

GUNNER

An Untamed Hell Fires MC Series



Book Four

C.L.McGinlay

Gunner

An MC Romance

Charlotte McGinlay

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Description

Gunner

I wanted her as soon as I saw her,
But she was taken at the time,
By someone who's worked for us for years then became a
brother,
He's family,
And I couldn't handle it,
So I started sleeping around, but by the time they broke up,
We were already friends, I couldn't ruin that for us,
And I couldn't ruin my oath to my brother,
Until I had found out nothing was as it seemed, that she had
always loved me,
Had always been mine,
But now she doesn't want anything to do with me,
Won't even let me touch her,
But I'm nothing but determined,
She will be mine, especially when I realise there's more than
our hearts involved now.
And I will kill anyone who will get in my way,
Because they don't call me Gunner for kicks.

Leah

The first day I made eye contact with him I knew he was the
one,
He was supposed to be mine and I his,

But he was seeing someone else,
Throwing their relationship in my face every day,
All while I went through a trauma right under his nose,
But I don't have time to fall apart,
I'm working full time trying to get myself through school,
To make my family proud,
But then we finally end up in bed together,
Only he doesn't remember and goes back to his girl,
He breaks me,
Then I find out I'm pregnant and suddenly he wants to be
involved, he wants me,
But I can't go there, not anymore, not knowing he'll always go
back to her.

I just didn't count for his determination,

Or for the pain his lover tries to cause me.

Can I give him a chance or will his past bury us?

This can be read as a standalone but is better if books are read
in order to get an understanding of other characters. This is
book 4 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA.
Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended
for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Prologue

Gunner – 24 years old – Five years ago

I look towards Slicer, our treasurer, and raise a brow at him. The fucker has been down ever since he met someone last month on a club run delivering guns and ammo to Wincher's club, the Rebels, and she basically disappeared. He's tried searching for her over the past few weeks with Flame's help, our tech guru, and our road captain, but both have come up empty-handed. He said he'd believe it never even happened if she hadn't left her gold bracelet behind by accident. He's currently fucking someone who wants to work here against the wall, his fucking bare ass in view.

I shake my head; this is his way of trying to forget about the mystery girl called Meghan.

I'm brought back to the bar, which is full of reds and blacks with dark oak woodwork, and the club's logo, a massive hawk with its wings on fire, hangs in a wooden sign above the bar by the sound of a fucking angel.

"I hope that's not in the job description."

I feel my hands go sweaty while Cara, my regular fuck and waitress, looks at me with furrowed brows, but I just clear my throat and turn on my black stool to see who owns the sound of the voice, and I instantly have to swallow my tongue.

The vision in front of me is fucking gorgeous. She must be roughly 5'4"; she's fucking tiny compared to my 6'2". She has thick thighs that are covered in tight-as-fuck jeans, not hiding anything. My eyes travel up past her wide hips and tiny fucking stomach, up to her chest, where a chequered shirt is unbuttoned halfway down, showing a black bralette thing that holds her fucking tits that must be more than a handful at least.

My eyes linger there for longer than they should before they travel up higher, looking at her heart-shaped face that's framed

by white, blonde hair with blue fucking highlights. She's got a buttoned nose that's pierced with a dark blue stud, while her plump lips shine with the gloss she has on. I move my eyes up, ready to connect with hers, knowing I'm about to fucking fall, and as soon as my eyes connect with her bright green ones, I instantly suck in a breath while she gasps before swallowing hard. We spark, and I know she feels it as well.

Fuck me, this is what my dad was yapping on about last year when he caught me fucking three women together. This is the feeling he told me I'd feel when I meet the fucking one—the instant feeling of wanting to protect her, the knowing that she's mine.

She clears her throat, bringing herself out of her stupor while I'm still in mine as she raises a brow at me.

“I need the job, but not enough to do THAT.”

She nods her head towards Slicer, and I snort, shaking my head, trying to get over my fucking beating heart that's pounding hard in my chest before I rasp out, “Don't worry, Angel, you won't have to; the girl came onto him; he just doesn't know how to say no at the moment.” She nods, and I nod my head to the bar. “Come, take a seat, and we can go through your resume.”

She nodded again before walking over to me and sitting on the stool, I nodded toward. I looked towards Cara, who was on water duty for the recruits, being only a waitress and refusing to go any higher, so she was not trained for bar work. I clear my throat to get her attention because if she keeps glaring at this woman, who I know instantly I want to claim, then we're going to have a fucking problem.

She looks at me, her hazel eyes shining with jealousy, before she tries to hide it.

Fuck.

Maybe it's time I find another main fuck until I can convince this girl to be mine. Dad said when you meet the one you'll know, and well, I fucking know, no one has ever made me react this way to them. Shaking my head, I nod to the water,

and she gives me a fake smile before flickering her shoulder-length brown hair over her shoulder, doing as I instructed before I turn back to this gorgeous girl who is looking at Cara with a furrowed brow, which soon turns to a raised brow when Cara slams the water down, making me sigh. It's definitely time to find a new fuck if this vision in front of me takes a while to convince me to be mine. I clear my throat again to get this woman's attention while the woman, Slicer, is fucking moaning loudly.

"Fuck, sorry about them," I say while I shake my head.

She nods before looking around me, making me want to growl.

"He is aware that she's faking, right? And that she has a phone in her hand currently recording him?"

What the fuck!

I quickly spin around just as Slicer pulls out of her, grabbing the hand with the phone, his eyes narrowing as he puts his cock away while the girl swallows hard.

"I-I was paid to try to get one of you to fuck me so I could sue you; H-Hairy is very persuasive."

Fucking Hairy, the Devil's VP.

I shake my head before texting our Pres Axel, who has just taken over as president, to let him know the fuckers are at it again. Snake defends every time we tell him what his VP and a few of his brothers are up to; he doesn't believe us, but then again, we are fucking rivals.

Me – Girl was paid to sue us after fucking one of us by Hairy. Our new waitress caught the girl filming her and Slicer.

He texts back a few minutes later while we watch Slicer destroy the girl's phone before dragging her out of the bar, all while this beauty next to me snorts, making me smirk.

I check my phone when it goes off.

Axel – If this carries on, we'll fucking fight back. I don't give a shit how much the old-timers try to protest wanting to

keep the peace. There's a new generation in town.

Nodding I put my phone back as Slicer stood next to me. He holds his hand out to the woman, and I have to bite back a growl, making him raise a brow at me.

“Slicer. Thanks for the tip; you just probably saved us thousands.”

The woman looks at the hand, then back to him, and I furrow my brows while Cara snaps.

“How fucking rude not shaking his hand. What are you, a fucking snob? You can't touch a biker.”

The woman just raises her brow at Cara before looking back at Slicer, giving him a little wave and making him look at her like she's weird because, yeah, it is weird. It doesn't stop me from wanting her, though.

“I'm Leah, and I'm 21 years old. I have worked at the college campus bar a few towns over since I was 18. My parents live near Hudson Bridge, and I would shake your hand, but no offense, that's the hand you were, you know, between you and the woman.”

My eyes widen before I try to hold in my laughter while Slicer looks down, seeing it's wet, before shaking his head. “Fucks sake,” he mumbles before looking up again, smiling, “sorry doll.”

I growl, not able to keep it in at his nickname while he bites back a smile as she looks at me like I'm the fucking weird one, which yeah, I guess was weird before she looks back at Slicer.

“It's fine. So about the job?”

We both grin at her before Slicer nods subtly. She saved our asses, so I nodded before looking at her. “You'll start off as a waitress; if you stay longer than a year, then we'll try you behind the bar. Come in tomorrow at 5 p.m. to go through the tables before we open. The pay is £8.45 an hour, not including tips; whatever you make, you keep.” I grab the paperwork for her to fill out for insurance. “Fill these in and bring them back with you; we pay your insurance in full.”

She grins wide before letting out a relieved breath. “Thank you so much.”

She holds her hand out to me as her other one takes the form, and I shake it, sucking in a breath at the electric shock while she gasps before pulling her hand back, looking at it weirdly before shaking her head, turning to Slicer, about to hold her hand out but stopping herself, making us both chuckle before she shakes her head again and waves at him before looking at me subtly, making me bite back a grin.

She feels this between us too; good to know.

She clears her throat. “I’ll, uh, see you both tomorrow then.”

We nod, and she turns to leave, again looking at me subtly, and I hold back my grin.

Hook, line, and sinker, she’s fucking mine.

As she goes through the door, Slicer sniffs his hand, then gags, making me laugh out loud before he rushes off to wash his hands, mumbling about having to wash his dick too and get tested. I’m still laughing when Cara comes into view. She leans over the bar and squeezes my hand, making my laughter die off at the look on her face, and I raise a brow at her.

“I understand that you like this girl; I saw the connection you both had, but Gunner, I’m sorry, baby, she’s outside with Carl. He called her his girlfriend.”

I swallow hard before removing my hand from hers, hoping it’s not true. Carl’s been here for three years; he’s the same age as me and is classed as family; we all grew up together.

I walk out the back door, hoping it’s not true, especially when he never mentioned it before, but stop in my tracks to see the head of Carl’s black hair that’s bent, kissing the girl I felt a connection with. She squirms in his grip, and then I notice his hand down her jeans, and I fist my hands as he tries to get her off before swallowing hard.

I turn and head back inside, feeling fucking defeated. We don’t snatch other brothers’ girlfriends, including men we see as family, even if they’re not brothers yet. He’s going through his prospect phase as we speak. Next week, he’ll be patched in as

a brother. I find Cara wiping down the oak counter before I grab her hand, pulling her towards the hallway, where I turn her around, making her gasp as I flip her short skirt up over her ass. I rip her thong before unzipping my jeans and pulling my cock out. I quickly sheath myself before shoving myself into her already wet cunt, bottoming out and making her moan out in pleasure.

And that's how I spent most of my time over the years, fucking Cara to forget the love I became to feel for the girl I couldn't have.

If only I had stayed fucking longer outside to know the situation was different than I had realized and we as a club had treated her better.

Leah – 21 years old

I grin as I walk out of the bar, feeling happy and delighted while also trying to forget how Gunner's hand felt in mine or how his gray eyes ate my body up before something. No, someone grabs my hand and shoves me to the side, making me gasp before I start to struggle as the person's hand comes over my mouth while their forearm holds me against the wall. I look up with tears in my eyes to see a man smirking at me, his brown eyes looking black as he stares down at me.

I try to shove him, but he just laughs.

“Now come on, darling, I saw how much you enjoyed the Slicer show; why don't we have one of our own?”

I bite his hand, causing him to curse, and before I can scream, he moves his forearm and grips my hair from behind, fusing his lips with mine. I try to get out of his hold, but he doesn't let go of me.

His hand grips my hair tightly, pulling my head back as his other hand moves between us and down our bodies, and I instantly freeze before he unbuttons my jeans. My panic comes in, and I start to shove him hard, screaming against his lips, but he bites down hard on my bottom lip, causing me to cry out as my tears fall down my cheeks. I can

feel the blood on my chin while he shoves his hand into my pants.

NO, NO, PLEASE, NO.

I've never had sex; my best friend Sophie gave her virginity to her high school boyfriend only for him to sleep with the school-mean girl the next day on graduation. It put me off and made me want to wait until I was in love.

I wanted to wait until marriage.

I try to kick out, but he manages to shove his fingers—three of them—roughly into my dry entrance. Sharp pains shoot from inside me, feeling like he's tearing me open before his fingers go high enough for me to feel a sharp pain shoot through my lower stomach, and I sob. He broke through my hymen with his fingers.

Oh God, he broke my virginity.

He chuckles against my lips, knowing what he just took from me, and continues to shove his fingers inside me, twisting them hard, all while I feel like I'm being cut on the inside. The pain is unbearable, and I feel sick. He uses my blood, which I can feel dripping down my legs as lube, to move his fingers in and out fast, but my body tries to reject him and tries to shove him out as my pain intensifies.

I hear a door open, and I try to struggle some more, hoping whoever it is will help me, but nothing happens. The man continues to shove his fingers into me hard before breaking his kiss and laughing while I sob as his fingers move in and out of me, making me want to throw up.

The pain hurts too much to even zone out.

“That darling was Gunner, the man who just hired you; he's probably gone back to fuck Cara, his girl.”

He removes his fingers, and I shove him back before falling to the floor while he laughs. He grips the back of my head, pulling my hair, so I look up to him as he shows me the blood on his fingers with a razor in between them, and I suck in a breath, realizing all the blood isn't just because of hymen, before he sucks them into his mouth, making me sob.

He grins around them, blood staining his teeth, before he gets in my face.

“I’ve heard a lot about you, Leah, from your foster parents and how much you wished they adored you, but instead they made you move out at 18, didn’t they? They made you get your own place because you were such a burden,” he grins before he whispers as I sob. “I also heard you were waiting until marriage, and I couldn’t let a fine piece of ass as you walk around with your big V still intact, the same big V I’ve wanted for the past year since laying eyes on you.” He gets closer to my face and says, “Just know this though: if you decide to squeal, they don’t call me Razor for fun, darling. I’ll ensure your lovely foster parents, who you are trying your hardest to impress and make proud of you like they haven’t been jetting off now that you are out of their house, take pleasure in learning exactly how I got my name.”

He gets even closer as my body starts to shake. “And you better make sure your fine ass is here tomorrow for your induction; otherwise, that redhead who you always hang with will have that pretty face carved up.” He kisses me hard on the lips before chuckling as he walks away while I sob as the pain and ache between my legs intensify, and I know I need to go to the hospital. I can feel the blood drip between my legs, and my head feels fuzzy.

I slowly get myself up before buttoning my jeans up again as my tears fall, my chest heaving as vomit builds in my throat. I don’t bother holding it in; I throw it up all over the floor until I only heave with nothing coming out. The reality of the situation is not taking place yet. That man is friends with my parents, the parents who took me in at five years old after my birth mother ran off, choosing her boyfriend over me. I don’t even know who my father is. I breathe heavily as I decide to walk the back way out to my old car that’s on its last legs that I’d parked on the road just in case it decided not to start. I didn’t want to be embarrassed.

I swallow as more bile wants to come up, the feeling of him in me making me sick. As I get past the backdoor to the bar, I notice it’s open a little, but I ignore it and go to continue my

way until I see Gunner, the man I felt a connection with, thrusting hard into the woman who glared at me and had a go because I didn't want to touch some other woman's juices. More tears leak out as the woman turns my way and grins wide at me, evil shining through her eyes. She knew what I had just gone through; I wouldn't be surprised if she planned it with him, so I didn't unintentionally take her man.

Shaking my head, I turn and hobble back to my car. I climb into my rust bucket while biting my lip to hold in my cries as pain drags through me, my lower stomach aching badly. My tears fall harder, my sobs wanting to wrack my body, but I hold it in, knowing the man is watching me, and I put my car in drive, causing me more pain as I head to the General hospital. It doesn't take me long to get there, and I quickly park up near the front before hobbling in. A man in his mid-forties notices me, and his brown eyes widen in shock, noticing all the blood on my jeans.

I just make it to him before I fall, making him catch me.

"I NEED A GURNEY, NOW."

He shouts while I sob before he places me on a bed. He goes to move me, but I grab his hand, making him look down at me.

"No one can know; I don't w-want the police. A-A man assaulted me with his fingers, he-he." A sob comes out, and the man squeezes my hand. "He used a razor to rip through my virginity."

His eyes widen in shock before anger takes place.

He nods his head before rushing me into a room where I have to endure even more pain.

I pray to never have to go through the humiliation again. I hope I never see this man who tends to me again, but unfortunately, fate has different ideas because this man ends up turning into my surrogate father, a man I look up to, and a man who becomes my confident when I can't talk to anyone else, who would help me through the many heartbreaks the man I fall for puts me through over the years.

This man became the man I started to call dad when my own failed me when all I wanted was his love.

Chapter 1

Gunner – 5 years later – 29 years old

I sigh, rubbing a hand down my face.

I've just finished the books for the bar, and we've made good income this month, so Axel will be pleased.

Fuck, I hate doing the books; normally Slicer will do them, but he's currently looking for Hairy, the Devil's VP. He turned into a traitor and tried to fuck with us using his club's name, and now both our club and his own are after him, but the fucker keeps slipping through our fingers.

Shaking my head, I stand and stretch before grabbing my scotch glass and downing it in one before heading out front. I make sure to lock my black door first, then take my usual seat in the red booth and look towards Leah. She's pouring a drink for some preppy dude. She gives him a fake smile before taking his money into the till, then hands him his change, all while he stares at her with want, making me fist my hands.

For five fucking years, I've had to watch her from afar, watching her being flirted with just like now, but she is beautiful and she doesn't even try, so I know it's inevitable. Her white, blonde hair is up in a messy bun with some blue highlights dangling down. She's wearing a tank with the bars logo, which also happens to be the club's logo of the Hawk with its wings on fire, while pairing it with some denim ripped shorts and cowgirl boots.

A true fucking southerner, that's for sure.

I readjusted my growing hard-on.

She and Razor broke up a few months after she started working here, but I never made my move; it's forbidden in our club, even though several brothers said it's been long enough, so maybe give it a go. If he were just fucking her, then it wouldn't have mattered, but apparently, she ripped his heart

out and fucked some other guy from a few towns over. Slicer wanted to fire her for what she did, but Pres said it was a lawsuit waiting to fucking happen if we did it out of obligation to a brother, so Cara tried to make her quit, making her first year here hell, but Leah took all that was given and kept doing her job without making a complaint, and now not only is she one of my closest friends, and she likes the brothers even though it's not greatly received by most, but she's also now bar manager, much to Cara's disagreement.

She fucking kicked off when she'd found out. I knew she was vying for the job, but she never tried to excel; she loved being on the floor while men groped her, so she didn't have the qualifications for it.

Sighing, I make eye contact with Leah, and she waves me over, making me furrow my brows, but I oblige and get up, heading over to her just as Cara wraps her arm around my waist. I don't think; I just act out of instinct, and I place my arm over her shoulder, continuing my walk over to the bar. I could swear I saw the pain in Leah's eyes but it's not there as we got closer making me furrow my brows some more,

"Everything ok?"

I can't keep the concern out of my voice, but she just clears her throat.

"I, uh, was wondering if I could swap my shift tomorrow?"

I tilt my head,

"Wednesdays are the days you requested not to be rostered on, as well as Fridays; tomorrow is Monday. Leah, I'm sorry, but you requested those days and signed a contract agreeing you'll work the other days we rotate you on."

I don't know why, but she made it perfectly clear that she could work any of the other days, but those two are off-limits, and at that stage, we were trying to get her to quit after she signed her new contract to become a bartender. It's in writing, and even for a close friend, I won't change it. Her requesting those days caused enough problems with the rest of the staff as it is.

Leah clears her throat. “I, uh, have a hospital appointment that they can’t change. It’s for a check-up.”

My brows shoot high into my hairline. Fuck, yeah, that’s a good enough reason.

“OK, and when are you going to make up the shift then? You know everyone will bitch and make out like you’re getting special treatment; it’s why we have contracts to begin with Leah.”

I can feel Cara relax into me while I’m being harsh with the girl I’m in love with. I’ll never admit it, but I have to be harsher when it comes to work.

Leah’s face goes red. She crosses her arms over her chest and decides now’s the time to speak loudly.

I know I just fucked up.

“So, you’re basically telling me I can’t have tomorrow off, FOR A HOSPITAL APPOINTMENT, if I don’t make up the shifts when I work more hours than anyone, including you and Slicer? Maybe it’s time for me to find a new fucking job then, and while I’m at it, Gunner, I’ll give your sister a call, shall I?”

My eyes widen at her threat.

I’d not long found out that Dagger’s woman, Melanie, was my half-sister. My parents had split for a little while, and my dad slept with someone else who turned out to be a druggie and a nasty woman. She made my sister’s life hell after my fucking mother, who I have barely said two words to since finding out, offered to buy my sister, offering \$100,000 to the man who was bringing her up and had no idea that she wasn’t even his for full custody, causing him to pack up and leave. Her mom blamed her since she was just a little girl for him leaving when in reality it was hers for doing the dirty in the first place, and my mother’s fault all because she couldn’t have any more kids and wanted a little girl.

Mel doesn’t want anything to do with my mom, and I don’t fucking blame her, but she’s willing to try a friendship with my dad, pissing my mother off. If Mel knew how I was

currently talking to Leah as an employee instead of my friend, then she'd fucking kill me.

Someone snorts behind me, and I see Axel with a smirk on his face. "Alright, Leah, settle down; we both know you won't quit; you love us, and we need you too much. Gunner's just trying to make it fair for everyone, that's all. He's talking to you like an employee, not a friend of the clubs."

She nods her head, pain shooting through her eyes at his comment before it goes a split second later, and a smirk enters her face, both myself and Axel tense, knowing we're not going to like what she's about to say. She bends down and gets the rota book before looking at me, then at Axel. I remember a time when she wouldn't look at any of the brothers or me in the eye, and right now I'm kind of wishing for that time back because if looks could kill, we'd be fucking dead.

"Right, in my contract, it says my hours are 45." She opens the rota book, and I sigh, muttering 'fuck' while Axel swallows hard. "This week alone, I am down for over 70 hours because I'm down for set-up and clean-up because your STAFF thinks that's only fair because I requested two days, just TWO, for personal reasons not to be rostered on, AND THEY ARE NOT EVEN WEEKENDS, THEY ARE WEEKDAYS. So I'm now going to sort through this so I'm only doing my hours and the rest of your employees, including your fuck buddy Gunner, can take the slack for once. It seems as though you're finding it hard to help me out when I've done nothing but be your fucking loyal employee for five years, including a year where you all tried to get me to quit making my life hell, and then I'm going to go find a new job where I'm not taken advantage of and not treated like shit!"

My eyes widen while Axel clears his throat, knowing she means every word.

Fuck.

We have relied on her; the others did take advantage, and we never did anything to change it because she still treated our brother like shit. "Okay, tomorrow you can have off for your

appointment, but, fuck, Leah, we'll have to have proof; we can't treat you like a friend of the club here, you know this."

She just scoffs and shakes her head before she gets her phone out while muttering, "So much for being fucking family; what a fucking joke the lot of them," making me wince. She's my best friend; the brothers tolerate her, but she'll never be family for what she did to our brother.

It's as simple as that.

I'm brought back to her when a voice echoes through her phone, making both Axel and I look at her in shock. It's a voice we know well, a voice we had no idea was even close to Leah.

"Hey, sweetheart."

Leah smiles,

"Hey, could you do me a favor? You're on speaker, but both Axel and Gunner have decided now is the time to question my loyalty to your club and want proof of my appointment tomorrow, all because I have those two weekdays rostered off each week; apparently the others hate that I get them off."

Her eyes narrow at us as Doc growls, "Seriously, what the fuck is wrong with you two? She puts in more hours than any of your employees, including you and Slicer Gunner, and you have the fucking nerve to question her? She hasn't even taken a fucking holiday!"

I swallow hard realizing that it's true; she hasn't even taken a day off unless she's throwing up, which is hardly ever, except for the other week when Ink decided to end things with her best friend Sophie taking a text out of context and she passed out. I've promised not to tell him. Leah threatened to leave then too, and she meant it; she always does when it comes to her friend. Doc sighs, sounding disappointed in us and making me and Axel look at each other, wincing.

"Yes, she has an appointment tomorrow for a check-up; it cannot be changed, and yes, she fucking needs it. Grow up, the pair of you. Leah, sweetheart, my old lady will pick you up tomorrow. I love you, honey."

Leah smiles while both me and Axel look at the phone in confusion as she replies, “love you too” before hanging up. She scowls at us both before walking away while we stand here stumped.

Cara huffs, “What a selfish bitch. You kept her here after what she did to poor Razor, who’s been fucking anything that moves after she broke his heart, and she’s acting ungrateful.” She shakes her head before kissing my lips. “I’ve got to get back to tending tables. I’ll see you tonight, baby.”

I nod before looking back at Leah again, but she isn’t looking our way while Axel sighs, running a hand through his black hair. “Are we taking advantage of her? Punishing her for something she did five years ago?”

I clear my throat and shrug. “Probably, but you don’t fuck over one of our own. We only kept her on because she was so good at her job that and she became my best friend, but we’ll always keep a distance from her because of what she did. It is what it is, I guess.”

Axel sighs and nods his head. “Fuck, I hope she doesn’t try to lower the hours we’re giving her, or worse, fucking quits. She basically runs this place.”

I nod my head in agreement as he pats my back before heading over to the table where his woman is, while I look back at Leah. We make eye contact, and she narrows hers at me, and I know I may have fucked up our friendship.

Shit.

Shaking my head, I go over to where Cara is picking up some empties and wrap my arm around her waist, making her giggle, before guiding her towards my office. I’m fucking stressed and need relief. I take the tray from her and place it directly in front of Leah. “Sort these for me, will ya? Cara’s taking a break.” Leah snorts, anger showing on her face, and I sigh. “Leah, I am the boss; remember, I can’t be your friend here.”

She nods, “Alright, ‘boss’”; she uses quotations, making me narrow my eyes at her, “I’ll be expecting my break to be two

hours then; it seems as though she's already had an hour break, and your now making me take on the bar and the floor by myself so you can get yourself off."

I slowly close my eyes. She's starting to piss me off. I don't understand this attitude of hers. I should have just said okay to the day off tomorrow, but it's late notice, so she should have known I would question it. I shake my head and pull Cara with me, noticing her smirk, but I ignore it and soon stop when Leah talks again. "Oh, and Gunner, as of Thursday, I expect to be doing my contracted hours ONLY; there's nothing in my contract about overtime being mandatory, and there's nothing in my contract stating I have to be the one to open up AND close up every night while being underpaid. I'm pretty sure there's a law suit there, don't yah think?"

I hear Axel curse, knowing he's just heard what she's said, and I turn towards her and say, "Leah..."

She shakes her head and says, "Nope, if you do not follow my contract, then I'll just have to go see a lawyer while looking for a new job."

Her eyes shine with fury, and I know she's not bluffing.

I'm the fucking idiot who's just forced her to hold down the busy fucking bar for my own needs, and it looks like she's now had enough.

Fuck.

Shaking my head, I turn, heading back towards my office, and drag Cara with me, who, by the looks of things, wants to bitch slap Leah, but unfortunately, she can't because I'm still fucking in love with her even when she drives me insane.

I just can't show it; I can't show any emotion towards her because she hurt a fucking brother.

Chapter 2

Leah – 26 years old – 3 months prior

I swallow hard.

I can't afford for my hours to be cut, but it's the principle of things.

I've nearly completed law school, with only 8 months left, and only Sophie, my best friend since infancy, momma Anderson, Doc, and Ava—Doc's wife—know about it. Once I've completed my bar exam, I can kiss this fucking town and Gunner goodbye because I will be gone. I'll obviously stay in touch with Sophie, her momma, Doc, and Ava, but not everyone else.

I shake my head.

For the past five years, Gunner has thrown his relationship in my face.

For the past five years, if anyone pays any attention to me, he scares them off, and for the past five years, I have had to watch the man who tore my virginity from me using a razor in between his fingers inside me just outside those front doors smirk at me every chance he gets while I try to keep a persona up when all I want to do is fall apart.

I feel dirty even now, after so long, I can still feel his breath on my face and the stale smell of his tobacco.

My skin crawls at just the thought of him making me shiver.

I haven't told anyone what happened, only Doc, but he just doesn't know who. Well, no, that's a lie. I did tell my foster father Adam; he just laughed and said, "Good for Carl," then hung up on me. I haven't spoken to them since.

Sighing, I look at the glasses, then at Gunner's office door, which's now closed, and then toward the time.

00:20am

I look towards Axels table and see him laughing with some of the brothers and Annalise, his old lady, who whenever I'm near sneers at me, like I'm after her man. I shake my head and make a decision. It's Sunday night; I'm already on hour 78 after being called in on Wednesday night after doing a full day at school, and my stupid heart couldn't say 'no' to Gunner, only to find out he was taking Cara back to the clubhouse for the evening; he fucking used me for his fuck buddy.

Nodding my head,

I make a decision. I'm already petrified about tomorrow, so why not go home? Soph won't be there because she's working, but that's fine; being alone will be just fine; I'm used to it now.

I look at Gunner's door one more time before grabbing my bag and coat that's under the bar and making my way over to the MC table, which quietens when I approach. Half of the brothers and the women, including Annalise, look down on me, while the other half ignores me. It's how it's always been since that 'man' said shit that wasn't true about me, but I kept working here, despite the treatment of my adoptive parents, who, let's face it, didn't actually treat me right growing up; they only kept me for the money they got, but I still don't want to see them dead, so I stayed. Don't get me wrong, some brothers are nice to me, like Hawk, Ink, Dagger, and sometimes Axel, but the rest don't want me here, and neither do the women, and Melanie, Dagger's woman, doesn't count; she liked me before they could poison her against me; they didn't have a chance.

I clear my throat, "I'm off." I say to Axel, who furrows his brows at me in confusion while the rest look at me with shock, but I power through, "I am currently on hour 78 out of a 45-hour contract; I have yet to have a break since being here at 4 p.m. to set up, which was over six hours ago, and Cara is on her second break since arriving late at 7 p.m. instead of 6, so I am off. You can either tend the bar or you can go get Cara and Gunner, who are currently in his office again for the second time today."

One of the brothers snorts, and I look to see Tank shake his head at me. “Leah, you’re just jealous; we all know you have a thing for him, but after what you did to Razor, it’s never going to happen. Just put your stuff back behind the bar and do your job before we decide to find someone else who will.”

I flinch at the name before narrowing my eyes at Tank.

So much for him being a nice freaking guy.

“Or I can walk out of here with my contract in hand as well as the rota’s and all my payslips and go see a lawyer and sue your asses for overworking me without a proper break?” his eyes widen while Axel clears his throat, “or I can leave now and come back bushy-eyed on Tuesday to my job where I WILL only be doing 45 hours as per my contract.”

