the floor and a large wide-screen TV on the wall that I barely watch. There's also a new kitchen complete with marble counters, a larger than average pantry, and a dining area with a long table I've never used. I don't bring people back to my penthouse apartment.

Ever.

Not because it's my home—it'll never feel like that—but because I don't want to give up a slice of myself to anyone. Doing that exposes weaknesses people can use against you.

I will never hand anyone the ability to harm me.

I walk down the back hallway that leads to the four bedrooms and bathroom. I should put her in one of the guest bedrooms, but I step into the master and lay her down on the edge of my mattress. It's been a while since I last slept here, but the sheets are clean and fresh. I have a housekeeper who comes over two or three times a week to take care of this shit.

My room is masculine. The comforter on the bed is thick, heavy slate

grey, and the walls are white. There are black frames covering one side of the room and the furniture is the same colour. There's a plush dark grey carpet on the floor.

Against the pillows, she's like a splash of colour in this bleak landscape, and I want to stare at her pale skin, that copper red hair all day. I pull the covers over her body, shielding her from my eyes, giving her the privacy she probably craves after being captive for so long, and resist the urge to press my mouth to her forehead.

Confusion clouds her eyes as she stares up at me. I can see the drugs are still affecting her by the heaviness of them. "What's..."

I place a finger over her lips. "Sleep."

She wants to argue, I can tell, but the drugs and the adrenaline crash have other plans. Her eyes flutter and close.

I watch her for a moment, unsure what to make of her, before I move to the door and step out of the room. I head back towards the living area and activate the alarm system.

Then I call my brother.

Kane answers after two rings. "It's done?"

"Kind of."

There's a pause and then, "What do you mean 'kind of'?"

I go into the kitchen and grab a bottle of Scotch from the drinks cabinet. Sandwiching the phone between my shoulder and ear, I manage to get the ice from the ice compartment. "She's at my penthouse."

Silence fills the line.

"Kane?"

"Why the fuck is she at your penthouse?"

Because I can't give her up. "Insurance." It's a lie. I don't care if the Sons never give us what they promised.

"Against what?"

"The Sons deciding to leave us cleaning up shit." Another lie, but my brother will never understand my draw to this woman I just met.

"You know this is going to cause war between us and them."

He doesn't seem fazed by this idea. My brother has a blood-thirsty streak. He's probably rubbing his hands together at the prospect.

"Anthony might trust them to follow through. I just want to make sure that's going to happen." I hate feeding my brother a line of bullshit, but the truth is too crazy to try to explain. He wouldn't understand anyway. Kane's

never loved anyone or anything in his life.

“Smart, little brother.”

Smart, or crazy? Pissing off the Sons isn't a good idea, but I've never been big on doing what's expected.

I move over to the sofa and sink onto it, taking a deep sip of my Scotch. “I thought I would give you a heads up before I call Ravage.” It's not a call I'm looking forward to, but it's one I have to make. They deserve to know she's safe—or at least as safe as she can be.

I could end this now. I could have the Sons meet me at my penthouse and take her home, but the thought of that makes unease settle in my gut. Farley's still out there. He might have meant to take Fury's bitch, but that doesn't mean Bailey wouldn't get caught up in this shit again. There's no way I'm handing her over until I know she's going to be completely safe.

“Do you want me to tell Anthony?” Kane asks, sounding giddy at the prospect. Pissing our father off is a sport we both enjoy playing. This game I've started now might be a step too far. I'm not sure Anthony will ever forgive me for this.

“I'm sure Ravage will make his own call.”

I have no doubt the president of the Untamed Sons will make that call to my father. My father will be furious.

I don't care.

“Stay safe, little brother,” Kane tells me. “I'd hate to have to rid the world of another biker club.”

I can't stop the tug at my lips. He would do it too. Kane might be incapable of love, but in his way, he cares about me and our siblings. Not that I need his support. I can take care of myself, but it eases some of the pressure in my chest to know I have backup if required.

I hang up the phone and dial Ravage.

He picks up immediately, as if he was waiting for my call. “You have her?” he asks.

“She's safe,” I tell him. “And she'll stay that way as long as you uphold your end of our bargain.”

She'll stay safe full stop. I'm not going to lay a fucking hand on her.

There's a pause then the universe seems to suck a breath in. “Are you... are you fucking serious?”

“I'm not big on trust, Ravage. I'm sure you understand that I need an insurance policy. You deliver your end of the deal and you can have her

back. Considering you aren't planning on double-crossing us, it should be easy for you to follow through." The thought of handing her over makes my stomach churn. It's not happening.

He curses down the line. "You fucking backstabbing prick—"

"Calm down. I've no intention of hurting Bailey. I just want to make sure you're not going to pull a fast one and leave me and my family facing the Farleys alone."

"Why the fuck would I do that?"

"Trust has to be earned."

"That shit works both ways," he growls at me.

"Let me know what the plan is to get rid of Farley. We'll supply men, weapons—whatever you need."

"And Bailey?"

"Consider this a little holiday for her."

"You're a fucking bastard. I trusted you."

"You still can trust me."

"Can I? You broke our fucking agreement."

"Our agreement still stands," I counter. "You want rid of the Farleys... so do we, and together we can make that happen."

"You hurt her—"

"I'm not going to fucking touch her." The assurance is easy to give.

"When this is over, I'm going to flay your fucking skin off your bones, you piece of shit liar. This ain't done," Ravage says and the line goes dead.

That could have gone better. I take a sip of my Scotch, my gaze drifting in the direction of the bedroom. What am I to do with Bailey?

That's a question I don't have an answer to.

BAILEY



I WAKE in a room I don't recognise, but it's not the dirty mattress I've woken on all week. This bed is soft and smells good. I'm also not tied up.

Blinking, I peer around the space, my heart starting to race. Where the fuck am I?

I try to remember something.

Anything.

But nothing comes to me.

My heart starts to gallop in my chest as I slowly manoeuvre myself into a sitting position. What happened? How did I end up here?

Wherever here is...

I'm so disorientated the room rolls around me as I move, and I drop my head into my hands. I wait for the spinning to slow back down. It takes a few minutes, but it does eventually calm down. As soon as it does, my head starts to throb, but I ignore the pain and swing my legs off the edge of the bed.

I stare at my bare feet as I regain my equilibrium and wiggle my toes. They move, which seems positive. The dirt on my skin doesn't. My bare legs are smudged and the white dress I'm wearing is stained with muck too.

Why am I here...

My thoughts splinter as the memory returns in full force.

I was sold.

The word chokes me as I breathe through the pain lancing my chest.

The auction.

I recall the image of the man who bought me. He was attractive. Gorgeous, in fact, but his eyes... There was something off about them. A darkness I could see reflecting back at me. Fear nips at my heels as I

remember that cold gaze. Did he bring me here?

Wherever the fuck here is...

I swallow back my nausea as I fist the edge of the mattress. He told me he was saving me, that he was there because of Nox. That titbit of information makes me relax just an iota, though not by more than that. Just because he name-dropped Nox doesn't mean anything. It could have been a ploy to make me more pliable. Considering I'm in a strange bedroom and not in a room at the clubhouse, that's looking like a possibility.

I pull myself up to my feet on shaky legs. If Nox and the club saved me, I must be somewhere safe. Nox wouldn't let anything bad happen to me, right?

Considering I thought my brother had abandoned me, I'm not sure what to think right now.

I walk across the carpet, the fibres thick and fluffy beneath my toes. Expensive. I open the door with trembling hands, and I'm greeted by a wide corridor with several more doors off it.

I strain my ears, trying to hear, but I can't make out any sound.

Hugging the wall, I start up the corridor, which opens out into a large open-plan space. The décor looks expensive, clean and masculine. There's no colour anywhere, just different shades of brown and grey with some black and white thrown in.

As I scan the space, I see the back of his head. His dark hair is ruffled, as if he's been raking his fingers through it, and his suit jacket is draped over the back of the sofa. From here I can see his black-socked feet are crossed at the ankles on top of the glass coffee table. There's a half-finished tumbler of amber-coloured liquid next to him.

I freeze in place, not sure if he's heard me or not. I look around the space, and I notice there is nothing that looks like a front door, but there is an elevator. Is that the way out?

My gaze goes back to him. He hasn't turned around yet, so I feel emboldened and inch forwards.

"Even if you make it to the lift, you'll never make it out of the building."

His deep voice is like gravel, with a lethal edge that makes me jolt in place. It's like silk over granite, soft yet hard. But it's the words that scare me, sending a chill through me. Is he really saying I can't leave?

He twists and faces me. It's the man from the auction. The man who bought me. Through the haze, I remember that much.

"You can't keep me here." My words are strong, defiant, and useless. I'm

at this man's mercy, though I somehow know he's not going to hurt me. I don't know how I do know that, but that's what my instincts tell me.

He tilts his head to one side. "Can't I?"

The challenge in his voice doesn't go unnoticed. He's playing me, trying to garner a reaction. I draw my brows together. "Where's my brother? You said you were taking me to him."

"I lied."

"Why?"

There's a pause and I get the impression he's trying to get his story straight. "Because I want Nox and his little club to play nicely. To do that, I need an insurance policy."

Me.

I'm his insurance policy.

His candour surprises me. I didn't expect him to tell me. The club is forever trotting out the "club business" line. That he's not keeping secrets puts me instantly on my guard. Why doesn't he care if I know his plans?

I fold my arms over my chest and give him a glare that I usually reserve for annoying bikers. "So, you just kidnapped me to make the Sons do whatever it is you want?" There's sass in my words, annoyance too. I want to get home to my daughters. I don't want to be stuck here because I'm a pawn in some fucked up game the men are playing.

"I didn't kidnap you, Bailey. I bought you."

The way he says these words makes my stomach fill with ice. Is he serious?

"You can't own a person."

He pushes up from the sofa and he moves towards me. I step back, uncertainty making my fear skyrocket. My back hits the wall as he moves into my space, pressing one hand against the wall next to my head, the other close to my opposite hip. It shouldn't be erotic, but my heart is pounding like a freight train as it moves over the rails. He's so close I can smell him and it's heady.

"The money I just paid for you begs to differ, princess."

Mouth dry, I dip my tongue out over my lips to wet them. He tracks the movement, his eyes heated. My chest starts to heave and my pulse rockets. I'm vulnerable. Alone. This man is crazy. Is he going to do unspeakable things to me?

"Don't." I hate the begging quality to my voice, but if it keeps this man

from harming me, from doing worse to me, I don't care.

"Don't what?"

I lick my lips as I meet his dark haunted irises that are dilated wide. "Hurt me."

He doesn't recoil, like I would expect, but rather trails his fingers down the side of my face. "What I do all depends on you."

"Meaning?"

"Behave and I won't have any reason to hurt you. If the Sons uphold their end of the deal, you'll be home by the end of the week."

"And if I don't behave?" I whisper the words.

His smirk is sinister and it makes me want to hide from him. The horrors promised in his eyes make me think Jack was a pussycat compared to the man in front of me. He is a whole new beast. I'm used to being around aggressive men, but they're not that way with me. This is different. He's a threat, one I would be stupid to ignore.

"I wouldn't recommend it."

He tucks a strand of hair behind my ear in a movement that is strangely gentle and at odds with his demeanour. I can't stop from stiffening, which makes his mouth pull into a tight line. He straightens, moving slightly away from me, and giving me just enough room to breathe freely for the moment.

"I've called the doctor. I don't know how bad your injuries are, but I want her to check you over."

I can't stop the surprise from registering on my face. "Why do you care?"

He shifts his shoulders as he goes back over to the sofa. I don't move from where I'm plastered against the wall, my chest heaving in fear as he picks up his glass and takes a long sip of that amber-coloured liquid. "I would prefer to give you back to your brother in one piece, though if that's not possible, I'm not going to lose any sleep over it either."

There's no way in hell I'm letting a stranger near me.

I shake my head. "I don't need or want to see a doctor."

"You assume you have a choice."

I swallow hard. "There's always a choice."

He seems to laugh at me silently, as if saying you think so, but there's not. I really am his prisoner and I really am so very screwed right now.

"I don't even know your name."

His mouth pulls into a smile that makes a shiver race up my spine. "Zeke."

I understand now why he smirked, because that name is enough to make fear claw at my heart. I know who Zeke is. He's the second eldest son of Anthony Fraser, head of the Fraser syndicate, and his reputation is enough to terrify me into silence. As a kid I was always warned never to go into Fraser territory. As an adult, my brother often told me the same. I know about the Fraser brothers and the things they have done. They have a string of bodies behind them that make the Sons look like saints, and I'm sure there's more.

It was Zeke Fraser who threatened Rachel a few years ago. It was Zeke Fraser the club had to pay off to ensure her and her boys' safety. Titch had done what he needed to do to keep his family safe, which was the end of the matter. Why Zeke is putting himself in the middle of this problem, I don't know. He said I was insurance. Does he think the club would betray him?

I watch as he takes a sip of his drink, his Adam's apple bobbing as he does. "I can see you've heard of me, which means you know what I'm capable of."

I don't answer. What the fuck can I say?

"I meant it when I said if you comply I won't hurt you." He points to the sofa. "Sit."

It's an order, not a suggestion. I want to rail against it, but I can't deny I'm scared of what he might do if I'm not meek and willing. For now, I'll do whatever I have to in order to keep breathing. Even if that means complying with a psychopath.

I cross the room and sit on the edge of the sofa, perched like a bird ready to take flight at a moment's notice. I feel like one, trapped in a cage, and I have no doubt this cage is gilded. The entire apartment is stunning. I can appreciate money when I see it.

"You own this place?" I ask, wrapping my arms around myself as I peer about.

"Yes."

"Do you actually live here?"

He tilts his head to the side. "Sometimes."

"It doesn't look... lived in."

"I like things clean, neat. Orderly."

I try not to look at him. I don't want to be taken in by his charm. His charisma is that of a lion before he eats you.

"I want to see my daughters."

I can see my words surprise him. Did he not do any diligence before he

snatched me? “You have children.”

“Yes.”

“How many?”

“Two.”

“Their ages?”

I stare at him, my mum senses going hyper alert. “Why is that important?”

“I’m just trying to know you, Bailey.” He gives me a sharp glare. “I’m not planning on hurting them. I’m not a complete monster.”

“No, but you are dangerous.”

“Exceptionally,” he admits. It’s not a brag, but the truth. A shiver runs through me even as I’m enthralled by his honesty. “I still don’t harm children. I assume they are children.”

I nod my affirmation and glance away. “When can I see them?”

“When this is over with.”

“Can I at least speak to them?”

He considers my request for a moment. “No.”

“Please.”

He grits his teeth. “Do I need to remind you who is in control here?”

“I know you’re in control, but I just need to hear their voices. Please.”

“No.”

“I lay in that room, on that bed, thinking I was going to die. Bruised, beaten, thinking I’d never see my babies again. Please, I need to hear their voices. I need to know they’re safe.”

My words affect him, I can tell by the way his eyes twitch. “Who was it who beat you?” he demands, his voice like ice shards. I ignore this. I don’t want to talk about Jack.

“Please, let me speak to them.” I’m not above begging. I’ll do it if I have to.

I can see the moment his resolve breaks. “Fine.” He pulls his phone out of his pocket. “You keep it short. Say anything of where you are and I’ll kill you.”

Since I have no idea where the hell we are that won’t be a challenge, so I bob my head. He hands me the phone. I take it and dial my mum’s number. She’s likely to still have the girls. She picks up on the second ring.

“Hello?”

“Mum... it’s me.” I have to choke the words out and they sound croaky,

wrong.

“Bailey? Darling! Are you okay? Your brother is worried sick—”

“Are the girls there?” I interrupt. I need to speak to my daughters before Zeke decides to take that chance away from me.

“Kara, honey, come and talk to your mum.”

There’s a rustling down the line and my eldest daughter’s voice drifts to my ears. “Mum?”

I let out a breath. Fuck, it’s good to hear that sweet little voice. I choke back my tears. “Hey, special girl. Are you behaving?”

“Always. Grandma made us cookies.”

This warms me. I can always rely on Mum to come through in a crisis. As the wife to a biker and mother of one, Mum is a rock for both me and Nox. She knows more than anyone how this world works and what her place is in it. I feel better knowing my girls are safe with her.

“Where’s your sister?”

“Mollie! Mum’s on the phone.” She yells so loud it hurts my ear. Still, I can’t stop from grinning. It’s so good to hear my child. There were moments lying in that room on that filthy mattress I thought it might never happen. I hope neither of them is traumatised by my absence. The last thing I want is for them to be upset.

“Mummy?” Mollie’s overexcitable tones pierce my heart. She doesn’t often call me mummy anymore, spouting that she’s too old, so the fact she’s reverted back to that worries me. I want to hold my babies. I want to snuggle them, put them to bed, get annoyed by them being loud. I want to be home.

“Hey, baby.”

“When are you coming home?” she asks, sounding younger than her ten years.

“As soon as I can. Grandma and Uncle Nox will take care of you until then.”

“Are you in trouble? Everyone is at the clubhouse and all the uncles seem angry.”

Of course Ravage will have called for a complete lockdown of the club. It is the sensible course of action. He’d want everyone together, safe, where the men could take care of them.

I can hear noise and other voices in the background, and then my brother comes on the line. “Bails? Where the fuck are you?”

I try not to shift my eyes towards Zeke, wondering if he knows I’m no

longer speaking to my children. “I’m not sure.”

“You hurt?”

I was hurt before this, but by Zeke, no. “I’m fine,” I tell him.

“That fucker lays a finger on you and I’ll fucking kill him.” The vehemence in his voice makes a smile creep up on my lips.

“I’m okay,” I assure him. For now, the easiest thing is to shove all my trauma into a little box and focus on the most important thing—staying alive and surviving this new challenge.

Zeke snatches the phone from me and puts it to his ear. Whatever rant my brother is on makes Zeke smirk. “I look forward to that, Nox,” he says, and the psycho sounds as if he really is looking forward to whatever threat my brother just levelled at him. “Uphold your part of the bargain and this ends. I have men. You tell me where you want them and this will come to an end.”

Zeke’s eyes find mine and flash angrily as he ends the call. Then, without warning, his hand shoots out and wraps around my throat.

Z E K E



I SHOULDN'T BE surprised she went against my orders. There's a fire in her that lights up her eyes every time she's defiant. I saw it clearly, the change in demeanour between her speaking to her girls and speaking to Nox. She's not a good actress. At least not as good as she thinks, and I'm not stupid. I can read most people like a fucking book, and Bailey's no exception.

The fact that she lied to me, tried to conceal the truth, pisses me off more than it should.

I tighten my fingers around her neck, and the feel of her pulse fluttering beneath my fingers is a fucking balm to my soul. It eases some of the pressure in my chest knowing I'm in control. As with everything in my life, I will manoeuvre this chessboard however I need to because this is my world, not the Sons' and not Bailey's. She will not move any of the pieces unless I allow it.

I'm hoping the Sons have a plan for how they intend to hit the Farleys, but as of yet nothing has been discussed. We should have talked that through before we started this shit, but my father as usual didn't see the need for planning. Now, we're walking into the unknown with no clue how to navigate the stormy waters ahead.

The Farleys aren't people we can blindly hit. They came at the Sons, which tells me they will be prepared for a showdown. They will expect some retaliation. Patrick stole Bailey for a reason—to get the attention of the Sons. The question is why. Was that part of a greater plan, and if so, what the fuck is coming next?

Will that attack be aimed at Bailey?

At her family?

Will it be aimed solely at the Sons?

I don't know why, but the thought of her caught up in the crossfire makes me want to breathe fire. It's another reason why I'm not letting her leave my penthouse. I need to know she's going to be safe. I don't trust Nox to keep her out of the firing line. He already failed at that job.

To understand how she fits into this shit, I need to understand one thing: what is Patrick's end game?

He wants revenge for Archie's death. I get that. I'd want it too. He also wants revenge for what the Sons did to him, but what form will that vengeance take? Where is this all leading?

Bailey's fear-filled eyes meet mine with an insolence that pokes through the terror. I respect her inability to back down. Even a cornered dog will fight, and that's what she's doing. Fighting back. It soothes me in a way it shouldn't. No one fights back. Not when they're facing a man like me. I've seen grown men crumble faster than she is. Then again, I haven't unleashed the full force of Zeke Fraser on her. I've held back. Why? Because as much as I enjoy poking the Sons, I don't want to cause a war for real. War is bad for business, and I neither have the will nor the desire to butt heads with the biker gang.

I also don't have the will to hurt her. I want to keep her close.

"Do it," she spits out, my fingers still around her neck.

If she were anyone else, she would already be dead, but I don't want to kill her. I don't know why, but I want to keep her alive, safe, breathing.

I release my hold on her. "Sit the fuck down."

Bailey glares at me, but she does drop onto the sofa. She didn't tell her brother anything, least of all where she is, which is the only thing keeping me calm right now. The penthouse isn't in my name, because I'm a man with enemies and I didn't want to look over my shoulder while sleeping. Even so, there's a panic room in my office, in case I need to lay low and call for back up. It doesn't hurt to take precautions.

"I'm not playing games here. I will kill you if you don't comply." It's a lie. I'll not raise a single hand to her. She doesn't need to know that though.

"I didn't do anything."

She's wrong. She's done plenty. Firstly, she's tying me up in knots that I can't untie. I shouldn't have her here, in my personal space. I shouldn't be so easy on her either, and not because it would bring war between our factions if I laid hands on her, but because she's pushing my boundaries. I'm holding

back for fear of upsetting or hurting her. That isn't me. I'm a man who takes or does whatever my impulses demand. I'm not someone who holds back because of morality or empathy.

The feelings of others are not something I care about.

But I find myself caring with her.

"I'm sorry," she says, as if that can fix things.

Maybe it can, because some of the anger seeps from me.

"That's the last time I'll give you something you ask for," I tell her, my words terse.

Her face contorts into an angry snarl. "I complied with your stupid rules. I didn't tell Nox anything. I can't tell him anything. I have no fucking idea where I am. What could I possibly give him, that I'm somewhere high up in London?" Her eyes go to the massive floor-to-ceiling windows that look out over the city. There are a few notable landmarks, but it would still be difficult to give a precise location. "I'm not able to tell where I am from the fucking skyline."

"You grew up in the club?" I ask.

She blinks at the change of direction. "Yeah, so?"

It explains a lot. Her behaviour is not what I'm used to dealing with. I'm used to more compliant women. She's a wildcat. Being a biker brat would do that. She's used to being around tough, scary men. I'm just another.

She's wrong though. Very wrong. I'm not someone she can manipulate or try to use. I'm not someone she can get onside. I don't care about making her comfortable here. My only aim is to keep her alive long enough to give her back to the Sons.

At least that's what I'm telling myself.

I have another objective though. I want to keep her safe.

I give her a thin smile and sink back onto the sofa. I'm not used to explaining myself either, so I don't.

"You're really going to keep me here?" she demands.

"I told you. I bought you."

I grab my Scotch and take a sip. The burn as it slides down is welcome. It reminds me I'm still capable of feeling, even if it is only something as small as this. I don't feel anything for her discomfort. I only allowed her to make the call because...

I don't know why I allowed it, truth be told. I shouldn't have. It has given her the illusion she's in charge here, and she couldn't be more wrong about

that.

This is my game, and we'll play it my way.

Without warning she rushes towards the lift. Frantically, she stabs the button to call it. I don't move from the sofa, watching her display with curiosity. The hope shining in her eyes is tragic. She'll never get out of the building.

The elevator pings and the doors slide open to reveal Malone. It's pure luck he's standing there, but the timing couldn't be better. Bailey lets out a squeal and backpedals as he steps into the penthouse. The doors slide shut behind him before his eyes come to mine.

"Problems?" he asks, splitting his gaze between me and Bailey, who has plastered her back to the wall as if she's trying to become one with it.

"Nothing I can't handle."

My phone starts to ring. I glance at the screen and see my father's name on it. No doubt he's heard from Ravage by now. No doubt he's furious I went behind his back and pulled this stunt. I silence the call.

Malone gives me a knowing look, a slight grin tugging at his mouth. Pissing my father off is my favourite pastime. I relish the moments I can get one over on the old bastard.

"The doctor will be here soon," I say to Bailey. "Until then make yourself at home."

She looks a little frantic as I push to my feet. "Where are you going?"

"I'll be in my office."

I gesture to Malone to follow me, which he does. My office sits off the main room. As I push inside, I focus instantly on the wall of monitors. They are focused on different rooms in the penthouse, so I have a direct line of sight on Bailey. She waits for Malone to shut the door behind him before she rushes back to the lift and presses the button.

"She's persistent," Malone remarks.

"Even a cornered animal will fight," I say, my voice low as I watch her.

The lift works using fingerprint recognition. She isn't keyed into the system, unlike Malone. Nothing she does will make it move. I have to override the system to allow people to leave. It's an over-the-top security system, but in my line of work, it pays to be careful. It means I can get out of the building and leave an intruder trapped in the penthouse apartment until they can be dealt with.

"Why did you bring her here?" Malone asks.

I can't answer because honestly, I'm not sure I really know. I've never brought anyone here, other than Malone and my sister. Aurelia has been here once before. She's the only other person keyed into the system. I wanted her to have a safe place if she needed it and this is a fortress.

"Leverage," I finally say.

"I get that, but why here?" he pushes.

I let my eyes snap towards him. "You're a nosey bastard."

"I'm an interested bastard," he corrects.

"I want her safe. We don't want anything bad to happen to her before she goes back to the Sons." It's almost true. I have to admit I like having her in my space. That's not something I thought would ever happen. I've never brought a woman other than my sister here before. I didn't plan on ever doing it either, but with Bailey I didn't hesitate. I don't know what it means, if it means anything, but I like having her here, where I can keep an eye on her.

She steps out of the lift and moves back into the living area, searching the space. She won't find anything of use, but it amuses me to watch her try nevertheless.

"I hope you know what you're doing," Malone says.

