



RUBINOUS

MILA CRAWFORD

Dubious

Mila Crawford

Copyright © 2023 by Mila Crawford

All rights reserved.

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

 Created with Vellum

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Blurb](#)

[Also by Mila Crawford](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Website](#)

Introduction

Dear Reader,

This novella contains content that could be disturbing to some readers, please read at your own risk.

-Degradation, Primal, Spit Play, C*m Play, Cream-pie clean up, Pet play, Toys, Praise, TVP, DP, Marking, CNC, Exhibitionism. Step-Siblings.

-Play with sharp objects used to cut up fruits, and vegetables.

-Play with red bodily fluid

-CSA

-CA

-Violence and Violent acts.

Blurb

Once upon a time, there were three men forged in suffering. They lived their lives in servitude to the monster who created them. Broken boys became vicious men.

Years of brutality stripped them of their humanity and hardened their hearts.

Each man retreating further into darkness.

Until her.

She is the beacon of hope and the spark that re-ignites their damaged and demented hearts.

But when their world threatens her life, they'll do anything to keep her safe. Even if it means destroying everything they've ever known.

Also by Mila Crawford

Park Avenue Elite Series

[Cruel Intentions](#)

[Forbidden Desires](#)

[Your Daddy Does it Better](#)

The Dangerous Sinners Series

[Bound Together](#)

[Room Twenty-Two](#)

[Thicker Than Blood](#)

[Hide and Seek](#)

[The Mask](#)

Prologue

Alaric

Another rich man for my mother and another sibling for me. I turn my head and stare at my two brothers, although neither are my biological siblings. They're byproducts of my mother's marriages to wealthy men. Men she seduces and eliminates, sucking up their wealth like a succubus.

Asher sits across from me in the limo, his eyes on the trees rushing by. We've been driving on what seems to be a barren road for ages—nothing in sight but the lush forests and a dirt track. No doubt Mother likes the isolation—no one around to rush in and save her new husband when he dies from a mysterious heart attack.

How long will we have to wait before adorning our mourning black and pretending we give a fuck about the impending loss?

River is wearing his headphones, most likely listening to some obscure death metal band. He shrewdly observes his new daddy. Will he fuck this one like he did the last? I glance at his crotch and smirk at the visible outline of his dick.

The previous guy was fun. I enjoyed his talented mouth. We used to bring

him out for parlor tricks when buddies were over and see how many dicks he could shove into his mouth. Sadly, the maximum was only five, but that didn't stop us from fucking his ass two at a time to satiate our disappointment.

Asher didn't like fucking that dude. But he sure liked to torture him. He called him pathetic while he stretched his ass wide with a speculum until it fit the barrel of a baseball bat and swag. Asher joked about how he wished he'd done the same thing to his little league coach ten years ago. But I guess a nine-year-old boy isn't as imaginative as a twenty-nine-year-old man.

I spot my mother fussing over her new man in my peripheral view. Her oversweetened voice is enough to make me gag.

"I can't wait to meet your little girl," she simpers.

I bet she can't. My mother has a penchant for breaking sweet little things. From how my new step-daddy describes his little girl, she's a decadent cupcake with a mouthwatering buttercream frosting.

The stretch limo may as well be a cramped closet because my ability to breathe is constricted. All I want is to get away from this woman and the toxic environment she created from the moment I was born. My attachments are misguided now, and I'm locked in with the two young men sitting across from me. Asher would likely fuck the bitch with a knife and rid us of her, but he's not easy to convince—probably because she's fucked him up since childhood. My mother calls him a good boy, and he salivates like a starved dog spotting a piece of prime meat. I guess it's why he has a hard-on for leashes.

"Oh, Charles, it's beautiful," my mother coos as the limo pulls up to a large black cast iron gate protecting a giant stone mansion.

The place must be at least thirty-thousand square feet. My mother has come a long way from the trailer park where she lived with my sperm donor.

"I'm so glad you like it, Celeste," Charles whispers as he kisses her palm. His gaze moves to me. "I hope you four will be as happy as Ella and I have been here."

My ears perk up at the mention of his daughter—my new twenty-one-year-

old sister. My dick got hard the first time I saw her picture. That's never happened before. There was something about her, a body made for sinning and a face God himself would bow to in reverence. A perfect mix of saint and sinner.

Mother's lips turn up at the mention of her name. She's never had to make a female come to heel before. I'm sure she's gloating about how much easier it will be to manipulate a girl over the three boys she's molded to her liking. My stomach churns as Mother glances nonchalantly at Asher's and River's cocks before licking her lips.

Sick bitch.

The iron gates swing open, and the limo pulls up in front of a stone staircase leading to two giant mahogany doors with a cliché gold knocker. But the extravagance before me pales compared to the curvy brunette with the bright smile.

The scorching afternoon sun sends rays of light into the dark limo. Mother and Charles step out first. Like a Hollywood actress, she runs to her new stepdaughter and begins her ritual. My ears burn with the poison seeping from her lips. Bullshit lies she spins to catch the young beauty in her web. The nausea induced by witnessing her deceit is why I never lie. Omit the truth? Yes, all the time. But I never lie.

The girl smiles politely at my mother before leaping into her father's arms. Charles twirls her around, and they both laugh.

"Don't you think you're getting too big for such antics?" Mother asks, hiding the venom in her voice with an overdose of sweetness.

Charles laughs. "She'll never be too old to give her dad a hug, will you, Princess?"

"Never, Daddy."

My dick jerks at her words, letting them wrap around my shaft like a wet cunt.

Mother's sinister smile splits her sweet stepmother persona as she turns toward the three of us.

River steps forward first—shocker. He'll fuck anything with a hole. I'm sure he's already picturing Ella on her knees with tears streaking down her face while her mouth is busy worshipping his dick.

"Hi," he greets in a chipper voice, "I'm River. I'm charmed to make your acquaintance."

"Nice to meet you," Ella murmurs, her sweet smile causing my heart to beat erratically. She bypasses River and steps toward Asher. "And you are?"

Asher smirks as he steps forward. He leans in and places a kiss by her ear, whispering low enough for only the three of us to hear. "Your worst nightmare."

I smack the back of his head, and Asher growls as he glares at me. Fine by me. Better me than her. Besides, I did him a favor. Can't have him scaring the little thing before Mother puts her plan into action. Asher would be in a world of pain. Then again, he'd enjoy every ounce of torture I could muster up for him. My gaze roams to the vicious marks along his arm, and my conscience rears its ugly head, reminding me that they're my fault.

I smile. "Don't listen to my brother. He's an idiot."

Ella's pretty green eyes land on me, and the ground under me splits open, sending me plummeting into the unknown. If I believed in the almighty, I'd be forgiven for thinking she was an angel sent down to ordain me as a prophet. Her lips turn up and her smile widens as if beckoning me to the heavens. I shake my head to clear my brain of her hypnotic spell.

Extending my hand, I reciprocate her warmth. "Hi. I'm Alaric."

Mother clears her throat as Ella places her soft hand in mine, forcing me to add quickly, "Your *big* brother."

Ella blushes at my emphasis on "big." What other parts of her body can I cause to blush so prettily?

River inches closer to her, blocking my view. He wraps his arms around her waist, hoisting her in the air before he twirls her around. Her laugh tinkles like melodic wind chimes. She seems so innocent and carefree. Part of me is envious—I never had the option of being carefree.

It's too bad I'm about to destroy her dreams and drown her in nightmares.

Chapter One

Ella (Three Months Later)

The ambiance of the house has shifted. The peace ordaining the walls has distorted into something else, something ominous. The joy I possessed is gone—destroyed and void of happiness.

My father is dead. His virile body now composts in the dirt with vermin while strangers surround me in the space that held his love.

Three months ago, my dad arrived with a strange woman and three men, introducing me to my new family. I worried about what those changes meant before chalking it up to my anxiety at sharing my refuge with virtual strangers. I did it for my father's happiness.

Now my father is gone, and I'm alone.

I enter the formal dining room and see my new family seated around the dinner table that only held my father and me three months ago. If he were still here, it wouldn't feel like a vise was clamping my throat, obstructing my words.

My stepmother sits at the head of the table. *His place*. She appears regal and aloof, a statue to be revered with darkness lurking beneath the surface. Her three sons surround her—a queen with her royal advisors and generals.

For the past three months, I've remained in the shadows, making myself small and unseen to ensure I don't disturb the balance of my new family. My father deserved to be happy, and his new wife had achieved that if the way he'd gazed at her was to be believed.

"So nice for you to join us, dear. We were getting worried about you," Celeste coos.

My father's body is barely in the ground, yet there she sits, wearing a bright red shirt with her face perfectly made up. Her eyes are like lasers as she looks at me over the rim of her wine glass and tips the merlot to her lips. To a casual observer, she would seem uncomfortably giddy about the death of a man she declared her undying love for not a month ago.

"Sorry I'm late," I whisper.

Cool hands drape over mine as I pull back my chair, sending a shock wave through my body. I turn to my left and fall into Alaric's steel-blue eyes.

My heart is in my throat as he seats me. He bends forward, his warm breath prickling my neck and sending chills through my body. "Ladies don't pull out their own chairs."

His large hands rest on my shoulders, and I turn my head to see the tattoos etched on his fingers. One in particular catches my eye: a black raven flying over a river of blood. He got it a month ago, after a night we swore never to mention again. We've never spoken of it, but that night replays in my mind repeatedly. A perfect memory etched in sorrow.

Alaric smiles. "Can't have my little sis not believing she's the belle of the ball, now, can I?" His words are charming, but his eyes lurk, gliding from my face to my breasts and telling me that night is also present in his mind.

The staff rush out and place the various courses of the meal before us. My stomach becomes a brick, repulsed at the idea of consuming food when my heart is in a million tattered pieces.

I push my food around on the porcelain plate in silence, creating an illusion of enjoying the feast before me. I nod at statements made, not processing the words that reach my ears. Words resonate like white noise. I can't focus on anything other than losing my anchor. The man who wrapped me in safety is

gone, and the treachery of the turbulent ocean is no longer held at bay.

“Ella.” Alaric’s deep voice breaks through my musings.

I look up to see my three stepbrothers leering at me. I feel like a little rabbit surrounded by a pack of rabid wolves.

“I asked what your plans are now,” my stepmother says. “It’s been a month since your father’s passing. I’m sure you have plans in mind.”

A month? I’ve lost my only family, and this woman talks about my father’s death like he was a pet goldfish. “My father died, Celeste. Grief isn’t something you process quickly.”

I’m about to say more and lay it on the line for this woman, but I freeze in shock as River’s hand lands on my knee. When did he move his chair? I swallow audibly, trying to ignore his touch, unsure if it’s wanted. A part of me wants to jump up and blast him for being so bold, but that night flashes in my mind, and shame floods me at the longing I harbor for the heat of his hand on my skin.

I stare Celeste down. “I’m surprised you’ve moved on so quickly.”

Celeste gasps, her hand flying to her chest as if I’ve mortally wounded her with an invisible sword. “I’m in a lot of pain, Ella. Charles was the love of my life. I don’t know if I can go on without him.”

I roll my eyes at her dramatic response. Her indignation is as fake as the non-existent tears she shed at my father’s burial. “Maybe you should have jumped into his grave with him. It would’ve been a poetic ending to your love story.”

River chuckles beside me, throwing me off. Ignoring him, I return my attention to Celeste. “I’m not planning to go anywhere. This is my house. This is where my father raised me. Right now, my only plan is to grieve.”

River laughs again and squeezes my thigh before removing his uninvited touch from my person. “I like the idea of you being around, Ella. It gives me more time to get to know my little sister.”

My body reacts when River says, “little sister.” Two words that should be innocent yet sound blasphemous on his lips.

Celeste clears her throat. “That’s understandable, dear.

Sure it is, you black widow.

I busy myself with my food and copious amounts of liquor for the rest of dinner, hoping I can leave the meal unscathed if I don’t make eye contact with anyone.

“Maybe we can go for a drive tomorrow,” Alaric suggests, his blue eyes searching mine.

I can’t bear to look at him, so I focus on his hands. Bad idea because my mind floods with images of those calloused fingers gliding over my skin. As illogical as it is, I can’t help thinking that night was forged in sin, and my father’s death was the punishment I received.

“Alaric, don’t forget, we have a meeting with the lawyers tomorrow,” Celeste interjects.

“Lawyers?” I ask.

Stepmother dearest turns her beady eyes on me with contention. “Yes, lawyers, dear,” she says smoothly, placing one hand on top of the other. “Now that everything’s settled, we need to find out what will happen with the estate. We need to ensure that you’re all taken care of. It’s what Charles would have wanted after all.”

I wave a hand around the table. “As far as I can tell, we’re all adults here, so I don’t understand what needs to be taken care of.”

Celeste narrows her eyes on me and smiles. “You never know, dear. Better to be safe than sorry.”

I turn to Alaric. I know what I’m about to suggest is a bad idea, but the need to get under Celeste’s skin overrides all logic. “Perhaps we can do something after your appointment.”

“Absolutely, Princess,” Alaric replies.

“We’ll make it a family affair,” River interjects.

My face immediately grows hot as I gaze at him, regretting my suggestion

when he wags his eyebrows. River is the joker of the three. Sometimes, I wonder if he has any moral compass or shame, but I like him because he doesn't care what people think. River lives his life the way he wants. Does what feels good. Says what he believes is right and walks his own path without worrying about where it might lead.

"I'm sure Asher would like to join too," River whispers so only I can hear. "If I remember correctly, you enjoyed his idea of fun the last time all three of us hung out together."

Asher is the most unnerving of the three men. He doesn't talk much; his words cut into short answers. When he peers at me, I can't help but think he's pondering innovative ways to hurt me—ways I want to fall into, like Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole. Out of the three, Asher has the key that unlocks all my inhibitions. It was he who lulled me toward them. It was he who coaxed me to believe that every act of debauchery was acceptable. Asher is the serpent who convinced Eve to take a bite of the apple.

I lock eyes with him. The back of my neck prickles, and I have an urge to run—not out of fear but the necessity of having him chase me until I'm caught. Asher smiles and winks as if he senses my thoughts, and I quickly avert my eyes.

"Don't worry, Sis," Alaric chimes in. "I'm sure we can keep you busy."

Alaric is the subdued one but also the most charming. I found myself tangled in his web before the other two were added to the mix. Alaric makes me comfortable and frightened at the same time. He emits a sense of safety while living on the edge of fear. Alaric is the calm before the raging storm of River and Asher.

The air is thick. My lungs are balloons begging for their heated breath to fill me. My skin crawls, not from discomfort, but from becoming entrapped in a situation that could turn at any moment.

Celeste jumps at the clatter of my fork hitting the china plate. All eyes turn to me.

"I'm sorry," I stammer. "I'm not feeling too good. Please excuse me. I need to rest for a bit."

Without waiting for a response, I push back my chair and run for the sanctuary of my room. I rush up the stairs and down the long corridor until I reach my haven. My bed shifts as I fall back on it, hoping to recall my father. Almost a month has passed since he died, and I'm scared that if I don't keep my memories of him in the forefront, I'll lose him all over again. But it's not images of my father flooding my mind. It's visions of that night and the three men seated at the oak dining table downstairs.

Why haven't they attempted to be with me since then? Sure, they've been kind to me. We've exchanged light touches and had deep conversations, but nothing like *that* night.

"Charles must have some sort of power over Celeste," River said as he plopped on the sofa beside me and shoved his hand into the popcorn bowl on my thighs.

"It is weird," Asher agreed as he sat on my other side. He put his arm around my shoulder and squeezed. "Looks like it's just us kids, all alone."

Alaric's eyes were fixed on the paused TV screen. "You gonna start the movie or yak all night?"

*Asher rolled his eyes and hit play on *Scream*, one of my favorite movies. When the guys asked me what I wanted to watch, the title rolled off my tongue, but I was rethinking my choice as I clung to River or Asher every time there was a jump scare.*

"Sorry," I whispered, readjusting myself between them.

"No need to apologize. I like it," River said with a wink.

My body heated, making me grateful that the lights were out because I was sure my face was an embarrassing shade of red.

I desperately tried to focus on the film, but River's hand gripped my thigh while Asher's fingers played mindlessly with my hair. I couldn't concentrate on anything but them and the realization that my panties were damp with lust.

"I've gotta get some air," Alaric announced, storming from the room.

“What’s his problem?” I asked, frustrated at how he always pushed me away and made everything so uncomfortable.

River chuckled. “You.”

“Me? I’ve only ever been kind to him. He’s the one who kisses and touches and follows me. How is it my fault?”

Asher tightened his arm around me, pulling me closer. “We’re not used to being gentle with someone we care about. Alaric cares more about being good than the two of us, so he’s fighting it.”

Anger bubbled within me. I was so sick and tired of Alaric’s hot and cold temperament. “He thinks being decent is a contrast to being good? Is this a sick joke the three of you are playing? Spinning me like a record or bouncing me like a yo-yo?”

The bowl of popcorn crashed to the floor as I jumped off the sofa and strode from the room after Alaric. I was done with him treating me like a toy he played with and discarded like garbage.

I barged out the back door and spied Alaric sitting on a deckchair by the pool. One hand held a whiskey bottle to his mouth while a cigarette dangled from the fingers of the other.

“What the fuck is your problem?” I demanded.

Alaric turned to me, his eyes eating me up silently as he slowly took a haul of his cigarette.

Apparently, the jerk thought he was too cool to answer me, which made me angrier. “Are you deaf? I asked you a question. What’s your problem?”

He cast his eyes to the shimmering water. “Isn’t it obvious? My problem is you, Princess.” He threw the bottle, and I watched in horror as it shattered into tiny pieces on the deck. Alaric stood and stepped forward until he was directly in my face. “I don’t know what to do with the way you make me feel.”

