

A
Steele Riders
FAMILY NOVELLA

Dylan

C.M. STEELE

Dylan

Steele Riders Family
Novella

Book Four

C.M. Steele

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I came from a monster. In my blood I am ruthless, cold-blooded, and it shows because I take no prisoners. Of course, it is in the business world. Still, there is a part of my life I keep pure because there is a demon lurking that I'm afraid will get out, a twisted side of me that's in my DNA. The fear that I could be just like the monster is what made me keep that part of my life clean until she came into my life. She made me break the rules.

I sent her running and into the heart of danger. I'll never forgive myself for it. Her enemies are now mine, and they will pay. I can't let her go again, but will she ever forgive me? She'll have to because there's no going back to the man I used to be. I can't exist without her.

Chapter One

Dylan

The door to my town car opens and I step out, stretching my long legs and adjusting my suit to the chilly Texas air. My driver hands me my coat and briefcase before I make my way into my office building in the heart of Dallas's sprawling metropolis. Doors are held open for me as if I can't manage the feat for myself, but I don't complain because today I'm in one of those moods to fire someone and as if on cue, it seems my staff can read it off my face. Everyone scatters and pretends to be busy even if they aren't because it's about to cost them their jobs.

Another sleepless night, another dream about the girl that works somewhere in this building whose name I don't even know. I should have learned it, should have memorized it, written it down, and had it tattooed on my chest, but no, I snapped at her and sent her on her way. I could fucking kick my own ass for being so screwed up.

How many days has it been, and she hasn't bothered to cross my path again? Is she trying to torture me? Punish me for being so damn cruel?

Normally I don't hesitate in the lobby because there are too many interested parties seeking me out for business or perhaps finding a way to take me out. Still, I linger in the hopes of running into the little object of perfection.

"Sir, the elevator," my head of security says, reminding me that it's waiting.

"I own the fucking building. It can wait," I snarl, staring at the lobby area, looking for any signs of her long, caramel-colored hair breezing through the area or a whiff of her vanilla scent in the air. "Nothing," I mutter.

"Excuse me, sir?" he asks, believing that I'd been speaking to him instead of muttering to myself like a fool.

"Never mind. Let's go."

We enter the elevator and once it closes, he asks, “Is there a problem? Did you sense a threat that we may have missed?”

“No. Leave it be. Now, I need to get to work, and I’m not to be bothered until it’s time for my meeting.” I don’t make it to my office before I spot my VP of Operations. While I stay strictly focused on business, he can’t stay away from women.

He comes in smelling of booze this morning, and I wonder why the fuck I bother to keep him around. It’s then I remember that he knows too much, and I don’t have time to find a replacement for him unless he pushes me too far. “Nice of you to freshen up before work.”

“Hey, sorry. It was a long night. One of the new employees and I were getting to know each other, and it was a lot of fun.”

I drag him into my office and slam the door shut. It reverberates so hard that some of the papers on my desk go flying. “New employees? You’re not supposed to be fucking the employees. It’s against company policy, and you damn well know that shit,” I bark out, glad the room is soundproof.

“What? Technically she’s a temp, so she comes from a different company,” he confesses, shrugging his shoulders as if it’s no big deal. I didn’t even know we dealt with temps, but then again that’s not the part of my company I deal with. If I had time for those matters, I wouldn’t need all these lackeys around.

I shake my head, feeling violent, as if the punching bag I destroyed this morning didn’t get all my aggression out. “It doesn’t matter. What is wrong with you?”

“I like pussy.”

“Apparently a lot more than you like money. You’re on your last strike here, Majors. I don’t have patience for this shit anymore.” I release my hold on him, and he fixes his lapels.

“Damn, calm down.”

“Get out of my sight, and get some work done.” He leaves, and I feel like I have to disinfect my office and myself. I step into my private bathroom and wash my hands. Smelling the distinct whiff of old alcohol, I give my office a quick spray and turn on the air purifier just in case. No matter how much I don’t want to deal with the hassle, Majors has got to go. I put in a call to a friend and do some headhunting before my next conference call.

Once I get through my morning with a nice headache building at my temples, I get up and head to get myself some coffee. I have an assistant, but I sent him on an errand, so I’m left to my own devices. When I passed the copy room, the door was closed and the unmistakable sounds of moans, grunts, and slapping skin could be heard from it. Son of a bitch. I can hear the woman whisper my VP’s name and then he says, *“Be quiet. I’m on thin ice already.”*

“It’s okay. We’ll be rich soon.”

“Keep talking, baby.”

I’m so damn disgusted. I pound on the door.

“Holy shit.”

“Just looking for something behind the door. Give me one minute.”

I wait for them to exit and then sneak off to the side so they can’t see who found them. I can see who both of them are, and I’ll report them both to HR to be fired today. So that’s the new temp. I’ll have her out on her ass today.

I called down to the HR department and IT at the same time. “Hello, Mrs. Featherman, Mr. Russell. I need to have two employees terminated, effective immediately. My VP of Operations, James Majors, and the new temp, but I’m not sure her name.”

I can hear both of them typing quickly as I speak. “We only have one new temp, sir. Harley Dean.”

“Well, then, that’s the one who goes.”

“Is there something I should put in their files?” she asks.

“Yes, they were fucking in my copy room,” I snarl. “Well, word it professionally, please.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Should we send up security for them?”

“Yes. I want them out of my building by the time I get back from my next meeting.”

“Understood,” they reply in unison like good little employees, which keeps me sane. At my age, running an empire is a miracle, a bit of luck, and pure sacrifice, and when people like Majors turn my company into a whorehouse, I feel venomous.

I leave for my lunch meeting to discuss the possible buyout of a company, but after ten minutes I know it's not worth it to me. Someone with more time to waste can invest in a new makeup company, so I pass on the venture. It's not like I know a damn thing about women, and I know even less about makeup. I come back an hour later only to come face to face with the blonde who I caught with my former VP this morning. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“Excuse me? I work here.”

First, who the fuck does she think she's talking to? And second, “The hell you do. I fired you this morning.”

“Fired me for what, handsome.” She moves in closer, as if that's going to work with me.

“For screwing my former VP, Ms. Harley Dean.”

She gasps, pressing her hand to my chest. “I'm not Harley Dean.”

“What? Do you have a twin?” I accuse her after swiping her hand away with a little more force than necessary.

“No, that mousy girl wouldn't be caught screwing anything. She's probably cradling her pillow right now.” So

there's a second temp no one mentioned. Breathing through my nose, I let the rage boil in my blood.

"I'm Sandra Stone, Mr. Majors's assistant."

"Well, you're fired, Ms. Stone. Get your shit and get out of my building." I'm already on my phone before she can step away. "Russell, please deactivate the keycard for Ms. Sandra Stone." I end the call and summon security next. I follow her directly to the VP's former office, and it's a wreck. "What the hell happened in here?"

"He wasn't too happy about getting fired," the head of building security says, stepping next to me.

"Have Ms. Stone escorted out with her things. Make sure she doesn't take anything that belongs to the company. I need to go speak with Mrs. Featherman."

I walk down to HR because I'm too pissed and need to burn off the anger for this motherfucking mistake. If I wasn't already stressed out and screwed up over a stranger I have no intention of pursuing, I wouldn't have been so damn careless when it came to firing these two. I would have called them into my office and fired them on the spot.

I slam her door open and Mrs. Featherman looks up, and then a pair of beautiful, tear-stained eyes find me. It's the girl I've been looking for over the past few days. The sexy, innocent, heartbreaking beauty is in HR's office, crying. "What are you doing in here?"

"She was just leaving." Tears are in her eyes, and I don't like it one bit. I grab her wrist, stopping her from fleeing. Her eyes dart upward toward me in panic.

"Mr. Hunter," Mrs. Featherman scolds me. I release my tormentor, remembering my actions and my sanity.

Closing the door, I turn to stare at my employee and give her a warning. "If you ever correct me again, it won't be just your job you lose. Now, explain to me who it is that just left, and why the hell was she crying?"

"You should know who she is. You just had me fire the girl, accusing her of screwing Mr. Majors." I growl. The

thought of his hands on her body sends me into a rage. I slam my fist on the desk.

“Actually, that’s your damn fault. I asked who the temp was, and you said there was only one, but there’s more than one because he was with the other one—his assistant.”

“She’s not a temp. She’s a full-time employee. I only gave you what you asked for, and now that poor girl has left.”

“That lying sack of shit,” I mutter to myself, running my hands through my hair, ready to bust his head open.

“I need her information. I have to contact Ms. Dean and inform her that she’s rehired.”

“That’s not up to us. We contacted the temp agency, and it’s on her record, per your request.”

“Fuck.” I drag my hands over my face. “Give me her information. I’ll have to hire her directly.”

“We can’t do that. It’s a violation of the contract with the agency. Maybe we can contact them and fix it, but they’re closed for the weekend.”

“Still, I refuse to let Ms. Dean suffer for that mistake. I will contact her and at least let her know it’s my fault. I won’t tell you again to give me her information.” She quickly writes it down, and I call the number on the file as I storm out of her office.

A moment later, a shaky voice answers, “Hello?”

“Harley, this is Dylan Hunter. I wanted to speak with you about your job. Please come back.”

“I can’t show my face in there again. I’m mortified, hurt, and...”

“Where are you?” I question, needing to see her again.

“I’m waiting for the bus.”

I’m already taking the stairs two at a time and out the lobby. I’m grateful that HR is on the third floor because I made it down before she could get away.

“Come back to the entrance, and I’ll be waiting for you. I’m taking you home, and we can talk.”

“What’s there to talk about, Mr. Hunter?”

“Dylan.” I want to hear her say my name, and as I stare at her profile from a few feet away, I want to watch it come off her lips.

“Mr. Hunter, I’m not the office whore. I’m not going to sleep with you too, if that’s what you think.” I snatch the phone from her hand and spin her around.

“Too?” I want to rip his balls off and stuff them down his throat. She’s mine. No, she can’t be mine. I don’t deserve someone like her.

“I mean, that’s what I was being fired for. Having sex with someone, and I wasn’t even told who it was.”

“Mr. Majors,” I snarl, disgust filling my blood. The thought of him even putting his hands on her makes my stomach flip. He said that he spent the night with the temp, but I’m hoping that Stone was telling the truth and that he was just lying.

“Jimmy? Yuck.” Harley gags on his name.

“You know him?” I have to ask.

“Yes, he’s my cousin.”

“Your cousin? How come we never met?”

“Because I’m a lot younger than him, and we don’t get along.”

“Come on; I’ll give you a ride home.” She shakes her head, sending strands of hair across her pretty face, and I want to brush them away but I’m already on thin ice with her. Besides, I can’t trust myself not to stop.

“No, thank you. I’ve had enough of Hunter Industries.”

“I’m sorry about earlier. It was a mix-up. He said he was banging the temp, and you’re the only temp.”

“Eww. He’s a natural liar.” Her face scrunches, and she shivers in disgust. Seeing the bus approach, I forget my trepidation as I take her hand and lead her to the back of my vehicle. As I let go of her hand, the regret is strong, but it’s for the best.

“I’m taking you home, Ms. Dean.” She doesn’t fight me this time, so I give my driver the address.

“You have my address?”

“Yes, I got it from HR so I could make sure I corrected this matter. I’m sorry that you were fired by mistake.”

“And you told the temp agency that I’m the office slut. I’ll never get another job around here unless I plan on working at a strip club. It’s looking to be my only option to pay for my student loans.”

“The hell you’re going to do that.” There is no way I’d allow her to take off her clothes for anyone else. The thought pisses me off to even consider it. Although, I’d love to see her dance for me. The idea has so much merit that my dick hardens painfully even though I try to fight it off.

“Don’t tell me what I’m going to do. You fired me, and you ruined my name. You’re damn lucky I don’t sue your ass,” she says, glaring at me. Normally, I’d take that threat and make the person eat it, but I’ll give her anything she wants.

Before I can say anything, my driver says, “Sir, we are here.”

“Well, thanks for the ride. It’s been great, but I have to go.” Her phone pings and then rings. She sends it to voicemail before another text message pops up.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”

“Of course I’m not okay. I don’t have a job, and now I’m a pariah. My family just learned that I got fired for fucking at my job even though it was that piece-of-shit cousin of mine who is going to lie and say it’s true because that’s his personality.”

“My uncle works on the fifth floor and was the one who told me about the job. How could they know that already?”

“Word spreads like wildfire, so thanks. It’s been a pleasure.”

“I’m sorry. I’ll make it up to you.”

“How?”

“I don’t know.” I want to tell her that I could keep her wrapped up in our bed for the rest of our days where she can’t get away and find other men. I’d help her find another job, but that would mean that she’d work for other men or be surrounded by other men all day. It’s unacceptable to me and yet, I can’t have her by me all day, or the animal I’ve kept hidden my entire life will come out.

“That’s what I thought, so excuse me.” She exits my vehicle, and I don’t stop her because she deserves someone who isn’t sick and twisted. I watch her until she’s inside, and then I have my driver take me home where I sit for ten minutes before I remind myself that I’ll never be able to get her out of my head. Grabbing the keys to my Mercedes SUV, I drive back to her home and then stay across the street, watching her apartment for the next few hours until her lights go off.

Even in the darkness, I can’t pull myself away. I see a car that parks on the side of her building. There’s a man that stands outside the vehicle, and something about him gives me a sense of discomfort, so I decide to do something dumb. I call her.

It takes forever before she finally answers, “Hey, Harley, it’s Dylan Hunter.”

“Dylan? What time is it?” Her voice is sexy even when she’s half asleep.

“It’s one in the morning.”

“Is there something wrong?”

“No, I found a position for you,” I answer cheerfully.

“Excuse me? It’s one in the morning and you found a position? Am I on my knees for this one?” she asks, her voice full of skepticism and sarcasm.

“Don’t tempt a man,” I mutter, slamming my eyes shut; my dick is so hard I could build a house with it.

“Huh?”

“Nothing, but it starts right away, so I need you to get dressed and come with me.”

“Right away? Like when?”

“Like right now.”

“What? What’s the job?”

“It’s as my live-in personal assistant. I’ll pay you two hundred thousand a year.”

“Are you serious?”

“Yes.”

“Are you trying to sleep with me?”

“Hell, no, I’m not.”

“Well, way to hurt my feelings.”

“It’s not you. It’s me.”

“Ha, let me just stop you there. I’ll take the job, and I’ll be down in twenty minutes. I have to attend a family wedding in two weeks, so you’ll be without me for a bit, and next weekend I’m going to a bachelorette party as the designated driver. If that doesn’t work, then you can look for someone else.”

I’m not okay with it, but I’ll be having someone follow her, or perhaps I’ll do it myself. No, I can’t, because I might rip someone’s head off if I do. Swallowing my irrational jealousy, I answer calmly, “It’s fine. Just move your ass. I’d like to get some sleep tonight.”

“Where do you want me to meet you?”

“I’m outside.”

“You’re outside my apartment?”

“Yes. Now—less talking and more moving.”

Chapter Two

Harley

I pack my bags quickly. Luckily, I was already mostly packed since I was on my way to being thrown out of my apartment in a couple of days. It only took me a few minutes to get my toiletries in a bag and to change out of my pajamas. When life hits you, it really hits you hard. My landlord raised my rent right after I graduated from college, making it harder to come up with enough money for rent.

I come outside, and he's waiting with a large SUV there to pick me up. "That was fast. Were you planning on leaving town?"

"If you must know, I was going to get evicted if I couldn't pay my rent soon, so I was already packing up since I just lost my job." Why am I completely honest with this guy? This is like the fifth time I've told him the truth when I don't owe him an ounce of honesty after everything he did.

"Well, then, this works out just fine." There isn't a drop of remorse in his voice. "You'll have a place to live and earn enough money to save." Good. So when I quit working for this handsome jerk, I can find a nice place to live where someone doesn't know about my supposed perverted background.

"Yep," I answer, pressing my lips together as he holds the door open for me. He waits for me to buckle myself in before he closes it and then locks my door. After that, he loads up my things and then enters the driver's side.

"I have a guest bedroom that will be yours for the time being. There will be no men allowed in the condo, understood?"

"Yes, Mr. Hunter."

"It's Dylan. Say it."

"Dylan."

“Good. If you’re going to be my personal assistant, I want to make sure you can follow simple directions.”

“Are you always this grumpy at night, or is guilt eating you up so bad that you had to find a solution to your little problem?”

“That smart mouth of yours isn’t going to do you any good, Harley.”

“As your personal assistant, what are my duties?”

“You’ll be keeping track of my schedule inside and outside of work, picking up my suits among other things, but we’ll discuss more of that in the morning.” We drive in silence through the city streets until we arrive at a condo building. He parks his car next to the elevator and steps out. “Come on.”

He takes my hand to assist me out of his vehicle and then releases it as soon as my feet hit the ground, as if it disgusts him to touch me, which is fine by me since Mr. Arrogant is getting on my nerves. He may be gorgeous, but I’m not letting my hormones rule me, especially when they’re unwelcome. He presses his hand to the small of my back, leading me to the open elevator. “What about my things?”

“Someone will bring them along.”

A moment later, I see a man behind us heading to the back of the vehicle. Where the hell did he come from, and does he just have people at his disposal at any hour? If he has people like this, why does he need me?

We enter the condo, and I’m not surprised that it’s absolutely perfect—something straight out of a Pinterest board, or some photoshoot. It’s amazing.

“Your room is over here.” He leads me down the hall and then opens the door to an equally nice guest bedroom.

“Um...thank you.” I see the bed and let out a yawn. Mr. Hunter’s eyes darken, and he’s about to say something when we’re interrupted.

“Sir.” The giant from downstairs is standing inside the bedroom door with my things.

“You don’t ever come in here. This is her space.”

“Sorry, sir. I was just dropping off the bags.”

“Leave them there, and you can go.”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter.” Okay, so he’s an asshole to everyone.

“Thanks for my stuff.”