I have no idea, but I'm not admitting that. "She'll be safer here."

"Than with her family?"

I don't answer that and instead focus on the reasons I'm telling myself she's here. "It'll ensure the Sons uphold their end of the bargain."

"Do we have reason to believe they wouldn't?"

"No."

"I'm guessing it was your father calling before?"

"I don't give a fuck what he thinks."

I don't. The days of me caring what Anthony Fraser thinks are long over. My father is impulsive and that impulsiveness has got us into trouble in the past. I agree with helping the Sons. Getting rid of the Farleys would make life a little easier for us. It would remove one more enemy from our path, and I know they can do it. They destroyed Isaac Blackwood and his empire a few years back, but I want to know this won't come back on us. I want to know the Sons aren't going to leave us holding the house of cards up alone. I want to keep Bailey with me.

Anthony also doesn't know about my penthouse, so I feel safe here. I know no one will be able to touch Bailey or me.

I shift my focus back to the cameras. She's wandering aimlessly around

the living area, her arms wrapped around her stomach, as if she feels nauseous.

“Once Ravage calms down, I’ll see if we can figure out next steps.”

Malone arches a brow. “You think he’s going to calm down?”

I don’t. I know I wouldn’t. I would kill him and every member of his shitty club if the roles were reversed, but Ravage is a smart man. He knows he can’t win a war with the Farleys and Frasers. He’ll pick his battles.

“I think he’ll realise the sense of what I’ve done.” My phone pings and I glance down at it. It’s the intercom for the door. I pull up the app and see it’s the doctor I ordered for Bailey.

I release the lift locks so she can use it.

I give Malone my attention for a moment. “I don’t know why, but this woman is the key to it all.”

I’m not sure if I’m talking about this shit with the Sons or about myself. Both. Neither. I’m like a hormonal teenager being led around by my dick, something I never thought would happen, but I want her.

“I hope you know what you’re doing.”

So do I.

BAILEY



AS I EXPLORE THE PENTHOUSE, I realise one thing. I'm not leaving here unless Zeke allows it. The thought scares me if I allow it to take hold, so I push it down. I want to go home. I want to see my babies—even though neither of them are babies any more. I want to see my brother. I want to see the old ladies.

I want my life back.

I don't think that is going to happen any time soon.

I went from one prison to another, though this one seems infinitely better than the first. At least Zeke hasn't beaten me or touched me in ways he shouldn't.

Yet.

Zeke seems determined to keep me here, and all I can do is try to stay alive long enough to see my daughters again. I will survive this. There's no other choice, though I don't think he intends to harm me. He looks at me like he wants me, and part of me is enthralled by that intensity. Part of me is terrified. I just survived a week with a maniac. Falling into bed with a new type of psychopath isn't what I should be doing, but I feel weirdly at ease around Zeke. It's like we've always been together. I can't explain it.

Even so, I want out of here, so I poke around the room, looking for anything that will help with my escape. There's nothing. The place is... sterile. Like what you'd see in a glossy magazine. It's not homely at all.

I can't imagine trying to settle in a place like this.

I'm scared to touch anything in case I dirty it. My home is so different. Cosy, friendly, open, and usually messy. The joys of having a teenager and a kid who is hurtling towards that. Kara never picks up after herself. She's a

whirlwind of chaos, much like her father was. I love that about her, even as it drives me to distraction. It reminds me of Laurence, of what I had, even if it was only for a short time.

It also reminds me of what I lost. Laurence's death hit me hard. It was like losing my best friend. Don't get me wrong, things weren't always easy. We struggled a lot through our marriage. The club was both something I loved and loathed as an old lady. It was never simple. He'd have to leave sometimes with no warning, and that made me crazy. Especially when I was pregnant. I needed him home, but the club always came first.

I push Laurence out of my head. I need to focus on my current predicament, not take a walk down memory lane. I don't want to deal with the pain of the past any more than I want to deal with the uncertainty of my future.

I go over to the fridge and pull it open, interested to know what sexy psychopaths eat. There's no food in it. What the hell does he eat?

I really am starting to think he doesn't stay here often.

If that's the case, why? The penthouse is showy, expensive, and clearly a statement of his wealth. Why would he not use it?

My thoughts scatter as the lift pings and the doors slide open.

An older woman steps inside, her dark hair streaked with white. She's holding a bag in one hand and wearing a camel-coloured coat that looks stylish and expensive. "You must be Bailey," she says softly.

Before I can answer, Zeke steps out of the room he disappeared into. "Ah, Mary. Thank you for coming."

Mary?

"Anytime, Mr Fraser. I'll need a room to examine my patient in."

This confirms she's the doctor. She's also not looking at me, and taking all her instruction from him, as if I'm invisible. That pisses me off. "I told you I didn't need a doctor," I snarl.

Zeke shrugs.

"Maybe not, but she's here now and she's going to check you over."

"Zeke—"

He comes towards me and I brace myself, expecting the worst. His fingers don't latch around my throat, but instead they come to my shoulders. "I'm not going to argue about this with you. You were the captive of Farley's men for a while. Your face is bruised as is your neck, and you were drugged."

“You keep adding to those marks,” I tell him, my words harsh. Though in truth, I don’t think he had caused any more damage when he grabbed me.

He surprises me by kissing my forehead. It’s such an oddly gentle gesture it robs me of my voice. “Go with the doctor.”

It’s an order, and though I want to deny it, she could also be the key to getting out of here. So I nod. “Fine.”

“You can use the bedroom you woke up in,” he says.

Giving him a final glare, I wander up the corridor, the doctor on my heels. Once the door is shut behind us, I turn to her. “You have to help me,” I demand in a hushed voice.

She stares at me like I’ve lost my mind. “That’s why I’m here.”

“I mean help me get out of here. I’m being held against my will. That man in there is a nut. Don’t be fooled by the fancy fucking suit.”

Mary lets out a disgruntled breath, as if my show of emotion is displeasing to her. “Mr Fraser told me you were hurt. What injuries do you have?”

My eyes flare wide. She’s really going to ignore what I just said to her? “I just told you I’ve been kidnapped. Aren’t you supposed to help? Don’t you have a medical duty to protect or something?”

Her gaze drifts towards me. “I’m in the pay of Mr Fraser. I do whatever he needs me to. If you want to keep breathing, you’d be wise to do the same.”

Her words make a shiver crawl over me. Would he kill me for something like this? My shoulders slump. I thought she might be a way for me to get the fuck out of here, but she’s not going to help me. She’s firmly in camp Fraser.

Fuck.

It’s not easy to stop from being overcome with despair. No one seems to find it odd that this man has abducted me and is holding me hostage. What is wrong with these people?

“Now, injuries... Do you have any I should know about before I start with the exam?” She drops her bag and pulls out a bottle of hand sanitizer.

I step back and snarl at her, “If you’re not willing to help me, leave. I don’t need shit off you.”

She takes my anger in her stride. “I realise you’re frustrated, but you’ll find your stay here easier if you comply with what Mr Fraser wants.”

I scoff at her words. “Fuck that. I’m not complying with anything that lunatic demands.”

Mary ignores my words. “He tells me you were held prisoner for almost a

week.”

Images of my time spent with Jack flash through my mind. I close my eyes and sag against the wall. Thinking of him makes me want to disappear into the darkness, to give in and let it consume me. If it wasn't for the girls, I think I would.

“I was. At least, I think I was. I was kept in a dark room. I could only see a sliver of light. I had to guess the time.”

She scans my face, and I see a hint of sympathy flicker in her eyes. My stomach feels like it's full of lead while my heart is shattering.

“Were you raped?” Her voice is soft, almost gentle as she asks this, but it doesn't stop me from recoiling as if I've been hit in the gut.

“No.” He'd touched me, but hadn't done that to me, thankfully. Patrick's warning had stuck. I'm not about to have her look at me like the victim, though, so I shake my head. “He just beat me.”

Her whole demeanour softens and I hate that it does. I'm not going to be defined by this shit. Jack will get his judgement day, and when he does, I'll be there to deliver the same pain he gave to me back to him.

“Hop on the bed and I'll take a look at your bruises.”

I do as she asks, mostly because what choice is there? As I strip my dress off she hisses in a breath. My skin is a canvas of purples and blacks. There's no spot on my skin that isn't bruised.

“I'm sorry,” she says instantly.

“It could have been worse,” I reply.

The bruise to my chest is the worst and the most sensitive. I can't stop from crying out as she probes there. My left wrist is also a ball of pain, the skin cracked from the bindings.

“You have bruised ribs, but I don't think they're broken. However, your wrist is sprained, so I'll strap it. They should heal in time, but you'll need to take it easy.”

She does what she needs to, and once she's finished, she starts to pack up her things. “I'm sorry I can't help you,” she says softly, “but I owe Mr Fraser. This is part of my payment. I won't cross him. If you knew the things he's done, you wouldn't either.”

I watch as she grabs her bag and moves towards the door. My veins feel like they're flooded with cold. My chance of getting out of here is leaving. Not that Mary was ever a chance. She'll never help me. She's scared of Zeke, of his name, his connections. I understand that. The Fraser name is whispered

to children to make them behave. I wonder what she did to get caught up in his stream.

I should leave the bedroom, but I need a moment to catch my breath, to remember that I can get past what happened to me. To remember I'm a survivor.

I sink onto the edge of the bed and wait a while for my heart to slow, for my chest to stop heaving.

The door suddenly opens and Zeke is standing in the frame.

"She told me you're covered in bruises."

"What do you care?" I demand. "Aren't you just going to do the same to me?"

His face contorts into a mask of rage and I realise my mistake instantly. I shouldn't poke the beast.

ZEKE



HER WORDS INFURIATE ME. I feel my blood start to bubble with the rage working its way through me. It's like heat is rushing through my veins, destroying and setting fire to every synapse it passes.

"I will never lay my hands on you like that. I'm not a fucking bastard." I am many things—a murderer top of the list—but I will never lay my hands on a woman. That is a line I will not cross.

"I'm sorry," she murmurs. "I shouldn't have said that." I get the impression she's saying it simply to calm me down.

"No, you fucking shouldn't have."

My nostrils flare as I try to calm my breathing. When Mary told me Bailey is hiding a litany of bruises under her clothes, my thoughts instantly turned to violence. I don't know why. She's not mine to protect. She's nothing to me, but I wanted to kill the man who laid hands on her. I wanted to destroy and bleed someone. I need that vengeance. I hadn't watched the cameras while she'd been in the room with the doctor. I'm not a pervert and she deserved some privacy. Now, I wish I had so I know what I'm dealing with.

"I'm just mixed up," she says, throwing her hands in the air and huffing out a breath. There's frustration in her tone, but I still see the hint of fear too. I frighten her even as I interest her. It's an interesting paradox. "I'm finding it hard to trust anyone and you're not exactly giving trustworthy vibes holding me here."

"You're here for your own protection."

"From the club? I don't need protecting from my family, Zeke."

"No, but you need protecting from the Farleys. Your club can't give you

that. Not like I can.”

“Why do you care? I’m not your problem.”

I don’t know why I care. I shouldn’t. She should be the last consideration I have, but she consumes all my thoughts. I can’t stop from worrying about her wellbeing at every turn.

Caring about people is a weakness, and one I can’t afford to show. It’s one I never showed before her. Before Bailey. I don’t know why I’m so invested in what happens to her. I tell myself it’s because I need her. She’s my leverage.

But it’s more than that.

Something I can’t explain.

She’s the missing piece of my soul and part of me recognised that the moment I laid eyes on her. She’s mine. It’s a bold statement to make, and I don’t know why I feel this way, but I know the truth deep down. There’s a connection between us, one that transcends time. I feel like I’ve known her for years, not hours.

“Who hurt you?” I demand. The growl in my voice makes her jump.

“Why?”

“Because I’m going to hunt whoever did it down and bleed him.” When she doesn’t answer, I add, “Tell me,” in a softer voice that nearly kills me to use, but it seems to make her shoulders relax a little.

“I don’t know who he is. He told me his name was Jack. He saved me in the bar from a handsy guy. I thought he was a good one. He…” I watch as she swallows down the lump. “He must have slipped something in my drink. Next thing I knew, I woke up on a mattress in a dark room.”

My anger threatens to boil over. Cowardly bastard. What kind of prick does that? She hugs her stomach, as if by trying to protect her body she can keep the demons at bay with will alone. She can’t. I know a few things about the monsters that infuse you after trauma. She’ll never be the same again, but she’ll learn to deal with it. I’ve got my share of evil that torments me. When I was seven, I killed my first man. That death soaked into my very bones. My father took me out to one of his warehouses and handed me a gun. It is a rite of passage in the Fraser family. All the boys have to do it. Kane has, Lucas has, and even Anthony did it. It didn’t make it any better, knowing that they went through the same thing, but it allowed me to disassociate from the men I hurt. I was born a killer and I’ll die one.

“Can you describe the man who took you?” I say.

Her brows creep up her forehead. “So you can bleed him?”

When I find the fucker, I’m going to strip the flesh from his fucking bones, but I don’t tell her that. “I need to know you’re safe from him.”

“I don’t want you to do that.”

“You’d prefer he was free?”

“Of course not,” she hisses at me, a venomous snake, ready to strike. She’s pretty when she’s angry. She’s pretty when she’s not, but I find I like her spitting fire at me. It heats my blood. “But you don’t get to be the judge, jury, and executioner.”

I step closer to her and I’m pleased she doesn’t move away. She holds her ground, and I love that she does. I don’t want Bailey scared of me.

“That’s exactly who I am.”

She peers up at me, her lashes framing her eyes beautifully. “It doesn’t have to be.”

It’s laughable if she thinks I can change. I can’t. I’m who I am and I’ll be who I am until the day I take my last breath. I came into this world bloody and I’ll leave it the same way. I’m not a man who will die of old age in his bed. That will never happen. I have too many enemies.

“You grew up in this world, Bailey. You should know better.” I watch her plump lips as she tugs the bottom one between her teeth. Fuck, I want to kiss her so badly. I shouldn’t want that, she’s the enemy, but I need to taste her. The urge is overwhelming.

“The men I grew up with are hard men, I don’t deny that, but they are soft when needed. They love their families. They are capable of being more. Just as you are.”

It’s absurd that she thinks that. There’s nothing soft about me. I’ll never be the man she thinks. It’s not in me to be that way. I don’t address that, though. There are bigger issues going on here that I do need to deal with.

“I’m still going to find this Jack,” I promise her. “If you want your pound of flesh, you can have it. I won’t deny you that. I won’t deny you the chance to have revenge for what that fucker did to you.”

“You... you want me to... do things to him?” An uneasy look passes over her face, and I can see that as much as she doesn’t want to admit it, she wants that too.

“Everyone deserves the chance to face people who hurt them and hurt them back.”

“Nox would never allow it,” she murmurs.

“Your brother doesn’t get a say.”

She scans my face. “I want him dead.” She whispers the admission, and I see how much it costs her emotionally.

“I know.”

“I’ve never wished to take someone’s life, but he hurt me—” She breaks off as she swipes at her tears. “—I want him to feel what I felt.”

“And he will.”

I don’t know what possesses me, but I lean down and I press my mouth to hers. It’s like kissing sunshine. Her light eclipses my own darkness and it makes some of the bands around my chest loosen enough so I can breathe easier.

She stiffens beneath me.

Fuck, I shouldn’t be doing this. I shouldn’t be pushing her after learning the truth of her stay with the Farleys, but I can’t stop devouring her. I want to taste her. She’s a drug I can’t get enough of. She starts to soften a little beneath me, and I want to roar my jubilation, until she suddenly shoves me back.

“Why did you do that?” she demands, sounding breathless even as she wipes her mouth with the back of her hand. “You don’t get to kiss me! Not while you’re holding me here against my will!”

I don’t owe her an explanation, so I don’t give her one. “Would you prefer I’d left you to be sold?”

“I’d prefer you let me leave and go home.”

“I can’t do that.”

“I’m not a part of this,” she whispers.

“You’re in the centre of this,” I correct her, “and while you are, I’ll use you however I need to.”

It’s easier to hide behind that than admit I feel things for her.

I’m not letting her go until I know Farley is gone and there’s no threat to her.

She shakes her head at me and pushes around me to storm from the room. I watch her go with a smirk. I love that fire in her, that feisty temperament. It’s been a long time since anyone last stood up to me. It interests me that she does.

I head out of the room and make my way back to the office. Malone glances up as I enter. The camera in the bedroom is still off. I switch it back on and then try to locate Bailey. I find her at the window in the living room,

leaning against the glass as she looks out over the city. She seems lost in thought. I want to go to her and find out what's going on inside that head of hers. I keep my feet rooted to the floor.

"She's going to be trouble," Malone says.

He's not wrong. My phone starts to jingle once more, and I see Anthony's name on the screen again. Fuck. He's going to keep calling if I don't answer.

"What?" I snap into the handset.

"You took the Sons' girl."

He sounds pissed. I don't give a fuck if he's spitting fire.

"I did."

"Why?"

"Because you wouldn't do what is needed to protect the family." I don't mention that I also took her because I want her and because I'm interested—more so than I have a right to be.

He scoffs at my words, which pisses me off. "You think I'm incapable of taking care of us? I've run this business longer than you've been alive, boy —"

"The Sons will toe the line and do what they promised if we have her," I cut him off, not wanting to listen to his diatribe.

"And what about afterwards, when this is over? Do you think they'll just forgive and forget? You've brought war on two fronts to our door."

"No, I've bought security, and if you weren't so trapped inside your ivory tower, you'd see that."

I hang up and pocket my phone.

"You really think pissing off your father is a good idea?" Malone asks. There's no judgement in his tone, just curiosity.

"I think my father doesn't have the first clue how to deal with men like Ravage. They understand one language only, and treating them like business partners is not the way to get what we need."

At least I hope so. The Sons may be less than forgiving for what I've done, but I doubt they will risk a war with us. Not after having fought the Farleys, but if it comes to that, I'll be ready.

I will fight and die for my family.

Because they are everything to me.

The only problem is, Bailey is starting to feel like she's slipping into that category too, and that scares me as much as it thrills me.

BAILEY



HE KISSED ME. The bastard kissed me! Who does he think he is? I have to admit, I've never been kissed like that in my life. It was like the world ceased to exist around me. All I was focused on was him and his mouth—and what a mouth it is.

I press my fingers to my swollen lips, the urge to taste him again a seed growing in the back of my mind. I don't understand it. He's been absolutely awful to me since I got here, but touching him unlocked something inside me. It's made me want more. A quiet desperation is starting to take root inside me and it scares me.

I see the monsters in his eyes. He is tormented, cut up inside, damaged. We're all a little screwed up by this life, but Zeke wears his damage like a shield.

As I peer out over the city, I think about his reaction to finding out what Jack did to me. He seemed angry on my behalf, and his assurance that I would get my pound of flesh unlocked some of the anxiety that has been nipping at my heels since I left Jack behind. I'm not a bloodthirsty person. I might have grown up in the club, and at times I've seen things I shouldn't have, but I've never been on the end of a knife or a gun. I've never been the one to dole out the violence.

I move over to the sofa and curl my feet underneath me. I'm exhausted. It's a deep-seated, bone-weary tiredness that comes from days of not sleeping properly. I shouldn't sleep here either. There's constant trouble swirling around Zeke, and I'm frightened to close my eyes, but my body has other ideas.

I can't stop the pull of tiredness and I nod off.

When I wake, it's dark the outside the windows, and there's a lamp casting a slight glow over the space. It's soothing, not too bright. There's a blanket over me. A blanket I don't remember going to sleep with.

Did he... did he cover me up?

The idea sounds so ludicrous I laugh to myself as I sit up. My body is stiff, and it takes a few tips of my head to stretch my neck out. The room is warm, despite all the glass that should make it feel like a fridge in here.

I glance around at the sound of a door opening and see that man who came out of the lift earlier. Zeke comes on his heels. He looks good. His white shirt is crisp, tucked into his suit pants and rolled up at the sleeves to expose thick arms. I glance away. I shouldn't be thinking about the man who captured me as anything but a monster, but I feel safer with Zeke Fraser than I ever did with Jack.

I believe Zeke when he says he'll not hurt me like Jack did. I believe the sincerity in his voice, the assurance that was freely given. He strikes me as a man who needs control in all aspects of his life, but not like that. He doesn't want to control me. It doesn't stop me from being scared of him. I am. I would be stupid not to be. He holds my life in his hands. All I can do is keep him level and hope I will make it home. That decision rests with him.

The other man doesn't acknowledge me as he moves towards the lift, but Zeke zeros in on me, his gaze roaming over me in a way that makes my skin feel heated. He waits until the man has gone and then prowls over to me, the predator stalking his prey. I feel like I'm about to be on the dinner menu.

It takes everything I have not to stand back, not to move away from him as he gets closer. My body starts to react before I can even contemplate why or how he has this effect on me. We're alone now, at least I think we are, and the thought should terrify me, but it doesn't.

He steers me over to the sofa and we both sit. I'm aware of how close he is to me, the scent of his aftershave filling my senses. He smells good. I probably don't. I really need a shower. "Malone is going to do what he can to find the man who took you."

"Malone?"

"The man who just left. He's my personal security. Do you remember the bar you were in?"

I give him the details of the place I was taken from, and give him as much as I can about the room where I woke up. Zeke pulls out his phone, his fingers swiping across the screen, sending all the information I'm feeding

him.

“What happens now?”

“We wait, see what Malone can pull up.” He leans forwards and tucks a stray piece of hair behind my ear. I should stiffen at the gesture, move away, but I don’t. I lean into his touch. It seems... natural, almost like he’s been doing that for years. I meet his gaze and I see something change in his eyes. I also see the same confusion mirrored back at me. He doesn’t understand this pull between us either.

He breaks through the moment. “Did you sleep all right?”

“I did, though I still feel tired.” A yawn punctuates my statement. I cover my mouth with my hand so he doesn’t see my gaping mouth.

“You’ll probably need a few naps to make up the sleep you lost.”

While I was with Jack...

“My housekeeper is dropping by with some supplies. What do you like to eat?”

His words surprise me. Does he really care about my comfort? “Anything—just nothing with fish in. I’m not keen.”

He nods and then sighs. “Malone will find this fucker, Bailey, but even if he doesn’t, our plan is to take out the Farley family and we won’t leave any man standing.”

I frown at his statement, a slither of unease moving through me. “You’re going to war with them?”

“They overstepped when they took you. Your club wants blood. They invited us to the party and honestly, it didn’t take much convincing. The Farleys are a thorn in our side. We want them gone too. Your club should have put them down when they had the chance to.”

“I don’t want people to get hurt because of me.”

“The only people getting hurt will be Farley and his men.”

“Will you... Will you be fighting with them?”

“Yes,” he says and for some reason that acknowledgement makes me feel uneasy, like a weight has settled on my chest. As if sensing my mood, he puts his hand in mine. He feels good in my grasp. Strong, steady, unyielding.

“I need to do some work. Why don’t you sleep some more?”

It’s a good idea. My chest is aching and I feel exhausted. Plus, what else is there to do? I move into the bedroom and crawl under the blankets. I don’t know how long I sleep for, but when I wake I feel a little more refreshed.

I sit up and push the blankets back. I shouldn’t, but I snoop around his

room, looking in the drawers, trying to get a feel for who this man is and why he's holding me here.

I pull open a set of double doors. I'm greeted with the largest walk-in closet I've ever seen in my life. It's as big as my living room. There are rails filled with suits, shirts, slacks—more clothes than a person could wear in their lifetime. At one end there are shiny leather shoes, some trainers, a few pairs of boots. There's a section just for belts. I peer around, unsure what to make of the space. This is so far from the world I live in. I feel like a pauper and he's the prince.

I rummage through the stuff, wondering if I can change out of this hideous dress that reminds me of what I've suffered.

“Are you always so nosey?”

His voice startles me. I spin, yelping as I do, my hand flying to press against my sternum. He's standing in the doorway, his eyes sparkling with something that could be mirth, though it's hidden beneath a layer of irritation. I can never tell with him.

“I need... I need clothes.”

“So, you just thought you'd help yourself to mine?” His brow arches and I'm not sure if I've annoyed him with my admission. He's a difficult man to read.

“I can't walk around naked, can I? And I hate this vile dress.” I feel the rise of my own anger. “Since you brought me here and are forcing me to stay, taking care of me is the very least you can do.”

He scowls at me, but he walks over to one of the shelves. He pulls out a pair of jogging bottoms before reaching for a tee. I get the feeling he works out in this type of garment, because I can't imagine him sitting around in that living room in loungewear.

“Put this on.”

I take the items from him and quickly dress, expertly hiding my body from him, even though he gives me his back, pretending to look at something on the rack behind him. At least he's respectful.

The clothes are bigger than I'm used to wearing, but they don't hang off me. He has a good frame, but I'm not exactly super skinny either. Two kids took their toll on my body.

“All done,” I say, and he turns back towards me.

His eyes slide to the dress I dropped on the floor. He doesn't comment on it, but I can see the disapproval in his face as he snatches it up and tosses it

into the clothes hamper just inside the door. Maybe I shouldn't be such a brat, not while he's being good to me, but this is the only defiance I can give him. I'm trapped in this palatial fortress until he deems it's time to free me, and I'm not the kind of person to sit down and shut up.

When he returns, I mutter, "Why don't you just let me leave, and then you won't have to worry about dirty clothes on your precious carpet."

He steps into my space, and I forget how to breathe as he crowds me. He's tall and wide, and he commands any room he's in. Right now, he's stealing all the air from my lungs. I tip my head to meet his gaze and try not to be overwhelmed by his presence. It's a difficult thing though. His is not a presence easily forgotten.

"You know why that can't happen." His voice comes out low, almost a little breathy.

My chest heaves as I struggle to draw air past the lump suffocating me, and my mouth is completely dry as my stomach somersaults. He's so imposing. I should be terrified, but I'm not. He stares with such intensity into my eyes that I feel as if he's stripping back everything and seeing into my soul. It thrills me even as it scares me.