“How do I make you feel?” I demanded, holding my breath. I never knew if Alaric’s words would be a balm to my soul or a knife wedged deep in my

heart.

“I’m stuck between suffocating when you’re around and wishing I was dead when you aren’t. I want you so bad I can’t see straight, and that’s a dangerous path. A path there’s no coming back from. We can’t give you what you need. Not regular shit like roses or chocolates, only three fucked up men with no moral compass and homicidal tendencies.”

I frowned. “We weren’t talking marriage and babies and happily ever after, Alaric. We were watching a movie, and you stormed out like a toddler who couldn’t get his way.”

Alaric smirked and stepped closer. “Trust me, Ella. I can get my way. I’m just not sure you can handle it.”

I didn’t retreat from his advance. I closed the small space between us and pressed my body flush to his. “I can handle it. I can handle all three of you.” I was unsure why I’d made that claim because the truth was, there was no way I could contend with them. But I wanted to. I had to if I wanted to discover what this was between the three of us. It could be a perverse attraction driven by curiosity, or it could be something tangible and mind-blowing. Either way, I wanted to find out.

“I need you to pick a word,” Alaric said. “We don’t acknowledge words like ‘no,’ ‘please,’ or ‘stop.’ We like those words and will only stop for one of your choosing. So pick.”

My gumption suddenly vanished, and I was wary of the pandora’s box I was attempting to open.

“That’s what I thought, Princess,” Alaric scoffed. “You can’t handle shit, so why don’t you scurry off?”

“Prick.”

Alaric snickered. “Been told I’m a prick by my mother my whole life, Ella. Your paltry attempt at name-calling isn’t gonna do much.”

I didn’t understand why, but his admission was like acid thrown in my face. The sheer horror of his mother demeaning him hurt me more than anything he could have called me. A mother’s love was supposed to be pure and

unconditional. Words from a mother should fuel you and help you flourish, not cut you down like an annoying weed in her garden.

I smiled. “No, Alaric. That’s my safe word. Prick.”

Alaric blinked. “I’m giving you a head start, Princess. Gonna count to ten, and you’ll run.” I opened my mouth to speak, but Alaric placed a finger on my lips. “Princess, all three of us have our little proclivities. Asher likes leashes. River likes pain. And me?” He leaned in close. “I like to chase. So start running.”

I saw Asher and River from my peripheral vision. I was a deer caught in the headlights, frozen in place, unable to think or move.

“One. Two,” Alaric counted. “This won’t be fun or challenging if you stand there, Ella.” His voice dropped to a dangerous whisper. “Run.”

The message finally reached my feet, and I dashed toward the forest surrounding the house. Alaric raised his voice, counting slowly, giving me the fuel to quicken my steps.

The trees beckoned me like old friends welcoming me home. I’d spent many days running beneath their shelter and climbing their sturdy limbs in my youth. I placed my foot on the bark and hoisted myself onto a hanging branch. I now had a bird’s eye view of the three men circling below like a pack of wolves. Alaric, the alpha, with River and Asher flanking him. They were a terrifying sight to anyone who gazed upon them.

River surveyed the surrounding trees. “She can’t have gone far. You only gave her a count of ten.”

I was confident I’d bested them, but then I noticed Alaric had disappeared. I scanned the area, but he was nowhere in sight. I squeaked as strong arms enveloped me like a vise.

“Miss me?” Alaric’s deep voice attacked the shell of my ear.

“How did you know I was up here?” I asked breathlessly.

“You had ten seconds, Ella. Didn’t give you time to get far. I must admit, I’m impressed by your climbing skills. Now you’ve had your fun, it’s time for me

to have mine.”

Alaric moved in to capture my lips, but I ducked under his arm and scampered down the tree, laughing as I ran deeper into the forest.

I didn't make it far before Asher wrapped his giant arms around me and pushed me to the ground. “Where are you running off to, Pup?”

River smirked. “Well, well, well. Looks like the rabbit has been caught by the big bad wolves.”

Chapter Two

R iver

“What’s the game plan?” I ask as I plop down on the wingback armchair that likely cost a pretty penny. It’s one of those fancy French chairs, the epitome of luxury.

Alaric’s been acting fucking weird as hell for the past few days. He went for a drive with Ella, and the next day, he was off. I can’t help thinking that everything is about to go to hell in a handbasket.

“Don’t get too comfortable. You know what Celeste is like. We won’t be here for long,” Alaric says as he pours a glass of whiskey. He tips the glass back and downs the amber liquid in one gulp.

Asher pulls out a joint and lights it up, leaning back on the bed and taking multiple puffs. “She isn’t going anywhere until she finishes the job. And as long as little sister isn’t in her grasp, she’s the enemy.”

Asher passes me the joint, and I take a hit. “Celeste didn’t like the little date you planned.”

“It’s not like you helped the situation by making it a family affair,” Alaric snips.

I shrug, forming O's with the smoke. "No way I'm not getting a taste of those goods again."

"That shit with her can't happen again," Alaric states. "One and done."

Motherfucker can't be serious. It was the first time I've seen him shut down all the bullshit in his head and let go. Ella did in one night what Asher and I have been desperate to achieve for ten years.

Needing something to take the edge off thinking about Ella naked and spread before me, I beckon Asher with my fingers. He falls to his knees and crawls without being told. Asher makes quick work of my belt and unbuttons my pants, pulling down the zipper and unleashing my semi-hard cock. The fucker is baffling, but he's the best cock sucker I've ever met. "I call bullshit. There's no way you're gonna walk away from her."

"Never said we were walking away. Just that we can't have her more mixed up in this shit than she already is." Alaric slams his glass down and turns his gaze toward Asher and me.

He makes eye contact with me before lowering his gaze and taking a few predatory steps to stand in front of us. I think he's about to unzip his pants, but he lifts an eyebrow.

Silence shrouds us as I wait to see what Alaric will do. It's rare for him to join in when Asher and I go at it. I always thought it was because he wasn't interested, but I learned that wasn't it.

Like Asher and me, Alaric likes to fuck hard and fast and often. The only difference is that while we allow ourselves to relish the act, Alaric uses it as self-punishment.

With one hand, Alaric hoists Asher by the belt until his ass is directly in front of his crotch. He unbuckles Asher's belt and yanks from the hoops. Asher puts his arms behind his back, and Alaric binds his wrists with the belt.

Asher would never let me tie him up like that. I'd end up on the sharp side of his blade. He'll bottom for me—the fucker loves getting his asshole fucked and eats cum like a French delicacy. But no one except Alaric ties him up. He has no problem being bound, gagged, or even beaten by Alaric. It's a little fucked up, considering their history, but that's the draw of Alaric for both of

us—our Manaveli. The man who would put us through hell if it meant we'd be in a better place.

Alaric focuses on his task as he removes the small bottle of lube from his pocket and pours it over Asher's ass.

“What are we going to do about our little sister?” I ask as Asher moans on my cock from the intrusion of Alaric's fingers.

It's weird how Alaric is being careful tonight. Usually, he lubes up his dick and jams it in. My favorite. I like it to hurt a little. The pain takes everything right to the edge.

Alaric pulls his fingers out before impaling Asher on his dick in one full thrust. “Protect her. We have to wait it out. Three months, and it's all over. I've already started shuffling things at the club. Celeste has no power. She just thinks she does. Three months. I'll turn thirty and get the keys to the kingdom.”

I stand, forcing my cock to the back of Asher's throat and Alaric's dick deep in his ass. “Three months is a long time. How can you keep her safe when Celeste is drooling to put her six feet under?”

My hand moves to the back of Asher's head, holding him still and choking him with my cock. I thrive on the surge of power when he gags loudly. We've learned to lean on each other over the years, using one another to work out the urges indoctrinated into us from childhood to adulthood.

I peer at Alaric. My gut twists as I gaze at his face—a mixture of pleasure and turmoil. His eyes are far away, as if envisioning something beyond the world surrounding us. Alaric wants to save Ella. To allow her to live something pure instead of the eternal damnation we survive in.

It must be hard living with the guilt of a dark savior—someone who wants to do good but is bound to the vilest things by the circumstances of life. Alaric has offered to burn in the flames to set us free so we don't have to endure this life. But each time he brings it up, we shut it down. Asher and I understand that we belong to this man no matter what happens. We belong *with* this man.

“You know you always pull us through,” I groan as Asher sweeps the tip of

his tongue along my shaft, accepting my release into the depths of his warm mouth as he comes on the hardwood floor. And with that, Alaric pulls out, depriving himself.

“You could’ve finished,” Asher says.

I toss a piece of cloth at Asher before lighting a smoke. “He’ll never finish. With how our boy here edges himself, when he finally blows, it’ll be an avalanche.”

Alaric jumps back and tucks himself in, avoiding eye contact. He never looks us in the eyes after fucking. I’ve always wondered if it’s because I disgust him, but now I realize he’s punishing himself. He doesn’t want to bask in anything that could bring him peace.

The three of us turn at the intrusion of creaking floorboards on the other side of the bedroom door.

Alaric lunges to open the door, and the little sister stumbles into his arms. “It’s not polite to spy, Ella.”

“I-I wasn’t spying, I s-swear,” she stammers.

Alaric pulls Ella into the room, slamming the door behind her. He’s no longer the tormented soul. A stony mask replaces his vulnerability. Slamming her against the door, he leans in, pressing his body against hers. My dick gets hard again at the idea of her frightened by the ridge of his thick cock. Yes, I know that makes me sick. I like my girls a little scared. It’s a problem. It’s also why I didn’t fuck her that night because I realize the damage I would’ve inflicted.

“Please enlighten me, little sister. What would you consider your ear pressed against a closed door if not spying?”

“I heard nothing. I swear.”

Alaric glides his finger down her face, resting the tip on the bow of her lips. “Shhh, little sister. I don’t want you spilling more lies from your sweet lips. Were you interested in a show, Ella? Or were you looking for a repeat of that night?”

Her long, silky hair flies back and forth as she shuts her eyes and shakes her head. I recognize that fear—the kind where you don't know what's going to happen. But if you close your eyes and wish with all your might, it will simply be a nightmare you can put behind you. Where does she go when she's scared? I run to memories of my dead mother, steadfast in her arms as she hums a song.

“Why are you being like this?” Her words are barely a whisper falling from her lips. So soft and filled with sorrow that I'm unsure I heard them correctly.

Alaric falters. He steps back, giving Ella space. She visibly shakes, and tears cascade down her round face.

“Gotta be cruel to be kind, Ella. I don't want to be unkind to you, but you have to realize there's nothing but misery for you here. You should run, Ella. Your natural reaction to us should be beyond fear. When you look at us, you should be flooded with horror.”

“I know you would never hurt me,” she states, her shoulders pulled back as if sure of her statement.

Before I can blink, Alaric's hand is around her throat, pinning her against the wall, holding her steadfast. “If I ever catch you snooping around us again, I'll gut you like a little fish and leave you flapping on the ground, gasping for your last breath. Have I made myself clear?”

Ella's eyes widen, and she nods. Pure fear replaces the sorrow lingering there a moment ago. Her hands move to her throat, her nails digging into Alaric's flesh, desperate to free herself.

“Use your words, Sis. No misunderstandings.”

“Yes, I promise,” she sobs.

Alaric grips her hair, yanks her back, and opens the door. He tosses her on her ass in the hallway. “Now, stay the fuck out.”

With a slam, he walks back to the liquor and pours another glass of whiskey.

Asher grabs the glass from his hand. “You can't keep her safe if she's

petrified of you.”

Alaric glares at him. “If she fears us, she won’t trust us. If she doesn’t trust us, and since her father isn’t here anymore, she’ll have no choice but to take my suggestion to get herself the fuck away from here.”

Chapter Three

Ella

Tears cascade, drenching the pillow beneath my face. But the sad part of my current predicament is that I don't know if I'm crying from the loss of my father or Alaric's cruelty. Maybe it's both, or perhaps it's self-pity that my world has been turned upside down.

Things were so clear before, and now everything is a murky gray, causing confusion, frustration, and dread. When it was my father and me, the simplicity of life was a lulling comfort. There was no disturbance in my life, just a silent river of boredom that shielded us from the outside world.

At first, my new stepbrothers were unnerving. When my father announced that he'd married and his new wife had children, I expected three little boys, not three attractive, vital men.

My interactions with them were charged with a strange energy, and I didn't understand why. Their brazen good looks and golden tongues ignited my senses and lit fires inside me. I didn't even realize that fire was simmering under the surface. I was a cliché, a good girl dipping her toes in a world much darker than she was used to.

Each man offered something new and exciting. Alaric was charming, a vision

of every girl's fairytale, a handsome prince who perceived me as the pinnacle of perfection. I realized how special these three men were within a week of them moving in.

"What are you doing, Princess?"

I jumped at the deep baritone. Alaric Tate, my new stepbrother, walked around like a sleet ghost, unsure of his place or what he wanted. I'd been watching the three men who'd invaded my space carefully as they claimed what used to belong to me. They'd built a place in my lonely world.

I gazed up at him. "I hate that word. Princess. What does it mean? People throw it around as a compliment and an insult. I'm curious, Alaric. What's your intention for using the word?"

Alaric's expression was contemplative. He didn't speak right away, processing my question. I liked that.

He tilted his head, and the corners of his lips lifted in a slow smile, revealing two dimples. "Depends on what you consider a virtue and a vice. Does the word 'princess' unleash images of a bratty, entitled little girl, or does it make you an exquisite beauty whose radiance and grace should be revered and relished?"

Alaric slid onto the bench beside me. His hand grazed mine as he dug into the clear bag he was holding and ripped off a piece of bread, tossing it to the ducks in the clear water beneath a blue sky.

"You have a wicked tongue, Alaric Tate, and I don't know what to think about it."

Alaric placed his other hand on his heart and gave me a mischievous wink. "I solemnly swear every word I utter is the truth and nothing but the truth."

My face grew hot, no doubt painting my cheeks red. I tried to swallow, but my dry throat made it difficult. "Would you admit to being a liar?"

My heart sped up as his tattooed hand moved to my face. It paused in mid-air as if he were contemplating his next move. He chuckled as his fingers grazed my face and tucked my hair behind my ears. "I have no reason to lie, Princess. Lying is the weapon of the weak, and I'm not weak."

“So you’ve never lied in your entire life?”

Alaric pulled his hand away abruptly, leaving me cold. He pushed his hand into his hoodie pocket and pulled out a pack of cigarettes. “Nope.”

I stared in wonder as he pinched the filter before gliding a cigarette from the disheveled pack with broken edges. He placed the cigarette between his full lips, lit it, and took a drag—a simple action that transfixed me. We sat silently as I watched the smoke curl from his mouth and dissipate in the crisp air.

He turned to me, and his eyes were so intent that I wouldn’t be shocked if he could see right through me. The unease forced me to shift away, needing a barrier against the fire igniting in the steel of his eyes.

Alaric stretched his long legs in front of him and crossed his ankles. He smirked. “Oh, the irony.”

I frowned. “Irony?”

“For the first time in my life, I want to be vulnerable, and the person I want to bestow my vulnerability upon wants to shuffle away.”

Alaric’s words were so thick with emotion that they hung above my head like a bomb. My heart accelerated with fear, knowing that once it detonated, it would decimate the world around me, leaving shrapnel in its wake and replacing the life I knew.

With the inch of space between us, I grasped for a reply. I held his brilliant blue gaze, swallowing the jagged lump in my throat. “Excuse me if I’m a little suspicious of a grown man I don’t know.”

Alaric laughed, a boisterous sound that echoed beyond the trees surrounding us. “Fair enough. To be honest, you should be wary of me.” He rose from the bench and dropped his cigarette on the ground, pulverizing it with the toe of his black leather loafers. He bent, picking up the demolished filter before placing it in his pocket.

“What are you doing?” I asked, befuddled by his action.

“Just because I’ve decided to kill myself by smoking doesn’t mean I want to

kill the planet in the process.”

“Well, that was unexpected,” I whispered.

Alaric leaned down, his face directly in front of mine. “You shouldn’t judge a book by its cover.”

“I can’t judge anything. I barely know you.” I leaned back, needing the space between us before I became intoxicated with the liquid pools of his eyes and the scent of tobacco, peppermint, and musk.

Alaric smiled, pushing past my boundaries, something I should despise, but I found the invasion welcoming. I visibly shivered. My skin bloomed with goosebumps as his warm breath hit the shell of my ear, and he whispered, “Well, then, I think you should get to know me.”

He didn’t wait for me to respond; he just smiled and walked away.

I wipe the remnants of tears off my face. I’m sick of crying about things I can’t change. This sense of helplessness is a noose that restricts my ability to breathe. I’m frightened that it will eventually snap and pull me under, leaving me hopeless, surrounded by darkness.

My heart jumps at the knock on my bedroom door before it slowly opens. A flash of shame hits me at the hope that it’s Alaric to tell me how sorry he is. Maybe fall on his knees and beg for my forgiveness. But it’s not Alaric. It’s the person I least expect.

Asher.

The bed shifts as he flops onto the mattress, making me bounce. I’m unsure if he’s trying to lighten the mood or make me perversely aware of his sheer size.

Asher is a large man. My friend, Isari, would call him thicker than a snicker. He leans back on my bed and smiles as he takes in the princess motif decor. I realize how girly it is, with the pink comforter, frilly white curtains with lace applique, and the bench covered in stuffed animals.

“Your room is deceitful, you know that? It gives a man the illusion that you’re a little girl living in a fantasy world of fairytales and happily ever

after.” Asher turns to me with a snide smirk. “Based on those puffy eyes, the illusion is laced with reality.”

Where Alaric makes me sweat, Asher makes me mad. His gaze is electrifying and dangerous, revealing the twist of a small boy and a deranged serial killer. He’s arrogant, with no filter, and no care that his words are bullets that decimate as they leave his lips. But under the sharp tongue is a soft soul strangled in darkness.