The brother’s eyes go wide. I’ve never stood up for myself, even when they treated me like crap, but enough is enough. The town was all crazed about how great their MCs were, but to me, they were all just mean old men that needed a better hobby. I look Axel in the eyes and raise my brow, and he nods when he sees I’ve finally had enough of their treatment toward me. “We’ll see you Tuesday, Leah. Go get some rest, and good luck tomorrow with your appointment.”

I give him a nod before turning, heading to the backdoor, refusing to walk past that ‘man.’ He is the reason for my nightmares; the thought of him being anywhere near me makes my skin crawl. I make it to my car and climb in just in time for Gunner to storm out of the front door with his shirt undone, but I ignore him and drive off without looking back, heading home where I’ll hopefully get at least some sleep before my nightmares take over me.

The next morning I’m sitting in the waiting room at the hospital, exhausted, waiting to see Sarah, the OBGYN, with Ava sitting next to me, her hand in mine. Whatever crap the ‘man’ and the club have said about me over the years, Doc and Ava are the two people who have stood by me, not believing them, and I’m grateful for that.

They’ve become my parents—well, the parents I should have had.

My knee starts to bounce, making Ave grip my hand harder, trying to help me through this next hour before Sarah walks out, her brown eyes showing me kindness, "Come on, Leah." I nod, and both Ava and I follow her. She guides me to a chair and tells me to take my bottoms off for my scan. I quickly do as she says and lay back, placing the towel over me and my feet on the stirrups, before Ava comes to my head, holding my hand.

"Ok, Leah, let's see if there's any improvement."

I nod.

Over the past five years, I've been having scans done to see if any scar tissue has shrunk since the 'man' cut me open from the inside and left some trauma to my lower stomach. So far, there's too much of it. I may never conceive, and if I do, I may not be able to carry a baby to term; I might not even make it past 7 weeks, and if I do manage to, I might not be able to deliver a baby naturally.

I may never become a mom.

I bite my bottom lip, my eyes starting to tear up, my gut feeling telling me the truth; she'll just confirm it. Ava squeezes my hand, and I look at her to see her hazel eyes showing me concern, but I just give her a smile as Sarah places the prob at my entrance, causing me to flinch hard.

"Ok, you're okay. Leah, deep breath for me, ok? It's just you, me, and Ava; you're okay. Doc is outside waiting for you too; you are ok, you are safe."

I do as she says, taking deep breaths as she pushes the prob inside, causing my tears to fall.

This happens each time.

Doc says I may have PTSD, but I don't want to see anyone for it because seeing them means talking about it, and I-I can't; I don't know if I ever will be able to.

I don't know how long we sit here until she says I can get dressed, and I finally feel the prob gone. I quickly do as she says before taking a seat again, and she opens the door before Doc walks in.

My tears fall again as he takes Ava's place, her hand staying in mine though while his arm goes around my shoulder.

“What's the verdict, Sarah?”

She smiles gently at Doc's question before shaking her head and making a sob crawl out of my throat. “I'm sorry, but everything still looks the same; the chances of conceiving are very low, and if you do conceive, you still may lose the baby or end up going into labor early. If that is the case, you will have to have a caesarean; otherwise, you could bleed out.”

I nod my head before placing it against Doc's chest while squeezing Ava's hand, the reality that I'll be alone for the rest of my life sinking in.

I guess I wasn't meant to bring a child into this world.

A few hours later, I'm sitting at the park with a bottle of vodka.

Doc and Ava knew I needed time alone, so they didn't argue when I said I wanted to walk home. Meghan, the new resident doctor who I have become good friends with thanks to Doc and Mel, tried to convince me to go home with her, but I just needed time alone to get my thoughts together, and what better way than with a bottle of vodka?

I just didn't count on the sleazeball standing in front of me, towering over me, trying to get into my pants, which, let's face it, I'd probably freak out having anything placed near there anyway, so he's wasting his time. I hear a rumble of a bike, but I ignore it, and the man is trying to get my attention. His breath fucking stinks, though, which is really hard to ignore.

He gets further into my face, about to touch me, when a growly voice belonging to a man who breaks my fucking heart every day speaks out coldly.

“You've got five seconds to get the fuck away from her before I get my gun out.”

The man runs like his ass is on fire.

I guess the sound of the bike was Gunner.

I snort, watching the man trip over his own feet as he tumbles down and into the pond before Gunner takes a seat next to me. I look at him, his blonde hair all over the place, and he raises a brow at the vodka at 11:30 in the morning. I offer it to him, but he shakes his head before looking forward, while I just shrug and take a gob full.

“So, this is what you couldn’t come into work for tonight? Why you had to walk out on your shift?”

I just snorted at his disappointment.

“Nope, this is what I need after having bad news at the hospital this morning that I was anticipating, which is why I couldn’t work tonight, and you know your overworking me with lack of pay, so me walking out was your own doing. You want to fuck people, then do it when I’m not having to cover their fucking job all night on my own after working 78 hours that week already.”

He nods, his brows raised, but I just shrug. I’m fucking done.

“You’re not going to tell me what the appointment was for despite my being your best friend?”

I shake my head. “Nope, and Sophie is my best friend; you’re just my asshole boss.”

He shakes his head with a smile before gripping my hand, helping me stand, then taking the bottle off me. I try to grab it.

“Hey, that’s mine!”

He just chuckles, putting the bottle over his head when I try to jump for it.

“Come on, Angel, I’ve got plenty of booze at my place. I’ll be your drinking buddy if you want to get pissed and not talk, but not out here.”

I huff and reluctantly follow him before I start walking towards the clubhouse, but he grabs my arm and guides me to the truck with the prospect sitting in it that I must have missed in my tipsy state. He helps me inside before going to his bike, and we head to the clubhouse because, of course, I can’t go on his bike; I’m nothing to him.

The next morning I groan, my head killing me before I slowly open my eyes but freeze when I feel an arm wrapped around my waist. I look down to see tribal tattoos going up a forearm and instantly know it's Gunner, and everything comes back to me.

He found me in the park, drinking.

He brought me back to his.

We got drunk together.

He kissed me!

We, oh God, we...

I have to leave; I need to leave; he'll reject me for Cara; I know he will.

Very slowly, I climb out of his bed, but as soon as I move in between, my legs ache, making me gasp out loud.

Shit.

I turn my head towards him, but he doesn't wake; instead, he turns on his back before placing his arm over his eyes, his bare tattooed chest on display, and the club logo over his right peck.

I swallowed hard before shaking my head.

I look around the room before finding my jeans and white shirt and quickly putting them on. I quietly but quickly rush out of his room, which I don't even take pleasure in looking at, before rushing down his stairs, grabbing my shoes, and then running out of his house. I don't stop until I'm at the gate, and Cal is on gate duty. I give him a wave like I've just woken up, which technically I have, before I leave, walking back to my apartment, where hopefully Sophie is still asleep.

I really hope he doesn't break my heart tonight. I snort, who am I kidding, of course he will, he always does.

Chapter 3

Gunner

I take a deep breath as I start to wake up, my mouth tasting like shit and making me want to vomit.

Fuck me, my head is killing me.

What the fuck did we drink last night?

Shaking my head, I look around the room. Leah's not in here, but why would she be?

I try to sit up while my head pounds from the amount of alcohol we drank before finally managing to get up, making the sheet fall off.

The cold air instantly hit my cock.

I look down in confusion.

Why in the fuck am I naked? I know I normally sleep in the nude but not when I have people stay over.

Shaking my head, I quickly head for a shower before I wake Leah up with some hangover breakfast. She never told me what the appointment was about, only that it wasn't good news. I reach into my walk-in shower and turn it on before climbing in. I start to wash myself when I swear I can hear a moan, and I shake my head in confusion before finishing up.

I get out and quickly dry before putting my dark blue jeans on, sans boxers, because, well, what's the point when I'll probably be fucking Cara again later? No doubt Leah will look fucking gorgeous, and I'll be hard.

Is it right? No, but what choice do I fucking have?

I grab my black V-t-shirt and put it on, then my cut, before walking barefoot looking for Leah. I check all the rooms and then downstairs, but she's not fucking here.

I grab my phone off my kitchen counter and call the gate.

Cal answers,

“Leah left twenty minutes ago, looking worse for wear.”

I chuckle,

“Alright, thanks, Cal.”

Hanging up, I shake my head before I swear to fucking God. I hear another moan, making my cock twitch.

What the fuck?

I think I need to get laid.

I sigh before saying, Fuck it. I get my socks and shoes on, and heading to the clubhouse for breakfast seems as if I don't have to entertain, which I know I feel fucking bummed about, but maybe it's a good thing she left. Each day that goes by makes it that much harder to resist her. The more time I spent with her over the years, the more I fell, but I just can't fucking do it to a brother; I won't.

I could lose my fucking patch over it if he contests our relationship.

Half an hour later, I'm sitting at the clubhouse with Annalise, eating the hearty breakfast she cooked full of pancakes, sausages, and bacon, when my mom walks in. I sigh before shaking my head. I ignore her, taking the last bite of the pancake before standing up. I grab my plate before putting it in the sink. Annalise smiles as I walk over to her and kiss her cheek, then head towards the door that connects to the common room when my mom speaks.

“You can't ignore me forever; you're my son. And she can't ignore me forever either, not if she's having a relationship with you!”

I shake my head and start walking again while saying over my shoulder,

“Yeah, Mom, I can, and so can she; you are basically the sole reason why the man bringing her up found out she wasn't his and left her with an abusive druggie mother.”

I hear her huff in frustration, but I ignore her and continue walking out of the kitchen before heading towards the door. I've got some paperwork to do at the bar before we open. I fucking tell you, the sooner Slicer finds Hairy, the fucking better; this is the fifth time he's gone out with the Devils, our old rivals, to try and find the slimy fucker who has been trying to destroy our businesses for years on the sly, behind his Pres's back.

Sighing, I leave the clubhouse and go to my Harley.

Hours later, I'm sitting in my office at the bar doing paperwork, and the next thing I know, the bar is opening. I sigh and crick my neck before getting up to see Leah and make sure she's okay. Normally, she'd pop her head in, but she hasn't. I know she was pissed off with me the other day but I thought we were fine after spending the day drinking together, unless she's still hung over that is, and decided to blame me.

I chuckle before walking out of my office and heading into the bar. I see Leah instantly, and my heart jumps in my chest. Fuck me, why do I have to fall for the one girl I can't fucking have, and why the fuck did she have to pull shit with a brother?

She's wearing jeans and her usual chequered top, which, since the interview is now buttoned up, passed her tits much to my dismay. Her hair is up as normal, and she's wearing minimal make-up.

I go to walk forward but instantly stop as memories shoot through my brain like a film.

Fuck, I slowly lay her down, placing my naked body over hers, before kissing those plump lips with my own. She gasps, and I take my opening and shove my tongue down her throat before she moans into my mouth. I break the kiss and look down into her beautiful, light green eyes that shine full of love.

I swallow hard as I come back to the bar and shake my head—another fucking sex dream about Leah.

When are they going to stop?

I start walking again and get to the bar when we lock eyes. She looks nervous, but I don't know why. I furrow my brows,

“You good?”

She blinks several times as so many emotions flutter through her eyes, one of which is pain. I guess we did drink a lot last night.

She clears her throat and nods her head before turning to a customer.

“What can I get you?”

Another memory filters through me again. I try to squeeze my eyes shut to shut the pictures out of my head, but it just makes it worse.

She tenses as I place the head of my cock at her entrance, and I lean down, rubbing my nose along her jaw before cupping it with my hand, forcing her to look at me.

“It's only us, Angel, just you and me.”

She nods and opens her legs a little wider for me before I slowly push in. She gets tenser the more I push, so I dip my head down, making our noses touch, our lips mere millimeters apart, and I look into her eyes, which shine bright with fear but also love, love for me, and I bottom out, my cock going into her deep while her tight cunt strangles my cock.

“Fuck Angel, you feel good.”

She gasps as a tear leaks from her eye, and I kiss it away before taking her lips as I slowly move out of her, leaving the tip in before thrusting back into her hard. She moans and gasps with each thrust while I keep one hand on her jaw and the other exploring her gorgeous body that's made full of sin just for me.

Cara wraps her arm around my waist, bringing me back, and I blink my eyes several times.

“Hey, baby.”

I swallow hard, my eyes still on Leah, but she's busy with a customer, and I turn to Cara.

My dick is hard, and I need some release.

That dream I had last night felt so fucking real, like I was inside her all night long when I fucking wasn't because she belonged to a brother whom she cheated on; she can never be mine, and that fucking hurts more than anything.

With that thought lodged in my brain, I wrap my arm around Cara and smirk at her, trying to forget the dream before guiding her to my office, making her grin wide. I don't notice the pain Leah shoots my way, and I don't recognize the mistakes I keep making over and over again because all I see is the pain of not having the one I want, and being with someone else helps ease it, even for just an hour.

I shut my door as Cara leans over my desk, her ass in the air, and my dick twitches, loving the sight in front of me. I walk over to her, pulling her miniskirt up, seeing she's gone bare, and I grin before undoing my jeans as I run my fingers through her wet slit. I take my cock out and quickly sheath myself with one hand while the other plays with her clit, teasing her.

She moans as I place the head of my cock at her entrance before shoving forward, making her gasp. I pull out before thrusting in and out over and over again as I close my eyes, enjoying the sensation.

I kiss her neck while my hands move over both tits, gently pinching and twisting her nipples as my hips continue the slow, hard thrusts before I move my mouth back to hers. Our tongues tangle as she grips my back, digging her nails into me and marking me.

I blink as my hips move faster. I can feel my balls start to tighten.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

I lean forward over Cara's back and bring my hands to her front. I pull her top down, her tits popping out and swinging before I grab her nipples, twisting them hard, making her scream out in pleasure, and I place my mouth on her shoulder

blade, biting my teeth into it, making her tighten around me as I squeeze my eyes shut, trying to stay in the moment.

She gasps as I run my tongue from her entrance to her clit, tasting my own cum that's leaking out of her before I bring her clit into my mouth and suck hard, making her orgasm hit again for the fourth time tonight. Her body shakes as her juices fill my mouth, making me groan. I keep playing with her clit with my finger until the aftershocks have subsided before I shove my tongue into her entrance, taking a big lump of our releases together before moving up her body, shoving my tongue into her mouth as my cock thrusts into her entrance again, making her groan while swallowing our releases.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

I bite harder, my hips thrusting faster, I feel my spine tighten, and I quickly pinch Cara's clit making her orgasm before I pull out, cumming in the condom while I keep strumming my fingers on her clit, placing my forehead against her shoulder blades, and breathing hard.

Fuck.

Every time I close my eyes, new visions of Leah pop into my head, and they feel so fucking real and so different from my other dreams about her; it's like I can still taste her. I pull away from Cara and clean up while she grins, sorting herself out, and as fucking usual, I instantly feel fucking dirty. Every time I fuck her or someone else, I feel like I'm cheating, which is fucking ridiculous.

I sigh and shake my head before she struts over to me, looking just fucked before she kisses me, but I don't kiss her back; I never do, but that doesn't deter her.

She leaves with a wink while I run my fingers through my hair before heading back out to the bar.

I see Leah just finishing up an order when I walk over to her, the bar between us.

"How are you feeling tonight?"

I furrow my brows because she ignores me; she doesn't even fucking acknowledge that I spoke to her; instead, she turns and heads down the other end of the bar, leaving me stumped because, as far as I'm aware, we made up yesterday after I had no choice but to treat her like an employee instead of a friend.

I had to keep things fair.

Why the fuck did she just ignore me? I mean...

What the fuck?

Chapter 4

Leah – 2 months prior

I'm wiping the bar down when I have to suddenly stop.

I take a deep breath as nausea takes hold of me for the fifth time tonight. I take several deep breaths before Cara slams a tray down on the bar, giving me evils, before grabbing the other tray I prepared for one of her tables and then turning around. I shake my head and pick up the tray, placing it near the dishwasher that's currently going, before grabbing my cloth again, wiping down the bar, and ignoring the club's women at one of the tables.

Annalise and Cammy keep whispering while looking at me, and it's starting to piss me off.

Cammy, especially after she sent some sleaze over here to ask me out, why can't they just leave me alone?

I haven't done anything to any of them except work my ass off.

I also feel eyes on me from the doorway where 'he' is working tonight, which is probably why I feel so flipping sick.

I blink my eyes several times when my phone rings, and I sigh, looking at it to see that it is Gunner. I don't want to answer, but it could be about work.

Dammit.

I answer it without saying a word as he speaks.

"Look, I know you're still pissed at me for reasons I don't fucking understand, but uh, I need a favor."

I just snorted; the idiot still doesn't want to remember our night; he prefers his 'fuck buddy' and he wants a favor. I shake my head and go to hang up, but he speaks again.

“Leah, please. Ink, he’s struggling; he’s finally figured out the text was out of context.” I narrowed my eyes.

Sophie, my best friend since birth, my rock, had fallen for a patched brother, Ink. He’s nice; he treats me well, but he’s also an idiot after he called her a fucking whore and told her she belonged in a whorehouse. He thought she was in a relationship before he convinced her to choose him, not realizing it was fake—that Todd, our now-friend, is actually gay. I spent two fucking days consoling her with Momma Anderson.

We both wanted to kill the fucker.

“I know you’re narrowing your eyes right now, Angel, and I get it. He fucked up, but he wants to make it right. Please, can you please get her to the bar and keep her there until he gets back from the run?”

I take a deep breath.

“Please, Lee.”

I huff out a ‘fine’ before I hang up and bring up Sophie’s number.

Dammit, I know she’s going to be pissed about this, but she’s falling deeper and deeper into depression; she needs him, and if Gunner hadn’t called, I would have let Ink into the flat anyway. I hover my thumb on the call button and swallow hard. I don’t owe anything to this club but Ink; he’s been good to me and kind. I press the button and put the phone in my ear.

It rings three times before she answers.

“Yeah.”

I sigh, “Alright girlie, get your ass dressed and come to the bar now.”

She chuckles, “Nope, I’m staying in; I don’t want to come out.”

I narrow my eyes and say, “Text Mel; have her meet you and get your ass here now, or I’m calling momma Anderson.”

She gasps, “Below the belt, Lee!”

I chuckle. “I know, but you’d do the same to me; now you have 30 minutes to get here, no more moping.”

I hang up before she can say a word before putting my phone away and ignoring Cara’s eyes. As far as I’m concerned, she and Gunner don’t exist anymore, and I can pretend he doesn’t own my body and soul with a rich laugh and terrible jokes, and I can pretend she doesn’t know the pain she puts me through night after night and that she wasn’t a part of the plan to have me...

I swallow hard as more bile sits in my throat, and I try to breathe through it before I pick the cloth up again and finish wiping the bar, refusing to go there. I’ve just finished emptying the dishwasher for the fourth time as my redheaded best friend, sister from another mister, walks in looking down in the dumps, making me sigh.

I quickly grab her a Coke, and she raises her brow at me, but I just shrug.

“It’s better for you, and I may have put a little vodka in there.”

She grins wide.

“OK, that I can live with. Mel will be here after her shift.”

I smile and nod before going back to the customers, still trying to ignore the club women and Cara, who has a smirk on her face.

I don’t know how long I and Soph play this back and forth of her complaining about wallowing here instead of at home when she checks her phone, shit. I bet Mel’s decided to just go home to be with Dag.

Shit, shit, shit.

She starts to grab her things, and I rush over to Sophie. Fuck, she’s going to be so pissed with me.

I try to smile.

“Where are you going?”

She smiles and says, “Mel can’t make it; she’s working late, and her man wants to take her home straight after. I’m tired, so

I'm off."

I scowl, really trying to play my part by crossing my arms over my chest before I shake my head, making her raise a brow at me. "Sit your ass back down right now!"

She tilts her head and says, "It's late, Leah, and I have work tomorrow. I'm going home."

Shit, I'm losing; I should have just told her the fucking truth.

Defeated, I drop my arms to my sides and say, "You can't."

Anger and realization enter her eyes as I bite my bottom lip when Ink walks in with Gunner right behind him.

"And why's that?" She sounds angry, but Ink isn't deterred as he walks up behind her, rasping in her ear.

"Because we need to talk, Pixie."

My eyes started to tear up when she looked at me with betrayal. Though I know a small bit of her knows she needs this, I'd become her punching bag and lose my best friend.

I turn my head when Gunner storms behind the bar, getting in my face and asking, "What's this about you having a fucking date?"

I roll my eyes and scoff.

He'll fuck Cara whenever he wants, yet a guy asks to sit at the same table as me in a café a town over that Cammy had set up behind my bag and was a sleazeball, and suddenly it's a 'date' I shake my head. He's a jackass, and he can fucking suffer; he doesn't need to know it wasn't a date, and he can't keep doing this. I know he has feelings for me, yet whatever 'he' said has ensured we'll never be together, and his actions just cemented it.

"It was a bust and none of your fucking business. Why don't you go pay attention to your girlfriend?"

He furrows his brows, "I don't have a girlfriend." Just as he's said the words, Cara slinks up to him, and pain shoots through me when his arm wraps around her and I turn away from him, making him sigh

because yet again he's a clueless jackass. I look at Soph apologetically, but she just shakes her head at me, and my tears build again.

Why in the hell am I trying to help these men when they treat me like crap most days?

If the crunch came down to it, Cara would be chosen over me in a heartbeat, even by the ones who do treat me nicely.

I look down as Ink speaks.

"I know you are pissed, Pixie; I understand and I deserve it, but baby, please. I fucked up; I didn't let you explain shit; I let my jealousies of another man getting to touch you take over."

I look up just in time to see her point at Ink: "I'm not your Pixie; I'm not your baby; I'm not your anything." Then she looked at me with anger and betrayal before snapping, "Don't bother talking to me for a while," making my eyes widen before I shook my head at her, coming up with anything for her to see reason before she ruins our friendship. "Soph, you are struggling without him. Did he screw up, yes he did but you can see he loves you. Just give him a chance to explain."

She looks at me with disbelief and betrayal, making me sigh while Ink goes back behind her, but she doesn't break eye contact with me while he rasps, "I had just found out that my mother, my blood, had my big brother molested from the age of 10 until he left for the Navy. I wasn't in my right frame of mind. Phoebe showed me the text on your phone, and I flipped. I didn't think; I just acted. Please, Pixie, please understand where I was coming from."

My heart breaks for Dagger; the same heartbreak flashes through Sophie's eyes before they turn to stone, making me take a step toward her with panic, knowing she's shutting down, but before I can grab her, she spins around and rams a knee between Inks's legs, hard, causing him to gasp, then grunt, leaning forward.

I vaguely hear Gunner mutter, "Fucking hell," as I choke out a chuckle because, yeah, that was deserved.

She ignores us before getting in Ink's face, saying as coldly as she can, making me shiver, "How's that me knowing where you were coming from? Why don't you go back to your sweet butts, Ink, because you and I, we were done the day you thought treating me as a bed buddy was better than treating me like your heart? I was just stupid enough to stay until you decided to humiliate me and call me a whore with one of your brothers, who I thought was my friend. Stay away from me!"

Shit, my eyes widen as she pushes past him, "SOPHIE" I shout, but she ignores me, running out of the door before Ink quickly gets his bearings, running after her while I rush out from behind the bar, shoving past Gunner and Cara, who scowl at me.

I go to the one door I always stay away from for my friend.

I ignore the panic rising, ignore the man who tore my innocence from me, and rush through it.

The memories creep up, wanting to take hold, but I push them away as I watch Ink try to convince her to give him another shot before his phone goes off, as well as Gunners, who's currently standing behind me. He mutters "fuck" before rushing past me, knocking me into the wall, where I hit it hard, making me gasp, but he doesn't stop; he doesn't even flinch; he just runs to his bike before Ink follows.

My tears fall before I look back towards Sophie, who ignores me as she climbs into her jeep, and drives off, and I have never felt more alone than I do right now.

I go back inside the bar before wiping my face and quickly catch up on some orders when my phone buzzes, and I grab it, hoping it's Sophie, but it's not; it's a message from Dagger.

Dagger - Mel was shot; she may not make it. Come to the hospital.

I gasp and go to grab my bag when a hand stops me. I look up into Cammy's brown eyes, looking at me with distaste.

"You're not family; you're nothing but a whore employee wanting a patched brother; stay away from the hospital or you'll regret it."

I step back from her, remove her touch, and swallow hard before I nod.

I keep my bag in hand and grab my coat before looking at her.

“I don’t feel well and have never taken sick leave; I think I will now. I won’t be in for the rest of this week!”

She narrows her eyes but doesn’t argue with me. I’m sure Axel told her I threatened to sue him and the club for overworking me.

I quickly rush out of the bar and head home, hoping Sophie will be there, but she’s not; she’s gone to Momma Anderson’s, and I’m all alone, so very fucking alone.

Chapter 5

Leah

The next morning I wake up with a start, bile rising in my throat, and I quickly rush to the bathroom I share with Sophie, the pink and purples blending well together on the walls. I lift the purple toilet lid and throw up the bile, heaving with pain as tears fall down my face. I take a few deep breaths before I move my head from the toilet and sit back on the floor when my eyes catch the box of unopened tampons on my side of the counter, and I freeze.

No, I'm not, NO.

My breathing becomes heavier before I place my hand on my stomach, feeling a slight pouch there, and bile comes back into my throat, wanting to come out again.

I made it up just in time.

When I'm only heaving, I flush the toilet before panic rushes through me.

I quickly brush my teeth, then rush to my phone, where I have a message from Dagger and Gunner, and I swallow hard.

Dagger – You didn't come? I thought you were her friend, Leah; I thought you were different from what Razor was saying, but I guess not. Don't bother coming in, and stay away from my woman.

My tears fall as a sob builds up; Cammy caused this.

Gunner – So our friend gets shot and is now in a coma, and Cammy said you walked out on your shift, leaving us in the lurch. I'm sorry, Leah, friend or not. You're on an official warning; something like this happens again, and you'll be fired. I'll give you the letter for your shift on Monday, as you've told her you're taking the rest of the week off sick. This isn't okay, Leah; far from it, the other employees shouldn't have to do your work.

My sobs came out, yet he was okay with me doing their work for five years?

I decided to ignore both messages and get Sarah's office number.

I press call, and Gail, her receptionist, answers after the fourth ring.

"General OBGYN, how may I help you?"

I let out another sob.

"G-Gail, its-its Leah."

She gasps,

"Leah, sweetheart, what's wrong?"

I sniffle, "I-I think I m-may be p-pregnant."

I hear her mutter 'shit' before some typing.

She's aware I'm at high risk.

"Alright, sweetheart, come in; Sarah can see you in the next forty minutes."

I sob out a thank you before hanging up, then rush to get dressed. I get a baggy jumper on before some sweats, not caring while I pull my white, blonde hair in a messy bun, some of the blue highlights falling over my face. I quickly grab my bag and keys and lock up, rushing down the stairs towards my crappy car, hoping it doesn't play up tonight.

Yesterday, it just kept winding over and over before it finally started.

I get to the hospital within twenty minutes, thanks to my rust bucket struggling to start and rushing in. When Gail sees me and sees the tears trailing down my cheeks, she quickly grabs her phone and calls someone while pointing at a chair for me to sit in. I nod and take a seat before Sarah rushes out and ushers me into an examination room, making me lie on the bed.

"Alright, Leah, I want to do a scan first, but I would rather not do a transvaginal scan because we haven't got Ava here to

keep you with us, so when was your last period?"

I sniffle and furrow my brows, trying to think before I stutter.

"Over t-three m-months ago."

It was a week before I got drunk with Gunner.

She nods and squeezes my hand while my tears fall down my cheeks. A sob comes out when a whooshing sound echoes through the room. Oh God, I'm really pregnant.

She nods. "You're definitely pregnant, Lee, and by the size of the baby, you're roughly 12 weeks."

I sob as I try to watch her take measurements.

I can see the baby's little arms and legs, its head, and the heart beating in its chest. God, a baby. She prints off some pictures before wiping my stomach and then helping me sit. She wipes my cheeks with her fingers before squeezing my hand.

"Leah."

Some more tears fall.

"You've reached the 12-week mark, which is good, but you have about an 8% chance of carrying to term," she says, taking a deep breath. "You have roughly an 18% chance of you and the baby surviving delivery if you can deliver naturally, but if we book a cesarean for you, then you'll have a 50% chance; the both of you will, and by law, we can terminate the pregnancy now because of your risks for death."

My sobs come out, and she takes me in her arms.

I could die, I could lose my baby, yet I know I will do this; there's a heartbeat, and this may be my only chance of not being alone, and if I don't make it, then, well, I don't make it.

Once I calmed down, I pulled back, wiped my tears, and nodded.

"I'm having this baby."

She grins, wiping her own tears before nodding when there's a knock on the door and Doc rushing in. He sees the state I'm in and quickly rushes over to me, taking me into his arms and

holding me tight before looking at the monitor and then the pictures.

“Fuck!” he rasps, and another sob comes out, and Sarah continues to talk.

“OK, so I want to see you every four weeks. You’ll have a scan each time, and before you go, we need full blood work done, OK?”

I nod while Doc squeezes me tightly to help me stand while Sarah hands me a slip of paper with my next appointment before passing Doc the scan photos. I sniffle as he leads me out of the waiting room towards another room where they take my blood and I have to have a swab and pee test done. Then he guides me to the lifts. I’m in a comatose state, just going through the motions when we get off on the ground floor, but end up bumping into Hawk and Dagger. Hawk furrows his brows while Dagger scowls at me.

Doc quickly hides the scan photos in his cut while Dagger steps toward me.