“Goodnight. I’ll see you in the morning.”

“Wha...” He doesn’t let me finish before he shuts my bedroom door and is gone. I walk over to the amazingly fluffy bed and plop down. “This is wonderful,” I sigh, letting out another yawn. It’s too late to look for my pajamas again, so I strip out of my outer layers and slip under the covers in just my panties. The sheets feel like a dream as I let sleep take me.

There’s a rapt knocking on the bedroom door. “Harley, breakfast is ready.” His deep voice penetrates the door and so much more.

“Sorry, I’m coming,” I say groggily, rubbing my eyes. Picking up my cell phone, I see it’s already ten in the morning. Shit. Quickly, I grab some leggings and a top with a pair of slippers. I normally wake up early every day, but I guess it was the fancy bed and the middle-of-the-night wake-up call because I slept in. I must look like a mess, but it’s Saturday and he just messed up my schedule, so he’s going to have to deal with me as is for now.

I open the door and find him standing there. “Good morning.” Why does he look so damn good in just a plain black tee shirt and gray slacks? His muscles are jacked, stretching the fabric on his shirt, and I’m doing my best to not look at them, but damn, the man is packing massive cannons.

“You didn’t need to wait for me,” I say, trying to create some separation between us.

“Yes, I did, because you don’t know where we’re eating breakfast.”

“Oh. Wait, we’re going out?”

“No, but I don’t want you running around the entire condo without a bra on trying to find my office.” I cover my chest and my insanely hard nipples.

“Shit. Give me one more minute.”

“No problem. Just don’t let that slip-up happen again.”

“Yes, sir.”

“It’s Dylan.”

“Yes, Dylan.”

“Good girl,” he says, crossing his arms, and I drop mine, turning on my heels before going back into my room to add a bra. Once I come back out, he leads me to his office, which is on the second floor of the condo with double doors. It’s freaking gorgeous. On an ornate wooden table, there’s a spread of food that smells delicious. “Come and eat.”

I nod and make a small plate, which earns me a curious stare and then a furrowed brow. “Don’t be shy. Your bright eyes opened up like a kid in a candy store.”

“I’m not a glutton. If I want more, maybe I’ll go back for more, but I get full fast.”

“Okay.” I don’t have a lot of money as a former college student, so I’ve learned to eat on a budget, which means meals can be small and sparse. “Please eat, and then we’ll discuss your tasks.”

We eat in silence for a few minutes before his phone rings and he takes a business call right in front of me. I’m surprised, but I suppose that as his personal assistant, it will be a normal thing. When he ends the call, I ask, “Should I have been taking notes?”

“No. If I need you to be taking notes, I’ll ask.” His tone is even, not harsh or soft, and I can’t tell how I’m supposed to take it, so I file it away as a matter-of-fact response. The man puzzles me. He’s attractive, smart, and when I see him, my pulse jumps in my throat, my heart races, and parts of me tingle that have never tingled before, but it’s pointless. The

man doesn't want anything to do with me. Maybe he can sniff my inexperience on me or something.

“So, are we ready to discuss my duties?” A look crosses his face.

“I've ordered you some supplies so that you can keep track of my calendar, update my schedule, and ensure that I'm at all functions on time. They should be here in the next two hours. For the rest of your duties, they will come along as needed. I have a stack of mail that needs to be sorted and gone through over there.”

“Yes, si—Dylan.”

“You can have my seat. I need to get my workout in. I know you don't have my calendar up yet, but here it is. I have a meeting in two hours, which means you need to remind me to finish my workout in forty-five minutes so I'm not late. Understood?”

“Um...Dylan, where is the gym?”

“It's next to your bedroom.” He winks and leaves his office. I watch him walk out with that V-shaped torso and killer glutes. No wonder he looks so damn good.

I set my timer on my phone to thirty-nine minutes so I have time to clean up my mess and get to him. Most of this stuff is junk mail, but there's an invitation to a gala, and I'm not sure if he wants to attend or if he'll send his regrets. Also, there are several important documents that I file to the side, and the rest I leave for the trash. My phone startles me, nearly sending me sliding out of his comfy chair. I set everything down and am thankful that most of this area is perfectly neat. Once I'm sure it's good, I head down to the gym. The door is open, and inside, Dylan grunts as he pumps iron. I'm doing my best to fight the instant arousal coursing through my veins as the sweat drips down his naked chest. I check my phone, and he has two more minutes, so I step back out of the room.

“Harley, where are you going?”

“Sorry, sir. I mean, Dylan. It's just you had two minutes left. I was a little early.”

“That’s okay. I’ve had enough for the morning. I’ll finish later.” My mouth falls open when I realize that he plans to work out again. Seriously, how many times does he work out in a day?

Chapter Three

Dylan

Fuck me raw. What am I doing to myself? I've created an even bigger mess by bringing her here and into my home. It's like waving a juicy, raw steak in front of a hungry lion, and I'm motherfucking starving. When I caught her staring at me from the doorway, I almost dropped the weights and pounced on her. The fear of becoming my sperm donor is the only thing that held me back.

She has no idea who she decided to shack up with as a roommate. I have the potential to be a monster, and that scares me. She scares me, tempts me more than any other person in the world. I want her like I want air.

It's bad enough that Harley doesn't like or trust me, and if I give her one reason, she'll bolt, and I can't have that. I need her here, even if I can't touch her, taste her, or claim her. I don't want anyone else to have that perfection. I almost lost it this morning when she came out without a bra on, her dark nipples on display, bouncing as she bounded out the door and dragging my attention straight there. Timothy was so lucky that he'd stepped away a minute before or I would've blinded that son of a bitch.

I'm obsessed, and yet I can't have her. It's sick and wrong, so I should let her go, but she needs my help. Even if that fucker was nobody outside her building, I realized how unsafe her neighborhood was, and then to find out she was about to be evicted. Until she's good and ready, I'll keep her as my fake personal assistant.

Of course, I've caught several strange looks from my men since last night because I don't allow any females in my life and into my private space. They most certainly know I don't need a personal alarm clock. I operate like a machine, but it isn't anyone's business. I pay them to do a job, and now that includes protecting my little PA—precious assistant.

As soon as the shower is on, my hand goes straight to my cock. I've choked the fuck out of my meat since I've crossed paths with Harley. Thoughts of fucking that pretty little face and bending her over my desk has played in my visions every damn waking minute. Water sprays all over my body as I stroke up and down, rubbing my length until I come, shooting my load on my hand and the wall. It would be better if it was all over her.

Chapter Four

Harley

It's been a week, and I've learned that I'm only here because he feels sorry for me and is making up for his mistake. As much as I want to up and quit, a girl needs her money, so I put on a fake smile and do his menial tasks that are useless because the man is a clock built by the finest artisans; I've yet to remind him of his job. Also, this place has its perks. The gym is killer, and I get to run on the fancy treadmill, getting in about ten miles a day.

It's one of my favorite hobbies. I have done several races, including a marathon last year. Once, Dylan actually worked out at the same time and was surprised that I finished in record time. He was worried I'd burn out the motor. "I could always go running outside."

"No, it's better and safer for you to run inside."

"I suppose." I don't mind either, but he has a point. It's always so crowded at the park. Still, he works my nerves with his overly protective attitude, and I was so close to letting my tongue slip.

I stockpiled my first paycheck just in case I said something that got my ass fired. This weekend, I'm off with my cousin to her bachelorette party, so I'm getting ready now. With my light brown hair styled, looking a little less blah, and makeup slightly done, I slide on my little black dress, which makes me feel cute but not slutty.

Immediately, I nearly barrel into that great wall of a chest. "Mr...Dylan. I didn't see you there." He's coming out of the gym with no shirt on, chest glistening with sweat, muscles amplified from the workout. I try to catch my breath, but how can I when he looks perfect? At least I can say it's from slamming into him.

He looks me up and down. "Whoa. Where are you going?" he growls. He doesn't notice my lack of oxygen.

Straightening my posture, I answer, “I told you that I have my cousin’s bachelorette party.”

“You look beautiful.”

There goes my breath again. “Thank you, Dylan.”

“Be a good girl and take one of my vehicles.”

I wave off his offer. “That’s not necessary. I was just going to take an Uber to my cousin’s and then take her car.”

He grasps my chin a little rough. “The fuck you are. You don’t belong in any stranger’s vehicle.” Shit, I think I need to change my panties. They’re soaked.

“Yes, sir. Anything else I should do?”

“Don’t start with me.” He closes the distance, the space between us becoming negligible. He presses his thumb along my mouth and my lips part. He leans in and I think he’s going to kiss me, but he brushes his lips by my ear and whispers, “Be a good girl tonight. Don’t make me kill anyone.” His teeth bite down on my lobe, grazing it before he quickly pulls away, and then he storms into his office and slams the door shut.

I don’t know how to breathe because my entire body is shaking with lust. Why? Why did he have to do that before I went out? The man has done everything to push me away. I shake my head and take the keys and my purse.

“Hello, ladies. What can I get you?” the bartender asks me. He’s handsome, and instantly I feel like I’ve seen him somewhere before.

“Do you, like, have some cosmos?” my cousin asks.

“Come on, Lily. This is a small town. They’re not going to have that stuff here.”

The bartender gives Sandra in her tight, shiny black dress a passing glance and then winks at the bride-to-be, my cousin. “Sugar, we have it all.” He gives us an appraising look, judging us, reading our overly done outfits for this bar. We should be club hopping in Dallas with these outfits instead of a biker bar, so he asks, “Now, how many cosmos am I mixing up?”

“We all want one,” the bitch answers for us.

I raise my hand and softly say, “I can’t have any. I’m the designated driver.”

“Would you like a Coke?” he offers me with no condescension in his voice.

“That sounds good to me.” I smile at him and he returns it, but there’s something in his appearance that is too familiar. It’s warm and inviting.

“Goodness, look at those muscles and tats. Seriously, Daddy.” God, Sandra doesn’t quit, even though she’s banging my cousin and probably several other people.

“Thanks,” he says, giving her that charming smile while doing some cool bartender-pouring skills.

“Boss,” someone calls him from the other end of the bar toward the entrance. We all look, and he’s a hot biker guy. No guy is as hot as Dylan, but I’m sure this guy has plenty of ladies following him, and I don’t doubt Sandra’s about to open her drunk, slutty mouth.

“Give me a minute,” he tells the guy.

“Ooh, he’s hot too. Damn. I’ve got a hot daddy and a sexy biker. Talk about a Sandra sandwich. Are you boys up for it?” She leans toward the guy that just came in.

“Sorry, not interested,” they both say in unison, and I have to bite back a laugh. If there’s one person I truly don’t like, it’s her. She’s the one who told everyone about me getting fired for fucking.

“Sam, can you handle these ladies when you’re done? Blade and I have some things to discuss.”

“Boss, I don’t need anything, but I wanted to show my pretty girl, here, around.” I don’t miss the tension, and that’s when I notice something in the older man’s expression. The look of pure jealous possessiveness. I’ve seen that same damn expression before. In fact, I saw it earlier today when I left the condo. That’s who this bartender reminds me of—Dylan. They could be father and son.

“Hello, I’m Emiliano’s mother.” I listen to their conversation, even though I try not to, but I want to know more about Dylan’s older doppelgänger. I wonder if it’s just one of those rare coincidences, or if his dad really works down here.

“No, you can’t be his mother. You’re too fucking young.” Wow, he’s flirting hard, but I can’t blame him because she doesn’t look old. I wonder how old the son is.

“Thank you. It’s the lighting here. It’s lying to you, because I’m an old lady,” the woman says.

“Seriously. Our drinks. We need to go to another town. I heard there were hot biker guys here, but damn, they are into old hags.” His head whips toward Sandra, and he hits her with the dirtiest scowl that would scare anyone. She flinches and stumbles backward off the stool, nearly hitting her ass on the floor. Holy hell, it’s like looking at an older Dylan.

Maybe I just have Dylan on my brain.

“Get out—now,” he barks out, anger radiating from him.

“Shit, Sandy,” my cousin Lillian hisses at her bestie.

“Now,” he roars. He gives a look toward the man at the door, and I get out of my seat, grabbing my purse and light wrap. He tells the bouncer guy, “Make sure they are safely escorted out.”

He turns to me with soft, kind eyes and says, “I’m sorry.”

“No, don’t be sorry. She can be a real piece of work when she’s drunk,” I say.

“Please be careful.” He seems to be only addressing me again. I like him. He’s kind and respectful to the right women.

Sandy gives him and the woman he’s flirting with a glare before she moves toward the door. I roll my eyes at her behind her back.

I give a low, apologetic wave as I walk the drunk girls out of the bar. “We will, as soon as we get her back to Dallas.”

“Good.” He nods and goes back to his business while I lead all the wasted girls into Dylan’s Mercedes.

“Put on some good music. I want to jam out, and then we need a better place. I can’t believe we drove all the way out here for nothing.”

“I heard there were hot bikers here, and there were, but someone had to freaking ruin it with her big mouth,” my cousin’s other friend Erica said.

I check my rearview mirror, and I catch a sedan I thought was following us earlier to another bar in Dallas. Did Lillian’s fiancé send someone to watch us? He can be a bit jealous, but he trusts her. Maybe he’s worried about her safety, or maybe I’m just crazy.

Chapter Five

Dylan

“I kept my distance, sir, and she didn’t see me,”
Timothy says.

“Good. Where is she now?” It’s nearly three in the morning, and we have a function to attend tomorrow night. She’s my plus one—as my assistant, of course, but it will be the first time I’ve brought a woman with me.

“Dropping off the bride and the one you fired.”

“She was with them?”

“Yes.”

“Yuck. Remind me to sell that vehicle in the morning.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Or burn it.” I hate that woman. Something about her disgusts me, and it isn’t just that she sleeps around because people have sex every single day. I’m still pissed about my copy room being defiled. Hell, I would love to have taken Harley inside there if I’d caught her there alone and I wasn’t fucked up in the head.

“A bit extreme. Selling it would be the best thing to do.”

“Very well. First thing Monday morning, I want it listed.”

“Yes, sir. Oh, she’s on the move again.”

“Good. She should be coming home now.”

“I don’t mean to pry, but...”

“Then don’t pry. If you know what’s good for you, just drop it.”

“Yes, sir.”

It’s nearly four when she comes through the door, creeping in, but I’m standing there with a glass of whiskey on

ice.

“Did you have a good time, Harley?”

“What are you still doing up?”

“I asked you a question.”

“Yes, I did, Daddy. Am I grounded?”

“Were you drinking?”

“No, of course not, but you’re waiting up for me and interrogating me.”

“As it happens, I don’t sleep well.”

“Oh, well. I’m home safe, and I only had Cokes while we were out. I was the best designated driver. I didn’t even kick any of my passengers out when I wanted to toss them out.”

“Good girl. Now off to bed.”

“Yes, Daddy.” She pops her ass.

“I’m not your daddy. I’m your boss, and we have a big gala to go to tomorrow. I need you to look like you slept and not look hungover.”

“I told you I didn’t drink.” She nudges my chest. “Maybe you shouldn’t be drinking, Mr. Hunter. You’re apparently too wasted to understand I already said that before.”

“I’m not drunk, Harley. I’m annoyed.”

“Whatever. I’m going to bed.” She leans on the wall, takes off her heels, and starts peeling off her dress before she gets to her bedroom. I can’t take my eyes off the sight. The door closes before her back is fully revealed, but it doesn’t matter because I’ve seen enough to destroy my control. This can’t go on much longer.

I have to send her away before I hurt her. Even if I don’t have that in me, what if I created a child who has his grandfather’s genes? I’ve considered the possibility multiple times and thought about just getting myself fixed, but that

wouldn't stop my fascination with Harley. No, my cravings have only gotten worse, the thoughts darker. I don't want her to leave ever again, and the ache in my chest grows with every thought of her walking away.

"I'm ready, Dylan." She steps out of the bedroom, and I'm fucking floored. Internally, I'm wrestling with the man and the animal inside me.

"God, you are so damn—perfect." I stare at her, and there's something she's missing. Something I picked up especially for her. "Almost perfect." I pull out a long jewelry box.

"Oh." She takes it and opens it to a beautiful diamond pendant that she doesn't know has a tracker inside it.

"Here, let me help you." I take it and step behind her. Fuck, her hair is up, and I get to see her slender neck all night long. My dick is going to be throbbing painfully the entire time. I take the clasps and slide them along her collarbone until I grace the back of her neck, clipping it. Lingering for a moment, I breathe in her vanilla scent.

"How does it look?"

"Gorgeous."

"Thank you."

"Ready?"

"Yes." I lead her to the elevator, and we head down to the limo where my driver is waiting for us. I help her slide in so that her dress doesn't catch and then I slip in beside her.

"I'm nervous."

"Don't be. I hate these things. People are only there to try and con money out of me."

"So then why do you go if you hate them?"

"It's good press."

“Oh. Is there anything you need me to do?” she says so sweetly that I want to bring her onto my lap and tell her to ride my cock all the way there so her pussy is dripping my cum and her body is covered in my scent, but I hold back.

“Act professional, and keep the flirting to a minimum.” Or none at all. The thought of her flirting with other men makes me want to snap necks. Several of my men will be on duty tonight to stop me from doing just that, and they know it. It’s the most security I’ve ever taken to an event, but it’s also to keep her protected from the predators. There are so many rich fucks eager to get their hands on a beauty like my woman—no, she’s just my assistant. Damn it, I have to stop thinking of her like that.

Chapter Six

Harley

I fight back tears in the limo, doing my best to look at my phone or out the window so I don't give away the fact that he just hurt my feelings. Not that he'd notice since he just zoned out on me.

Did I read him wrong in the condo? Was he not marking me as his with the necklace? I guess it's just business, and he wants me to look like someone he'd bring here. The way he touched me, I could swear he was being so damn possessive, and the comments. It was like the guy in the bar. Seriously, my heart hurts terribly. Try not to flirt with anyone, and act professionally. I'll remember that. I'm just his assistant, and that's what I'll be.