Chapter Four

Asher

Ella's been crying. I don't like how that makes me feel, and discomfort twists inside me.

People usually cry without crying—a grotesque squinting of their eyes, jutting their bottom lip, and incessant whining. The most amusing part of the scenario is that the entire time they're playing victim, not one tear falls from their pathetic eyes. Women have mastered that shit. I can't blame them, I guess. They've been allowed to get away with it for years.

But looking at Ella, I know that her red, puffy eyes, the dampness on her pillowcase, and the tears drying on her face are real. Her pain isn't constructed to win sympathy she doesn't deserve.

When we first moved here, I thought Ella was the same as any rich girl. My perception of her was based on my lived experience with pretty, snobby blonde girls who made it clear I didn't belong in their society. Scars left behind as a poor kid too smart for schools in the slums but not good enough to fit in with the upper crust.

“Don't wallow in your sorrow so long that you allow those deluded by their power to have a hold over you.”

Ella stares blankly at me as if my words are a cluster bomb of confusion. I lean forward, allowing my fingers to brush her soft hair and holding my tongue to let my words settle.

Her eyes shut. “You don’t need to pour salt on my wounds.”

“Stand up. Yell at him. Tell him you won’t break simply because he told you to. Take the pain, humiliation, and grief and swallow it, burn it, pulverize it until it’s a small ember that fuels your right to persevere.”

“Who’s side are you on?”

I smile as her nose scrunches and her eyes slant in suspicion. Pride blooms within me, something that doesn’t happen often these days. Even when broken, a lioness dwells inside her, tearing down the facade she’s been forced to create. Ella is a survivor, and as much as Alaric is willing to walk away from her, I’m not. “Alaric’s side, River’s side. Your side. But most of all, I’m on my side.”

The corners of Ella’s lips lift with the sweetest smile, confirming that despite her fragile appearance, she has what it takes to burn in the flames with us and come out on the other side.

I’ve never been allowed to have anything good in my life, nothing pure. It’s led to the notion that innocence is both repellent and fascinating. Guess that’s what happens when you’re a kid forced to look at the chocolate cake without ever being able to savor the decadent taste.

I resigned myself to a life of corruption, pain, and heartache. Never to know softness or a kind word, especially from women. Until that day with Ella.

“Asher,” a soft voice called from the other side of the door.

I turned up the music. Nirvana. I wanted to drown her out, drown it all out. It was easy with Alaric and River. They knew my reasons. They accepted that the ends needed to justify the means.

But the way Ella had looked at me, like I was a monster, had set me back. With one look, she’d taken me back to the scared kid pushed around in the locker room, covering my head, desperate to limit the blows, while steel-toed boots kicked the shit out of me.

Another knock.

She was like a fuckin' gnat, a permanent annoyance. I'd tried to stay the fuck away from her, but she sprinkled sugar and fairy dust every fucking where she went. I could be a dick to her, but that would be like kicking an injured animal for shits and giggles. I was many things, including an asshole, but I wasn't sadistic. That was more River's deal. If he were in my situation, he would've slit her throat and considered the consequences on the flip side.

I didn't think I was doing anything wrong, at least not in my world. But what was acceptable in my world would drive a regular person to the brink of madness and beyond. They had no right to judge me because they wouldn't last a minute in the lifetime of misery I'd survived. The memories lingered in my mind day in and day out. Their suffocating grip on my heart told me that if I didn't harden it, I'd crumble in despair, destitute and insignificant.

I shut my eyes tightly as I sat in the dark, reeling at Ella's perseverance and her demand for answers I was unsure I could give. I wanted to lash out at her perfect existence. I told myself she would never understand because she'd seen nothing but the bounty and glory that life could provide for her. But the look in her eyes lingered like a beacon, flooding the darkness behind my eyelids. Her soft eyes were a spotlight of pity, sorrow, and horror. But they also held something else: the anguish of grief. She mourned me, a man she barely knew. She was mourning me as if I had died.

"Well, I'm not dead, bitch!" I yelled into the abyss.

My venomous roars were propelled into every corner of the room, drowned out by the thumping music. I roared the words because I wanted her to hear me, maybe even fear me. I wanted her to run from me. I wanted her body to rock with tremors at the mere thought of looking at me. But the reason I covered my screams with music was because, deep down, I couldn't bear the idea of her hating me. I didn't want her to gaze at me and witness the same image I saw every time I stared in the mirror. A monster.

The soft knock was now a vicious roar of fists banging against wood. A violent demand to be let in.

I remembered those knocks from many years ago. The same turbulent bangs Alaric had inflicted whenever they'd forced me into that room. His small fists

had banged as he'd screamed and pleaded, his little boy tears mixed with the rage of a child with nothing to lose. So he'd fought with the last remnants of hope and the tightening noose of desperation. I'd never forget the anguish in his voice when he'd demanded his mother take him over me. A prisoner swap, a pathetic attempt at hostage negotiations which went unheard and ignored by Celeste. She'd had no desire to leave anyone alive in the rubble. That would be a failure of her corrupt pathological need for power and greed.

"I'm not leaving, Asher." Ella's voice burst through the cloud of doom hanging over my head. "I'm not leaving. I'll sleep outside your door if I have to, but I'm not leaving."

With three large strides, I swung open the door. My face was directly in front of hers, my teeth bared like a wolf facing off with a small woodland creature. "You have no self-preservation, do you, Ella?"

She didn't back down. Squaring her shoulders, she stuck out her chest and faced me. It didn't matter that she was craning her neck back even as I bent forward, lowering my massive height to her level.

I stepped forward to make her retreat, but other than a slight wobble, she didn't budge.

I laughed as I gripped her neck and raised her from the floor, not with joy but with the urge to frighten her. Her eyes morphed from concern to horror as she finally clued into what I was capable of. Little Miss Perfect thought she could tame the beast, and now she regretted her foolishness. "You should've left well enough alone, Pup, but you barked up the wrong tree."

"Ash—" Her clawing slowed as my fingers tightened around her throat.

I could end her right now. Squeeze until her final breath escaped from her lips. Revel in the wave of satisfaction as her lifeless body fell to the floor.

But the desperate look in her eyes froze me. There was no reason the terror in her eyes should captivate me, but their silent plea forced me to abandon my grasp and watch as her body crashed to the floor. "Stay. The. Fuck. Away. From. Me."

Turning my back on her, I was about to return to my prison in this mausoleum of a house when her soft voice punched me directly in the gut.

There were moments when people believed you had an angel with you. A small sign from a divinity roaming in the heavens trying to reach you. Save you. Perhaps even heal you. I'd never given much weight to idiot notions of the divine. Fictional concepts in a world where redemption and salvation were possible invoked deep-rooted feelings of manipulation.

But this pure girl with her bright eyes clouded with concern forced me to stop because I saw the innocence that was ripped so violently from me in Ella. But there was something else. Shame. The anchor that had held me down for most of my life, causing my anger and violence to fester and grow.

I stood in the hall, shrouded by shadows and ambiguity. The powerful man I'd convinced myself I'd become suddenly seemed like a delusion. The only notion rattling in my brain, like a ship tossed on the murky waters of an angry, turbulent ocean, was that I was lost and frightened. Just like that little boy many years ago who'd wanted nothing more than to be cradled in his mother's arms while she told him everything would be okay.

Turning in horror, I witnessed the irrefutable proof of my handiwork on Ella's delicate neck. Red marks viciously highlighted her flesh.

I dug the heels of my hands into my eyes, trying to erase my savagery. Intrusive voices whispered from the past, deeming me an animal, a piece of meat to be manipulated and discarded. The words echoed with disdain and venom, eroding my self-worth, and painting me as something inhuman.

I forced myself to remember that things had changed. How the days of being less than nothing had forged my resolution to own the brutality forced upon me. The realization that my oppressors' hatred had created a man who would not slither into the void without a volcanic explosion of redemption, stripping the wrongdoers of their violence and harm.

The retribution I sought, my desire to ensure the offenders suffered the same fate as so many innocent people, could not equate to me becoming one of them. That was why I'd turned the corrupt darkness into the hollow parts of my soul unto myself. Every fiber of my being contained a conflicting war, a confrontation between good and evil. The truth glared at me like a reflection in shimmering water. If I harmed Ella, I'd become what I hated the most.

Celeste.

Ella tucked her legs under her arms, shrinking away from me. The same thing I'd done many years ago. An irrational impulse to make yourself smaller so you'd become invisible to those who wanted to hurt you. It never worked because, for demons, those moments of fear and desperation heightened their vampiric desire. It was an aphrodisiac—a twisted game of foreplay. But Ella was far more fortunate than I'd been. She hadn't faced a monster who'd subjected her to unknown torture for its pleasure. I was a broken man trying to find my way.

I bent, forcing myself to appear less threatening, more vulnerable. "I'm not going to hurt you, Ella." I raised my empty hands in the air, hoping she believed me. I couldn't begrudge her if she didn't. "I'm sorry," I whispered. I meant those words more than anything I'd ever said.

I stiffened as her shaky hand moved toward my face, forcing myself to hold still. I needed her to know I wouldn't harm her, no matter what. The electric touch of her skin against mine was a budding inferno. But it wasn't a fire that singed in retribution and judgment. It was a heat that warmed after being caught in a blizzard you didn't think you would survive.

Ella offered me a faint smile, one I didn't deserve, and whispered, "I forgive you."

Those three paltry words gifted me something I'd never had. Grace.

Ella rose from the floor and towered over me, offering me her hand. "Will you walk me to my room?"

I wrapped my fingers around her soft hand, and we silently walked down the corridor until we reached her door.

Ella turned to me and offered me another smile. This one was more vibrant, perhaps more earnest in its goal. "I won't pester you to tell me what that was about. Not because I don't want to know but because it's not something you're ready to share. But I want you to know I'm here for you, Asher. I won't judge you." She got on her tiptoes and kissed me on the chin, the only place her lips could reach.

At that moment, I knew that no matter what happened or what heinous acts I'd yet to commit to finally get my revenge, protecting Ella would take

priority over everything.

Chapter Five

Ella

Asher coming to my rescue makes sense in a twisted and complicated way. On the outside, he appears aloof, dismissive, and so contained that you'd think he was an android. But Asher has a depth that most don't recognize and usually dismiss.

Asher has the softest soul of my three stepbrothers. He's the gentle one who takes all the pain and holds it in to protect those he cares about. His selflessness and lost spirit allow him to rip his heart out with no thought of the consequences to himself.

Alaric burdens himself with the duty of caretaker. I'm unsure if that derives from being the eldest or because he's Celeste's only biological child and feels responsible for his two younger brothers. Whatever the reason, it fuels him to ensure everyone is safe and accounted for. He's the planner, commander, and executioner. Nothing is done without his knowledge or approval.

River could be labeled unhinged. He's saddled with a mind on the verge of insanity. Possibly overtaken by psychosis. I don't think River has a conscience or a tangible grasp of right or wrong. The only thing he understands is immediate gratification, and he has no limits to the depravity he'd partake in to get his way.

Asher's words lay siege to my body and echo in the fabric of my mind, forcing their way past my erratic emotions.

"Stand up. Yell at him."

The same nervous energy is present whenever I'm around them, a continuous buzz heightened by apprehension, intrigue, lust, and curiosity. The same emotions I'd experienced when they first showed up at the house and climbed out of the limo, larger than life and looming over everything I'd previously known. It's a complicated concoction that leaves my head spinning with something foreign and unknown. I figured the buzz would dissipate once I'd been around the three of them long enough. But it hasn't wavered. If anything, it's more present than the first time I saw them.

I would've never been able to look, let alone yell at them. But times have changed, and my connections with all three men assure me they would never hurt me, even during the most vicious fights and dangerous arguments. Even with how Alaric treated me, I know I'm still safe with him. And even if he decimates me, leaving me a husk of a human being, I'll know I stood up for myself—something my father instilled in me.

I observe Asher. His position hasn't shifted on the bed.

His lips turn up. "I only respect fighters, Ella. That's why I like you."

Jumping off the bed, I wipe away the remnants of my tears and head for the door. With my hand on the brass knob and my back turned to the man I care for so deeply, I pause, unsure of what to say. I have so many words I want to utter, but I know there's no obligation to muddle things with words when it comes to Asher. We've always been able to say so much with our silence.

I don't look at him, but I know his eyes are on me—a burning recognition of something familiar, warm, and protective.

"Thank you," I whisper.

"For what?"

"For always being there."

I don't wait for him to answer. I fling the door open, rush to the closed one

next to mine, and slam my fists against the dark wood.

My balance betrays me as the door opens, and I fall to the floor. Holding my arms out, I brace the impact with my hands.

I take in his chocolate brown Italian loafers and the hem of his navy-blue wool pants. The fluttering moonlight from the window enhances the shine of his shoes. Perfect and pristine.

A few months ago, Alaric wore hoodies and jeans, but he's transformed into a man who wouldn't be caught dead in anything but a three-piece suit. The sophisticated Fortune 500 CEO look juxtaposes the tunnels in his ears and the tattoos decorating every visible part of his flesh not covered by the decadent Italian or French threads.

"Well, hello there, Princess," Alaric coos from above me before hauling me up by my shoulders.

His body surrounds me like a military unit protecting an unsuspecting civilian. He's an intimidating force who doesn't want me to be comfortable because that would mean he'd lose the upper hand.

My throat tightens, my stomach plummets, and the courage I had in droves a moment ago quickly melts away. "Um, hi."

"Thought I told you to stay the fuck away from me," Alaric spits. His words are directed at me, but his eyes look anywhere but.

I peek behind his arms and notice Celeste sitting in the corner, smiling smugly at me. She's always been weird with the guys. It goes beyond motherly behavior. She's taken the overbearing parent role to a new and creepy level.

Her black dress is so short that you'd think she was a college freshman attending her first frat party. She lifts the champagne flute in her hand to her lips and takes a sip, crossing her legs and forcing the restrictive dress further up her thighs. Any higher, and I'm sure I'll have a perfect view of her vagina. You'd never believe Celeste recently lost the man she claimed to have loved so much that she didn't know how she'd move on.

Ignoring her, my gaze roams to the other side of the bed. River sits there,

facing the wall, his eyes focused on the hardwood floor. The stillness of his body is so out of sorts with the guy I know. His slumped shoulders and inability to look my way send alarm bells through me.

I've never seen him like this. Usually, he's full of arrogance to the point he seems incapable of any emotion that doesn't serve his needs. Seeing him so empty has a wave of empathy raging through me. I cannot imagine what's going on in his head and forcing him to look the way he does now.

"I—" Words fail me. I don't know what to say.

I don't want to have a conversation with Celeste in the room. The way her eyes rake over me sends chills along my spine. She's always creeped me out. As much as my father gazed at her in complete devotion and insisted on her goodness, I never believed it.

"Ella, so appropriate of you to join us, dear. We were just talking about you," Celeste purrs. Her fake smile is a desperate cover-up for the chill in her voice.

I raise an eyebrow. "Oh? Would you care to clue me in on the conversation the three of you were having behind my back?"

"I was telling the boys how it would be appropriate for you to get out. You've been cooped up in this house for such a long time."

Celeste's bony hands, with their long, red nails, move to the bedside table, and she grabs a shiny envelope. Rising from the bed, she walks toward me, the champagne sparkling in the flute in her other hand. My eyes move from her face to the envelope. Taking it, I open it and read the words inside. An invitation. To an ostentatious ball hosted by Benjamin Nevin and his degenerate son, David.

I shove the paper back at her, slamming it into her chest. "No, thank you."

Celeste smiles, gripping the envelope tightly. "Oh, sweet Ella, you seem to be under the assumption that I was *asking* you to attend."

Wait a minute. Does this woman think she can tell me what to do? Who the fuck does she think she is?

"You can't make me go to something I refuse to attend? Celeste, you seem to

be under the assumption I'm not a full-grown adult."

"Ella." Celeste takes a warning step toward me, crowding my space and making it hard to breathe.

She doesn't invoke the same nervous energy as the guys. Celeste carries impending doom, conveying that she'll render my life unbearable if I don't do what she says.

But even with this knowledge kicking me in the guts and screaming in my brain not to push this woman's boundaries, I hold my ground, willing to witness the magnitude of her cruelty. "I'm not going."

Celeste moves closer, forcing me to retreat. Her entire stance is intimidation, and my mind rages for me to fight against it.

I step forward, relishing her look of shock. My mouth opens to give her a piece of my mind, but Alaric steps between us.

His back is to me as he faces Celeste. His voice is calm, but the tightness of his shoulders makes it apparent he's having a Zen moment. "I'll take care of it, Mother. You can leave us and carry on with anything of importance you need to preoccupy yourself with."

Celeste's eyes narrow as if she wants to talk back to Alaric. To stomp her feet and demand she get her way. She lifts her hand and pats his cheek, placating him with one condescending action.

Celeste peers around him and her eyes pierce mine, silently warning me that she pulls all the strings and will eventually get her way. "All right, dear." Her gaze remains on me as she addresses Alaric. "I hope you have a better time with her ungrateful nature than I have. It seems Ella is in need of a rude awakening. She needs to learn what it requires to be a member of this family."

Celeste walks around Alaric, giving me a final scathing look before she exits the room.

Alaric doesn't say a word, marching to the door and locking it before turning to rest his back on the wood. "Fucking told you to stay away, Ella. I didn't want you involved in any of this." His hands fly to his head, and he pulls at

the slicked-back strands of his hair with a groan. “Why the fuck can’t you do what you’re told?”

I nervously put one foot in front of the other as I approach him. Most people would be frightened of Alaric—a tall, brooding man who demands obedience from those around him with every fiber of his being. That and his disturbing and nonsensical Norman Bates relationship with his mother.