I scan his face, trying to draw air into my abused lungs.

"You're safe here," he tells me.

"Am I?"

I doubt the Farleys will try to recover me. I was bought and paid for. The transaction was completed, and it wasn't me they wanted anyway. The threat to Amalia may still stand, but I can't worry about her right now. I'm sure Fury will do everything in his power to protect his old lady, and I have my own problems. Zeke is an ever-present threat to me, one I can't escape. One I'm not sure I want to escape.

I do feel safer in his penthouse and in his presence.

I hold my breath as I wait for his answer. I also truly believe he doesn't wish me any harm. If he did, I'd already be dead. He's a man who shoots first and asks questions later.

He reaches out and trails his fingers over my cheek. I want to lean into his touch, the first gentle touch I've had in days, but I keep my body still. He's not a friend. He's the man holding me hostage and I can't let his kindness go to my head.

"As long as Ravage upholds his end of the bargain, you'll be safe," he amends.

“And if that changes?”

He pauses then lets out a breath. “Then all bets are off.”

Z E K E



I HEAD BACK to my office, feeling an itchy tension work through my shoulders. I don't know why I keep hiding out in here, but being around Bailey is too much. She ignites something inside me, makes my synapses flare to life in a way they never have done before. When I kissed her, something changed. She might have protested when I did it, but there is definite chemistry between us. I see it in the heavy set of her eyes and the rapid rise and fall of her chest, but she's scared of me too, and that is holding her back.

I understand it, even if I don't like it.

I don't know why I'm bothered by what she thinks. She's nothing to me. No one. But I can't stop from being irritated by her reaction. I don't want her afraid of me, even though I'm used to people being frightened of who I am. I don't know why I care if she is.

I do know why, though.

More than I want to admit.

I scrape my fingers through my hair and try to calm myself. I need to be a little gentler with her. She's been through so much already, but she brings out this volatile side of me. At times, I want to wrap my fingers around her throat and squeeze. At others, I think about how it would feel to have her pretty mouth locked on to mine.

I let my gaze drift to the monitors and watch as she moves into the kitchen. The joggers and tee I let her wear don't hang on her, but they are loose enough it hides those shapely hips. I don't know why, but seeing her in my clothes hits me in the gut. I've always been a possessive bastard, but right now, I'm feeling that tenfold. I want to lock her in my room and never let her

free. I tell myself I want to take control of her to ensure her safety, but it's more than that. I have an overwhelming need to keep her close. I'm not even sure I trust her brother to take care of her.

I had my housekeeper fill the fridge while Bailey was sleeping and there are a couple of packages from the local takeaway on the counter. It's probably cold now, but she doesn't seem fazed by this prospect. She pokes at them cautiously, as if the packages contain wild animals, and then unwraps the paper. I watch her, intrigued, mesmerised even by her movements. She's beautiful with all that copper-coloured hair hanging down her back. I want to wrap my fist in it and tug her head back as I pound into her from behind. Fuck, I shouldn't be thinking this shit.

I don't understand my feelings. I've never had such an intense reaction to a woman before, but I find she interests me in a way I've never experienced. She doesn't take my shit, even though I scare her, and her bravery in the face of all the adversity she's suffered is a fucking turn on. I'm used to weaker women, women who fawn over me because of my family name, but that's not what I want from a partner. I want someone who is my match in every way, and I see Bailey as someone who ticks all those boxes.

I watch as she rummages through the drawers and finds a fork. Then she takes the takeout tray over to the sofa and places the food on the coffee table—an item that cost over a grand, yet she just drops her food tray on it like it's worth only ten pounds. I find that refreshing.

She digs into the noodles as if she hasn't eaten all week. Maybe she hasn't. It wouldn't surprise me if Farley's cunt starved her.

I keep my eyes locked onto the screen as she eats. I like her presumption that the food was for her. I like that she doesn't ask questions, just takes what she wants. She's strong, despite the horrors she's suffered. She's bolshy and bossy, and all of that is a fucking turn on.

I don't know how long I watch her for, but eventually she returns to the bedroom and climbs under the covers. She takes a long time to fall asleep, but she does drift off after a while. I give my attention to business, but I keep one eye on the cameras.

I call Kane.

“Any update?” I ask my eldest brother.

“We have a lead on where Farley and his men might be hiding out. We need some confirmations, but it's looking like a solid thread. You have really pissed the old man off. Anthony is fucking fuming with you.” I can hear the

amusement in his voice as he says that. He would enjoy the fact I'm in trouble. Usually, it's him.

"I don't care," I say. "He won't do what is necessary to keep us all alive. I will."

"He wants your head on a plate."

He'll have to find me first...

Few people know about my penthouse, and my father and mother are not in that group.

"Dramatic as ever, I see," I mutter, feeling my irritation mount. My father has no reason to be annoyed, not when my actions are for the sole purpose of protecting our family. "Would he rather I left shit to chance? Hope those leather-wearing pussies don't decide to recant on their end of the deal? This will keep them behaving. Have you told the Sons about the lead?"

"Not yet. I want to make sure it is a good one first. They're already spitting fire over what you did." He sounds gleeful about this. My brother enjoys a good fight. The thought of war on two fronts won't scare Kane. Nothing does.

"They'll get over it."

"Why did you really take the girl?" he continues.

"I told you—insurance."

He sees through my lies. "There were other ways to ensure the Sons did as was promised. This seems a little extreme, even by your standards."

He seems genuinely curious to know the answer. I don't have an answer to give him, because honestly, I'm not fully sure why I did it either. It was a need to have her close, an unwillingness to hand her over.

"I took her because we needed to protect ourselves. I've ensured that."

"Have you?" Kane laughs. "It seems to me, little brother, all you've done is piss off the bikers. I don't care if we go to war with the Sons. They're nothing to me, but I do care why you have gone out of your way to anger them. Are you planning any more coups against Anthony?"

"She's a pawn. Nothing more." I don't like how saying that makes me feel. Wrong. Uneasy. She's not a pawn. She's so much more than that.

"I can't say I disapprove of your methods, but the Sons are not going to be easy to calm."

"They want her back in one piece. That will keep them from doing anything too drastic."

"You're sure about that?"

No, I'm not, and if Bailey was my family, I would raze us to the ground for this shit. It's a bridge I'll worry about crossing when I get to it. For now, my focus is on getting rid of the Farleys, and the Sons want us to help with that.

My eyes stray to the screen, and I notice Bailey is moving around in my bed like she's restless. I should have put her in one of the guest rooms, but fuck, I like seeing her flaming hair fanned out on my pillows. I like the thought of her in my bed too. More than I should.

"I don't give a fuck what they say," I mutter to Kane. "They aren't my priority."

"What is? The girl?"

I let my brow furrow as his words hit a little too close to the truth. "Protecting the family," I correct.

"I hope you know what you're doing."

"Of course I fucking do," I snarl at him, pissed at the insinuation that I jumped into this mess feet first.

Kane laughs again and the line goes dead. Fucker.

I slide my mobile phone onto the desk and lean back in the chair, trying to calm my mind. My gaze drifts to the screen again, intent on watching the woman sleeping in my bed. She deserves privacy, but I don't give it to her. I need to know she's okay, that she's safe at all times. That's the justification I give myself for why I haven't turned the camera in the bedroom off when I know watching her like a creep is wrong.

I push up from the desk and go into the kitchen. I find one carton of food untouched, so snag that and a fork before heading back to the room.

Sitting down, I start to make my way through the noodles, tasting the spices and sauces on my tongue. I'm hungrier than I thought, and devour the meal in a few minutes, my eyes still locked on the camera.

Because I'm watching her, I can tell immediately something is wrong.

She starts to twist and turn more in the bed, like she's in torment. I stiffen in my seat, leaning forwards to get a better look at the screen. My heart starts to thrum in my chest as I realise she's trapped in a nightmare.

Without thought, I push up and rush through the penthouse towards the bedroom. I can hear her little whimpers and cries as I get closer. I've never been a man who cared about someone's suffering, but hearing her torment makes me homicidal.

I push into the room, letting the light from the rest of the penthouse

illuminate the space as I rush to the edge of the bed.

She's in the full throes of terror. She twists her head from side to side as she is pulled deeper into the horror she's experiencing.

Her pleading "No" shatters what resolve I have left to keep my distance, to see how it plays out. I move to the edge of the bed, sinking onto the mattress, and I gently shake her shoulders. "Bailey?"

She doesn't wake from the nightmare. "Don't," she whimpers, and fuck, my heart contracts so painfully it steals my breath.

Is she reliving the shit she suffered at the hands of the man she knows as Jack? Is she trapped in hell? I shouldn't have taken her. I should have let her go home and be with people who love her, but even the thought of handing her over makes me feel sick to my stomach.

I shake her shoulders again and move closer to her ear. "Bailey, wake up."

I can tell the moment she does. She doesn't jackknife up like they do in the movies, but rather twitches savagely and lets out a little squeak. Her eyes are glassy for a moment before they slide towards my face.

Then the tears start to leak down her cheeks. She scrabbles up and wraps herself around me like a fucking vine. I freeze. I'm not the man to come to for comfort. I'm not the man people relax around enough for me to embrace them. I'm the monster hiding in the shadows. I'm the darkness.

Even so, I slide my fingers into her hair as she sobs against me. Fuck, she feels so good in my arms. Warm and soft. I hold her close, needing to feel her against me.

Mine.

I barely know her, yet I don't feel alarmed by the thought of owning her completely, of having her belong to me. I don't feel icy terror move through my veins, even though with any other woman I would. I pull her closer against my chest as her arms wrap tighter around my waist.

"You're safe," I tell her.

Her sobs are lances to my chest. "He's destroyed me."

Her words confirm her dreams were about Jack, the bastard. My mouth pulls into a snarl. Fuck, I hate that cunt. As soon as Malone finds him, I'm going to slice his fucking cock off and feed it to him.

"He hasn't destroyed you," I disagree.

"I'm a broken mess. I can't even sleep without nightmares."

I shouldn't, but I dip my head and I take her mouth. I feel her stiffen

beneath me before she relaxes a little. The kiss is soft, gentle, because that's what she needs right now. She doesn't need the monstrous side of me. She needs the side that cares about people. The side I show my own sister. The side that doesn't exist for many people.

I taste her sweetness on my tongue as I devour her mouth. She pulls me closer, as if she wants to pull me inside her to stop the nightmares. I will give her everything I possibly can, which is something I've never wanted to do before. The only other woman in my life who means anything to me is Aurelia. Even my own mother isn't on that list. Charlotte Fraser is a savage bitch who would sacrifice her own children to get ahead. She has done so in the past.

Bailey stiffens and she pulls back from me, dipping her head. I see the shame in her face as she averts her gaze. "I can't."

"Okay," I tell her. As much as I want her, I'll not force her to want me back.

"It's not that I don't want to..." she starts to explain. "He's just... he's in my head. I can't."

I twist on the bed so I'm lying next to her and pull her against my chest. "Why don't you try to rest some more?"

She tucks her head against my chest, draping her arm over my middle. It should feel foreign, awkward. It is neither. This is where she's meant to be, lying with me, and fuck if I don't want this all the time.

BAILEY



I OPEN my eyes to the most spectacular view. The city of London looms on the horizon, its high-rises, squat buildings, and familiar landmarks within my line of sight from the bed. I watch as the curtains continue to slide back like magic. Too posh to open his own drapes. This life is nothing like mine.

The bed next to me is empty, even though I know I went to sleep wrapped in Zeke. I strain my ears to see if he's moving around in the penthouse, but I'm greeted by nothing but silence. After years of raising children, the quiet is a little disturbing.

I feel the sheets next to me and they're cold. He's been gone a while. He didn't move from my side after I woke from the night terror about Jack. I'd been trapped back in that room, on that dirty bed. Zeke didn't leave me. He could have gone after I fell asleep, but he stayed.

Why?

Why does he care if I'm having nightmares?

Why did he try to comfort me?

Who is this man I'm sleeping next to?

He's a devil and an angel wrapped into one, and I don't know what to do with that. He's clearly an enemy of the club, but I can't say he hasn't been good to me. He has. He's done more than I expected, considering I am his prisoner here.

I climb out of the bed and make my way into the bathroom. There's a new toothbrush sitting on the side of the basin, which I assume is for me, and a little bag of toiletries that look expensive. I recognise some of the brands as designer ones.

His thoughtfulness surprises me. He doesn't strike me as a man who

would take care of someone, yet he's doing his best to make me feel at home.

He's also holding you hostage here...

I put the toiletries back down. Is this a peace offering? Something to make me forget this isn't where I belong? I shouldn't want to be here. I'm itching to see my daughters. I've missed them both with all my heart, but facing them, letting them see the damage done to me both emotionally and physically... I'm not sure I can face that. I feel ashamed I let Jack hurt me.

Closing my eyes, I refuse to think of that prick. I refuse to give him space in my head. He'll get what's coming to him—my brother will make sure of that.

I hesitate before I take the shower gel and shampoo into the shower cubicle. It's only an en suite, but it's bigger than my family bathroom. It's bigger than my own bedroom, which is crazy. I shower, enjoying the seemingly endless supply of hot water, and then wrap myself in one of the fluffy black towels.

When I step into the bedroom, I see the clothes laid on the bed.

I slowly lift the top item from the pile. It looks like a pair of leggings and a sweater. There's underwear too. They feel like good material, not the cheap knockoffs I usually get from the high street, and the bra is clearly silk.

Did he have someone buy these for me?

He's trying to take care of me in his own way. I can't deny that his thoughtfulness makes me feel a little better about my situation. This is a better prison than the one Jack kept me in. Jack didn't let me have any freedom, while Zeke cares about my comfort. He wants me to feel at home here. I didn't expect that. The way he looks at me sometimes is so intense it steals my breath. I don't know what to make of that either.

I dry myself off and slowly dress. He didn't quite get the sizes right. The sweater is a little baggy, but it all fits well enough, and I feel more human in proper clothes. I hang the towels back up in the bathroom, remembering his disapproval from last time, and make my way into the main living space of the penthouse.

I find Zeke sitting at the breakfast bar, a mug in his hand as he reads a newspaper. It's so domestic. So normal it makes my footsteps falter a little.

I try not to stare at him, but he hasn't noticed me yet, and I can't stop from taking a moment to just study him. He's as perfectly put together as he has been this entire time. His dark hair is slicked back, his shirt is crisp, and black this time. It's open at the chest, revealing a hint of pectorals. My

attention strays to the thick muscles of his forearms as they flex and move. Fuck, the man might be a devil in a suit, but he's a good looking one. Zeke is gorgeous. Even I can see that. He has a jawline that looks hewn from stone and sharp, shrewd eyes that see everything.

He strikes me as a man who lives on the edge constantly, yet he's taken care of me in his own way, making sure I'm comfortable and have what I need. This juxtaposition between his darkness and the side of him that cares doesn't surprise me. I grew up with men just like him.

"Are you just going to stare at me or are you going to join me?" he asks, not looking up from the newspaper.

Fuck, how does he know I'm here?

I step towards him, a little anxiously. "Morning," I say.

He shifts his gaze the windows. "You slept a long time. Do you feel better?"

It's such a normal, mundane conversation. It wouldn't be out of place around any family breakfast table, but this situation is not normal, no matter how much he wants to pretend it is.

"I went out like a light after you—"

I break off, but he adds, "Crawled into bed with you?"

The arch of his brow is challenging, but also holds something a little sinister in it. I should tread lightly with this man. I know his type. He's a man who commands a room just with his presence, and he's a man who isn't used to hearing the word no. I don't mean in the bedroom, but in everyday situations. My brother is the same. No and Nox do not go together.

It was easy to slip into this vision of domesticity, into this fake routine we're building, and forget Zeke has caused a war with my family because he took me. It would be easy to forget how savage Zeke is and how he can end my life with a word. Because one look from him makes me forget that. He looks at me like I'm his.

I'm not sure how to untangle the mess he's in. I don't know if it can be fixed. Ravage isn't a forgiving man and he'll see this—rightly so—as an affront to him and the Sons. I'd be surprised if they weren't rallying a few of the other chapters to come down and kick the shit out of the Frasers.

The thought shouldn't concern me as much as I find it does. Zeke's the enemy, right?

"Are you worried?" I ask him.

"About what?" he asks, taking a sip of his drink. "There's coffee in the

pot if you want some.”

The normality of his statement makes me frown, but I go over to the coffee pot and grab a mug off the mug tree that looks more like a work of art. I haven't had coffee in days and the smell of it tells me it's good stuff.

“The Sons. What they're going to do to you when this is over...” I hope that will be soon.

“I fear nothing.”

His words strike me like a wrecking ball to the gut. Is he that closed off? That removed from the world around him? “You must be afraid of something!”

“To be afraid is to have weakness, and weakness can be used against you.”

He's lying. Everyone has a weakness. For me, it's my daughters. I would die for them. I'm not sure what his is, but he must have something. I understand why he would keep it secret, though. Why would he give me the power to hurt him?

I don't speak as I sniff the coffee in the mug. Shit, that smells divine.

I sense something in him, a similarity that we share. He's damaged, just as I am. We're both products of our environments. We're two broken halves of a whole, and despite the tension between us, I've never felt this at ease with another person I've just met before.

I don't understand it. This is a man who has torn me from my family and is holding me in his penthouse prison, yet, I feel a kinship with him I can't describe. I'm drinking coffee in his kitchen as if it's the most normal thing in the world.

I need my head examined. Maybe this is some kind of Stockholm Syndrome. I shouldn't be this comfortable with my captor.

He grabs my wrist as I start to move away, and he zeros in on the bruises lining the skin like ugly dark purple bracelets. “He'll pay for every fucking bruise he put on you.”

The vehemence in his words makes me shiver. He means it. If he finds Jack, he's going to kill him. I want Jack dead, but I don't know why Zeke would want to be the one to do it.

Why did he stay with me last night? He didn't owe me anything. He could have spent the night in his own bed and left me in one of the spare rooms, but he didn't. He let me sleep on him. He held me close after my nightmare and soothed me. This man who acts like a demon, who walks in

shadows, held me and reassured me. I slept like the dead. I don't feel refreshed, but my eyes are less gritty than they were. A few more nights like that and I'll catch up on my sleep.

There is more to Zeke Fraser than he shows, and that interests me more than it should.

I glance up, my heart starting to race a little. "I don't need you to fight my battles."

"That's not what I'm doing."

"Then what are you doing?"

"Righting a wrong."

He pushes up from the stool and rounds the counter. He steps right into my space, forcing my back against the counter. My mouth instantly dries and I feel a little nervous as his fingers stroke over the pulse in my neck. I'm at this man's mercy, and we both know it, but he doesn't push me into something I'm not ready for.

"He'll pay for these too," he says, running his fingers over the bruises on my neck.

"Men like Jack don't get justice," I whisper. He smells so good this close up, and I let his scent envelop me.

"I promise he will."

The air between us crackles, the electricity clear to anyone with eyes. Why do I feel for a man who is clearly trouble? Why does he interest me? I should be running in the other direction.

Lust.

Attraction.

Want.

He peers down at me, his eyes heated. It scares me even as it thrills me.

"Tell me about your daughters."

I frown at his words. "Why?"

"I want to know more about you, Bailey."

"Kara's the eldest. Mollie's three years younger, but already acts like a teenager."

"Their father?"

I swallow down bile, not sure I want to discuss this. "Gone. He was killed on a club run. Went out one night, never came home."

I duck my head. The pain isn't as severe as it once was, but I still feel sad when I talk about him. He was a good father, even if he wasn't always a good

husband.

“How long ago?”

“Just after Mollie was born. Nine and a half years ago.”

“You miss him?” There’s jealousy in his tone, which surprises me.

“Sometimes,” I admit. “What about you? Is there a special Mrs Fraser on the scene?”

I don’t want to admit it, but I hold my breath as I wait for his answer.

“No.”

I lick my lips as the relief washes over me. I would have been disappointed if he’d said yes. “Truthfully?”

“I don’t have time or the inclination to get involved with a woman.”

His words disappoint me. “That’s sad.”

“Why?”

“Everybody needs somebody.”

“Do you?”

I shift my shoulders. “I miss having a person in my life, someone to tell me I’m okay, that I’m pretty, that I’m loved.”

“You don’t feel any of those things?” he ask, arching his brows.

“Well, I love my daughters, but they just see me as Mum, and my brother adores me, but he has his hands full with Lucy and their baby. I work sixty hours a week and the only men I meet are at work.”

At the mention of other men, he growls under his breath.

“Besides, people run when they realise you’re linked to a motorcycle club.” It’s more than that. As Laurence’s widow, I’m expected to retain a shrine to his memory. If I tried to move on, a lot of the brothers would see that as an insult.

He meets my gaze, his eyes heated. “I’m not most men.”

He’s not. He’s powerful in his own right, deadly. I should be terrified of him, but I’m not. He’s been good to me and that’s lulled me into this false sense of security that makes me at ease in his presence.

He’s also a man who would easily face Nox and the other brothers. He wouldn’t be scared of standing up for me, of claiming me as his. That realisation makes butterflies flap against my belly.

He leans forwards as if he’s thinking about kissing me, and my emotions are so turbulent, I’m not sure I don’t want that.

His phone starts to ring on the worktop, crashing through the moment.

“Fuck,” he mutters before he steps back from me. It seems as if it takes

him a lot of strength to do it. He glances at the screen and swipes across it. “Yeah?”

I don’t miss the terseness in Zeke’s voice, and I wonder who is on the other end of the phone. He mutters a few noncommittal phrases and then says, “Okay, I’ll be there in twenty.”

When he hangs up, I can see the irritation lining his face. “I have to go out,” he says, and he’s definitely pissed about the fact.

A flutter goes through me at the thought of being left here alone.

“You’re leaving?” I don’t add the “me”, but I sure as hell think it. I peer around the penthouse, which feels too big, too clinical.

“I won’t be long, but I have to.” He skims his knuckles down the apple of my cheek. I can’t stop from leaning into his touch. It feels good. Right. Normal. He slides his fingers under my chin and tips my head back so I meet his eyes. “Don’t try to leave.”

His words make me jolt out of the moment, like a bucket of cold water has been tossed over me, because for a split second, I forgot I’m his prisoner and this is my prison.

I won’t make that mistake again.

Z E K E



I HATE TO LEAVE HER. In fact, every inch of my body recoils at the thought. I know she'll be safe in the penthouse, but that doesn't stop nervous energy from tingling through me. The thought of walking out of the building almost makes me step back into the lift, but I force myself to move from the lift into the cooler air of the parking area. Fuck, she's already under my skin and I don't know how the fuck it happened. I've never given a shit about women before. I've never given a single shit about anyone outside my family, but I want to protect Bailey with a need that alarms me.

I make my feet move towards the nearest vehicle, which happens to be one of my Audis and climb inside it. As I start the engine up, itchy tension moves across my shoulders. I shouldn't be leaving her here, but my brother needs me.

The drive across the city feels like it takes forever, and by the time Fraser Holdings comes into sight, I'm more on edge than I've ever been. I want to get home, but I have to take care of business first.

I park the car and head up to the office. As I wander past Anthony's secretary, she pushes up from her desk and makes herself scarce, which tells me my father is about to tear into me.

When I step into the office and shut the door behind me, I quickly scan the room. My brothers are sitting in front of the desk, as usual, and my father sits behind it, looking through the floor-to-ceiling windows at the city skyline. To my surprise, my mother is also here. Blood red lipstick coats her lips, and her smart dress suggests she means business. She's perfectly put together as always, but I don't miss the disapproval on her face as she takes me in. Disappointing Charlotte Fraser has been a lifelong achievement for

me.

“The prodigal son returns,” she sneers. “Do you have any idea the mess you’ve created?”

I shift my shoulders. I do, but I just don’t care.

“That’s all you have to say? A shrug?” Her voice goes up a piercing octave.

“What do you want me to say, Mother? That I’m sorry? I’m not. I would make that same choice every time.”

“You’ve caused issues with the Sons. Issues we didn’t have before.”

I have, but I have faith it will all work out in the end. Ravage is pissed, I get that, but he will see the final result when the Farleys fall, and this will be put to bed. He’ll understand I was just making sure he upheld his part of the deal.

If I give Bailey back...

The thought makes my stomach clench with uncertainty. “The Sons aren’t our problem. Finding Patrick Farley is.”

“I think the real question,” Anthony says, “is why you’re working against the family.”

His words piss me off. “I’m not, and if you think that then we have bigger problems than what’s going on here.”

The doors open behind me and I stiffen as Parker Weston, my father’s lieutenant, steps in with Aaron Leep, another one of his men. The air in the room goes arctic as I eye Parker’s unyielding face before I let my gaze shift back to my father. I know both men will be carrying guns beneath their suits. I should have brought Malone with me, but I didn’t expect to leave the penthouse, and I didn’t think I’d need protection from my own father.

A mistake on both fronts.

“Think carefully here, Anthony,” I warn.

“I have thought carefully. You’re a liability to the family. You’re a threat to everything we’ve built. You’re going to give me that fucking girl back and somehow I’m going to fix the mess you’ve made.”

A chill races through me at the thought of Bailey in the hands of my father. No fucking way. My father isn’t depraved, not like Farley’s fucking man, but he wouldn’t treat Bailey how I will. It’s not happening. He’s not having her.

I let my mouth pull into a smirk. “And you think these fuckers can make me hand her over?”

“Oh for God’s sake, Zeke, just give your father what he wants,” my mother says, waving a hand as if this matter is beneath her.

I don’t even know why she’s here. This business is not between me and her, but my father defers to my mother on a lot of matters. It’s why people say she’s the real head of the Fraser Empire. It’s not a lie. She is. A real Lady Macbeth, pulling all the strings behind the scenes. My father might think he’s in control, but he’s not.

He doesn’t even control my brothers and me.

“From the scratches on your face, she’s not being cooperative anyway,” my mother continues. “Let us handle her.”