"Sir, we have arrived," his driver, John, says. I check my phone only to see my reflection, so he doesn't notice. My makeup is flawless and so is my hair.

"Relax. We can just rush past the cameras and the press." He steps out and extends his hand. I take it long enough to get out and free myself as soon as I'm on two feet. I swear I heard a growl come from him, but it might be the limo.

"Mr. Hunter. Dylan, can we get a comment from you?" several press members shout from behind the ropes. His men along with event security keep them at bay, but the questions still fly.

His answer is simple. "No."

"Who is this beauty with you tonight?" Although I don't have to wonder what he'll say. He made his point clear before we arrived. Still, I don't have to wait long for his response.

"My assistant." I nod, validating his response, and take the steps with him, avoiding his touch as he lightly presses his hand to the small of my back.

We enter the event, and he's greeted by many people who are insanely eager for his attention. I'm quickly left to my own devices, and I shuffle away from the crowds. I notice how fast they all clamor to him, wanting his undivided attention. There is one actress who can't take her eyes off him, and I want to hit her in the mouth, but again, it's not my business.

I'm his assistant only.

Holding on to my pride and dignity, I take a seat at our table when another gentleman comes up to me and sits down. "Hello, beautiful. Dylan selfishly didn't give me your name. All he said was you were his assistant." Of course he did. I find his actions rude, because at least he can introduce me. I have a name.

"My name is Harley Dean," I say with a professional smile. He takes my hand and brings it to his mouth. He's about to kiss it when Dylan snatches it out of his grasp.

"Harley, a word." He lifts me out of my chair before I can even reply.

"Yes, Mr. Hunter." A deep growl rips from his chest.

We make it to a room off the party room. It looks like a private changing room. "What have I told you about calling me Dylan?"

"You also told me to act professional."

"I meant with them, and I also said not to flirt with them."

"He was flirting with me. I just gave him my name. You want to act like I'm a servant in the back, then you shouldn't have brought me with you. Damn it."

"You're not a fucking servant. You're fucking too hot, too sexy, too good for a man like me," he growls before his mouth lands on mine, kissing me hard and furiously. His hands are quick and rough as they fist my hair, tugging my head back as his lips drag down my throat to the necklace where he places a kiss. He slides lower, pushing the top of my gown off until my breasts are exposed. "God, I've wanted these since you popped out of your room with no bra."

His mouth latches on to one nipple with a mix of biting and sucking, and I can't control the moaning, breathy sigh coming from my throat. "Oh, Dylan."

He pops off and stares at me in the face. "Good girl, but I'm not fucking you right here. We have a room for the night, and I'm taking you upstairs."

"Please," I whimper. He adjusts my dress and opens the door where one of his guards is standing outside.

We make it to a bank of elevators where another one of his guards is waiting right on cue to take us up. "What the hell?"

"They were waiting for me to lose control all night."

"Oh." He carries me into the room and sets me on my feet. His strong hands grasp the back of my dress and with a simple tug, he tears the fabric, sending it to the floor.

"You tore my dress. What am I going to wear out of here?"

"We'll figure that out later. Right now, I want you and I can't wait." Dylan cups my face, framing it as he kisses me deeply. A guttural sound comes from his throat, and he lifts me up, wrapping my legs around his waist. The tension radiating off him only amplifies my need for him, but there is a secret I'm keeping.

Knowing how many times he's walked away from me, I don't want to make him run again. I should tell him that I've never done this before, but the risk is too great. My desire for him matches it, so I leave it be. One night is all I need with Dylan. That's what I tell myself as he carries me to bed. My bare back hits the soft, silky sheets and then I feel his body cover mine.

"Dylan," I utter his name like a whisper. His gorgeous eyes darken as if hearing his name off my lips turns him on.

He stands up and strips himself bare, revealing muscles, pure masculine energy, and a huge cock that bobs dead center. I can't take my eyes off the way it stands so proudly.

“Harley, are you ready?” I nod, and he enters me without hesitation. The single thrust penetrates the last of my innocence, which I happily give to this man who has stolen my heart and soul. I don’t know how this grumpy, miserable man has, but he did. I bite back the pain, eat it, and swallow it down before opening my eyes to see him staring down at me with a dark smile on his face.

“Just for me.”

“Yes, just for you.”

“You feel too damn good, Harley. I’m going to come so fast in your tight little pussy.” His voice deepens more than I’ve ever heard before. Sweat beads his forehead, and I’m stunned by the way our bodies are so heated.

“Take me, Dylan.” He pushes in and out, flattening his palms on the mattress, bracketing my head.

“You’re getting all of me.” His mouth slams down on mine, lips moving roughly, sliding his tongue inside and swiping it around as if he’s marking his territory. I want to be his, owned by him, belong to him.

“Fuck, you feel so fucking good,” he grunts, pumping harder and faster. His hands roam all over my body, cupping my ass, squeezing my thighs. My pulse rockets with desire, sending me over the edge, and then he bites down on my shoulder.

“I’m coming,” I cry out and feel him empty inside of me. He presses his forehead on my chest while my heart beats violently.

“So fucking sexy.”

He eventually pulls back and slides out of me, causing me to grunt from the pain. My virgin body is unused to the experience. “I bit you.”

“That’s because you’re an animal.”

His expression changes. “You should probably shower. It will make you feel better.” He jumps off the bed and then slides on his boxers. The sudden change in him shouldn’t

surprise me. Dylan is a bit different, and I still can't figure out his moods and what drives them. Is he bothered by the fact that he bit me? I'll talk to him after my shower. I head inside and enjoy the luxurious jets run over my sore body and forget all my worries for now.

As I exit the bathroom in the luxurious robe, Dylan runs his hand through his hair. "Ms. Dean, unfortunately things aren't working out and your services are no longer needed. You can stay here for the evening. Your things will be delivered here by morning. Your payment has been deposited into your account." He gives me a strained look, confused, pained, and then he hardens it.

My mouth falls open, but before I can respond he exits the hotel room, leaving me all alone. I fall to my knees, tears ripping from my chest. How could he? How could I let him?

I cried for a long time. It seems like hours until there is a knock at my door. "Go away."

"Ms. Dean. I came to drop off your belongings." The voice is familiar, and I'm sure it's one of his team. I wipe my face and then go to the door and open it. "I'll just bring these inside."

"Thank you."

"Please don't cry. He's not worth it. He has no respect for women. He uses them and spits them out. You are just one in a million that he takes from one of his many places."

"Thanks, but that doesn't help. Being used doesn't feel good either way. So, um, I'd like to be alone."

"Yes, Ms. Dean." He nods and leaves. I lock the door with the deadbolt slide and rest on the settee by the window, unable to lay on the bed we had just shared. I stare out the window, unseeing, thinking about what happened and trying to understand what happened. How did we go from so insanely passionate to pure nothingness, pure indifference?

Chapter Seven

Dylan

It's been a day, and I haven't been to work. Instead, I stared at that bedroom door for hours, unable to see anything but my own regret. In fact, I don't believe I've done much of anything. Tim gave me a strange look this morning. "Sir, you shouldn't let a woman get to you."

"If you want to keep your job, you'll watch your mouth. Harley isn't just some woman." He grumbles under his breath and walks away. He wouldn't understand because he doesn't even like his wife.

What the fuck did I do? I sent her running from my life for no fucking reason. I love her, and I'd never harm her. "Except I already did." I took her virginity and then paid her to leave me. What kind of bastard am I? My heart feels like it could break into a million pieces, and I have no one to blame but myself.

I need to get her back. "Sir, she's not at her old apartment."

"Where is she?" Damn it, I should have had access to the tracker myself. I intentionally didn't give myself that power because I'd be a crazy stalker, but now I don't care.

"It looks like she's with her cousin that's getting married."

"Oh, yes. The wedding is in a few days." Married. It's what I should be doing; I should be getting married to the love of my life instead of pushing her away.

I hate myself more than I ever have before. I made a call I should have made a long time ago—to a therapist.

The following morning, I go to the first session that day and explain everything, letting it fall from my mouth like verbal diarrhea. It almost feels cathartic to let it out. No one knows my true past, only that I was adopted and my mother

died. There is nothing else about my past, and I have no one that I ever shared it with.

The therapist leaves me with a bit of comfort, explaining that it's something proven to be passed on, and we are who we are based on how we are raised. Many children like me suffer with PTSD because it's a reminder that we were a product of force.

I see the therapist again for a second day because I want help before going to fix my relationship with Harley.

“You don't need to hide away from relationships. That's only going to hurt you. Think about people who are born to alcoholics, and yet one child is an alcoholic and the other never touches a drink in their lives because they don't want to become their parents. You don't have to hurt a woman, because you don't want to. Do you have urges?”

“What urges?” I ask, wanting to know where she's going with this.

“Urges to hurt women?”

“God, no. Never. I don't feel anything for almost all women.” Only one woman do I have any feelings for, and they are deeply rooted in my soul. Embedded, engrained, etched into my heart—they'll always be there even if she never forgives me.

“Then why are you so afraid?”

“Ever since my adoptive mother told me the truth, I worried about what I could become.” Shame fills me as I confess those words.

“How old were you?” she asks, putting a sympathetic hand on my thigh.

“About thirteen.”

“Oh, so just at the start of your hormonal stage. Any arousal would have frightened you, right?”

“You nailed it.” I used to get hard with the wind blowing. God forbid if I saw a movie with a pretty woman in it. Then as I got older, I wasn't aroused by much but my own

fantasies of a happy life until Harley swept by me. All fantasies became about her and imagining her in my arms, writhing with pleasure, crying out my name as I ate her out.

“You should consider the fact that you’re in your late twenties and just lost your virginity as a sign you had no intentions of hurting anyone.” I don’t need to be reminded that I was a virgin and that I shared that with anyone. It’s kind of embarrassing. She leans in, lowering her glasses and adds, “You’re handsome, wealthy, and you could probably pay your way through discretionary affairs. There are clubs that allow for privacy for those craving dominance and submission.” Is she hitting on me?

“I’m not interested in anything like that, Doctor.”

“You could find yourself in one of those places.” She licks her lips, and I’m out the damn door.

“I will no longer require your services.” I step out and leave the damn secretary a message. “I want the bill, and I don’t want any more sessions. No calls. I want the doctor and this office to lose all of my information. Understood?”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter.” Where did I get her number from in the first place? Fuck, now I remember. James Majors, when he said the company-recommended therapy sessions help release stress.

I just need to find Harley and get her back. No matter how perverted that bitch was, I did learn something. I’m not my father, and I can love Harley.

“I need to find Harley,” I tell Timothy.

“Sorry, sir. We don’t have a location on the necklace.”

Chapter Eight

Harley

It's been miserable without Dylan. His words stung just as much as the way he left, going to his other home. I found out from one of his men, whose name I don't remember, that he doesn't even live at the condo all the time. It's where he brings his hookups. This was just temporary, something he does from time to time.

Yet, I miss him so much. A part of me doesn't believe a word he said because I remember the way Dylan was, and that was a man conflicted and not a man playing a game. I was his after the first day. He could have had me over and over if he wanted, and yet he refused to touch me, holding out until he lost control. Still, he shoved me away, telling me that it was over and so was his need for me.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes. I need some air, Lillian. I'm going to go out for a walk."

"Don't go too far, okay?"

"Of course." I head out with my keys and my purse and walk down her block. I only get about halfway when there's a cloth placed over my face. I gasp, and then everything goes dark.

My vision's fuzzy, clearing up as the road grows bumpy, and I slowly wake up. My hands and feet are tied but I'm not blindfolded, so I see who is in the passenger seat and I'm not as shocked as I should be. Her blonde hair is a clear giveaway, but then her shrill, bitchy voice is the dead giveaway that sent the chill down my spine—Sandra.

"James, baby." I almost vomit in the back. I can't slap my hand on my mouth and it's too late anyway because she hears me. "Oh, shit. She's awake."

"Well, well, well. Pretty little pussy's awake."

“They’re going to love her.”

“Love breaking her,” she says with an annoying giggle that turns dark, something I hadn’t expected even from Sandra.

“They are going to do so much more than that, or maybe Hunter will give us tons of money to get her back.”

“Oh, he so will. He never gave any woman a single ounce of time, and suddenly he hires her as his personal assistant. He wanted his mousy little woman, and I’m sure he’ll do anything to get her back.” I’m so confused and scared that I drop my head back on the seat and try to think of a way to get out of here. Whoever they’re taking me to isn’t a good person and nothing good can come of what’s going to happen to me, so I’ve got to get myself out of trouble.

“Hunter’s got deep pockets, and we’re going to take him for so much.” I can’t believe that my cousin was involved in my own kidnapping. How sick and twisted does someone have to be to do it to their own family?

I disliked James before. Now, I despise him with everything in me and if I ever get out of here, I’m going to find a way to make him pay for his involvement. The road only gets more and more bumpy as he flies faster, sending me bouncing around the vehicle, plumping to the floorboard in the backseat.

“Hey, slow down, James. She’s going to get hurt back there.” Wow, a modicum of sympathy coming from her takes me by surprise. “Malone’s not going to be happy if we damage the merchandise before we get there,” she continues, and then I’m no longer shocked. Can’t be looking ruined for the buyer. I can’t believe they are doing this to me. Taking a hard breath, I try to calm down and focus. Since I’m not strapped down, I consider my options.

They are flying way too fast for me to pop out and make a run for it, so I’ll have to wait for them to make a stop, but then what would be my next move? Shit. Things are crazy, and my mind is whirling. More like actually spinning at the moment; whatever they drugged me with is giving me a killer headache. Suddenly the vehicle slows, turning onto a gravel

road, and my tension picks up. I'm beyond frightened, but that's not going to do me any good, so I stay strong as the vehicle comes to a stop.

"Come on, little bitch. It's time to make me a lot of money," James sneers, staring at me from the front seat. The back door flies open, and my head tilts up to see a massive brute leering down at me.

"How about that. Look at the treat you brought me today. This is a nice one. I might want to sample her first." I hold back my shiver of disgust so he can't sense my fear. He grabs me around the shoulders and quickly pulls me out of the car and throws me over his shoulder. The bastard hurriedly moves into a small building out of the fading sunlight to avoid any passing cars on the road. The blood rushes so fast to my head that a new wave of nausea causes the spins, and I'm a little off on my surroundings.

"Boxer, she's a beauty, isn't she?" my cousin says. He looks like a damn underground heavyweight boxer.

"She is," he says, leering at me with a dirty look in his eyes and licking his lips.

"Let me go, you filthy fuck." I kicked him violently, attempting to break his hold. It almost works, and he nearly sends me falling to the ground. The prick must be used to dealing with women like me, and he snatches me up in a more precarious position, holding me tighter.

He smirks as he tosses me into a cage. Fuck, this isn't good. "Oh, feisty, is she? You never told me that."

"Well, we had no idea. She's a little mouse."

"Let me steal your freedom and see if you cower, you dirty cunt," I hiss, grabbing the metal and tugging on it, but it's useless, so I spit on the fucker.

He wipes his face with the back of his hand while glaring at me. "Watch your mouth, little treasure box. You don't need teeth to suck dick." I try to still my expression, but I can't stop myself from clamping my lips shut.

“Don’t want to lose profit on a precious commodity,” James says, stopping the wrath of my jailer.

“True. We have enough crackhead whores. A pretty little skirt like her would make a killing even if she’s not a virgin.” I slide back into the far corner of my small enclosure and consider my options. There aren’t a lot of ways out of this.

They step out of the room, and then suddenly only two men rush back in: the man who carried me, and a new man. I recognize him from my time with Dylan. He was on his security team, and he brought me my things to the hotel from Dylan’s condo. I see him, and I believe he’s here to rescue me.

“Oh, no. Is that you, Harley?”

“Yes, please help me.”

I move closer to the edge of the cage. He stares at me lecherously, and I try to move back but I’m too late—he already has the cage open and drags me out by my hair. “Oh, my, my. Finally, I’ve got you alone.” He brings his face to mine, about to kiss me when his eyes drop to my chest. “What the fuck?”

“I told you to take the fucking necklace. It has a damn tracker. Hunter put it in there to follow her ass.” He violently rips the chain from my throat.

“No,” I scream.

“What? You’re upset that your boss can’t come to find you? He’s not looking for you anyway. He’s too busy sitting at home like a lost fucking puppy.” He laughs maniacally, and I’m growing more terrified by the moment. There’s something different in him than the others. They’re greedy and unscrupulous. He’s insane.

“Who are you?” I question, scrunching my eyes as I try to remember his name. I know that I’ve seen him around many times, but his name isn’t ringing a bell.

“What? You’re going to play dumb with me?”

“I don’t know your name or anything, other than you work for Dylan.”

“Bitch,” he roars, slapping me across the face. “You ignore me, but drop to your knees for him.” He huffs and attacks me. Damn it. I feel the strikes until the other guy pulls him off me.

“Chill the fuck out.”

“Sorry.” I groan and lie there, still.

“Leave her for now. Let’s dispose of this shit.”

“We’re going to have to move her now that he can trace this.”

“Damn it.”

“Well, she’s fine for now. Let’s go have a drink and think about our plans. She’s not going anywhere for a while.” The second they leave the room, I make my way to the door on my tied hands and knees. The rope digs into my wrists, twisting with each inch I move. The pain is excruciating, but I’m able to get to the door that isn’t locked. Fucking idiots.

I open it just a bit because there is a light nearby that can seep into the dark room. I shimmy it open just enough so that I can scoot out, and I make a break for it. Getting to my feet, I look around and dash back to the main road and start running.

Even with the pain racking my body, I use my skills as a runner and push through it, remembering that I’ve run on bloody, blistered feet before. Unlike before, my hands are tied, so I fall just a quarter mile from the little shack. I heard them shouting, so I duck down. As I do, I find my savior—scrap metal on the road. Keeping myself ducked in the overgrown brush, I used the metal as a knife and sawed my ropes over it until my hands were free.