Our bodies line up closely, yet I sense an ocean between us. I don’t understand his anger or why he says I need to stay away when he keeps trying to get closer. Persuading me. He was the first person to drag me into this world and make me care about him, Asher, and River when I had no desire to do so.

I tilt my chin. “It looks like I’m crap at listening to you, so I think it’s time you told me what’s going on.”

Chapter Six

A laric

F uck. She's so damn beautiful. It's not just an external beauty; it's what's in her heart. Ella sees past the bullshit exteriors people use to cloak themselves from the world. She's aware of what exists deep down. She has the tenacity to look past the outer layer, peeling it back until the center is revealed. A virtue both noble and inspiring but also her Achilles heel, allowing others the power to fucking ruin her.

The heat of her body close to mine undoes me in ways I never believed possible. What I feel for her consumes every part of me. I think about this woman more than I have any right to. As much as I wish our circumstances were different, they're not. I want to drive off into the sunset and have the four of us live a life we deserve, away from all the bullshit we've put up with for years. But fairytales are only found in storybooks. This is real life.

That night doesn't feel like a mistake. It opened something buried deep within all of us, and now there seems to be no way to shut those emotions away.

I loved hide and seek when I was a kid. My dad had played with me for hours. I'd hidden, and he'd pretended he couldn't find me while I'd giggled like a maniac. My dad had been a good man, an honest man. He'd worked sixteen-

hour days but still found energy within his broken and bruised body to play with his son. Mother had never done that. She'd thrown me in front of the television while she had her gentleman friend over. I could never go into the room when she had company. She hadn't even the decency to spring for a soundproof headset to hide the slam of the headboard against the wall or the slaps of a hand on flesh.

I'd never dared say a word about it to my father. I'd wanted to, but Celeste had told me that if he knew, he'd leave me, and I'd never see him again. But it didn't matter because he'd fallen to his knees, gripping his chest while searching for me during our favorite game.

The mind was a fascinating and complicated organ. I was the perfect example of how the brain became jumbled in chaotic and disastrous ways. Brain damage caused by an overload of emotion and trauma. A fond childhood memory was twisted into the single most impressionable moment of my young life and was now a twisted kink that fueled me like nothing else.

That's why now, as River and Asher caught Ella as she jumped from the tree, disappointment rushed through me like an uncontrollable wave from a ferocious ocean.

Chasing Ella was the most erotic and exciting game I'd ever partaken in. She wasn't the first person I'd played this game with. There had been other girls, but none energized my soul like Ella. My connection to her was primal, a need I couldn't contemplate or ignore.

I sat on the thick branch and witnessed how she reacted to River. Pride bloomed within me as Ella kicked him, her nails scraping against his arms to free herself. I wished it was my flesh she scored with her sharp nails.

River howled as he let Ella loose. She'd bitten him. She rushed further into the forest. I watched her long hair bounce in the moonlight for a moment before I climbed down from the tree and chased her.

She was fast. Much faster than I'd expected. But then again, the harder the chase, the sweeter the spoils. I quickened my speed, and it took no time for my long legs to catch up with her, taking one stride for every two of hers.

"You can run, but you can't hide, Princess," I taunted.

“Then I better hope I can outrun you,” she panted, out of breath.

“Princess, I’ve been doing this my whole life. Something tells me that a spoiled little girl like you isn’t used to roughing it in the woods.”

Two quick steps, and I was in lock with her. I reached out and hoisted her against my chest. I brushed my nose against her nape, inhaling the scent of her shampoo. Lilac and honey. She always smelled like damn honey.

“Now you’ve caught me, whatever will you do?” Ella asked breathlessly.

“I’m going to nibble on every fucking part of you.”

It’s hard to concentrate when she’s in front of me, smelling like honey. I want to push her against the wall, strip her bare, and feast on her flesh. Kiss every inch of her until she’s panting and begging for release like that night on the forest floor. But the hardest lesson I’ve ever learned is that I rarely get what I want.

“What’s going on, Alaric?” Ella asks softly, pushing me into giving her answers I am not ready to unleash.

Ella constantly pushes me, demanding more. It isn’t her insistence that upsets me; it’s my impotence at not being able to give it to her. I wish I were a better man so I could throw the world at her feet. But I’m not. I’m a piece of shit who got lucky once and tasted heaven.

I grip her arms and turn her, pushing her against the wall. Stepping into her, I crowd her body and hold her still. We both know she can’t escape. Maybe if she’s terrified of me, her self-preservation will kick in. “You don’t get to make demands of me, Ella. I’m not some pathetic boy who will fall to his knees so you’ll look at him.”

Ella’s chest rises and falls. Her bottom lip quivers. She blinks multiple times to keep whatever emotion is about to fly out of her in check.

I have an unrelenting need to pull her close and tell her everything will be all right. But what I want to do and what I want to say are opposing forces.

I’m not in a position to be anyone’s knight in shining armor. I wasn’t born with hopes and aspirations. My only purpose in life was to play a role that

guaranteed a deplorable monster would continuously receive what she desired. Sometimes, I find small pockets of peace in the hellish nightmare of my life, stolen moments hidden in the shadows.

The night with the four of us, I truly hoped my life could be better. I deluded myself into believing Celeste could finally be happy. Content in a marriage with a man who appeared to love her beyond all reason. Perhaps he could thaw her frigid heart and compel her to release me from the prison I've been in since my conception. A foolish notion permanently wiped away the night Celeste poisoned him. His death was ice water in my face.

Celeste isn't capable of happiness or love.

"Please, Alaric," Elle pleads, grabbing my suit jacket lapels and bunching the fabric.

My heart hammers violently with every gentle pound of her fist. Her desperation moves me more than anything else in my life. The agony in her voice is ballistic missiles aimed at detonating my already mangled and demented heart.

I should lie to her, make her understand I'm a monster that will destroy her life, so she understands exactly what kind of hellscape she's facing. But as much as I want her to run, to hate me, a part of me can't bear the idea. I realize what I need to do to make her despise me, but those actions will eventually lead to my destruction because her opinion of me is enough to sustain my very being.

I've done many awful things that make it hard to look in the mirror. I've caused people destruction, pain, and heartache, some deserving, others innocent. I don't want to inflict any of those on Ella.

When Ella looks at me, I don't want her to resent me. When her eyes gaze upon me, I want her to see a man who will do anything to keep her safe and ensure she's happy. "She killed your dad, Ella. She killed your dad, and now she wants to use you before she kills you, too."

My face stings from her vicious slap, followed by a barrage of attacks from her hands and sharp, unapologetic nails. I dodge her kicks aimed at my crotch. Her fingers scratch my neck as she pushes and pulls on my jacket,

shoving me. All this to the soundtrack of her uncontrollable sobs.

“You’re lying. The doctors all said he had a heart attack.” Tears flow down her cheeks as she swallows the pain-flooded agony trying to escape her throat. “You’re a dirty liar. A pathetic liar! I hate you! I hate you!”

“He’s not lying, Ella.” River’s tired voice breaks the excruciating cries raging from Ella. “Celeste is a vindictive little cunt. You never thought it was weird that three grown men were following their mommy around like little boys?”

“Shut up, River,” I demand.

“Tell her the fucking truth,” River roars. Something he rarely does. He prefers the role of a demented clown. A comedian you’d never assume was a sadist. He’d have you laughing right before he smashed your head in and fingerpainted with your blood and guts. “I’m so sick of your shit, Alaric. You make moves like you’re some sort of chess master, but we’re no closer to taking out the opposing queen. Aren’t you fucking tired of playing her games? I know I am.” River nods toward Ella. “Tell her.”

I storm toward River, reaching for his throat and pushing him against the wall. The rage festering inside me is at boiling point, no longer contained by the blank, emotionless mask I’ve worn so meticulously throughout the years. “She’ll fucking kill her. Do you fucking understand that? Celeste will take a knife to her throat, slit it, and bathe in her blood. I won’t lose her.” I abandon River’s throat and collapse onto the floor. Defeat slithers over me, gripping my heart in an unbreakable hold. “I won’t lose the only light I’ve ever known in the world.”

“Then tell her the truth,” River repeats.

“If he won’t tell me, you do it, River. I deserve to know what’s going on because the woman responsible for my father not being here is living in his house. Sleeping in his bed.”

“Celeste is a psychopath,” I whisper. “She’s been like this her entire life. She enjoys killing people, and she’s made me an accessory to it.”

Ella gasps. “What do you mean, an accessory to it? Did you know she was going to kill my father? Did you help her?”

She jumps on top of me. I don't bother trying to temper her rage. She needs an outlet, and I'll gladly provide her with one. I let her punch my face. Allow her to scream until she tires herself out.

"Did you help kill him?" she shrieks.

"No. No, I didn't help her kill your dad. Had I known she was going to do it that night, I would've stopped her. I wouldn't let anyone or anything hurt you. I know how much you loved your father and how important you were to each other. You think I'd ever let anyone devastate you by taking away someone you love so much? I would've done anything to keep you from feeling the pain she forced on you."

"Then what do you mean you had a hand in it? How could you have if you didn't help her?"

"I could've killed her ten years ago, but I didn't. That woman has used me and the people I care about my entire life. But when the opportunity presented itself, I couldn't do it. All I kept thinking is, what kind of person kills their own mother, you know? No matter what she'd done, she was the reason I was alive. I've gone my whole life protecting her, no matter what she did. Not condoning it, but turning a blind eye to it." I gazes at Ella and then moves my eyes to Asher and River. A silent apology. "And isn't that worse? Knowing someone is doing hideous things, causing brutal harm. Knowing you can stop it so easily, with no true hardship to yourself. But you don't. Because no one wants to admit someone they love and believe in could be so destructive."

I close my eyes, mentally trying to outrun the things Celeste has made me do. Desperate to wipe away the atrocious situations I've been a part of. "Then you came into my life, and I realized that by covering for her, I'd become a despicable human being. I don't know if I can ever achieve redemption or forgiveness. But I know I have to make things right."

Ella tumbles off me, pulling her legs under her arms, but she doesn't look frail or scared. It's a comforting move that seems to give her strength. I recognize the look in her eyes. It's one I've seen in the mirror before I commit atrocities, knowing full well I'll enjoy every fuckin' minute of it.

"Let's go out there and kill her." Her voice is quiet—a low, icy whisper

infused with vengeance and anger.

I raise my head, feeling like a bullet has landed in the middle of my chest. My sweet Ella will never be the same, and it's all my fault. I ruined her innocence like I ruined River's and Asher's. My throat tightens, and I can't form words.

"We can't," River interjects. "At least not right away. She's got a lot of files on all of us. If anything happens to that bitch, we're gonna end up in jail, if not worse. And truth be told, we don't care about being put away, but she's also got shit on you, Ella. Over my dead body will we let anything happen to you."

"So we're just gonna let her get away with it?"

River laughs. "Oh, no, baby, She's not getting away with shit. We're going to get those files. It's already in the works. Have you ever heard of The Beasts?"

I growl at River. We don't need to tell Ella what we do or who we associate with. The last thing I need is her asking questions about those fucking nut cases. Those guys are so demented they could scare the devil himself.

River smirks, ignoring my silent warning. "They're the guys who have the key to end all this shit. Their keeper used to be in deep with Celeste. We needed to find the right person because those guys are maniacs. Shit, they make me look almost normal. But this girl, she's theirs. They'd never hurt her. Once she gets us what we need, we'll chop Celeste into little pieces and feast on her carcass. We need to wait it out, and you need to go away until we've figured out all this shit."

Relief rushes in my veins when River mentions Ella going away. At least the fucker agrees with me on this.

Ella folds her arms over her chest, her large breasts distracting me for a moment. "Not going anywhere. So you better tell me what I need to do because I'll be the first one to stab a blade into that cold bitch's heart."

"Well, damn, baby," River says. "Isn't that the hottest thing I've ever heard?" He points directly at his crotch. "Look how hard that made me. Huh, words have never done it for me like that before. Might as well have had your

mouth around my dick.”

There goes my hope of thinking River might be logical and sane for longer than two minutes.

“She’s not getting involved,” I say through clenched teeth.

“She’s already fucking involved, Alaric. Besides, if you want the girl, she needs to know who you really are. Like, sure, bring her the fucking roses and the chocolates and all that shit, but let her in. We both know you’re not gonna satiate your needs by fucking her missionary. You might think you can, but that shit ain’t gonna last long.” River laughs. “Besides, if memory serves me right, she liked it a little rough, too.” I glare at him as he smirks and turns his head to Ella. “Isn’t that right, baby? You knew what you were getting into and couldn’t get enough.”

Ella glances at River. Her cheeks flush, and something akin to desire flashes in her eyes. She shakes her head and focuses on me. “I’m not leaving, Alaric, so what’s the plan?”

I jump off the floor, turning between the two of them. River, with a smug look I wanna punch off his face. Ella, with her gigantic eyes and defiant stare. I know I’m not winning this argument because as much as I want Ella to run from us, River and Asher will ensure she stays put.

I storm toward her, forcing her back to slam against the wall. I focus on her, wanting to be sure she hears me. “You want to know what the plan is?” I spit out the words like poison. I want them to wound her, to fester in her veins.

Ella nods.

I slam my hands against the wall beside her head, trying to intimidate her out of her defiant stupidity. “You’re gonna have to be a little whore, Ella. You willing to do that?”

“W-What?” Ella stammers.

“How do you think we’ve been useful to Celeste all our lives? We weren’t always her henchmen. We were scared little kids she used to garner power. She pimped us out, Ella, for whatever she needed. Turns out she wants to sell you to the highest bidder. Are you ready to be a whore? Because that’s what

she'll demand of you, and do you know what she'll want from us?"

Ella's eyes water and she shakes her head.

"She'll want us to break you. That's right, little girl. She'll make us fuck you up in unimaginable ways."

Ella swallows. A lingering hope inside me wants her to slap me and run. But that glimmer is decimated as she glares at me, conviction blatant in her warm eyes. I've seen that look before; pure fucking determination. "I'll do whatever is necessary. Let's take that bitch down."

Chapter Seven

R iver

“Y ou have her under control?” Celeste asks as she rolls sheer nylons up her legs.

“Yes, she’s neutralized for now. Bitch knows if she steps out of line, I’ll walk her like a dog.”

Celeste laughs as she approaches me, wrapping her arms around my neck and attempting to kiss me. I remove her arms and step back, wracked by a shiver of disgust. I’m gonna have to bleach my skin later.

My fingers twitch with the urge to wrap around her scrawny neck and watch the light leave her eyes. “We don’t do that anymore, Celeste.”

Celeste flinches as if I’ve slapped her. Wish I fucking had. Bitch deserves it.

Celeste adjusts her reaction quickly, moves to her dresser, and spritzes herself. The putrid stench of her perfume penetrates the air like poisonous gas. “She better be prepared for David. If she embraces me, I’ll have to take extreme measures.”

The fuck she will. If Celeste has any idiotic notions about laying a hand on Ella, I’ll kill her. Nothing will stop me from putting the bitch down like a

rabid dog. “She’ll be ready. Don’t you worry about it.”

Celeste turns to me and smiles. It’s fuckin’ weird that the bitch looks uglier than usual. When someone smiles, their face lights up, but with Celeste, a smile is impending doom lurking on the horizon.

“Good. I expect to see your handiwork at dinner tonight.”

Celeste gestures toward a dress bag on her bed. “Ensure she gets that. I expect her to wear it to the ball. David explicitly told me it’s his favorite color.”

I nod and grit my teeth before I say something to fuck everything up. Lifting the garment bag, I sling it over my shoulder and storm out before she says another damn word.

My heart races, and I attempt to calm its frantic beat as I walk down the excruciatingly long corridor to Ella’s room. Fuck, I hate this house. When we get out of here, I want to move into some place smaller, newer. The only good thing about this house is that it’s nestled in the forest, away from the world outside. That part I like. Maybe we could get a house in a forest far from here. It would be nice to be surrounded by nature instead of the carnage of human indecency. The only three people I want to see for the rest of my life are Alaric, Asher, and Ella.

I don’t knock on Ella’s door, barging in without warning. I don’t want any barriers or rules with her, but to achieve that, she’ll have to trust us, and that shit takes time.

She sits on one of the wingback chairs nestled in the room’s corner, her eyes cast down as her hands glide over her bare legs. I’d do anything to remove her anxiety. I want to see her happy, but that won’t happen until we get rid of that decrepit bitch.

“You ready?” I ask, stripping every ounce of emotion from my words. It’s the only fucking way I can get through it all—make myself a robot. It’s that or the clown, my coping mechanisms.

Ella looks so defeated, and I’m not about to add to it by showing my trepidation and worry.

“Sit,” she demands, pointing to the bed where Alaric and Asher are seated.

I raise an eyebrow. “Whoa, who died?”

My boys look like shit. Alaric looks worse than Asher.

“Sit down,” Alaric orders.

Asher and I have made peace with Ella being involved, but it’s still a point of contention for Alaric. He’s petrified of her seeing what he’s capable of, worried she’ll run from him rather than Celeste. But it’s better that she understands. If she’s going to be with us, she needs to know who we are, every single part, not just the bits and pieces we show her.

I plop down on the bed and stare at her. “What’s up, baby girl?”

“I want to start the training now, the three of us. I don’t want Celeste to have the power,” Ella blurts. I open my mouth to speak, but she holds up her hand. “Stop. I know what you’re about to say. I understand what’s required to convince Celeste you’ve made me a pawn in her game.” She turns her gaze to Alaric. “I’ll put on a good show, make it appear like you’ve broken me. Don’t worry. I understand I’m expected to be nothing but a trained dog willing to do any trick Celeste deems fit. But I need you to fuck me without the show. I don’t know why I want this, but I do, and since the three of you have twisted me up in so many ways, you’re going to give me this.”