“I’m not handing over the girl.”

I glance over my shoulder at the movement behind me, but before I can react, Kane and Lucas both come out of their seats, guns pointing at Parker and Aaron.

“Touch him and die,” Lucas growls.

Kane smirks, a demonic gesture that makes him look wild. Knowing my brothers have my back, I turn my attention back to my father. “Find Patrick, give the Sons that information about the Farleys, and I’ll take care of the girl.”

Anthony bangs his fists off his desk. My mother tuts in disapproval at the loss of control. No doubt she’ll school him about that later. “Fucking hell, just hand her over! I might be able to save you if you do. If not, the Sons can have you.”

I’m not surprised my father would hand me over to protect the family. It wouldn’t be the first time he’s threatened to do it either. My mother says nothing, just sits there tight-lipped, ready to back up Anthony.

“She’s safe with me, and she’s going to stay that way.”

“She’ll be safe with me too,” Anthony counters, but he’s wrong. He won’t take care of her as I have. He won’t hold her when she’s having nightmares. He won’t tell her she’s not broken because of things that were beyond her control. He won’t let her breathe freely.

Possessiveness crashes through me like a storm-tossed wave. This is a hill I’m willing to die on. “I’m not handing her over.”

“She’s one girl! What the fuck, Zeke? She’s not more important than this family’s safety!”

But she is, because she’s mine, and she’s been mine from the moment she walked through the doors of that auction house.

“If this is all you wanted to see me for, I’m leaving—”

“Son.” My mother walks over to me, her high-heels clacking on the tiled floor. “Think about what you’re doing.”

If she thinks this is the way to make me do as she wants, she’s wrong.

“I have thought about it. This will ensure the Sons do as they promised. Once they have, I will give her back.”

It’s a lie, but one I tell anyway. How can I hand her back?

“You’re not the head of this fucking family!” Anthony snarls. “I am! For your insolence alone I should take your fucking life. If you were anyone else, you’d already be dead.”

Kane stiffens at Anthony’s threat, as does Lucas.

“But I’m not anyone else, and what I did was for a reason. You’ll understand when this is over, but until then stay the fuck out of my way.”

“What you’ve done is treachery.”

“It’s taking care of business,” I correct.

“Son,” Charlotte tries to keep her voice soft, gentle, but my mother is neither of these things.

She’s a wasp, irritating and likely to sting when you least expect it. I brace myself for whatever shit is about to spew out of her mouth. “Just think about it for a moment. How do we know the Sons aren’t planning an attack as we speak?”

“Because they won’t risk harm to Bailey. They made a deal with the devil just to protect her. They’re not going to go back on that. They’ll want her safe and they’ll do whatever they can to ensure that.”

“They might decide to kill the man who took her,” Anthony says pointedly.

They can try. It won’t happen, though. I’m sure of it. Ravage won’t want another war. The Farleys are easy pickings. They’re still recovering from the loss of men who were jailed for raiding the clubhouse. Farley has some numbers, but not nearly the amount my family has. This isn’t a war the Sons are guaranteed to win. My hope is Ravage won’t risk it.

Taking Bailey wasn’t my smartest idea, but I am sure it was the right one. The thought of handing her over makes cold sweat bead on the back of my neck. I can’t stand the thought of letting her go. What if something else happens to her? What if I’m not there to keep her safe?

“I’m not handing her over, so you’d better think of another way to keep Ravage level.” I turn to Kane. “Do we have any update on Farley?”

He was pulling a thread last I heard. I wonder if he's yet unravelled it. "When I know, you'll know, brother."

I nod, sure this shit is in hand. "If that's everything, then I'm leaving."

My mother grabs my arm and I see the warning in her eyes. I ignore it, tugging my arm free. Then I walk around Parker and Aaron.

Driving back to the penthouse takes longer than it should. I double back on myself and take a few detours to make sure I'm not being followed. I don't want those fuckers discovering where I'm keeping Bailey. If they try to take her, the streets will run with blood. I'm not willing to just give her up. She's mine and she's going to stay mine until I say otherwise.

By the time I pull into the parking area under the building, I'm on edge and tetchy. When my phone rings, I nearly roll my eyes in irritation when I see it's Mary, the doctor who examined Bailey.

I swipe my finger over the screen as I walk across the tarmac towards the lift. "Yeah?"

"I'm in the lobby of your building. I have the prescription Bailey needs."

"What prescription?"

"For the pain."

Farley's man is dead when Malone finds him. I'm going to flay the skin off his bones and piss on his fucking grave. He'll never breathe free air again for what he's done.

"I'll meet you in a moment." I hang up and hit the button in the lift for the lobby.

When the doors slide back open, I see Mary waiting by the doorman. The smile she gives me doesn't reach her eyes. She fucking hates me, and for good reason. I hold her life in the palm of my hand, and she's too useful to allow her to ever walk away. I think on some level she knows that too.

"Mr Fraser." She hands me a white paper bag.

"Everything she needs is in here?"

"Yes."

"She'll be okay?"

"In time. She should speak to someone."

"A therapist?"

She lowers her voice. "She's not going to get over being attacked overnight. It's probably going to take years to come to terms with. This isn't something you can throw money at."

I scowl at her. I throw money at her every month to keep her on my

books, even though I own her arse. “Careful, Mary.”

The warning in my voice makes her swallow back her next words. She should be scared of me. I would destroy her life in a heartbeat if she pushes me. I’m not a man to trifle with.

She licks her lips, the nerves back in full force. “Just be careful with her. She’s not a toy for you to break.”

“Thanks for the reminder,” I mutter and turn towards the lift.

I watch Mary until the doors close and then I sag against the wall of the lift. Fuck, what am I doing with this woman? Mary is right. Bailey needs help, something I can’t give her. I’m not qualified to deal with this shit. Emotional support is not something I can do. Who knows what trauma she has from her time with Jack?

The lift doors opening on my penthouse shatter through my thoughts. I’m greeted by silence. The lack of noise is deafening. What the fuck? Bailey couldn’t possibly be that silent. As I round the corner of the wall, a knife is pressed to the underside of my chin.

I freeze, feeling the blade, cold against my exposed skin. As I let my eyes drift down the blade, I’m greeted by a pair of electric eyes.

Bailey.

“One wrong move,” she hisses, “and you’re dead.”

BAILEY



I DON'T KNOW what the hell I am thinking, but the knife pressed to Zeke's skin feels right. I know we are getting somewhere, that he cares in his own way, but I want to leave and I'm going to do whatever it takes to do that. Even if it means threatening him.

He freezes, but I don't see any fear as his eyes slide towards me. What I see is anger and something else... excitement maybe? Is this turning him on?

"And what exactly are you planning on doing with that?" he asks in his smooth voice.

I haven't thought that far ahead. It was desperation that drove me to act in the first place. A need to get back to my daughters, to my family. Zeke has been kind to me, mostly, but he's still keeping me here against my will, and I have to remember he is my captor.

He thrusts his hand out and grabs the hand holding the knife, pulling it away from him. He squeezes my wrist, barely more than a tightening, but my skin is still broken and sore. I whimper and drop the blade. It clatters as it hits the tiled floor, the sound loud in the otherwise silent space. I feel real fear as I meet his eyes. Is he going to kill me?

He shoves me against the wall and pins my hand over my head. The other he secures by my side. He doesn't speak for a moment, just breathes heavily, scanning my face with his eyes over and over. Then his mouth descends and he kisses me like I'm his reason for breathing. I stiffen and try to push him away—at first. But as his tongue slides into my mouth my protests fade, and my groans transform into gasps and moans of pleasure.

Fuck, he kisses like a demon. His tongue moves over mine, heated and hard. He wants me, and I can't deny I want him too. I'm drawn to the

darkness in him in the same way he's drawn to it in me. Two broken damaged souls, victims of our families. He's a product of his life, of his father's ironclad hold on him. I'm a product of my upbringing too. I've never known a functional relationship, and this is no different. I'm falling for the man who kidnapped me. I feel a weird closeness to him that I can't explain. I want to protect him. I want to be close to him because the comfort he brings me outweighs the other bad shit he might have done.

My feelings seem real. I'm besotted. Jack tried to destroy me, but he didn't manage it because I'm stronger than him, because I'm not defined by what he did. Zeke doesn't see me as a victim. He doesn't see the girl who was beaten and sold in a trafficking auction. He sees *me*, and that makes me feel more wanted than I've ever been.

I'm not stupid. I know things are moving too fast, that we're crazy for even entertaining this. It's going to take time to get over what was done to me, but I feel like I can do that with Zeke.

He releases my mouth, his breath ripping out of him as hard as it is out of me. "You'll find me harder to kill than that, little girl."

"If I wanted you dead, I would have pushed the blade in without hesitating."

This makes his brow draw together and I can tell my words have surprised him. "What were you trying to do then?"

"Get out of here."

The helplessness in my voice ticks me off. I don't want to be the resident damsel in distress. That isn't who I am, but in this situation, that's how he makes me feel. There's no phone line and the lifts don't work for me. I tried the entire time he was gone to find a way out. This place is a fucking fortress. I searched all the rooms, bar one.

There's one door I couldn't get through. It's the room I saw a peek of that has screens in it, a control hub of some sort. I was trying to figure out a way in there when I heard the lift starting to move. I reacted on instinct. I grabbed a knife from the kitchen and ran to wait for him. I didn't have a plan of what I was going to do after he stepped out. I still don't, but I wasn't lying when I said I wasn't planning on killing him. That thought never crossed my mind. Incapacitating him, sure, but I don't want him dead.

I don't even want to know why that is.

"And go where?" he asks.

"Home." The word wavers as I say it. "I want to see my daughters."

He loosens his grip slightly on my wrist. "I know you want to. And you'll be able to soon. I promise."

"When?"

"As soon as this shit is done. We've found Farley. Your club will do what they need to, and providing they stick to the agreement, I'll hand you back." He lets me go and steps away from me. I can see it costs him a lot to do it. "My intention is not to harm you, Bailey."

I believe that is true, but it doesn't mean I should take this shit lying down either.

He stoops and picks up the knife as well as a white paper bag he dropped when I'd threatened him. I stand, transfixed to the spot as moves into the kitchen. He replaces the knife in the rack and slides the bag onto the counter. "But if you try to kill me again, I will defend myself. Accidents can happen."

His pointed statement makes me swallow back bile. "I'm not going to try again," I assure him.

"Look at this as a vacation. A time to relax and recharge."

"But I'm a prisoner."

"If that's how you want to view it." He nods at the bag. "Mary left these for you. Painkillers."

Medication.

In his own way, he is trying to look after me, and that eases some of the tension in my body. I go to the counter and rummage through the bag. There are a few different prescriptions.

"You shouldn't have to take that shit," he growls.

I snap my head up, surprised by the venom in his voice. I don't answer, not sure what to say. "You said you found Farley. That means this is nearly over?"

A new feeling surges within me.

Hope.

His face wavers for a moment, and I can tell he's upset by the prospect. Why? Does he like keeping me here? His little doll he can pull off the shelf when he wants to play?

No, that's unfair. He's never been like that with me.

"We have," he admits, "and it does."

"So, what happens now?" I don't want to ask it, but I need to know. I need to know what my fate will be.

I don't expect him to answer, but he surprises me by saying, "Now, we

wait. My brothers will handle the negotiation side of things with the Sons.”

This doesn't make me feel thrilled. His brothers are crazy. A sliver of ice slides between my ribs, making it hard to draw a full breath in. “And then?”

“We destroy Farley. You go home.”

I can't say I'm sad about Farleys' and the Farley syndicate's demise. Not after what they did to me and what they wanted to do to Amalia too.

“You don't seem fazed by that,” he remarks as he sinks onto the sofa, his legs parting so he can clasp his hands together between them.

I wet my dry lips. “I'm not. His men hurt me. I want Jack dead.”

“The whole syndicate will pay for what he did,” he says without skipping a beat. There's no regret or remorse there. There's no uncertainty, just the knowledge that he'll do whatever it takes to get the job done. “They took from the Sons, so the Sons will take from them. That's how this world works, princess. You don't get to steal someone and traffick them without repercussions. He wanted to hit your family where it hurt.”

“They wanted Fury's old lady. Amalia.”

He nods. “Fury killed Patrick's son. Maimed the fuck out of Patrick too. He wants revenge for that.”

Taking Amalia would have done that. Fury loves her more than he loves anything else on the planet. It would have destroyed him.

I study Zeke for a moment before I say, “You know what they say about an eye for an eye.”

His smile is thin as he stares back at me. “You couldn't begin to understand.”

I shouldn't but I do. I do because this was the world I grew up in. Come at one member, come at us all. My abduction was an affront to the club and all it stands for. I understand that more than Zeke realises.

“I understand. Do you honestly think my life has been flowers and rainbows? I was a club brat. I've seen the club destroy more enemies than I can count. I watched my husband ride out into trouble every damned day. So I understand.”

“You understand the relief of taking the life of someone who has stood against you? Of killing someone who is a threat to everything you've built? I highly doubt that. Men like me enjoy taking lives. Murdering Patrick would be a welcome fucking relief because it means he's no longer someone I need to worry about. He's proved he has no issue involving women in his fight, and I will do whatever the fuck I have to do to protect my sister from

experiencing what you did. Even if it means burning the entire Farley syndicate to the ground and pissing on the ashes of the fire.”

“I understand the need for revenge,” I say softly.

“Because you want it?”

“Yes.”

He smiles and I tip my head back to stare up at the ceiling. Being left in the hands of Zeke and his brothers scares me to death. What if he decides I’m a loose end that needs to be disposed of? Will I ever see my daughters again?

That’s not my choice.

All I can do is roll with the waves and hope like hell I don’t drown in the squalls.

He pushes up from the sofa and comes towards me. I watch as he leans across the counter and snags my chin between his fingers. His eyes meet mine, intense, and yet soft for me. “You don’t have anything to fear from me.”

“Unless I try to kill you again,” I say.

His lips quirk slightly at the corners. “Unless you try to kill me again.”

He pulls me around the counter and surprises the shit out of me by tugging me against his chest. I stiffen for a moment before I let his warmth envelop me. I didn’t realise how much I need to be held, to be told things were all right. “No one will ever hurt you again, Bailey.”

It’s a promise, and from the sound of it, it’s one he fully intends to keep.

Z E K E



I INTEND to keep my distance. I try anyway. I retreat to my office, because being around her is too hard. I can't keep my hands off her. She didn't resist when I embraced her in the kitchen, but I can't allow myself to get that close to her either. Like a coward, I hide myself away and watch her on the monitors as she reads through the leaflets enclosed with the prescriptions, then takes the meds. Anger flares through me that she has to do that, but I know how much bruised ribs hurt. I've had my share of injuries over the years.

She indulges in some television for a few hours, which leaves me free to catch up with Malone.

"Heard you paid your father a visit. Alone." I don't miss the snap of anger in his voice.

"I was perfectly safe."

"Anthony is a rattlesnake."

He is, but I don't think, despite his bluster, my father would ever hurt me. Maybe I underestimate him, but so far he hasn't given me any indication that might be possible. He cares too much about my family's legacy, about The Firm's future.

"Have you found out anything about our mysterious Jack character?"

"I got footage from the bar Bailey was in. I have his face. I'm running it through a local police database." We have a few coppers on the payroll.

"Let me know if you get a hit." If this fucker works for Farley, there's a chance he might also be on the law's radar too. We might just get lucky. We might not. I have to prepare Bailey for the fact we may never get her revenge on her attacker. That thought makes balls of lava settle in my gut. I can't

allow that. I won't. She needs to have closure. She needs her five minutes with the man.

Longer, if she wants it.

"Do you want me back at the penthouse?" Malone asks.

"No, you're more useful where you are."

"I don't like being separated."

"Nothing's going to happen to me here."

"Famous last words," Malone mutters. "I'm finding this guy then coming back. Do not leave the penthouse without me."

If anyone else had demanded that, I would have torn their head off, but Malone is different. He has a job to do, one that I often make difficult. He's also my closest ally, and perhaps friend. I'm not sure if I'm capable of having friends.

"Bye, Malone." I return my attention to the cameras and see Bailey is on the move. She steps into my bedroom and turns the bedside lamp on. I should turn the camera off, give her privacy, but I don't. I watch as she crawls under the blankets and settles herself down.

Then I watch her sleep. Creepy, probably, but I can't stop my eyes from gravitating in the direction of the monitor for the next hour, even as I try to work. My concentration is shot to shit, though, and I can barely focus on anything, so I grab my laptop and head into the bedroom. She left the lamp on—a conscious choice, I think. The dark brings sleep and sleep brings nightmares. Maybe she thinks the light will chase the darkness away. Maybe it will.

I take a seat in the chaise across the room and try to focus on the spreadsheet I'm working through. I might be a mobster, but I also run several of the family's legit businesses. The work I'm doing is for one of those. It's mindless, and soul destroyingly boring.

Bailey whimpers and I snap my head up. Her head is turned to the side and her brow is drawn together in tight lines. It's not a relaxed slumber—I can tell that by how she keeps muttering under her breath and moaning. Her fear is evident in every line of her body, but from the dark smudges under her eyes, I surmise exhaustion pushed her into a restless sleep.

Every time our eyes meet, I feel that electric charge race through me and the urge to protect her comes over me strongly. She looks at me with the same hunger, the same desperation beneath the fear in her eyes. It's there. I've seen it a few times since I brought her here.

Falling for me will be her downfall. I'm not one to give mercy because of feelings. Step into my orbit or get in my way, and I'll trample over you to get where I need to be. I'm not a man who cares about other's feelings.

Except I do care about her.

I don't know why, but I do, and I hate myself for allowing this weakness to fester.

She jolts suddenly and her eyes pop open. I want to go to her as she lets out a muffled cry, but I stay rooted to the seat. I'm not a man who shows feelings, and I don't want her to know I care, even if I do.

It takes her a second to remember her predicament and when she does, her gaze seeks me out. I smirk at her and her brow pulls down, dimpling between her eyes.

"What are you doing?" she demands, sitting up in the bed. Despite the fact she has a tee on, she pulls the blanket around her body to shield it from me.

"Working."

Her brow kicks up this time. "You have to do that while watching over me like some kind of crazy stalker? I can't go anywhere. You don't need to keep vigil."

"I couldn't concentrate away from you," I admit. I don't know what possesses me to give her that, but the softness in her face when I say the words makes me glad I did.

"You couldn't?"

I don't answer, but she's worked her way under my skin, and she has to know that. She has to know the effect she has on me.

I place the laptop on the seat next to me and move over to the bed. She watches me with a hint of fear beneath the curiosity. I climb onto the bed next to her, and she moves away slightly.

"I'm not going to hurt you, princess," I murmur.

The trust she places in me surprises me when she stills. She meets my eyes with hers, and I can see the uncertainty in them.

What am I going to do?

The unspoken question hangs in the air as I reach forwards. I scrape my fingers over the back of her neck as I pull her hair to one side, and she shivers a little at my touch.

"What are you doing?" she hisses at me, but her voice fades into a moan as I push my thumbs into the knots at the back of her neck.

“Quiet,” I order, mostly because I don’t know how to answer her.

I massage her nape as I trail my fingers to press along her collarbone. She gasps as I hit a hard knot and tilts her head to the side to grant me better access. My eyes lock on her offered neck, my mouth watering. The urge to place my lips there is overwhelming. It takes all my restraint not to.

I work my way around the column of her throat, my fingers ghosting over her bruised skin, my dick hard as she makes little whimpers and groans.

This was a bad idea, but I can’t stop touching her. I don’t want to stop touching her. When her head falls forward, her hair curtaining her face, I reach out and sweep it back, needing to see her expression as I work her over.

Her eyes close, and as I hit a particularly sensitive spot she draws in a breath.

“Zeke...” She whispers my name so softly I wouldn’t hear it if the room hadn’t gone deathly silent, apart from her breath.

“Quiet, princess.”

She falls silent and I continue to knead her neck and shoulders, working the knots out. This is the most sensual moment of my life and I’m not even inside her. I had no idea a neck rub could be so sexual, but she’s moaning beneath my touch like I’m working her pussy.

“Good?” I ask her.

“Yes.” Her voice sounds breathy and I feel a pang of satisfaction that I elicited that response from her.

“Did you have another nightmare?” I keep up the pressure on her neck and shoulders.

Her head dips slightly. “I don’t want him in my thoughts, but he’s there whenever I close my eyes.”

It pisses me off that I don’t know how to stop the darkness encroaching on her sleep. Maybe Mary was right. Maybe she needs to talk to someone.

“I’m going to find you a doctor who can help you work through this.” I don’t know why I suggest it. It’s not like she’s going to be here long, but I can’t stop from wanting to fix this hurt for her. The only way I know how to do that is to kill the man who touched her.

Bailey seems as confused as I feel by my statement. “I don’t need a doctor.”

“You need to process what happened to you.”

“I’m doing that.”

“Are you?”

“What I really need is to be with my girls and get my life back on track, but you won’t allow that.”

I won’t, and honestly, I’m not sure I’ll ever be able to give her up. She’s under my skin, part of me. I don’t want to let her walk away. I don’t say this. I don’t want to scare her.

“You will be able to go home soon,” I tell her, unsure if that is the truth or not.

I continue to knead her neck, but she brushes my hands off her. I drop them and let her find the space she clearly needs from me.

“I’m scared.”

“Of what?”

“Facing my family. They’re going to treat me differently, like I’m breakable.”

I stroke my fingers down her arm and hold her against me. I’ve never been the kiss and cuddle type, but with Bailey it doesn’t seem odd. It’s like she was always made to be in my arms. I’ve never felt that with another woman.

“They will be angry because you were hurt.”

Because they love her.

My own rage flares internally at what that cunt did to her. I’m going to rip his balls off and feed them to him when Malone catches him.

I continue stroking her as she drifts off to sleep, and even content with her in my hold, I can’t stop my thoughts from filling with the blood and destruction I’m going to inflict on the man who took her.

BAILEY



I SLEEP EASIER WRAPPED around Zeke. I know I shouldn't rely on him. He's not a man I should invite into my life, but I'm leaning on him like a crutch right now. His presence is reassuring. His demeanour puts my mind at ease that I might actually be safe now.

I expect him to be gone when I wake, as he was last time, but he's snoring softly at my side and I'm still wrapped around him like a vine. He looks different asleep. Less stern. Less angry. With me, he's different. I can't explain it, but there's a softness that wasn't there when I first was brought to the penthouse.

I don't know what to make of it.

For now, I don't question it. I just enjoy the feeling of being with him, of feeling safe for the first time since I was taken. I know he won't let anything happen to me, and that leaches some of the tension from my body.

Logically, I know what happened wasn't my fault, but I blame myself anyway. If I hadn't gone out that night. If I hadn't separated from my colleagues. If I hadn't let stupid Jack get me a drink...

The list is endless. It's foolish to think this way. I can't change the past any more than I can move time, but what ifs plague me nonstop. I could have been home, living my normal life with my girls, instead of a captive of Zeke Fraser. Though this doesn't feel like I'm a prisoner.

Lying against him feels like where I'm supposed to be. He makes me feel human. He makes me feel unbroken.

He makes me feel like I'm not a freak.

He makes me feel like I'm whole.

Zeke stirs and I peer up his chest at him as he opens his eyes slowly.

When his gaze meets mine, his eyes soften. I didn't think a man who is built from hard edges could be this way with me, but I can see the real affection he has for me clear in his eyes. It's been a long time since a man looked at me with want. So long I forgot what it feels like to be a woman, not just a mother, not just a kid of the club.

The way Zeke is looking at me right now leaves me with no doubt that he wants me.

"Sleep okay?" he asks, trailing his fingers up my arm. I snuggle deeper against him, needing the comfort he's freely giving.

"Yes. Once you were here, anyway."

He likes this admission. I can see it in his face. For a while, neither of us move, just content to be in each other's company. It's as if this is something we do every morning, even though it's not. We're practically strangers to each other, but I feel this connection I can't describe—this need to be with him, to be close to him. He makes me feel safe, like nothing can touch me. He makes me feel like men like Jack will never be able to get their hands on me again. I felt that way in the club, until I was abducted. I thought I was safe, that I could never be touched.

That assumption was proved wrong. I could not only be taken, but I could be abused. I suffered at the hands of Jack, something I know my brother would make him pay for, but I don't want him to know to depth of the beatings I took, of how I was molested by a maniac who got off on strangling me until I was nearly unconscious. Nox will want to wrap me up in cotton wool to protect me, but I don't want Jack to take more power from me. I can't allow him to win like that. I want him punished, of course, but I want to do it on my terms, something Zeke seems like he's going to help me to do.

"I'll stay with you every night if it helps," he tells me, and some of the pain in my chest starts to loosen a little.

I feel like this is a battle I can win with him at my side. I feel like I can stand tall and face my demons with his support. I've never had this strength of feeling before for another person. It's as if he slots into my broken edges perfectly.

He rolls me onto my back, moving on top of me, though he's careful not to give me his full weight. My bruised ribs protest and I can't stop from hissing.

"Sorry, princess."

"It's okay. I'm okay."

He dips his head and captures my mouth as he presses against my core. I shouldn't want this, but the place between my legs throbs savagely with need. Fuck, I want him inside me. I want him to fuck me hard.

"I want you," he tells me.

"I want that too."

It's all the invitation he needs. He pulls my leggings down, my underwear following. Exposed to him, I feel a shiver of anticipation as his mouth goes to my pussy. Nervous energy tingles through me, but I'm not afraid of him, not like I was Jack. I trust Zeke and I know he's never going to hurt me. I don't know how I know this, but I do.

My hips arch off the bed and I let out a gasp as he flattens his tongue to my clit.

"Zeke..." I murmur his name as he inserts a finger inside me, then a second.

His fingers probe deep, and I can feel my orgasm building embarrassingly fast. I'm going to come.

He snakes his hand under my top, finding my nipples. He rolls one of the buds hard enough to elicit a gasp from me. His touch is nothing like Jack's. Zeke wants me to feel pleasure. He wants me to enjoy it.