Quickly they scan the area, but it’s getting dark, and so I run on an angle and run for miles. It’s a little bumpy, but I end up reaching a small town that looks familiar. I see the name of a building, and I remember where I am. It’s the town where we were kicked out of the bar, so we aren’t that far from Dallas.

Sweat pours down my neck and stings as I duck down between buildings, looking for the one I remember well. They tore off my necklace that Dylan put a tracker in. Why would he do that if he didn't want me? None of it makes sense, but it doesn't matter because finding shelter and safety is the most important thing right now. I move around until I see my refuge in sight: a place I remember with a man I hope I can trust. My gut says I can, and I pray that I'm right.

It's just after sunset when I pound on the back door of the bar, begging for help. It's Dylan's older twin who comes to my rescue, bringing me in and asking me what's wrong, but I feel like nothing I'm saying is making any sense. "Sweetie, talk to me. What happened?" Dylan's older twin asks me. He wipes me down, and it feels nice.

"Attacked, ran away," I mutter. He grabs on to me and it hurts, but everything hurts right now and I'm so tired.

"What's your name?"

"Harley."

"I'm going to get you some help, Harley, and then we're going to find this bastard."

"Okay." The world goes dark.

When I come to again, I can see that I'm bandaged and I have new clothes on. I look to the side and am startled by a woman sitting in a chair. "Oh, sweetie. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. I came to see how you were doing, and I've been sitting here since you started moving around."

"Where am I?"

"You're just above the Panhandles Bar in Steeleville. I'm Crystal." She gives me a wave and a smile.

"Am I safe?"

"Yes, you are. We won't let anything happen to you. Are you hungry?"

"No." I don't feel like eating. I haven't felt like eating since I was unceremoniously expelled from Dylan's condo. Not his home, though. He has another one of those.

“You do need to eat. You’re weak, and you’ve been here almost a full day.”

“Really?”

“Yes. We can bring you food and if you feel like eating, please do. We’re here if you want to talk. I recommend you stay up here a little longer, though. We don’t know who is after you, so we can’t say if you’re safe just yet.”

“Thank you.” I already know who set me up—my beloved cousin, James, his whore, Sandra, and one of Dylan’s security guards. That asshole security bastard told my seller named Boxer to rip off my necklace because it had a trace on it, but I don’t know who I can trust just yet, so I’m going to be quiet. So far, these people look like they want to help.

Chapter Nine

Dylan

“Hey, boss. I’m surprised to see you in here,” Russell says.

“I need you to do something extremely top secret for me. I have a tracker on something, and suddenly it stopped functioning. I don’t have access to the account because I’m an idiot, now I need you to run it and find out the locations of its movements.”

“Sure. Do you have the original tracker information?” I give him everything I got when I bought the piece, because I need answers. Someone on my team is lying to me. It didn’t just go cold, and we can’t trace her. I’ve watched too many crime shows to know that you can fucking track things easily and ping the damn records.

“Okay, here you go. Here are the last ten days.”

“Hm...” Baby, please be safe. Fuck, I’ll destroy everyone in my path, and then I’ll take my own damn life if you’re not in this world anymore.

I follow the trail and take several of my men with me, but not the asshole who knew about the tracker in her necklace. In fact, I inform my team that I’m going on a business trip to Houston because I don’t want them to be suspicious. My trail ends at an abandoned shack. She’s been there, but there’s nothing I can do because she’s gone. “Where is the nearest town?”

“Sir, that’s Steeleville. That’s where she went for the bachelorette party.”

“How do you know?”

“Because Tim told us. He said the bikers there were crazy and the girls got kicked out of the bar in a matter of minutes. He said he almost got spotted by her.” So he fucking lied to me when he said that he wasn’t noticed by Harley.

“Thanks.” We make the short, two-mile drive to the very nice, quaint town, but it will be a pile of rubble if they’re holding my woman against her will and, God forbid, they’ve harmed her.

“Where the fuck is she? I know she’s here.” I’m just calling their bluff, but this is the bar she’d been at and if my woman is anywhere in this town, this is the place to start.

“Where is she?” I bark out at the bastard who has me doing a fucking double take.

“You can’t come in here acting like you own this place.”

“I’ll buy this place and have it shut the fuck down in a heartbeat if you don’t tell me where she is.”

“You can try, boy, but that shit won’t happen.” This old man stands tall, like he isn’t the least bit intimidated by me. I would be impressed, but since he didn’t tell me he didn’t know who I was talking about, I’m about to kill him.

A gasp echoes through the room, and then someone opens their big mouth.

“Holy fuck, Boss. It’s like looking at you the day we met.”

I look past him at Harley on the steps, and venom fills my heart. I’m going to kill him for sure.

“You put your filthy hands on her, and I’m going to kill your ass like you deserve, you sick fuck,” I roar at my lookalike, charging forward. I go for a swing at him. My men and his do as well.

“Dylan, no,” Harley cries out. Her voice is the only thing that stops me from losing complete control. “He rescued me.”

“Rescued you or not—he’s the monster that gave me life.”

Everyone around the room looks on in pure, stunned awe, but I don’t care. I lunge at the fucking pig again, and he’s too shocked to move, so I deck him in the jaw. He falls back,

and then I'm quickly pinned by an asshole with a blade at my throat. My men and his have everyone separated.

"Enough." Everyone relaxes slightly.

"Who the fuck do you think you are?" another biker roars. "I'll kill you easily. I want answers, and that's the only reason you're still breathing. You walked into the wrong place, assaulting one of the best men I've ever known."

"Best men? Ha. He raped my birth mother. He's a pig," I spit out with a busted lip. I don't give a fuck if I bleed all over his floor.

"He would do no such thing," the asshole who's pinning me says, followed by several calls of agreement. Of course they would stick up for this asshole.

Taking a seat and wiping the blood from his lip, the sick fuck says, "My boys are right. I wouldn't do something like that, and I sure as fuck didn't do anything so fucking twisted."

"Your boys? You have other sons?" I ask, looking at some of them, wondering if they're my brothers.

"Not quite." He looks at the other bikers. He makes quick introductions by pointing to them and saying their names: Boomer, Blade, Cyber.

"Blade. Fitting," I scoff to myself. I catch a smirk from him, and I still want to punch him in the balls.

"But they're the closest damn things to sons I've ever had."

"Sam, Get us some drinks. Where the fuck is Doc?" the one who threatened me says.

"I'll call him," another one says.

"Now, I'm not sure where the fuck you got the idea that I raped anyone or that I'm your father. As far as I've ever known, I never had any living children. You're not my son, but I have a feeling..." He takes a deep breath several times before continuing. "You are my nephew."

“What do you mean?” I ask. I can’t shake the emotion from my voice. All of a sudden, I’m a teenage boy again with the pain of my true parentage coming to light.

“I don’t know if you’re my nephew or not, but the resemblance is uncanny.” Our family genes are strong as fuck if it’s true.

“That’s for sure, but there are a fucking ton of people who have doppelgängers. That’s no reason to attack him,” Harley insists. I show a slight bit of remorse, but I can’t say I care that much. He still had my girl.

“When is your birthday?” he asks me.

“June twenty-fifth,” I answer.

“What year?” I pull out my ID and hand it over to him.

Now it’s his turn to get pissed off because he looks just as angry as I was earlier. “Since my brother and I were nearly identical, it’s possible that you took after us. He was two years older than me and married his high school sweetheart. They were always having problems from day one. Frankly, I’m surprised they bothered to marry at all, but they did.”

“Shotgun wedding?” Boomer tosses out.

“No. That’s why it was surprising. There was no need for a rushed wedding.”

“He was working for our father’s company when I’d gone into the military right out of high school, and his wife was pregnant. Seven months into the pregnancy, I got a call from my mother that my brother had been killed in a car accident after leaving his lover’s house. When I came home on an emergency leave for the funeral, she was no longer pregnant and claimed that the affair and his death caused the miscarriage.”

Sam brings us some drinks and we both take a shot of whiskey and ask for another. Everyone else sits around waiting with rapt attention for the rest of the story.

“There was a little coffin buried with him that had you in it. Now, I’m not saying she’s lying, because he was

cheating, which means if you are his son, that means you could have been a son of his girlfriend. He wasn't a rapist. A cheating rat bastard, but a rapist? No. Where was this hospital that you were born in?"

"St. Vincent's."

"I'm sorry that I missed out on watching you grow up."

"You've been like a father to each one of us," Boomer adds, clasping a hand on his shoulder.

"Thanks."

The sound of the front door swinging open can be heard, and someone says, "The doc is in."

He reaches us, and everyone parts to let him get to the table where we're sitting. "What the hell is going on now?" he asks, scowling and quickly surveying the room.

"Doc, nothing major. I need a DNA test done, please." His head jerks between the two of us as we sit across the table from each other. "To see if he's my uncle," I add to make sure he understands.

"Wow, holy shit. Really? Because he fucking looks like you back in Kabul." So they all served with him in the military, it would seem. No wonder they all have his back, and I'm starting to feel like a big prick.

"I know."

"Wow, that looks like a good one." He reaches out and touches Boss's jaw. Then, he turns his attention to Harley. "What are you doing out of bed, young lady?"

"He came looking for me." Doc whips his head around toward me and snarls. I can feel the tension rippling off the doctor.

"Relative or not, if he's the one who..." Even this fucker wants a piece of me.

"I'd never hurt a hair on her head," I say, promising not just to them, but directly to Harley. I brush my hand over her back.

“Just my heart,” she whispers. Fuck. I wince like she just slapped me across the face.

“Harley,” I sigh. “It’s hard to explain.” My eye flit toward my supposed uncle and then back to her.

“Tell me about you. Where did you grow up?” He takes some sympathy on me.

“I lived with the woman who I thought was my mother. She told me when I was about ten that my real mother had given me up. Later on, when I was thirteen, she developed an aggressive form of cancer.” I pause, feeling the pain of the memory. She meant a great deal to me as the one person who gave me love when I was abandoned.

Harley rubs my hand gently, coaxing me to continue. “However, before she died, she explained my parentage to me so that I knew the truth. She said my mother came in, claiming that I was the product of rape and that even though she tried to love the idea of me, she couldn’t, so when I was born a preemie, she wanted nothing to do with me and gave me up. The woman who adopted me was the nurse who took care of me at the hospital. After she died, I went into foster care until I aged out.”

“I’m sorry.”

“You don’t believe he was a rapist?” I ask him again, wanting to believe it more than anything.

“No. A dog? Hell, yes. He knew he was good looking and took advantage of it, but that’s his own personality, and I don’t have that trait in me even though we look identical.”

“That’s for sure. The day I met you, all her friends were hitting on you,” the woman beside him huffs.

“Were you hitting on him?” I growl at Harley, getting jealous.

“No. Not that it’s any of your business.” Harley crosses her arms and scowls at me, but I don’t give a shit because she’s mine.

“The hell it’s not.”

“You’ve got a good girl. It’s how you treat her, and that’s how you’ll keep her. As for your mother—if I’m right, you were born in wedlock and not from a rape. I can’t know for sure just yet, but I promise I’ll get to the bottom of it for you.”

Although I’m rarely wrong, I can admit when I am wrong. “Thanks. I’m sorry that I decked you.”

“No. I understand how thinking about another man putting his hands on your woman can piss you off.” He shares a look with the asshole with the blade. “Anyway, I’ll look into the matter as soon as I can. It’s the least I can do if I am your uncle.”

“Let me run out and grab some things from my truck, and I’ll be back in a minute to do the labs. I was expecting to be doing some patchwork here.” He winks at me and then heads back out the front door. While he’s gone, everyone’s quiet, but I press my head to Harley’s chest, wanting to hear her heart. I thought I lost her.

“I’m back; please hold your round of applause. This may hurt a bit, but I’ll be gentle,” Doc says with a chuckle and a little swagger in his step.

“Don’t be a prick,” I snip.

“Only a little.”

“That’s what she said,” Blade coughs out.

“That’s not what she told me,” a woman who I just noticed says.

Boomer wraps his arms around her, pulling her tightly to his chest. “Don’t be talking about his dick, babe, or I’ll be bending you over really good tonight.”

“You need to work on your threats,” she says, rubbing her ass on his front. I have to say it doesn’t look like she’s threatened.

“No pizza. Only salads with light dressing.” She freezes, and a big gasp goes around the room. Shit, I know it took a while before Harley built up an appetite.

“That’s cruel. Fine. Well, commence with the blood draw, damn it. I want my pizza,” she huffs, crossing her arms over her pregnant belly.

“Look, the test is going to take twenty-four hours. I can run it to the lab in Dallas right now since I’m about to head in. Get some ice for both of you and your handsome mugs. I can’t believe you actually clocked your nephew, though.”

“I didn’t.”

“I did,” Blade says with a grin. “Boss has been a father to me and my sister for a long damn time, even though he stole my girl here and failed to introduce me to this pretty little thing.” He winks at Harley. I snarl at the motherfucker.

“You’re itching for a fight. Are you ever going to go speak to Penny’s cousin? He’s only doing this because he has a crush on someone who’s too young for him,” Boomer says, teasing Blade who turns completely red.

“Fuck off. I’m out of here. I have some blades to make. Stay out of trouble for a night, will you, Boss?”

“I’ll try.”

“Bye, beautiful.” He winks at Esperanza before running out the door. Damn, he’s a fucking pain in the ass.

“He’s asking for it.”

I stare around the place and wonder if he works here. “So, you work at a bar?”

“I own it. Please sit down. Here are some drinks.”

“How did you find me?” Harley asks. I ignore the question because I can’t stop looking at all the markings on her precious body. The body I held so tightly and then pushed away. I pull her onto my lap and examine her wounds more closely. Cupping her chin, I tilt her head, caressing her gently as if she’s as fragile as glass.

“I’m going to find who did this and destroy them. That, I can guarantee.” I caress my hand down her back.

“I have some ideas. We have been looking into it since she arrived two days ago. He came in looking for her about an hour after she’d been treated.”

“He did?” Harley asks.

“And you let him get away?” I roar.

“Yes. You were out cold then, but I wasn’t going to let him anywhere near you. He had no idea you were here, but he was creeping around the town, most of which wouldn’t give him the time of day.” At least they kept my woman safe. Something I couldn’t do, so I have to give them credit for that.

“Good. I want everything you have on him because I’m going to take my time ending him and everyone involved in hurting her.”

“You’ve got it.”

“I’m hungry.”

“I’m sorry, Tigress. Let me get you fed.” He kisses her softly.

“I’m sure we’re all hungry. It’s almost dinnertime.”

“We should head back to Dallas,” I say, looking down at Harley. “You need to be looked after properly.”

“We were doing just fine until you showed up,” the pregnant woman huffs.

“They were doing a great job.”

“Yes, but there’s no room for me here, and you belong with me.”

“Are you sure about that?” Harley huffs, crossing her arms. “I’m staying here. You can head back to Dallas or wherever it is you actually live.” I’m not sure what that means, but I’ll get to that question when we’re alone.

“Damn it.”

“Look, I’m not going to let her leave if she doesn’t want to go. She’s been through a lot, and regardless of who

you are, she's under my care. She deserves to have that peace of mind."

"If she stays, I stay. There's no way I'm leaving her side again. I fucked up once, and that's how she ended up unprotected and in this position in the first place." I duck my head and shake it. This is all my fucking fault, and I'll never forgive myself for sending her away in the first place.

"It's okay. There is a second room upstairs if that's okay with you, Boss?" Harley mentions, trying to release the tension in the room.

"Are you sure?" She nods. "My home is only down the road, as well as all the other guys here. Cyber lives two doors down in the apartment building."

"Is there a hotel for my men?" I ask, pointing to them. After today, I don't know what to expect, and I sure as fuck want as much backup as possible.

"Sure."

"Why don't we order some pizza? I'm hungry," the woman says, rubbing her belly.

"Yes, dear."

"I could go for some pizza," Harley says with a blush as her stomach rumbles.

"When's the last time you ate?" I ask Harley, looking her over and feeling frustration that this is all my fault. She would have been safe in bed if it wasn't for me.

"I didn't eat much. It's been a little hard to eat. The girls bring me food but, well, I haven't been in the mood to eat."

"Well, you sure as fuck are eating now," I growl.

"Damn, he sounds just like you," Esperanza says, chuckling.

"You missed out on me twenty years ago, my beauty," Boss tells his woman.

"Same here."

Boss and his woman look close, but it doesn't seem like they've been together for a long time. "We've only just met recently. I've been alone a long time, and no, I don't have any children."

"We met because my son is married to his former bartender and sister of the man that just left," Esperanza says.

"The one he said you were like a father to?"

"Yes. I didn't have any kids, so I looked after those around me. I hope you had a good life." I scoff and shake my head. I've made my life better, and yes, became a multimillionaire overnight with lots of hard work and pure dedication, but I've suffered from loneliness that has only now been abated with the help of Harley.

Chapter Ten

Harley

I lead Dylan up to the apartment above the bar, and I'm a bit nervous. We haven't spoken, but I already understand a lot more about his behavior than I did before. He's afraid of commitment because of the way he was born, or was supposedly born. We'll learn more tomorrow. "So, this is it. The other bedroom is over here." I start moving over there, but he grabs my bicep.

"Harley, can we talk?"

"What's there to say? You literally took my virginity, treated me like a whore, and tossed me out on my ass while you went about your life."

"I didn't. I..."

"Don't... look, I'm grateful that you came here to find me because you're one of the only people I honestly believe doesn't want me dead or off in a trafficking ring, but that doesn't mean I forgive you. You broke my heart, Dylan. You took something sacred, and you treated it like it was nothing. What's worse is you made me feel special. It's one thing if I knew you were just looking to get lucky, but you hurt me, and I'm having a hard time dealing with that."

"I understand. I respect that. I've disappointed you, hurt you, and plain abandoned you when you needed me the most. I thought if I pushed you away, I could keep you safe from the monster in me."