“No.” Alaric stands, stomping his feet. “I can’t believe you want us to fuck you the way she demands. What the fuck is wrong with you, Ella?”

“Why not?” Asher asks. “We’ve already had sex. She knows our distinct edges. It’s not like you were sweet. You wouldn’t even come in her. You pulled your usual shit and abandoned her emotionally, shutting yourself off like a fuckin’ asshole. She knows who we are, Alaric. The wool has already been ripped from her eyes. We’re about to show her far fucking worse, so we may as well give her a taste of the nightmare she’s agreed to be a part of.” River shrugs, biting his lip ring, before he adds, “We all want her. There’s no denying that. So what’s the problem?”

“Good question, Asher,” Ella says. “Mind answering it, Alaric? You had no problem having sex with me before. If memory serves me correctly, you started all this. You came to me, sprinkling sweetness, deceiving me into

believing notions I had no business believing in.”

“That was a mistake. We wrapped you up in this shit. In *our* shit. If we’d stayed away, never touched you, you would’ve been off living your life after your father died. But you stayed. You stayed because of us. I won’t give you a frayed thread to hold onto. Once this is over, you live your life. Without our bullshit.”

“Okay,” I say, annoyed with Alaric’s self-righteous bullshit. I pull my black sweater over my head and display my bare chest. “You can sit in that chair over there, and Asher and I will have a good time.”

What’s Alaric going to do? Punch me? Stomp his feet like a petulant child and sulk? I know he won’t kill me. Fucker is too weak. He’d never hurt someone he has affection for. It’s how Celeste has held him under her thumb for all these years.

I walk up to Ella and almost cum from the lust in her eyes. “You want to be fucked? Forced to be our obedient little whore? You don’t have to ask me twice. Take out my cock, baby girl.”

Ella drops to her knees, and her hands shake as she works the button of my black jeans. She lowers the zipper and pulls my pants down my legs, unleashing my hard dick.

My heart pounds and my hands tremble as I wrap her hair around my finger, gently tugging her head back and forcing her to look at me. “You sure?”

“Yes,” she whimpers.

“Beg for it.”

“Pardon?” She looks like a fucking goddess as she searches my eyes. More than a goddess because Aphrodite has nothing on her beauty.

“You heard me, baby girl. If you want this dick, I wanna hear you beg like a good little slut.”

Ella bats her eyes at me. I don’t know if it’s from shock or the rush of playing the game. It’s one of my favorite things about Ella—she’s unpredictable.

You’d never think she’d be prepared to partake in the shit we do. That she’s

the girl who turns the other cheek no matter what you do or say, and her philosophy is to let bygones be bygones and all that shit. But it turns out that Ella is no docile kitten scared by her own shadow. Nor a forgiving Madonna who sacrifices herself to keep the peace. She's a ferocious lioness out for blood, and there's nothing hotter to me. It's glaring proof that Ella Isn't going to break when things get tough. Instead, she'll ride into the storm with us and fight.

"Please, River. Let me taste you," she pleads.

Fuck. The way her bottom lip juts out slightly consumes me with ecstasy.

"I promise to be a good girl for you, Daddy. Can I please have a taste of your lollipop?"

Jesus, she did not just say that. My body grows hot, and I'm flustered. I've never been flustered. I want to push the boundaries and see what she says when it's not a show. To witness how dirty this girl is when we're hidden from the world. No one around but us.

"Look at you, Ella. A perfect girl begging to suck my cock like a pathetic whore." I pull her hair hard and yank her head back. My face is less than an inch from hers. "But I don't want to be your daddy, Ella. I already have a role." I move back and loosen my grip on her hair. "Now, let's try this again. Why don't you tell your big brother how much you want to suck his dick? Tell me, little sister, how wet you are thinking about choking on your brother's cock."

"Your little sister wants to taste her big brother's cock. Can I please?"

"That's a good girl." I grip my shaft and hit her face with my dick before she opens her mouth and offers me her pretty pink tongue. Moving closer, I suck her flesh between my lips, sucking her tongue like it's a cock. I pull back and smile, watching as her eyes fixate on my fully erect dick. "Go ahead, Sis. Show me what a good little cock whore you are."

Her soft tongue licks along her full lips before she cranks her neck forward and wraps that perfect little mouth around the tip of my cock, pushing down to suck me fully. I guide her head gently, maneuvering it up and down my shaft, savoring how her tongue worships every vein and manipulates my

senses with slow, seductive circles.

“Eyes on me, Sis. Look at your big brother.” Ella gazes up at me, and I’m so turned on that it’s a miracle my balls don’t unload in her mouth immediately. I kick her knees apart and edge the toe of my boot over her panty-covered cunt, making her moan along my dick. “You’re a dirty little whore, Ella. Did Daddy know he raised such a fucking slut? I sure as fuck don’t think my mommy dearest knows what she’s playing with. You enjoy being humiliated, used, and discarded.” I laugh as I press the toe of my boot harder against her cunt, and her moans escalate. Holy shit. How much of a freak is our little princess?

“Is this a two-man show, or can anyone join in?” Asher asks as he kneels in front of me. I don’t say a word as I watch him dip his head and suck my balls deep into his mouth.

Fuck. There’s nothing, and I mean nothing, better than having two mouths on your cock. That’s not true. A tongue in my asshole would have taken this to another level, but no man in his right mind would turn down this slice of sexual heaven.

Alaric hides in the room's corner, thinking the shadows will shield him from my gaze, but I know he’s turned on. Good. I hope the fucker wallows in his damn self-righteous bullshit.

Pulling my cock from Ella’s mouth, I palm it and present it to Asher. “Why don’t you share, Ella? Good fuck toys need to know their place.”

Ella nods, and Asher opens his mouth wide as I ram my dick deep down his throat. No mercy. No gentleness. Just primal instinct. But Asher is used to this. He craves it. Don’t get it twisted; Asher can dominate, but he also likes to be used. I bet he’d get off on Ella using him. Something tells me she’ll need somewhere to direct her frustration for this to work between us.

Ella licks her lips and smiles as I thrust into Asher’s waiting mouth. Yup, I was right.

“Force him down on my cock, Ella,” I urge. “Take control of him. I bet he’d love knowing that he’s beneath a worthless slut like you. Such a good little pup. Asher has been sucking his brothers’ dicks for a long time. He fell

asleep with a cock in his mouth like a baby sucking on a pacifier.” I thrust my hips into Asher’s mouth, never taking my eyes off Ella. “Why don’t you show me those big tits?”

Ella turns beet red as she moves her hands behind her back and unhooks her bra, letting it fall to the floor.

I nod in approval. “Take off your panties and get on the bed. I want you on your hands and knees, legs apart.”

Ella gets off her knees and pulls her panties down before doing as I instructed—on the bed, knees apart, giving me the perfect view of her fuck holes.

My mouth waters as I stare at her dripping pussy. “Give us a show, slut. Rub that dirty cunt.”

She moves one hand between her legs and rubs her clit with her index finger in small, gentle circles.

“You got any toys, baby girl?”

“Yes,” she pants, “In the nightstand.”

I step away from Asher, open the top drawer, and laugh as I see the selection of dildos and vibrators. There goes my impression that Little Miss Perfect is naïve. Based on her treasure trove, she’s no such thing. Not only are there dildos, some of questionable size, but also nipple and clit clamps, some of which look painful.

“Damn, Ella. Who knew you were a freak?” Lifting a giant dildo, I wave it in the air. “When you shove this up those holes, do you imagine it’s one of us? You dream about us filling your pathetic pussy and ass, don’t you, baby girl?”

Ella doesn’t respond, so I smack her ass with the silicone. “It’s rude to ignore your big brother when he asks you a question.”

Chapter Eight

Ella

There's a moment when you fall from the ideal of what others believe you should be and simply become who you are. I never experienced that epiphany until this moment. It's absurd that my lightbulb moment came from being sexually exposed to my three stepbrothers. Most would view this scenario and label me as insane at worst or misguided at best. But they would be wrong.

I've lived my life for one solid goal, my whole being forged for one undeniable purpose. To make my father proud. But that wasn't who I was; it was who I created myself to be. As I expose my aroused and naked body to these three men, I'm bombarded with the extreme shame and guilt that comes with that realization. But the words and acts of humiliation River thrusts upon me heal me in unfathomable ways.

I knew something was broken in me the night Alaric slipped and called me his good little slut while we had sex. That night, the sex wasn't as degrading. My first taste of liberation was the moment the curtain lifted, and the guys showed me glimpses of their true nature. But now, as River mutters words without restraint, I taste the intoxicating delicacy of freedom.

Lost in my thoughts, I forget to answer River in a timely manner. I'm

snapped from my reverie by his forceful slap on my right ass cheek. “Answer my question, fuck-hole, or I’ll beat your perfect thick ass black and blue.”

“Yes,” I pant.

A large pink dildo, perhaps eight inches long, lands by my right hand.

“Go on, slut. Let’s see how you take that fake cock.” Hands grip my ass cheeks and pull them apart before spit lands in my ass crack and flows toward my pussy.

“A slut like you doesn’t need lube,” River taunts, “but I like spitting on dirty whores so they know what pathetic fuck-holes they are, only good for collecting cum in their nasty holes.”

I should be furious at his words. A regular person would lash out and retaliate with violence. But I want more. I want to be destroyed in the worst possible ways.

Gripping the base of the dildo, I push the tip into my waiting pussy and moan while gliding it in and out. I gyrate my hips for better friction and to intensify the sensation.

Cold liquid falls on my lower back and trickles between my butt cheeks.

“Good girl,” River encourages as he massages two lubricated fingers over my asshole. “Just relax, Sis. Big brother is going to take good care of you.”

My pussy clenches around the dildo at his taboo words. I don’t understand why the words “big brother” or “Daddy” ignite my every perverted desire, but I know I crave them.

River inserts one finger inside me, followed by another two, moving past his knuckles. Instinctively, I push my ass back, forcing him deeper. “What a tight fucking ass my little sister has. Let’s see if we can stretch it out nice and wide.”

River jerks his fingers out, and the tip of a silicone invades my anus. “How often do you fuck your own ass, Sis? You’re a fan by the looks of all your beads and plugs.”

“Yes,” I scream as he pushes the plug into my ass and slaps the seal.

River's hand moves to mine and slaps it away, forcing the dildo to slip from my vagina before he slams into me.

I scream while my body adjusts to his feral thrusts and enormous dick. If the dildo was eight inches, River is an easy ten, and his cock feels so much thicker, almost inhuman in its girth.

“Asher, why don't you fuck our sister's pretty little mouth?”

Asher appears as if from nowhere, presenting me with his thick cock. The tip jerks as he strokes the visible veins. I open my mouth, and he slides his dick inside, pushing his way in slowly at first before thrusting as violently as River.

The two of them work up a rhythm, their cocks propelling my body back and forth.

“Fuck, Ella,” Asher moans. “Such a perfect, warm little mouth.” He smiles at me before hooking his thumbs in the sides of my mouth and pulling it wide. He takes his eyes off me and looks at River. “Pass me the dildo.”

River tosses him the silicone and holds it up, inspecting it like a gemologist discovering a rare diamond. He tugs at my lips and pushes the silicone in, jamming it beside his cock. “Look at you, Ella. Taking two cocks in your pretty little mouth.”

The tip of his cock and the fake dick poke the back of my throat, and I gag, which seems to egg Asher on. He laughs and fucks my mouth with abandon. Asher doesn't stop when I gag and cough, ignoring the tears falling down my cheeks and the saliva trickling from the corners of my mouth. This is a side of him I haven't seen before. Usually, Asher is reserved, kind, and polite. This Asher is domineering.

He cups the back of my neck, restricting my movement as he continues to assault my mouth. “You're so pretty with your mouth full of cock.”

I gasp for breath, and copious amounts of spit cascade from my lips when he pulls the two cocks from my mouth. He places his hand under my chin, collecting the spit before rubbing it all over my face. “Such a perfect mess.”

Asher lifts me, forcing River deeper as he moves under me, his mouth below

my pussy. He nips at my clit, and I squeal. “Shove the dildo in your mouth. I better hear you gagging, or I’ll bite off this pretty little clit.”

The spike of adrenaline from the threat is like a shot of dopamine in my brain. As deranged as this is, I have to admit it’s exhilarating. The only thing still disturbing me is that Alaric isn’t partaking. Using one hand to brace myself, I lift the dildo with the other and stare Alaric in the eyes as I lift it to my mouth and encase it with my lips.

Alaric lifts an eyebrow. I’m unsure if it’s a warning or a look of intrigue. I decide to push my luck and his resolve by licking the dildo from root to tip. Shoving the whole silicon down my throat, I gag so badly that I panic.

Chapter Nine

A laric

Every nerve I possess vibrates to the brink of destruction. My willpower is an acrobat walking on an unraveling tightrope.

I have a mind to take my belt to her sexy apple-shaped ass for the games she's playing. Someone needs to remind Ella that playing with fire will get her burned. Her gaze is like kerosene, tempting an arsonist to break and give in to his deadly addiction.

I stand in my corner, my cock so hard that I'm worried it may explode from the burning need to unload. I don't come with others—never have. Sure, I ejaculate, but always in private. I can't describe the pathology of it. Perhaps it's self-punishment of the shame rooted deep within me.

My mind wanders back to that night when things were simpler. For two months, the three of us got to know Ella. At first, it was for Celeste. She wanted us to manipulate and deconstruct Ella so we could mold her into whatever we wanted. But as we got to know her, things shifted.

We'd each built a bond with Ella since we met. She embodied a feminine kindness and compassion we'd never known. Everything she did was laced with care and empathy, yet we couldn't push her around because she called

us on our bullshit without fear or hesitation.

She smiled as she placed the freshly cut flowers in the basket. "I thought I'd end up tolerating the three of you. Never in my wildest dreams did I think you'd become my friends."

"I want to be more than your friend," I blurted before I could stop myself. I cringed at my admission, wanting to kick my own ass.

Ella gazed at me in unadulterated shock. "What?" She lost her footing and stumbled.

Lunging, I braced her fall, jubilant at the heat of her body engulfed in my arms. She clamored to free herself, but I didn't want to let her go. Bringing my face closer to hers, I crushed our lips together, losing myself in the only kiss I'd ever shared with a woman. I didn't know why I'd dived in. I was well aware of the dangers, but all I could think about was my desperation to taste something pure and untainted for once in my life.

Her lips held the flavor of honey. I pondered why that substance was so prevalent in the bible, where it was mentioned sixty-one times. In Exodus, God told Moses he'd take his people into a land of milk and honey. Was Ella the promise of freedom? I'd never believed in the bounty of an omniscient being, but right now, I'd fall to my knees in worship of this woman. Maybe she was the key, my messiah, my savior, and my prophet.

She pushed at my chest before pulling me close as if she couldn't decide what she wanted. I couldn't blame her. Something in her subconscious must have warned her that I was impure and unworthy, unlike her. We were the juxtaposition of sin and virtue battling for dominance, knowing we were the polarity of the other.

"You're supposed to be my brother," she whispered against my lips. "This is wrong."

"Stepbrother," I corrected, the taboo of her words causing my cock to rise. If only she knew how much I enjoyed fucking people meant to be my siblings.

"Is that how you justify having sex with Asher and River?" Ella asked, almost knocking my ass to the ground.

Instantly, irritation bloomed within me. I was discreet with my relationships, but I wasn't ashamed. Too many people and obstacles could rip my world apart in an instant. I might not care about many things, but I loved Asher and River and would do anything for them.

I should play it cool and pretend I didn't know what she was talking about, but I didn't. "How do you know about that?"

Ella flinched, dropping her gaze to the vegetation scattered around the garden.

Panic. It was an emotion I knew well. It was the suffocating knowledge that you'd been caught, and everything was about to crumble beneath your feet. "I'm not gonna hurt you, Ella. We've had to be careful. Most people look down on the relationship we've fostered. Yes, we're stepbrothers, but we've also grown up with each other, which adds another layer of fucked up to the taboo."

"I would never judge those who bonded to survive," Ella whispered.

"Pardon?"

"Asher told me how you helped him." She paused and gazed at me as if hoping I'd say something, but I remained quiet. People talked too much, never listening to understand but only to respond. I didn't want Ella to feel like I wasn't listening to her.

Ella took my silence for displeasure or anger and quickly blurted, "Please don't be mad at him. I caught him in the bathroom. There was so much blood, I thought something had happened, but then I saw the razor in his hand and the cuts on his thighs. He yelled at me and ran off. I was scared. My mind told me to ignore it, pretend it didn't happen, but I've never been good at shutting myself off to those in need."

I scoffed, irritated that she was labeling Asher as a weak, pathetic creature. "Asher isn't a weak kid."

"Of course not. Being in need doesn't mean you're incapable, only that you need help." I started to speak, but she brushed her finger over my lips, silently requesting that I wait. "The strongest need an escape, and the weakest can provide shelter. Asher needed something, and I could provide it.

So he let me in.”

I jumped up, needing distance to think. “So now you’re breaking his trust by spilling his secrets.”

“She broke nothing, Brother,” Asher said calmly behind me.

I’d never seen Asher look at a woman the way he looked at Ella. Like she turned the world on its axis and caused the sun to rise and set. He gazed at her like a prophet witnessing the revelation of God.

“I want her,” Asher stated. “She’s important to me, just as you are. There’s no reason for secrets between us.”

Asher was right. She is important, not only to him but to all of us. And that’s why I have to fight my urges. We need to keep her safe.

I hate that I’m fucked up. I hate the depravity that surges through me. Ella deserves someone who’ll softly kiss every inch of her skin and tell her how beautiful she is. She doesn’t need men like me and my brothers.

“You’ll regret doing that,” I say.

Ella has the audacity to lock eyes with me, pushing the dildo further down her throat. She looks stunning with mascara running down her face, and another stab of guilt jerks my cock and claws at my heart. What kind of fucking psycho enjoys watching a girl he cares for cry?