“I told you, you’re not welcome here! Not only did you not show up for your friend, but you also left the bar unattended last night like a selfish bitch. We needed you, and you let us down.”

I feel Doc grow tense, about to take a step forward, but I grip his arm while Hawk drags Dagger back, growling at him, “Dag, what the fuck is wrong with you?” I look up and make eye contact with Dag, and he furrows his brows when he sees the tears stained on my cheeks and my red eyes. Hawk notices too, but he soon looks at the grip I have on his father’s arm, and anger shines through his eyes, making him step forward, clearing his throat.

“Uh, Dad, does mom know how close you two are, because I, uh, I’ve been told that you two, uh, have been..”

Doc growls, “If you continue that sentence, accusing me of having an affair with someone I see as a daughter, then you and I are going to have problems, son!”

I swallow hard and sniffle before going into Doc Cut, grabbing the appointment letter and photos but ensuring they aren't visible from the picture side before kissing Doc on the cheek. He goes to say something, but I just rasp.

"Thank you, dad."

He smiles gently at me while Hawk raises his brows in surprise, and Dagger just glares at me.

I ignore them both and walk around them, not willing to stay in the MC's presence any longer. I thought they saw me as family, but I guess I was wrong about them too, and now 'he' is probably trying to cause more problems, spreading more lies, so I'm all alone, but I already know he doesn't need to confirm it for me; I'm not good enough for anyone, and when it comes to it, I'm disposable to the MC. I need to try and find another job until I pass the bar exam; my foster parents haven't been in touch, so that doesn't matter anymore with 'his' threats, and maybe a job out of this town would be better; maybe a new place too.

With that thought, I go to my rust bucket and start her up, feeling relieved that she did start on the first try before heading home, where not even my best friend from diapers will be there.

Alone, I'll be all alone.

When I get inside the empty apartment, my tears start to fall as I slide down the door, deciding now is the time to fall apart, and tomorrow, tomorrow I'll find a different job and a different apartment a few towns over before I quit.

My thoughts start to run wild.

How am I going to raise a baby on my own?

How am I supposed to tell Gunner when he's choosing not to remember our night together, or do I not tell him and let him live his life?

Am I even going to survive this?

Chapter 6

Gunner – one week prior

I smirk as I sit back on my brown desk chair, watching Cara eat out another waitress, Silver, who is lying on her back on my dark oak desk. Her white hair spreads all over it while her legs hang open at the side as Cara stiffens her tongue, rubbing it around Silver's clit before sucking it into her mouth, moaning while tasting her juices, and I palm my rock-hard cock.

A vision of Leah pops into my head, her head tilted back as she cums on my cock.

I shake my head. Fucking dreams.

Leah hasn't spoken to one club member since last month, and she has ensured to only complete her mandatory hours each week. If a waitress has said she needs to stay for clean-up because she has to go early, Leah has refused, when normally she'd agree. Ink tries to talk to her, but she just ignores him each and every time. The only time she'll acknowledge you with a head nod is when you tell her something changed with the shifts. She doesn't care as long as it's not exceeding her hours.

Sometimes I debate whether to add an extra few hours just to see if she'll speak to me. Fuck, she hasn't tried to contact Sophie since Ink tried to win her back at the bar.

I miss her, I miss my friend, and I miss the girl I love more than anything. Mel woke up last night, and she hadn't even gone to see her. It's like she's detached from everyone. Shaking my head, I come back into the room and watch the delightful show. Fuck, Cara loves eating pussy. I palm my cock again before taking a swig of the tumbler in my hand, the whiskey slowly burning its way down, feeling fucking good.

I'm about to undo my jeans when my office door opens and I sit up, seeing Leah walk in here dressed in baggy clothes. My

eyes go wide while the women on the desk gasp before Cara's face goes red with anger at being interrupted by her.

Fuck, not once has she ever come into my office when the doors closed.

I swallow hard at the detached look in her eyes.

“Ever heard of fucking knocking.”

Leah looks toward Cara and raises a brow. “Have you ever heard of not being a slut?”

I furrow my brows while Cara gasps hurt etching her features.

In the back of my mind, I know it's a fake look, but I'm too high up in my feelings, as I've just been caught cheating, to realize the damage of my words.

“LEAH!” I boom, making her look at me. “That was uncalled for, especially when everyone around you knows you're a slut too.”

Hurt shines in her eyes before she shakes her head, and I instantly want to fucking hit myself.

What the fuck did I just say?

What the fuck...

Leah walks towards me. She goes around my desk, where Silver is still playing with her slit, trying to stay in the mood, but she doesn't look at them. Nope, instead, she walks right up to me and looks me in the eyes before she says coldly, “I quit.”

I stand, making her have to look up to me and say, “What the fuck are you talking about?”

She just smirked and said, “I'm talking about being treated like crap by you and your club; I'm talking about being overworked. I. QUIT.”

My nostrils flare as my father walks in and raises a brow at the women at my desk, then an angry-looking Leah,

“Dad.”

He raises a brow at me.

“Yes, son.”

I can feel my heart beating wildly; she's not fucking quitting. I'll never see her if she does, and it'll drive me insane. I fucking need her like I need air to breathe; she fucking consumes me, and the women on my desk are the only way to heal my broken fucking heart because I can't go there.

"Tell Leah here the terms of leaving employment before the end of her contract."

She just smirks; she's not deterred, even with my father's words.

"That she needs to give at least three months' notice or face a fine, and Leah, you're not quitting, darling; you know we need you."

She flinches when my dad calls her darling before she looks me in the eyes.

"Then take me to court."

She's fucking serious.

I shake my head, not agreeing, while she just shrugs before leaving my office.

I look at Silver and Cara to see them trying to get off again, and I boom, "OUT," feeling fucking pissed. Cara frowns but does as she's asked, taking Silver with her while my dad furrows his brows.

"Son, that girl loves you something fierce; did you really think she'd put up with this shit forever?"

He points to my desk, and I just shake my head. I know she's in love with me, but it can't happen. For years, I was in denial over my feelings for her. I'd tell the brothers I didn't love her when I knew I did, and then I'd be fucking surprised if I heard she was on a date, but we couldn't go there.

"You know what she did to Razor's dad; I can't go there."

Dad sighs and nods his head before placing his hands on his hips. "Who had no proof, son?" He sighs again. "Your mother wants to see Mel."

I just snorted, "Dad, you know that's not going to happen."

He sighs again. “I know, but she’s getting more and more irate over the fact we’re seeing her, but she’s not, and she’s only just woken up.”

I just shake my head and say, “Dad, we both know she only wanted Mel back then because she was a girl and she couldn’t have any more children; it was her way of dealing with the fact you slept with someone else. Now it’s because she doesn’t want to be left out. She ruined Mel’s childhood dad; it’s not going to happen. She needs help.”

Dad nods before running a hand through his hair. It’s why he’s tried to act like she didn’t exist for so long because mom became unpredictable about the whole situation, even though she apparently slept with someone else too when they were on a break, and instead of getting pregnant, she got an STI instead, which is gross; she’s my fucking mother. “I’ll make an appointment with Dr. Shall.”

I nodded, Dad bringing the horrid visions of my mother being intimate out of my fucking head—shit that was disgusting. I pat Dad on the back, and I head out while he double-checks the books for me again. Fucking Slicer’s gone again, and I’m not good on the paperwork side of the fucking business, so that’s where Dad comes in for me—to make sure I haven’t messed it up.

I fucking bet my left nut Slicer won’t find Hairy; someone’s fucking helping him.

I ignore Cara walking out of the bar, giving Razor a head nod from Untamed Girl’s doorway; he swaps shifts each week, and I get on my bike before heading back to the clubhouse. I need to go home and drink myself into a stupor. I know what I’ve been doing with Cara over the years has been wrong, but how else am I supposed to try and get over the aching in my chest every time I see Leah, every time I see her smile and the dimple in her left cheek, or every time she laughs that sweet laugh that causes her eyes to sparkle?

She cheated on Razor; she wanted a patch, and I can’t fucking go there.

I wish I could, but I fucking can’t, and it kills me.

I get back to the clubhouse in record time before pulling up towards the gates. Shane lets me in while Stormy and Axel grab a hold of Leslie, Stormy's ex-old lady, and Dagger's stepmother, but Inks's biological mother keeps trying to get in while Hawk keeps a hold of his piece in his cut. I climb off, walk over to them, and raise a brow,

“You will let me in; I want to see my fucking son.”

I snort, making her narrow her eyes at me, but I just smirk at her.

“Ink doesn't want fuck all to do with you; you abused his brother, and you let men molest him from the age of 10, all because you were a jealous bitch. Now, you need to leave before I fucking force you.”

She just huffs, “You wouldn't touch me.”

I just smile at her and say, “Bitch, I'm the enforcer of this club; you bet your ass I'd remove you by any means necessary.”

My name is Gunner for a reason—I'm really fucking good with artillery, rifles, and guns, to be specific.

She pales before Axel steps forward.

“Leave now!”

Leslie shakes her head, her brown bob in a mess, while her brown eyes fire anger at us before she screams.

“I'M HIS MOTHER.”

Just as Ink pulls up.

He did have a smile on his face, so I'm guessing things are good with Sophie, and I smile a little. Apparently, Sophie hasn't had anything to do with Leah since I begged her to bring her friend to the bar for Ink. I think I may have broken their friendship, and the guilt is fucking horrid, but at least my brother is happy again.

His smile soon fades when he sees his egg donor, but her smile comes out, seeing him with relief, but I just snort and shake my head. She's delusional if he wants anything to do with her.

He slowly puts his sunglasses on his head before turning to Leslie.

“You need to leave, Leslie.”

She flinches but doesn't deter as she places her hands on her hips. “What's this I hear you dating a fucking whore.”

We all stand straighter at her words, words that are going to get her throat fucking slit as Ink growls out, punctuating each word, “Don't. Ever. Fucking. Call. My. Woman. A. Whore.”

“I can do whatever I want, your MY son; she's not dating you; I've already forbade her.”

I furrow my brows.

When in the fuck did she see Sophie?

I looked towards Axel, who was also confused when Ink got off his bike and got in her face. “You have five fucking seconds to leave before I take you to the basement, and this time my father won't be able to stop me, and the next time you go near my woman, I'll kill you without hesitation.”

Her eyes go wide with unshed tears, but we all just shake our heads.

We've fallen for that trick one too many times; ask fucking Dagger, considering he's the one who suffered.

Fuck, I feel like a shit enforcer for not picking up on the shit he was going through.

Stormy steps forward, “I'd do as he says, Leslie, because our prospect here doesn't like you too much, especially with the gun he's currently pointing at you, and to be honest, I'm kind of hoping he shoots it.”

I hear Shane snort as Leslie turns her head towards him in fear when Ink's phone rings and he freezes before he rasps, “It's Uncle David.”

I sucked in a breath, my eyes wide. He wouldn't be calling Ink unless it was an emergency, and by the look in Ink's eyes, he wasn't expecting a phone call today. He puts the phone on loudspeaker as he answers it when David, who is also the

sheriff, panicked voice come over the speakers before he hangs up.

“Jackson, get to the General now; it’s Sophie.”

Fuck!!!

I quickly rush over to my Harley that my dad got me on my 16th birthday while shouting over my shoulder to him, “INK, SNAP OUT OF IT, I’LL CALL LEAH.”

I climb on, the fire red tank glaring in the sun, before calling her quickly, but she doesn’t answer, which I should have fucking predicted, so I do the emergency call that we came up with a few years ago when she got a flat tire on the Hudson Bridge, and I didn’t answer because I was too busy fucking Cara and Silver. She ended up leaving her car there and walking back to hers in the pissing-down rain.

I ring her, let it ring twice, and then hang up. I do it twice before ringing again, and she answers immediately.

“Gunner?” Her voice is shaky, and I feel fucking horrible for doing this, but I need to get to the hospital.

She needs to get to the hospital.

“Something happened to Sophie; get to the hospital now.”

I hang up before skidding out of the clubhouse, managing to catch up with the others, knowing I just fucking panicked her.

When we all rush into the reception area of the emergency room, Leah comes through a different door, making me frown with confusion before we hear the painful cries of a woman. I see Leah’s eyes widen as she rushes through the double brown doors,

“SOPHIE” she shouts, and we all follow.

We all watch as Ink takes his woman into his arms as she falls apart.

Leah tries to rush over to her, but I grab her so she doesn’t get hurt, making her hit out at me. Ink screams for someone to sedate Sophie while she screams for her mother in absolute gut-wrenching pain before Meghan sticks a needle in Sophie’s

neck, causing her to go limp. Ink puts her on the gurney that was provided when we all look at Doc. He looks at Ink before flashing his eyes towards Leah, concern shining through them as he tells us, Ashley, that Sophie's momma is braindead after trying to commit suicide by taking several pills.

Leah falls to the ground in gut-wrenching screams, and I quickly catch her, her sobs echoing through the room. Dagger looks at her with concern and confusion, and I must admit, even I'm confused. I understand Sophie's friend, but she's acting like she's just lost a parent. I shake my head about to tell her to pull it together for her friend, but I don't get the chance when she pushes me away, following Ink and Doc. We all follow, as well as Ink having a quiet word with Ashley, who currently has a tube down her throat, the machine breathing for her as Leah climbs onto the fucking bed with her, putting her head on the woman's shoulder and sobbing for her to come back before Doc clears his throat.

We expect him to make her move, but instead, he looks at us, "Let's give her some privacy, yeah."

We all furrow our brows but nod, and I look at a sobbing Leah one more time who's holding onto Ashley like she's her lifeline before leaving, going into the hallway to wait for her, not noticing a devastating Sophie walk in, pulling the plug on her own mother.

Chapter 7

Leah – present day

I stand in my gray bedroom in front of my oval mirror. I have bags under my eyes, but that's a given. My hair is down, and I'm wearing a baggy black flowy dress to hide my 17-week bump that is getting larger by the day. I don't know how I've managed to get this far in the pregnancy, but I have, although Sarah has said the survival rate hasn't changed. I guess it helps that I'm now working at Tots Café in Rivers End, a town over from the MC, instead of being overworked and stressed working for them.

Gunner ended up smashing a chair against the wall when I took the letter of resignation to him, effective immediately. Called me a shellfish bitch for leaving them in the lurch, but I just shrugged and walked out. I'm done with him.

I look at the time.

7:45 am

Time to go.

Looking back in the mirror once more, I grab my coat and bag and head to the freaking clubhouse because, of course, that's what Ink decided was best even for the wake, despite momma Anderson wanting her wake at the Hudson Lake, and now I have to sit with all these people who don't like me, avoid my foster parents like the plague because clearly, nothing I do will make them proud, it seems as though their true colors have shone through, and I have to be near 'him'.

Sighing, I lock up my new flat before heading to my car. The guys had packed up all of Sophie's stuff a week ago, not caring for the mess they left behind for me. I cleaned the place from top to bottom before I handed in my keys to the landlord without anyone knowing, including Doc. I had already signed a lease for this place before Momma Anderson left us; it's close to my job and closer to my school. The only reason I'm

going back to Parkerville is for Sophie and only her. After today, I won't be back; she'll have to come here.

Well, that's only if she wants to anyway; our friendship has strained a lot lately.

I make it to the clubhouse gates within an hour, and Shane lets me in reluctantly; he narrowed his eyes when I pulled up, not wanting to open the gates for me. I shake my head and pull up in an empty space before heading inside. Everyone looks at me with raised brows, but I just keep my head held high. They've become staler with me since I quit the bar, but I don't care; I'm not here for them; I'm here for my friend.

I notice Ink in his doorway, and he gives me a small smile, but I don't return it.

He suggested I maybe sit out the funeral because of the hostile environment that Cara and 'he' had created by spreading crap about me and the MC believing it, to which I nearly hit Ink. Doc had to hold me back while his eyes widened. These people don't get to dictate shit to me when momma Anderson and Sophie are MY family.

She wouldn't even be back with him if it wasn't for me, so in my eyes, he's a selfish bastard.

He tilts his head, his eyes showing apologies, but I just shake my head at him when Mel grips me into a hug before Dagger joins her and hugs me too, but I ignore him as she pulls away a little.

"How are you?"

I just shrug and give her a little smile while Dagger squeezes my hand, making me look at him. Sorrow shines through his eyes, and I've gotta tell ya, I'm fed up with these men being dicks and then apologizing a few weeks later only to be dicks again.

"I'm an ass." I snort while Mel nods her head in agreement, narrowing her eyes at her man. "I was stressed with the thought of losing Mel, and I took it out on you. I'm sorry, Lee, and I'm sorry for the pain Gunner's been putting you through these past five years without doing anything about it. A lot has

been said over the years, and instead of coming to you about it, we've all just believed it—after seeing you at the hospital that day, a complete wreck, I'm beginning to think I'm not the only one who's gone through trauma.”

My tears fall while I suck in a breath before he pulls me into his chest, not knowing how to feel about him figuring me out. I know how difficult he is with touch because of the trauma caused by his stepmother, so I know how sorry he is.

I pull away first, and he tilts his head, but I just give him a small smile, making him smile a little back.

Mel goes to say something before we hear Sophie scream out ‘NO’ over and over, and I don't think I just run towards Ink's room. I ignore Cammy telling me to leave Ink to her as I rush in, climbing in bed with her in front of her, my tears falling down my cheeks when she grips me, putting her head in my neck, wailing.

I hold her tight as she cries herself to sleep, clutching me while my sobs wrack my body for her loss and for my loss.

I squeeze my eyes shut as Ink speaks, dictating what we all have to do, and I find it hard not to snap at him, “Everyone leave; get ready for the funeral; I'll wake her again and get her sorted. We'll meet you all outside for the hurst.” I hold her tighter as he speaks to me, causing me to sob. “You too, Leah.” I can't move, though; she needs me. “I promise, she'll be okay.”

I shake my head before someone lifts me up, and I instantly know it's Gunner by his rich cologne and the smell of Cara's fricking rose perfume, making me sob some more. I can't be around these people anymore. For years, I've put on a smile, but I can't fake it any longer. Gunner walks us out of the room when I hear Cara in the background say, “Gunner, she has legs, baby; let her walk, yeah,” but he ignores her, taking me into a room before lying on the bed.

I feel the bed dip as my sobs shake my body before he moves my hair out of my face.

“Angel, look at me,” he raps, but I ignore him, making him sigh before laying back, ensuring to keep his hand on mine, squeezing it every time I try to move it. “We’ll wait here until it’s time to go. You’ll be riding on the back of my bike.”

I spring my eyes open, and he smirks at me, knowing he’s gotten what he wanted.

I go to shake my head, but he just shrugs before closing his eyes, making me want to punch him.

A few hours later, and the service is over, we’re back at the clubhouse, where Cara has shoved me several times for being on the back of Gunner’s bike, where I barely held onto him, trying to hide my bump and not wanting to touch him. He stunk off her, so they obviously had a get-together when I was left alone in a room for half an hour. He also has a new hickey on his neck, proving my point.

Most of the MCs have ignored me except for Doc, Ava, Dagger, and Ink. I haven’t spoken to Hawk since he accused me of having an affair with his dad, a man I see as my dad, and I’ve made sure to dodge my foster parents who are currently sitting with ‘him’ laughing and joking, looking my way every once in a while, but I keep my eyes on my friend, wondering when the best time for me to leave will be, but I don’t know if leaving her would be a good idea. Also, staying around these people who I thought were my family and around the parents who took me in is sending my stress levels high, which isn’t good for the baby.

I can feel Gunner standing next to me; he’s barely left my side since the service, but I ignore him while he talks to Axel and Hawk, who keeps looking at me with apologetic eyes. Ava said she had words, but I don’t care; the damage is done.

I take a small sip of my lemon juice when I notice Cara, whose hair is suddenly bright fucking pink when it was brown this morning, slink up next to Gunner, who automatically wraps his arm around her, and pain shoots through me. It won’t be long before he makes her his old lady; it’s probably better that way. I try to move away a little while Cara smirks at me, knowing my feelings for the man that she’s currently all over

in barely there clothes, which she wore for a freaking wake, when there's a loud bang, and I turn to look at Sophie with shock. She's standing near the table, her chair knocked over as she glares at Gunner.

Shit.

I shake my head at her, but she ignores me before storming over to a confused Gunner and pulling her fist back, punching him. Cara screams like she was the one hit and moves out of the way, making me roll my eyes before Sophie screams at Gunner.

“YOU COMPLETE WASTE OF FUCKING SPACE.” She points at him while his eyes are like saucers, which would be funny if my sister from another mister wasn't about to out me. “You stand here next to my best friend and wrap your arm around another woman. The same woman you always fucking run off to.”

Oh fuck, no, no, no.

“For years, my best friend has had to watch YOU parade around with that skank.”

She points at a shocked Cara while Gunner's eyes widen, and I swallow hard because my best friend, who's going through so much pain, has decided to focus on my pain instead, boxing hers in.

I shake my head at her again, but she ignores me.

“You have been treating her like she's your fucking doormat. If someone takes notice of her, you scare them away, then go back to the bitch; she's upset; your right there to take care of her before yet again going back to that fucking bitch!”

Gunner's eyes flare before he shouts, “BECAUSE SHES MY FUCKING FRIEND!”

I flinch at his words as I hear Ink growl at Gunner's tone toward his woman while Cara grins before one of my secrets is out of the bag: “WHOSE FUCKING IN LOVE WITH YOU!”

I look down, squeezing my eyes shut, knowing he's looking at me.

“And when you saved her from some fucking asshole four months ago at the park and took her home, where you both drank, you slept with her!”

Oh, fuck, fuck, fuck, Sophie, stop. Please, please, please, stop.

“It wasn’t a dream.” I hear Gunner rasp, and my tears start to form while the whole clubhouse is quiet.

I can hear the smirk in her voice as she takes delight in hurting him like he’s been hurting me. “No, Gunner, it wasn’t a dream, and you didn’t even remember; instead, you went back to Barbie Wannabe over there the next day! Do you know the best thing when people think you’re not listening because of your grief, Gunner? They talk.” I hear Cara gasp, but I don’t look up; I can’t. “The bitch admitted while on the phone that she’d poked holes in your condoms this morning. “I feel the room get tense, and I look up to see all the brothers stand. She wants your patch and your money, so what better way than trapping you?”

Gunner goes stone-cold still before slowly turning to look at Cara, his eyes hard before he tilts his head at her, making her swallow hard. He’s pissed because, well, he did fuck her this morning; he has hickeys to prove it, and he stinks of her.

“Shane.”

It’s all he says for Shane to take hold of the woman’s arm, who then proceeds to drag her, kicking and screaming, out of the clubhouse before turning back to me. He goes to walk towards me, but I just shake my head at him before moving over to the table with Cammy, who instantly takes me in her arms despite being a bitch over the years towards me, but right now I don’t have anyone else to turn to. I don’t look at Leah; I can’t until I hear her gasp and Gunner tries to help her. “It’s ok; just breathe; it’s ok.”

Her tears come out quickly, and I stand, moving towards her, hoping using her daddy’s nickname would snap her out of her panic: “Breathe, baby girl, breathe.”

It doesn’t work; she runs, shoving past people out of the clubhouse. “SOPHIE” I shout, but she ignores me.

Ink looks at me, but I just shake my head at him. I know his question: am I mad? No, I am not fucking mad at her; I am at the rest of the MC, though.

“I’m not mad; let’s go find our girl.”

He nods as I run past him, while several feet follow me. I quickly get into the van with the prospect making Gunner growl, but I don’t give a shit.

Ink goes in front of the van, leading us to where she is—the only place she’d go—to her momma.

When we get there, we see her on her knees screaming for her momma to come back, and my tears fall as I rush out of the van before she screams, “PLEASE COME BACK, PLEASEEE....”

I can see the gate is bolted, so I don’t bother trying to nudge it, and without thinking about me or my unborn baby, I fucking climb the gate while Gunner tries to get me down, but I ignore him. Ink follows suit until we’re both on the ground on the other side and sprinting toward my friend, who’s screaming in pain.

“SOPHIE” I shout as Ink shouts, “PIXIE.”

She doesn’t hear us though; the pain of losing her momma is consuming her. “P-PLEASE COME-COME B-BACK, P-P-PLEASE...” She falls forward, and I scream out, panicking for her to get in.

We run faster, Ink getting to her first, Doc right after, while I stand back with tears in my eyes. Doc nods. “She’s passed out from a panic attack, and she’s severely dehydrated. We need to get her back to the clubhouse, or your house at least, so I can insert an IV.” He breathes deeply while the rest of us sigh in relief before Ink takes charge and looks towards Shane. “Drive my bike back to the club; take it to my house.” He waits for a nod before looking at me. “Can you drive the van back if I sit with her on my lap in the passenger seat?”

I take a deep breath and quickly wipe my tears, needing to be strong, and I nod while Gunner places his hand around my waist, but I quickly knock him back, not looking at him. I

don't want him feeling the baby, and I certainly don't want him touching me. The men quickly help Ink stand with Sophie in his arms before we rush down the green grassed hill from Momma Anderson's grave.

I look at it one more time while holding the door to the van as the men help Ink climb inside, memory after memory of her teaching us how to cook and how to dance flying through my eyes before she comforted us when we were sad. Wiping away a fallen tear, I climb in, but Gunner stops me from closing the door.

I don't look at him, even when he speaks.

"The clutch sticks, so be careful, Angel."

I flinch at the nickname but nod my head before starting the van, waiting for Gunner to shut the door before pulling away from the cemetery.

The guys all surround the van with Axel in front, heading back to Ink's on the compound.

By the time we get back, the whole club is waiting in the driveway, but I ignore them as Ink guides me around the clubhouse towards the little estate before I pull up outside Ink's home. We all hurry inside, going to his room before he places Sophie, who is still unconscious, on his bed while I take a seat at the end of it, my eyes focusing on my best friend as Doc comes over and places an IV in her arm before he sighs.

"She'll be out of it for a little while; her body's in shock, so it's trying to protect itself. I'll come check on her a little later."

I vaguely hear Ink mutter, 'Thank you' before Gunner clears his throat. "I'm going to take Leah back to mine; I'll come to check in later."

I snap my head to him and narrow my eyes, making him clear his throat again, knowing he's in for a fight because, like, fuck am I staying with that bastard. The love I felt for him has slowly started to dwindle over the years, and these past few months have made me slowly start to hate him.

The fucker has treated me like garbage.

“It’s just while she’s sleeping, Angel, then I can bring you back.”

I glare at him before I feel Ink squeeze my hand, making me look at him. My hair falls in my face, and I quickly move it to see his eyes soften towards me before giving me a nod to get some rest, making me sigh. I get up and kiss Sophie’s head before whispering, “I love you” Then I turn and leave, making sure not to touch Gunner, I don’t want fuck all to do with him. I hear him sigh, but I ignore him, speeding up because I am not staying with him. I’ll stay with Doc or I’ll go home and come back early tomorrow morning, but I’m not staying at his house, no way, no fricking chance.

I get halfway down the road towards Doc’s when I hear him shout.

Fuck.

“LEAH!”

Chapter 8

Gunner

“LEAH!”

I shout as she quickly rushes to the opposite side of my fucking house, considering I live one door fucking over from Ink’s next to Dagger.

I quickly run after her as her footsteps quicken before I wrap my arm around her waist, but before I can tighten, she quickly shoves me away, her eyes showing nothing but hate, and I have to swallow hard for how dry my throat goes. I really fucked up over the years. I mean, I knew she had feelings for me and I, her but she was with a brother, and she cheated on him. She knew we could never be an item, but saying that the day after we slept together, pieces of our night are coming back to me fully now that I know it wasn’t a fucking dream.

I fucked Cara, and it explains her silent treatment since.

I lift my hands up in an innocent gesture and say, “My place is this way, Angel.”

I say it calmly because maybe she was still drunk the next morning and doesn’t remember.

I suddenly feel sick when the realization hits. Fuck, did I take advantage of her?

She sneers at me, fucking sneers for the first time, making my eyes widen in shock. “I’d rather burn than stay at yours; go back to your girlfriend, Gunner I’m going to Docs.”

I bite back a growl as she turns and walks away from me before muttering ‘fuck it’ and running after her. I bend down, place my arms around her pelvis, and pick her up, making her gasp before she starts to try and hit me. “GUNNER, PUT ME DOWN RIGHT FUCKING NOW!”

I ignore her and walk to mine while a few brothers come out of their homes to see what the fuss is about. Ink quickly opens one of his windows. He, Dagger, and Axel all pop their heads out, and I wave at them as Lee screeches about how she's going to rip my balls off. The brothers all smirk and snicker while I whistle, ignoring them all with my middle finger in the air, which I soon fucking drop when Leah decides she'd like to be a fucking piranha and bites my fucking finger, making me curse while the brothers laugh their asses off.

Dickheads, the lot of them.

I open my white door, slamming it shut behind us before I take her upstairs, intending to take her to my room but veering off when her cold voice echoes through my two-story Victorian home.

“YOU TAKE ME TO YOUR ROOM, AND I SWEAR I’LL BURN YOUR FUCKING HOUSE DOWN.”

Her threat is real; I can feel it, so I deposit her on the guest bed that my mom decorated. The three walls are creamy white, while the back wall, where the queen-sized bed with dark gray bedding and a throw is light gray.

Leah sits up and narrows her eyes at me, but I just raise a brow when my phone goes off.

Axel – Emergency Church, 4 a.m.

Sighing, I look at the beauty who stole my heart years ago. She looks fucking tired. I walk over to her and cup her cheek, but she smacks my hand away, and I sigh again.

“Get some sleep, Angel.”

I turn and leave, and fuck am I going to hell for this, but I lock the fucking door so she can't leave; she needs rest, and being here is for the best for not just her and everyone else but for Sophie. I'm starting to think Leah's got more drama in her than she's previously shown; Razor did warn us. I hear the door handle wiggle, and I wince when she screeches and something smashes against the door.