"What monster?"

"The monster I could possibly be."

"The only monster you are is the one you became when you told me it was over."

"You're right. I'm sorry. There are no words for what I did to you that will make it better, but I can't give you up again. I thought I was doing it for the best, but it was foolish

of me. When I got home, I stood in front of your door for so long that I lost track of time and then I laid in your bed just so I could breathe you in. I wanted you to come back the moment I sent you away. You mean the world to me and if I wasn't such a fool, I would have understood that a long time ago. I wouldn't have gone to see a stupid therapist over the past couple of days."

"You went to therapy?"

"Yes. I wanted to know how to figure out how to be a better man for you."

"Do you think it helped?"

"She taught me that it's not my fault for my past and it's not who I am now, and that she'd like me to join a BDSM club with her."

"What?"

"I told her to go fuck off and I quit my sessions that second."

"Seriously, you even get hit on in therapy?" This man is too good looking for his own good. Hell, for my own good.

"I suppose so." He shrugs his shoulders, and I guess it's not his fault. After all, I was kidnapped because I was going to be used for the same fucking thing. At least he was strong enough that they couldn't just snatch him up.

"Will you tell me who did this to you?"

"I don't know who the guy was that held me captive, but I know who brought me there."

"Who was it?" He takes my hand, caressing my fingers, and I ache for his touch.

"My cousin, James, and Sandra Stone."

"This is all my fault. I fired them and they came after you."

"They were planning to use me for a long time. I was their payday, but it wasn't only them. One of your men was involved."

“I had a feeling. Your necklace—”

I cut him off and said, “Had a tracker in it.”

“Yes, I wanted to know where you were all the time.”

“So you always planned to let me go.”

“No, I was conflicted. I never wanted to let you leave the condo again. Hell, I was getting sick, twisted thoughts of keeping you locked up so you couldn’t fall for anyone else, and that scared me.”

“So you pushed me away...”

“I know you can’t forgive, Harley. I can’t forgive myself for it. You’re the first and only woman I’ve ever been with and—”

“Wait...you mean...you’re a virgin,” I gasp.

“Was, sweetheart.”

“I didn’t want to ever lose control and become an animal like my father.”

“So when I said you were like an animal...”

“I’d only given you a fraction of the hunger I’d been feeling.”

I sit in his lap, caressing his face. “Dylan, I only meant it in the most sensuous way possible. It’s natural for a guy to practically go feral with a woman he wants, and you never heard me tell you to stop. You even asked if I was okay.”

“I know now that I was wrong, Harley. I wish I could go back and fix it.”

“Will you show me now?”

“You’re hurt.”

“I’m horny as hell. I watched you storm in here ready to go toe to toe with a bunch of badass men for me. You came to find me, and deep down I know you care for me.”

“Care for you? Baby, I love you.”

“Then prove it. Fuck me like you mean it, and don’t be afraid.”

“Baby, I’m no longer afraid, but you better be because we have a lot of missed nights to make up for.” He pounces on me, pinning me to the mattress and sending my hair splaying all around the pillow, and a fit of giggles falls from my lips until I look into his eyes. They’re dark and hungry. Suddenly my laughter is gone, replaced by my own need. Desire and lust equally shoot down to my core, pleading for relief.

“You’re mine, and this time there’s no letting go. No take-backs. No fucking returns. I’m not fucking this up. You’re not getting rid of me, and I don’t care if I don’t deserve you. I want you, so you’re mine.” He fists my hair and slams his mouth to mine, dominating me in a rough kiss.

Our clothes are off in a hurry; I’m naked and bared to the man I love. We’re moving wildly, kissing, biting, caressing, but then he freezes when he wraps his hands around my wrists. “Please don’t stop. I promise I’m fine.”

“I don’t want to make you feel uncomfortable.”

“I told you I’m perfectly fine. My pussy aches, and I need satisfaction, damn it.” With a violent slam of his hips, he thrusts his length inside and claims me over again, making us one.

“Fuck, it feels so good. Don’t stop, Dylan. Fuck me like you mean it.”

He pulls out and plunges back into me, sending my body rocking forward on the bed. I’m glad everyone is gone for the night because they’d hear him beating my pussy up.

“Do you need your pussy thoroughly fucked and claimed?”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter. I need it owned and possessed,” I replied, digging my nails into the back of his arms, clawing his triceps. He fucks me hard and fast, causing the wooden headboard to hit the wall, banging violently with every roll of his pelvis.

“Fuck, you feel so good. That little cunt is so tight.” He reaches between us to stroke my slit, rubbing me. My eyelids close as my eyes roll backward. “That’s it, sweetheart. I’m about to come, so you need to come with me. I want that sweet, sticky juice soaking my cock while I fill you up.”

Words stop as his mouth drops down on my body, kissing my throat, sucking on my pulse, biting, nipping and then moving lower. I’m panting and squirming as he fucks me with his big cock. I’m so close that my thighs clamp against his, hooking my legs around his calves. “Fuck, I’m coming.”

“Good—come for me.” He shoots his load deep inside me as I scream his name. He doesn’t stop until he has nothing left to give, and then he carries us to the shower.

“Another round?” I ask with a giggle.

“No. We’re going to rinse off, then I’m going to give you your meds for your wrists, and then it’s time for bed.” We make it to the shower and then after he dries me off and applies the medicine, he devours me, starting something all over again.

Chapter Eleven

Dylan

I wake up feeling like a bastard, but then I look over to Harley, who has a sleepy smile on her face, and the shame that I was too much for her fades away.

She sits up and presses her chin on my shoulder, wrapping her arms around me. “Good morning, my animal.”

I kiss her hands. “Good morning, my little harlot.” With a swift motion, I pull her onto my lap. “Marry me.”

“Yes.”

“You will?”

“Yes. I’m kind of in love with you.” My dick rubs against her pussy, and I’m so hard I could nearly fuck her right now, but that would be pushing it. Then she starts grinding her little slit over my extremely hard cock.

“Be a good girl and slide on my pole.”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter.” I pop a nice spank on her ass.

“Is there a problem, Mr. Hunter?” she asks with a pretty smirk on her face while her little cunt eats up inch after inch of my length. I give her another pop on the other cheek, loving the way it jiggles under my hand. “Ooh,” she gasps.

“You’re asking for it,” I growl against her lips.

“I love you, Dylan.” She giggles. She bounces her ass on my thighs while her pussy cuffs my cock, choking it. “Oh, yes.”

“So fucking beautiful the way you ride my cock, my good girl.” I splay my hand over her back, holding her as I pump my hips, sending my dick deeper into my woman.

“So deep,” she whimpers, tossing her head back, revealing the bruising those bastards did to her. The line from where they ripped the necklace from her precious neck is still visible, and it infuriates me. I’m going to kill them all. I kiss

her softly over the marks, and then I feel her pussy clench. “I’m coming. Yes, please don’t stop.” I lick the wounds while I hold on to her tightly, driving into her, letting Harley ride me.

As she comes down, I flip her onto the mattress because I’m about to lose it. I pull out and drop to my knees, licking her pussy, tasting her release, and then I get back up and slide inside her again. “You’re mine. No one else’s. Do you understand me?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll kill any man that puts his hands on you.” I deliver each word with a violent thrust and watch as her eyes light up with pleasure. “I need you forever. I’m never giving you back.”

“Promise?”

“I promise.” I kiss her as I unload all of my seed inside her. I don’t care that we’re not careful and she could be carrying my child. She’s mine, and I might not be a rapist, but for her, I will be a killer.

“Can I get you a drink?”

“Just a juice, please.”

“I need a drink,” I say, rubbing my hand down my face. It’s early as fuck, but my nerves are frayed as hell.

Boss’s phone rings on the bar top, vibrating on the wooden surface. “I guess it’s the moment of truth.”

He pulls it off the counter, swipes to answer, and then hits the speaker. “Go ahead, Doc. I’ve got you on speaker.”

“Okay. Good morning, Uncle Liam.”

“Thanks, Doc.” Boss ends the call.

Harley moves around, handing a drink to me while Boss and I sit around the bar feeling shocked. I came to find the love of my life and be whole again. I never imagined that I’d find family as well.

“I don’t know what to say to you. I can’t even begin to process this.” Boss stands and walks to the large front window of the bar. He seems frozen solid, except for the slight shake of his shoulders as he silently weeps. Fuck, I can’t fight my own tears. I stand up, walk up to him, and hug my uncle. I never had a real family and here is my uncle, a man everyone around here looks up to, and he’s already trying to get me answers in a flash.

“I’m so sorry, Dylan.”

“So am I. So am I.” We pull apart a moment later, but I have to ask, “Who is she?”

“Give me a minute. I need to make a call.” I nod.

He pulls out a burner cell phone and then dials a number.

“Hello. This is Liam Rhoades. It’s been a long time. Don’t worry about how I got this number, just know I have a question for you, and I need an honest answer because I will get it one way or another and if I go the hard way, your life will be hell.” He paces. “Did the baby really die?” He runs his fingers through his hair and snarls, “You’re a fucking cunt. I hope you know that.”

Boss ends the call and then tosses the phone into a glass of water on the bar. He walks up to me and whispers, “Veronica Blake.” I’ve met her and so has Harley.

Instantly the two times we have crossed paths run through my mind, and rage fills my veins. “I will handle her myself. I know her. God, I know that fucking bitch.”

“Dylan, can we forget about her for now?” he says, trying to get me to calm down. That selfish bitch turned me into a neurotic freak who sent the woman I loved away out of fear.

“I think you two need some time to talk and to spend time learning about each other,” Esperanza says.

“I agree,” Harley says. “Come on, Esperanza. Let’s go chit chat while they talk.” I want her to stay, but there are things I don’t want her to hear.

“She was at the gala just last week with Harley and me,” I say when they leave the room.

“Did she say anything to you?”

“No, but she recognized something in me. It’s the second time we’ve crossed paths at social events, and it’s no doubt she was looking at a ghost from her past both times. She flinched and tried to hide it, but I ignored it. I assumed I was sneering at her or something.”

“Well, what are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. Right now, I’m boiling with rage. It makes everything I’ve known a lie and my life a lie.”

“I looked you up, and you’re extremely successful, Dylan. So whatever you’ve become, you used that focus to become the man you are.”

“She almost cost me Harley. Harley almost died because I pushed her away, and that’s not something I can accept.”

“You’re going to have to move past it. We all have flaws. Hell, I’m in my late forties finding love for the first time. I wish I’d met the love of my life when I was your age because there would be nothing I wouldn’t do to make her happy.”

“And keep her safe?”

“Yes, so speaking of that. What do you want to do about her kidnappers?”

“That’s another problem. One of my own was involved along with her cousin. I’m not sure which one of my employees, but I’m pretty sure it’s my head of security.”

“Why is it always our most trusted?”

“Same thing happen to you?”

“No, to Esperanza’s son. It nearly got him killed, and the bastard came here to finish the job and paid the price. We’re good at what we do.” He winks at me, and I don’t doubt it.

“Is there any way to get the footage from the night Harley was in town for the bachelorette party?”

“Yes. It will take a bit, but yes.”

“I want to see who was really following Harley that night. I want to be sure it was Tim, or to see if he’s being set up.”

“Smart.”

“I didn’t get to where I am by just taking everyone’s word for it, but I should have just kept Harley’s tracking device to myself.”

“On the next one.” I nod because there’s definitely going to be at least one more, maybe five.

The rest of the day is spent talking to Harley about our plans. I haven’t bought the ring yet because I thought it would give it away that she was safe. Now, we’re in the bar while my Uncle Liam is working, and I have a drink while my pretty little harlot sits in the corner, looking divine. I’m itching for that bastard to show up again, but I don’t think we’ll get that lucky. My location has been shared, and that’s intentional. I want my men to know where I am now that I have Harley and I know she’s well protected. It’s a matter of finding the traitor amongst the mix. There could only be three possibilities when it comes to the tracking: Russell, Timothy, or John.

I send a group text to my men. ***Head back to Dallas. I’m good here. I’m with friends and family.***

When I get confirmation that they’re heading out, I walk over to the bar and speak with my uncle. “We’ll talk later.”

“Sure.”

Chapter Twelve

Harley

I rub my eyes, waking up from a restless night of sleep. Hearing Dylan talk about his plans with some of the Steele Riders and someone else set my teeth on edge. He's risking a lot to protect me, and I'm afraid something terrible could happen to him.

"Stop looking at me like that, Harley. Everything is going to be fine, my love. I promised you forever, and I mean it. There's nothing I won't do to keep you safe, and I'm not going to let something like this go unanswered." He cups my face and kisses me hard, pulling away fast with a grunt.

"I love you, Dylan. Will you be calling me?"

"Yes, I will, and I'll be back for you soon. Don't give them any trouble, and don't leave me for one of these handsome fuckers, especially that asshole Blade." There's a scowl on his face that is too cute to take seriously.

I giggle. "No worries there. I have no intention of leaving you for anyone, especially that clown. He only likes to annoy everyone and it's funny, but I'm all yours."

"That you are. Fuck, I don't want to leave you, but I know you'll be safe here."

"Yes, I will. Your uncle and his friends are like giant guard dogs. Don't tell them I said that."

"I won't, pretty girl. Give me a kiss and let me drop you off so I can have a talk with my uncle before I go."

"Okay." I fight back the tears so he can't see my sadness and take his outstretched hand. He isn't going to come back inside and see me again because it's going to be too hard to leave, so I do my best to relax.

He speaks to Liam while Esperanza and I gather on Liam's sofa and chat. "So have you been watching anything new on TV?"

“Not much lately. I’ve been watching reruns of House.”

“Great show. I absolutely love it.” The door opens again, and Liam appears all alone. I try not to let it affect me, but my heart’s aching.

“Ladies, who’s hungry?” Liam says. I have absolutely zero appetite.

“Actually, I’m a little bit tired,” I say, releasing a yawn.

“I’ll show you to your room,” he tells me, giving me a gentle smile.

“I’ll get started on some breakfast if you want, babe.”

“Sounds good.” He kisses her cheek before coming to show me where I’ll be staying.

“Thanks for everything. You’re an amazing person, and I’m glad that Dylan got to see a better part of his family.”

“Thank you, Harley.”

I yawn again. “Sorry. It’s been a rough week for me. I didn’t get much sleep last night. He thought I didn’t know what he was up to in the other room, but I’m not stupid. I hope he’s careful.”

“He will be. Get some sleep.” I nod and close the door behind me.

Once inside the room, I fall on the bed and cry myself to sleep.

My phone rings in the middle of the night, startling me awake. I answer it with a sleepy, “Hello.”

“Sorry to wake you, beautiful, but I miss you, Harley.”

“Dylan?”

“Of course. Who else is calling you beautiful?” he growls, but there’s no anger in his voice.

“Sorry, what time is it?”

“One in the morning.”

“I’m starting to think you like waking me up at this time.”

“I tried earlier, princess, but my sleeping beauty didn’t answer, and they told me you were napping.”

“Oh yeah, well, someone left me exhausted.”

“Good. Get your rest because when I come back, you’re going to get tired and sore all over again.”

“You sound cheerful and wide awake.”

“I’m in bed thinking of you.”

“Funny, I’m doing the same thing,” I say with a giggle.

“Be a good girl and listen to my uncle.”

“I will. I promise.”

“Okay. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.” He ends the call, and I check my call log. There are several missed calls, but I guess I was truly knocked out because I didn’t hear any of them.

Chapter Thirteen

Dylan

I watch the video evidence that my uncle got for me, and it's clear that Tim has lied his ass off. He hadn't been following Harley that night. Some fucking goon had been, one that the Riders alerted me was none other than Boxer Malone, a known human trafficker.

My plan has to be a careful one because I don't want Tim to know I'm aware of his deception. Why had he gone after Harley, of all women?

I find James easily because he's got bigger problems than chasing pussy. He's in the middle of a drug deal for some coke. Interesting. I call the police and have him picked up on drug charges along with the fraud my team found earlier this week.

One down, and I don't have to end his life just yet.

His demise will come soon, but not at the moment. Can't have all my enemies dropping like flies at once, or someone will catch on.

Next, I head home and check in with my staff, or so they believe. I know who the guilty party is, and it's just a matter of time for me to get my hands on the bastard. When I enter the elevator, Tim is waiting for me. "Sir, I didn't expect you to be back so soon."

"Then what are you doing here at this hour?" I question because he's in my fucking private elevator that leads directly to my condo.

"You got me." He pulls a gun out on me. Fuck, this bold motherfucker.

"Why?" I ask.

"Because you stole her from me. I had my eye on her from the moment she started working for Hunter Industries. I saw her before you did, and I greeted her like the lady she was.

You didn't even see her for a whole month. She was perfect, sweet, innocent, everything a woman could be, and you ruined her. She has to pay. I killed that fucker for hurting her—he shouldn't have roughed her up like that. I just wanted her away from you, but no, he wanted to sell her. I couldn't have that, so he had to go. Now, it's your fucking turn." He killed Boxer?

"Who hurt Harley?"

"That fucking thug who was supposed to hold her for me, but he lost her. Where is she? I want to know where you're hiding my love," he demands, pointing the gun at my chest. This fool has no idea that there are cameras on him. Yes, I enjoy my privacy, but I make sure to secure my property, including my private elevator.

"Why would I know?" I ask, shaking my head in confusion.

"Because you didn't go to Houston."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because I have you monitored." Yes, his cousin gave himself up to assist me today. He admitted that he only helped him because of family loyalty, but he quickly realized his error when he learned the extent of his cousin's betrayal.

"Shooting me won't win you Harley. She'd never forgive you."

"She's been brainwashed. I'll convince her of our love again." Wow, this fucker has lost it.

"What about your wife?"

"She doesn't mean anything to me." Right on time, the elevator doors open, and I press the button in my pocket, cutting the power. Everything goes dark, and I can see his eyes widen just before it's completely pitch black. He tries to fire, but I've planned ahead.