River and Asher delude themselves into believing we have a shot at something better, but we’re too fucked up. We’ll never have anything resembling normal. But as I watch Ella pushing back on River’s cock and grinding her pussy on Asher’s tongue, I wonder if she craves the depravity only we can provide.

“Be careful, Princess. You might bite off more than you can chew,” I growl.

I move from the shadows, taking deliberate steps closer to my pretty little prey. I’d prefer her to run than fight, but not all games need to be physical. Ella wants me to fuck her. She wants me to taste her skin and pound her pretty holes until she screams in ecstasy. But I’m not gonna give in to her. Ella needs to understand that brats don’t get rewarded.

I stand in front of her and undo my pants, releasing my thick cock. Ella removes the dildo from her mouth and edges closer to engulf my cock with her lips.

Laughter falls from my throat as I look down at her. “You think you deserve a reward, Ella? You think I’m going to bend for a little brat like you?”

Ella doesn’t say a word. She sticks her tongue out, desperate to lick the tip of my dick. She flinches as I smack her face with my cock and pull away. “Pass me the lube, River.”

River smirks as he throws the pink bottle my way. “I knew you’d crack.”

River is wrong. I’m not cracking for Ella. I’m not so easy to break. I won’t be fucking Ella until she begs like a dog at my feet. Until she learns that I’m the one who gives orders and if she wants something, she needs to ask like a good girl.

I pour the liquid on Asher’s ass, rubbing it in with my fingers before entering his ass in one deep, slow thrust. Grabbing his dick, I point it at Ella’s mouth. “Suck.”

She obeys without a fight, opening her mouth and taking Asher’s cock deep in her mouth. With every thrust of my dick in Asher’s ass, she gags with the force of his dick impaling her throat.

“This is all you’re good for, Princess. A piece of meat to be fucked whenever and wherever. You know we’ll parade you around, don’t you? Show everyone your talents.”

She closes her eyes and moans loudly. My crazy girl likes this. I freeze at the thought of claiming her, of admitting that she’s mine. The realization ignites another wave of rage. Anger festers, not at Ella, but at allowing myself to want her. Another life I’m about to ruin with my selfishness. I now know without a shadow of a doubt that I’ll never be a good man. I will never sacrifice what I want for the betterment of someone else. There’s no way I’ll ever let Ella go.

“That’s it, slut. Grip my cock with that tight cunt,” I groan. “You’re gonna come around it, aren’t you whore? You gonna soak my dick with your cunt? Fuck. Alaric. You need to fuck this cunt. We have to stretch her out as part of

her training. Maybe we should shove as many dicks in this slutty cunt as possible.”

I gaze down at Ella, and instead of being horrified or outraged, her eyes are closed in bliss as she sucks Asher’s cock like a damn Hoover. Ella wants this. She wants it all. That thought has my balls tightening, and I pull out of Asher’s asshole, unleashing a flood of cum all over her face right as Asher fills her mouth.

Ella starts to pull away from the rush of cum attacking her, but I grip her head and hold her down. “You wanted this, Princess, so put your money where your mouth is.”

“Fuck, Sis. This sexy little cunt is milking me dry,” River groans as he and Ella shake. He pulls out of her and dips his fingers into her cunt, lifting a glob of his cum and licking it off his finger. “Cum tastes so much better dripping from your cunt.”

River kneels, and I watch as he and Asher work on her pussy with their mouths. “You want a taste, Alaric?”

I don’t respond, not wanting to admit that I need to taste her like a dehydrated man who craves water in the heat of the Arabian desert.

River smirks, his face glistening, his mouth full. He rises and walks over to me, placing his lips on mine. He pushes his cum covered tongue into my mouth, and we devour the flavor of his and Ella’s cum until I’m hooked.

Ella’s mouth slips from Asher’s cock and she collapses on him, screaming as another orgasm rocks her body.

“Look at her, Alaric,” River says. “Such a perfect little whore. So responsive to her big brothers. That’s it, Sis. Give Asher more.”

I tug her hair as she attempts to get up, forcing her back. “Where are you going, Princess?”

“To clean my face,” she mumbles.

I shake my head. “No, you’re not. Looking like a whore is part of the package. You don’t think Celeste will allow you any dignity, do you?”

“Go get the leash, Asher,” River demands.

Chapter Ten

Asher

Ella blinks at me as cum drips from her long dark lashes. She doesn't say a word as I clip the collar with "slut" written boldly on it around her neck and fasten the metal leash.

Leashes break people down, and I've never cared if they enjoyed themselves. I was only interested in Celeste's approval. The crueler I was with her new toys, the more she approved. Her praise was all that drove me.

Until Ella.

Now, I finally grasp how fucked up Celeste's hold over me was.

Love doesn't require you to construct acts of cruelty. Love is unconditional.

My hands shake as I recall Ella's words. How she's helped me break down the damage Celeste has done. Where Celeste stripped me of my humanity, Ella has done everything in her power to show me I'm not worthless.

I move closer, my lips at the shell of her ear. "When this is all over, I'll buy you a pretty diamond choker. I promise to wipe all this away or die trying."

Ella smiles at me. She reaches for my face and caresses my cheek. "I will

hold nothing you do out there against you. I trust you.”

An ache I don't recognize pierces my heart, but it doesn't bring pain. It brings hope. “It's going to be brutal, Ella.”

“I trust you. Please don't worry. It'll be okay.”

Her grace knows no bounds. I'm about to show her the ugliest parts of me, yet she's still here, my willing victim, absolving me of the horrors I'm about to unleash.

Bending, I place a kiss on her forehead. “I'll make it up to you.”

“Get in character, Asher,” Alaric barks, his tone annoyed and domineering.

I tug on Ella's leash, forcing her to crawl on the floor behind me like an obedient dog. I saunter ahead, Ella trailing behind me while the guys form the tail end as we head to the dining room.

There Celeste sits, the evil queen perched on her throne. The second she sees us, she beams. I resist the habitual urge to feel good about her conniving recognition of my existence, a knee-jerk reaction I've been conditioned to bask in for most of my life. *Picture her decapitated head as the centerpiece of this table.*

“Good boy, River,” Celeste says. She tilts her head to get a better view of Ella, naked, with her face covered in cum. “Looks like you boys have already started your handiwork.”

I swallow the lump in my throat, hating the words I'm forced to utter. “The bitch was getting out of hand, so we had to put her in her place.” I tug at Ella's leash, and she stumbles forward.

Celeste laughs and claps her hands like a giddy child. “Excellent. Benjamin and David will be so pleased.”

Three places are set beside hers. I know where she wants Ella. I sat in the same place many years ago. I tug Ella's leash and guide her to the dog bowl.

“What's this?” Ella asks.

“Why, it's dinner, dear,” Celeste responds.

Bile rises in my throat at witnessing Ella like this. *I'll make it hurt when we kill Celeste. She'll suffer for hours.* What upsets me isn't that Ella's on a leash or forced to eat from the bowl. Truth be known, if it were only her and the three of us, it would be as hot as fuck. What upsets me is Celeste thinking she can tell someone who belongs to me what to do. Celeste has deluded herself that Ella is beneath her, and it makes me see red.

Ella doesn't bother responding. She sits at my feet, waiting for me to pull out my chair and sit beside her. She seems too relaxed, and that puts me on edge. Celeste can't suspect anything, not yet, not when we're so close to getting rid of the decrepit bitch. Hopefully, Eden will come through and get the files we need. Once we have those, it's game over.

"I've gotta go," Alaric interjects.

Celeste and I turn to him, but his eyes are focused on whatever is blowing up his phone. "Shit is going down at the club. I need to take care of it."

"Oh, Alaric. What we're doing is important. Can't it wait?"

Alaric looks directly at Celeste. "No, Mother, it can't wait. Besides, I'm sure the three of you can take care of everything while I see to something important."

Alaric doesn't wait for her to answer. He storms off and takes the stairs on the ostentatious curved staircase three at a time. Celeste, not to be outdone, pounds her fist on the table. When that doesn't get the response she wants, she stands and rushes after him.

Celeste doesn't like it when Alaric turns her away. It's fucked up. As far as I know, she's never fucked Alaric, but I wouldn't be shocked if she wants to.

Celeste collected a menagerie of children she could manipulate and fuck up to get what she wanted. At first, she was kind to me, giving me the maternal affection I needed. But soon, her motherly facade morphed into what she truly was—a predator who groomed children.

As soon as she leaves the room, I bend toward Ella. "Remember, this is an act, and we need to be brutal. You gotta act like you hate us, okay?" I swallow, choking on my next words. "It has to look like we're raping you."

Ella nods. "I know. Don't worry. I'll play my part like an Oscar-winning actress. There's nothing I won't do to bring that bitch down."

The staff bring out plates of salad. The server glances at Ella's naked form, and his face reddens before he focuses on me.

The first thing Celeste did was fire Charles' staff when he died. Of course, she waited a few weeks to do so. She had to think about appearances. Celeste then brought in people she believed could be trusted. People who would remain loyal to her because she had files on them. If anyone dared to turn against her, Celeste could ruin their lives with a flick of a finger.

"She's watching," River murmurs, nodding toward the upstairs balcony overlooking the room. "Guess Alaric shut her down. That'll make her pissed."

I give River a subtle nod. "Feed her like a dog," I tell the server, dropping my gaze to Ella. "Pour it into the bowl."

The lanky man stares at me, dumbfounded by my order.

Ella screams as I grab her hair and tug it back violently. Guilt rushes through me, but I have to make this believable for Celeste.

I've gotta give the server credit. The man pours the salad into the bowl without blinking. Perhaps he's used to insanity, or maybe he's scared that the insane will make an example of him.

I bend and spit in Ella's bowl before shoving her head into it. "Eat up, Pup. You better not leave anything in your bowl, or I'll have to punish you."

I gaze up at the balcony. Celeste is perched there, leaning on the railing, glaring at us. If the bitch wants a show, I'll give her one. My chest fills with lead as I shove Ella's face into the food and hold her there with my foot. I'll have to grovel like a dog to make this up to her. I understand she's a willing participant, but my gut churns at what I'm forced to do to her. I remind myself that this bullshit will be worth it once Celeste is taken care of.

I stare at my wrist marred by razor cuts, which form a jagged ladder all the way to my elbow. The marking started the first time Celeste touched me. The first cut wasn't intentional. She made me shave my legs, one of the twisted

things she forced me to do before taking me into the room with all the men and women. They didn't want any body hair on their prizes. The first time I nicked my skin, the rush of visible blood relieved the pressure and made life a little more bearable.

I never knew my mother, never knew her love. She died in childbirth. In a twisted way, I was destined to be born in blood and conflict. My father threw himself into work, and I was passed from one nanny to the next until I was eight. That's when he came home and introduced me to my new mommy.

Celeste was so beautiful, and she was kind to me. She paid attention to what I said and wanted to spend time with me. I'd never known anyone who was interested in me without being paid. But Celeste made me feel special and important, and because of her kindness, my father was more invested in getting to know me. To that eight-year-old boy, Celeste was a dream coming to fruition. Back then, I had no idea she wasn't the happy ending in a fairytale. I didn't know she was the villain. If it weren't for River and Alaric, I would've killed myself long ago.

But now all I can think about is how cathartic it will be when I skin Celeste alive and revel in the anguished screams falling from her mouth.

Chapter Eleven

R iver

Asher laughs as he taunts her. “That’s it, Pup. Eat it all up.”

His acting skills are impeccable. Asher’s always liked leashes, and this whole human pet shit seems to get him going. It’s why I let him do it to me once in a while. He’s more of a bottom than me, but occasionally I’m down with getting fucked without thinking about what will happen next. It’s fucking liberating.

I don’t know why gazing at Ella bent over eating out of a bowl by Asher’s feet is so hot, but goddamn, it makes my dick as hard as fuck. I’ll lose my mind if I don’t bust a nut soon. I have no idea how Alaric stops himself from coming so often. I need to jizz at least twice a day, or I’m beyond cranky.

Leaning forward, I whisper so only Asher can hear me. “Bitch is watching. It’s showtime.”

I rise from the table, gazing at Ella’s perfect round ass. Her rotund body jiggles, and my cock demands to play. I love that she has meat on her bones. It’s so fucking hot. I enjoy grabbing her fleshy rolls and when her giant ass tits spill from my large hands.

Ella’s arms tremble, and she shivers as I pour olive oil on her lower back,

watching it flow around the butt plug and into her ass crack.

That ass has me in a damn trance.

A muffled moan echoes from the dog bowl as I remove the plug and slide my finger into her ass, pushing all the way to the knuckle. “That’s it, Princess. Stick out that ass. Remember when you pretended to be a sweet little girl? If only Daddy could see you being a pretty little whore for your big brother.”

I look up and see my stepmother, her eyes narrowed as she takes in the scene before her. The sick bitch is enjoying this. She’s always enjoyed witnessing innocents being defiled and urged us on like a cheerleader at a football game.

I drag down the fly of my pants. My stomach churns at giving Celeste a show, but until we get that file, we need to make the bitch think we’re with her. I swear, once we’re free of the cunt, I’m going to carve out her eyes and crush her. I long to have all evidence of the monstrous whore wiped from my mind. For Celeste to be a dead, buried, and forgotten memory.

Palming my dick, I impale Ella’s warm cunt while staring my mother in the eyes. The sick bitch wishes I was fucking her. Bringing my hand to my mouth, I lick my palm and slap Ella’s ass, not once looking away from my mother’s beady little eyes. My dick grows harder from the tight, warm cunt surrounding it and the knowledge that Celeste will soon realize her plan didn’t work out the way she intended. Her three sons were meant to destroy the little cinder girl, not become consumed by her.

I glance at the candelabra holding the long, tapered candle with its flickering flame.

Ella will freak out, but I have to make this believable. Celeste has to think we despise her, want to ruin, use, and discard her like a piece of trash.

Reaching for the candle, I shove it in her ass and gaze at the flickering flame. Ella squeals and squirms. “You better make big brother cum before the flame reaches your asshole. I’d hate to see a perfectly good hole burned to shit.”

Asher laughs, putting more force on Ella’s head to keep her in place as he jerks his cock. “Eat up, Pup, but leave room for dessert.”

Celeste laughs and claps her hands. “Stretch her holes. Benjamin and David

like to fuck holes together. They'll appreciate the slut being able to accommodate them easily."

Someone seriously messed the bitch up, or maybe she was born the daughter of everything sick and demented. She's such a bloodthirsty bitch. There's no reason to torture Ella. The Nevin's want to purchase her, and they don't care how much she can take. Those sexual predators get their pleasure by inflicting violence on their victims. They get off on the excruciating torture.

Celeste is a psycho, which is why she wants to commit these acts on Ella beforehand. The bitch can't handle not being part of the depravity. Celeste gets a sick high from crushing victims. This is where she's different from the three of us. We also like to cause mayhem and have no issues spilling blood, but we don't relish harming the innocent.

I push the candle further into Ella's ass until the flame is as close as possible without burning her. Her sweet cunt grips my cock, and I know it won't be too long before I come. Ella's pussy is the definition of a nutcracker. Never have I experienced something so fuckin' perfect.

My eyes connect with the warmth of the candle flame, which adds to Ella's heat. Fire is a fascinating element. It purifies, sustains, and demolishes. A fierce force that ignites for comfort or burns for destruction.

"Don't even think about using that wax on her," Asher warns in a whisper. "I recognize the crazy in your eyes."

I laugh so I don't make Celeste suspicious. "Relax." I grit through my teeth. "I'm giving the cunt a show." Ella screams as I slap her rounded ass. "Be a good whore, Sis, or I'll burn your clit with hot wax. Take your brother's cock like a good girl."

"Take the candle out so the pup can get on the table," Asher orders. He yanks at her leash as I reluctantly remove my cock and the candlestick from Ella. "On the table, Pup."

Asher places his foot on Ella's torso as she rises, pushing her down. "Like a dog, Ella. Crawl."

Ella moves her hands and knees until she's in front of a chair and climbs it like a dog. One hand, then a knee, followed by another hand, and the other

knee until she's on all fours on top of the oak table.

Asher pats her head. "Good girl."

He looks at the food on the table. I don't recall the staff bringing it in because I was so busy fucking Ella. I should lodge my foot into my ass for that one. It's imperative that we're aware of our surroundings. We need to know where the threats are.

Asher grabs the corn on the cob and places it by Ella's mouth. "Suck."

Ella's mouth falls open, and Asher shoves the corn in. He's not gentle. He's going to town. Ella gags and convulses at the uncomfortable intrusion now lodged in her throat.

Asher smiles and pats her head again. "That's a good girl. Show your brothers how well you take the corn. Let us know how much of a whore you are for us. Get it nice and ready for your dirty little cunt."

While Ella splutters on the cob, Asher moves behind her and rams his cock in her pussy. It's so volatile that I can't help wincing. "That's it, Pup. Gnaw on your chew toy while I fuck your dirty hole. This is all you'll ever be good for, Ella, a pathetic fuck hole. You understand what we're going to do, don't you? Take you out and about on a leash and let random men fuck you. Wonder if we can get a Guinness Record for the number of cocks you can take in one night. I'll let every man who sees you dump a load in your worthless pussy. Then, when all is said and done, you'll push it out into your doggy bowl and have a tasty little snack."

Fuck. Asher has a mouth on him. Usually, he barely talks when we bang girls. Occasionally, he takes his knife out and cuts them, something he hasn't done to Ella. Which is pretty fucking out of the norm for him. But he's never been vocal. I wonder if he does it for Ella because the girl gets wet as fuck when you say anything remotely taboo. Guess what they say about good girls is right; they're always down to get their freak on.