Shit.

Scrubbing a hand down my face, I head to my room before taking a quick shower, then hopping into bed in just my black boxers.

My phone goes off, and I check it quickly before blowing out a breath at the name that's popped up.

Cara – Baby, where are you? I'm sorry; I just didn't want to lose you. XX

Shaking my head, I put my phone down on the charging mat. It makes sense why I felt like I was cheating these past four months more than normal anyway because I'd had Leah, and I blocked it out to make it okay to keep going back to Cara. Don't get me wrong, I don't have feelings for her; she's a means to an end, but I do care about her welfare.

I knew she was in love with me, so I needed to tread carefully because until Lee and I can sort this shit out, hash everything out, and be friends again, I can't fuck anyone else, and I certainly can't fucking go back to Cara after she tried to fucking trap me. Shit, I fucked her this morning because I couldn't handle having Leah in my bed. I shake my head. I know Leah and I cannot be together because of Razor and our by-laws in the club, so we need to sort this out. We both need to move on, which means I need to stop getting in the way when a guy asks her out, no matter how hard it'll be.

The next morning, we're all rushing out of church after two of our prospects informed us that Sophie was on the Hudson Bridge instead of in bed, where Ink left her. We all race to her, only to find her hanging off the edge before fucking Ink joins her, making us all hold our fucking breaths. It takes both Ink and Stormy, but she finally snaps out of it, crying her eyes out before she nearly falls, making all of us brothers rush to them. I grip Sophie's arm and pull her up with Axel and Stormy, while the brothers grip Ink's body and pull him over. Sophie collapses on the floor in tears before Ink takes her into his arms, and I squeeze my eyes shut for the pain she's in.

Axel looks around and says, "Alright brothers, let's get home and get some rest. I'll go with Ink and Dagger and get Dr. Shall out to see her." We all nod before each one of us kisses

Sophie's head. She grips my arm before I can leave, and I furrow my brows as she rasps, "I'm sorry for the lip." I smirk at her and shrug. "You helped me open my eyes, sweetheart; now I can try and help Leah move on from me."

She furrows her brows at me, but I just kiss her head again before going to my bike and heading home. I have a woman to update. Fuck, she's going to be pissed. Just before I get on, Ink shouts my name, and I turn to him and say, "I know you need to tell Leah, but don't let her come round for a few days."

He worries at his lip ring, not knowing if it's the right plan, but I nod my head before climbing on my bike.

Leah will only stress her out and make her feel guilty.

Fuck me will I regret those words.

All of us brothers will be where Leah's concerned, and I'll have one hell of a fight on my hands.

Half an hour later, I'm unlocking the guest bedroom door before something flies at my head, making my eyes widen as the vase mom picked out smashes. Fuck, that was close. I look towards a very pissed-off Leah, who's going to be even more pissed off with me in a minute. I cleared my throat,

"Soph, she, uh, she..."

She doesn't let me finish as she rushes towards me, her eyes wild and her hair a mess still in her funeral clothes. I guess she didn't want to wear the shirt I left for her.

"She what? Is she okay?"

I cleared my throat again. "She tried to jump off the Hudson Bridge. Ink managed to save her in time; she's now back at his; she's okay."

Leah's tears fall from her eyes as she gasps before she tries to go past me, but I grip her arm.

Sophie needs peace and quiet now, not an irate friend.

"We all agreed to leave her in peace for today, you can see her in a few days once things have calmed down."

She changes right before my eyes as her eyes burn with rage before her nostrils flare. Fuck, she's pissed, and I'm starting to miss the mother hen from the bar who wouldn't give us alcoholic drinks if we were in a bad mood. I should have seen it coming, but I didn't. Her fist goes back, and she swings, hitting me right in my already-cut lip, and it's a hard fucking punch too, so hard that I end up knocking into the wall.

Fuck me.

She gets in my face while my eyes widen in shock, "Don't. Ever. Get. In. between. Me. And. My. Sister. Again."

She rushes out of the bedroom without looking back, and I curse quickly, shoving myself off the wall and going after her while ignoring my bleeding lip. I manage to catch up as she tries to barge into Ink's house, but he just puts his hand up and says, "I'm sorry, Leah. I understand you're her friend, but she's my woman, my family; she needs peace, not you upsetting her."

Oh fuck. It was the wrong thing to say. She tilts her head up to him.

"You're stopping me from seeing my best friend, my sister, who tried to kill herself because she feels so lost without her momma when all this could have been avoided if you'd have 'allowed' me near her sooner."

Ink shakes his head. "You would have made things worse, Leah; you know that."

Leah just smirks before, oh shit, she lifts her knee and rams it in between his legs, making me wince while Axel behind him mutters, "What the fuck?" as Ink drops to his knees, coughing before she gets in his face.

"I nearly ruined 26 years of friendship because of your selfish fucking ass, and this is how you repay me, keeping me from her. I don't think so, biker boy; she was my family first, and you wouldn't even know her if it wasn't for me."

With that, she barges past him while Axel puts his hands up, not wanting any bodily harm, before we both drag Ink up and

rush after her, catching up in time to hear Doc scold her for not resting.

“Leah, you need your rest!”

Sophie hums, “He’s right.”

Leah just scoffs, “Sorry Dad, I’ll get some rest when my sister decides not to fucking leave me alone with no one, and the fuckers in this MC stop trying to dictate what I can and cannot do where my family is concerned, oh, and by the way, Soph, Ink may not be able to have kids now.”

Ink growls; this is what he wanted to avoid, and I go to take a step forward until Doc shakes his head at us before scolding Leah, “Hey, what about me?”

She smiles at Doc, her eyes shining, before going back to Sophie, whose tears have started to flow again.

Fuck sake.

“I’m sorry, Lee-Lee.”

Leah sighs and shakes her head before climbing onto the bed, both girls holding each other tightly, while Doc walks over to us and mutters, “You three are fucking idiots,” before pointing at the girls and saying, “Watch.”

And we do; we turn as Sophie speaks again.

“I’ve-I’ve been selfish. I was going to l-leave you, m-my sister, and Jackson.” Leah squeezes her tightly, “I-I’m not t-the only one w-who lost a momma.” Leah shakes her head; you can see her trying to fight back her tears, “Y-yes, she was y-yours too. S-she b-brought y-you up, y-you called her momma, y-you lost y-your momma, Leah, y-you lost her too.”

We all freeze as the realization hits us. Leah put her grief aside for Sophie.

I hear Ink mutter ‘fuck’ while my heart breaks as I watch absolute utter pain pour through Leah’s eyes before Axel then mutters, “Oh fuck, we’re fucking idiots.”

Sophie continues to talk, knowing this is what Leah needs—her permission to mourn and her permission to be angry with

her friend, her sister, for trying to leave her.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

“You lost her, and y-you nearly l-lost me. We-we need each other and I-I nearly left you, t-to mourn t-twice as much. S-S-she was your momma t-too Lee-Lee.”

Sobs start to pour from her throat before heartbreaking cries tear from her as Sophie squeezes her, crying too, and I link my hands behind my head, wondering how in the fuck we missed this. We all thought she was just a friend to Sophie and didn't know her mother well, despite Leah telling us she had known her since diapers.

We didn't fucking believe her.

“Fuck, I thought she was lying about knowing Soph since diapers; this fucking explains her climbing in bed with Ashley at the hospital.”

Axel rasps in shock, and we all nod as we watch both women fall apart for their loss. Doc looks at us and shakes his head before looking at me. “Next week, when things have calmed down, I want you, Hawk, Axel, Dagger, and the rest of the council to come to my office. I have a story to tell you all, and you're all going to be fucking kicking yourselves.”

We all furrow our brows at him, but he just shakes his head before going over to the girls and kissing both their heads as we realize they're both asleep, their pain exhausting them, and Ink sighs, “Looks like I'm on the floor tonight; no way am I separating them because I think Leah was right. Sophie needed her more than she needed any of us, and tonight may not have happened if she was by her side; I just thought I was doing the right thing. Fuck. She's her fucking sister through and through, except for blood, and we tried to keep them apart because we thought Leah would turn into the drama queen we all thought she'd be.”

Both me and Axel nod as he pats my back, then Inks before going to kiss both girls' heads then leaves as I sit down and lean against the wall, Ink following suit while groaning in pain, and I nod my head.

Yep, my girl can fucking hit, I mean.
Shit.

Chapter 9

Leah

I wake up to the feel of someone running their fingers through my hair, and I slowly open my eyes to see the dark green ones of my best friend. She smiles at me, and I smile back.

I know we're not alone; I can feel Gunner's presence, and I have no doubt Ink's here too, but we ignore them.

"I've been a shitty friend." I snort and shake my head, but she just nods, "I have. You lost her too, Lee-Lee, and you spent the past week trying to help me or try to fight the brothers to even see me instead of mourning yourself. I mean, I'm your sister, and they thought they had a right—a fucking right—to stop you from seeing me when you're the only one who would have been able to get through to me because you lost her too."

I hear the men suck in a breath, and I just shake my head at her, telling her with my eyes to stay calm by looking down towards my stomach, where I can feel some fluttering, and she instantly takes a deep breath before muttering, "Jackson can kiss goodbye to sex for a while."

I bite my bottom lip when I hear him mutter, "Fuck," before Sophie goes back to playing with my hair again, and she smiles, "Remember when we were 10?"

My eyes widen, and a giggle comes out. "Momma and Daddy Anderson took us to the water park in Cali," she nods, "and momma's bikini top fell off on the water slide." I start to laugh, Sophie following, "I swear daddy Anderson was going to have a coronary."

My laugh turns into a sob, and she holds onto me tightly when she whispers, "It's you and me now, Lee-Lee."

I nod as she wipes away a tear from my cheek before we're quiet for a little while until I break the silence.

"I called her."

Sophie furrows her brows,

“The day before I came to the vet office to make up with you, I called her,” I sniffled. “She threatened me when I started to cry on the phone, saying if I didn’t get my ass around hers, then she’d ground me and make me stay around hers for a week doing chores.” Sophie grins. “I told her everything, and she was excited. Then she spent the day looking after me; we watched movies, ate junk food, and laughed; we both slept on the couch before she woke me up.” I let out a sob. “She told me she loved us both so much before kissing my forehead, and I left, not noticing the pain in her eyes intensifying before I came to your work. I went to my appointment at the hospital, then the next thing I knew.”

My sobs increase while the men curse, realizing I was the last one to see her before she killed herself. I probably did it as soon as I got in my car.

“What, what if, what if I went back inside instead of driving off? What if I could have s-stopped her?”

Sophie’s tears fall before she grips my cheeks, wiping my tears. “You couldn’t have Lee-Lee; she wanted t-to go; she w-wanted daddy. If you had managed this time around, she would have tried it-it again.”

I let out a sob before holding my friend tight, trying to calm down before she wiped my face.

“Ok, junk food, girlie movies, and mani-pedi’s. It’s girlie day, just you and me, no men; they can both get lost after stocking up the living area for us.”

I smile as both men curse again, but agree to Sophie’s words before we both sit up and look at Ink and Gunner, who both look worse for wear. I mean, Ink’s black hair is short, but you can still see he’s put his hand through it several times, and Gunner’s eyes are bloodshot.

I guess they didn’t sleep.

Sophie gasps, and I look at her with a furrowed brow. Her hands are over her mouth, her eyes wide.

“I didn’t do that, did I? Please Gunner, tell me I did not do that to your face.”

I look to see what she means, noticing Gunner already looking at me with a raised brow. I see his bottom lip swollen, and I grin wide, making him narrow his eyes at me, and I just shrug. “Momma Anderson taught me well.”

Sophie grips my hand, and I look at her. She has questions in her eyes, and I shrug again. “He tried telling me I couldn’t see you for a few days. No one keeps me from you, not even your man, who I introduced you to in the first place.”

I look at Ink with narrowed eyes while he sheepishly rubs the back of his head before Sophie snaps at him.

“What did you do?”

He clears his throat. “We, uh, we all thought, uh, that she, uh, would make you worse; we, uh, we’ve been told she likes the drama.”

I just scoff, knowing who told them that shit, while Sophie goes to charge at her man, knowing I can’t stand drama. His eyes widen, and I quickly grab her arm and say, “Remember, Soph, you still love him.”

Ink nods his head frantically and says, “Yeah, you love me, and she’d already hurt me last night, which I’m still fucking feeling today.”

Sophie looks at me with a brow raised, and I grin proudly before saying, “I took a leaf out of your book,” making her grin wide while the men back up a bit before Gunner whispers, “We’re fucked, brother,” making Ink nod in agreement.

We narrow our eyes at them before they both put their hands up and rush out of the room to get our snacks, making us snicker.

As I look through the doorway, Sophie squeezes my hand, making me look at her. She had questions in her eyes, and I knew what she wanted to know—what Momma Anderson wanted to be called.

“Granny.”

It's all I have to say, and more tears fall from her eyes, and I hug her tightly, staying like this for a good ten minutes before we pull apart and head downstairs, only to find crisps, biscuits, chocolate, and sweet treats from Annalise's bakery being set up. Annalise stands near the black sofa, twisting her hands together in front of her, and I swallow hard. She's good friends with Sophie but hates me because of the lies 'he' has been spreading with Cara, which sucks because we did start to get along really well until suddenly I was dirt on her shoe.

Sophie doesn't know about 'him'; I never told her, but I did tell Momma Anderson that night; she held me all night as I cried; she told me to tell Soph, but I just don't know.

Annalise looks at me, and her eyes soften, so I'm guessing Axel told her how close I actually was to Sophie's mother, and I clear my throat, giving out an olive branch.

"We're, uh, having a girlie day; do you, uh, want to join?"

Annalise smiles gratefully at me and nods her head before bringing me and Sophie a chocolate chip muffin, which my stomach then decides to growl, making Sophie narrow her eyes at me. Mine widen because, yes, it's been a few days since I properly ate, which I know isn't good, but neither are my emotions nor this morning sickness that has decided to stay. Trust Sophie to recognize my signs of not flipping eating.

I quickly hide behind Annalise, making her furrow her brows at me until Sophie scolds me and she starts to giggle.

"Leah Ashlyn Parker!"

I wince at the full name while Axel, who just came in, tilts his head. "Ashlyn?"

I clear my throat and nod. "After momma Anderson, our mothers were best friends before my mother went off the rails and decided to run off with her boyfriend, leaving me at the fire station when I was, I think, 5 years old. Adam and Carol Huntington were my foster parents, despite Momma and Daddy Anderson trying to fight for custody."

His eyes widen in shock while Gunner and Ink furrow their brows until Sophie, who decides she's not done, speaks up,

diverting their attention from my family dynamics.

“When was the last time you ate?”

I bite my bottom lip while Annalise folds her arms over her chest, and the men narrow their eyes at me.

I clear my throat before taking a big bite out of the muffin, hoping not to have to answer, but oh wow, it instantly melts in my mouth.

“Oh my God, this is good.”

I mumble around a mouthful, moaning, and take another bite because, wow.

Annalise giggles while Sophie shakes her head at me before pointing, “You are not off the hook; we’ll be having words, and I can bet my vet license momma will haunt you for not eating properly.”

My eyes widen while the men choke on a laugh, but not Gunner; he’s too busy glaring at me, but I ignore him. shaking my head at Sophie and smiling,

“How to lose a guy in 10 days?”

She grins as well as Annalise while the men groan before saying they are out, making our grins go wider before Gunner comes up to me, whispering in my ear,

“We still need to talk, Angel, and sort this mess out so we can both move on with our lives. I’ll pick you up at 8.”

He doesn’t kiss me, which is good because I’ll probably punch him again. Move on with our lives. I’m carrying his fucking child from a night he doesn’t even remember while he fucks other women, shoving them in my fucking face.

I mean, he had two women on his desk when I went and quit!

Sophie narrows her eyes at him; she heard, and she also knows who the father of my unborn child is, but I just shake my head at her to leave it; screw him. Even Annalise is glaring at Gunner’s back for his words.

The pain shoots through me when I realize he’s never going to want to be with me, is he?

I let out a snuffle, and both women grabbed a hold of me before we all sat cuddled up together watching movies while I ignored the pain slicing through me. I know he loves me; he's shown it time and time again. I know he was using Cara, but whatever 'he' said after my interview, I have been a no-go to him. But maybe it's for the best because, after everything he's done, including walking away five years ago when 'he' assaulted me, I don't think I could ever trust him.

Sighing, I place my head on Sophie's shoulder as she grips my hand while Annalise puts the movie on.

Hours later, Annalise is taking me back to my car, where she ensures Cal opens the gate for me before Ink gets back, and I head home after thanking her.

I don't hug her because of my bump, but I do kiss her cheek while hoping I've made a new friend before I head home to my new apartment alone.

Chapter 10

Gunner 1 week later

I stormed into Flames' room at the clubhouse. He's sitting behind his computer desk and raises a brow at me, his bright blue eyes assessing me as I start to pace his room. I'm frustrated, so fucking frustrated. Last week after, I told Leah I'd pick her up from Ink's at eight so we could finally get things back to normal because, let's face it, we can't be a couple because of Razor; she knows it, I know, but instead of finding her drinking with the girls, I fucking find her already gone, and her pissed off friend telling me, no, ordering me to stay the fuck away from her 'sister' from now on until I'm ready to give a relationship ago, all while Ink tries not to laugh like the cock sucker he is.

For a whole fucking week, I've been trying to find her, but it's like she's vanished. Not only did she make true to her promise and quit at the bar where we're now fucking struggling because she did every-fucking-thing but she gave up the flat she and Soph had shared, and instead of finding her, I found some 19-year-old freshman living there stoked about starting community college a few towns over, who then proceeded to try and invite me in.

Flame clears his throat, and I stop pacing, placing my hands on my hips.

"Brother, please, please tell me you managed to find her."

Flames is our tech guru and a damn good one, as well as our road captain. Not once have we been caught with the ammo that we ride up to Wincher to the Rebel's MC; that's roughly an eight-hour round trip most times, and that's down to him and his genius mind, always mixing the runs up. It also helps that he's now solely focused on the club while trying to find his girl, our club princess Star. She's his childhood best friend, who he had been in love with for years but didn't think he was

good enough for her, so he pushed her away, and now, for reasons none of us know, she left with no trace.

We don't know where she is, and Flame's dying each day inside without her. We know she's safe, though, because she's finally messaged Annalise. Annalise found out she was pregnant and fell apart. She called Star and ended up leaving her a message during her breakdown. Star rang back straight away, like the true friend she was, and calmed her down before promising to contact her once a week. Annalise had lost a baby six months ago after her biological father had kidnapped her and then beat her up; she nearly died as well and struggled with survivor guilt. Axel and us brothers have helped raise her back up, just like we helped Mel, who ended up shot by a jealous woman Dagger had left hanging for an orgasm, and how we're now helping Sophie after losing her momma.

It's what we do for family.

Flame sighs, and I curse, "No, I haven't; wherever she's working is paid in cash, and whatever flat or house she's living in is under a different name, her GPS is also switched off on her phone. Have you asked Sophie?"

I ran a frustrated hand through my hair. "Yeah, I did. She was shocked and ended up calling Leah; apparently, she handed her keys in after spending two hours deep cleaning the flat after the mess we brothers made packing up Sophie's stuff. Then I spent an hour of her reaming my ass, and Ink was forced to sleep on the sofa for two nights for mistreating her friend; he's also still not gotten laid after we tried to keep Leah from Soph after her momma passed, so he's a grumpy ass right now."

Flame's eyes widen before he mutters, "shit," and I nod my head in agreement.

He sighs, "The problem is, as much as we all love Leah and I know you more than most, she was with Razor, and she cheated on him; she used him because she wanted the patch. We can't treat her like family for that; it's part of our by-laws, just like Leslie's now realizing. Now I could log into the hospital database, which would be completely invading her

privacy, but that has to be voted in church, and with her history and our loyalty to Razor, our patched brother, I don't see them agreeing, brother."

I curse again before noticing the time and running a frustrated hand through my hair. "Fuck, we've got to go; Doc will be pissed if we're late."

Flame sighs and nods. "I'm not sure what he wants to tell us that he can't tell us here."

I shrug as we both walk out of his room before he locks his door. Ginger, one of the club's sweet butts, was caught going into his room last week, apparently cleaning it, but I call bullshit; I hear the whispers; she wants his patch.

We go through the common room waving to some patched brothers and chuckling when we see Razor fucking Glitter, who, you guessed it, is obsessed with the stuff. I mean, her hair is fucking silver and full of fucking glitter. Razor turned into a man-whore after Leah cheated on him; he gave Slicer a run for his money, that's for sure, over the past five years.

Shaking our heads, we go out front towards our bikes before heading to the hospital, wondering what is so important that can't be discussed in our chapel.

We arrive in Doc's office twenty minutes later. It's a tight squeeze, but he nods me forward, and we all look at him with furrowed brows. "Just come take a seat, Gunner; you're going to need it."

I look at Axel, who's sitting in the other seat with Dag behind him and Ink behind the chair; he nods too. I tilt my head but do as he asks and take a seat before he clears his throat.

"Alright brothers, I could get into some serious fucking shit with Leah for doing this, and I mean her disowning me kind of shit and me possibly losing my license." He looks at his son and says, "You heard her son; she calls me dad and even calls your mother mom." Our eyes widen in shock, but he ignores our reactions and takes a deep breath. "When I first met Leah five years ago, she'd probably wished she'd never have to see me again, but instead I became a father to her while Ava, my

old lady and wife, became a mother.” He drops his head in his hands before running them over his head, stressed, before looking back up. “All of you have to understand the seriousness of what I’m about to tell you. I-I could lose her,” he says, looking at his son. “Your mother could lose her, and for that, she’ll never forgive any of us for it.”

I sit forward and say, “We’re listening, brother.”

The brothers nod, and he sighs.

“For five years, you have all listened to the crap that has come out of Razor’s mouth. You treated her nicely to her face but got the sweet butts and female employees to try and make her quit her job, yet none of you asked her if what was being said was true.” The room grows tense. “You all the next generation, and currently my generation, your fathers and uncles are all nodding their heads in agreement with me. You all act like you know everything, but you’re still too immature.”

Axel clears his throat. “Now, Doc...”

Doc doesn’t let him continue, “No, you Axel, treated Annalise like shit before you won her over, and you Dagger did the worst thing and cheated on Mel after she needed time; she had found out her dad wasn’t her fucking dad, her mother was a druggie, and she didn’t want to scare you away before your one and done fucks nearly killed her and Ink.” Ink clears his throat, knowing what Doc is about to say: “You called your woman a whore because you didn’t let her explain the situation with her gay friend Todd. You men, whom we entrusted to take our club, OUR legacy, are fucking up left, right, and center.”

Axel stands, not liking what he’s being told, but Doc doesn’t give a shit.

“Dead Shot, the situation with Leah, how would you have handled it?”

Axel slumps down again, dropping his head while cursing, knowing he won’t disrespect his own father despite him now being Pres and I sigh as Dead Shot speaks up.

“The accusations made about her, I would have confronted her, not tried to use women to get her to quit or make her feel like shit, putting her down day after day. For five years, the women in this club have put her through hell, sneered at her, and made her feel unwelcome instead of family, my woman included, and even the new lady of the club has done the same thing. It’s only recently after I had a word with Annalise about her treatment of Leah that she saw the error of her ways, especially when I asked her when the last time she saw Leah with a man was because the answer is fucking never; she never dates and hasn’t had a relationship or a fuck buddy in the time we’ve all known her. Sophie even confirmed she never dated in high school.

Until proven guilty brothers and you all made her guilty by another brother’s word, a brother who hadn’t even been patched in yet, he was a prospect. **AND SINCE WHEN DO WE FUCKING LISTEN TO THEM WITHOUT FUCKING EVIDENCE?”**

The brothers drop their heads, but I keep eye contact with Doc. The emotions in his eyes are telling me I’m going to lose my shit and most likely feel a hell of a lot of guilt.

He clears his throat. “The day I met Leah,” he says, taking a deep breath. “It was warm out, and it was late. Gunner and Slicer were holding interviews for waitresses at the bar.”

I sit up straighter, my heart pounding; it’s the first day we met her. Sorrow shines through his eyes, and my heart pounds hard in my chest.

“She’d been sexually assaulted.”

I go to stand while the brothers all curse as Ink grabs my shoulder, holding me down, before clearing his throat. “Does Sophie know this?”

His voice is raw, with pain lacing through it.

The men start cursing louder, realizing this would send Inks girl, who lost so much and tried to harm herself, into another spiral when Doc shakes his head, causing him to bang his hand on his desk, making them quiet. His eyes stay connected to

mine. “I have a theory as to who did it, but she never told me, and I never had any evidence except for her injuries,” he says, taking another deep breath. “I believe Gunner, by the way, Leah had sobbed it to me that night; you saw it happen but walked away thinking it was something else.”

Bile instantly comes to my throat.

NO, please fucking please, no, he was not assaulting her and I didn't walk away, then fuck Cara, please no.

The look in Doc's eyes tells me it's the truth. No.

He quickly gives me a trash can as my face pales and I vomit, making Ink grip my shoulder while Axel booms, “WHAT THE FUCK DO WE NOT KNOW?”

“Settle down, son; Doc's getting to it. He only just filled us in this morning, and Slicer has also been filled in. He'll be home in a few weeks, but he's fucking pissed that he's not been able to be here to help you boys.”

Tank takes the trash can once I stop dry-heaving as guilt churns inside me before putting it in Doc's bathroom. Doc makes eye contact with me again: “She came into the E.R., her jeans were covered in blood,” the brothers tense even more, “I had just managed to catch her before she had collapsed after driving from the bar to here.”

I squeeze my eyes shut, my tears building up before memories of every time I fucked Cara, every time Cara smirked and treated Leah like crap, the woman I love more than anything all over a fucking setup. I open my eyes when he speaks again, his eyes staying on me.

“Before I could wheel her away, she grabbed my arm and begged me not to call the Sheriff before she told me, she was assaulted by a man shoving his fingers inside of her with-with a razor in between them, using it to-to,” he drops his head before looking back up, tears in his eyes, “using it to break through her hymen, stealing her virginity from her that I had found out a few years ago she was keeping until marriage.”

My whole world tilts as my tears fall, bile wanting to come up again.

I can feel Ink shake behind me as Axel mutters, “She never left the bar out the front door, always used the back, never went near him. Fuck, how did we miss this?”

Doc turns in his seat and switches on a monitor before a 3D picture of dozens of torn bits of flesh shows up: “This brothers is the vaginal wall of Leah. Fuck, I could lose my job for this.” He takes a deep breath. “This is the damage the razor had caused her.”

My breathing becomes heavier while Axel stands slowly, fury etching off him,

“She had to have extensive surgery that night; it’s why she rearranged her induction day for the job for the week after, which was again too soon.” He keeps his eyes on me. “Her flat didn’t have a leak, Gunner; she was laid up here.” I slowly stand next to Axel while Ink grips my arm as Doc continues to talk before pointing to the next picture: “This is a 3D image of her lower stomach. As you can see, the razor had hit that high, causing more severe tears.” I can feel my dad now standing next to Ink, putting his hand on my shoulder. I always feel my father’s presence when he’s pissed. He’s not called butch for shits and giggles; he likes to butcher people. I’d say ask my mom’s ex-boyfriend, who tried to rape her but he butchered him with a machete.

It’s a good campout story, though.

“Due to the injuries she had received and the fact that her body tried to expel him from inside her, causing more tears by that alone, Leah has a 5% chance of ever conceiving a child,” the brothers curse while my blood freezes. “If she ever was to conceive, she has an 8% chance of carrying to term, then roughly another 18% chance of her and the baby surviving delivery if she could deliver naturally. If she went for a cesarean, then there would be a 50% chance of both mother and baby surviving.”

Axel scrubs a hand through his hair while I feel like I’m dying on the inside, and I drop my chin to my chest. “But why did she stay? A brother, one of our own who works at the club

most fucking nights did this to her. Why the fuck did she take the job and stay?”

You can hear the frustration and confusion in Axel’s voice as the realization hits before I slowly look up, my tears trailing down my cheeks and my voice cold.

“Razor threatened her, didn’t he?”

Doc nods. “That’s what made my suspicion rise higher after hearing about the razor. She never told me where it happened, but little pieces came together, especially when she mentioned you witnessing it Gunner when she was drugged up after her surgery; it made sense why she took the job and why she stayed... Sophie.”

I shake my head. “I knew she was mine as soon as I saw her, and Cara noticed it.”

Doc nods and sighs. “She told you they were an item and outside together.”

I nod back when Axel speaks next: “They planned it together, to make you think they’re an item, so she got to keep you, fuck that is fucked up shit right there.”

My anger takes hold; I can’t keep the fury wanting to be released in, and I rip out of Ink’s and my dad’s hold, grabbing the chair and throwing it against the wall, narrowly missing Hawk, our SGT in arms, who quickly rushes over to me, tackling me to the floor, pinning me while I shout.

“I WANT HIS FUCKING HEAD, I WANT HIM DEAD, I WANT HER FUCKING OUT OF OUR BAR RIGHT FUCKING NOW.”

He grips me tighter before rasping as the brothers breathe heavily in the small room, feeling my pain and anger knowing there’s nothing they can do to help me except with this: “You will, brother, you’ll have him, you’ll avenge her, then fucking grovel as your life depends on it, we’ll help anyway we can, brother, I promise, we’re sorry, so fucking sorry, brother.”

My tears fall harder, and Hawk holds me tighter as I start to sob for what I’ve put her through after she was assaulted and I walked away from the scene.

Fuck.

I walked away.

Fuck.

Chapter 11

Gunner

I'm a man on a fucking mission. Razor was busy fucking Glitter when we left, so he's now probably at the clubhouse bar drinking a beer before his shift at Untamed Girls tonight.