I push Jack out of my head, not wanting to let that fucking prick invade this moment and sully it.

I go over the edge, panting and sucking in air as my pussy contracts, a bite of pain amid the pleasure. Then his mouth finds mine. He consumes me, taking everything I'm offering and more. I can feel his hard length against me through his jogger bottoms, and I raise my hips to meet it, to get the friction I desperately need.

"I want to be inside you," he says.

I want that too. More than I should. I want to be back in control of my body, of my desires. I don't want that fucking bastard, Jack, ruining a single moment of this. Even so, I feel a hint of nerves as I peer up at him. He could take what he wants, but he waits for me to give him the permission. That fucking means something to me, more than he'll ever know.

In control, I feel strong. I feel relieved. "Fuck me."

He pulls down his joggers and boxer briefs before slipping his tee over his head. "Birth control?" he asks on a pant.

"I'm on the shot."

"Condom?"

“I want to feel you.”

He seems to like this. He gets his cock free and slowly but purposefully enters me. His dick is thick, and pushes in and out of me, the friction delicious. I lock onto his eyes as he pistons his hips in and out of my pussy. I feel magnetised to him, unable to look away as he fucks me. I want to be closer to him, so I wrap my legs around his waist, pulling him deeper inside me.

It’s not making love, what we’re doing. It’s pure carnal fucking. He wants me and I want him. I run my fingers over his solid abs as he slams into me again and again, my climax starting to build.

When he comes, his hips twitch and he spills inside me just as I go over the edge too. I cling to him, raking my nails down his skin as my pussy contracts around his shaft.

Panting, he lifts off me and is careful not to jostle me. “Did I hurt you?”

“No.”

We lie in silence, relishing the aftermath of what we just did before he pulls me up and we take a shower together. He uses the cloth hanging in the cubicle to wash over the bruises covering my skin. They look worse than they are, but he treats each one with reverence.

“He’ll pay for every mark,” he vows as he cups my face and kisses me.

We get out and he wraps me in a large fluffy towel before leading me into the bedroom. I sink onto the edge of the bed, holding the material against my breasts.

“Zeke, can I speak to my daughters again?”

He stops drying himself. “Okay,” he agrees.

Relief washes over me so powerful I almost let out a gasp of air. I could stay locked in this fantasy we’re building if it wasn’t for Kara and Mollie. I need my girls.

“Zeke?”

The attention he gives makes me feel special, wanted. Needed.

He looks at me like I’m his reason for existing sometimes. Even Laurence didn’t do that. Laurence loved me, I’m sure of that, but I was never his reason to live. I was the girl he knocked up and did the right thing by marrying.

This is different. Zeke wants me.

It’s a heady feeling, but I don’t want to lead him on either. I don’t want him to think we’re building something here that I’m not sure I can reciprocate.

“What we just did...”

“Don’t overthink it,” he tells me.

“It means something, right?”

“Yeah, princess, it means something.” He leans down and kisses me. “Finish getting dried and dressed, then you can speak to your girls.”

My yearning to talk to Kara and Mollie makes me move as fast as I can. By the time I’m dressed and heading into the living room, Zeke’s already sitting at the breakfast bar garbed in a pair of joggers and a tee. Does the man ever wear denim? Does he own a pair of jeans? I’m used to being surrounded by denim and leather.

He slides a mug of coffee onto the counter in front of me as I slip onto the stool.

It smells lush. Better than the instant granules I usually drink. Properly percolated coffee is a treat I usually only get when I buy from coffee houses, or when I visit Sasha. She has a coffee machine that cost a small fortune. Somehow she convinced Ravage to buy it, though I doubt he took much convincing. He’d do anything for Sasha.

I wrap my hands around the mug as he digs into his pocket and pulls out his phone. “Call your girls.”

I take it from him and quickly dial Mum’s number. She picks up after the second ring, which makes me wonder if she’s sitting by the phone all day, waiting for me to contact her. Guilt stirs in my gut. She’s worried and I’m here, snuggling the man who took me. I must be crazy. “Hey, Mum.”

“Bailey? Darling? Oh God, are you all right?” The concern in her voice makes me wince.

“Yeah, I’m good, honestly. I’m being taken care of. Can I speak to the girls?”

“Give me a second.” I hear her shouting for them and my heart leaps in my chest when Mollie’s voice sounds down the line.

“Mum?”

“Hey! Hey, baby girl.” Fuck, my heart is cracking in pieces. “Are you behaving for Grandma?”

“We haven’t been able to go to school.” This will please Mollie, but Kara, my studious girl, will hate it. I’m grateful they’ve been kept home safe, though. I would hate to think of them out there, alone and exposed.

“Things will be back to normal soon,” I promise, even though I have no idea if that is true. Zeke says he’ll let me go home as soon as possible, but

what does that actually mean? When will I be allowed home? Just because we fucked doesn't mean things change, does it? I want to be with my daughters, but part of me doesn't want to leave him either. I'm not ready to walk out on him.

"Mum?" Kara's voice filters down the line, and I close my eyes as it washes over me. "Are you coming home soon?"

I let my gaze drift to Zeke. I have no idea, but I don't want my girl to worry. "Soon, baby. Soon."

"Uncle Nox said you were taken."

Since I know Nox would never tell his niece that, I arch a brow. "He told you that?"

"I... might have overheard him talking to Uncle Ravage."

"I've told you about listening in on conversations that are private, Kara-bear."

She huffs at the nickname I've called her since she was born. As she's got older, she's come to hate it, but I'm not ready to accept my kid is a teen yet. "Don't call me that."

I smile in spite of her pissy tone. This... this feels normal, and fuck if I haven't missed it. "Sorry."

"Mum, I love you."

Her words hit me like a solid thump to the chest. I know in my heart my daughter loves me, but since she hit her teen years, she's not been one to tell me that kind of thing. "I love you too, honey."

I talk for an hour to my daughters. I expect Zeke to order me off the phone, but he doesn't. He just sits there drinking his coffee and waiting for me to finish.

I say a tearful goodbye before finally hanging up.

"All right?" Zeke asks.

I round the counter and throw my arms around him. "Thank you," I whisper to him.

"You'll see them soon for real," he tells me. "I promise."

I plan on holding him to that assertion. I need my daughters and I want them back at my side.

Z E K E



THE NEXT FEW days pass in a weird blur of normality. I've started sleeping in my bed with Bailey. I let her go to sleep first while I finish off whatever work I need to see to and then I go to her. In the morning, I fuck her into the mattress, letting her pain seep from her. My presence seems to be enough to keep the nightmares at bay, and while it is, I'll keep staying with her. I want her to sleep easy. I want her to catch up on all the sleep she lost being held captive by Jack.

We develop an easy routine in the mornings when we shower together and then have coffee and toast at the breakfast bar. I love spending this time with her. It makes me appreciate her all the more. Between the moments of sadness, moments when she gets lost staring out over the London skyline, there are glimmers of Bailey, or who I think she must have been before the abduction. Her strength fucking slays me. Every day she wakes up and puts a brave face on for the world, for me. Most people would have fallen apart, and maybe she will once she's free of the penthouse, but for now she's keeping things together better than I would have expected.

I admire that about her.

I'm sitting at the breakfast bar with my laptop while she moves around the kitchen making us lunch. She's whipping up some kind of vegetable risotto. She's a terrible cook, but I keep this to myself.

My phone rings. I pick it up and swipe across the screen when I see my brother's name. "We've confirmed Patrick's location," he says, without bothering with a hello.

My stomach sinks a little at that news. It means my time with Bailey will be coming to an end. She'll go home to her girls and I'll go back to my

normal life. Fuck, I don't want that. I've got used to having her here, in my bed, in my space. I ruthlessly shove that thought down. I don't want to consider what shit will look like without her. I don't want to wake up alone. Even though it's only been a few days, I've become used to having her wrapped around me. I've got used to waking up with her and our morning routine. I don't want that to change.

"Ravage has been given the information?" I ask.

At his name, Bailey turns to me and I see the uncertainty in her eyes. I ignore her and focus on my brother's voice. I'll tell her what we talked about afterwards.

"Yeah," Kane tells me.

"Next steps?"

"Anthony will give twenty men to help. Parker will lead them."

"Where?"

"Why?" he asks, suspicion in his tone. I don't blame him. I'm not hot-headed, not like Lucas or Kane, but I do have the Fraser personality, which means I tend to jump into shit before I really consider the consequences. Case in point, taking Bailey. That hadn't been the smartest move, even though I thought I was fucking clever at the time. Now, I have to give her up, and I'm not sure I'm going to be able to.

Nox is going to have to tear her from my fucking hands.

"I'm going too."

"No, you're fucking not." Kane spits out the words, as if they are a done deal and his word is law. It's not.

"I want to make sure they get all of Farley's men." At that, Bailey stiffens. Fuck, the worry in her face nearly steals my breath, but I need to know this is finished, that there's no chance of anyone coming after Bailey again. I will do whatever it takes to ensure her safety, even if that means getting down in the trenches with the foot soldiers.

"Parker will do what's fucking necessary without you putting yourself at risk."

"I don't answer to you, Kane."

He lets out a huff. "You're set on doing this?"

"Yes."

"I'm coming too then."

I grin at his assertion. "Anthony won't allow it."

"Since when have either of us given a fuck what that prick will allow?"

Never. We've been disobeying our father since we were old enough to do our own thing. He rattles off an address and a time to meet him at. I commit both to my memory before I hang up the phone.

"You're going to fight," Bailey states, her voice flat and empty.

"I have to," I tell her, hating how pale she's suddenly become.

"I don't want you to."

"I know, but I have to see this through."

She shoves the spatula into the pan and turns to face me. "Why? You have men who can handle this, don't you? Why do you have to be there?"

"Because I have to ensure your safety."

Her jaw slackens at my words and her eyes flare wide. I can see I've shocked her. She didn't expect that as a reason. "What?"

"I won't let another fucking man from Farley's syndicate lay a finger on you. I need to ensure with my own eyes that those fuckers are wiped out."

"Zeke—"

"They took you, they hurt you, and now they're going to fucking die." I walk around the counter and come to stand in front of her. All my protective urges are on overdrive right now. I want to kill. I need that bloodletting to make these feelings dissipate. I need to smash Patrick Farley into the dirt and make sure Bailey will never be on that fucker's radar again.

"I don't need you to fight my battles," she says quietly as I run my hands up and down her arms, trying to soothe the pain I see in her eyes, a pain I want desperately to remove.

"No, but I'm going to anyway." I dip my head and capture her mouth. The kiss is gentle. Far more so than I want it to be, but I don't want to push her when she's so close to the edge.

She's not so shy. Her tongue sweeps into my mouth, duelling with my own. Fuck, she's a wet dream, and as I put my hands on the globes of her arse, I want desperately to push her onto the counter and slide between her thighs.

"I need to be inside you," I tell her.

Her eyes darken and she nods. This isn't going to be perfect and beautiful. It's going to be fast and furious. I free my cock as she gets her leggings and underwear down, and then I slam into her. She wraps one leg around me, giving me a different angle to penetrate her, and fuck, it feels amazing. She's so tight and her warm slick channel squeezes me as I fuck her.

Her eyes are heated as they meet mine, and I want to consume her. She's mine, and I'm never letting her go. I've never wanted a woman like this in my life. Most were convenient, something to pass the time. Bailey is different. I see a future with her. I see a strong woman at my side, running things with me. I see a life partner I can rely on who can rely on me too. I'll never let shit touch her again.

She trembles as I fuck her against the counter, her pants driving me fucking crazy. She comes first and a moment later I follow her over the edge, spilling inside her.

I slide my fingers into her hair as I slow my hips. I kiss her again and she melts into my touch in a way that makes me rejoice. Fuck, the feel of her against me lights a pyre inside me, the heat scorching my skin.

"The way you're looking at me now scares me," she whispers.

I don't want her afraid of me. I never want that. "Why?"

"Because you want something I'm not sure I can give you."

"Whatever you can give me is enough." She swallows hard as I pull free of her. "I have to go."

She grabs my wrists. "I don't want you to do this."

Gently, I extract myself from her hold on me. "I won't be long."

I clean up in the bathroom as much as I can then snag a suit jacket from my closet as well as a gun and a couple of knives, before I head for the lifts. Bailey watches me from the kitchen, and I wish I knew what was going on in her head. I don't have time to unpick it though. My brother won't wait long for me. They'll want to strike the Farleys while the intel is solid. They could move location at any time.

Time is of the essence.

"I'll be back soon."

She wraps her arms around herself and her brows come together. "Please be careful."

"I will."

I call Malone from the car and tell him Farley's location so he can meet me there. "Any news on Jack?" I ask as I navigate through the traffic.

Malone's voice comes through the car's speakers. "A potential name. Jack Bolen."

"The fucker used his real first name?" That surprises me.

"Guess he didn't think he had much to fear."

He's wrong about that. He's going to have plenty to fear when I get my

hands on him. I'm going to make him pay for all the bruises he left on Bailey, for the marks braceleting her wrists and ankles, and for the nightmares he gave her.

He's going to pay for it all. I'm going to make him suffer like I've never made a person suffer before. Death will be too quick for him. I'm going to flay his skin off the bone and cut his pencil dick off before stuffing it down his throat.

"I don't want that fucker going to ground when we hit Farley's headquarters."

"I'm not leaving you to deal with Farley on your own while I go after him, if that's what you're asking." Malone sounds pissed I would even make the suggestion, but I don't see what choice we have.

"You are, and that's an order."

He grumbles down the line. "You're a first-class prick, you know that?"

"Yeah, yeah. You got a location for Jack?"

"I know a few places he owns. I'll check them out to see if I can flush the rat bastard out."

"You fucking find him, Malone."

"Zeke—"

"Find him." That cunt can't be free to attack Bailey again. I need this nightmare to be over for her. I need her to be able to move on and live her life. I don't want this shit hanging over her head and her girls' heads either.

"Fine. I'm not fucking happy about this shit though."

"Noted."

I end the call and refocus my attention on the road. Itchy tension works through me as I get closer to the address Kane gave me. That this could be the end of this is both good but also bad for me. I will have to do as promised and give Bailey back. I'm not ready for that to happen. I'm not ready to stop exploring things between us yet. I've grown attached to her quickly. She's my newest obsession and I don't want to give that up.

But I have to.

I have to in order to avoid a war between us and the Untamed Sons. Could we defeat them? Maybe, but it would be risky. They have a lot of additional forces they can call on from other chapters of their club. The Fraser Syndicate is not that expansive. We're kings in our domain, but that domain is limited. It doesn't mean we're not powerful. We are. We didn't get to where we are today by not having strength, but we do rely more on

alliances—alliances we're about to break by standing with the Sons against the Farleys.

I direct the car down a long lane that opens out onto a scrap of land that looks like it's been deserted for years. There are rows of motorcycles as well as a few cars and vans I know must belong to my father's men.

Kane is standing with Ravage and Nox, deep in conversation. I'm grateful he didn't bring Lucas, though he would have come, which tells me Kane didn't mention he was coming either.

As I cut the engine and step out of the car, Nox locks eyes with me. His gaze darkens as his mouth pulls into a snarl. I don't move as he tears towards me. No one does. I find myself shoved against the side of my car, Nox's elbow jammed in my neck. Kane pulls a gun instantly, aiming it at the back of Nox's head. More guns appear, my father's men facing off against the bikers. The tension is so thick it should choke me.

I stare into Nox's eyes, daring him to make a move. He might be Bailey's brother, but that won't stop me from killing this fucking bastard. "Do it," I hiss.

His lip curls into a snarl. "You took my fucking sister."

"She's safe," I assure him.

"If you've laid a finger on her—"

"You'll what?" I sneer back at him. I slam my hand against his chest, shoving him away from me. The temptation to stick my own gun in his face is overwhelming.

"Nox." Ravage's warning cracks through the air.

He growls a curse, but steps back, running his fingers over his shaved head. "I should fucking kill you for what you've done."

His threat doesn't faze me. It's not one he's going to follow through on, as much as he may want to.

"You can try," Kane tells him in calm voice, "but you'd be dead before you drew your weapon."

"Let's just all calm down," Ravage rumbles. His deep voice cuts through the air like a knife.

"This cunt stole my fucking sister," Nox snarls.

"Keep your end of the bargain and you can have her back." I say the words even as my stomach lurches at the idea. The last thing I want is to give up Bailey, but right now, we need to have the Sons onside. I can't be with Bailey if I'm fucking dead.

“You’re a prick,” Nox says, stabbing a finger in my direction.

I am, so I don’t defend the accusation.

“Shall we discuss how we’re going to do this?” Kane asks.

I straighten my suit jacket and move towards my brother as everyone lowers their guns slowly. Like a match to a powder keg, this meeting could spark an explosion. We have to keep focused on the only thing that matters—ensuring Bailey’s safety. If her brother can’t do that then we’re going to have problems, because I’m not handing her back over until I’m sure she’s fucking safe.

Z E K E



THE PLAN IS SIMPLE, and Ravage goes over it a few times to make sure we all are clear on what we're doing. Nathan Ford, Kane's bodyguard, sticks close to my brother. The downturn of his mouth tells me he's not happy about what he's doing, but he won't challenge Kane either. Nathan is a good little foot soldier. Unlike Malone, who fucking questions everything I do.

Nox keeps giving me shitty looks, which I ignore. The man is a volcano on the verge of explosion. He wants to lay into me. I can see it in his eyes, but this is bigger than our personal feud. If we can wipe the Farleys off the map, things will be better for both us and the Sons. Doing that is not going to be easy, though.

Farley's forces were decimated by the Sons almost a year ago after a faction of his men stormed the Sons' clubhouse. Most were arrested and are now rotting in jail at Her Majesty's pleasure. Patrick himself was left in a predicament. His son was murdered by the Sons, which left him heirless and rudderless. Patrick was carved up like a Christmas turkey, leaving him with horrific scarring to his face and body. It's anyone's guess what state of mind we'll find him in. He's had months to stew on this revenge plan of his. Taking Bailey was the first step. I have no idea what else he had planned, but I will ensure he doesn't do anything else that might put her in harm's way. That means I have to eradicate the Farleys completely. It's the only way.

I check my gun is loaded before we start the short walk through the desolate industrial estate towards where the Farleys are reported to be holed up. Old warehouses, their red brick crumbling, line the route like a graveyard from a time long forgotten.

My heart beats steadily as a calm washes over me, the same calm I

always get before a big fight—although I don't get to be involved in many of those. Kane is the heir and I'm the spare. If anything happens to my brother, the Fraser empire will come to me after my father's demise. It's not a kingdom I want. I'm happy to let my brother take the lead on it and do as he needs. My position at Kane's side is what I've been groomed for my entire life. I've never coveted that kind of power.

The show of force behind me makes me feel immortal, like there's nothing I can't achieve. Farley's demise is a done deal. He and his men will not come out of this alive.

The bikers move first, as discussed, storming the main entrance while the rest of us move to the back entrance. Ford keeps close to Kane, but I notice he doesn't stray too far from me either. I watch as Parker storms through the door and into the old warehouse. The men follow him while Kane and I enter behind them. I know my brother would prefer to be up front, but if we're ambushed it doesn't pay to be the first ones into the building.

We're greeted with silence as we move into the building. The lights are on, but it doesn't seem as if anyone is home. Fuck, did we miss them?

Then I hear gunfire.

The distinct rat-tat-a-tat of firearms discharging fills the air. We move faster, clearing the rooms as we go until we hit a large open space and step into the middle of the gunfight.

I can see bikers ducked behind anything that offers protection. Fury, the big guy who runs the club's security, has blood running down his arm, but he's still firing.

I ignore everything but the enemy as I duck behind a large piece of machinery. I fire indiscriminately at Farley's men. The Sons block one exit while we block the other. There's nowhere for these fuckers to go. They're rats caught in a drain and we'll flush them out one by one until the infestation is gone.

I shoot at a target and take him down, his head exploding like a melon. A bullet skims close to my shoulder, the rush of air moving the fabric of my suit. Fuck, that was close. I keep an eye on my older brother as I shoot. The gleeful grin on Kane's face tells me all I need to know. My brother is having the time of his life picking off Farley's men.

The fire fight is brutal, long, and bloody. I can smell discharged guns in the air, the acrid scent of the gunpowder making my nose itch, and the coppery tang of the blood. It's thick with it, sickly even. I keep firing until

there's no one left to return gun shots.

As we move forwards from our hiding places, I notice there are few of our men down and a few bikers too. One of their lads, I think his name is Titch, has a bullet in the leg. He's conscious and swearing, moisture beading on his forehead. I don't think it's life threatening, but he's not my concern.

I glance at my brother, who is dusting his suit off.

Certain Kane is whole, I follow the men deeper into the warehouse. Most are gathered outside a small office, Sons' kutties staring back at me. Fury is being patched up by another brother, his arm pissing blood.

As I step through the doors, I see Nox and Ravage alone are standing over the desk, Ravage has his gun aimed at Patrick Farley's head. Kane and I step inside, closing the door behind us.

The rumours didn't lie.

Pat's face is scarred to shit. His face is a mass of white lines from the healed injuries, a road map of the torture he suffered. I find myself grinning in spite of the situation. This fucker is the reason Bailey was taken and the reason she has nightmares. I want my five fucking minutes with him.

From the looks of it, I'm going to have to get in line. Nox pulls a knife from his belt. He slams the blade into Farley's shoulder. He screams. It's a bloodcurdling sound. Music to my fucking ears. He needs to scream more before my thirst for his blood will be assuaged. I want him begging for mercy that will never come. I want him to feel the same fear Bailey felt tied to that bed for days, wondering if she was going to die. I want him to feel the same humiliation.

I want him to suffer.

I want him to die.

And then my family is going to take over everything they built over the years and piss on the memory of the Farley syndicate.

I want to rub my fucking hands together with glee, but I just keep my gun locked on his head. One wrong move and he's going to have several bullets splitting his skull open.

Patrick's eyes dart around as he licks his lips. I can see the anxiety racing through him as he realises it isn't just the Sons he's facing, but also the Frasers.

"Traitorous bastards," he hisses at Kane. "We're supposed to be allies."

My brother doesn't react. "You overstepped," Kane tells him. "Now, you'll pay the price for that."

“You shouldn’t have touched my fucking sister,” Nox adds on a snarl. He’s a feral animal waiting to rip out the heart of an enemy.

“I didn’t want that bitch. I wanted Fury’s whore. I want him to suffer as I did. I wanted him to watch as I killed the only thing that ever mattered to him.”

His words piss me off. Red films my vision. I move before I think about it and put a bullet in his chest. He doesn’t make a sound as I do, but the laboured movement of his chest and breathing tells me I hit his lung. Good.

Blood bubbles on his lips.

“For that, you’re going to pay with your life,” I tell him quietly, “but not before I make it fucking hurt.”

I don’t care that I have an audience. My only thought is for Patrick to suffer the same way Bailey did. I pull out my knife and stab it into his leg. This time he lets out a garbled whimper. It’s music to my fucking ears. I want him to scream. I want to hear those beautiful sounds. I will make him pay for every inch of hurt inflicted on Bailey. I don’t give a fuck that Patrick wasn’t the one who hit her. It doesn’t matter. He was the one who ordered her taken. Mix-up or not, he could have given her back unscathed. He chose to sell her. He chose to leave her with that filthy prick. That makes him culpable in my view.

I slash ruthlessly at his body, cutting his clothes to bloodied tatters as I do. I want to do worse, but there isn’t enough room. Then I move to his eye. I’ve had a lot of experience with how to remove an eye without killing the victim. It was something Anthony had one of his psycho men teach me. It’s a lesson I’ve never been more grateful for. Patrick screams through the whole ordeal. I’m grateful he doesn’t pass out. I want him awake for this shit.

“An eye for a fucking eye,” I hiss at him, pressing the knife tip against his cheek, my fingers gripping his bloody chin. “This isn’t a fraction of what you fucking deserve.”

Nox tugs me back. “Enough. Time to end this shit.”

He wouldn’t say that if he knew what this cunt did to his sister, but I won’t tell him. It’s not my shit to spill.

Chest heaving, splattered with blood myself, I can’t help but think it will never be enough. There will never be enough torment I can inflict on him that will make what was done to Bailey right.

Nox steps closer and without hesitation he puts a bullet in Patrick’s head. Blood pools around the wound before it starts to bleed more heavily.

He slumps to the side in the chair, and fuck if it doesn't piss me off that this cunt is dead. I wanted more. I needed more. I needed to torture the fuck out of him. I needed him to suffer more than that.

"It's done," Ravage mutters, staring at the body of Patrick Farley.

"I want my fucking sister back," Nox demands.

The thought makes my stomach roil. "As soon as we have control of Farley's assets, she's yours."

"Fucker—" Nox steps forwards and Kane gets between us.

"Take another step and I'll kill you," Kane tells him.

"Your brother stole my fucking sister."

"He has been taking care of her. She's not in any danger."

"He had no fucking right to touch her."

"I had every fucking right," I hiss. "She's mine."

Nox's eyes flare as wide and anger ripples through his body. "The fuck do you mean she's yours?"

"Exactly fucking that."

Nox tries to launch himself at me, but Ravage snags him around the neck. I don't flinch or move. "If you've touched her, I'll fucking kill you!" he yells.

I turn to Ravage, and as much as it kills me to say it, I mutter, "Fulfil the terms of the agreement, and if she wants it, I'll have Bailey brought to the clubhouse. You have my word."

Ravage scowls. "If she wants it? Why the fuck wouldn't she want it?"

Because as much as she's mine, I'm hers too. But I don't answer. I can't explain what I don't understand myself. I walk from the room with Kane on my heels.

"You want to tell me what's going on between you and this woman?"

I stop as we get outside and peer up at the sky. "Yes. She's mine, and I'll kill anyone who tries to take her from me. You included."