Asher grabs another corn on the cob and pours more olive oil over Ella's lower back. He works it into her ass, which is now primed to take whatever we throw at her. Between the butt plug and the copious amounts of olive oil, the corn disappears quickly with only the stem sticking out.

“You don’t need to show off, Asher.” I smirk. “We all know you’re a tree hugger. How fucking cute. An environmentally friendly butt plug!”

Asher breaks character for a second, cracking a brief smile that he quickly covers. “Shut up and come fuck this whore with me!”

“You don’t gotta tell me twice,” I say, removing the cob from Ella’s mouth. She splutters, and spit trails from her mouth, landing on the table. “Why, Ella. Look at the mess you made.” I grab her hair and shove her face into the drool. “Better be a good little girl and clean it up.” Ella gazes up at me in confusion. Laughter bubbles within me, and I spit on her face. “Lick up your saliva, slut.” Her tongue falls onto the table, and she laps up the liquid. “Good girl.”

When she finishes cleaning up her mess, she arches her neck to look up at me. “Did I do a good job, sir?”

Hearing her say "sir" has me ready to explode. I’ve never been into being called "sir," or "master," or shit like that, but goddamn, it’s as hot as fuck when Ella says it.

As if sensing her effect on me, the corners of Ella’s lips turn up in a bold smile. Alaric is right. Ella may be submissive, but she’s a brat.

Gripping her hair, I yank her head up so she’s at eye level with my cock. “Why don’t you stop talking, you worthless whore, and do the only thing your pathetic mouth is good for? Suck!”

Ella wraps her lips around my dick and works it until she’s taking me all the way down her throat.

“That’s it, you dirty bitch. Gag on it.” I toss Asher the corn, and he catches it. “Take this corn and double penetrate that cunt. Pass me the one in her ass.”

Asher looks uncertain, but he does as I request without question. Catching the cob, I gaze up at the balcony. Celeste is now humping the rails as she grabs her breasts.

“Do you wish it was you we were fucking, Mommy?”

Her eyes widen as I bring the corn to my mouth and bite down.

Celeste immediately straightens guiltily like a kid caught with her hand in the cookie jar. I'm gonna crush those hands, mutilate her, and place her corpse at Ella's feet.

I ignore the decrepit bitch and focus my attention on the only woman worth anything to me. My Ella. I don't even have to hold her head down. She's pushed her face so far onto my dick that her nose meets my lower abdomen. Her coughs and gasps are the sexiest sounds I've ever heard. Ella's moan vibrates around my dick as Asher impales her with his cock and the corn, adding an extra layer of pleasure.

"So good. Such a tight pussy. Too bad it belongs to a worthless fuck hole. Gonna come in your pussy, Ella," Asher groans. "I know you're not on the pill. Gonna fill your cunt to the brim with my cum. I'll put a baby in you, Ella. Wouldn't you like that? The entire world knowing you're a disgusting whore knocked up by your brother?"

Asher's eyes are wild, his teeth bared like a feral animal as he digs his nails into Ella's flesh. The blade of a sharp steak knife gleams between his fingers as he grabs it from the place setting and glides the tip along Ella's back. I recognize that glint in his eyes when his emotions overwhelm him and he can't bear it.

Asher wears his trauma on the insides of his arms and legs. It's found in the scar above his pelvic bone—jagged, sacred marks he inflicted on himself when his emotions became a mountain he couldn't climb. Occasionally, the marks were part of his anger, but more often, it was due to his grief. This is the first time he's needed the relief of blood for another reason. A stronger emotion. Dare I say... love?

Asher bends to whisper in Ella's ear. "I'm sorry. I need to."

A trickle of blood unleashes down Ella's back, growing into something prominent as he slides the blade over her skin. Ella screams as Asher licks the blood before sinking his teeth into her, filling and ridding himself of the darkness.

"Fuck," Asher growls, shaking as he releases deep within her. His head falls onto her back, and for a second, he forgets we're supposed to show Celeste our undeniable cruelty and not our capability to comfort.

Seeing Asher come undone has me ready to shoot my load as well. But I don't want to cum in Ella's mouth or on her face. I want to fill her pussy. "My turn."

Asher pulls out, and I remove the corn from her pussy. I pump into her a few times, silently telling her I'll make it up to her for my twelve-year-old boy ejaculation game. Gripping her hips, I hold her to me as I cum in the warmth of her perfect cunt. Reluctantly, I pull out and place the side plate under her cunt. "Push out the cum, slut. I want all of it on this plate."

My mouth waters as I watch her squeeze every drop of our cum from her pussy. All I can think about is eating her out until she begs for mercy, but I don't know if I can achieve that without sending alarm bells to Celeste.

I slide the cum plate to Asher, and he puts it in front of Ella. "Be a good girl and finish your dinner." Asher tugs her leash, forcing her to lunge forward. "Protein is good for you. Oh, and Pup? Use the tip of your tongue. To make it interesting, River is going to tongue-fuck you. Better stay in control. If anything other than the tip of your tongue hits that plate, I'll punish you."

God fuckin' love Asher. I don't wait for instruction as I plunge my tongue into Ella's cunt, tasting our cum mixed with hers. If I'm honest, I'd be happy to lick that plate with her, but I'll lock that up for later.

Two fingers rub my asshole, followed by greasy liquid. Asher bites my earlobe before he pushes his fingers into my asshole, pumping in and out. "Thought you'd like being fucked by your brother for a change."

The tip of Asher's cock replaces his fingers. Moans escape my mouth as my tongue dives into Ella's pussy and Asher pushes his dick further into my ass.

Asher sinks his teeth into me as he thrusts deeper, causing my body to ignite. I push my fingers into Ella, twisting them as I lap at her clit, desperate to tattoo her distinct flavor on my tongue. Between tongue-fucking Ella and getting fucked by Asher, it doesn't take long, and I stiffen at the same time as Ella. She drenches my face as she squirts, and I cum all over the marble floor.

Pain shoots through me as Asher's bite moves from loving to vicious. Knowing what he needs, I grab his arm, wrap it around my waist, and make

cuts on his forearm.

“Fuck,” Asher moans as he pulls out and adds his cum to mine on the floor. “Pup,” he says as he pulls Ella’s leash. “Get over here. You have another snack.

“Can I please have some water?” Ella asks as she crawls off the table and sits beside our feet, looking at the fresh load of cum.

Asher pats her head affectionately. “Sure, Pup. Open your mouth.”

Ella gazes up at Asher and opens her mouth. He takes a sip of water and spits it directly into her mouth before shoving her head on the ground. “Now, fill your belly with all that cum, slut.”

“Oh, perfect,” Celeste squeals. “She’s going to be perfect.” She descends the stairs, her heels clicking heinously as she walks toward Ella. “It’s time for you to get ready, dear. Scrub all that filth off you. Oh, and wear something white and sweet. David likes his women to act like whores but not look like one.”

Chapter Twelve

A laric

“**Y**ou got anything for me, boss?” Azadeh Baran asks, making me nearly jump out of my skin.

The girl is a damn ninja. It’s one of the reasons I hired her. I called her a Persian assassin once. She simply laughed as she threw a blade, hitting the bulls-eye on a dart board before telling me how Persians were the original order of assassins—the Hashashin.

I look up from my desk to see her leaning against the wall, dressed in her usual all-black attire.

“I’m good,” I say, waving the file. “I’ve got everything I need.”

Azadeh beams at me. “Wait, is that it? Is that the ammo you need to finally get rid of that bitch?”

I crack a smile. “Sure fuckin’ is.”

“Good. I know what it’s like to live your life with a damn noose around your neck. No human should live under the boot of another. I can’t wait to sing ‘Ding-dong, the witch is dead.’”

“Me too, Azadeh. Me too.”

“If you don’t need me, I’ll take some time off. My kid sister got into some shit, and I need to take care of it.”

“You need our help?”

“I think I’m okay. My brother can bail me out if needed.”

“Ah, Dariyus. How’s he doing?”

Dariyus Baran, a killer with the heart of a poet. There aren’t many decent people in our world, but Dariyus and his crew are good guys. Malaki is completely unhinged, but he’s kept in line by the other two.

“Happy. Can you believe that? My big brother is all domesticated and shit.”

I lean back in my chair and smile. “I don’t know. There’s something comforting about riding off into the sunset, isn’t there?”

“I was born in Iran after the revolution, joonam,” Azedah says, the Persian endearment rolling off her tongue. “The idea of sunsets died the first time I witnessed someone I loved hung by the regime simply for saying the wrong thing. It’s why I dedicated my life to this shit. You, River, and Asher, you’re good men. You got caught up in messed up shit because of that thing who calls herself a mother, but somehow you all turned out good.”

“I kill people, Azadeh, and enjoy it. I wouldn’t say I was good.”

Azadeh shrugs. “Some men deserve to be killed, Alaric, and there are two types of killers. Those who kill for power and those who kill for need. Besides, if you were a bad man, I’d have slit your neck long ago.” She pushes off the wall and places her hand on the doorknob. “Oh, and the Nevin’s are here. So are your boys and that pretty girl of yours.”

River, Asher, and Ella are waiting on the other side as she opens the door. The guys have shit-eating grins on their faces, but Ella keeps glancing behind her at the girl getting a train run on her. I think she’s at guy number twenty-two, but I rarely pay attention to the debauchery at the club.

“Ella,” I say, reaching out my hand. Ella takes it without hesitation. “I need you to know that what we’re about to do is for you. Please understand that

everything we were forced to do was to get us to this point.” I press my forehead to hers. “Remember that you mean everything to me, and I’ll spend the rest of my life making up for all of this. Just trust us.”

“I do,” Ella says. “I just want a piece of Celeste when we take her down.”

“You got it.” I grab my suit jacket from the back of my desk chair, regretting I chose to wear it today. Too bad it’ll be ruined by the blood.

I lead us out of the club to one of the VIP booths where Benjamin and David sit. Both are receiving blowjobs under the table.

David gestures to the girl between his legs. “You don’t mind, do you?”

“No, but she might.” I move aside, revealing Ella.

Benjamin and David quickly zip their pants and shoo the girls off before standing for Ella—a strange gesture for two men who negotiated to buy a slave from my mother.

Ella steps forward, and Benjamin’s hand moves to her back. Before he can make contact, blood gushes from his wrist as his hand falls to the floor with a thump.

Benjamin’s screech transforms into a torturous, animalistic sound as he holds up his handless arm. It’s so exaggerated that it’s almost comical.

River shrugs as he shows Benjamin the bloody ax. “All I did was chop off your hand. You’d think I’d chopped off your dick from your demented banshee screams.” He turns his back on Benjamin to face David. “You should be very concerned about what we’ll do to your father if you refuse any of our demands.”

Asher circles David, putting a hunting knife to his throat. “I’m going to need you to strip.”

“Are you crazy?” David splutters. “Do you have any idea what I can do to you?”

I smirk as I light a smoke and take a haul. “We are crazy, David. You can thank my mother for that. Now, I suggest you do as Asher requests, or this is going to get way worse than we intended.”

“Way worse?” David asks, pointing to his father, who’s still screeching at the inconvenience of missing his right hand. “I’m pretty sure it can’t get worse than that.”

River laughs. “Is that a dare, David? Are you triple dog daring us?” Without prompting, River grabs David’s hand, pins it to the table, and raises his ax.

“All right, all right!” David hollers. “I’ll do it.”

“Atta boy,” River says, moving back.

David strips, removing his creepy white Miami Vice suit and discarding it on the circular booth. River gently taps David's ass with the bloody ax. “The tightie-whities too, Davey. Naked as the day your momma welcomed you to the planet.”

David hesitates for a second, reevaluating if it’s worth arguing. Asher presses his blade into his throat, causing a trickle of blood to roll down his neck.

Once David is naked, I turn my attention to his father. “Your turn, Pops.”

Benjamin is unable to move, his eyes focused on his bleeding wrist and missing limb. I could be kind and simply blow his brains out with my gun, but I know what he is and what he and his son have done. How many women they’ve harmed for their disgusting pleasure. Benjamin Nevin and his son are going to suffer.

Ella steps toward Benjamin, a sweet smile plastered on her pretty face. I appreciate her slow, seductive moves. She looks like a predator setting a trap to entice her prey.

“Let me help you, Mr. Nevin,” Ella says, making quick work of his gold belt buckle and pulling down his pants. She grips his shirt by the sides and pulls it apart, forcing the buttons to pop off and bounce on the floor. “Isn’t that better, Benji? I think you should bend over so I can make it all better for you.”

Benjamin Nevin shakes his head and backs away from Ella. “You’re fuckin’ crazy. Celeste said we were getting someone sweet, but you’re no such thing.”

Ella shrugs and smiles sweetly as she sways back and forth. “Oh, shucks, Mr. Nevin. I’m so sorry my mommy lied to you.”

Before I register what’s happening, Ella slams Benjamin's head against the table.

“That’s the hottest thing I’ve ever seen,” River says as he plants a kiss on her cheek. His face transforms from awe to unadulterated derangement as he taps Benjamin's ass with the ax. “David, I got a question for you. You think I should ax fuck him? Get it? I’m fucking him with the ax, so it’s not an ass fuck, but an ax fuck.”

“We get it,” I say, rolling my eyes at River’s self-amusement.

“David, come here,” River demands.

David steps forward, shaking with each step, before bending over the table so he’s facing his father. “We have a lot of money. We can make you richer than you’ve ever dreamed.”

River pouts as he swings the ax back and forth. “Okay, you’re right. It’s a little crazy to ax fuck your daddy. I think it would be better if he ass fucks you.” He taps Benjamin on the ass with the base of the ax. “Chop, chop, Benji. Get the deed done, and we can all be on our merry way.”

Chapter Thirteen

Asher

My hand twitches with the need to slice flesh from bone. River enjoys theatrics. Alaric enjoys quick deaths. But I like slow, methodical torture.

“Can I have some lube?” Benjamin asks.

How fucked up is it to ask for lube when you’re about to fuck your own son? But I guess degenerate rapists don’t have a tangible moral compass.

“Pull his cheeks apart and give that asshole a little spit,” River says, laughing.

To my surprise, Benjamin follows his orders and spits in his son’s ass before lining up his dick.

David screams as Benjamin penetrates him. Being fucked with no lube hurts bad. I should know. Celeste let her friends put me through similar torture once. She probably would’ve done it again had it not been for Alaric telling her that if she did, he’d walk and report her to the cops. Back then, Alaric was under Celeste's power. That he would’ve done it says a lot.

“That’s it, Benji. Shove that shriveled old dick in your baby boy,” River

gloats. “Show the rapist what it’s like to get his ass torn up. Good thing this booth is soundproofed. With the way Davey boy is yelling, you’d think it was the end of the world.”

My gaze falls on Ella. I expect her to look away. To be a little squeamish about the scene in front of her. But to my shock, her lips turn up as she stares unblinking. She’s enjoying this, probably as much as River. That realization makes me sad and jubilant. Sad because it means the last of her innocence is gone forever. Jubilant because it means she won’t run away when all is said and done. She’ll stay.

The booth door opens, distracting us from the two men.

Celeste.

“What’s going on here?” she demands, her hands on her hips as she taps the toe of her leopard-print shoe. It’s almost humorous how she thinks she’s still in control. She walks to River, tapping him on the shoulder. “Stop this right now. Benjamin, get off David.”

River taps Benjamin’s ass with the ax. “Don’t you dare move, Benji. It’s just getting good around here now that Davey’s bleeding from his rectum.”

“Alaric!” Celeste snaps. “Stop him.”

Alaric chuckles. “I’ll do no such thing, Mother. The last time I heard River laugh like this was when he was a child before you ripped the joy from him. I think it’s past due for you to shut up and let him have his fun.”

“Alaric, you know who they are. You know what will happen to us,” Celeste pleads.

Alaric barks out a laugh. “They won’t do shit. You see, Benjamin’s wealth comes from his second wife. He doesn’t have two pennies to rub together. When we sent her the files you had on Benji Boy, she was more than happy to look the other way.”

“David is her son. She’d never do that,” Celeste hisses.

“Stepson, Mother. He’s her stepson,” Alaric corrects as he moves toward her. He fists Celeste’s hair and pulls. She screams as he drags her toward the

viewing. “And you should know better than anyone that some stepmothers can be truly evil.” He slams Celeste’s head on the table. “Don’t worry, Mother. We’ll treat you just as gently.”

Celeste screams again—ear-bleeding screeches of horror.

“Oh, please shut up, Mother,” Alaric says. His warning only makes Celeste yell louder. “Oh, for fuck’s sake.” Alaric presses his gun to her arm and pulls the trigger. The silencer dulls the sound of the bullet tearing through her flesh but not her screams. Alaric stuffs the barrel of the gun into her mouth. “I’ll blow your brains out right here if you don’t shut your fuckin’ mouth.”

I step up to Celeste and bend so my face is in front of hers. “Open your mouth and stick out your tongue.”

Celeste shakes her head.

I grab her ear and place my blade behind it. “Do as I say, or I’ll take this ear.”

Truth be told, it doesn’t matter if she does what I want or not in the grand scheme of things because I plan to skin her like a fish.

Celeste opens her mouth, assuming the meek one won’t do anything bad to her. She probably thinks I’ll spit in her mouth or on her face. Instead, I lift the knife and stab it through her tongue and into the wooden table.

Celeste gargles another scream, yanking her head back instinctively and slicing her tongue in half. Blood pours from her mouth in rivulets as she stares in horror at the inch of flesh from her tongue pinned on the table.

I step toward her, and she retreats until her back hits the wall behind her. Crowding her, I hold the knife under her eye and drag it across her face, making a superficial cut on her cheek. “You’re going to shut your mouth while we finish what we started.” Celeste’s eyes widen, and she nods as unintelligible words tumble from her mouth. “I’m going to take that as a “Yes, sir.””