I speed up. The brothers are trying to keep up with me. Tanks has already gone to the bar to fire Cara and give her one warning to get out of town because if I see her, then she's fucking dead. Five years, five fucking years of wasting and hurting Leah all because of the bitches jealousies, and I fell for it—hook, line, and fucking sinker—destroying any chance with my girl.

Axel rides up next to me, making sure I'm good, but I'm fucking not; I'm nowhere near good. I'll probably never fucking win her round; she'll hate me forever. Instead of questioning her over the years, I took a brother's word and kept my fucking distance, fucking someone else just to forget her all while shoving it in her face, knowing she loved me. I fucking slept with her and didn't remember it. I'm her fucking only, and I didn't fucking remember it.

We turn for the clubhouse, and Shane quickly rushes to open the gate when he sees I'm not slowing down, and I narrowly miss it, but I don't fucking care. I slam my bike down on the floor, not giving a shit, while I vaguely hear Axel shout for Shane to quickly pick it up as I rush inside the clubhouse. I look around when I'm inside; it's full, but there's only one person I want to fucking see, and there the fucker is, where I thought he'd be, at the bar.

I storm over to him, making the patch brothers and old ladies who are here setting up for dinner stop what they're doing and look at me in confusion, but I ignore them as I grab a hold of Razors cut, throwing him on the floor, making him grunt in confusion before I jump on him and start pounding my fists into his face.

Left right, left right, over and over.

He tries to fight back, but I'm fucking stronger than him, red-hazing my eyes.

I hear a crunch, but I continue before Ink and Hawk drag me back while my dad and Dead Shot grab a hold of Razor, helping him stand but keeping a grip on him as he angrily looks at me.

“What the fuck was that for? Is this about Cara? about yesterday? I didn't think you had feelings for her; us fucking last night was just a mistake, Jesus Gunner.”

I give him a cold smirk, making him furrow his brows in confusion.

I give him a minute—a minute—to realize what this is really about because we both know it's not Cara.

His eyes widen.

“Look, her foster dad sold her virginity to me; it was mine to have, and-and I saw the look you two gave each other, so I took what I paid for before you could, and after well, well after, Cara wanted me to say shit, knowing you wouldn't go near Leah if she'd had hurt me because Cara, she wanted your patch, gave me a blowy for my efforts. Gunner, brother...”

Every brother in the room is tense.

“You tore, with a fucking razor—the woman I have been in love with, the woman I stayed away from because you said she cheated on you—you tore her insides and cut through her virginity, nearly fucking killing her, ensuring she cannot carry a baby to term without either losing it or killing her all because her foster father thought he had a right to sell a person, MY FUCKING WOMAN, MY FUCKING HEART.”

I boom the last bit, and he swallows hard.

I hear the women in the room start to gasp, realizing what they put Leah through before, out of fucking nowhere, both Cammy and Annalise jump on Razor, hitting him while a wail full of agony and pain comes from my right, causing Ink to rush over to a destroyed-looking Sophie as she falls to the floor.

Fuck.

Axel and Dead Shot quickly grab their women while Tank drags a pleading Razor to the basement while everyone else is frozen, staring at me while I breathe deeply.

All you can hear are Sophie's wails in the quiet room.

"I-I NEED TO SEE HER, I-I NEED TO."

Fuck.

Ink tries to calm her down: "Soph, baby, you can't, not like this."

She shoves him before she screams at him, "SHE NEEDS ME," and he quickly grabs her from behind when she tries to rush by him.

She starts to kick out, and I rush over to them before I grip her cheeks, making her look at me, her tears coating her lashes. I gently place a kiss on her forehead, causing Ink to growl, but I don't even smirk at him; instead, I rasp with absolute pain in my voice.

"Five years ago, when Leah came to interview for the job, Cara and Razor set us up. Razor clearly wanted something that wasn't his to take before I convinced her to give us a shot. Cara didn't want that and sent me out to see them in an intimate situation outside of the bar; she told me they were in a relationship. I didn't know he was assaulting her. I-I fuck." I squeeze my eyes shut, causing her to grip my arms before I look at her again, my eyes tearing up. "I walked away, letting it happen, not realizing the truth. For years, Razor and Cara have said shit about her, and because he's a brother, and we, the new generation, didn't question it when we should have because we grew up with him and trusted him. It was our mistake, and because of that mistake, she has been mistreated by the women in the club when in reality she should have been treated like family. We failed her. I failed."

Sophie lets out a sob. "She n-needs me."

I nod. "She does, and I know she does. You both proved to all of us last week that you are both each other's anchors, but there's just one slight problem with that plan, Soph." The

whole club is quiet; all you can hear are the women's sniffles: "She doesn't know, we know. Doc only told us today because he's worried about her mental state after losing your momma and then nearly losing you. He doesn't want what you went through to happen to her, so he told us, especially when we all treated her differently because of the lies we were told. He broke the law. Soph, if she really wanted to, she could report him; he could lose his job; he could be prosecuted; but more importantly, he and his old lady could lose the woman who's turned into their daughter."

She squeezes her eyes shut, and more tears fall down her cheeks before Ink lets her go, sensing she's calmer.

He goes to hug her, only for her to hug me tightly instead making his eyes soften.

"We need to help her."

She rasps, and I nod, holding her tightly.

"First, sweetheart, I have a really bad thing to do to a really bad man, and I hope you don't look at us brothers any differently for it."

She pulls back and looks me in the eyes. She knows we're not innocent men; we kill when necessary, and this is necessary.

"Make it hurt."

They're the three words she says coldly, making Ink beam with pride, and I nod before kissing her head, then turning around and heading to the basement with all my brothers following. When we enter, Tank has already gotten him into just his boxers, his arms up above his head, and chains wrapped around his wrists that are attached to the ceiling.

He instantly starts pleading when he sees me.

"Please, Gun-Gunner, please, I g-gave him ten grand for her virginity. Please, I know it-it wasn't r-right but I'd seen h-her out and a-about; I s-saw her a-around her p-parents, I-I wanted her first."

It was the wrong thing to say because Flame grabbed his torch and burned his tattoo of our club's

symbol off his right pec making him scream and I smirk. We don't handle in flesh or selling women, he knows this, he knows he would never have gotten his patch and he fucked up and now he's going to pay.

This is for Leah.

I slowly walk over to the table, grab my revolver, and walk over to him. He starts to sweat as Flame pulls back while I rasp, "She'll probably never want anything to do with me anymore. You and Cara ensured that. My soulmate, the woman I saw a future with the moment our eyes connected, a woman I pulled away from for you, is gone."

He starts to shake before something comes to mind.

"Tell me something, Carl," he flinches; he's no longer a brother, and he knows it. "How is it that every time Slicer leaves the state, the object he's searching for disappears?"

The brothers all stand up straight while the pathetic excuse of a man in front of me pisses himself and I turn to Axel.

"It looks like we just found our traitor, Pres."

He nods before looking at the men, who all nod, knowing he's making sure they're all alright with me dishing out the pain; even if they weren't, they'd have to drag me out of here in order to stop me from killing this son of a bitch.

When Axel gives me the nod, I turn back to Carl.

"Now, where is he?"

He shakes his head. "I don't know-know, he w-wouldn't tell me; he d-didn't t-trust me."

Hmm, smart man after all.

I look into his dark eyes, and I can see the truth but also relief thinking he's getting off, making me smile before I shoot him in the dick, causing the men to flinch and Carl to scream out in pain, "I NEVER FUCKED HER," over and over, but I get in his face as he cries, "No, but you did ensure it wouldn't be safe for her to have a baby."

His eyes widen while I shoot his right hand, then his left, causing his body to jolt before I shoot him three more times in the dick. His head goes limp, and he starts to pass out; he's doing well considering. I stand back and grin before shooting his kneecap, causing him to shoot his head up, screaming. I shoot the other knee cap, then his pelvis, working my way up while the brothers watch.

When I get to his face, he's barely breathing, his body covered in blood, but all I see is the top of his head while Leah struggles because that's what that was—her struggling to get him away from her as his hands were down her jeans, tearing through her innocence with a fucking razor.

I shoot his mouth, and I know he's dead, but I still shoot his nose, and then each of his eyes before my dad grips my shoulder, but I don't look at him. I keep my eyes on Carl, a dead Carl, wondering how I'm supposed to get her to forgive me.

I've got to find her first, though.

With that thought, I take a deep breath before turning around, locking eyes with Flame, and he nods before both of us and Axel leave the basement, leaving the brothers, who all drop their heads for me before they clean up the body. We ignore the women in the common room, not caring that I'm splattered with blood, and head to Flame's office. When we enter the dark room, he boots up his computer, which sits next to a photo of him and Star from when she was 16. She's on his back, and they are both grinning at the camera.

Fuck, I miss that girl; she'd know what to do right now.

I look back at Flame as he starts typing, finding the information I want. He takes a deep breath before looking at me, then at Axel.

“Docs going to be pissed if I press this last button; we haven't even had a vote.”

Axel steps forward, gripping my shoulder. “Do it.”

Flame nods before logging into the hospital database and finding her file.

“Alright, everything Doc showed us is here, including several scans she’s had over the last five years; fucking hell, there’s at least ten of them all saying the same results regarding pregnancy and that she’s had to have Ava with her every time or she has a full panic attack and meltdown due to the penetration of the prob and...” He stops talking, so both me and Axel step forward before he looks at me. “It was roughly 18 weeks ago that you slept together, right? and you’re the only one she’s been with; I mean, that’s what Doc had implied.”

My heart pounds, and I nod. “Yeah, brother, why?”

He clears his throat before turning the screen around, and a picture of a scan shows up before he speaks.

“Because she’s 18 weeks pregnant, and it’s in her notes that she’s high-risk and could die.”

My whole world tilts.

Pregnant: She’s pregnant with my baby.

Axel speaks, but his voice sounds distant. “Well, that explains why she hasn’t let you touch her waist lately. Gunner?”

“Pregnant?”

It’s all I can say.

Flame nods, “Yeah, but brother, did you hear me she could die. They both could. It says in her notes that she refused to terminate when she found out. She was already 12 weeks gone.”

My breathing picks up.

She could die!

I look at Flame. “An updated address?”

He looks back at the screen before grinning.

“Gotcha Lee-Lee.”

I grin back.

I’m coming Angel and I’m not letting you go, this is our second chance, and like hell will I let her push me away.

Even if I have to endure her screaming at me.
Get ready Leah because here I come.

Chapter 12

Leah

I've just finished washing up in my tiny kitchen after spending most of it cursing under my breath about a girl in my law class, Hallie. She seems to think she's better than everyone else and has now decided to try and start with the quietest girl in our class, Shelby, who also happens to be the smartest. I swear, Hallie still thinks we're in high school with her petty drama.

My head rant is interrupted when I hear a knock at the door, and I furrow my brows. No one knows I live here, so who in the hell could that be?

Someone knocks again, and I walk over to the door before looking into the peek hole, and I instantly jump back.

Shit.

"Open up, Angel, or I kick it down, your choice."

I sigh, knowing he will kick my door in before looking down at my stomach.

Thank fuck I put a baggy jumper on today. I open the door and scowl at Gunner. Great; as usual, he looks hot—always fucking hot. Dark jeans and a black V-t-shirt show off his muscles. His cut and biker boots just add the aura of a bad boy. Tattoos on full display as usual, his hair messy on top, the sides recently cut short, always too good-looking—he should be fined!

Great, now my thoughts aren't making sense; this is what he does to me, which isn't fair after how he and his club treated me.

Stupid hormones; I'll just blame them.

He tilts his head, looking at me from my canvas-covered feet, up my legs that are covered by black leggings, past my gray

jumper, lingering for a second on my stomach, making me conscious, but I know he doesn't know it's probably just my eyes playing tricks. Then he looks up at my face. I know he can see the bags under my eyes; this baby doesn't seem to like me being comfortable at night, but at least my hair is washed. I guess that's a bonus, right?

He raises a brow. "Renting a flat under momma Anderson's name, smart Angel, but we'll be having words with it being two towns over."

I shake my head at him as he walks up to me, not stopping until he's right in front of me. I brace myself for the smell of her perfume, but it doesn't come. Only his musky cologne hits my senses, and I furrow my brows in confusion before he lifts his hand, his fingers moving my hair out of my face, making me flinch with his touch, but he doesn't deter as he cups my cheek before placing his forehead against mine, and I look into his eyes, his gray eyes showing absolute pain, and I suck in a breath.

"Sophie?"

He smiles a little. "Trust Sophie to be the first thing that comes to mind."

I shrug. "She's my family."

He smiles a little again as his eyes begin to water, and I start to panic.

He didn't say it was her, but he also didn't say it wasn't.

Please, she better be okay; I can't lose her.

"We're your family too, Lee, me, and the club."

I shake my head and go to move because I'm not doing this with him, but his hand grips my cheek before his other hand slowly goes to my stomach, making me suck in a breath.

No.

He cups my bump, and I squeeze my eyes shut before he snuffles, making me look at him again. Tears trail his cheeks, absolute agony shining through his eyes, and I know. I just know he knows, and his rasp confirms my biggest fears.

“I-I walked away. I walked away thinking, thinking that you two... I walked a fucking way.”

He lets out a sob before he drops to his knees, causing the tears that started to build up in my eyes to fall as he grips my hips, placing his head on my bump.

“I-I w-walked away.”

I shake my head.

I know Doc told him, and I can't even be mad because he was probably worried about my welfare after losing Momma Anderson.

Damn him, though, for not warning me.

I step back from Gunner, removing his grip, but he stays on his knees, and I shake my head at him.

“It doesn't matter anymore.”

He stands and stalks over to me, fury taking over his features.

“It does fucking matter, Leah; he hurt you; he TOOK something from you all because your foster dad wanted money, and he took it that way because he knew you were going to be mine.” I squeeze my eyes shut, but Gunner doesn't stop. “And I killed him for it; I tortured him.” My eyes spring open in shock while Gunner holds his arms wide open. “This is me, Angel; I'm a killer, and I'd do it again and again for you if I had to.”

My heart pounds in my chest. He's gone. Dead?

I look into Gunner's eyes, and I see the truth, and my sobs come out.

“He's gone?”

Gunner nods before rushing over to me, taking me into his arms while rasping.

“I made him pay Angel; I did, I promise.”

I move away from him and shake my head, turning towards the smashed window in my apartment that the landlord had only boarded up. That's why it's so cheap.

“It doesn’t change anything.” I rasp.

He scoffs, “It changes everything.” I turn back to him before he points at me. “And I don’t mean because you are carrying my baby. Everything changed when I found out you weren’t Razor’s girlfriend.” I flinch at his name. “It changed everything when I found out you never cheated on him and that you didn’t use him.”

I shake my head and tsk, “It still doesn’t change anything; none of it does, not ‘him’ or the baby; you never even ASKED ME.”

I scream the last bit, and he growls in frustration, but surely he knows I won’t give him a chance. Too much has happened in the past five years, and memory after memory of him with Cara and Sliver plays on a continuous loop in my head, sending sharp pains through me every day. He walked away while that man stole my innocence; his brothers only tolerated me because I was good at my job, while their women treated me like crap.

I can’t do this with him.

He takes a deep breath before looking at me again and telling me the only thing that could get me back at that damn clubhouse is, “Sophie knows.”

I instantly freeze. No, this will send her over the edge. He nods, seeing the questions in my eyes as to how she took it, and not very well.

Shit.

I quickly rush to the tiny kitchen counter and grab my bag and keys before running past Gunner, but he grips my arm and grabs my keys, making me scowl at him.

“Gunner, give me my keys now; she needs me, and remember what happened last time you tried to stop me?”

I raise a brow at him, and he smirks, shaking his head.

“It’s Lucas to you, Angel, and yeah, I’m fully aware of what you two women can do to us when we stop any contact between you both. I’ve got the clubs 4x4, I’m driving you, and

that rust bucket is going to the scrap to be crushed like I wanted it to five fucking years ago.”

My anger takes hold.

How dare he!

How fucking dare he.

He comes here trying to act like suddenly I’m all he wants after he fucked Cara over and over, shoving their relationship in my face while I tried to deal with the man who stole my virginity, working ten feet away night after night. I’ve had to deal with crap after crap from his ‘family’ over and over, and he thinks he can come here and start dictating shit? I don’t fucking think so.

I pull my hand back and go to swing, but he sees it coming and grabs my fist with a grunt.

“Ok, I know that wasn’t the best thing to say, but Angel, for the past five years, I’ve kept my alpha side locked away where you are concerned. I’m now done holding back.”

Oh, I don’t think so.

“DONE HOLDING BACK,” he flinches at my shout. “Every time someone paid attention to me, you interfered; it didn’t matter if I wanted the attention or not; you had no right because as soon as you scared whoever away, YOU WENT BACK TO CARA,” he winces this time. “AND LETS NOT FORGET YOU TELLING ME A WEEK AGO. WE NEEDED TO TALK BECAUSE WE HAD TO BE FRIENDS ONLY BECAUSE I’M SOME SORT OF FUCKING PATCH CHASER TO YOU AND YOUR FUCKING CLUB AND HOW I’M A FUCKING SLUT.”

He swallows hard while an ‘oh shit’ look comes across his face as I knee him in the balls, making him grunt while I take my keys from his hand before getting in his face when he bends down holding his family jewels.

“You and I, GUNNER, are never going to fucking happen again. You broke me; go back to Cara!”

I stormed away from him, heading to my car, before climbing in. He rushes after me, but I'm already pulling out of my space, and I'm pretty sure I heard him scream, "MOTHER FUCKER," but I could be wrong; who knows?

An hour later, with a pissed-off Gunner following me from behind, I'm pulling up to the gate. Shane smiles at me, which is flipping weird considering he's always reluctant to let me in.

He opens the gate for me, and I park up.

"Leah Ashlyn Parker!"

I ignore Gunner and rush inside the clubhouse, where I'd promised myself to never return. Bloody Doc and his big worrywort mouth. I push the door open and look around the common room, ignoring everyone looking at me. Some of the women have tears in their eyes, but again, I ignore them.

Jesus, what would it take for them to get rid of the brown look in here? It's flipping dark and dreary.

My eyes connect with Sophie's and her tears fall making my body deflate before I rush over to her. Ink, let's her go before she gets up, meeting me halfway and hugging me tightly as she sobs.

"I'm okay, I promise you," I rasp, holding her tighter.

She shakes her head before letting me go when the baby kicks her, and she places her hands on my bump, smiling a little before Ink furrows his brows.

"Your pregnant?"

The whole room grows tense, and I look at Doc, narrowing my eyes at him, making him look at the walls like they're the most interesting thing in the room, causing Ava to hit his head, which means she didn't know he was telling the brothers everything. He sighs before clearing his throat, getting up, and walking over to me.

"Sweetheart, I never told them you were pregnant." He looks at Flame, the tech fricking guru, and narrows his eyes, and so do I, making him now look at the walls, and I roll my eyes before Doc turns back to me. He moves my hair from my face

before he rasps, “I’d understand if you’d want to report me, but you’re my daughter through and through, except for blood. I couldn’t stand allowing them to treat you this way anymore; I couldn’t, sweetheart, especially after you lost Ashley. I had a theory about who it was; Gunner just put it all together, confirming it for us all.” A tear falls down my cheek, and he wipes it away while the women sniffle. “You should have told me it was him, sweetheart.”

I sniffle. “I’m sorry.”

He nods before hugging me tightly when Hawk speaks up.

“Oh fuck, I accused you two of having an affair when Cara said she saw you both in an intimate position. Oh gross.”

I snort and shake my head while Ava smacks him on the back of his head, making the brothers chuckle, and I look back at Sophie to see she’s on the verge of a breakdown.

Dammit.

Chapter 13

Gunner

Leah takes Sophie in her arms again before Soph lets out a heartbreaking wail—shit.

Ink squeezes his eyes shut tightly while Leah holds onto her friend, her sister. Their bond is unlike anything I have ever seen. They both drop to the floor, and I rush over to them, but before I can grab my girl, she puts her hand up to stop me and Ink, who is about to pick Sophie up. We both walk back a bit, and I clear my throat.

“Angel, the baby.”

This stress isn't good for either of them; she could lose it. Her notes were very detailed about the risks of this pregnancy, not just for the baby but for her too. I can't lose her; I can't. I still need to start a fucking life with her to convince her we're meant to be, but she just shakes her head.

“Our baby is fine, Gunner, but you won't be if you try to take my inconsolable friend out of my arms, or did you not learn that an hour ago?”

I growl at her, using my club name, while Sophie sobs harder, making Leah hold her tighter.

All the brothers look at me in shock, not realizing I am the dad, and I nod, knowing what she's capable of, because, yep, my balls still hurt.

Ink raises a brow at me, and I clear my throat again. “I tried to take her keys to drive her here, you know, since she decided to get a crappy flat two towns over, and she kneed me in the balls for it.”

The brothers snicker while Doc snorts, “Didn't you learn your lesson, brother, when she punched your face?” I just narrow my eyes at him while he smirks wider. “Well, at least you've

already got a baby on the way, so it's not like you need to worry now anyway."

The brothers chuckle, and Hawk tilts his head.

"I feel like I need to hit you since you know my parents have basically claimed Leah as theirs, which means she's my sister, and you knocked her up before, you know, fucking around."

I shake my head at him, smiling a little, which soon wipes away hearing Leah's mutter.

"Probably already knocked Cara up too."

The brothers hear her and are all tense while I sigh. Fuck me, I have a lot of work to do to win her over. Let's just hope I can do it before our baby arrives and have her live with me because I will get her; she's mine, just like I'm hers. I just fucked up epically. We brothers like to fuck up before getting our girls.

My dad pats my back before whispering,

"We'll all help, son; I promise you'll win her back."

I nod before looking back at my girl to see Sophie has passed out in her arms, and I sigh, watching as my girl gently moves Sophie's hair from her face before wiping a tear that's fallen from her own face. She clears his throat and looks towards Ink, who nods and bends down, picking up his girl, who doesn't stir while I go to mine, where she reluctantly puts her hand in mine so I can help her up too, but as soon as she's standing, she lets go of my hand and follows Ink to his room here, and I grit my teeth before looking at my mom, who nods her head for me to follow my girl, and I do, without hesitation.

I get into Ink's room just as Leah climbs on the bed with Soph, laying towards her, her hand in hers, squeezing it tightly, and I lean against the wall, sliding down it before placing my arms on my knees.

Ink gives me a nod before leaving, giving me a chance to talk to my girl.

I clear my throat. "Dagger's proposing tomorrow, and your girl there is going back to work, but afterward she wants to

clear momma Anderson's house. I was wondering if you'd help while she's working. You know what she'd want to keep and what to donate."

She doesn't say anything for a while, and I debate asking her again, but I know she'll talk back; I just have to be patient. It takes about ten minutes, but she finally speaks, her hand playing with Sophie's hair.

"I have so many memories of that house. Momma Anderson taught me how to cook and bake, and Daddy Anderson taught us how to defend ourselves. I spent more nights there than I did with my mother before she left—more nights than I did at the Henderson's. When Soph told me she was selling, my heart broke, but then I remembered the memories were tainted. When Momma Anderson did what she did, she tainted the memories for her daughter and for me, but I miss her so much. I keep my eyes intently on her form; I don't look away as she does the same, looking at Soph. "I'll help tomorrow; I'll call my work and let them know I won't make it in."

I sigh, knowing this is going to piss her off. "You're not going back to your flat, Leah, or that job. I've already quit on your behalf." She goes tense, and I swallow hard, waiting for the backlash that I know is coming as she slowly sits up and faces me, her eyes cold with fury, and I take a deep breath. "I won't have you out of my sight now, Leah. We're having a baby together. Did I screw up over the years? Yeah I did, but things are different now; everything has changed."

She glares at me and says, "But I haven't changed."

I furrow my brows,

"I have always been me, Gunner. I haven't changed. My personality has never changed. Who I am has never changed."

I slowly close my eyes. "Angel..."

I hear her move, and I open my eyes to see her standing. She points at me and says, "No, you have no right to sit there and dictate what I'm not going to do all because I'm pregnant with your child. YOU didn't even remember sleeping with me! This is my body and my life, so you can go fuck yourself."

I stand, “Leah, it’s not because of the baby, and you know it. I’ve wanted you for five fucking years. I thought you fucked a brother over; we have by-laws in this club...”

“FUCK YOUR BY-LAWS!” She screams, making Soph wake up, sitting up instantly before looking between the both of us and winces, seeing the tension between us, but Leah doesn’t notice, “You have all treated me like crap all while I had your relationship.”

I butt in, “It wasn’t a fucking relationship; it was sex, nothing more.”

But she shouts back over me, “ALL WHILE YOU SHOVED YOUR RELATIONSHIP INTO MY FUCKING FACE DAY IN DAY OUT WHILE I WAS BEING TORMENTED BY THE ‘MAN’ WHO STOLE MY INNOCENCE, A MAN YOU ALL BELIEVED INSTEAD OF FUCKING CONFRONTING ME. A FUCKING MAN YOU LET INTO YOUR BROTHERHOOD.”

I swallow hard as she walks closer to me, getting in my face. “You want something to do with this baby, fine, but you and I are never going to fucking happen. You broke me. You destroyed me. You are no longer in my heart; you are officially dead to me.”

It’s a lie.

We both know it, but she says it so she can convince herself.

She sneers at me before walking out of the room, and I say over my shoulder, “The prospects know not to let you leave Angel; we will work this out, and I will finally have my girl. I’ve already wasted five years away; I won’t waste anymore.”

I can hear her breathing quicken before she screeches, walking away. I hear Hawk shout, “SISTER” trying to ease the tension, but it doesn’t work with her as I vaguely hear her sneer back, “Fuck off Hawk,” in the distance, and I sigh when he mutters, “Well, that was mean,” while the brother’s snicker and I look towards Soph, who is looking at me with concern, but I just shrug.

“I fucked up Soph, and I don’t know how I’m supposed to convince her we’re meant to be.”

She nods. “She’s always known Gunner, but for years I’ve had to deal with her coming home with tears in her eyes because the man she’s in love with had his arm around another woman, dropping everything for that woman, and making her do that woman’s job on top of hers all while he screwed her in his office. The same woman who has bragged to her over and over what you do with her behind closed doors.”

I drop my head in my hands.

“It’s going to take time, and I know you don’t think you have time, but in her head, you only want to know because she’s pregnant.” I lift my head and go to speak, but she puts her hand up. “I know that’s not the case; I know you love her; everyone does. You were in denial because you thought she’d hurt a brother. You tried to convince yourself that you didn’t want her to stop the pain you felt every day from not being able to be with her. You went the wrong way about it with Cara and screwed yourself over.

You need to prove to her that it’s not because of the baby. You need to prove to her that the feelings you felt for her over the years were real, and that is all you want. I’m the only family she has left; she doesn’t see the club as family because of their treatment of her, and yes, she loves Doc; she sees him as her dad, but there has always been a little voice in the back of her mind telling her he’ll leave her too, and he’ll hurt her too. The whole club has some groveling to do with her, but you need to plead and prove that she is your world.”

I nod, determination pushing through, and I stand before walking over to Soph, kissing her red hair before heading towards the common room, hoping to find my girl. The brothers and women all look at me with guilt while Axel nods his head towards the kitchen, and I nod as Ink passes me, patting my back and heading back to his girl.

They know they messed up too.

Hopefully, Leah will be able to see them as family again, like she did until we fucked her over for a man we thought was a

brother. I head inside the kitchen and see Leah standing near the window, looking out, and I walk up behind her, placing my hands on either side of her on the counter, making her tense. I place my head on her neck, her lavender scent filling my nostrils, and I take a deep inhale, loving the smell of her. My dick starts to harden, so I move my hips back a bit.

I don't want to fuck this up even more than I already have.

I place my lips against her ear. "I know you're pissed; you have every right to be. At me, the brothers, the women, we fucked up; we know this. We didn't question you as we should have; we let the women dish out punishments for something you didn't deserve, and we are sorry, so fucking sorry, but I know that isn't enough. You'll learn to trust us again. Leah, you'll learn to trust me again because you aren't just my friend; you are my heart, and you are my soul. I have loved you for years, I have wanted you for years, and I fucked up majorly. I know this, Leah, but I need you to give me a chance to prove to you that it's not because of our baby." I move my hands and cup her bump. "Why I want you. I need you to let me prove to you the love I have felt for you over the years because I do love you, Leah, more than words can say. I used Cara because I didn't think I could have you."

I feel her tears drop on my hand before I place a gentle kiss behind her ear, and I rasp, "I have five years to make up for Angel, and I will. You are staying in the guest room until you are comfortable sharing a bed. You want to re-decorate, then do it because, baby, I'm not letting you go a second time."

I place another kiss behind her ear, then leave the kitchen, letting my words sink in while Annalise quickly rushes in there to hopefully make sure they're still alright before my dad pats my back, handing me beer.

"She'll forgive you, son; we'll all make sure of it."

I nod before taking a sip, hoping and praying he's right; otherwise, I'll be tying her to my bed until she does come around.

Chapter 14

Leah

I sigh as I rinse my cup out in the clubhouse kitchen, ignoring the sweet butts who are currently glaring at me. Apparently, they're not happy I'm pregnant with a Patch Brothers baby—a council brother at that. I don't know half of the ladies' names, only Ginger, Bubbles, who is now Amy and a sweetheart, and Clitter, who turned into a really good friend for Sophie. The rest just blur into one really; they all want the same thing, a patched brother, and I was accused of being one of these women.

Great.

I'm lost in thought when Butch bumps into me, making me look at him, and he smiles at me, his blue eyes shining.

“Have I thanked you yet?”

I furrow my brow at him. “For what?”

He just grins, “making me a grandpa.”

I grin back and shake my head while he puts his arm around my shoulders as his wife Hazel leans on my other side, grinning widely and making me giggle when she whispers,

“Is it a boy?”