Kane's maniacal grin should freak me out, but it doesn't. It means my brother has my back. "You want to go to war with those leather wearing fuckers, just say the word."

I consider my answer. Then I say, "I want Bailey. Nothing more."

But if Nox is going to stand in my way, I will fight him and I will win, because Bailey means more to me than I've even admitted.

BAILEY



I CHEW my nails down to the quick waiting for Zeke to return. Is he hurt? Has he killed? Do I care if he has? No. I know that makes me a bad person, but I'm under no illusion about the kind of man Zeke is. He's a killer. Like my brother. Like Ravage. Like Titch and Levi. Like Daimon. Like Fury.

I know my old man killed. I would ignore the blood spots on his clothes when I did the laundry, but I'd see them. I knew he was into things he shouldn't be. Zeke is more obvious with his dealings, and if I'm being truthful, I admit I prefer that. I never knew where I stood with Laurence, or with my brother either. I never knew anything but what he allowed me to know. It wasn't a bad life, not at all, but it is a difficult one when your spouse is hiding things from you.

Zeke also hides things.

It's the nature of these men.

But Zeke will tell me things he thinks I should know—like when Jack is caught. Laurence would never have done that. He would have taken care of matters himself, though Zeke could still change his mind.

I go to the windows and peer out over the city, an uneasy feeling draping over my shoulders like a lead weight. Thoughts of escape don't enter my head, though they should. I'm still a prisoner here, but I don't feel confined. Not anymore. I want to be here with Zeke. It sounds crazy, but I feel like I belong.

What if he never comes back?

I'm stuck in this building. I can't get out. The lifts don't work for me. I haven't seen any other exit, though I'm sure there must be a fire exit somewhere. I'm trapped like a rat on a sinking ship.

I should eat, but my stomach churns savagely as I wait. I try to watch some television, but I can't concentrate on the story. In the end, I curl up on the sofa, a blanket pulled over my legs, and I let my brain empty of all thoughts but Zeke.

In the silence of the penthouse, I start to nod off. I must drift completely because the next thing I know I'm being pulled out of sleep by the ping of the lift. I snap my eyes open and glance up as Zeke steps into the living area. He's covered in blood. His previously white shirt is stained crimson and his eyes are a little wild.

They locate me instantly, his gaze a heat-seeking missile finding its target. Heat explodes between us both at that hungry look in his eyes even as I feel a tendril of fear unfurl in my belly. I'm grateful for the distance between us because right now he's looking at me like I'm his next meal.

He crosses the space and captures my mouth, his fingers sliding into my hair.

He attacks me with a ferocity, a need I've never seen from him before. He pushes me up against the cushions as he cups my pussy.

"Stop. Zeke, stop."

He does. Instantly. Even in his blood haze, he pulls back, breathing like a raging bull. His eyes are wide, fired up.

"Are you hurt?" I ask.

He peers at his bloody shirt, plucking at the front of it. "The Farleys are done."

A shiver runs through me at the finality of his words. Fuck, they're one of the oldest crime families in London, and Zeke is standing there wearing their blood, proclaiming their downfall.

"Whose blood is that?" I don't know why I want to know this. What difference does it make?

He doesn't answer or stop as he moves towards the bedroom. I get off the sofa and follow him as he moves into the en-suite bathroom.

"Zeke, whose blood is that?" I demand again as he strips the shirt off his back, letting it pool on the floor where he drops it.

I can't stop my gaze from gravitating to the contours of his pecs and abdominal muscles.

He turns slowly towards me and I flick my eyes to his face in time to see the brief second of indecision before he answers. "Patrick Farley's."

I swallow bile and all lusty feelings dissipate into the air like steam from

a kettle. There's a lot of blood. More than there should be if Patrick stayed breathing.

"He's dead?"

"He suffered for the order to take you. Know that." The fire in his voice crackles.

Patrick is dead.

I shouldn't feel as relieved as I do, but knowing the man is gone, that he can never order another abduction of me or someone I love makes the muscles throughout my body relax. I close my eyes and let that thought wash over me as I try to breathe easier. "And Jack?"

"Malone went after him."

A tingle runs up my spine, icy fingers skimming over my skin like a ghostly touch. "He has him?"

Could this be over? Could I be in a position to get my life back on track? I want to see the man who hurt me punished. I want to see Jack suffer the way I did. The need for vengeance is a drug racing through my veins, poisoning every cell in my body. I've never been bloodthirsty before, but then I've never been hurt before either. The club protected me from a lot of stuff over the years.

Zeke takes hold of my arms. "You don't have to do shit to him if you don't want to."

His words confirm that Jack is in Malone's claws and I'm not sure how I feel about that. Relief that I know I'll be safe, maybe.

Anger.

Confusion.

I peer up into his eyes, my heart thumping in my chest. "This is over?"

"Yeah, princess. It's over."

Fuck, it's like a weight has lifted off my chest for the first time since I was first taken, a weight that is no longer crushing my lungs and making it hard to breathe.

But Zeke's reaction makes me unsure. He glances away, his eyes filled with pain. What's wrong with him? I'm not sure, but I want to fucking know. I don't like seeing that look in his gaze. I don't like feeling on the outside looking in.

"I need to shower," he says. "Then I need to hold you."

His words warm me from the inside out. I follow him into the bedroom and sink onto the bed to wait for him to clean up.

After what feels like an age, the shower switches off and I hear the glass door slide back. When he steps back into the room, he has a towel wrapped around his hips, giving me an even more tantalising view of his body, and what a body it is. His hips taper down into that pronounced V men have and the ripple of his abdomen is divine.

I lick my lips as he drops the towel and turns, giving me an eyeful of the perfect globes of his arse as he steps into the closet. I don't know what I'm doing with this man, but he comforts me in a way no other man ever has. Beneath the icy exterior there is warmth he gives to me and, I suspect, only me.

He pulls on a pair of sweats and a tee before coming back into the room. He still seems a little... off. I can't put my finger on what's wrong with him. I don't think it has anything to do with killing Patrick and wiping out the Farleys. I doubt a man like Zeke would care about that kind of thing, but there is something.

“What's wrong?”

He doesn't answer.

“Zeke.”

“This is done. As long as the Sons uphold the rest of the bargain, I have to give you back.”

The pain in his voice makes my own chest ache. I want to go home, desperately. I want to see my daughters, but I don't want to leave Zeke either. I feel like I'm being torn in two. A sliver of pain crawls through me. I can't imagine not waking up in his arms. I can't imagine trying to sleep without him there either.

But freedom...

I want it too.

I want to see my family. I want life to return to normal.

“This doesn't have to be the end of us.”

“I know, but it will be.” He doesn't look at me as he says that, and I have no idea what to make of his words. Why will this be the end?

“What if I don't want to go.”

He slides his hand around my neck to collar my nape. “You have to. Your brother is already spitting fire.”

I pull free of his grip, letting my anger flow through me. “I don't care what Nox wants. I don't want to wake up without you.”

“Your girls.”

I grab his hands, needing to feel him. Needing to be grounded. They were covered in blood just moments ago. They're clean now, but can water wash away the sins of the past? "I want to see them."

"You need to be with them," he agrees.

Tears form in my eyes, a lone one sliding down my cheek, leaving a wet trail in its wake. "I'm not ready to give you up."

My heart is shattering at the thought. Once I leave here, things will change. I know they will, and not necessarily for the better. My family will never let Zeke near me again. I'll be trapped once more as Laurence's widow and Nox's sister.

Not Bailey.

They won't see me. They'll see my club ties.

I hate that.

I've always hated that.

"Nothing here for you, princess. I'm not a good man." He runs his fingers down my face.

"I think you're better than you give yourself credit for."

"I just had to rinse the blood of a man I killed less than an hour ago off me."

"You think I didn't want him dead too?" I hiss at him. "I wanted his murder to happen. Just like I want Jack dead too. I'm not this sweet innocent little girl."

"No, I can see that."

"So stop treating me like you need to protect me."

He leans forwards and presses a kiss to my mouth. "You need to go home, be with your girls, and heal. You were attacked less than a week ago. You're just finding solace in me because it's safe. Easy. I'm not what you really want."

His words shred me. Does he really think that? Is that what he believes? It goes me if he does. I thought we were building something. I'm not sure what, but I thought the heated look in his eyes when he looked at me meant something. I didn't imagine it.

Did I?

"So that's it? This is... done?" I can feel my tears choking me and an agony in my gut as if my body is tearing itself apart.

There is a chasm growing between us, a gulf I can't traverse. It guts me. I don't want this, but I don't really know what I want either. I'm so mixed up.

This man forced me to be here, but part of me wanted to be here too. He was good to me. Kind. Held me when I was reliving Jack's abuse. He soothed the pain away. He helped me to get medical treatment.

No, this isn't done.

I won't allow it.

I shake my head. "Don't you dare push me away. Not after everything."

"Bailey, you have to go back to your life, and that life doesn't include me."

I grip his forearms, needing something to ground me. The floor feels unsteady beneath me. I feel lost after finally being found. I feel alone. Scared.

My breath tears out of me as I stare up at him. "Don't do this. I need you."

Gently, he pulls my hands away. "I'm a mobster. The monster in the dark. I'm not the man you fall for."

Tears pool at the corners of my eyes. I won't beg him. I'll never do that. I have more self-respect than that, even though my heart feels like it's being ripped apart. "I don't care about that shit. Don't fucking toss me aside like this past week has meant nothing."

He kisses me. "It's meant more than I can tell you, but if you don't go home, we'll head straight into another war, and I'm not sure we'd win this one."

My brother against the man I'm falling for...

Fuck.

I don't want that. I don't want to tear my world apart and hurt the people I love. But I don't want to give up Zeke either.

"A compromise," he says as he presses his forehead to mine. "You go home, you heal, you take time to digest all this, and if you still want this, I'll be there."

"You promise?"

"Promise."

"Okay."

"Before I take you home, I need to make sure the threat to you is gone."

"Jack." My mouth pulls into a tight line.

"Yeah. I promised you I'd let you have your time with him. I'm not going to go back on that, but I'd rather you didn't take part in this."

The anger and torment flaring through me needs somewhere to go, so I shake my head. "No, this is my fight."

And I'm going to make Jack regret crossing me.

Z E K E



I DRIVE Bailey to the place where Malone is holding Jack Bolen. As I cast a sidelong glance at her, my stomach clenches. Fuck, I don't want her to do this, but I understand she needs to. I have no full idea of the horrors she endured while she was Jack's captive. I only know what she's told me. Beating after beating, the mental torment of never knowing if she'd escape that room, and then the fear of being sold to a stranger must haunt her.

My imagination is worse. The things I dream up disturb me. When she says she wants to see this shit through with Jack, as much as I want to protect her from it, I can't deny her a thing.

She keeps her gaze locked on the side window and doesn't speak to me. She's barely said a word since I told her she needed to go home. Do I want that? Fuck no, but she needs her family. She doesn't need a man like me, a man who would set fire to the world to get vengeance for her. Bailey will get her time with Jack, but so will I. I'm going to do things to that man that his worst nightmares could not imagine. I'm going to come up with all new inventive ways to make him hurt. Her bruises still have not faded from her time with him. They still circle her neck, her wrists, and her ankles. They cover her body. Her ribs are still healing, and her wrist too.

I cast a glance at her, hating this growing divide between us. It shouldn't be here. I shouldn't allow it. Why am I pushing her away?

Because I need to know this is real.

I need to know she isn't just taking what I'm offering to keep me from hurting her. Nothing about our relationship has been normal. She's here because I abducted her. I need to know that's not the reason she wants to stay.

Her refusal to talk to me is grating on my nerves though.

“Are you just going to give me the silent treatment?” I demand, irritation making my words terse.

“What else is there to say?” she mutters. “You want me out of your life, so I’m going.”

“I didn’t say I wanted you out of my life.”

Bailey snaps her head around. “You told me to go home. You told me to leave.”

“Princess... you need to see your girls. You need to get back to normality.”

“And you want me to do that without you?” Tears stand out in her eyes. “I don’t think I can.”

I reach across the middle console and squeeze her thigh. “You can, and you will.”

“I can’t sleep without you. I can’t breathe without you.”

Fuck, she’s breaking down that cold hard muscle in my chest. I don’t know that I can keep pushing her away. I want her so much, but I also can’t be a crutch for her.

“Talk to someone about the abduction. If, after you’ve done that, you still feel the same, we’ll talk.” I need to know what is between us is real, that it’s not because she feels like she owes me.

“You still think my feelings for you are some kind of misguided complex where I see you as my hero?”

That’s exactly what I think. “You’ve been through a lot.”

She doesn’t answer. She just goes back to staring out the window. Neither of us speak until I pull the car up outside the place we often use to torture people. The small building is off the beaten track, something that is hard to find in inner-city London. I can see the skyline of high-rises poking through the trees that surround the building.

I climb out of the car and so does Bailey. She’s pale beneath the freckles on her face, and that makes me want to push her back into the vehicle and take her home.

“You don’t have to do this,” I tell her.

I see the physical effort it takes for her to steel herself. “I do.”

Despite our argument in the car, I hold my hand out to her and I’m glad she slips hers into mine. Her palm is warm and I can feel the shake in her body as I grip her tighter. I shouldn’t bring her here. This isn’t right.

“We can get back in the car right now and go home—if that’s what you want.”

Her eyes soften at my words and I want to see more of that instead of the anger she’s feeling directed at me. “I want him to pay.”

“I can make that happen. You don’t need to be here for it.”

I watch her tongue as she dips it out and wets her bottom lip. “Yes, I do.”

I kiss her. I shouldn’t. I’m trying to keep my distance, but I can’t stop myself from meeting her mouth. She tastes like sunshine, the light to my dark. I should protect her from the horrors she’s about to unleash, but I can’t be the one to stop her doing this either.

I thread my fingers through her hair before I cup her cheeks. “Any time you want this to end, just say the word.”

She gives me a wobbly smile as I lead her into the building.

The air is cooler inside, the bare concrete walls providing little insulation from the chill. Bailey shivers as we make our way through the maze of corridors to the kill room. I’ve tortured my share of men in this room, including Henry, who sold information about our shipments.

I squeeze her hand a little tighter as I push open the door. Malone is leaning against the wall, his foot planted against the plaster. He looks surprised to see Bailey, but he doesn’t comment on it.

My gaze shifts to the middle of the room. A blond man is hanging from a meat hook, naked. His skin is a clean canvas apart from some swelling to his temple.

Malone hasn’t touched him yet.

Good.

He lifts his chin at me before he leaves the room, giving us the space we need to do this.

Jack raises his eyes and finds me first before looking behind me to Bailey.

She stiffens. I feel the ripple of tension go through her entire body as she comes face to face with the man who held her captive, who beat her for days, who tormented her. Her nightmares are made real in this moment, and I wonder what the fuck is going through her head. Her breath hisses as she gets her first look at the man who terrorised her.

“It’s him?” I ask, even though her reaction tells me it is.

This is the fucker who wakes her every night in terror. This is the reason she can’t sleep alone. She’s nervous around me sometimes. I see her

wariness. I understand it, even if I don't like it. She has nothing at all to fear from me. I'll never lay a hand on her. I'm not a good man. I've done questionable things in my life, some I regret, some I don't, but hitting a woman is not on my list of transgressions and I'm not about to add it either.

"Yes." Her voice is small, but there's steel in it too. My brave girl. Fuck, I'd take this pain for her too if I could.

I let go of her hand and stalk towards Jack. He's watching me, a slight curve to his lips. That disappears when I grab him by the throat. I dig my fingers into the soft flesh. His eyes bug out and his breath catches as he tries and fails to draw air. I want to squeeze just that little bit harder and watch the light leave his eyes. I want to be the one to end his life, but this is Bailey's fight. She needs to be the one to destroy him.

"You're going to die today," I tell him between gritted teeth. "Slowly. Painfully. I'm going to make sure you feel every agony possible."

"What do you care about a piece of snatch?" he hisses.

It's the wrong thing to say. It ignites a fire in my veins. I slam my fist into his gut hard enough to make the breath leave his body. I hit him over and over, my rage unbridled. Then I grab him by the hair and tug his head back.

"Motherfucker," I sneer at him. I let him go with a shove and move back over to Bailey before I kill the cunt. Her eyes are wide and there is real fear in her eyes as she stares at him.

I cup her jaw. "He can't hurt you now. Princess, look at me."

Her eyes slowly slide towards me and I see the tears standing, ready to fall. "This is never going to be over."

"It will. I promise."

I tug Bailey in the direction of the tray of implements used to bring a man to his knees. I can feel her shaking in my grip.

"Take your pick."

She stares at the tray of torture devices. Knives, pliers, screws... it's not for the fainthearted. Bailey's throat works as she wraps her fingers around a knife. "He assaulted me for days, and not just punches. He touched me in ways he had no right to," she says softly. My body recoils at her matter-of-fact words, at the images flying through my head. I don't want to imagine what this cunt did to her, but I can't stop the thoughts from taking hold. "I was tied to the bed. I couldn't move. All I could do was wait for him to come to me and take what he wanted."

"He... he raped you?" Red films my vision, the sensation so strong I feel

like I'm going to pass out.

"No, he just touched me, but that was bad enough. Do you have any idea what it's like to lie there, beaten and terrified, while a man touches you in your most private places?" She raises her eyes to meet his. "You took something from me I can never reclaim."

"You fucking bitch," Jack sneers, his vile words making me want to rage. It takes everything I have to hold still and let her handle this.

Bailey studies the knife in her hand for a moment. Then without preamble she slams it into his leg. He screams as blood pours from the wound. "Bastard," she hisses at him.

She leaves the knife in his leg as her breath rips out of her in heavy pants. I can see the toll this is taking on her already. Bailey might have grown up in a violent world, and I'm sure she's seen violent acts too, but this is different. This is cold-blooded vengeance.

I expect her to pull the plug on it, but she picks up another knife. "I should cut your dick off," she says.

Jack says nothing. He just continues to gasp through his pain. I hope it is fucking agony, the little prick.

"I dreamed of this moment, of what I'd do to you."

"So do it," he taunts, his lips curling into a snarl. "You're nothing but a weak whore."

She proves him wrong by jamming the knife she's holding into his stomach. He can't stop the scream of pain. With both knives sticking out of him, he's starting to look like a fucking pincushion.

"You're going to die. Horribly," she tells him. "While I get to go on with my life. How does that feel?"

He doesn't answer. He just hangs limply on the hook, drawing air in through his nose. He's going to unravel fast once I get my hands on him. Good. I want him a simpering mess. I want him begging for a mercy that will never come.

Bailey hits him in the stomach. "You made me afraid. You made me feel damaged. I hate you!" She hits him again. "I fucking *hate* you."

I let her have the time she needs with him. Her movements are filled with rage she doesn't attempt to control. I wouldn't expect her to either. She needs to get this shit out or it'll eat her alive. She hits him over and over, screaming her anger as she does. There's no method to her assault, just pure feeling. I watch her coming undone like a thread on an old sweater, and as much as I

want her to have this, I don't want it at the expense of her sanity.

I step forwards and snag her arm, which brings her feral gaze to meet mine. I see the anger dial back as she realises who I am.

"Enough," I tell her.

She drops her trembling hands and looks back at her handiwork. There's blood trickling from the two knife wounds and Jack's stomach is red where she's been beating on him like a piñata. It's not the torture I would have inflicted, not by a long shot, but if it's helped her work through her grief and her anger, it is worth it.

Her eyes lock on Jack's body and I can see the regret starting to rise in them. I cup her face.

"Don't you have even a moment of thought for that cunt," I tell her. "He got what was coming."

Her gaze roams over my face. "I can't do more."

I kiss her forehead. "I'll handle it from here."

Part of me feels satisfaction that she's left me to take out the trash. I'm ready to annihilate this fucker. His torment became less and less the longer her beating lasted, and I saw the energy start to seep from him as the pain overtook. I want to slit his throat for some of the shit that spewed from his mouth.

I walk her outside. Malone is waiting by the car, smoking a cigarette. He puts it out as we approach.

"Take Bailey back to the penthouse."

She snaps her attention towards me at my words. "I don't want to leave without you."

"I'll be home soon."

Home.

Is that how I see the penthouse? It's always been a place to retreat to in times of trouble, but I don't think I ever considered it home. Not until the past week with Bailey. It became some form of home during that time. It shocks me to my core to realise this. Letting her go is not going to be easy.

She doesn't pick up on my word choice, though, or maybe she doesn't compute it. I take her hand. Her knuckles are red and raw. I want to press my lips to them too, but I don't. Instead, I say, "Go with Malone."

I think she's going to argue with me, but then she climbs into the passenger seat of the car without a word. I turn to Malone. "Protect her with your fucking life," I order.

“I’m supposed to be protecting you,” he grumbles.

“Get her home and get back here.”

I tap on the roof of the car and go back into the building. As I step back into the room, I can hear the wet gasps coming from Jack. Bailey clearly did him some damage during her attack.

I roll the sleeves of my shirt up and I go to work. Unlike Bailey, my movements are designed to elicit screams, and for a while, they do. I hack at him, slash him, cut his skin from the bone. I pull fingernails and douse the wounds with salt and lemon. I use every torture technique in the book, and a few that are not in it.

Lastly, I cut the fucker’s dick off, so he can never assault another woman again. He may not have raped her, but I don’t care. He touched her without permission and that’s enough to bring the rage out of me and fill my veins with hot magma.

Finally, I drag the knife under his chin. A waterfall of blood spews down the column of his neck, splashing off the concrete below. I can feel the wetness against my skin. I don’t give it a second thought. Instead, I watch as he bleeds out, the only feeling running through me is satisfaction that vengeance is done.

BAILEY



MALONE DOESN'T SPEAK to me the whole way back to the penthouse. I'm grateful. I want to be alone with my thoughts so I can work through the horrors I've just inflicted on another human being. I didn't think I had it in me to be that savage, but Jack deserved what I did and more. I don't feel regret for my actions, but I do feel alarmed that I was so easily able to torture someone. I don't know what that says about me.

"We're here," Malone says softly as he cuts the engine.

I realise we're back in the parking garage we left just a few short hours ago. Even though I know where the building is now, I don't think of escaping as Malone steps out of the vehicle, despite the fact that now would be the perfect time to try. Instead, I follow him over to the lift, unable to stop the numbness from sweeping through me. He ushers me in and presses his thumb against the button.

Leaning against the wall, I try to calm my tumultuous thoughts, but there's no stopping them from colliding with each other. I did something awful to a man who did something evil to me.

Can I live with that?

Yes...

I think I can.

Jack reaped what he sowed. He brought this shit on himself. He could have just kept me in that room and not laid a finger on me. He chose to molest me. He chose to hit me, to derive pleasure from hurting me. He chose to torment me, and he chose to sell me.

I know whatever pain I inflicted on him was nothing compared to the anguish he's suffering right now at Zeke's hands. I never wanted him to stain

his soul for me, but I'm grateful I didn't have to finish this. I don't think I could have.

I head straight for the bedroom after the lift doors open. I need to clean up and change. I feel numb. I want to speak to my girls. I want to speak to my mother and Nox, but that's not an option, so instead I head for the shower. I wash the blood off me, ignoring the way it turns the water pink, and as soon as I've scrubbed my skin raw, I step out of the cubicle.

Once I've dried off and changed into more of Zeke's clothes, I crawl into his bed. I don't sleep. I just lie there, trying not to think of the things I've done today. I try not to recall the things that were done to me either.

It's hours before I hear the door handle pull down and feel a familiar presence. I twist to look over my shoulder and see Zeke standing in the doorway. His hair is damp and his clothes are clean, no apparent evidence that he tortured and murdered a man, though I know that's what he's done.

"You showered." I don't know why that's the first thing I ask.

"There's a small bathroom in the building. I didn't want you to see me... like that."

My stomach twists at his words. "Covered in blood?"

He scrubs a hand over his jaw. "Does it matter?"

"I guess not." I sit up fully and push my hair out of my face. "He's dead?"

Zeke goes to the edge of the bed and sits on it. "Yes." A shiver moves through me as well as a feeling of relief. "You don't have to worry about him again."

The promise in his voice settles something inside me. Jack's gone. He can never hurt me or my daughters. The Farleys are gone too. Life suddenly seems a lot safer.

"Thank you." It seems a useless thing to say, but I do anyway.

"Princess, you don't have to thank me," he says, but I know that I do.

"What happens now?" I ask.

He skims his fingers up my arm as he hugs me to his side. "You go home. I got a call from my father on the way home. The Sons came through. The terms of the agreement have been met."

A ripple of unease goes through me. "Oh."

I don't want to leave, but I want to see my daughters. He wants me to get my life back on track before we go any further. I understand that. He needs to know that what we're building is real. I'd feel the same too if I were him.

He kisses the side of my head. "Time to go."

I want to cry. I don't want to leave him. He kisses me again, but this time he captures my mouth. It's a gentle kiss, but there's a hint of desperation too. He doesn't want this to happen any more than I do, but I understand why it has to. He's right. I need to get my head on straight. I need to deal with what happened to me. I need to recover. I can't do that while juggling a relationship.

Or, rather, I shouldn't.

I dip my head against his chest and try to breathe through the pain rippling in my heart. We sit for a while, then he pulls me up. On numb legs, we make our way down to the car park and climb in the vehicle. Malone sits in the back while I take the passenger seat.

The drive across the city goes too fast. I hold onto Zeke's hand the entire way, my heart racing. I don't know that I can face my family. I don't know that I can look my girls in the eyes knowing I tortured a man this morning.

As we pull up outside the clubhouse, my heart starts to race. I see Cage move towards the gate and tug it open so Zeke can pull inside. He shouldn't be doing this alone. He needs back up. This is insanity. My brother is going to fucking kill him.

"You shouldn't go inside," I tell him.

"Princess, I'm not scared of your family."

"You should be."

"They won't hurt me, not without causing a war and they won't want that. Farley's men were easy to put down. They were rebuilding. They weren't at their full strength. My father has many allies."

"My brother isn't exactly a pussycat, Zeke!"