My blade slices his hand first, sending the bullet into the wall in my foyer. Quickly, I slice his chest, and then drop down and run the blade over the back of his knee. I enjoy this

way more than I should, but then again, his betrayal cut too deep for me to care.

“You bastard,” he roars, coming at me like a linebacker, tackling me at full force. With a grunt, I fall back, hitting the wooden table in the entryway, but I counter, punching him in the jaw. He slides off me long enough for me to land on my feet. This time I pull out my gun to take care of business, but I think it’s better to use his. So, I pick it up and fire it as he comes at me again with another gun in his hand.

The cops are already on their way. The entire video from the elevator had been recorded, but my apartment is dark. I hit the lights and see my place is trashed. It’s more than our fight. The fucker had gone in and destroyed it. My walls look like someone took a sledgehammer to them, and glass is everywhere. My television has bullet holes in it.

My phone rings, and it’s security. “I’ll be waiting right here.”

A moment later, the elevator doors open, and four uniformed officers enter my condo. “Mr. Hunter?”

“Yes.”

“Please drop the gun.”

“Oh.” I set it down. “It was his.” I point at the dead fucking asshole bleeding out on my floor.

“What happened here?”

“He destroyed my home, but if you’re talking about why he’s dead, it’s because he tried to kill me. My security has the footage from the elevator. I shot him with his own gun.”

“You sound extremely unbothered by his death.”

“When you see the footage from the elevator, you’ll understand why I don’t care that a man I had as the head of my security forced me to kill him.”

“He had another weapon?”

“Yes. I only got the one gun away from him. I got the shot off before he tried to shoot me again. The first time, it hit

my wall over there.” I point to the foyer. One of the officers goes to the foyer to inspect my claims.

My phone rings, and I answer it. “Okay. Please bring it up.”

“My security is sending up the footage from the elevator.”

“Very well. The detective would like to interview you, but I need to do a cursory scan around the condo to inspect the rooms. Is there anyone else here?”

“There shouldn’t be anyone else here.” He nods and takes out his gun. He walks around, room by room, opening the door and calling out that he’s the police. Every room is silent, but he lingers up there a bit longer. I heard him say something on the walkie, calling for CSI.

“Sir, did you have a guest in your home?”

“No. I never have anyone in my home. Who is up there?” Well, except for Harley, but that’s none of his business.

“There’s a woman.” I try to run past him, but his men stop me. “I can’t let you up there and contaminate the scene.”

“God, no. Please tell me it’s not Harley. She’s supposed to be in Steeleville.” I call her phone several times and get no answer.

I call my uncle, and he picks up on the first ring. “Hey Dylan. Is everything okay?”

“Where’s Harley?”

“She’s laying down in bed. She was sleepy, and I think she misses you a lot. She woke up enough to eat a little, but then went right back to bed.”

“Good, thank God. Okay. I’ve got to go. I’ll call her later.” I end the call.

“I can’t imagine who would be up there. I hardly even acknowledge women, and I don’t allow women into my home.”

“A blonde.”

“Shit. There’s only one that I’m acquainted with. I fired her two weeks ago. There’s no reason for her to even be in my home.”

“Sir, I have the elevator footage.”

“Would you happen to know how a woman got into my apartment?”

“Earlier, Tim brought her to clean it. She was supposed to make it nice for your return. I told him that I’d have to call you, but he said it was a birthday surprise.”

“Birthday surprise? My birthday’s in June.”

“Do you have footage of that?” the officer asks.

“I do. It will take me a few minutes, but I can pull it up right here.” He does some magic on his tablet, and I see him bringing in Sandra Stone dressed in a maid’s uniform and carrying a large bag.

“That’s Sandra Stone, the woman I fired.”

“Why is she carrying a large bag?” I say to myself.

“Good question.”

We continue to watch them after they get on the elevator. *“You look for the documents to his bank accounts, and I’ll have a little fun punishing him for touching what didn’t belong to him,” Tim says with a smile.*

“Why is everyone so damn obsessed with that mousy bitch?” He slams her against the wall of the small confines.

“Watch your fucking mouth. No one talks about Harley like that. She’s precious and perfect, something a whore like you wouldn’t know anything about.” He releases her roughly.

“You didn’t mind this whore an hour ago.”

“I was thinking of Harley.”

“You’re fucking disgusting.”

He just ignores her, but I want to shoot him again. I look over to his dead body and move closer. The officer grabs

my arm.

“Calm down. He’s already dead.” His grip remains firmly on me until I take a calming breath and nod that I’m good. If I’d known this before, I might have shot him the second I stepped in the elevator. “Given the state of the place, I don’t know what happened between them, but it didn’t end well for Ms. Stone.”

“She probably opened up her mouth again,” my security guard says.

“I have no doubt. She wasn’t known for her tact and tended to speak her mind. I’m sorry that he killed her, even if I didn’t care for her.” It’s a total lie because the bitch had a part in my woman’s kidnapping.

“So, who is this Harley?”

“Wait. Did you say Harley? As in Harley Dean?” a man in a suit wearing a badge says, entering my condo.

“Who are you?”

“I’m Detective Williamson. I was actually coming to question you about Harley Dean. She’s been reported missing for almost a week.”

“Yes. Well, she was missing, but she’s now found and she’s safe.”

“And I’m supposed to believe you? You were reportedly her lover who left her, according to her cousin, Lillian.”

“Yes. We had a brief breakup and she was kidnapped by that piece of shit and another human trafficker, but I don’t know about him. All I know is she escaped and ran to safety. I went looking and found her. That’s why in the video he was asking where she was at. He knows I found her.”

They show him the elevator video, and he nods. We go over my statement, and they record it.

“I still need to be assured that Ms. Dean is alive and well.”

“I’ll call her, but that’s the best I can do at the moment.”

“Very well.” I give her a call and laugh at the time.

“Hello.”

“Sorry to wake you, beautiful, but I miss you, Harley.”

“Dylan?”

“Of course. Who else is calling you beautiful?” I growl because she sounds so sexy and that should be just for my ears, but I have her on speaker.

“Sorry, what time is it?” she mumbles.

“One in the morning.”

A light giggle escapes her. “I’m starting to think you like waking me up at this time.” Her voice gets clearer as she wakes up.

“I tried earlier, princess, but my sleeping beauty didn’t answer, and they told me you were napping.”

“Oh, yeah. Well, someone left me exhausted.”

“Good. Get your rest because when I come back, you’re going to be tired and sore all over again.”

“You sound cheerful and wide awake.”

“I’m in bed thinking of you.” I have to lie because I don’t want her to worry.

“Funny, I’m doing the same thing.” Fuck—my dick is hard with a bunch of cops around.

“Be a good girl and listen to my uncle.”

“I will. I promise.”

“Okay. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.” I hang up before we say anything else and give anything away.

“Wow, okay. So I’m getting the reason everyone is falling over themselves over her. My wife would have bit my head off if I called for nothing.”

“That’s because you have three kids and she’d wonder if you were hurt.”

“True.”

“Anyway. I’d like her to come in and give a report.”

“She will when we return. I suppose my condo is now a major crime scene.”

“Yes. Given your wealth, you can afford to stay somewhere else.”

“Yes.” I don’t bother packing a bag because the cops tell me that every single one of my suits has been sliced. Fucking dickhead.

The rage that fills me isn’t as strong as it could be because he’s out of my life and my woman is safe. All of her attackers are gone in one way or another, and soon the last one will be dead. It’s only a matter of time before the right people take his ass out in prison.

Chapter Fourteen

Harley

When he comes through the door of Boss's home, I jump into his arms, sending him back a step, but he doesn't care. He pins me to the nearest wall and slams his lips on mine, giving me the deepest, soul-bending kiss.

When he breaks away, I'm panting, but we're attached everywhere else. "I missed you, Harley. No more time apart."

"I agree."

"I'm glad it's just you at the door," Boss says. I blush, clamp my lips together, and unlatch my legs from around Dylan's midsection like a silly teenage girl.

"I came to get my girl," he says. When I look up at him, he's beaming with pride.

"Everything okay?" Boss asks while Dylan holds me around the waist and kisses my temple.

"Mission accomplished," he says with a straight face, giving away no secrets as he gives Boss a nod, but I know there's so much left unsaid.

"At least stay for dinner." The energy flowing through me is so positive that I ignore the undertones of what happened while he was away. There's a lot they're not saying in the subtle looks they're giving each other.

"That I can do. How about you, babe?"

"I'm up for whatever you'd like." As long as we're together, nothing else matters to me, but I don't want to come off as too needy. After what happened between us, I'm still feeling vulnerable, and I can't confess that without breaking down.

"That's what I love to hear." A low growl comes from him and then he cups my ass.

"I didn't mean that." I swat his hand because we were in front of his uncle.

“Sorry,” he says, even though he doesn’t look the least bit sorry. I smile and press my lips to his cheek and shake my head. “And she wonders why I can’t keep my hands off her. So perfect.”

We spent the rest of the evening with his uncle and Esperanza before going back to Dallas. We pull up to the expensive hotel that we made love at for the first time. “Why are we here?”

“Um...my condo isn’t available at the moment. This is our temporary home.” I have two suitcases worth of clothes that the ladies in Steepleville gave me so I’m good, but the rest of my things were at my cousin Lillian’s.

“I haven’t contacted my cousin since this happened and...”

“And what...” He tilts his head and stares, trying to puzzle out what I’m thinking, but I just say it.

“What if Lillian was involved?” I drop down on the lovely sofa and throw my head in my hands.

I feel Dylan sit beside me and then he rubs my back. “Sweetheart, she filed a missing person’s report for you as soon as she was allowed.”

“She did?” I ask, lifting my head.

“Yes, she had to wait until you’d been missing for a certain amount of time, but the report was filed.”

“I need to call her.” I’m on my feet, pacing, trying to remember where I put the cell phone Dylan got me. “I missed her wedding and everything.” It’s in my coat pocket, which I’m still wearing. I dig it out, but Dylan puts his hand over mine.

“It’s late.”

“Yes, but she’s been waiting to hear from me. I’m sure she won’t care what time it is. I know I wouldn’t care either.”

“Go ahead.”

I call her number, and she doesn't answer until the last ring. "Hello," her voice cracks from sleep.

"Lily," I say.

"Harley," she screams. I rub my ear and pull the phone away as I smile. "Where are you? Oh my God." Suddenly the sleep is gone.

"I'm safe now. I'm back in Dallas."

"Back in Dallas, safe?"

"Yes. It's a long story," I say with a sigh. It's insanely difficult to process. The sheriff in town brought over a professional to talk with me about my abduction to help me deal with my situation, and I have the Steele Rider women as well, who strangely all have had something crazy happen to them in one way or another. Unfortunately, being with men who have power leads to a whole host of enemies. My problem was a screwed-up family, which apparently is a commonality in this country.

"You ran away to deal with your feelings. I totally get it, but I didn't think you'd do that to me right before my wedding," she huffs.

"I didn't."

"You sent me a text and I thought it was a lie, but now that you're back..."

"A text? I didn't send you a text, Lily." Fucking dicks were well prepared to make it look like I fled.

"I told James and the cops you wouldn't have done that to me." My eyes slam shut. I'm going to have to explain that my own cousin betrayed me—her cousin, too.

"I was kidnapped, but I got away."

"Kidnapped," she gasps, and a loud thud could be heard in the background.

"Lillian? Lily!"

"Sorry, I dropped my phone on the floor. I can't believe that happened and we still had the wedding. I knew I shouldn't

have listened to anyone else. Where are you? I have to see you're okay."

"Tomorrow. I need rest."

"Okay. Please meet me for breakfast, girl. Anywhere you feel safe." Her voice is shaking with tears.

"Please don't cry, Lily. We'll see each other tomorrow."

"Okay," she says. I end the call and cling to Dylan.

"She'll be fine. She has her husband by her side."

"And I have you."

"That's right, and you'll have me forever, Harley." He kisses me until we fall onto the mattress and lose ourselves in passion, letting the night slip away.

Dylan didn't want to meet them at Lillian's house because he didn't trust my safety just yet, so he scheduled a meeting with them in a secure and neutral location. I rolled my eyes because I knew Lily wouldn't do that to me. She isn't deceitful and never has been. If there is anyone who has a good soul, it is her.

We meet in a local café for breakfast. We're early, and I fuss over my dress as if I'm meeting a complete stranger that determines my future instead of my favorite family member.

"Stop, sweetheart. You look perfect."

"Hardly. I've got bruises and rope burns," I say, pointing out my reddened and scabbed wrists. They're not as bad as they were, but there's no mistaking the injuries.

He slides his arm around my waist, pulling me to face him. "Yes, but it's expected for someone who was kidnapped, remember. Your cousin knows that, so relax, my beautiful love." I press my head on his chest. He smooths his lips on the crown of my head, kissing it.

I look out the café window and spot them walking to the door. "They're coming."

“I’m by your side. Always.” I love this man so much it’s insane. My heart races, and I’m not sure if it’s because he’s my rock or because I’m nervous to see my best friend. Lily’s eyes widen and her mouth falls open when she sees me, and then her eyes dart over to Dylan’s and she looks almost equally as shocked. Still, she rushes up to me. Dylan tenses, and his men inch closer from their hidden perches around the café.

“Relax. I’d never hurt her,” she says, rolling her eyes at Dylan.

“He just worries about me.”

“As he should.”

“I’ve missed you,” I say, throwing my arms around my cousin. “Lily, it’s so good to see you.”

“I’m so glad you’re safe.” She leans back with her hands on my biceps and tears in her eyes. “God, look at you,” she says, caressing my cheek, brushing my hair from my face. “I hope you got those bastards.” She stares right at Dylan.

“What makes you think he got to them?”

“Come on. He’s your former boss. I remember you telling me he’s wealthy, and he’s obviously obsessed with your safety.”

“Everything has been taken care of,” Dylan answers. I don’t react to it because I don’t want to know details as long as I’m safe. It’s not like I’m unaware that stuff went down when he came back to Dallas. He told Boss it was handled.

“Good. Let’s sit down. I could really use some food, and you can tell me how you’re doing. I need to know how you’re feeling and where you’ve been. It must have been awful.”

“I don’t really want to talk about the details.”

“How was your wedding?”

“I wish I hadn’t gone through with it.” Her husband gasps like he’s been slapped. “Oh, love. You know I don’t mean that. It’s just that I knew she was truly missing and

didn't leave of her own free will." He hugs her tightly and kisses her temple.

They were perfect together, and I'm happy she didn't miss her special day because she had gone through all that trouble to plan it. "Oh, Lillian, don't think that. You did the right thing. I'm glad that you had your beautiful wedding."

"Thank you, but I wish you were there. I want to rub it in Sandy's face that I was right to worry." Dylan's face shifts.

"Um...ladies, let's order. I'm getting hungry, and you need to eat, sweetheart. I let his reaction go because I know she was involved in my kidnapping, and he's probably unsure if we should tell her about it. Perhaps we should have spoken about it beforehand.

We ordered food and discussed Lily's wedding. Several times Sandy and James come up for their antics, and Dylan stiffens beside me. Lily doesn't notice, but her hubby does and quickly changes the subject. Several times during our reunion, Dylan's phone goes off but he doesn't answer it.

"You can take the call," I tell him.

"No, love. It can wait. I'm returning to work tomorrow. I can work while you're resting." He's been doing that whenever I'm napping, but the man runs a billion-dollar company, so he's busy all the time. I tilt my head, and he sighs. "Fine, I'll be back in one minute." He nods slightly to one of his men as he steps away. I already know it means they had better step up and watch me.

"Wow, he still doesn't trust me, does he?"

"It's not just you he doesn't trust, Lily. It's everyone around me. He wants to make sure that I always feel safe. Also, I didn't want to say anything before, but James was involved in my kidnapping." She gasps.

"That totally makes sense."

"Why?"

"First, James is a damn sleazeball, and second, Dylan got tense every time you mentioned that fucker," her husband

says.

“Oh, goodness. I’m so sorry for even bringing him up. It just felt like he was making sure to stick out at my wedding,” she says.

“It was probably to make himself look less guilty. If he was present, then he couldn’t be off trafficking Harley,” Dylan says, returning to our table and taking his place beside me. “I’m sorry about the call. Unfortunately, sweetheart, we need to cut this a little short. That was an important call, and we have to be somewhere soon. We only have another half hour, but we can do this again soon.”

“Dylan, I was thinking maybe we could have dinner together,” I say.

“I plan to have dinner with you every night,” he says, raising his eyebrows and grinning.

“I meant all of us.”

“I know. I’m teasing, sweetheart.” He bends down and kisses my lips. A sigh escapes from my mouth, and I blush when he pulls back while both my cousin and her husband stare at us with smiles on their faces. “We can definitely schedule something, but we have a lot to do this week.”

“I’d like that,” Lillian says. We eat our food and talk for a little longer before Dylan picks up the check, refusing to let anyone else do it. Lillian and I hug it out forever before the guys have to pull us apart and Dylan leads me to our waiting vehicle.

Our driver pulls into traffic, and then I ask about something that has been on my mind. “So we haven’t spoken about this, but what am I supposed to do now that you’re at work and I’m unemployed?”

“What do you want to do?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, I plan to knock you up often, so I’m sure that will keep you busy, but other than that, you can decide, but I

want to vet out a serious security team that I can ensure your safety with at all times, okay?”

“I’d like that.” Thank goodness he said that because truth be told, I’m not ready to be alone. After what happened, I don’t want to be outside by myself. Hell, I don’t want to be outside at all, but with him, I feel safe.

“Harley, you don’t have to hold back, sweetheart. I can see that you’re afraid, and you have every right to be, but I promise you that every single fucker involved can’t touch you again.”

I gasp and stare at Dylan, trying to puzzle out his meaning, but the only thing I can think about is what I overheard in Steepleville. He killed them. How do I feel about that? I don’t know. I take a deep breath, and I’m not bothered by it. In fact, I’m happy that he was strong enough to protect me, but what about his safety...the police? “Did you...”