I go to answer her but stop when a voice booms.

“DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT ANSWERING THAT QUESTION ANGEL.”

I turn to see Gunner standing near the door with his hands on his hips, his dark blue t-shirt stretching over his muscles. Not. Flipping. Fair.

He grins when he sees my reaction to him, making me scowl at him while his mother pouts.

“I'm the grandma I deserve to know!”

I bite my lip to stop my laughter.

As much as I don't want to be around these people, they're still the baby's family, and the baby deserves to know they're family.

"I don't care, mom. I don't even know what we're having, and by the looks of my woman's face, she does, so if anyone is going to find out first, it'll be me."

She huffs, making her husband chuckle while I wrap my arms over my chest, my breasts pushing up, which are so sore it's unbelievable, I tell yah.

"Not your woman."

He grins before his eyes go to my breasts, lust shining in his eyes, and I scowl, dropping my arms, making him look at my face again before he walks over to me. He places a kiss on my forehead, making my stupid backstabbing heart flutter before he pulls back. "I've already ordered your cut, Angel; you are my woman, my old lady. I know it'll take time for you to trust me again, but you are mine. I know you love me just as much as I love you; it's how I know you'll forgive me for the last five years, but I also know how I'll treat you like a queen for the rest of your life for the pain I put you through."

I swallow hard at his speech when the door opens again and Cammy walks in. Her brown eyes lock with my green ones, hers showing sorrow, mine probably showing resentment for how she treated me and how she stopped me from seeing Mel when she was shot.

I look away as she clears her throat. "Butch, Hazel, and Gunner. I have told Mel and Dagger, who are currently pissed at me for yet again sticking my nose where it's not wanted, but I thought you should know. I told Leah not to go to the hospital when Mel was shot, and I told her she wasn't family."

Gunner tenses, but I just shake my head.

Everyone's so quick to judge me and treat me like crap on the word of that 'man', but now they have proof I wasn't what they thought; they think a simple apology would be enough to forgive.

I shake my head again; I can't deal with this shit anymore. I leave everyone in the kitchen and head into the common room before heading out the front door towards the van that the prospect Cal will be driving. He gives me a small "I'm sorry" smile, but I don't return it.

Everyone's fucking sorry. It doesn't change the hell I've been through because of them when I treated them like family.

I go to open the door, but Gunner beats me to it, opening it for me. He helps me in before looking at his bike, then back to me, furrowing his brows before his eyes narrow.

"Did you know you were fucking pregnant when you sat on the back of my bike?"

I just grin at him, making him growl, before placing a small kiss on my lips, making me gasp, before he shuts the door with a cocky smirk on his face.

That son of... I don't get to finish my thought as Cal starts the van up just as Shane sits next to me. Axel takes the front as we leave the clubhouse grounds after Henry, the new prospect, opens the gates for us, waving as we go through, and I wave back, causing the two prospects to scowl and sulk, and I just shrug. "He's new; he didn't make me feel unwanted and like shit." They sulk harder, causing me to giggle, and they shake their heads as Gunner bikes towards the passenger side of the van, staying there, Hawk takes the driver's side, making me raise a brow, and Shane just shrugs.

"Precious cargo is on board."

Cal nods in agreement, "an old lady, a pregnant one to boot."

I just huff, leaning back in my seat and making them both smirk.

Old lady! I don't think so; that ship sailed long ago.

A few hours later, Ink and Soph joined us at her momma's house, and we'd just finished packing up. I can hear everyone talking outside while I'm sitting in the guest room that was basically mine. I've emptied it and kept nearly enough of everything except for this door frame that I know I can't take.

I hear my name being shouted, but I don't move.

I want a little more time to look at our last memory here.

Gunner enters the room and frowns when he sees me sitting on the floor, my legs crossed and some tears falling down my cheeks. He crouches in front of me and wipes my tears. I flinch at his touch. Memories of him touching Cara and holding her to him enter my mind, but he doesn't deter as his thumb caresses my jaw.

“What's wrong, Angel?”

He rasps, and I sniffle.

“Nothing; I just wanted one more look at the last memory here.”

He furrows his brows before turning to see where I'm looking before he grins, “Yours and Sophie's heights?”

I nod. “When we were like 3, I think, her dad decided to turn it into a game, hoping to get us to stand still. He said whoever cleaned up the best would be the tallest, and as you can see, she won.”

Gunner chuckles, and I let out another sob: “And now, we-we won't see t-this anymore.”

His eyes soften before he places a kiss on my forehead before standing up and walking over to the door. I gasp as he grips the gray wood and pulls; it comes off easily enough, and he turns grinning at me, and says, “Now you can take it with you.”

My tears fall before he helps me stand, wrapping his arm around my waist. He kisses my forehead and then guides me down the stairs, and I take everything in, every memory, saying goodbye before we leave the house. Sophie notices the door frame in Gunner's hand instantly, and she grins, tears filling her eyes as Gunner gives the frame to Shane, who smiles seeing the markings.

I turn to the house one more time before Hawk shouts, “SHE SAID YES,” and I grin as the brothers cheer before Axel speaks up.

“Alright brothers and our two sisters,” I grin when Hawk wags his brows at me as the men chuckle. “We have roughly two hours before they get to the club, so brothers get home now and help set up for the party; Daggers squadron is already there; prospects go take the stuff in the van to Jackson’s, leave them in his garage, but watch that fucking Mustang.” Sophie and I nod in agreement before narrowing our eyes at the men, making the others chuckle again, and Axel grins. “Ink, go take your girl to the shelter and meet us at the club before Dag gets there.”

Everyone nods before the brothers give Soph a kiss on her cheek, and I hug her tightly before getting in the van and taking one more look. As soon as the door shuts, Gunner points to Shane, clearly telling him where to take me, and I roll my eyes and lean my head back as the men laugh loudly.

A few hours later, I’m sitting in the corner of the clubhouse bar, ignoring everyone. I gave my congratulations to Dagger and Mel, but since then I haven’t wanted to interact with anyone until Soph nods me over to her, and I sigh, knowing I can’t say no to her otherwise she’ll worry.

Dammit.

I walk over to her feeling Gunner’s eyes on me, tracking my movements. If I thought I could run then I flipping would. When I get to Soph I hug her and we get into conversation like we always do. I’ve just finished bitching about Hallie just as the door to the clubhouse slams open and a very deranged Leslie barges in looking a complete mess.

I freeze seeing the knife in her hand before Sophie steps in front of me making me gasp,

“Sophie no.”

I try to step in front of her but she moves her arm, holding me back and it all happens so quickly. One minute Leslie’s bitching about how Soph isn’t good enough for her son and the next I’m shoved into the safety of Gunner’s arms and Ink is on the floor bleeding while Sophie is screaming for her love and Leslie is dead on the floor. I feel like I’m about to puke but I put it aside and grab my friend, holding her tightly as the

commotion escalates. Ink loses his pulse causing Sophie to wail before someone shouts that Shane is okay while dragging him into the clubhouse - apparently, Leslie stabbed him too. How I missed that I don't know. When Doc finally gets his pulse back they take him to another room to save his life.

Sophie goes to follow but is stopped before Clitter takes Sophie over to a table and I swallow hard, letting her go. This is Sophie's family after all, they have her back more so than they ever did for me the past five years so I know I need to take a step back from her now, letting them help her, becoming her crutch.

Even if it hurts me more.

Chapter 15

Gunner – 2 weeks later

I sit back in my chair, tapping my finger on my desk while looking at my computer screen and staring at the pink sapphire 18k gold ring I've just bought Leah, and yes, it is an engagement ring.

Am I getting ahead of myself? Probably.

Do I give a shit? Absolutely not.

She's mine; it's been since we first saw each other. She knows it, and I know it. She just has to get on board.

For two weeks, I have been trying to worm my way back into her heart to unlock the box I know she's shoved me into. I've left her favorite peonies outside her door—one every morning. I've ensured her breakfast is always ready, and the bath is run in the evening. I've texted her several times a day, telling her how I'm thinking of her and how much I love her, and most days while she's behind the bar, I'll just walk up behind her, cupping her bump while holding her to me. I've made sure she knows she's all I think about, and for two weeks she's barely said a sentence to me or anyone, for that matter.

She hasn't even seen Sophie since Ink's mother stabbed him instead of his girl. Granted, Soph has spent more time with Clitter these past two weeks and with Dr. Shall, a therapist who is also an old lady, that she hasn't even noticed the distance between her and Leah, but I have, and so has Ink. Leah has pulled away from her friendship and from the club.

She wants to run; I just know if she has the chance, then she'll be gone. That's why I convinced her to come to work back at the bar. I mentioned how much more she'd get from working in that dump café, and she agreed. Well, she nodded.

Like I said, she won't fucking talk to anyone.

I sigh and shut my computer off as my door opens and Flame walks in before taking a seat, scrubbing his hand over his face looking defeated.

“Still no sign of her brother?”

He shakes his head, and I furrow my brows, leaning forward. “Come on, Zayne, talk to me.” He looks at me as I use his given name. I know there’s more to the story as to why Star left the way she did.

He bites his bottom lip before rasping,

“I fucked up badly.” I frown as he continues, “We were on a friend’s date; Annie had lost the baby, and she needed a distraction from the pain her friend was going through.” I nod so he knows I’m following, and he swallows hard, his eyes misting. “I could feel myself wanting to comfort her in the way a friend doesn’t do; I could feel myself finally willing to let go of the fear of losing her in my life, and it scared the shit out of me, so when Ginger walked over to me, I got up, wrapped my arm around the sweet butt, and left Star with a devastated look on her face.”

I sigh and shake my head. “Zayne,”

“It gets worse, Lucas.”

He raps before I can say anything else, and I tilt my head. How can it get any worse than that?

“The night before she left me, left us, the club, and her family, she gave me her virginity. It was a goodbye and a fuck you to me,” my brows shoot high. “Axel caught her before she ran off. She told him everything that happened the night I left her alone, making her think I was going to fuck Ginger when in reality I went home and slept.” He takes a deep breath. “Me, Axel, and Dead Shot saw footage of Hairy, the Devil’s VP, who also happened to be Killer’s cousin, the guy that was trying to sell in our strip club that I burned alive... raping my girl.”

My eyes widen, and I stand in shock while he drops his head. “But, you just said...”

I let it trail off as he looked at me, his eyes full of pain.

Fuck no, she was raped...anally.

I shake my head and grip my hair before he stands, gripping my shoulder. "I don't know if she'd ever forgive me, even if I did find her. I left her alone; I left the love of my life, my best fucking friend, alone because I couldn't handle my feelings to be-be..." He can't say it; he shakes his head. "Dagger knows as well, but no one else, not yet. It's up to Star if she wants people to know, but the reason why I'm telling you this is because if you called Star, left her a message, and explained the situation, she may be able to help you, brother."

I shake my head, not willing to use her, but Flame just squeezes my shoulder. "Do it, brother, because I feel like we're losing Leah bit by bit; she won't talk to anyone, and I have noticed her pulling away from Sophie even if Soph hasn't realized it yet. Clitter has pushed herself in between them, whether intentional or not. I don't know, but I am keeping an eye on her just in case.

We all failed her brother; Star may be the only one to help get through to her, knowing she had nearly enough of the same experience. Do it, brother, if not for you, for your unborn child."

I swallow and nod my head before he pats my back and leaves.

I take a seat and scrub my hand over my hair before grabbing my phone and spinning it in my hands. I never call Star; I text yes, but that's it. I think the last and only time I called her was when Flame got hit by a car when he was out on a ride.

Nodding my head, I get her contact number up and press call.

It rings five times, and when I think the voicemail will pick up, she fucking answers.

Shit.

"Gunner?"

She sounds panicked, and I swallow hard as my emotions take over.

"Starfish. I fucked up." I rasp as my tears start to fall, and I sniffle.

She sucks in a breath before she whispers, “What happened?”

I sniffle again. “Leah, she, fuck Star. We got it all wrong, so fucking wrong.”

I can’t stop the sob that comes out. I don’t know how to fix things for us or how to get her to understand where I and the club were coming from, even though I was wrong. I need her to fucking forgive me.

“Lucas, tell me what happened with Leah.”

I sniffled again. “Razor, he-he fuck, he lied Star; he and Leah were never an item; she never cheated on him; it was all a fucking ploy, so Cara got to keep me.”

I hear her take a deep breath. “She played you with his help.”

I can hear the anger in her voice: “Worse Star, so much fucking worse. Leah’s foster dad sold her virginity to Razor when he took an interest in her before we met and before she applied for the job at the bar.”

She sucks in a breath before she rasps, “Lucas, please tell me he didn’t, not where I was...”

She can’t finish her sentence as a sob comes out again before I rasp,

“He tore through her innocence with a razor in between his fingers the day of her interview, right outside the front door of the bar.” I hear her gasp out a cry: “He never fucked her; he basically wanted what he saw as his when he realized we had a connection and that I was going to make her mine. He left permanent damage inside her. Star, she was told she may never be able to get pregnant.” I hear her gasp out a ‘no’ as I continue, “but we beat the odds, me and her. We were drunk, which is probably the only reason she even let me touch her. Her notes from the hospital go into detail on her trauma with penetration, but it happened; I had her-her, I got her pregnant against the odds; I didn’t fucking r-remember it.” I clear my throat to control my emotions and my anger at myself.

“There’s a large chance I could lose both her and the baby before she even gives birth; she could die because of the trauma he caused her body.” Star lets out a cry, and I sniffle,

“F-for years Star I have been fucking Cara for years, t-throwing it in her-her face.”

She sniffles. “You didn’t know Lucas; surely she can’t hold that against you?”

I shake my head. “Star, I saw them. She and Razor, Cara, told me they were a couple, knowing I’d go and want to see it with my own eyes. I saw her riffling against him, but-but I thought, I thought...” I can’t finish the sentence with how deeply I fucked up.

“You thought he was getting her off, not tearing her insides up.”

I sniffle again as more tears fall. “We all treated her badly, Star, except for Doc and Ava. They see her as a daughter; they’re the only reason we know the truth. She never told anyone, and with how we were treating her, Doc couldn’t sit back any longer and risked his license,” she sucked in a breath. “He risked his license for someone who’s a daughter to him to open our eyes to how badly we were treating her, how I was treating her, the woman I love more than anything. I was pushing her away out of loyalty to someone we never even questioned.”

“Oh, Lucas.”

“I don’t know what to do, Star. She’s pulling away from everyone, including Sophie, and she’s like a sister to her. I made her move in with me, and I got her to work back at the bar, but if given the chance, Star.”

I shake my head before she rasps,

“She’ll follow my footsteps and run.” She takes a deep breath. “Leave it with me, Lucas; I’ll figure something out.” I sniffled again. “I promise you, I’ll figure something out.” I hear some woman in the background shouting, and I furrow my brows. “That’s Wendy, my boss, my breakover. Leave it with me, Lucas, ok? I love you.”

Gratitude flows through me as I rasp, “I love you too, Starfish,” before she hangs up and I quickly message Flame.

He’s going to want to know.

Me – she answered me, brother. She said to leave it with her.

He messages back instantly.

Flame – fuck... She's wavering, brother; she's fucking wavering.

I smile before wiping my face, glad to give him hope before I stand.

I need to see Leah; I need to make sure she's still here. I know working here is difficult for her with what happened, but the brothers and I redecorated outside. The door is now ruby red, and the wooden effect on the walls outside is now brown instead of white. Cameras are now installed out the front instead of just the back, and we've brought staff parking to the front too. Fuck, I even redecorated my office. We'll do anything to ensure she's happy and feels safe—anything to get her to learn to forgive us for fucking up and to forgive me for fucking up.

I walk into the bar to see it's nearly full. Sliver walks past me, giving me a sultry look, but I ignore her, looking behind the bar before my eyes find my girl. She's drying up some glasses, lost in thought, and I sigh before walking over to her. I know she feels my presence because her body's gone tense, but I aren't deterred; it's been two weeks since I found out the truth, two weeks since she's been in my home. I'm not stupid; it's going to take a while for her to finally give me another chance. I know it, and so does the club; we're all trying.

I can't lose her.

Before she was still in my life, my friend, so I had a piece of her, but now that I remember our night together and now that I know I'm an idiot, I can't lose her, and being a friend just isn't going to cut it anymore.

I come up behind her, placing my hands on her hips before gliding them around, cupping her beautiful bump that she still hasn't showcased to everyone yet. Even at home, she'll wear baggy clothes. I want her to feel proud of it and show it off; at least then every mother fucker knows she's mine.

I rub my thumb over it as the baby moves about under my hands before I place my head into the crook of her neck and rasp,

“I wish you’d speak to me, Angel. I miss the sound of your voice; I miss you, and I really would like to know what we’re having before my mother.”

She doesn’t say anything; she just continues doing the glasses, making me sigh before I kiss behind her ear. “I’ll be in my office doing the paperwork if you need me, alright? I love you, baby.”

I give her another kiss behind her ear while rubbing my whole hand on her bump one more time before leaving her to do her job.

She’ll talk to me again; it’ll just take time, and I’ll just have to be patient because I won’t lose this chance with her, I won’t lose her or our child.

Chapter 16

Leah – 2 weeks later

I look up to see more people walk into the bar, and I sigh, finishing up the margarita and sangria for the two women who are here to apparently teach their men a lesson about how to keep your child alive without them.

I must admit, I actually wanted to laugh for the first time in weeks.

Last week I had another check-up with Sarah without Gunner knowing; he thought I was here before he found out the truth. He was pissed, and I know he has a right to be there, but not this time. She wanted to check my walls, which meant an intervaginal scan, which meant panic attacks. Ava came with me while Doc waited outside as usual. They managed to calm Gunner down when I refused to speak to him, which made him more pissed. They told him what the appointment was for after my little head nod and defeat washed over his features because I didn't tell him about it or want his support. I mean, would I really want the man who treated me like shit for five years to be there for me? No, I wouldn't; he should have known that.

I smile at the ladies as they pass me a tip before I go to the next customer while remembering a phone call I received two weeks ago from someone I never expected to hear from.

I've just sat down on the bed in Gunner's guest room, ready for sleep, when my phone rings, and I sigh. It's probably Doc; he's the only one who calls me nowadays. I haven't spoken to Sophie, and to be honest, she hasn't even noticed our friendship has all but faded now that she has Clitter. She doesn't need me right now, and that's fine; it's probably for the best. She and the club are close; I can't have her argue with her family over me because I'm always outside looking in. They didn't even bother to question the accusations that were being made against me despite bringing in more

business for them when they promoted me to manager; I was just a tool for them to make more money, and I see it now.

I get up, grab my phone from near the TV, and frown at the out-of-state number before I answer.

“Hello?”

“Hi, Leah.”

I freeze in shock. “Star?”

She clears her throat. “Yeah, it’s me. I uh, know this call is out of the blue, but I had a frantic call from Gunner.”

I swallow hard. “Look, Star. I don’t know what Gunner has said, but I don’t want to talk about anything; I just want to go to sleep.”

She sighs, “And neither did I.” I freeze again, my breath caught in my lungs. “I was raped Leah, behind the bar six months ago. “I try to breathe, but I can’t. “A traitor to the Devils targeted me after the club killed his cousin for dealing drugs at Untamed Girls. Flame is the one who did the deed, and as I was technically his girl in everyone’s eyes except his, I became the target one night. It was our friend’s date, and Ginger sauntered over to Flame. He decided being with her was the better deal and left me alone. When I went to cry in the bathroom, Hairy grabbed me from behind. He tore through me without a care in the world in front of the camera...anally.”

I let out a sob, “Star.”

“I know. I decided I couldn’t stay around the club anymore, around Flame, so I gave him my virginity, then left, ran really, and haven’t looked back. I know what you feel, Leah. I know.”

I shake my head. “No, Star, you don’t. That ‘man’ tore through my dry walls with two of his fingers and a razor in between them, taking my innocence, destroying my chances of having a healthy pregnancy, and ensuring I could die as well as my baby, all because Cara wanted Gunner, a man I had just met. She didn’t care about that detail; she just wanted me out of the way, and instead of letting me slink off

into the night, they both decided to let me suffer, forcing me to stay and work all while she shoved her activities in my face with a man I became hopelessly in love with, a man who loved me back but decided to listen to crap, just like you did a woman I thought was becoming a friend, just like the club did who I thought was becoming family before you all decided to inform me you'd all never see me that way because I was basically a slut, a patch chaser when I'd never even had sex before.

You all turned against me because of their lies, and he wasn't even a patched brother then. No one asked me; no one was willing to listen! I tried to tell you, and you told me you don't speak to liars, so I don't know why Gunner got you to call me, and I don't care why. I want nothing to do with the club, you, or Gunner; now I'm sorry for what you went through. I really am, but at least you'll still have your family at your back if you decide to return. I have no one, but the baby I didn't even know was possible to conceive.”

She sighs, “Leah, please. I don't want you to shut down like I did. The brothers messed up, and so did I. I just want to help you earn your forgiveness like everyone else because you are family, Leah, and you always have been.”

I shake my head as my tears fall down my cheeks. “There is no helping me, Star.”

“Yes, there is, and I'm going to bring you back up again like I have for myself. I'm going to text you every day and call as much as I can. You won't feel alone or lost as I did; I won't allow that, and I know Gunner completely fluffed up big time, but he loves you, Leah; he just wants a chance for forgiveness, for you to give a relationship a go like you both should have had five years ago.”

I sniffle. “I don't trust him.” and I don't, not anymore. He became my world the more time we spent together—the little touches and flirting behind the bar, the smiles that were meant to just be for me. I just wasn't his world, because if I was, then he wouldn't have kept going to Cara while shoving it in my face; he wouldn't have believed ‘him.’

“I know Lee-Lee, I know and trust is probably the hardest thing to get back, I should know. I don’t think I can ever forgive Flame or the club, to be honest, but if you still love him, if you are miserable and miss him crazily, then let him try to earn it back.”

I shake my head and sigh. “You don’t love Flame anymore?”

She’s silent for a beat before she responds, her voice defeated. “I’ll always love Flame; he’s my one and always has been for as long as I can remember, but how do you let someone like him earn your trust back after everything he’s done? He knew my feelings, and I knew his, just like Gunner and you. He decided to spend nights with other women, including my own sister, who had been stealing from me just like Gunner, but he left me to his enemies, the same enemies that are still at large. I was raped because of him because of the club and their dealings. Gunner didn’t mean for this to happen to you, Leah, and I know Flame didn’t expect mine to happen, but he chose to walk away with Ginger, thinking his club was invincible. Gunner misread a situation that ended in disaster, and he’s now paying for that because your pain is his pain. He cried, Leah, on the phone to me. He cried and fell apart for the pain he put you through.”

I sigh because she’s right. Gunner didn’t know what was happening, and it destroyed him when he realized what was actually happening when he walked away from the scene. His heartbreak when he fell apart on me in my apartment completely obliterated me. Seeing his tears and pain, it was hard not to hold him and keep my walls up. “My assault was always going to happen.”

“What do you mean?”

I sniffle. “My foster dad sold my virginity to ‘him’ a few years before it happened; he liked what he saw even when I was underage, despite my never meeting him before. He heard the rumors that I wanted to wait until marriage. He wanted me, and when he saw Gunner and I make a connection the first time we looked into each other’s eyes, he wanted what he thought was his and decided to take it before

I gave it to Gunner, which I would most likely have done before marriage.”

She gasps, “Please tell me the fucker is dead.”

I snort at her language.

Star hates cursing and only does it if she’s pissed: “My foster dad isn’t. Gunner killed ‘him’ though.”

Five years later, I still can’t say his name.

She hums, “I think you need to make Gunner grovel, make him work back the trust, and then knee him hard between his legs if he messes up again.” I laugh a little because I’ve already done that and made his lip bleed. “I know it’s easier said than done, but I just don’t want to see you give up something that could be epic, and you two, Leah, will be epic if you let the sparks take hold.”

I bite my bottom lip. “Are you going to take your own advice?”

She hums again, “I’ve been trying to take my own advice for the past six months. The love hasn’t gone; the longing grabs me every day; I’m just struggling with forgiveness.”

Star kept to her word. She rang every three days and texted every day, making sure I was good, and I’ll admit, she’s becoming a good friend despite our rocky start after the lies that were told. I still haven’t spoken to Gunner or anyone in the club except Doc and Ava. I haven’t even spoken to Sophie in four weeks, but I don’t think she’s noticed. Every time I went on Sophie’s watch after she tried to jump off the Hudson Bridge, Clitter would take over and send me back to Gunners, with Cal or Shane following me to ensure I didn’t run.

Enter the eye roll here, shall we?

I serve the next customer as Clitter’s words repeat in my head.

‘Sophie confided in me; she’s struggling to look at you as the days go on; you were the last person to see her mother alive, and she resents you for it; it’s just that stage of grief, and it will pass.’

I swallow before smiling at the gray-haired man who gives me a tip before I go to the next customer.

'It's best you keep your distance for a while. I know you've been through a lot, but I don't think she can handle your issues on top of hers right now.'

I serve the frat boy his club soda and white wine, taking his money, my eyes barely focusing.

'I'm worried the clubs going to hurt you again; keeping your distance is better for you and your health.'

I take the money and go to the till to grab his change.

'Trigger and Jizz still don't know if you can be trusted; your being near Sophie, whom they love and see as family, is making them more paranoid that you're going to hurt her. Just give it time.'

I hand the guy his change before I go to the end of the bar for my water, my head all over the place.

Every time I've gone into the clubhouse, a few brothers look at me skeptically while others just ignore me, and I heard a few of the old ladies whispering about my being pregnant and how I trapped Gunner, and that's why he's trying his hardest with me for the baby. Nothing has really changed; the lies 'he' spewed are still in everyone's heads despite learning about my trauma. I mean, Triggers old lady Lily, who I thought was sweet, actually had the nerve to ask if I made the whole thing up.

The sooner I get out of the clubhouse and the flipping state, the better.

I sigh before someone grabs my arm tightly, dragging me towards them, and I suck in a breath, seeing the angry eyes of my foster father before I twist my arm to get out of his grip. It works for about a second before he grips it harder, making me cry out. I look around, but no one notices. The MC table is full, but none of them are even looking this way, awesome.

"You little bitch, where is Razor?"

I flinch at the name before I spit in Adam's face, making him sneer before he backhands me, making me gasp as he cuts my lip, his grip on my arm just keeping me up.

“What lies did you tell the club? hmm. Your virginity was his to take; he bought it fair and square, and if I find out you had him killed with your vicious lies, then I'll fucking sell this body to the highest bidder.”

I swallow hard; he doesn't know I'm pregnant, so that's my saving grace right now.

I will not let him hurt my baby.

He gets in my face again.

“Where is Razor?”

I don't speak; I refuse to. I look towards the MC table again to see Cammy looking at the bar with a furrowed brow, not seeing me before she gets Trigger's attention. He looks too before standing to look around the room, and when he sees me, with tears trailing down my cheeks, he scowls before rushing over towards us, but just before he can get any closer, Gunner comes out of his office, making me look his way while Adam is in the process of hitting me again. The first thing he sees is my face, then Adam's hand lifts and thunder rages over features before rushing towards me, and for once, I'm grateful for his timing.

Chapter 17

Gunner

I stretch my arms above my head before looking at the clock.

10 pm

I haven't seen my girl in two hours, which is two hours too long.

Nodding my head, I get up after saving my work on the bar's accounts and head to the door. I need to get my eyes on her.

Star messaged me and explained she's helping Leah through her trauma, which she hasn't done in the five years since it happened since she's had to stare at the fucker every day at work. It's hard because she's still not spoken to me or anyone really. I mean, fuck, she even got Ava to tell me she has personal things to do the two days a week she always has off, and I was not welcome to the knowledge of it. Not even Ava would tell me, only that she or Doc would go with her, so I know she'll come back because they're the only people who get to hear her angelic voice. I did ask Flame to look into it, and I know it was wrong, but do I care? Not one fucking bit, because fuck me, did I get a shock when I saw she was nearing the end of law school.

Pride and absolute love shined for her and her determination.

She's been going to school while working full-time and while being 22 weeks pregnant. My girl is amazing, and in only 8 weeks she'll be walking across the stage for graduation, where I'll make sure I'm in the crowd cheering the loudest, so she knows she's not alone.

I walk out of my office smiling while holding the chocolate muffin I picked up before leaving my desk only to freeze. Adam, the slimy bastard of a foster father who fucking sold my girl's virginity, has a grip on her arm. He's in her face,

which is streaked with tears, and her fucking lip is bleeding. His hand is raised, like he's about to fucking hit her again.

Both Trigger and I get to her just in time.

He grabs the soon-to-be dead man while I grab Leah, bringing her into my arms, while Trigger wraps Adams's arms behind his back, holding him tightly while he pleads,

“Wait, please; she threatened the club; I couldn't let that happen; you've been so good to me and my wife; you're my family.”

Trigger furrows his brows as he believes him, and my anger spikes up while Leah lets out a sob, causing all three of us to look at her, but her eyes are not on us; no, they're on the fucking muffin on the floor that I just dropped.

Really?

I raise a brow while Trigger tries to hold in his laughter as my pregnant girl cries over a fucking muffin and not her split lip, Jesus.

Trigger clears his throat while Adam looks at Leah like she's mental, which yeah, right now she kind of is. I walked into her bedroom last night because I heard her crying, only to find out she killed a spider. Obviously, she didn't tell me; it was on the floor, so I cleaned it up and flushed it, only for her to cry harder.

Hormones: I tell yah they're going to give me fucking gray hairs.

“Why the fuck are you crying over a muffin when I've literally just threatened your life?” Trigger tenses while Adam forgets he's been restrained. “I mean, I know you're getting fatter, but jeez, go and buy a fucking another one.”