My hand twitches with the need to cut until her crimson blood surrounds me. I don’t think about what I’m about to do. I simply walk over to Benjamin, shove the blade of my knife up his rectum, and pull up. Benjamin’s mouth

opens in a silent scream. I watch in morbid satisfaction as streams of blood cascade down his legs and flow onto the floor, creating a red pool by his overpriced leather shoes.

River grips my hand and pulls it back, the bloody knife now covered with chunks of flesh. “Why the fuck did you do that? You ruined my fun.” He glares at me, his bottom lip jutting in an absurd pout. “Get off your son, Benji.”

Benjamin shuffles away from David, and River swings the ax, severing David from his rectum to his ribcage. David bleeds out in a gush, and his guts splatter on the floor. He convulses before his body goes limp.

“You think he’s still alive?” River asks conversationally.

“David!” Benjamin screams his son’s name right before River decapitates him. His head rolls along the ground and comes to rest at Celeste’s feet.

River shrugs. “I was getting bored.” His lips turn up in a sinister smile as he turns and focuses on Celeste. “Who’s next?”

Chapter Fourteen

E^{lla}

“**Y**ou called the crew?” River asks Alaric as he gets in the limo.

Alaric smiles as he puts his arms around me, pulling me close. “They were already at the club on standby.”

River taps his ax on Celeste’s leg, winking at her. “Good lookin’ out. That was smart of your boy, huh, Celeste?”

Blood still drips from Celeste’s mouth. Maybe she’ll choke on it. Her arms shake as she grips the leather seat. She’s scared, but she doesn’t want us to realize it. It’s not every day that the three people you believed you controlled disobey you and slice off half of your tongue.

Hands grab my waist and haul me away from Alaric.

River.

He lines up the tip of his cock with my entrance. “You don’t mind, do you, Ella? This shit always makes me horny, and Asher and Alaric can’t step in because they need to keep their eyes on our evil stepmother.”

“No,” I whisper as I impale myself on his cock. “I don’t mind.”

Celeste glares at me, and I see her desire to flay me with demeaning words.

“Why don’t you tell Mommy dearest what you think of her, Ella?” River suggests.

Celeste’s glare darkens. Her wrath is directed solely at me. I’m the interloper who ruined her insignificant life. She’s too arrogant to blame her callousness for the misfortune that’s befallen her.

“How does it feel to know I have your boys and you have nothing?” I ask as I bounce on River’s dick. “They despise you, and they love me.”

“Fuck, yes, we do,” River says as he smacks my ass.

I wasn’t sure if I’d gone too far by declaring their love for me when they hadn’t told me themselves. But they didn’t need to say the words. I knew they cared because they showed me. Sure, it might be in a fucked up, unconventional way, but my men would do anything to protect me, even at the risk of their own lives.

Celeste makes inaudible noises as she struggles to free herself from her wrist restraints. She must know that these are her final moments, yet she still struggles for freedom, thinking she can win.

“Don’t believe me, Celeste?” I taunt. “Ask them. Ask your boys who they love. Ask them if they’ll kill me for you.”

Asher chuckles as he lights a cigarette. He blows a smoke ring, and I watch as it dissipates.

River bounces me harder on his cock as he frees my breasts from my shirt. He twists a nipple so mercilessly that I fear he’ll rip it off, but I don’t stop him because violence mixed with sex is comforting. It’s a blanket that warms me when my rage bubbles over.

“Open your legs, Celeste.” River demands.

Celeste shakes her head and presses her knees together.

River laughs as he stretches his long leg, ramming his foot between her knees and forcing her legs open. She screams as River kicks her in the vagina. “I figured you could watch Ella come while you’re tortured, Mother. Wasn’t

that your favorite pastime? Watching people tortured and abused while you got off?”

Asher crawls between River's legs and swipes his tongue at my entrance before gazing up at me. “One of Celeste’s clients liked to burn me when I was a kid. He always burned me where it hurt the most and where no one could see unless I was naked.” He hands me the cigarette. “I’ll enjoy watching Celeste scream while *her* flesh burns for a change.”

Hearing Asher admit one of the many atrocities the psychotic bitch did to him makes my heart pound with fury. This woman has never thought of anyone other than herself for a single second. She’s never shown these men kindness, empathy, or care. But I guess it makes sense for money-hungry, venomous monsters who manipulate the vulnerable to accumulate power. People like Celeste don’t care what they do so long as they land at the top. She’d be happy being a queen of corpses so long as she was a queen.

I stare at her, tied up and helpless. A brief pang of pity stirs within me. I swallow it quickly because people like Celeste don’t deserve pity. They deserve an eternity of hellfire and horrific torture.

I bend, taking River’s cock at a new angle while Asher has me on the brink of orgasm with his devilish tongue manipulating my clit. I grip Celeste’s knee as River removes his foot from her vagina. Leaning in, I press the ember of the cigarette on her clit.

Celeste’s maniacal screeches would haunt nightmares if you didn’t know what a monster she is. Her torment should cause me to pause. The pungent stench of burning flesh and pubic hair should horrify me. But it only makes me crave more.

Lowering the cigarette, I press it to her vulva. I grip Asher’s blade from his abandoned seat. The knife is caked in dried blood, no longer a vibrant crimson but a darkened rust. I smile at Celeste and plunge the knife into her eye as my orgasm washes over me.

“Jesus,” Alaric whispers, his voice a lifeline in the ocean of my vengeance. He grips the knife handle and dislodges it from Celeste’s eye. He looks at the blade, crimson once again, with her eyeball hanging from the tip. “Ella, you okay?”

I can barely make out his voice as I float back down to Earth, sheltered in River's arms as he releases inside me. Asher's mouth latches onto my pussy as River pulls out, and cum cascades from my pussy into his mouth. I've had multiple orgasms with these men, but this one is intensified by vengeance and power.

We pull up to the house as Asher rises. River grabs him by the collar and they kiss, passing River's cum back and forth between them before Asher swallows and offers me his hand.

"So, what are we going to do with her?" River asks Alaric.

Alaric pulls a screaming Celeste from the car. "Anything we want. And when we get bored, we'll kill her."

I'm a little shocked that she's still breathing, but then again, monsters are hard to kill.

"Take her to the wood shop," I say as I walk to one of my favorite places on the property. My dad and I spent hours there working on minor projects: birdhouses, a doll, and small wooden animals. Anything I could dream up, my dad made for me, and I painted it with wild, vibrant colors.

"Charles was a woodworker?" River asks, brushing his hand over the various tools.

"Yes." I walk to the back and place my hand on the electric drill. "One of you want to do the honors, or can I?" I ask, my voice distant and sinister.

"No, Ella," Alaric says as he walks over and grabs the electric drill from me. "You're not gonna give her this. She's taken so much from you. I won't let you kill her. She wants it to be you, but she isn't your demon to kill. She's mine."

I release the drill and nod. "Kill her, Alaric. Kill her so we can bury her." I walk over to Celeste and kneel in front of her. "You're going straight to hell, and the demons will suck the marrow of the life you tried to strip from us. My boys will finally be safe from you, and I'll ensure they know what true love is. Something you've never been able to give anyone."

A blast of liquid drenches my face. Celeste falls to the ground, dead from a

bullet through her brain.

The ultimate gift from her son, Alaric.

Epilogue

Alaric (Three Years Later)

Wiser people than me have regurgitated the words “time heals all wounds” throughout history, but I’m not sure of its validity. Time alone can’t do much. Years could pass while you sit and wallow in misery, letting old wounds fester until the infection is so extensive it eventually consumes you. But you can build something greater if you view the past as the path to becoming stronger and wiser, facing the most turbulent truths.

The last three years haven’t been perfect. We’ve all stumbled into pitfalls and relapsed into the men Celeste created, but now we have an anchor. We have our Ella.

When she insisted we see a therapist, none of us refuted her. We’ll always do what she wants, no questions asked, because Ella is our salvation. Through Ella, we’ve finally discovered family, understanding, and compassion. Thanks to us, Ella has found devotion, protection, and unconditional love.

Ella shakes the box Asher hands her. “What’s this?”

“Are you going to shake every single package? This is drawn out,” Asher says.

Ella gives him a back-handed slap in the chest. She giggles as she quickly tears off the wrap. “You wait until Christmas. I’ll drive you completely mad.” She lifts the top of the velvet box and gasps. “It’s beautiful.”

“Let me,” Asher says as he lifts the delicate diamond collar from the case and fastens it around Ella’s neck. “I thought my pet would like something a little more permanent.”

Ella laughs as her fingers graze the precious gems. “When most girls ask for diamonds, they mean rings, not dog collars.”

There’s a snap as Asher connects the hook of the leash to the circular diamond O ring on the collar. “Yes, well, those girls don’t have a guy who will kill and die for her, do they?” he asks as he caresses her head. “You, my dear, have three owners who treat you like the queen you are.” He yanks on the leash before crushing his lips to hers. They both laugh, and Ella falls into his arms.

My gaze moves to the platinum hoops in her nipples. She got them two years ago. We never asked her to, but she wanted to shed who she was and embrace who she’d become. River joined her on the journey. They both now have multiple piercings in some very enjoyable places, if I say so myself.

“I got you a little something too,” River says as he removes a small velvet pouch from his pocket. “Had them especially made and everything.”

Ella takes the bag from him and digs inside, pulling out diamond nipple and clit clamps.

River smirks. “Thought I’d get some pretty jewelry for your jewelry.” He takes them from her before clamping one nipple, then the other. River holds on to the clit clamp and raises an eyebrow. Ella smiles before opening her legs, displaying her clitoral hood piercing.

“Fuck, that pussy piercing is still the hottest thing I’ve ever seen. I still can’t believe you did that,” River says. He bends and snaps the sparkly alligator clamp on her clit, giving the chain a little tug.

Ella turns to me. “So what did you get me?”

I love it when she’s like this: feral, uninhibited, brazen, and so fuckin’

beautiful. Leaning forward, I brace my elbows on my knees and gaze at her. “Why don’t you crawl over and see?”

My mouth waters as I take in her curves. The sway of her big tits back and forth as she puts one hand in front of the other. Her eyes lock onto mine, not looking away for an instant. She knows her power, her worth, and her allure. Pride warms me, knowing that our unconditional love for her enables her to be bold and free. Watching her bloom over the last few years has been the greatest privilege of my life.

Ella kneels before me, knees spread wide so I have the perfect view of her body. I caress her head. “You think you deserve another present? Do you think you’ve been a good girl?”

Ella nods. “Yes.”

I shuffle through my pocket before falling to my knees in front of her. “I didn’t want to do this now. I had something planned. But I’ve had this in my pocket all day.” I open the small velvet box, presenting the contents to her. “I love you, Ella. We all love you. We know it can’t be legal, not with the three of us, but we want it to be official, even if we’re the only ones present. We want you linked to us spiritually and physically.”

“Bro, you can’t propose while she’s naked. This isn’t a story she can tell her friends,” River scoffs, shaking his head. “I thought you were the smart one, but apparently not.”

Asher laughs. “You better hope you knock her socks off with some killer orgasms, or this is an epic fail.”

“Shhh, the both of you,” Ella says, beaming at me. “I think this is very fitting. Our entire relationship started with sexual frustration, then turned into revenge via sex. It makes sense to seal a new beginning with sex.”

“Fuck, you’re perfect,” River says. “No, seriously, if there’s such a thing as soul mates, you’re it for us. So how about you get that ring on your finger, and we can get this party started?”

Ella extends her hand toward me, wiggling her fingers. I take the ring from the box and slip it onto her finger. “Will you marry us, Princess?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” Ella squeals, surging to her feet and jumping up and down. She winces, and the pain from the clamps halts her pep party.

“Forgot you had those clamps on, didn’t you?” River asks with a goofy grin.

That fucker enjoys seeing her in pain. Guess I should count my lucky stars that he reins in his psychotic tendencies for her. But they’re still there in abundance.

River grins as he stalks toward her. When he reaches Ella, he grabs her ponytail and pulls her head back. “I think we should seal the deal with an unholy union.”

Ella frowns. “Unholy?”

River doesn’t answer. He picks her up and throws her on the sofa. “Present your ass. Open those cheeks nice and wide. I want to see that puckered asshole.”

I walk over to the back of the sofa and tap her head with my cock. “Better do as he says.” Ella moves her hands, gripping her ass and doing as she’s told. “Good fuckin’ girl.” I grab her ponytail as I slap her face with my cock. “Now open wide so we can put that slutty mouth to good use.” Ella’s mouth opens, and I thrust my hips, pumping my cock into her wet, warm mouth. “Such a good girl. Relax your throat, Princess.”

I move my gaze from Ella choking on my dick to River as his tongue penetrates her ass.

“Your ass tastes so sweet, Sis,” River moans. “You’re such a dirty slut, aren’t you? Look at you opening your ass wide for your brother’s tongue.”

River picks up a dildo and some lube from the toy box. He uses the tip of the dildo to spread the lube around her ass before pushing it in slowly. I’m a little shocked that he isn’t fucking her himself. River is an ass man. Any chance he gets to fuck Ella’s or Asher’s ass, he’s there.

Asher approaches River and lies beneath him, taking his hard dick into his mouth.

River grips Asher’s head and pushes down. “You hungry, Asher? Need a

little cock? I'm not in the mood for gentle." He rides his mouth, laughing as Asher's face turns red. "You know how much I enjoy choking you out. Remember when I throat-fucked you so hard that you lost consciousness? You know what I did after? I shoved my dick up your ass and fucked you deep."

River has a thing about fucking people when they're passed out, and Asher seems to be okay with it. The idea does something to me. Fucking Ella while she's asleep opens up new possibilities.

I gaze at her and smear her black mascara over her pretty face. "Look at that ass. Take that dildo. Such a dirty slut for your brothers. Bet your pathetic pussy is desperate for cock too."

I pull out of Ella. She sputters and coughs as she tries to catch her breath. She drools on the sofa and it drips onto the floor.

"Answer him. Do you want your tight little cunt stretched?" River demands.

"Yes," she pleads. "Please, someone fuck me. Put a cock in me and make me come. I'll do anything."

I tug at her hair, pulling her off the sofa and pushing her against the wall. I wrap one of her legs around my hips, then the other. She moans loudly as I shove my cock in her pussy and force the dildo further into her ass by pressing her against the wall. She digs her nails into my shoulders and scrapes them down my back.

"Yes. Oh, God, yes! Deeper, please. Fuck me deeper. I need more. I want more."

"I'm gonna rip this sweet cunt apart," I groan in her ear.

Gripping her ass, I walk her to the sofa, lying down so she falls on top of me. "That's it, baby. Take me deep. Take what you need to get off. My perfect, beautiful slut."

"Fuck," River growls as he face-fucks Asher. "That pretty cunt is begging to be stretched."

He pulls out of Asher and hops on the sofa, placing Ella's feet by my lower

abdomen. Gripping Ella by her sides, he pushes the tip of his pierced cock against her cunt and slides it against my cock.

“Damn, those cock piercings feel even better like this,” River groans.

I have to agree. His Dorsal Frenum and Jacob’s Ladder piercings add an extra dimension that takes fucking to a whole new level. It makes me reconsider getting one.

“Look at you, Princess,” I whisper in Ella’s ear. “I bet you can take one more, can’t you?”

“Yes,” Ella pants. “I want you all to breed me. Fill me with your cum. I want to feel all three of you cumming inside me at the same time.

“We’re all going to cum in you, Princess. Fill you up,” I say as River and I thrust into her. “Fuck, you’re so tight.”

Asher gets behind River and pours lube over mine and River’s shafts, adding to Ella’s natural lubrication. She’s already dripping, but I know why Asher is helping things along—taking two dicks is hard, but three is a whole new ball game.

Asher pushes the tip of his cock inside our girl, taking his time to let her adjust until he’s all the way in. Then, all three of us fuck her in union.

Ella’s moans and dirty words about having our baby have me on the edge of madness. I want to see her belly round and full with our children. The idea is arousing and healing.

“I’m gonna put a baby in you,” I pant. “Tie you to my bed, legs wide open, and pump my pussy with cum day in and day out until I knock you up. You’re going to be my little cum dump even after you’ve got a baby in your belly. A pathetic cum guzzler. You’ll open wide and take load after load for us. You’ll be our pathetic breeding whore.”

“Yes! Fuck, yes,” Ella moans.

I grab her throat, pressing down and becoming feral when she turns red. Her mouth opens for air, and I spit directly on her tongue. “That’s it, my pathetic little fuck hole. On the sofa with three cocks in your pussy and that dildo in

your ass. Bet you wish you had something in your mouth, don't you? To be completely stuffed." I force my fingers into her mouth, pushing until her face is stuffed. She shudders at the loss of air, and I know my girl is about to come all over our cocks. "That's it, dirty girl. Drench your brothers' cocks with your pussy. Show us how much our little sister enjoys being stretched. How much of a pathetic fuck toy are you, Princess? Show us, baby."

Ella moves up and down, matching our pace. She gags on my fingers, and saliva falls from the sides of her mouth. I remove my hand and smear her spit over her face. She smiles before she spits on me. Fuck, if that's not fucking sexy.

"That's it, cum rag." I tug at her clamps, knowing it's causing a jolt to her nipples and her clit.

"I'm coming!" Ella screams as she shakes and crashes into my arms.

I hold her while the three of us race to the finish line. My heart's full as I cradle the most precious person on the planet in my arms.

River comes first. He roars as he bites Ella's shoulder.

Then Asher floods her. He sinks his teeth into her, tasting her blood.

Finally, I release, crushing her to me.

We lie there, holding onto each other.

"I love you all," Ella whispers, breaking the silence.

I kiss her nose. "We love you too, Princess."

The next book in the series will be Azadeh's story. It's called Feral and it's a reimagining of Beauty and The Beast. Pre-Order [HERE](#)

Website

<http://www.authormilacrawford.com/>