“I only killed one in self-defense. James is in jail for other charges.”

“What about Sandy?”

“Sweetheart...this is a little hard for you to hear, so I need you to take a deep breath.”

“You can just tell me.”

“Tim killed her and left her in my bed.”

“What?” I gasp, pressing my hand to my chest as my back hits the car door.

“Be careful. He strangled her after they had an argument, it seems. They destroyed the condo, and that’s why we can’t go back. They ruined all of my clothes and my belongings.”

“But why? I mean...I just don’t get it.”

“It’s not important why people are crazy because they can’t harm us anymore.”

“What about the other guy?”

“Boxer Malone?”

“Yes, him.”

“Tim killed him before he came for me.”

“Good. I hate to say it, but you’re right. They’re not here to hurt me. Are you in trouble for killing Tim?”

“No. It was immediately ruled self-defense. The cameras in my building were all on and revealed Tim’s actions.” I throw my arms around his shoulders and squeeze him.

“Good. I don’t want to lose you.”

“You won’t, baby.”

Chapter Fifteen

Dylan

It's been a week since I found Harley, and we're on our way to Vegas. My uncle is getting married. It's something I should be doing with Harley. A plan comes to mind, and I'm doing it. Harley will be mine forever this weekend. I can't wait a day longer than necessary, so the second my uncle marries his love, I'll be taking my bride the next day to say our vows.

"I've never been to Vegas before," Harley says, turning to me and digging her teeth into her bottom lip while we ride in the back of our SUV on our way to the airport.

"There's a first for everything, sweetheart." I take her hand and bring it to my lips. All I can think about is tying her to me. My heart races when I consider the ring in my pocket. It's only been a few hours since I picked it up from the jeweler, but I want to slide it on her finger already.

"Do you go there often?"

"No, I've been there for a couple of conferences, but nothing in particular. I happen to be acquainted with Esperanza's son and his business partner. We've done business together over the years."

"Oh, wow, the world is so much smaller than it seems."

"I'm just so glad you ended up in my part of it." I press my lips to her temple and hold her close. Thoughts of the past creep up on me, and my faults threaten to derail my good mood.

"What's wrong?" she asks me, reading me easier and easier the more time we spend together. I want to tell her the truth, but I'd hate to ruin our trip.

I press my lips to hers and then say, "Nothing. I'm just lucky to have you in my life."

"So am I." Damn it, I want to ask her, but I can't do it in the back of a moving vehicle.

The rest of the ride and the takeoff over, I'm able to control my fears because Harley has her own fears. My sweet girl is completely afraid of flying. My hand comes over hers, giving them a squeeze.

"I've got you. We're going to be fine. This is pretty standard and will steady out as we reach cruising altitude." And just as I finish that, the plane steadies. "See, beautiful?"

Her body relaxes slightly, but she's clearly still on edge. "Would you like something to drink or eat?"

"Something to drink for sure. Something strong, please."

"Sure. I'll tell the flight attendant."

"Good morning, Mr. Hunter. How can I be of service?" For the first time in my life, I regret having a male flight attendant. His eyes land on my woman, and he gives an appraising look.

"What would you like?" I ask her, running interference because I don't want this guy to make any moves on my woman because he'd have a thirty-five-thousand-mile free trip to wherever he landed.

"I don't know."

"Get her a tequila sunrise."

"Yes, sir."

"Thanks. I just know I need something."

I press my head on hers and whisper, "Anything for you, Harley. I love you."

"I love you too."

He brings her drink and she sips it, calming down after a few minutes. Luckily the rest of the flight remains turbulence free, and we land in Vegas without any major hiccups. Although, I wish we had come at night so she could see the lights. Perhaps when we leave, she can see the strip lit up.

“Their wedding was so sweet, and almost everyone was well behaved.”

“You mean that asshole Blade?”

“He’s just himself, but her son is sweet.”

“You liked him?”

“And his beautiful wife, who happens to be Blade’s sister, which I think is why Blade is enjoying the torture a little bit.”

“I suppose, but he shouldn’t be flirting with you. You’re taken.”

“According to him, there’s no ring on this finger.”

“I’ll remedy that right now,” I growl. I grab her hand and pull her to my side.

“What?” she gasps.

“I’ve asked you to marry me, but the circumstances forced me to hold off on getting the one thing that made sure everyone knew that you were mine. Enough waiting.” I slide the four-carat stone on her slender finger.

“Dylan...”

“Yes, my sweet Harley?”

“It’s gorgeous and way too much. You didn’t...” I press my hand to her lips, silencing her.

“I would have gotten you a larger ring, but I didn’t want to hurt your hand with something so damn heavy. You have slender fingers, my beauty.” I kiss her ring finger and then her lips. “Marry me tonight.”

“Yes, Dylan.”

I stand in front of the officiant in the Vegas chapel, waiting for Harley to come out from the back where she’s getting ready with her cousin. It’s one of the nicer spots, and thankfully I was able to get many of the Riders and my uncle

to show up for the last-minute ceremony since they were already in town.

It's amazing what you can do in a rush with a lot of money and some phone calls.

"Congratulations, Dylan. You got lucky with that one. I wouldn't have given you the time of day, looking like that old ugly bastard," Blade said, gesturing to Boss. I'm about two seconds away from beating Blade's ass, if he hadn't helped me out with the badass weapon that I used to deal with Tim. He even gave me some tips that helped with my technique.

"Don't you dare call my man ugly, little boy," Esperanza hisses. "And you leave my nephew alone too. He's so handsome." She kisses my cheek. "Congratulations, Dylan. You're marrying a doll, and I'm so glad we're family."

"Ladies and gentlemen, it's time," the chapel planner says after rushing into the room.

"Thank you," I say. It's about time.

My heart races as I wait for my woman to reach my side. All my life I've avoided women and yet, here I am, anticipating the love of my entire being to meet me at the altar. "Calm down, Dylan," Uncle Liam says, clapping his palm over my shoulder.

"Do I look out of control?"

"You look like you're about to run."

"I'm not running anywhere. I'm ready to drag her out here and get her tied to me as soon as humanly possible." The doors to the room open and our eyes all focus on the entrance. My chest beats wildly hard against my breastbone as my gaze lands on Harley.

I head in her direction, but I'm held back by my uncle. "She's almost here. Let them get the pictures in."

She smiles at me and shakes her head as I reach her. "Are you ready to marry me, Mr. Hunter?"

"So damn ready." I cup her cheek, brushing my thumb over her chin and stealing a kiss.

“Um...you’re skipping a step,” Blade calls out.

“We better get this show on the road before he beats the hell out of Blade,” Roxie says.

The officiant begins our ceremony and before long, he pronounces us husband and wife. “I love you, Harley Hunter.”

“I love you, Mr. Hunter. Now kiss me and let’s say goodbye to our guests so you can claim your new wife.”

Chapter Sixteen

Dylan

“Hello, Mother.” Her eyes shoot wide open, and her mouth falls. The years of Botox can’t hide the sudden aging in her face from her lies revealed. The terror etched on her expression almost makes me laugh if not for the decades of pain behind the truth.

Quickly she fixes her face, masking her shock, and back is the glorious actress, but it’s too late. I’ve seen behind the curtain, and I know the truth. “Excuse me, you must have me confused with someone else.”

“No, Veronica Blake. I don’t. I thought you acted weird those times we encountered each other, and now I understand why.”

“What do you want?”

“Your demise, but I suppose that’s harsh. My wife wouldn’t like that. Your evil actions have cost me a lot, almost cost me everything, but they have done some good and that’s the only thing sparing you right now.”

“You look so much like your father. He was a handsome bastard.”

“So you knew him.”

“Of course I did. I didn’t want his family coming for you, so I lied about my pregnancy. It was so easy for them to take the baby. Less questions.”

“God, you’re evil,” Harley says.

“Calm down. He’s doing well. It looks like he did great with the life he was given. You should just get over it.” I want to choke this bitch. If I got any evilness, it came from her.

I put my hand up and shake my head. “I’ve heard enough.”

Taking Harley’s hand in mine, I walk away from the woman who gave birth to me. “Wait, wait. What are you going

to do? Don't tell anyone. I beg of you. You owe me."

My feet freeze to the granite floor, causing Harley to run into my back. "Sorry, love."

"It's okay." She kisses my shoulder. I turn and face the monster that lied about my conception and stare her down.

"I don't owe you shit. You are an evil person, and I wonder—how many other kids did you give up, or did you just get rid of them before you got that far?"

"I never got pregnant again."

"I want nothing to do with you, and don't ever speak to me or my family. If you ever try to use my name in any way, shape, or form, the truth will come out."

"I won't."

"Good. Now get out of my face because you make me sick."

I walk away with my woman and leave the hotel because I can't take the bullshit. We go back to our hotel and take the elevator to our room, and the moment we're inside, Harley asks, "Why did you let her get away with it?"

"She's right. I do owe her."

"What?"

"Without her abandonment, her shitty lies, I wouldn't have been the man I am today. Yes, I have fucked-up issues, but I wouldn't be the wealthy, successful man who has a heart and soul dedicated to one woman. No, I would have lived with a selfish woman who would have taught me to be even more selfish. Who knows what kind of life we would have had because she might not have gotten her many husbands and her career while dragging me around."

"But you lost out on your uncle and his family."

"Yes, but then he wouldn't have gone to war with his men, and they needed him. He would have come back and stayed to raise me."

"Wow, okay. I suppose you do have a point."

“Everything worked out just fine for me, and frankly, I’m not worried about her. Besides, she was so loud in the lobby. We had an audience, including the one reporter, anonymously, of course.”

Her mouth falls open. “You didn’t?”

“I did. I might not tell anyone, but she opened her mouth so big that I’m sure the reporter heard enough.” I smirk and lead my wife into our bedroom.

Three hours later, my uncle calls. “Congratulations on becoming a loving son.”

“What do you mean, Uncle Liam?”

“Have you not seen the news?”

“No, we just woke up from a well-earned nap.” I fucked Harley and me into such a deep sleep that I’d forgotten all about the confrontation with my birth giver.

He chuckles and says, “I’d look that shit up online and check out what they have to say about you and her.”

“Thanks. I will.”

“Okay. Let me know if you need anything.”

“I will. See you soon.” We promise to meet up soon when we have some time, but for the future time being, I want to enjoy all my free hours with my darling Harley, working on our family.

“What happened?” she asks from the bed with her hair messy and the sheet pressed to her chest.

I lick my lips as I stare at the sexy sight before me. “It would seem that our little confrontation got out today. Perhaps we should check it out.”

“Perhaps we should. You don’t know if you need to do any damage control.” There’s a little giggle coming from her lips, so I snatch it up and steal a deep kiss, pulling back when neither of us can breathe.

I pop my ass on to the bed with my back against the headboard and search my name on my cell phone.

Immediately it pops up with hers, talking about a long-lost son. As if on cue, my phone starts ringing. I send it to voicemail when I don't recognize the number. I call my tech guy because my number isn't public information.

"Sorry, it's out there. I can reroute all your calls first, but it's probably easier to just change your number. Someone doxed your information, sir. Luckily your new property hasn't been listed, but the old one has."

"Good. Get me set up with another number quickly, please."

"The company has many available numbers, so I can have it done in two minutes. I'll text it over. Is there anything else you need?"

"No, I'll have my security team handle the rest. For now, Harley and I are in the hotel and aren't leaving until it's time to go back to the office on Monday, so we're good."

"Yes, sir." I silence all the noise, powering off my phone and snuggling up with Harley.

"Let's forget everything else, love."

"Sounds wonderful to me."

It's the way we spend the rest of the weekend, but the peace doesn't last.

Monday morning rolls around, and we wake up to the sound of my alarm. I need to go into the office, and I'm not leaving Harley alone to face these vultures so I'm taking her with me.

"I can stay inside all day and avoid them."

"No, I don't trust that one won't get to the door when room service comes or one won't pretend to be room service."

"You could always send security up as room service, my husband."

"I could, but I don't know how long my day is going to be."

“Exactly, so I’ll be bored at the office unless you’re going to give me some work to do.”

“If you want things to do, I’ll give you something.” I hold her gaze and then raise my brows.

“Fine. Then I’ll hurry up and get ready.”

“Good girl.” I pat her ass as she sneaks off to the bathroom.

Once we’re ready, we take the elevator down to the lobby of the hotel. The moment the doors open, we’re bombarded with cameras. Of course, they knew where we were at, and I’m sure my evil beast of an egg donor didn’t hesitate to share that information.

“Mr. Hunter, do you have anything to say to the allegations that you’re the son of actress Veronica Blake?”

“What makes you believe that?” I ask.

“She’s already threatened to sue you for lying about it.” I smirk but refuse to acknowledge or deny the allegations because I’ll deal with my birth giver privately.

“That’s nice. Excuse me. I have to be at my office in fifteen minutes. Business calls.” My security team leads us out of the hotel and toward our vehicle while I keep hold of Harley, making sure no one is touching her.

“Mrs. Hunter, do you have any comments?” They try putting the mic in her face, but my new head of security moves the device.

“Nope. Now, if you didn’t hear my husband, we’re already running late after spending all weekend working on our real family.” She gives them a wink and clings to my side even tighter. My detail opens the back door, and we slide onto the backseat bench of my SUV.

“Finally, some peace and quiet,” Harley sighs. She presses her head to my chest and we drive to the office, which mercifully only takes five minutes. We enter the parking garage, and then we’re led to the private elevator to my office.

“Good morning, Mr. Hunter.”

“Good morning, Briggs.”

“Your nine o’clock called and needed to reschedule for this afternoon. Their flight was delayed and they’re just arriving in the city now.”

“That’s fine. We could use the break. Could you bring us some coffee, please?”

“Yes, boss. Mrs. Hunter, how would you like your coffee?”

“Cream and sugar, please.”

“Yes, ma’am.” He leaves us, and I pull my wife in for a kiss before stepping back and taking off my coat.

“Please take off your coat and have a seat, my love.” I take her coat and hang it on the rack with mine. When I look at her outfit, my mouth falls open. She’s wearing a gray pencil skirt with a white dress shirt that only buttons to the top of her cleavage, leaving just enough to entice me. Her long hair lays over her shoulders, framing her chest, and I bite back a growl. How did I miss it this morning? “Wow, are you trying to get bent over my desk today?”

“Maybe. Is there anything I can help you with today, Mr. Hunter?”

The phone on my desk rings, stopping any thoughts of taking her on my desk. “Hold that thought.” I walk over and answer, “Hunter.”

“Hello, son.”

“What the fuck do you want?”

“I want you to fucking fix this mess you made, you little lying sack of shit,” she screeches on the phone.

“I didn’t do shit. Did you call the reporters the second we left the lobby and start this shitstorm?”

“I didn’t do a damn thing, and you know it. Why would I want them on me? I’ve kept this secret for your entire life.”

“Well, your career was in the tank, and you were looking for some spark.”

“I don’t need that kind of publicity.”

“It’s a feminist society. People love a woman willing to give up her child for her career, so suck it up and leave me the fuck alone. You can rot in hell or continue living in the lap of luxury for all I care. I’ve done well without your existence, so don’t contact me again.”

“I won’t be contacting you. My lawyers will be.”

“You can try, but you don’t have any grounds to sue me, but I sure can get you for emotional damage.” I end the call, slamming the receiver down for enjoyment.

Harley walks up to me and says, “She has a lot of nerve.”

“She’s talking out of her ass. There’s nothing she can sue for in the first place, so she can be mad all she likes. It was her big mouth and her lies that started all this.” She presses her hand to my chest, calming my racing heart.

There’s a rapid knock on the door. “Sir, your coffee.”

“Come in.” My assistant enters with a tray and sets it down with our cups.

“Thank you,” Harley says, giving him a smile, and jealousy instantly tears through me. I’m not sure why because there’s no reason for it. She’s been here on and off all last week. Her smile isn’t flirtatious, but I’m suddenly in need of my wife.

“Leave us,” I command. “Cancel all my meetings for the rest of the day. As a matter of fact, cancel them for the rest of the week. I’m taking my wife on a proper honeymoon.” I grab her hand and snatch our coats off the rack before rushing her out toward the elevators.

“What has gotten into you?”

“Harley, I love you and we married this past weekend, but I didn’t take you anywhere special. I didn’t show you what you mean to me. Hell, we’re living out of suitcases in a hotel

when we should be living in a home, but we don't have one yet. If we're going to do that, we might as well do it somewhere fabulous."

"I don't need anything special but you, Dylan."

"Thanks, babe, but that doesn't change my mind. Let's get going. I want to take you somewhere. Anywhere."

"How about a quick trip to the Bahamas?"

"We can make that happen." I kiss her lips and lead her back into my office where I get on my phone and make all the necessary arrangements. Within two hours, I lead us out to the waiting vehicle. Luckily the press aren't expecting us to leave at this time, and we sneak away without garnering their attention.

I check the news streams for our names and find that the stories are still going strong. Several new ones have been made up, and it's clear Veronica has taken the lead on them, changing the narrative or at least telling her side of the story. Maybe she's trying to at least not look so terrible. Fuck, the shrew could have just said she was hurt by her husband's betrayal and gave up the child in a moment of despair, heartache, and rage, lying about her past to keep it where it should have stayed hidden. People would have understood that she was heartbroken with a lying, cheating husband, but the fact that she made herself out to be a rape victim is another story.

She made me the product of a crime, my father more than a philanderer—he was a monster. I believed I was part monster. Dangerous to women, sick and twisted by blood. I spent my entire life worried for nothing. Her image is tarnished because she made light of what so many women have suffered over the years.

Four hours later, we land in Nassau and I get an alert from my assistant with a message. *You're going to want to see this.*

I clicked on the video, and it's a press conference that my birth giver is holding. She has tears in her eyes that almost

seem sincere, but I know the coldblooded woman behind the crocodile tears, so I don't buy the Oscar-worthy performance she's putting on.