Leah glares at him before stomping on my foot just before the steel toe cap of my biker boot fucking hurting me, making me let go of her.

“What the fuck, Angel.”

She doesn't answer me. only glares at Adam while Trigger tries even harder not to laugh, and I finally, fucking finally

hear her angry voice, but at least I get to hear it.

She points at Trigger, who instantly stills fearing for his life.

“You can shut the fuck up; you know, seems as you don’t fucking trust me. Even then, you saw him holding me, hurting me, and he spews some lies after HE sold my virginity, had ME assaulted, you still looked at me like you believed him.”

Trigger freezes while I glare at him, making him clear his throat as my girl looks at the muffin one more time, letting out a little sob and an absolute heartbreak look on her face, making me shake my head. She goes to leave before I clear my throat at her. “There’s two more in my office.” She looks at me, her eyes instantly lighting up, and I chuckle despite the rage over the blood on her lip as she rushes inside my office, slamming the door, ready to annihilate those muffins.

I shake my head again while Adam still looks confused.

“Hormones. She’s pregnant with my baby, you idiot.”

He makes an ‘o’ face before realizing he’s still restrained and tries to plead his case again, but I just gag him and narrow my eyes at a guilty-looking Trigger, “Get him to the fucking basement at the clubhouse and have ALL brothers down there. This fucking stops now; no wonder she wants fuck all to do with me still.”

I turn and punch the wall as Trigger drags Adam out the back, where he’ll meet Shane, who happened to be behind the bar today. As soon as he saw what was happening, he went and got the van. That man will make a brilliant brother.

I send out a mass text before going into my office.

Me – EMERGENCY CHURCH IN 15 MINUTES IN THE FUCKING BASEMENT. ALL BROTHERS! ALL WOMEN IN THE COMMON ROOM.

I’m pissed, so fucking pissed, but as soon as I walk into my office and see my girl lounging on my chair, her feet on my desk, eating the last of the muffin, I instantly melt, my rage dispensing a little. I mean, her lips still fucking bleeding, but she looks happy.

“Alright, muffin lover, let’s go; I’ve got a fucker to kill.”

She looks at me and reluctantly nods before clearing up her mess, and I lead her to the new black 4x4 pickup truck that I bought for us and now use when I’m with her, ready to end this fucker and slay the last of her demons. I kept a hold of her inner thigh the whole way home. She must sense my anger because she doesn’t protest.

When we get to the clubhouse, I ignore everyone while Dagger looks at me with confusion, leading my girl to our room. Yes, our room; she’ll come round. I sit her on the bed before I run her a bubble bath, lighting the candles that are spread around the black tub before going back into the bedroom. I take her hand, lead her into the bathroom, and sit her on the counter before getting the disinfection wipes.

I slowly and gently dab it on her lip, making her wince, before I place a kiss on her nose and then one on her forehead.

“Climb in, Angel, and relax. I’ll be back soon, and all your demons will be gone.”

A tear falls from her eye, and I quickly kiss it away and push my luck just a little by kissing her lips gently.

I help her down before leaving the bathroom and then the bedroom, heading towards the common room. All the brothers are here waiting with furrowed brows, but I ignore them, making eye contact with Axel. He sees my anger and nods, knowing it’s about Leah, before leading us down to the basement with me right behind us and the brothers following like sheep who are about to get fucking burned.

They heard Doc, they heard me, they heard the truth yet they still fucking question her because of a brother’s word, a traitor fucking word.

This is why she’s fucking shut down, why I can’t get an edge weigh in with her.

When we get into the basement, the brothers frown when they see Adam, while the council brothers sneer and glare at him, and he swallows hard.

“Look, Gunner, please. She was eating my food, living in my home rent-free. I needed the money, and her virginity sold for the highest price with Razor. I knew she’d be safe with him. He’s a brother.”

The brothers are all tense with realization while I get in his face and sneer, “He shoved a fucking razor inside her, cut her up, and you did get fucking money for her, you dipshit. What you think we’re dumb that we don’t know that the state gives foster parents monthly checks?”

He starts to sweat, and I turn to my so-called fucking brothers, and boom,

“IT’S COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT MY BROTHERS, MY FUCKING FAMILY STILL HAVE CARL’S, A FUCKING TRAITOR TO THIS CLUB’S WORDS STUCK IN THEIR HEAD. LEAH DID FUCK ALL WRONG EXCEPT BE PLACED WITH THE WRONG KIND OF FAMILY AS A CHILD. YOU ARE ALL STILL JUDGING HER, MAKING HER FEEL UNWANTED. A FUCKING WOMAN WHO WAS ASSUALTED AND THREATENED BY A SO-CALLED FUCKING BROTHER.”

Doc’s face goes red with anger while Axel comes forward and faces the brothers, with the council brothers at his back, all scowling. The other brothers look down with guilt, and I grind my teeth while Axel speaks up: “She was proven innocent; us council brothers were shown proof, and the only reason why that hasn’t been shown to you all is because that’s unfair to Leah and humiliating for her. We all failed her. She was assaulted on our property by one of us, then threatened to stay because of greed and jealousy. SHE WON’T EVEN FUCKING TALK TO ANY OF US, INCLUDING HER BEST FUCKING FRIEND.”

The brothers look up in shock; they all know how close Soph and Leah are, and Ink clears his throat.

“Soph hasn’t noticed yet, but Clitter has basically unintentionally gotten between them, and Leah has let it happen because, well because we’re Sophie’s family now.”

Doc scowls. “Leah is her family too, and mine.”

I nod. “She is your family, Doc, but that’s how far it goes for Leah. In her mind, she doesn’t want Sophie to have to choose if it comes down to it, despite growing up together.” The brothers all curse: “Star has been in contact with Leah; she has spoken to her every day for the last two weeks. I may have overheard some conversations; it’s how I know the reason Leah has pulled away. She’s going to run, brothers. I’m going to lose the woman I love, the woman who won’t let me try to make things right between us and grovel because of you and the women in this club.”

The men curse again when Jizz steps forward, and he clears his throat. “It’s not that we don’t believe the trauma she went through or that we still believe the shit Carl had said; it’s the fact she’s pregnant with supposedly your child. The women have been talking.” My anger intensifies, and Trigger steps forward to finish for Jizz before I get my gun out on him. “The women think she trapped you for your patch.”

I let out a dark chuckle, ignoring the idiot chained up as he watches us: “The woman whose medical records our council brothers have seen picture after picture of her trauma, notes after notes of confirmation that there is a slim chance of her falling pregnant.” The man’s eyes widen. “I wasn’t saying that shit to Carl for shits and giggles, brothers; I was saying it because it’s the truth. If my woman doesn’t lose the baby beforehand, there is a high chance she could; if she goes into labor naturally, there’s an 8% survival rate for both her and the baby; if she has a cesarean, there’s a 50% chance. She didn’t plan this pregnancy because, believe it or not, we used a fucking condom, and I know I’m the fucking father because, inside her notes, there are pages and pages of her absolute terror of penetration.”

The brothers all swallow, and I lose my fucking rag with them.

“SHE WAS FUCKING SAVING HERSELF FOR MARRIAGE!”

Doc steps forward, anger shining through his eyes. “Which women in the club started spreading shit? I want names, and I fucking want them now.”

Jizz and Trigger swallow, and we know instantly that Trigger's old lady Lily is one of them, which isn't surprising before he clears his throat. "My old lady, as well as half the women in the club," he says as he looks at me. "I'm sorry, Gunner, Carl; he was liked by most women; they're finding it hard to comprehend him doing those things."

Axel grabs him by the throat and sneers at him, "I don't give a fuck if they thought he was a god; I am your president; I told you what we saw; you should have fucking listened and shut that shit down or come straight to me."

Trigger nods guilt, shining through his eyes as Axel shoves him back before Doc flies out of the room, causing the brother's eyes to widen considering he's the most level-headed brother, while Hawk mutters 'fuck' following him with me, Axel, and Dagger on their heels. The rest of the men stay in the basement, guilt etching over their features. As we get to the common room, it's chaos. Ava is trying to attack a crying Lily who keeps apologizing; Carl was her cousin, so of course the rumor came from her.

I shake my head and walk over to her with Axel, who tilts his head at her.

"H-he was my cousin; I didn't want to-to think."

I finish her, "He was capable of destroying a woman from the inside out because that's what he did. We've seen the pictures, Lily, the proof; he admitted to it right here in front of everyone."

She sniffles as Axel speaks up while Trigger, who has now joined us, stands back a little.

"You are banned from the clubhouse and all club activities effectively immediately for two months, and you owe Leah one hell of an apology. That woman has been through enough over the last five years from you lot," he says, looking at all the women who sniffle. While Cammy tries to keep a hold of an enraged Ava, he looks back at Lily and says, "You were the worst, Lily, all because he was your cousin." She looks down. "Your Triggers, old lady, and your family, but Leah's family too, had been before you and Trigger became a couple. We

brothers just made a huge mistake, but what you did was purposely put her down day after day, you made her feel unwanted and unsafe because of who your cousin was alone, and you prayed on her. We all saw it, but now things stop.”

She looks back up at me and says, “Is she really going to die? Was that true?”

I swallow hard and nod as Doc speaks up, “She has a low chance of surviving, her, and the baby because of the trauma ‘he’ did to her.”

Lily’s tears fall, and Trigger takes her into his arms before looking at me and saying, “I’m sorry, brother.”

I just shake my head and look at all the women who look guilty as fuck before I turn and go back to the basement.

As soon as I step in the doorway, I go to the table and grab Slicer’s knife before stabbing it into Adams’s gut who screams in pain before a voice comes over it,

“WELL LOOKS LIKE I CAME BACK AT THE RIGHT FUCKING TIME.”

I turn to see Slicer standing in the doorway with a pissed-off look on his face. The brothers celebrate and cheer when they see him, but his eyes are on me. He sees the pain in my eyes and the terror of never winning my woman back. I have everything against me.

The brothers, the old ladies, girlfriends, and sweet butts—the fact she won’t fucking talk to me, and there’s the fact she could fucking die—so yeah, things fucking suck.

Slicer walks over to me while I hold the knife at my side, the blood dripping down the tip, and the brothers all freeze. They’re cheering stops when they see the look in my eyes—the look of defeat because she’s never going to trust me, never going to forgive me alone for the things I did to keep us apart.

As soon as he’s close enough, Slicer grips me in a hug before he rasps in my ear, “I’m home, brother; I’m home, and we’re going to get your girl back. I won’t let you lose her, not now.”

I nod and grip him back, hoping he's right before we spend the next hour torturing and slowly killing Adam before the prospects take his body through the secret doorway that leads to the funeral home that we donate a chunk to, and we brothers go to the bar for a drink with Slicer, happy to have him home.

Chapter 18

Leah

I sniffle as I get out of the bath Gunner ran for me.

The poor muffin

Am I crazy for crying over a dropped muffin? Yes, I am, but I can't help it; it looked so delicious.

Damn, these pregnancy cravings!

Sighing, I go into Gunner's bedroom and look around.

It's so nice in her— rustic.

He's done a dark wooden effect, and it's cozy. Shame he's an asshole, though.

He won't give up.

I haven't spoken to him or anyone else, really, except for Doc and Ava. I don't understand how he expects us to work. He treated me like crap for five years; his family treated me like crap, and even now they still look at me like I was the problem, not 'him.' They still see me as a patch chaser. I can't keep doing this with him; he chose his path five years ago, and I've chosen mine. Just because I'm pregnant doesn't change anything.

I quickly put on a baggy top and leggings before touching my lip and wincing a little. It's not the first time Adam has hit me, but it never gets any easier because, wow, did it hurt.

Shaking my head, I climb onto Gunner's king-size dark oak bed and sigh before trying to get comfortable in between the pillows.

Do I love Gunner? Yeah, I do. He entranced me the first time we met, and my love grew over the years, but at the same time, resentment took hold every time he pushed me away for Cara and Silver. Momma Anderson told me to try and give

him a chance, to talk to him, and to let him know about the baby. She wanted to see her girls happy before she left us and left her daughter. I guess she didn't see her daughter and I pulling apart from each other or the pain Gunner and his club would continue to put me through.

My phone dings, pulling me out of my thoughts, and I pick it up, smiling a little.

Star – How's today going?

She's messaged me every single day without fail and called every three; she's become a good friend to me.

Me – My foster father cornered me, demanding to know where 'he' was, and decided to backhand me across the face.

I send the message, and not even 10 seconds later, my phone rings, making me smile.

I answer it but don't get a chance to speak.

"Please tell me the brothers sorted him out!"

I chuckle. "Gunner's apparently sorting it."

"Just Gunner?" I can hear the confusion in her voice, and I sigh.

"Adam started saying crap, that I was betraying the club, and Trigger believed him."

I hear her suck in a breath, "those no-good mother..."

She doesn't finish her sentence when I inhale a sharp breath.

Shit.

A sharp shooting pain spreads across my lower stomach,

"Leah? Are you okay?"

I clear my throat, panic shooting through me. "I don't, don't know. I just had a sharp-sharp pain."

"Shout, Gunner, now."

Clear my throat, "No, I'm sure it was noth..."

My eyes widen, my words trail off when I feel wetness in between my legs, and panic sets in before I scramble to stand up.

I look down to see my white leggings turning red. “No, no, no, no.”

“LEAH, WHAT’S HAPPENING?”

“Blood, so much blood.”

I whisper, pain shooting through me again, causing me to cry out in pain.

“SHOUT LUCAS NOW, LEAH, NOW. Shit fuck it, I’m calling flame.”

She hangs up as another pain shoots through me, and my tears start to fall.

I’m losing my baby.

More pain shoots through,

“LUCASSSS!” I scream loudly before my legs go weak.

The doors open, and the men stand there, still in complete shock as blackness starts to take hold, my legs giving out.

Gunner’s frantic gray eyes are the last thing I see before everything turns dark.

Chapter 19

Gunner

I sigh, taking a seat before chuckling when I see Clitter slide up to Slicer, running her fingers down his chest.

“Baby, you’re finally back.”

He shakes his head at her with a smile.

“Yeah, I’m back, but I’m having a beer with the brothers. I’ll come see you later, alright?”

She grins and nods her head before kissing his cheek, and I shake my head with a smirk as Cal slides a beer my way. I hold the beer up as a thank you before he serves the rest of the brothers.

Slicer slaps my back before taking a seat next to me, with Flame taking the other side.

“Alright, brother, let’s fucking brainstorm on how to win your girl back.”

I just shake my head, taking a sip of my beer. “She doesn’t want me back, brother. Between the brothers, the club women, and the shit I did to distance myself from her, I have everything stacked against me, fucking everything.”

He nods. “Maybe, but that doesn’t mean you give up, brother; it just means you fight harder.”

Flame nudges me about to say something when his phone rings and everyone shuts up; the whole clubhouse stills as ‘Love is a Battlefield’ Star’s favorite song and her fucking ringtone blares through the silent room.

I quickly nudge him before it cuts off, and he fumbles with his phone, answering it.

“Star?” he rasps.

“GET TO LEAH NOW!”

She screams down the phone before I hear a scream coming from down the hallway.

“LUCASSS.”

My eyes widen before I rush down the hall, kicking my stool over as the brothers follow.

I’ve never been fucking happier that the council brothers’ rooms and offices are on the ground floor.

As soon as I get to my door, I slam it open, only to freeze. Leah is standing in the middle of the room, bent over in pain, while her white leggings are full of blood—so much fucking blood.

No. Please, God no.

Doc shouts, “MEL,” getting me out of my stupor as Ava screams out in pain.

I rush over to Leah, her body now falling to the floor, her eyes closing.

Please, baby no.

I catch her before she hits the floor as Mel rushes in. She gasps seeing the state of Leah while Annalise cries out, “NO,” the scene reminding her of her own trauma and making Axel take her in his arms as she cups her bump. Doc and Mel quickly check for her pulse before he looks at me and rasps, “Pick her up gently, Gunner; bring her to the medical room.”

I nod and gently stand with her in my arms as tears fill my eyes. Hawk has an inconsolable Ava in his arms while my dad stands back with his hands behind his head. My mother is looking at the scene in shock, tears starting to fall down her cheeks, and Mel, my beautiful sister with a heart of gold, walks over to the woman who caused the man she thought was her father to walk away from her, taking her into her arms as she cries out for my girl and my unborn child.

I walk past them and into the common room.

Everyone stills, panic lacing their features, seeing all the blood while the women gasp, but I keep walking, heading to the next hallway over where the prospects sleep and where the hospital

room is. Doc quickly opens the door before I put my girl on the bed, slowly moving her hair out of her pale face as terror washes through me.

I can't lose her. I can't.

Mel quickly sets up an IV while Doc gets his screen before gently lifting up my girl's jumper and showing her bump, I grab her hand as he puts the gel on her stomach. Taking a deep breath, he places the wand over the gel, gently pressing down before pressing some buttons on his screen. It doesn't take long before we hear a strong 'woosh-woosh' sound echo through the room.

My mother, Ava, Mel, and Annalise all let out a sob.

Axel, Dag, Slicer, Flame, my dad, Dead Shot, and Doc sigh in relief while I let my tears fall.

Doc moves the wand around before pointing at the screen. "Her placenta has come away from her uterus a little, which is what's caused the bleeding. Her passing out was mostly from the shock of the pain. She's going to be alright, brother," he says with a sigh, and I slowly close my eyes. "She'll be on bed rest for the duration, but otherwise, all is well with her and baby, thank fuck."

I drop my forehead to our linked fingers while Doc sighs, cleaning up her stomach, before he rasps, "Okay, everyone out; let's give her some quiet time."

I just lift my head with a raised brow, making him chuckle before he kisses her forehead and leaves. Everyone else follows suit except for Flame and Slicer; they both take a seat while I kiss my girl's hand as my other one caresses her bump. We stay quiet for a while before 'Love is a battlefield' echoes through the room, and both myself and Slicer hold our breaths as he answers his phone.

"Hey, Firefly."

Star's voice echoes through, "Is she okay?"

I smile a little, loving the friendship they've built over the phone, as Flame sighs, "Her placenta has detached a little.

She'll be on bed rest for a while, but she and the baby are okay, the heartbeat was strong."

I hear Star let out a little sob, making Flame squeeze his eyes shut as he rasps, "Talk to me, Firefly, please."

I squeeze Leah's hand tighter, hating the pain my brother is going through while Slicer grips his hair.

All three of us are going through pain without our women, but at least I get to see mine every day; they don't.

Fuck, this is the first time in months that Star's even spoken to him.

I hear her snuffle. "I can't."

"Please, Star, I miss you. I miss my best friend. Please. I love you."

I squeeze my eyes shut as she lets out another sob before she rasps, "Just not enough," then hangs up, making him sob. Slicer grips his neck, pulling him over and hugging him tightly while I rasp, "As hard as that was, brother, she rang you. She could have called me, but she didn't; her first thought was to call YOU."

He looks at me with red-rimmed eyes as the realization hits.

"I'm still her person."

I nod as well as Slicer, "You are still her person, Zayne."

He uses his given name, so it sticks in his head. The first person she thought to call was him.

"She still loves you, brother; she's getting weaker being away from you; she's starting to cave, and when she does, fucking hold onto her."

He looks into my eyes and nods, determination filling his.

I look back at my girl. She's still out of it, and I need a fucking distraction.

"What did you find on Hairy Brother?"

Slicer sighs, and I look at him as he runs his fingers through his brown hair, his hazel eyes showing frustration and anger.

“Some woman he fucked said he knocked her up, then bailed on her after slipping the plan B in her drink.”

My eyes widen while Flame’s mouth drops open. Fucking hell.

He nods, “Yeah, I was on his trail for about a month before ‘someone’ tipped him off, and he fell off the radar again. Other clubs affiliated with ours and Snakes are keeping an ear to the ground, and we should hear something more in the next few weeks; he can’t stay underground for long. Axel said it’ll be me going again with Snake but also with Tank as well as my dad.”

I nod while Flame sighs. “There must be someone else helping him from one of our clubs.”

I nod. “That’s what I thought, but the question is, fucking who? Razor’s gone, so who fucking else would betray us?”

“I honestly don’t know, brother, but leaving for months at a time is fucking exhausting.”

I chuckle at Slicer’s words before my woman rasps, making us all look at her with relief while chuckling a little at her words.

“You men swear too much.”

Chapter 20

Leah

“You men swear too much.” I rasp, my eyes opening slowly before they connect with Gunner’s relieved gray ones. It takes me a minute to remember as I move my left hand over his right one on my stomach while my right stays clutched in his left.

He just smiles at me.

“The baby’s got a good, strong heartbeat.”

I sigh in relief as Flame and Slicer stand. I do a double take seeing Slicer, though, making him grin.

“Good to see you, sweetheart.”

I smile as he kisses my head, Flame following suit while Gunner growls at them, making them chuckle as they leave, and I shake my head and look at him again. He sits forward, holding my hand with both of his as he kisses my fingers.

“Your placenta has detached a little, but you’re okay, and so is our baby; you’ll just have to be on bed rest for a while.”

My eyes widen, and he chuckles.

“Don’t worry, Angel. Doc said you can come to work if need be during the day to help with the books or whatever to keep your mind occupied, as long as you’re sitting down.” I huff, making him smile before he squeezes my hands. “You know, you still haven’t told me what we’re having.”

I look at him with a furrowed brow.

“I haven’t?” Surely I have, right? He shakes his head, and my eyes widen—shit.

I clear my throat and focus on his hands. “We’re having a boy.”

He sucks in a breath, and I look at him. His eyes have turned glassy, but he's smiling wide before he bends forward, kissing my bump and then my lips, and I don't protest because, god, I miss having him near me.

He shakes his head. "I've missed your voice, baby."

I tilt my head at him.

Guess it's time to take Stars' advice,

"I've been struggling," he nods, letting me speak. "Everything coming out about 'him' then losing momma Anderson has sent me in a bit of a spin. Sophie told Clitter that she resents me because I saw her mother last, so I distanced myself from her. The women all look down on me, accusing me of things I haven't even done, and the brothers either ignore me or look at me like I'm a liar when I wasn't even the one who told everyone what had happened to me; I stayed quiet." I keep eye contact with him, making sure he sees the pain. "And the man I was falling head over heels in love with, who became my friend, my heart, pushed me away, throwing women in my face every day knowing the feelings I had for him until suddenly I'm pregnant and he wants to know, he wants to fight for me," he goes to say, but I just shake my head at him. "You may not see it that way, Gunner, but that's how it seems to me. For five years, I had to endure brothers being nice to me to my face and then bitching about me behind my back while the women openly tried to put me down all because of 'him.' For the past five years, YOU have treated me like crap, hurt me, and broken me.

How am I supposed to forgive and forget something like that? how am I supposed to move on?"

He sighs. "You can't, and that's why you turned silent."

I nod. "I found it difficult to put my feelings into words because of my hormones. Before, it was easy to just let things lie, ignore the hurt, and try to get on with my life, but then I fell pregnant, which shouldn't really have been possible, and suddenly I couldn't control my emotions. If you didn't notice, they are absolutely crazy. I mean, I cried over a dropped muffin for Christ's sake," he chuckles while squeezing my

hand harder. “I want to try and forgive; I want to see if we could have what we should have had five years ago, but how can I trust you? How can I trust your brothers and your family after five years of pain?”

He nods before kissing my fingers, “By giving them a chance to make it up to you and by letting me at least try because, Angel, I’ve tried for five years not to touch you, not to hold you all out of respect for someone I didn’t know was a traitor, but I’m done now. I know I fucked up; I know I should have just confronted you about his lies, and I’ll regret that for the rest of my life, but I can’t let you go, not now that I finally have you within reach, not when I’m finally getting everything I’ve wanted since first meeting you, locking eyes with your beautiful green ones that made my heart jump. I can’t let you go, Leah; it’s just not in me anymore.”

My eyes gloss over as some tears fall and he becomes blurry.

“I don’t know if it’s worth it-it.”

I let out a sob, and he quickly climbed on the bed, holding me in his arms tightly before kissing my head.

“It is worth it, baby, because we’re worth it. You and I are meant to be, and I’m going to prove it to you because I love you so fucking much. I can’t be away from you anymore, Leah. I’m going to show you how much I love you, and we’re going to have a life together. You’ll be my old lady; we’ll get married, then we’ll fill the house full of kids because we’re for keeps, baby, I promise.”

I let out another sob, finally letting go of the pain of everything, letting it all out like Star suggested to me last week, showing him the pain he caused me while he held me tighter, whispering over and over how much he loves me.

I cry myself to sleep but don’t know how long until I wake up to whispering voices. I open my eyes to see Ink sitting near the bed with a smile on his face while Melanie checks my IV.

She grins at seeing me awake.

“Well, it’s about time you woke back up.”

I smile at her before looking up to see Gunner in the same spot he was in when I fell asleep, my body half on his, my head on his chest while his hand plays with my hair, and I give him a small smile, making him give me the look, you know, the ‘this is happening look,’ before kissing my head.

He won’t give up, but the question is, can I forgive and forget?

Can I have a relationship with him without taking my anger out on him every time he pisses me off, bringing up his past deeds? I mean, that is the question of the day, isn’t it?

Sighing, I look back towards Ink, not moving off Gunner because, well, his grip is tight, he isn’t letting me go anywhere, and my traitorous heart jumps for joy while my body hums.

Seriously, let the man freaking grovel first!

Ink tilts his head while Mel takes a seat, and I raise a brow at him, making him clear his throat.

“Sophie. I need to know what to tell her. Word hasn’t gotten back to her yet, and with her therapy sessions, I don’t...”

He doesn’t finish, but he doesn’t have to, so I finish for him, “You don’t know if she’ll handle this very well.”

He sighs and scrubs a hand through his hair. “You two are best friends and sisters, yet you haven’t spoken to her in weeks.”

I snort and shake my head. “And she hasn’t spoken to me.” He furrows his brows, “Not one call, not one text, nothing. She wants space from me, Ink, because she resents me.” He goes to open his mouth to try and defend her thoughts, while Gunner holds me tighter. “No, don’t go making excuses. She does, and that’s her choice to feel that way, but I don’t have to subject myself to more pain.” He sighs, dropping his head. “I love her, Ink; she is my sister in my heart, but she no longer sees me as family; she hasn’t since it finally sunk in that I was the last person to see her momma.” He looks back up at me, his eyes showing pain for me, but I just shrug. “It’s OK because I know she has you, she has her new family, and she doesn’t need me anymore.”

He shakes his head. “But what about you?”

I just shrug again and say, "I've got the baby." If I survive, but I don't say that, although by the glare Mel just sent me, she knows I thought it.

I feel Gunner tense underneath me, but it's Ink who says, "You are family too, Leah."

I sigh, "No, Ink, I'm not. I thought I was, but then the truth started to come out these past few months, and I realized I'm not, and that's okay too."

Gunner holds me tighter but doesn't disagree with me. He knows that's how I feel in my heart, so he knows he can't convince me otherwise. Ink shakes his head before looking down again, sighing deeply. He stands up and walks over to me, determination shining through his eyes. He bends down and kisses my head before he rasps,

"You are family. We fucked up, but not anymore; we'll just have to prove it to you."

He gives Gunner a nod before leaving.

"You are loved." I look towards Mel to see tears in her eyes, and I soften mine. "You are my friend, my family; remember that, ok?"

I give her a smile before she kisses my cheek and leaves the room too, as Gunner draws little circles with the tip of his finger on my bump. He kisses my head before placing his nose on top, inhaling my scent.

"We will get your forgiveness, Angel; I will win you over because my love for you will pull you back to me."

He sounds so convincing, yet the pain still shines in my heart with a blinding light.

How can he cure that?

Chapter 21

Gunner – Two months later

I tap my forefinger on my jean-clad leg, feeling jittery.

Fuck, I hope she isn't pissed we're here.

I keep my eyes on the stage, waiting for them to call my girl's name.

The past two months haven't been easy, to say the least. She still keeps me at arm's length despite my trying every single day, but she has started to call me Lucas, so baby steps.

I look to my left to see my parents both trying to find my girl in the sea of black caps and gowns with Doc and Ava while Mel and Annie grin and take photos because they've actually found her.

Dagger shakes his head while Axel chuckles, and I look towards the stage again when I hear her name being called.

“LEAH ASHLYN PARKER.”

I grin wide when she starts to walk up the steps before we—the fucking rowdy bunch that we are—start cheering and whistling as she accepts her diploma. She looks our way in shock, and I can see the tears from here.

Fuck, I hope they're happy tears.

We keep cheering as she goes down the steps, going to take her seat again while the service continues. She keeps looking back at us, and I smile wide, seeing her eyes shine with gratitude. That's when I realized we did make the right call, she needed us here, her family, who have also been trying every single day.

Her ice is melting slowly.

As soon as the announcer calls out the class, they all stand and throw their caps in the air, making me grin wide to see my girl

doing it too.

Dagger slaps my back. “Fuck, I’m glad we didn’t miss this, brother. Did you see the look in her eyes when she realized she had FAMILY here?”

I nod because it’s true; she realized she has family finally; it only took her two months to realize it.

I’m about to say something back when some brunette slinks up to us, her brown eyes sparkling with lust, and we both snort, looking back at my girl as she hugs people around her.

“Hey, baby.”

She rasps at me, but I ignore her, my eyes staying on my pregnant woman, looking gorgeous in a tight white dress that showcases her perfect 30-week bump. Her bump isn’t as big as it should be, but the OBGYN, who seems to love men despite being married, said all is looking OK, so we don’t have to worry. Her chances of premature labor are still high, though.

“Hey gorgeous, I’m talking to you.”

Dagger snorts, getting Mel’s attention. She sees the woman and narrows her eyes before sliding under his arm, making me chuckle.

“You know it’s rude to ignore someone when they’re talking to you.”

Mel now chuckles, and I still ignore the woman as mine rushes over to us, making me bite my lip. Fuck, I hope she’s not pissed.