"No, but he'll want you back, and he won't care how that happens."

I can't help thinking that Zeke is overestimating the situation, but when he squeezes my hand and says, "Trust me," I fall silent. What else can I do?

He guides the car into an empty space in front of the clubhouse. Tingles race through my belly as Ravage steps out of the building with my brother on his heels. Nox looks pissed. I can see the anger coursing through him by the set of his shoulders and the tightness of his mouth. Ravage places a restraining hand on Nox's arm and my brother seems to calm a little.

Zeke doesn't seem afraid as he climbs out of the car, which helps my nerves a little.

Nox's mouth pulls into a snarl. "I'm going to fucking kill you!" he hisses

as he launches in Zeke's direction.

I move without thought, standing between him and my brother to block his path. "Stop."

Nox's gaze moves to me and I see the ripple of confusion on his face. "You're covered in fucking bruises."

"None of which were caused by Zeke." His eyes blaze as I place a hand on his chest. "He took care of me, Nox."

There must be something in my tone, because my brother's eyes focus on mine. "He shouldn't have taken you in the fucking first place."

"I'm glad he did," I admit. "I couldn't have come straight home. I needed space. Time."

"For what?"

"I was abducted and held against my will. What do you think?"

"You were abducted twice," Nox mutters, eyeing Zeke. "You're a fucking dead man walking, prick."

Zeke takes this threat without so much as a flicker of emotion, though I notice Malone moves closer to him. What he thinks he can do against the gathering crowd of bikers, I don't know. More have poured out the doors, including Titch, Daimon, Levi, and Fury. They aim their guns at Zeke and my heart starts to hammer beneath my ribs. I can't do this. I can't let him go.

Fury has a knowing smile on his lips, like he's planning all the shit he's going to do to Zeke. My heart thuds even harder.

"I upheld my part of the bargain," Zeke states simply. "She's home. This shit is over."

"You bastard—" Nox lunges and I get between him and Zeke again. "Move!"

"No. I won't let you touch him." My chest heaves and fear nips at my heels as my brother's angry gaze finds mine. I can see the confusion swirling amidst the rage.

"What the fuck did he do to you, Bails? Why are you defending a fucking depraved cunt like this?"

Because I love him.

I don't say this. If I express those words it will be to Zeke directly, and I don't think either of us are ready to hear them yet. I need to get my head on straight. I need to heal. I haven't really had time to deal with what was done to me, and I need that. Zeke was right about that.

"Because he saved me. He bought me and took care of me."

“He bought you because we asked him to,” he hisses, and I can see I’m pissing him off.

I don’t care. Zeke isn’t the bad guy in this. He’s the man who held me, who saw me through my nightmares. He’s the man who made me feel secure again.

Zeke is my fucking rock.

“He helped me,” I growl back at him.

Ravage finally steps forwards. “Go inside, sweetheart.”

It’s not a suggestion but an order. I rail against it. If I leave Zeke, is he going to be hurt? Right now, I’m the only thing standing between him and the thick tension in the air. Not that Zeke seems remotely fazed by the guns pointing in his direction. Malone has drawn his own, but he doesn’t stand a chance against the number of weapons trained on him.

When I don’t move, Zeke says softly, “Inside, princess.”

I shake my head and I grip his arm as if that can keep him safe. It can’t. He’s facing insurmountable odds. If my family decide to hurt him, there’s nothing either of us can do about it.

“Please, babe. Go inside.”

“Kara and Mollie are waiting for you,” Nox adds.

I need to see my daughters. I need to hold them.

Zeke nods at me. “Go.”

I don’t want to, I really don’t, but his reassuring smile gets me moving. The brothers stand aside to let me pass and I make my way into the clubhouse—a building I know better than my own home. I’ve whiled away many hours within these walls over the years.

I make my way to the common room, my stomach churning. Sitting with Sasha and Briella are my girls. Fuck. My heart stutters. I didn’t think I would get to see them again. I thought I would die on that shitty mattress in that dank room.

My girls both have red hair and the same upturned nose. Kara has more of her father in her appearance, while Mollie is the image of me. Kara takes one look at the bruises on my body and breaks into tears. I hold my arms open and both my daughters come to me.

“I thought you were gone,” Kara sobs.

I can feel Mollie crying too and my heart fucking breaks. I never want my girls to feel unsure again.

I hug them close, feeling that hole in my stomach begin to close up. Shit,

I missed them both. “I’m here now.”

As I hug them, all I can think is that I hope Zeke will be okay.

ZEKE



THE MOOD CHANGES the moment Bailey goes through the doors. Nox strides towards me and presses a gun to my head. The metal pushes against my temple hard enough to leave an imprint of the barrel. I don't flinch. I meet his gaze unwaveringly.

Malone instantly raises his gun at the nearest brother—Daimon.

“Can't shoot us all,” Daimon growls, his gun arm steady as he continues to point it at me.

Malone doesn't miss a beat. “No, but I can still fucking shoot you.”

The tension is so thick in the air it's stifling. I let my gaze drift around at the brothers, their weapons raised, ready for a word from Ravage to fire. Their president hasn't moved an inch. He's just watching the proceedings like it's a day out in the park.

I bring my attention back to Nox. I want to snap his fucking neck for daring to draw a weapon on me, but he's Bailey's family. It's only that thought that stops me from doing anything rash. “Do you want to take that fucking gun out of my face?” I sneer at him.

He doesn't move. “What the fuck did you do to my sister?”

“Saved her.”

“Did you put those bruises on her?”

I bristle at his words. “Bailey told you I didn't.”

“I'm asking you, fucker.”

“I haven't laid a finger on her.” Other than the ones she asked for. I'm not telling Nox we've shagged. He's already on edge enough.

He pulls the gun away from my head and steps back, breathing hard. “Farley's fuckers did that to her?”

“Yeah.” And a lot of other shit, which I’m not getting into.

Nox scrubs a hand down his face, and I can see he’s getting frustrated. “We let those cunts die too fast.”

That I agree on.

“You know we can’t just let this go,” Ravage says. “You went against our agreement when you took her.”

I did, but it was a necessary move, one that ensured we got what we needed. At least, that had been the intent. Now, I’m fucking attached to her, and knowing she’s inside out of my reach is shredding what’s left of my resolve to stay away. Fuck, I need her. She said she needed me, but it’s the other way around. My breath feels trapped, locked in my chest. I can barely draw air past the lump gathered there.

“I did what I had to,” I tell him. “I secured my family. You’d have done the same.”

He can’t deny it and he doesn’t try to either. “You fucked us.”

“Only for a short time,” I counter. “Bailey is home. Safe. Unscathed.”

“That’s not the point, and you know it.”

I raise my hands from my sides. “So what do you suggest?”

“Reparations.”

“Talk to my father. He’ll negotiate.”

Ravage shakes his head. “No negotiation. We want payment for the harm that was caused.”

I laugh. I can’t stop the noise from coming out. Money is not something I care about, but this is about the principle of the matter. “I paid extra to make sure Bailey came home, out of my own fucking pocket. I kept my end of the deal. I brought her home. I didn’t specify it would be immediately. It couldn’t be. She was in danger, and I did the only thing I could to keep her safe.”

Nox’s brow draws together at my words. “From who?”

“From the Farleys. From the man who took her.” At Nox’s concerned expression, I wave a hand. “He’s been taken care of.”

“By you?”

“Yes.”

I don’t mention Bailey’s part in Jack Bolen’s torture. I’ll never betray her trust.

“You didn’t think maybe I’d want a piece of that shithead?”

“My only concern was ensuring your sister’s safety. I did that. She’s safe and now she’s home.” I straighten my jacket as I glance back at the

clubhouse, willing her to come out. Wanting to see her. Needing to. But the doors remain closed.

Ravage scowls. “You take Sons’ property again and I’ll end you. I don’t give a fuck who your father is. I will destroy your life and the life of every person you fucking love. Understand?”

I get this show of force. He has to do it so he doesn’t lose face in front of his men. If it’s what he needs to have to finish this, then fine.

“I’ll be in touch about the payment,” Ravage adds.

“As always, it’s been a pleasure, gentlemen.” I walk to the driver’s seat of my car and climb in. No one stops me. No one stops Malone either as he gets into the passenger side.

Fuck, leaving is harder than I thought it would be, and as I slip the car into gear, I consider not going and waiting for her instead, but I can’t. She needs this. She has to have the time to heal and work through her shit, and I’m not going to stand in the way of that recovery.

If she still wants me after she’s healed, then I’ll be waiting.

Malone doesn’t speak as I pull the car away from the clubhouse and onto the main road. I can’t stop from glancing in the rearview mirror to see if she comes out, but she doesn’t.

Is this done?

Can I let it be done?

Was she into me because she needed someone to cling to and make her feel secure? I have no idea, but it doesn’t matter now. She and I are no longer walking the same path.

“Are you going to your father?” Malone asks.

That’s the last place I want to go, but I need to tell him what happened. “I’ll call him later,” I mutter. I don’t want to get dragged into whatever drama and shit Anthony will bring. I need time to process being without Bailey.

As soon as I pull up in the parking garage, my stomach starts to churn. I keep my expression neutral as I climb out of the car and head towards the lift. Malone follows after me, his footfalls silent while mine are loud on the concrete.

When the lift doors close on us, I start to feel nauseous. I don’t want to go up to the penthouse and find it empty, but that’s what is going to happen. Dread crawls over me as the lift doors slide open. Malone steps out first, as usual, to check it’s safe, and I follow him. The silence is deafening. There’s no music or noise—just vast empty nothingness. It hurts my ears.

My gaze drifts to the sofa and the blanket draped over the back of it. I half expect to see her curled under it, but she's not.

"You need anything from me?" Malone asks as he finishes his sweep of the penthouse.

"No."

"You need me to stay?" I don't know what he senses in my mood, but his words surprise me. Malone isn't a sentimental man. I wouldn't expect him to care about my emotional well-being.

"No. I'll call you if I need you."

He heads back for the lift, and once he's gone the silence is even more haunting. Fuck, somehow I have to reclaim my life and get back on with everyday shit, but all I can think about is Bailey and when she's coming home. I want her back in my bed. I want her pottering around the kitchen making shit food that's barely edible. I want her wearing my clothes.

I close my eyes and try to breathe through the pain in my chest. When I open them, she's still not here. "Fuck," I hiss before dragging my fingers through my hair.

Then I do the only thing that is guaranteed to keep my mind off Bailey.

I call my father and prepare myself for the lecture I'm about to receive.

BAILEY



THE DAYS PASS IN A BLUR. Getting back into my daily routine is easier than I'd imagined it would be. My girls give me purpose and make me force myself out of bed every morning. It would be easy to get lost in the grief and the pain of what happened to me. It's only fear of breaking down in front of Kara and Mollie that keeps me level. I don't want to freak my daughters out.

I miss Zeke. Sleeping is hard. Impossible. I can't close my eyes and block Jack out. Even though I know he's never coming back, he haunts my sleep. I catch naps here and there to make up on the lack of rest I'm getting, but it's not enough. I'm a walking zombie.

My girls are strong for me, but I can see they're walking on eggshells, scared in case they say something that makes me withdraw more. The longer I'm away from him, the more I feel like I need Zeke. I need him with a physical ache that makes me feel like the world is unsteady beneath my feet. I don't know how to breathe without him. My chest is a solid lump of pain.

I'm sitting in the garden, enjoying the early spring sunlight, a coffee in one hand, my tablet in the other. I've been trying to read a book for the last hour, but I can't focus on anything today. I'm restless. Anxious. I can't explain it. I know I'm safe at the house. My brother and Ravage have gone over and above to ensure the safety of me and the other old ladies. They improved the security system at the house and added a tracker to my car. If I need to go anywhere, I can call a prospect, though I haven't done that.

It's been two weeks since I last saw Zeke. I feel empty inside. I want to contact him, but I'm scared he'll reject me, so I keep my distance.

Kara is sitting at the table next to my lounge, her laptop on top of it. She's doing a paper for school while Mollie digs in the little patch of garden I

set aside for her to grow things. Our house is small, but considering prices in London, we're lucky to have outdoor space. Laurence bought it when I first got pregnant with Kara—with money earned from less than legal means, I'm sure. Do I care about that? No. My only focus is on keeping my daughters safe and happy.

I hear the rumble of pipes in the air. The back garden doesn't have a view of the street, so I listen as the engine cuts. I don't want company today, or any day. I just want to be left alone. My brother and family haven't grasped this yet and insert themselves into my life every day. I know it's because they care, and they can sense I'm different now, but I wish they'd give me the space to breathe.

"Bails?" Nox calls out before the side gate opens. I half turn on the lounge and lift my sunglasses as he swaggers towards us. His kutte is in place despite the heat, a white tee beneath it. If he's hot in his jeans he doesn't show it. I've seen my brother wear jeans in thirty-five-degree heat before.

"Uncle Nox!" Mollie rushes at him, covered in soil. She thankfully stops short of throwing her arms around him.

"Hey, munchkin." He turns and gives my teen a lift of his chin, which, scarily, Kara mirrors. She's becoming too like her uncle.

Nox comes over to the table and sits next to Kara.

"Where's Lucy?" I ask.

"Home. Nora ain't feeling well."

This makes me sit up. "What's wrong with her?"

"Ain't nothing serious, but Luce didn't want to risk bringing her out until it's cleared up."

I understand that. I would be the same with my girls.

Nox turns to my daughters. "You give us a minute?"

Great, this is not going to be a conversation I want to have, I'm certain of it. Kara grumbles a little but grabs her laptop and walks inside with her sister. Nox waits until the girls have gone in before he leans forwards in the chair, his hands clasped between his parted legs. "You doing okay?"

His words make me frown. "Did you ride all the way over here just to ask me that?"

He lets out a breath, his gaze going over the garden. There's an assortment of flowers providing a smear of colour in the greenery. "You sleeping?"

“Nox.”

“I’m serious. You look like shit.”

I’m not sleeping. I can’t without Zeke. Crazy, I know, but I haven’t slept a full night since I got home. He did something that made it easier for me to rest. I’m on edge too, making sure the doors are secure multiple times a night and checking my girls are safe. I haven’t let either of them out of my sight since I got home, other than to go to school.

I’m smothering them. I know I am, but I can’t stop the paranoia from creeping into my veins that they could be trafficked at any point—taken from a seemingly benign situation and tossed into a living nightmare. I know my situation was unusual, but I can’t stop the fear. There are evil men living among us, drinking in the bars we go to, working in the offices we do. It scares me half to death.

“I’m okay,” I lie. I know I look like shit. I have bags under my eyes that are big enough to carry all my baggage.

“Kara told me you’ve been having night terrors.”

Fuck. I had no idea either of my girls heard me waking every night. I tried so hard to shield them. “She heard me?”

“Hard to miss, from the way she tells it.” He hesitates a moment before he speaks again. “I know you’ve been to his place.”

I have. Several times. I’ve driven to the foot of the penthouse, thought about going up to see him, and backed out at the last minute. If Zeke wanted to see me, he would be here.

“How do you know that?”

He looks as if he’s not going to answer, then he says, “Had a prospect on you since you got home.”

So for two weeks, he’s known and yet he’s only chosen to say something now? “So?”

“What happened to you in that fucking room?”

My stomach twists. I know it wasn’t my fault. I was a victim, not a participant. There’s nothing I could have done differently. Whether I was in that bar or not, it would have happened because Jack Bolen was looking for me. He wanted to find me because he thought I was Amalia. He wanted to hurt Fury for what he did to Patrick. Instead, he got me.

I meet my brother’s eyes. “Does it matter? It’s done.”

“Matters to me.”

I consider this and sigh. “I don’t want to go over shit that I can’t change.

I'm moving forward with my life."

"So something did happen." His mouth pulls into a tight line as his eyes flash anger.

"I took care of it."

"What do you mean you took care of it?"

"I mean the man who touched me is dead. I made sure of that myself!" The venom in my voice surprises us both. I haven't lost any sleep over what I did to Jack Bolen. I wish I could have done more. I should have.

If my words shock my brother, he doesn't show it. He just stares at me as if he can see into my mind and understand what happened to me. "How?"

"Zeke."

"That cunt let you take care of someone?" He launches to his feet, toppling his chair with a loud clatter.

I bristle against his tone. "No, Zeke took care of me. He was good to me. I needed him in the days after what happened, and he was there for me."

"I would have been there too, Bails. I wasn't exactly given a fucking choice in that."

"I know that."

His jaw tightens and rage flashes in his eyes. His hands go to the back of his head as he yells, "Fuckers!" into the air.

"Calm down," I scramble to my feet, trying to calm him down. I don't want my girls to hear him melting down.

"I fucking want to kill them all."

"You already did that," I remind him.

"Fuck, Bails. This was never meant to happen to you!" His voice wavers, and for the first time in his life, I hear the torment in his words. "I'm fucking sorry."

"It wasn't your fault."

"Yeah, it was. My links to the club—"

"They wanted Amalia. And I'm glad they didn't get her. She's pregnant. She could have lost that baby. I survived. That's all that matters."

Nox squeezes his eyes shut as if he's counting backwards from ten and trying his hardest to keep from losing his shit. "I know you like Zeke, but he ain't a guy you get caught up with. He ain't good people. You got to stop going over there."

"That's not my experience of him."

"You were with him less than a week. Ain't like you had time to know

shit about him.”

It might have been less than a week, but it felt longer. Our connection had been instantaneous, and that hasn't dimmed in the time we've been apart. I yearn to see him.

“How long were you with Lucy before you realised how you felt about her?” The challenge snaps through my voice.

“Ain't the fucking same. Lucy ain't a mobster.”

“Oh, and because you're an upstanding member of society.”

“Fuck, Bailey! He's a lunatic. He makes Rav look like a Boy Scout.”

I know this because I've seen Zeke covered in blood of the men he'd destroyed firsthand. I know he tortured Jack after I left, and although I didn't witness it, I knew it was bad enough to require a shower before he came home to me.

Home.

It's funny I consider the penthouse as home.

“I need him.”

“You don't need him,” he scoffs.

“Okay, I want him, and I feel like I'm breaking into pieces without him.” I don't bother to stop the tear from escaping. It rolls unchecked down my cheek.

“Bails.” He sighs. “You always did have a taste for the arseholes.”

I don't even bristle at his words, because he's right. First Laurence, now Zeke.

He glares at me. “Fuck, Bailey. The man is fucking trouble.”

“And you're not? I still let you into the house.”

“I know I'm trouble.” He stands and I mirror his movement. When he pulls me into his arms, his hug is firm and filled with emotion. “Nothing'll ever touch you again,” he tells me, kissing the side of my face.

I know he means it and that warms my heart.

“Say bye to the girls,” he says.

I watch as he leaves, and that emptiness creeps through me again. A feeling that I'm alone and nothing is ever going to be right again.

Z E K E



THE UNDERGROUND FIGHTS I run are a break from thinking about a certain redhead. They make us good money and usually they go off without a hitch. Malone is hovering near me as I sit waiting for the first fight to get underway. The air in the warehouse we've set the match up in ripples with excitement.

Usually, I love this shit.

I don't seem able to find joy in anything lately.

I know why.

Bailey.

Fuck, I miss her. It's been weeks since I saw her, but she's been constantly in my thoughts. I wonder how she's sleeping. I wonder how she's coping.

I push her out of my mind as the two contenders step into the ring and shouts go up from the crowd. As I scan my surroundings, I notice a familiar face coming towards me.

Nox.

Fuck.

What does that cunt want? My father just about managed to smooth shit over with the Sons, though it hadn't been easy. I'm on fucking probation for my actions, like a little kid being schooled in how to behave. I don't give a shit. I've thrown myself willingly into work, needing that distance, that space

He's with one of the other brothers—Levi. These boys always travel in pairs. I rise to meet him, Malone on my heels. As I get close, Nox says, "We need to talk."

"About?"

"Not here."

I let out a breath before I lead him into the back office. It's a small space, with a battered desk and filing cabinet that has cobwebs on it. Levi doesn't follow us inside, and when Malone tries to, I shake my head. I get the feeling this is going to be about Bailey, and I don't need an audience.

As soon as the door is closed, I turn to Nox. "Speak."

"It's Bailey," he says, confirming my suspicions.

I try not to flinch at her name. I try not to show any reaction, even though I want to. Fuck, I've missed her. I don't like to show weakness, and she's a weakness I can't hide. "What about her?"

He snags me by the front of my suit jacket and explodes in my face. "Didn't think to mention that you let her torture the fucker who took her? Didn't think I had the right to know that?"

Did Bailey tell him that? Nox knows I tortured Jack, but I'd kept his sister's role in it quiet.

He shoves me back roughly, dragging fingers through his hair.

I grab him by the throat and slam him against the wall. "You're important to Bailey, which is the only reason I'm not going to shove my gun somewhere unpleasant, but you touch me again and we'll have problems." He glares at me but nods, so I release my hold on him.

Nox tugs on his kutte and glances at the ceiling. "It's going to fucking kill me to say this, but she needs you."

It's not what I expected to hear, but I can't say his words don't make me fucking happy. I need her too, and I want her back.

"She ain't eating right, ain't sleeping. The kids say she's having nightmares."

"She needs someone to sleep next to her," I murmur absently.

My words only seem to fan the flames of Nox's fire higher. "I don't know what perverse shit you were doing with Bailey while she was with you, but for some fucking reason she thinks she needs you. You have to see her."

I want to. With every fibre of my being, I want to, but it's not a good idea. Part of me doesn't give a fuck about that. What I want trumps everything else. "I'll go to her," I agree.

"My sister is fucking important to me. You screw her over and I don't care if it causes a war, I'll fucking end you."

"I wouldn't expect anything less."

"Take fucking care of her." He hands me a piece of paper and when I open it up, I see an address on it. Bailey's.

He doesn't need to give it to me. I know where she lives. It was the first thing I discovered as soon as she left me. I told myself I needed to know where she was for her safety, but the truth of the matter is, I liked knowing. I've driven past her house a few times late at night, but never stopped in. Like a creep. I was unable to stay away, unable to give her the space I told her I would—the space she deserved.

“Always,” I say in response to his command. It's not a blessing, but it's as close as I can expect. I take it and embrace it with both hands. I want Bailey, and having Nox onside will make it easier.

Nox opens the office door and steps out. Levi gives me a shitty look before both men disappear up the corridor. “We're taking a drive,” I mutter to Malone.

I pass on some instructions to some of my men who are still here, and Malone and I head out of the warehouse.

The drive over to Bailey's house feels like it takes forever. I tap my fingers against the steering wheel as we approach the small terraced property. It's tiny, but it looks homely with the little touches she's made to the front garden. Flowers and pots line the path and a row of lights lead to the front door like a landing strip.

I order Malone to wait in the car and then walk up to her front door. Nervous energy fizzles through me as I rap my knuckles on the door. It takes a while, but movement stirs, and then I hear the locks being disengaged.

She opens the door a sliver and I get my first look at her in weeks. Fuck, my heart nearly explodes in my chest. Her hair is piled on her head in one of those messy topknots, and she's wearing a baggy sweater that has slid off one shoulder to expose an expanse of skin. I want to kiss her there. I want to kiss her everywhere.

I shouldn't do it, but I'm not a man who is used to stepping back and considering his actions, so I push inside and shove her against the wall. She lets out a small squeak as I stand in front her, my fingers wrapped around her neck, my mouth inches from hers. There's no fear in her eyes, just need. Want.

“I've missed you,” I admit.

And then I claim her. I kiss her wildly, untamed. She kisses me back like I'm everything to her, and fuck if that doesn't make me feel fucking amazing.

I press her harder against the wall as I slip my tongue inside her mouth, duelling with hers. She tastes like sunshine, and I want to drag her legs

around my hips and slide into her, but I can't. Not yet. Not like this.

I pull back, panting hard, and peer at her. She has flushed cheeks and heated eyes, but I see the bags under them. She's not sleeping well. Nox didn't lie about that. She looks beautiful, but ground down.

"You're not sleeping."

Her mouth opens. "I'm... I'm trying."

"Princess, you need to sleep."

"Mum?" a tentative, scared voice calls down the stairs.

"I'm okay, honey," she yells back. "Go back to bed."

I didn't realise it was that late. I should have come over in the morning, but there's no way I could have waited, not after Nox's visit.

I don't speak until I hear the door shut upstairs. Then I tuck a stray piece of hair behind her ear that's fallen loose from her tie.

"I need you," she whispers.

"You need rest, babe. You look exhausted."

I'm worried by just how big the bags are beneath her eyes.

"Every time I close my eyes, I see him."

My stomach clenches at her words. "He's never coming back."

Bailey grabs my arms and nuzzles against my chest. "I haven't felt like I could breathe until just now."

I tilt her chin and press my mouth to hers. "You're going to bed," I tell her.

"I can't—"

"I'm coming with you," I interrupt her before she can say no to the idea.

"You are?"

"I'm not leaving your side."

She takes my hand in hers and leads me up the stairs and into her bedroom. The space is girly but not flowery. Totally Bailey. I kick my shoes off and climb onto the bed. She crawls onto it next to me and snuggles against my chest.

"Why did you come now?" she asks as I trail my fingers up her arm.

"Nox. He said you needed me."

"Oh." She sounds shocked by this, and I wonder whether they'd talked about me beforehand, and whether that conversation was favourable. "You didn't have to come all this way."

I don't tell her I've driven past her house nearly every evening since we were separated. I don't tell her that I need her as much as she seems to need

me. I just hold her closer.

I don't know much about love. I never had any growing up. My parents treated me like a pawn in a game, a piece to be moved around the chessboard. I was born to provide for the family, to ensure the Fraser name lives on. But what I feel when I'm with Bailey is as close to love as I can imagine.

I want to wrap her in my arms and never let her go.

"Why didn't you come to me before now?"

"You needed time, Bailey."

"What I needed was you."

Her words are a hammer blow to my chest. Fuck, I need her too. "I should have listened to what I wanted."