I'd like to apologize to everyone who has followed my career and my life over the past several decades. It's with a heavy heart that I have to admit that I've kept a shameful secret. A lie that I told to hide a painful, heartbreaking past.

When I was a young girl, I married my high school sweetheart, James Rhoades. We were in love, or so I thought. It was our one-year anniversary when I found out he was having an affair, and I was almost eight months pregnant. He'd gotten into an accident and died with his lover, sending me into early labor. I was distraught, and in a fit of panic and pain, I lied to the nurses and doctors. I told them that I had been raped and that I couldn't keep the baby. They would take the baby from me and put it up for adoption, and so I left the hospital and told my husband's family that the baby died due to my grief-stricken state.

It was wrong and I know it, but at the time, my mind wasn't in the right state. It took a long time to see the right path, but then it was too late. My son had been given away, and I couldn't just take him back. The choices I made, I had to live with. I never thought in a million years that they would tell him the story I made up, but they did. For that, I'm truly sorry.

She pauses and sobs at the perfect moment, drawing sympathy from the reporters, but I know it's fake. We encountered each other three times in the past, and not once did she try to reunite. Not one time did she ask me about my parents or anything. There is information about my past in the record, so she would have learned something. She clearly saw the resemblance and always took off running.

I turn off the video because I've seen enough.

"Dylan." Harley lays her hand on my chest. "I'm sorry about her."

"Don't be. I'm fine, Harley. I refuse to be bothered by her nonsense."

“Please stop lying to me, Mr. Hunter.” She jabs my breastbone while staring at me.

“I’m not lying, Harley. I’d rather spend our vacation with you naked in our bed or swimming with your sexy body beside me than even think about that lying hag.”

“Well, then, let’s change into our swimwear so you can strip me out of it soon.”

“Then you better hurry, wife,” I growl and then reach for her ass, but she moves quickly, running away from me while giggling. I give chase, pouncing on her and sweeping her up into my arms. “Wife, I don’t think we’re going to make it to the water today.”

“As long as you get me naked, I’ll be happy.”

“That’s something I most certainly can do.” We stay naked for our entire vacation.

Epilogue

Harley

“Good morning, Mr. Hunter. You have an appointment at noon with...” He rounds his desk in a flash, scowl on his face. He passes me up and moves straight to his office door, locking it.

“Harley, what have I told you time and time again?”

“Um...but I’m serving as your temporary assistant.” He’s on me, his large, strong frame crowding my slightly smaller one. “Dylan.”

“Oh, now you remember.”

“When you’re this close...it’s hard to forget.”

“Wife, turn around.”

“Why?” I ask, knowing exactly what is coming.

“Because I said so.” He spins me around when I don’t move fast enough. My hands grip the back of the chair in front of his desk, tilting my ass slightly upward. “Damn, it’s like you’re begging to be punished. I might not let Briggs come back from vacation.”

“You’d never get any work done, Mr. Hunter.” His hand comes down on my ass with a cracking sound and my cheek vibrating. I let out a yelp, followed by a moan as the pain shifts to pleasure. Shit, I am so turned on. It’s only ten and I’ve made four trips to his office, each one teasing him a little more. Each one becoming bolder.

The first time, I lost my blazer, leaving just my white dress shirt, then the next time, I undid the first two buttons. Before I came in again, I tied my hair in a ponytail high up and slid on my reading glasses. Now, he’s finding out what I took off this time.

“No fucking panties, Harley.”

I turn my head and stare at my husband, letting my tongue peek out of my parted lips and answer, “Nope.”

“Such a bad assistant.” He pops my ass cheek again before dropping to his knees, diving face first into my ass and pushing his tongue into my pussy. I gasp and push back, moaning and begging for more. He slaps my flesh again, causing me to shiver. “Take what you’re given, bad girl.”

“Fuck, Dylan.”

“No, it’s Mr. Hunter to you, you naughty little assistant.” Fuck, my pussy loves that so much more.

“Yes, sir.” He plunges one finger into my hole, drenching it, and I mewl, dropping my head over the chair, fighting to hang on. “Oh my goodness.” He pumps in and out, harder and faster, drenching his face with my wetness.

“Come for me, my pretty little assistant.”

“I’m coming,” I shout, thighs shaking violently. Dylan pulls my core down harder on his face, using it like a fucking napkin.

“I need you every second, every moment of every day, Harley.” He stands up as I catch my breath, sweat beading down my forehead. The sound of his belt buckle sends a jolt of excitement through me. “Fuck me,” I whisper.

He leans over my back, brushing his lips against the shell of my ear and says, “I am.” The smooth head of his cock glides along my wet slit, teasing my entrance. “I should just fuck that pretty little mouth first, but I need to be inside this tight hole and can’t wait.” He slams deep inside me. “Fuck, you’re still so damn tiny,” he grunts.

My husband places one hand over mine, and I see our wedding bands touching as he rails me from behind. “Take me, Mr. Hunter.”

“Such a bad assistant.” His fingers tease my breasts, pinching my nipples through my shirt while the other hand has our fingers locked together.

I tilt my head and stare into his darkened eyes. “Yes, but you can’t do without me.” His hips move in time with mine, and we rock in rhythm until we’re on the verge of coming.

“I suppose I’ll just have to find a way to keep you.” He bites my ear and then down to my throat, marking my neck. “I know just the thing.”

“Oh, really?”

“Yes,” I moan as he strums my pussy, bringing me to the edge again. I’m so close.

“How?”

“I’m going to put my baby in you,” he answers. He rubs my clit and I cry out, coming on his cock. “Fuck, just like that.” He unleashes his orgasm, filling me with his release, a wave of seed coating my walls.

I lean back on his broad chest. “Well, boss. You already did the job. I’m pregnant.”

He pulls out of me, turns me around, and stares at me with wide eyes and his handsome mouth slack jawed. “What?”

“Like I said, handsome. You’re going to be a daddy.” He crushes his mouth to mine, kissing me fast and hard.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.” He starts to walk toward the door.

“Where are you going?”

“I want to shout it to the world.”

“Um, you might want to tuck yourself back in and wash up.”

He looks down at his still semi-hard cock. “Oh shit.” I’ve seen my husband disheveled and a mess before, but his staff hasn’t. He’d always been crazy respectable until I came around.

“Yes,” I giggle, pressing my hand to my mouth.

He kisses me and rushes into his private bathroom. He sticks his head out of the doorway and asks, “Are you coming?”

“In a minute.” I want to clean up the area just in case we made too much of a mess. Although most of the staff are men around here, the cleaning crew that come in at night are a mix of men and women. He might think he’s the only jealous one in this marriage, but he doesn’t know that I’m nearly as possessive as he is.

I look for any of his leftovers and wipe any with cleaning products that are stored in the supply cabinet. This isn’t our first sex-capade in his office, so I make sure we have things in here, even if it’s just disinfectant wipes.

He comes out looking handsome as ever, and I look thoroughly flushed. At least the mess on the floor and the chair have been cleaned up, and I’ve managed to adjust my skirt and top.

“So, babe, what time does Lily want us to pick up Jack?” Our son is two years old, and we’re about to have our second child. I just found out this morning when I dropped off Jack. Lily and I had coffee. Her son and mine are best friends, just like we are.

His assistant is finally taking a well-deserved vacation, and I’m filling in. My cousin offered to watch our son, even though we could easily have brought him with us because the company has a daycare, where I work a couple of days a week as the supervisor.

I only work because Dylan works anywhere from ten to twelve hours a day, and that way we get to see each other without too much on my plate. He doesn’t want me to overwork myself but also doesn’t want me to be bored. The job keeps me right in the middle, but it’s not my dream career in marketing. I still haven’t found that yet.

“We can pick him up whenever we get out today.”

I walk into his bathroom, relieve myself, and then wash my hands. I left my panties in my purse, so I’m still going

commando. I'll have to sneak back to my desk in a minute and grab them.

I look at myself in the mirror. My ponytail is a little messy, but for the most part it's not too bad. Still, I pull it out and let my hair fall. It cascades down nicely over my shoulders.

"Nice, sexy." Dylan comes to stand behind me. "I'm surprised she can handle both of them and another baby so easily."

"She loves babies," I say, brushing down my clothes so they don't look so wrinkled.

"Are you okay with having another baby so soon?"

"Dylan, I'd have as many babies as you wanted. I love you and our babies." I rub my belly. "I've just been around a lot of kids in one day. I assure you, six toddlers at once can test one person's patience."

"You didn't have to deal with them all by yourself, did you?"

"Well, we were a little short-staffed today."

"That's not okay, Harley. What's going on?"

"We had several staff members come down with RSV. It happens. Unfortunately, that left less people last week. Now we're back to full staff."

"We need to fix that."

"That's pretty hard. It's not like we can just trust a bunch of people to come into the daycare. They have to be certified and verified, but if you want me to look into a temp agency, I will."

"Yes, please. Just for moments like this. Or we will have to find another method. I need my staff, but we can't have our daycare staff being run ragged either."

"Yes, Mr. Hunter."

"Wife," he growls.

“I actually came to tell you that your meeting is in...” I check my watch “...fifteen minutes.”

“Shit.”

“The conference room has been prepared, and so has the meeting materials. Do you want me to take notes?”

“Not looking like that?”

“Do I look like a mess?”

“No, you look like you’re flushed and thoroughly fucked. There won’t be a man in the room without a hard-on, not even that old bastard who is ready to kick the bucket.”

“Whatever. I think you’re insane.”

“Don’t believe me?” He leads me into the meeting room and we greet the board members from the company he plans to buy. All eyes are on me, and they’re not just politely looking—they’re gawking.

“Enough eye fucking my wife, fellas. If you want the deal, it’s best to keep your head down around her.” He snags one arm around my waist and pulls me to his side. “Harley, thank you for your assistance today. I’ll see you later.”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter.” I’m rewarded with a smirk before he kisses me. “I’ll go pick up our son now.”

“Good. I love you.” I walk away and notice not a single head has lifted from the papers in front of them. Smart. They have no idea how crazy that man will get when it comes to me. How dangerous he is. God, how I love him.

Dylan

Five years later

Baby number three. I swear she’s going to leave me one of these days. Her swollen feet, swollen cheeks, and swollen belly make her so grumpy, but I just find her adorable.

“If you call me adorable one more time, Mr. Hunter, I’m going to turn into a freaking Gremlin.”

“Sorry, love. It’s almost over.”

“I’m sorry, too.” Tears well up in her eyes. I’m not sure what set her off today, but something has her riled up and emotional.

“What’s wrong, sweetheart?”

“Can we talk about it later? You have to leave for work and Jack has school.”

“Yes, but you will tell me, right?” I don’t like waiting until later to discuss feelings bullshit, but maybe it’s just her hormones. At this point in the pregnancy, it could be anything.

“Yes.” I kiss her softly, but there’s something missing in it. My chest hurts, but Jack tugs at my pant leg.

“Daddy, it’s time to go.”

“Okay. Let’s go, buddy.” I ruffle his hair before scooping him up. Staring at my wife, I’m bothered more now than ever, but I can’t figure it out. Dropping my son off at school, I double down on the security team for my wife.

“I’ll be in a long meeting today and unavailable unless my wife needs me, so make sure she’s well taken care of. Please let me know if something is wrong. Understood?”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter. Is there something going on? Are you concerned about her guard?”

“No, but I want to make sure she’s extra protected. She has a doctor’s appointment today, and I can’t make it.” Fuck, is that the problem? I’ve been to the majority of them, and her doctor changed the appointment, not me.

“Very well, sir.”

As soon as I enter my floor, I go straight into my office, ignoring my new assistant who stands up as I pass by. Briggs went off to bigger and better things after graduating with his master’s. HR hired my new assistant while I was on vacation with my wife. So far, I hardly speak to her unless it’s necessary. My trust issues with women haven’t improved much just because I fell in love with Harley. She’s the exception to the rule.

“Mr. Hunter, your meeting starts in ten minutes.”

“Yes, I know. Is there something important that caused you to walk into my office without knocking?”

“Sorry, sir.” I look up from my computer, and I notice she’s actually leaning on my desk with her hands splayed out and her chest practically in my face. I fall back on my chair and slide it back.

“Get out of my office now. Don’t come in here unless I call you.”

She stands up and does so. I call HR and say, “I want my assistant’s information instantly.”

“Sir, that’s inappropriate.”

“I’m talking about her fucking resume. I want to know how the fuck you thought it was okay to hire her while I was gone.”

“You told me I could as long as the person was qualified. Her qualifications are exemplary.” She sends it up as I walk to the meeting and as I read it, something catches my eye. As one of the directors speaks, I do some research and notice one fucking mistake that the HR manager didn’t account for when hiring this fraud. This CV is full of shit. When I get out of my meeting, she’s gone. As a matter of fact, they both are.

I’m nearly halfway done with our meeting when I hear commotion and shouting. “Excuse me.”

“Sir,” Bogan, the guard I had with my wife, is standing in between my wife and my assistant.

“Harley, are you okay?”

My wife glares at me, tears in her beautiful eyes. “Are you fucking her?”

“What? Have you fucking lost your mind? Of course not.” I storm toward my heavily pregnant wife to examine her for injuries. She appears okay, but I’m still concerned. “In fact, you—” I look back down at my phone so I can remember my assistant’s name. I look back at the woman, who is looking a

little too smug. “Ms. Greene, you’re fired.” She gasps and has her mouth open wide.

“What? Why?”

“Why? First, there has to be a reason my wife is here ready to rip your hair out. Second, that shit you tried to pull in my office this morning. If I didn’t need to be in a meeting, I would have fired you then. Third, you lied on your CV. You never attended Harvard School of Business. You’re not thirty-five. You’re twenty-six, and you don’t have twelve years of experience.”

“Shit. My aunt didn’t cover my tracks well. So what? I’ve done a great job and, well, it looks like she’s getting too big for you to handle.”

“My wife is perfect and the only one I need. Get the fuck out of my building.” I turn to my security. “Get her out of here before I do it myself.”

I look at the bitch and say, “I’ve killed for my wife before. Don’t make the mistake that I won’t do it again.”

I take my wife and scoop her up in my arms like she weighs nothing, and truthfully she does. Even with the baby weight, she’s still tiny compared to me. Walking with her into my office, I close the door and sit in my chair. “Mrs. Hunter, you and I need to have a serious discussion. I don’t know what was bothering you this morning, but I have a feeling it had to do with Ms. White.”

“It’s Ms. Greene.”

“I don’t give a fuck what her name is. She’s irrelevant to me. I’ll never let anyone else hire my assistant for me again, and never another female. Big damn mistake.”

“The day before, I called and she made small little digs that implied that you were getting friendly with her. She was calling you Dylan.”

“What?” I move to get out of my seat, but she clings to me, forcing me to keep still. “Sweetheart, I’m glad you told me because I’d be going to prison for murder right now. Last time, I had self-defense on my side.”

“I love you. Thank you for easing my heart and soul. She was very pretty.”

“I wasn’t paying attention.”

“What happened in here earlier?”

“Nothing.”

“Don’t lie to me.”

“Nothing major. Just enough to piss me off, and I’m sure enough to piss off my extremely pregnant wife.”

She crosses her arms and huffs. “Do tell.”

“I was typing and finishing up an email when she came in to remind me of the meeting, and when I looked up, she was leaning on my desk with her chest intentionally a little too damn close. I shouted at her to get the fuck out of my office and never to come in here without being called in.”

“Are you serious?”

“Yes. I asked for a copy of her CV and as I read it, something about it felt eerily familiar. I haven’t read many resumes over the years, so I thought about it and remembered when HR sent you packing. I pulled Mrs. Featherman’s resume to see if I should fire her. She was overqualified, so I kept her on and just chalked it up to me being a dumbass. Their credentials are almost identical, but they’re about twenty-five years apart, and when I say identical, the dates aren’t all changed.”

“Oh, shit. So she copied the resume and sent it to you.”

“Yes, and like she said, she’s her aunt.”

“Exactly. I’m sorry I had any doubts.”

“Don’t. You’re going through a lot right now, and I’ve never had a female assistant, then I break all my usual rules. I promise you’re my one and only until we’re in the grave. You’re my heart and soul.”

“Now you’re out of an assistant again.”

“Damn it.” I snap my fingers. “What am I going to do?”

“I don’t know, Mr. Hunter.” I run my hands over her plump, overly sensitive breasts, pulling down her top and pinching her hard nipples.

“Fuck, let me see your qualifications.” I free myself from my pants and push myself deep inside my wife, drilling her while she sits on my lap riding cowgirl.

“Shit, I’m coming.”

“You’ve got the job...”

“Harley.”

“Beautiful name.” I kiss her throat.

There’s a knock at the door. “Sir.”

“Bogan, give us a moment.”

“Sir, there’s a gentleman who is looking for you. Says they’re in a meeting.”

“Fuck.”

Harley giggles. “Oops. I’m already doing a bad job.”

“I’ll give you another chance later.”

“Don’t forget to tuck it back in, Mr. Hunter.” I put my cock away and rush into the bathroom to wash my hands and fix my hair as best as I can. I come back out and see my wife cleaning my desk and chair. I love how possessive she is.

“It’s Dylan. Remember that, and tuck my tits back in.” I lean down and kiss my wife.

“Yes, sir.” She’s going to get it when we get home. I leave my office and finish the meeting, explaining that my wife was feeling a little unwell and is in her last trimester so I needed to get her settled in my office.

When it ends, Harley is standing by the assistant’s desk looking sexy as hell. Several of the men take notice, and I want to punch them.

“Wow, that’s your wife? No wonder you needed to take a break. Does she have a sister?”

“No, and she’s mine, so keep your eyes to yourself.”

“Understood.” They leave, and I remember why I don’t like having Harley as my assistant.

“Let’s go home early, beautiful.” The troubles can wait—our happiness can’t.

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