She peers up at me. "And what did you want?"

"You. Always you."

She kisses me and I feel some of that ice around my heart start to melt. She's mine. She was mine the moment I laid eyes on her, and I shouldn't have let her slip through my fingers. It's not a mistake I'm going to make again.

BAILEY



ZEKE IS A MOBSTER AND A CRIMINAL, but in his arms I feel safer than ever. It's like nothing can touch me. His fingers trail a path along my arm as he holds me against him, and I let out a content sigh. With him here, I can breathe for the first time in weeks. I don't feel like a boat adrift at sea. He grounds me in a way no one else can.

"I shouldn't have left you," he says.

No, he shouldn't have, but I understand why he did. "As much as I hate to admit it, I think you were right. I needed that space. That time."

"Glad to hear that, princess. I wasn't sure I was doing the right thing walking away."

I peer up at him. "You have to understand, Zeke, how much you helped me. And I don't mean just from Jack and being sold. I mean you mentally saved me. I was drowning when I left that room. I was so deep inside my head, inside the horror I'd been subjected to. You pulled me out of that. You helped me to heal."

He goes rigid beneath me, and I'm not sure if I've freaked him out with my words. He brushes my hair back from my face. "You didn't need saving. You were strong enough to save yourself. That's what you've been doing for weeks."

I rise up and press my mouth to his. Instantly, his fingers collar the back of my neck so he can deepen the kiss. All the tension leaches from my body as he kisses me like I'm the oxygen his lungs desperately need. I can feel that he's hard in his trousers, and I can't stop my fingers from rubbing over his cock.

"I want you," I tell him. And I do. I've never wanted anything more. I'm

nervous, and I tremble as I let my fingers skim under his shirt to pull it free of his pants.

I want this, but I feel like a virgin about to have my first time. I'm nervous, even though we've been together before. This is different. I'm no longer his captive. I want to be here. I want him, and from the heavy look in his eyes he wants me too. My heart is racing like an express train as I take him in. There's beauty even in the demons that linger in his gaze.

I manage to get his shirt off, revealing those delicious pectorals below. I run my fingers over the contours of his chest and down to his abdominal muscles, which quiver beneath my touch. God, I've missed him.

He opens his trousers and I help pull them down his legs. His eyes never leave mine, and I wonder what is going through his head as he slips his cock free. He's thick, long, and hard—exactly as I remember. I lick my lips as I duck my head and wrap my lips around his tip and use my hand to work the shaft. Slowly, I swirl my tongue around the head of his dick, tasting his saltiness. He lets out a small groan as I move my hand up and down.

I want to bring him pleasure. I want to show him that I can make things good between us, no matter how damaged I am, no matter how shattered. I take him fully in my mouth, sucking and licking as I pull back off. He tastes good and smells even better, the masculine scent of his bodywash lingering on his skin.

He locks eyes with mine the whole time I suck on him, and the connection between us makes my pussy dampen. I want to taste him, and experience everything he has to offer. I want to show him the things I can't put into words. I want to love him, because deep down, I'm pretty sure that's what I feel for him.

Love.

And not just because he's helped me through a tough time, but because the air feels like it's closing in on me when he's not around. The world doesn't spin right, and I don't feel like myself. With Zeke, it's different. I breathe easier, my heart beats faster, and I'm alive. I'm not just existing. He makes my world Technicolor, not black and white.

His hips twitch and he comes hard, spilling his salty cum inside my mouth. I swallow it down, my eyes locked to his face, and I can see the heat in his eyes. Yeah, he liked that.

Good.

He takes a moment to get himself under control again, to wait for the

shaking of his limbs to stop before he says to me, “On your back.”

It’s an order, but it’s also a note, telling me what to expect. I appreciate that. It helps me to relax as I lay back among the pillows.

He carefully pulls my pants down my legs before my thong follows. All I see is the desire shining in his eyes and it’s a heady, dizzying feeling.

“I’m going to eat your pussy,” he tells me. “Take your top off.”

His words make everything south of my navel contract. Fuck, hearing him talk dirty makes me want to jump on him.

I drag my jumper off and then lie back. I close my eyes and drape my arm over my face as his tongue touches my centre.

Fuck!

I nearly lift my hips off the bed at the first swipe. Zeke makes me feel alive in a way I can’t describe. He makes me feel like I could be me again. Not Bailey, widow of Laurence. Not Bailey, sister of Nox. Not Bailey, mother to Kara and Mollie.

Just me.

He makes me feel wanted as a woman, desirable. And for the first time since I lost Laurence, I feel the rush of loving someone and having them love you back.

I’m certain Zeke does love me. I can see it in his eyes. It’s not something that can be hidden. He doesn’t have to give me the words. He tells me with actions.

My thoughts scatter as he drags his tongue over my clit and my hips lift off the bed. That feels so good. My pussy clenches as I tense my thighs and when he licks over the sensitive bud again, I can’t stop the little moan from coming out. He feels amazing between my legs, and I curl my fingers into his hair as he works on eliciting more groans from me.

I clear my mind of everything but Zeke and focus on the beautiful man in front of me.

He brings me to climax with his tongue, and I whimper as wave after wave of pleasure rolls through me. I bury my head in the pillow to keep my voice low enough that I’m not going to scar my daughters for life, but I want to scream from the rooftops.

He crawls up the bed so he’s sitting against the pillows and gestures for me to come to him. I scabble to him and wrap my arm around his chest, hugging him close, my bare breasts pressed against his skin. I like the contact. It feels intimate and I want that closeness with him.

He runs his fingers down my spine as he kisses my head. “Sleep. Get some rest.”

I snuggle against him and I let my body relax. Then, for the first time in weeks, I sleep.

ZEKE



I'VE NEVER BEEN to a club cookout before, but as I walk from my car towards the clubhouse, I can hear the liveliness of the families gathered. Fuck, this isn't my scene. Kids running free, bikers gathered around the barbecue and disappearing beneath the smoke from the charcoal. I feel out of place in my trousers and shirt. I've gone for a more casual look today—no suit—but I'm already surrounded by a sea of denim and leather.

All eyes come to me suddenly, and I feel like I'm under a microscope. I should have come with Bailey. This is excruciating. I spot her red hair through the crowd and she rushes over to me. As always, my breath catches in my throat at the sight of her.

Beautiful.

Like a ray of sunshine in a cloudy sky.

I fucking love her.

I don't care who the fuck is watching. I dip my head and claim her mouth, needing to touch her, feel her against me. I cup her face, pulling her closer as I devour her. "Fuck," I groan when I finally pull back. "I've missed you."

It's only been twenty-four hours since I last saw her.

It feels longer.

"I missed you too," she tells me. "Are you ready to do this?"

No, but I'll do it because she wants it.

She needs me to meet her friends, her family. Her daughters.

I understand why, but I feel fucking on edge walking into the lion's den. I thought my father might disapprove of my relationship with Bailey, but he sees it as a good thing. She will make the Sons more likely to tread carefully with us.

A natural alliance.

Not that I give a fuck what he thinks. I would be with Bailey no matter what, but having him onside makes shit easier.

“I’m ready,” I tell her, kissing her again.

I slip my hand into hers and we move towards the picnic tables filled with club members and family. Ravage makes a beeline for me with Nox on his heels. I can’t read the fucker’s face, and I find myself wishing I’d brought Malone.

Ravage surprises me by holding out his hand. I stare at it a beat before I take it and shake it. “Welcome to the family,” he says.

Bailey squeezes my hand, which makes some of the tension loosen its grip on my chest. She wants this. She wants me to be a part of her world, and I want to be a part of it—even if it includes fucking bikers.

“Thanks,” I mutter.

“Take care of her,” Nox says. “I will end you if you hurt her.”

It’s not an idle threat. Bailey smacks him. “Quit it.”

Nox’s gaze rests on her before he mutters under his breath and walks off. Ravage follows him.

“Are you really okay with this?” she asks when we’re alone.

“Yeah, princess.”

“You want to meet my daughters?”

“Absolutely.”

She leads me over to a bench where two redheaded girls are sitting together. The elder of the two looks a little nervous, but the younger stares at me like she’s trying to pull all the thoughts out of my head.

“Kara, Mollie, this is Zeke.”

Mollie, the younger girl, eyes me before she says, “He’ll do.”

Bailey draws in a shocked breath, but I laugh. It’s fucking funny. I’ve faced threats most people can’t imagine, had men so scared of me they’ve pissed their pants, and yet a ten-year-old gives me attitude.

“Fuck, she’s just like you,” I say to Bailey.

Mollie seems to like this and smirks.

I sit at the bench with Bailey as food starts to get passed around. Our picnic table is given burgers, which the girls dig into enthusiastically. It’s not the usual food I eat, but it’s good. Titch and Levi are both at the grill with Titch’s youngest running plates back and forth as the meat is ready.

The girls talk about nothing and everything and I intersect where I can.

They're laid back, like Bailey. Kara seems quieter, more introverted than Mollie who I get the impression could talk nonstop for days.

Bailey eventually gets up to use the bathroom. She gives me a look that asks if I'll be okay and I nod at her. I handle multimillion-pound businesses every day. I can manage two children.

"So, you're dating our mum," Mollie says around a mouthful of burger.

"Yeah," I say.

Mollie's eyes slide towards Kara. "She likes you."

"I like her too."

"She sleeps better when you're there."

I frown. I thought we'd been careful, that the girls didn't know I was there. For the past week, I've been coming over late and leaving before they get up.

"How...?"

Kara smirks. "We're not stupid. We know you've been staying."

"I love your mother."

"I think she loves you too," Kara says.

"I hope that means we can all... get along." How did I end up having this conversation with a ten- and thirteen-year-old?

"It'll cost you," Mollie grins before Kara thumps her in the arm.

"I didn't realise they taught the art of extortion so young," I mutter.

Bailey returns, her eyes darting between the three of us to check we're okay. As she sits back on the bench, I place a hand on her thigh, giving her that physical connection between us.

After a time, we're joined by various people who stop by the table to chat. Bailey introduces me to everyone and by the end of the night I'm fucking exhausted. I'm also never going to remember everyone's names.

We leave early because of the girls, and as we walk towards the cars, Bailey stops me, letting the girls climb into the back of her vehicle while we stand a few metres away.

"Thank you for today. I know it wasn't your thing."

"Anything to do with you is my thing." I want to kiss her, but I can feel the weight of her daughters' stares. "If I kiss you, are you girls likely to freak out?"

"I love that you care—" She smiles. "—but if you don't kiss me, I'm going to be annoyed."

It's all the invitation I need to dip my head and press my lips to hers.

She's soft in my arms, needy, and I want to go home and fuck her senseless.

"Are you coming back to ours?" Mollie hollers out the window, tearing through our moment.

Bailey laughs as I press our foreheads together. "Do you want to?" she asks me.

"Do you want me to?"

"Yes," she says without hesitation.

"Then I'm coming back to yours."

We have to go in our separate cars, but I follow her home, feeling secure in the knowledge I'm with her. I will never allow anything to touch her again.

When we get home, the girls get ready for bed while Bailey makes me a coffee.

"That went well," she says as she slides the mug onto the counter in front of me.

"They're a part of you, and I love every part of you," I tell her.

"I love every part of you too."

I don't tell her meeting my family will likely be more stressful. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. "Do you think the girls will be asleep yet?" I ask.

"Why?"

"Because I want to fuck you."

She smiles. "Such a romantic."

I'm not, and she knows that. But an hour later I take her to bed, and I make love to her.

EPILOGUE

ZEKE



A YEAR LATER...

“SO, YOU’RE A MOBSTER.”

I glance up from the piece of toast I’m eating, trying not to choke on it. I spend most of my time at Bailey’s house, even though I’d prefer to move us all to the penthouse. It has superior security, but Bailey isn’t keen on the idea. I understand. This is her kids’ home and she doesn’t want to uproot them.

Getting to know her daughters has been an experience. Both girls are so different. Kara is quieter than Mollie, who has no fucking filter. Something I’m finding out right now.

I place the toast back on the plate and glance up at my stepdaughter. “Who told you that?”

“Is it true?” Her eyes are bright.

Kara jabs her elbow into her sister’s side. “You can’t just ask that.”

“Why not?”

“Because... because you just can’t.”

“Can’t what?” Bailey asks as she steps into the kitchen.

Fuck, she steals my breath. Her copper hair falls down her back in loose waves that look stunning and she’s wearing a summer dress that reveals her long shapely legs and curvy hips. I want to drag her upstairs and fuck her until she’s screaming my name, but we have shit to do today. Fuck, how I wish we didn’t.

As she moves towards the table, I can’t stop from reaching out and touching her, needing that contact. Things have been tough over the past year. It took Bailey a long time and a lot of therapy to work through her fears. She was constantly panicked about being taken again, about her daughters being trafficked.

It hasn’t been easy for her, but together we worked through it and it built our relationship on a firmer foundation. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for this woman. I love her. I’ve loved her from the first moment I laid eyes on her. Our relationship hasn’t been normal, but I wouldn’t change it for anything. We’re stronger now than we’ve ever been.

“I was just asking Zeke if he’s a mobster.”

Bailey nearly chokes on her coffee.

“Well, is he?”

“Honey, this is not a conversation we have at the breakfast table.”

She picks up her toast, smirking. “So he is.”

“Mollie!”

“It’s okay,” I tell Bailey. I don’t want to lie to her children. I’ll never lie.

“It’s not like I don’t know bad stuff happens. Uncle Nox and the club are into bad things. That’s why we’re going to Stoker’s party today.”

Ah, Stoker. The reason I can’t drag my woman upstairs and show her just how much I like that dress on her. He’s a club member and he’s due out of jail today. We have to go to the clubhouse to celebrate his return, and even though it’s my idea of hell, I’ll go because Bailey wants me there, and there’s nothing I can refuse her.

Though she’ll have a lot of making up to do later.

“I run a number of businesses,” I tell Mollie. “Some are not legal.”

“So, you’re a mobster?”

“I’m an entrepreneur.”

“Eat your toast,” Bailey says absently, sitting next to me. Her hand instantly slides into mine on the tabletop, as it always does. She has to be touching me in some way and I love that.

We finish eating and the girls rush off to their bedrooms to get ready for the upcoming party. I come up behind Bailey, who is at the sink washing the dishes, and press my cock against her arse. “I want to fuck you,” I tell her as I sweep her hair off her shoulder, giving me access to her neck. She’s fucking gorgeous and she smells so good. I love the perfume she wears. It’s sultry but not too heavy. It makes me want to devour her.

“Stop,” she laughs. “We have places to be today and we can’t be late.”

“We could be a little late,” I murmur as I suck along her neck. She drives me wild.

“Zeke.” There’s humour in her voice, but also need. She wants this too.

“You’re mine,” I tell her.

“I’m yours,” she agrees instantly, and those words make my cock hard as a rock in my slacks.

I turn her around and capture her mouth, nipping and sucking at her bottom lip as I do. She’s everything to me and I would die to defend her. Nothing will ever touch her again and since we’ve been together nothing has.

It’s that reason and that reason alone that has made her brother cool his heels a little and stop being so aggravated with me. Nox was not happy we were together initially, but I think he’s made some kind of peace with it. It’s

good for both our organisations anyway, which is the only reason my father has been okay with it. It keeps a certain level of peace between us and the Sons. They won't attack me for fear I'd hurt Bailey, and I won't allow my father to attack them because I don't want Bailey stuck in the middle of that shit. She's been through enough.

I slip my hand under her dress and into her underwear as I press her against the counter. She's soaked and that makes me want to scream my triumph. "Look how wet you are for me, princess."

"I love you," she says, and fuck if my heart doesn't stop working in that instant, as it does every time she freely gives me those words. I don't deserve them. She could do so much better than me, but I'm a selfish bastard and I'm not willing to give her up. She is mine, and I'll kill anyone who tries to take her from me.

"I love you too." I move my mouth so it's inches from hers. Our breaths mingle as I slide my finger into her slick channel.

"Ohh..." she whimpers, and that sound is music to my fucking ears. I want to hear that every moment of every day.

I slide a second finger in and thrust in and out of her cunt, working her up. She sucks air in through her teeth and I can tell she's trying to keep quiet in case the girls hear. I should probably have waited until later to do this, but I couldn't. I needed this now.

I bring her off and she clutches my shoulders as her pussy clenches around my fingers. "Fuck..."

I kiss her as I slide my fingers free from her, then I lick them clean. She pulls a face at me. "You're gross."

"Nothing gross about tasting you, princess."

I help her finish up the dishes and then we head out to my car. All four of us pile in and head over to the clubhouse. Malone follows in his own vehicle, though he'll leave once I'm inside the clubhouse. At first I was worried the girls might be freaked by his presence, but they seem to have adapted.

I barely get the car parked before the girls are out of the vehicle and rushing towards the clubhouse. They stop to meet up with Titch's two boys, Aiden and Will, who are a little older than the girls. I suspect Aiden and Kara have a thing for each other, which I'm watching carefully. That boy goes near my stepdaughter, I will cut his tiny pencil dick off and feed it to him. I don't give a shit if he's Titch's son.

"Stop glaring," Bailey tells me.

“I’m not.”

“Kara and Aiden aren’t exactly going to get up to anything surrounded by everyone.”

I grumble as I climb out of the car, feeling overprotective and the urge to pound the little bastard’s face in. “You forget I was a teenage boy once. I know how they think.”

“Kara’s smart. She’ll be okay.”

She’s right. Kara is smart. More so than Mollie, but that doesn’t make the situation any better.

Bailey climbs out of the car, so I do the same. I hold my hand out to her and she takes it, but before she can head inside, I tug her back towards me, bracketing her against the side of the car.

As we’re standing there, I spot Fury with Amalia and their baby boy, Jude. Seeing the big biker fuss over his son is bizarre. This is a man who tortures for pleasure.

I pull my focus from Fury back to the only person in this world who captures my attention completely. God, she’s breathtakingly gorgeous. I love everything about her, and I can’t imagine my life without her and the girls in it. It’s crazy how quickly she’s become my reason for breathing.

“Marry me.”

She blinks at me and I can see I’ve surprised her. “You want to get married?”

I want to make her mine in every way. “Yeah.”

“Okay.” The fact she readily agrees makes my heart fucking stutter.

I dip my head and kiss her. “Fuck, I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Three months later, I make her Mrs Bailey Fraser.

DID YOU LOVE BAILEY?

This is the end of the Untamed Sons, London, but you can read about the Fraser brothers in my new series. Start with [Fractured Vows](#), coming January 2022!

Sariah

4 weeks, 28 days, 672 hours—that's all I have left until my fate is sealed.

I am promised to a monster. A man twice my age. He plans to keep me like a pretty doll, making me move to whatever whims he has.

Trapped, all my choices are taken away apart from one.

A handsome stranger. He tells me his name is Lucas and for one night I'm able to leave my cursed future behind. The pull to Lucas is unexplainable and undeniable. One thing is certain—I have to find a way out of this arranged marriage. I have to claim my life back. And Lucas might be the key.

Lucas

Sariah has secrets. I can see it in her eyes. There's a sadness that swirls within them, a fear of what we're doing. I want to know who put that look on her face and protect her from it. I will burn the world to ashes to keep her safe.

But when the truth is revealed, and I learn she is being forced to wed a man who has a reputation darker than my own, I realise how much danger Sariah is in. I'm not sure the might of the Fraser crime family will be enough to save her life.

Or mine.

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ALSO BY JESSICA AMES

Have you read them all?

IN THE UNTAMED SONS MC SERIES

Infatuation

I'm being watched. I should be afraid of the burly biker who hides in the shadows, creeping on me, but I'm drawn to his dark soul. Falling for my stalker is crazy, but I can't deny what I feel. Beneath the demons in his eyes I can see a hint of light and I want to draw it out of him. His infatuation isn't healthy, but I'm just as taken with him as he is with me. I need him like I need my next breath, and even though his obsession with me might be the downfall of us both, I can't walk away.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Infatuation-USMC>

Ravage

Leaving Rav was the hardest decision I've ever had to make, but I didn't have a choice. Staying and facing my past wasn't an option. I suffered through hell, but I'm stronger than I've ever been, at least I was until my daughter got sick. Now, the only person left who might be able to save her is her father. Only, I have no idea who it is. Ravage, or his brother, Sin.

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Nox

Nox is falling for me, but he shouldn't. I have secrets and if he knew the truth he'd drop me in a heartbeat. The problem is I'm falling for him too, but when my past comes out he's going to hate me. Nothing is as it seems. My whole life is a lie. Everything except Nox. Because the truth is Lucy Franklin doesn't really exist.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Nox-USMC>

Daimon

I've got darkness in my past that I can no longer keep buried. When Daimon finds out the truth, he's going to drop me and run. I shouldn't be falling for my brother's best friend, but I can't stop my feelings from growing. I want him. No, I need him. He's becoming my everything and I have no idea how to be without him.

But that choice might not be mine. Once he finds out the truth about me, he's going to walk away because the truth is I'm broken, I'm damaged and my past is coming back to haunt me.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Daimon-USMC>

Until Amy (Until Series and Sons Crossover)

Falling for a dangerous biker was never part of my plan, but I can't let go of Whizz. I don't care that my family doesn't approve or that everyone I know keeps warning me to stay away from the outlaw. He's mine and I'm not walking away, but that might not be my choice. When my life is threatened the only person who can save me is Whizz and the Untamed Sons.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/UntilAmy>

Levi

After the death of my sister, my need to get revenge pushes me into the arms of my enemy. I want to tear them down, destroy their whole club and I'll stop at nothing to get my revenge. Then I meet Levi. He changes my outlook, makes me realise that the Sons are not all bad, even if they have a few rotten apples in the barrel. I'm falling hard and fast, but I'm in too deep. Telling him the truth of who I really am will get me killed, but if I don't we can never be together.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Levi-USMC>

Titch

I never expected my feelings for Titch to remain as strong as they were when I first married him. Getting a divorce was my first mistake. My second was trusting my new husband. He has secrets that put me and my sons in danger. I shouldn't be thinking about my ex, not with a new man on the scene, but every thought I have is about Titch. He's the light in the darkness and he makes my heart beat faster than it has in years.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Titch-USMC>

Fury

As Sergeant-at-Arms of the Untamed Sons, my job is simple. Kill anyone who tries to hurt the club. Bleeding a man is the only thing that keeps me level, until I meet her. Amalia is not like any woman I've come across and when I'm with her my fear of being touched disappears. Stalking her might have been a bad decision, but keeping away from her isn't my choice. I can't breathe when she's away from me, and I can't stand the thought of something happening to her, so when she gets in trouble, my only thought is on protecting what's mine.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Fury-USMC>

Bailey

I was sent to rescue Bailey, but instead, I found myself unable to part with her. Keeping her captive in my penthouse isn't the best plan, but I'm unwilling to hand her over to the Sons until I know they're going to uphold their end of the bargain. I'm not supposed to fall for the woman I've stolen, but there's something about Bailey's fire that keeps me wanting more.

But to have her, I have to survive her family, and the club is out for blood. Mine.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/Bailey-USMC>

IN THE LOST SAXONS SERIES

Snared Rider

A decade ago Beth fled Kingsley for one reason and one reason only: Logan Harlow. Sure, the man is a sex on legs biker, but he's also a thief; he stole her heart and broke it. Now, she's back in town and has no choice but to face him.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/SnaredRider>

Safe Rider

A new life; a new start—that was what Liv needed after escaping her violent marriage. Moving to Kingsley was a chance to show the world she wasn't defeated by her past. No part of that plan involved falling in love with a biker.

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Secret Rider

A one-night stand—that was all she was supposed to be. She wasn't supposed to walk into his bar a week later and demand a job. Wade is used to dealing with formidable women but Paige may just be his match. She's fiery, feisty and he wants her, but before they can be together, he needs to learn what she's hiding.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/SecretRider>

Claimed Rider

(A Lost Saxons Short Story)

Liv survived a nightmare. She may have got her happily ever after, but things are still not perfect in her world. How can she prove to Dean that she's his in every way that matters?

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Renewed Rider

Beth knows she has to fix things before her family is destroyed and she knows the only way to do that is with Logan at her side. Together, can they renew the bonds of brotherhood and rebuild the club

before it's too late?

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Forbidden Rider

The Lost Saxons stole Piper's future. They took her brother from her, put him on a bike and made him one of their own. Hating them was easy—until she met Jem Harlow. He's irritating beyond belief, pushy, charming, attractive, and he knows it. And he won't leave her alone. Worse still, she's falling for his act. There's only one problem: her brother does not want her anywhere near his club friends.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/ForbiddenRider>

Christmas Rider

(A Lost Saxons Short Story)

Christmas in Kingsley should be a time for celebration, but with a maniac on the loose and a private investigator dogging their steps, things are tense as the festive season gets underway.

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Flawed Rider

Noah 'Weed' Williams is not a good man. He drinks too much, sleeps around too much, and he doesn't think he's worthy of a meaningful relationship. Meeting Chloe opens his eyes to a world he could have, but he knows she deserves better than him.

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Fallen Rider

Mackenzie is falling for the wrong man. Dane is completely off-limits, but she can't keep her mind off him. Running out on him after a one-night stand, she hoped she could avoid him, but fate has other ideas. When she's sent to his clubhouse for her own protection, she's put front and centre in his world and has no choice but to face up to her feelings for the man.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/FallenRider>

STANDALONE BOOKS

Match Me Perfect

He's a fisherman, she's a marketing manager. He lives on an island, she lives in London. Can online dating really match two people from different worlds?

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Stranded Hearts

(Love, Unexpected Collection)

Rhys Hale is a first-class jerk. Everything about him makes Zara's head want to explode. When he comes to her village, intending to put a stonking big development in the middle of it, the gauntlet is thrown down. The last thing she expected was for nature to play dirty and get stuck with him.

Download here: <https://books2read.com/StrandedHearts>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Ames lives in a small market town in the Midlands, England. She lives with her dog and when she's not writing, she's playing with crochet hooks.

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