Just when I think she’s going to stop and have a go at me, she jumps into my arms instead, and I catch her as she holds me tightly, causing me to sigh in relief.

“I can’t believe you’re here.”

She rasps, and I tighten my arms around her, our baby moving in between us and making me smile as I put my face into the crook of her neck.

“Where else would I be, Angel? Where else would your family be?”

She snuffles, and I pull back to cup her cheeks, wiping away the tears that start to fall before I gently kiss her forehead. Fuck, I love this girl. I hear someone clear their throat, and I roll my eyes, knowing it's the woman who can't seem to get the message.

Leah looks at her with a raised brow.

“Yes, Hallie?”

The woman, Hallie, frowns. “Is there a reason you are all over the man I was just about to take home with me?”

I snort but cough to cover it while the brothers and their women openly chuckle as Leah tilts her head and points her thumb toward me, raising her brow.

“This man?”

Hallie scowls but nods her head clearly, not understanding the situation considering I have my arm wrapped around Leah's waist.

“Yes, are you thick or something, Lee?”

I growl about to take a step forward, only for Leah to grip the back of my cut, making me scowl at her, but she ignores it, her eyes on the she-bitch.

“Huh, that's funny because I'm pretty sure this man,” she points her thumb at me again, “is the father of my unborn child.” Hallie's eyes widen. “And I'm pretty sure I'm living with him, and he sneaks into my bed every night thinking I'm asleep because he fucked up big time and I haven't forgiven him yet.”

I shoot my eyes towards her in shock.

I honestly fucking thought she was asleep, but a thought comes to mind: she always cuddles up to me, and she just said yet.

Fuck me, she really is trying.

I smile at her while the others chuckle again as Hallie's eyes burn with jealousy, but Leah just shrugs before turning back into my arms and laying her head on my chest. My arms

automatically go around her, ignoring the woman to my right as I place my nose on the top of her head, inhaling.

“Congratulations Angel.”

She nods her head, holding me tighter.

“Thank you, Lucas.”

I grin, looking at my blood brother, to see him grinning too, before Doc speaks up.

“Um, excuse me, little miss, what about us?”

We all chuckle as Leah moves out of my arms, going over to everyone and hugging them all while I look toward Hallie with a raised brow.

She’s now twisting her hair around her finger.

“Didn’t you get the memo? Fuck off.”

She scowls before stomping her foot like a toddler and storming away before my girl mutters, “I always hated that bitch,” causing us all to laugh.

I take her out of Axel’s arms and hold her close.

“I’m so fucking proud of you, Angel.”

She grins, “I’ve still got to pass the bar exam.”

I grin back. “You’ll ace it, baby.”

The others cheer in agreement before she hugs me again, and the weight of her not forgiving me loosens in my chest.

Baby steps.

A few hours later, I’m kissing Leah gently on the lips after carrying her to bed. She fell asleep with her head on my lap while we were watching Bridesmaids, and yes, I did actually sit and watch it—anything for my girl.

I watch her for a few minutes when there’s a bang on the front door and shouting. I furrow my brows before I scowl.

Whoever it is will be meeting my fucking gun if they wake my girl up.

I quickly shut the bedroom door to the master suite, where, yes, I placed her. There is no point in denying the inevitable; she already knows I climb into bed with her.

I rush downstairs as my front door bangs open, and I growl when a pissed-off Sophie rushes in with an equally pissed-off Ink who's following her.

"Sophie, you can't just fucking barge into someone else's house."

She spins around and says, "I don't give a fuck; I want to see Leah, and I want to fucking see her NOW."

She booms the last bit, and my anger takes hold.

"What the fuck is going on?"

She turns back to me and says, "What's going on is that you two are keeping me from my friend; you not telling me about her fucking scare. Where is she?"

I shake my head. "She's asleep, Sophie, and she doesn't need the stress; she's had a long day, so why don't you go home and calm down? You can try again in a few days.

She goes to attack me while screeching, "SHE'S MY SISTER, YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE," causing Ink to wrap one arm around her middle and his other hand to cover her mouth before she wakes my girl up. I step up to her, giving Ink an apologetic look, but he nods, knowing this needs to be said.

"My pregnant woman is asleep after a long fucking day. You have no right barging in here screeching at the top of your lungs because you didn't know about her scare."

Ink clears his throat before he removes his hand from her mouth. She's seething but she needs to understand the situation.

"Pixie, for four months you have not once spoken to her, not once tried to contact her, not since you realized how lucky she was for having that last night with your momma," she stiffens in his hold, her brows furrowing, trying to remember the last time she spoke to her, but she can't. "You didn't even go to her

graduation today; you forgot and went shopping with the Clitter instead.” Her eyes widen, and she looks at me.

I give her a sorrowful look.

“She didn’t want you to know about the scare, Soph; you haven’t treated her like family in months; she pulled back from you. I’m sorry.”

Her tears start to fall as a sob claws its way out of her throat.

“I-I didn’t; I didn’t mean to-to.”

I nod. “I know, but I think, and don’t fucking hurt me for this, but I think you need to leave things be for now. The stress won’t do her or the baby any good.”

Ink nods and says, “Baby, please; she doesn’t need this stress right now. The club, we’ve only just got her to start trusting us and seeing us as family; we can’t risk anything setting her back, and I know you love her. Soph - I know you do, baby, but right now, she feels disconnected from you. You trying to speak to her now will just set everything back, especially after today. You forgot, baby. I tried to call you when Dagger called to see where you were, but you didn’t answer. If it weren’t for the prospect with you when you were getting your nails done, then I would have gone off the handle.”

She shakes her head as another sob comes out, and she cries, “I-I forgot, o-oh god, I-I forgot after e-everything s-she’s d-done for me, I-I f-forgot,” before Ink picks her up. I give him a nod before he carries an inconsolable Sophie out of my house, and I sigh before locking up and then heading back to bed. I climb in behind Leah, my right arm automatically going over her stomach while my left goes under her head. She sighs in her sleep, snuggling into my body, taking my warmth while I place my head into the crook of her neck.

“Soon, Angel; we’ll be one soon.”

I kiss her neck before falling asleep with her whole body pressed up against mine, feeling fucking happy to have her back in my bed again.

The next day, I’ve just finished my piss in my attached bathroom in my office at the bar before heading back to my

desk. Leah's at home. I woke before her, giving her a kiss on the head before leaving her a note telling her how much I love her and to pack a couple of bags ready for a weekend getaway as a graduation gift. I've booked three nights in a cabin 50 miles away, just her, me, and nature, and I can't fucking wait—hopefully, by the time we return, she'll be mine again.

I smile going back into my office, but it soon drops, and I fucking freeze. Silver is splayed out on my fucking desk, naked, while shoving two fingers into her dripping cunt.

Does my dick stand to attention? Of course, it fucking does. I'm a red-blooded male, and I haven't had sex since finding out about the night I had with Leah, but am I going to fucking go there? Not a fucking chance.

My eyes narrow, and rage filters through my eyes as she moans.

“Come and join me, baby; I'm so fucking horny.”

“Silver”

She looks up at the coldness of my voice.

“You are aware that I have a woman who's pregnant with my child, right?”

Her eyes widen before she quickly gets up, covering herself. Just what I fucking thought. Fucking Cara, she better fucking hide because if I get my hands on her, she's fucking dead because this has her conniving schemes all over it, and I fucking knew she'd try something after we fired her.

“Oh my god, Gunner, I'm so fucking sorry. Cara, she-she said you were horny and needed us because she's been on holiday and wanted time together. Oh god, what did I just fucking do?”

I give her a small smile to help ease her guilt, panic, and remorse flashing through her eyes. “Cara was fired. She got my woman raped five years ago when she saw our connection.”

Her eyes widen and fill with tears. “Leah!”

I nod. It's no secret, Leah, and I have this connection.

She lets out a sob, and I would comfort her, but yeah, she's still naked.

"I'm so sorry, Gunner."

I nod. "I know. Why don't you go and get dressed and come back tomorrow for your shift? Cal will take over today."

She nods before leaving my office like her ass is on fire, and I shake my head. I need to see my woman, and I probably should tell her about this; I don't need rumors swirling around.

Poor fucking Silver; her crush on Cara nearly got her fucking fired if I hadn't known any better.

Turning my computer off, I lock my office door while texting Axel.

Me – Cara just tried fucking with my relationship. She got Silver to finger-fuck herself on my desk; she needs sorting.

He texts back instantly.

Axel – I'll get Flame on it.

Chapter 22

Leah

I blink my eyes, the sun shining through the black curtains, and I furrow my brows before looking around the room to see I'm not in the guest room. I can't help it—the little smile forms on my lips. The room is large, the walls light gray, and the furniture glossy black. There's a double door straight in front of me with blinds going down to the balcony. To my right, there's another double door—I'm guessing a walk-in wardrobe—then a single frosted door to the bathroom. I look towards the nightstand to my right to see if there's a clock, but there isn't; instead, there's a picture of me from roughly three years ago. My head is back, and I'm laughing on the club's picnic field, and my heart jumps in my chest. Next to the picture of me is the scan of our boy, then a brand new one of me and him yesterday, smiling wide at the camera, me in my cap and gown while he holds my bump.

My heart skips, butterflies fly in my stomach that could or could not be the baby, and right near the photo is a note.

I swallowed hard before picking it up.

Angel,

I had to go to the bar to do paperwork, and I didn't want to disturb you.

There are muffins in the kitchen.

Do me a favor and pack a bag for three days; we're going away as a graduation gift.

I love you, Angel, so fucking much; you are my everything.

This is happening, so get ready, baby.

Love forever and always,

Your Lucas xx

I bite my bottom lip.

Can I do this?

Can I give him a chance?

These men seem to like to screw up a lot.

Sighing, I get up to pee. The bathroom is large, and the tub looks absolutely perfect to sink into. I look around the gray marble counters and furrow my brows when I notice my stuff. I quickly go to the wardrobe and enter the light room, and yep, just as I suspected, the bastard has moved me into his room while I was sleeping.

I chuckle and shake my head.

He's not going to give up, is he?

Huffing, I shake my head again, answering my own question, before I quickly put on my white and gray jumper dress with some black flats. I run a brush through my hair before rushing down the stairs of Gunners, and well, I guess my home before grabbing my keys from the kitchen counter. I run out of his rustic-looking living area, which is just wow; it's gorgeous; everything is dark oak, full of dark browns and blacks; even the mantel around the fireplace is rustic oak; it's amazing. I haven't really paid attention to his house; I spent most of my time in the guest room. I guess I need to change that now.

Shaking my head, I'm losing focus. I need to see Gun... Lucas; he's Lucas, my Lucas.

I have to see him.

I quickly rush out to my crappy car that he still hasn't scrapped because I won't let him, and I head to the front gate. I wave at Shane, who comes to the window, and he clears his throat.

"I don't want to get hit because, well, I know you have a good swing, but, uh, I don't think that you..."

I smile. "I'm going to see Lucas."

He sees the sincerity in my eyes, and he grins wide. "Well, it's about damn time."

I laugh while he lets me out before I head to the bar.

I've let him suffer long enough; it's time to put the past to bed and see if we can have what we should have had before jealousies got in the way. We need to hash everything out so we can have a clean slate, and hopefully, I can learn to fully forgive him for hurting me over the years because I honestly don't know if I can live without that man.

Not even twenty minutes later, I'm parking near the bar's back exit, and I swallow hard.

What if he doesn't want me anymore?

What if I've left it too late?

Taking a deep breath, I shake my head before getting out of my car. I look towards the front door; flashbacks of being pinned while I'm cut from the inside flash through me. I know Lucas and the club have tried to make me feel more comfortable here since finding out about my trauma by changing the color of the door and walls and adding more security, but I just can't. I walk around the back of the bar, heading for the back door. Gunther, one of the new security bouncers, gives me a head nod, opening the door for me, and I head inside towards Lucas's office, hoping I'm not making a mistake.

Famous last words, though, right?

I get to his door and come to a stop when I hear a moan—a woman's moan—and I swallow hard.

Please no.

Very slowly, I open the door before coming to a halt.

Silver is on her back on his desk, completely naked, fingering herself, while the man who promised not to hurt me again is standing near, his eyes narrowing on her cunt and his jeans bulging. A tear falls down my cheek, and I have to swallow a sob before quickly shutting the door.

I quickly rush back out the backdoor, and Gunther furrows his brows, but I just smile and wave at him before climbing into my crappy car.

I take deep breaths willing not to break down here. I can't go back to the clubhouse; they won't let me leave, but I know I still have things at my apartment. With a nod of my head, I start my car and head back home to pack, a plan firmly in place. I need to leave and get as far away from this town as possible, and all the heartache it's caused me over the years. It takes me an hour. As soon as I pull my car into my space, I get out and rush to my door, only to be stopped by my foster mother.

I scowl, but she isn't deterred by the look on my face and places her hands on her wide hips.

"Where is Adam? Last I heard, he was coming to see you!"

I just chuckle as I walk past her. "Maybe you should try Hayley; you know his mistress."

Her cat eyes widen with shock, realizing I know he had a mistress before her eyes start to tear, but I ignore her. I thought of her as a mother; she was kind to me, but as soon as I turned 18, she didn't want to know. She turned her back on me and agreed with her husband about what "he" did. I go into my building, ensuring the door is locked behind me. I don't want her anywhere near me. I know she won't stick around; she loves Adam. Not sure why, though; she'll probably go and confront his 'pregnant' mistress. I left that part out on purpose. I don't think she's aware of that little detail, but when she does find out, she'll move on with her life and be free, or, well, I hope she will, because as far as I'm aware, Adam is gone.

I quickly rush into my purple bedroom and grab my duffle bags, packing as much as I can out of my drawers before going into my cream bathroom. It's tiny; there's only one cupboard, a small walk-in shower, and a toilet, but it was good enough for me.

I get all of my toiletries, take them to the bags on my bed, and gently pack them. I don't need a shampoo explosion. I empty my side table when I come across a photo of me and Sophie when we were about four, and my eyes tear up, but I hold them in and shove the picture inside my bag before taking the three of them into the small living area.

I look around to see if there's anything personal that I want to keep but don't find anything except for the framed photo of Momma Anderson, so I quickly grab it, placing it in my bag before heading into the small kitchen. Everything in here is superficial, so I know I won't need anything except my laptop that I used for school. I quickly grab that before swallowing hard, nausea grabbing a hold of me, a sob wanting to rip from my throat, but I know I haven't got time. I need to leave and get the distance between me and the heartache Parkerville has caused me.

Taking a deep breath again I close my bags about to take them to my crappy car when there's a loud bang from the main door, which is two flipping floors down. My eyes widen, and I wait, holding my breath, hoping it's just a neighbor pissed off or something.

I hear the thuds of boots coming up the stairs, and I know, in my heart, that it's not a neighbor. Lucas has sent someone after me while he gets himself off with Silver.

My tears start to fall.

Why can't he let me leave?

Why can't he let me heal from the pain he's put me through?

This isn't fair.

What in the hell have I done in my past life to deserve this crap?

The sound of the thuds gets closer before they come to a halt outside of my door, and I swallow hard, staying quiet, hoping the prospects are stupid enough to think I'm not here.

Loud bangs sound from my door, and I jump before my breathing stops at the voice on the other side.

“LEAH, OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR NOW BEFORE I BOOT IT DOWN!”

I don't move.

He's here? But he was just... I don't get to finish my thought as my door flies open, banging against the wall, hanging off its

hinges, and a very pissed-off-looking Lucas glares at me like I betrayed him.

Shit.

Chapter 23

Gunner

I race home wanting to see my girl, but as soon as I get to the gate, Shane furrows his brows at me, stopping me at the gate, and I raise a brow at him behind my sunglasses.

“Is Leah following behind you?”

My body stiffens. “What the fuck are you talking about, Shane?”

His eyes widen. “Fuck. Gunner, I’m sorry; she told me she was coming to see you half an hour ago; she even called you by your given name; her eyes showed her sincerity; fuck Gunner.”

A lump forms in my throat. Fuck no, “half an hour ago?”

He nods, and I slowly close my eyes, dropping my head. She fucking saw Silver and ran, fucks sake.

I give Shane a nod before I quickly spin around in the gateway of the clubhouse, roaring after my girl. She took it the wrong fucking way, and yeah, I don’t really blame her, but she should have just fucking confronted us then and there instead of running. She’s probably an hour ahead of me going back to her flat that I fucking forgot to end the lease on, and I would bet my left nut she’s packing to do a runner.

Fuck me, this woman is going to be the death of me.

Oh well, at least she’ll have all her valuables ready to take back home to our fucking home.

Pain in the ass, beautiful fucking woman

I cut the journey time in half, breaking a dozen fucking speeding laws before I pulled up next to the crappy rust bucket she refuses to scrape, and now I know why. She still has one fucking foot out the door.

Sighing, I shake my head before going over to her building as some woman is coming out of it, so I quickly grab the door before it locks itself, and I slam the thing shut, knowing that with how fucking crappy the walls are, she'll hear me coming. I stomp my biker boots up the narrow fucking stairs and come to a stop outside her creamy door.

I bang on it before shouting,

“LEAH, OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR NOW BEFORE I BOOT IT DOWN!”

My patience has run thin with this woman.

I don't give her a chance to try and come to terms with the fact that I'm here instead of fucking a woman I didn't fucking want. I lift my foot and boot the door. It swings open, banging against the wall, before hanging off the hinges. My anger flowed through my fucking veins at the fact that she ran instead of confronting me like the old Leah would have fucking done. I take a good look at her; she's in a jumper dress, her hair is down, and her face is make-up-free, while her tears coat her cheeks, and I shake my head at her. Fucking woman, that is it. I'm done holding back. I grab the door, managing to just shut it with half of the hinges broken before I turn and face her, but quickly duck as a cup comes flying my way.

There's the fucking anger she should have confronted me with.

The cup smashes against the now sort of closed-door before another one comes my way.

Shit.

I just about duck again before I scowl at her.

“You fucking done yet?”

That might have been the wrong thing to say because a plate is next.

Fuck, where is she getting the shit from? She's in her living area, not her kitchen.

Damn, another plate comes my way.

“LEAH ENOUGH!”

Her eyes narrow, anger vibrating from her, and fuck me, does my dick like it.

She points at me.

“You lying, cheating son of a...”

I reach forward, grabbing her hand that’s pointed at me, before crowding her against the wall next to the door, cutting off her rant and making her gasp.

“Careful Leah, we both know you love my mom too much to call her a bitch.”

She shoves at my chest, but I just chuckle, my body not moving from her force. I look into her gorgeous, light green eyes that have become misty.

“Move Gunner, NOW.”

She screams the last bit, and I just smirk before kissing her lips hard. She gasps, giving me the perfect opportunity to shove my tongue down her throat before she starts shoving at my chest again, but I just bite down on her lip, causing her to moan.

Fuck me if that wasn’t sexy.

My hands go down to her thighs, and I lift her up, making her wrap her legs around my waist. It’s not easy with the bump, but I make it work as I unbuckle my belt, pulling the zip to my jeans down. I grab a hold of her panties all while my tongue plays with hers before I place my hard cock at her soaking wet entrance. I feel her tension, but I ignore it. I know she has trauma, but I’m going to make her forget it. I kiss her jaw, down to her neck, suckling on it, before I rasp as my finger finds her clit making her gasp.

“Did you really think I’d want Silver when I have you, hmm?” She tenses again, but I continue my slow circles on her clit, “If you’d stayed long enough, you would have seen me telling Silver I have a woman who I love, who is carrying my baby; you would have seen her freak out and apologize over and over.”

She shakes her head as tears fall. “You liked what you saw; you were hard.”

I sigh in the crook of her neck before I look up into her sad eyes. “Angel, I haven’t gotten laid except with my hand since I realized you and I slept together—that was months ago, baby, at momma Anderson’s wake. My body reacted, but that doesn’t mean I wanted her, because I didn’t, I don’t, I only want you.”

She lets out a sob, and I kiss her again, and finally, fucking finally, she kisses me back. I pour all the love I feel for her into the kiss as I thrust forward, making her gasp and tense. I don’t move, but I don’t stop my kiss either, as my finger builds more pressure on her clit and as soon as she starts to wiggle her hips, I slowly pull mine back before thrusting forward, hard, tilting my hips to reach her magical fucking g-spot.

She gasps into my mouth, and I groan.

Fuck me, this must be what heaven feels like.

I break the kiss before placing my forehead against hers, making eye contact and keeping it as I slowly thrust my hips in and out while my fingers rub harder on her clit. I make love to my woman.

Her breath hitches as her body tightens around me.

“That’s it, baby, cum for me. It’s just you and me, Angel, you and me. Fuck, that’s it; squeeze me, Angel; fuck, I love you,” I rasp.

Over and over, I tell her how much she’s mine and how much I fucking love her before she detonates around my cock, making me see stars, my cum spurting from my tip, and painting her walls. I groan before kissing her passionately, holding her close between me and the wall. I break the kiss when I start to feel myself harden again, my dick not getting enough of his pussy, and I rub my nose against hers.

“You are it for me, Leah. You always have been. I know I fucked up over the years; I pushed you away without asking you for your truth or actually fucking looking into everything. When I promised you not to hurt you like that again, I fucking

meant it. I love you, Angel, so fucking much, and the sooner you realize that the fucking sooner I can put my ring on your finger.”

She sniffles as some tears fall down her cheeks, and I wipe them away.

“I came to tell you I wanted to give us a try, to see if we could have what we should have had five years ago.”

I sigh in relief, placing my forehead back against hers before pulling my hips back but leaving the tip in, then slamming forward, making her gasp.

“We won’t have what we should have had, Leah; we’ll have fucking better. Do you understand me? We’ll love, we’ll fight, but we’ll be fucking stronger.”

She sniffles but nods her head against mine while her fingers grip the base of my hair at the back of my neck before kissing me.

She’s fucking kissing me first.

About damn time, if you ask me.

I pull my hips back again before slamming forward, making her gasp in the kiss, and I bite her bottom lip.

“I think you should say bye to this apartment properly because, Angel, you’re coming home.”

Her eyes shine as she smiles wide at me, and I grin back before carrying her into her bedroom, my dick staying snugly in her heat.

As long as my dick stays inside her, she seems good, so that’s what I’ll do for the rest of the fucking night because we have five years to make up for.

Chapter 24

Leah – 5 weeks later – 35 weeks pregnant

I smile when I feel my baby move and rub my hand over my now larger bump. I can't believe I've lasted this long, and everything is going well. Only three more weeks, and we'll meet our boy. Sarah believes a planned c-section is the best way forward, so that's what we're doing. Now, if only she'd stop flirting with my man, then everything would be perfect.

I'm sitting at the bar at Untamed Fire going over the books for Lucas and Slicer, and my smile widens at the progress the club, Lucas, and I have made with our relationships. Things haven't been easy; I am still a little skittish and uneasy with the men and their women, but the club has been good to me these past few weeks. I haven't fully forgiven them for their treatment of me over the years. I mean, I thought of them as family until I needed to swap my days and I realized they didn't see me the same way, but they're trying, and I'm trying too, not only because I do love Lucas with everything in me and have done since our eyes first connected, but because they are my baby's family.

It's something I never had growing up and something I want my boy to cherish.

Things with Lucas are improving as well; we're talking more and being honest with each other. Every day we tell each other one new thing the other didn't know, like how I took a math test for Sophie in 8th grade and how he 'accidentally' played his parent's sex tape to the whole club when he was 15, after his dad had grounded him for letting Ink tattoo him, making him miss Slicer's birthday party.

Accident, my ass.

I still have my down days when memories pop up with him with other women being shoved in my face or when some of the women vandalized my rust bucket over the years, playing

in my mind like a movie, but Star's helping me through it all. She still calls me three times a week and messages whenever she can; she's become my rock, and I hope she comes back for Dagger's wedding. I bring it up as much as I can, and I think I'm slowly convincing her. Well, I hope I am, which Flame is very grateful for; the mountains of muffins he shows up with every day are proof of that.

I start to go over the order numbers, tallying them all up and making sure they match with the delivery reports when Lucas comes back to mind. For five weeks, he's been attentive and quite frankly amazing. After he stormed into my flat and we made love several times, he helped me pack up my rust bucket and followed me all the way back to the clubhouse, where he then proceeded to empty my car completely before throwing the keys to a relieved and smiling Shane, who then went and scrapped it, which then caused me to swing for Lucas, which only made him chuckle and me growl before he then proceeded to carry me upstairs and make love to me again and again, owning my body, my heart, and my fear of penetration, helping me through the trauma I've been through all while making me forget he scrapped my car. He's amazing when we become intimate; he's careful and considerate, always knowing how to keep me calm.

Last night in his tub comes to mind, making me smile wider.

I've just gotten in the bath, and, oh yes, it doesn't matter how many times I climb in this thing, I sink with a sigh. I'd live in it if I could, so flipping good. I lay my head back, closing my eyes as the bubbles surround me, when I hear a clearing of the throat. I open my eyes to see Lucas leaning against the dark wooden door frame, his eyes taking me in, and I smile.

"Are you going to just stand there and watch, or are you going to join me?"

He smirked before pushing off the frame. He hangs his cut up, placing it on the door, before removing his black t-shirt. He kicks off his boots, then his jeans and boxers, and I sit up, moving forward so he can climb in behind me all while I keep my eyes on his amazing body. He's a work of art, body

full of tattoos from lion heads to tribals, then there's his club symbol while his muscles showcase with each step he takes.

As soon as he's in position, I lean back, placing my head on his chest while his arms wrap around me, his hands cupping my bump, making our boy move, and I smile, placing my hands over his. I feel him place his face into the crook of my neck.

"I love you, Angel."

Tears build up in my eyes; I haven't said it back yet. It's not that I don't feel the same way; I do; I'm just not ready to say it, and he understands; he's being patient with me.

I feel him kiss my neck, making my body shiver as his hands move up my body, cupping my breasts before lightly rubbing his thumbs over my nipples, making them peak.

"Turn around, baby." He raps in my ear.

I listen, and I sit forward before he helps me turn in his arms, so I'm straddling him, his large cock rubbing against my pussycat, and I tense.

Dammit.

For five weeks, we've been having sex, yet I still panic at penetration. He just smiled at me before leaning forward, kissing my lips lightly, lifting me by my hips a little, and placing the head of his cock at my entrance.

"It's just you and me, Angel."

I nod, running my fingers over his crest tattoo on his right peck, before I see one on his left side, right near his heart, that I haven't noticed before. Using the tip of my finger, I gently trace the letters of my name, making tears fall from my eyes, and I look at him with questions swimming around. He gently lowers me onto his member, pushing the head into me and penetrating me while distracting me with his words.

"I got that the day I met you. I knew you'd be mine, always. It didn't matter that I thought you belonged to another; my heart and soul had connected with yours."

I sniffle before leaning forward, kissing him with passion and making him groan before slamming me down onto him as he thrusts up. I don't tense; I just kiss him harder. I may not be able to say the words yet, despite knowing it's true, but I can show him. I lift my hips myself before lowering them and then swiveling them.

We continue this for a while, and we make love.

My arms are tightly around his neck while he has one hand splayed on my spine while the other trails down our bodies between us before he finds my clit. He presses down on it hard before pinching it, and I spasm around his member, making him groan before pinching my clit again. I see stars as my stomach tightens, and I cum, squeezing him tightly. He thrusts up one, two, three, up to eight more times before cumming inside me, placing his face in the crook of my neck, gently sucking me there, and I smile as he rasps.

"You're my heaven, baby."

I'm brought back to the bar when my phone dings, and I look at it, thinking it's Lucas despite only being in his office, but instead it's a text message from my advisor regarding my results from the bar exam, and I freeze, reading and rereading the words.

Marcy – Congratulations! You passed; 305.

My heart jumps into my throat.

I passed! Oh my god, I fucking passed!

Excitement fills me before I stand.

I need to tell Lucas. I passed, I actually passed, and with a high fricking score, oh my, I can't believe it.

I'm so excited as I move to head down the hallway that I don't notice a figure behind me before something hard hits me on the back of my head, my vision blackens before I'm caught from behind, and darkness takes hold with one thought in my mind.

My baby!

I don't know how long I've been out when I groan, my head throbbing as I slowly open my eyes to see I'm in momma Anderson's old home that the clubs doing up, ready to sell, and I swallow hard. I'm lying on the floor in the living area, and I quickly look around.

I try to sit up, my head thumping, and my vision swims.

"Well, it's about time you woke up, bitch."

My eyes widen when I look up at the sound of the voice to see Cara standing over me, smirking.

"You think I'd let you take my man; let you trap him? I don't think so whore; he's MINE!"

She shouts the last bit, and I swallow hard. I need to play this right; she's clearly gone insane, with her hazel eyes looking crazy and bloodshot.

"What? Cat got your tongue?" She cackles at her own joke before looking to her right, and I look in time to see a short, stocky man enter the living area. He grins when he sees I'm awake, his hazel eyes sparkling with lust, making my heart race.

No, not again, please.

Cara cackles again. "She's all yours, Terry," she says to him before her eyes come to mine. "Make sure the baby's dead first, though, yeah, like hell am I raising that bastard."

My eyes widen before I try to get up, but Cara punches me in the face, making me fall onto my side, only for the man, Terry, to lift his black boot and kick me hard in the stomach.

"NOOO..."

I scream before he kicks me again.

I try to cover myself and protect my baby.

Please no.

She's partly the reason I'll always struggle with conception and pregnancy, please don't let her kill my baby, please.

The man kicks me for a third time when pain shoots through me and my legs begin to feel wet.

I look down to see blood.

“NOOOOO....” I scream as the door to Momma Anderson’s home is booted open.

Chapter 25

Gunner

I stretch my arms above my head and crick my neck from side to side.

I've just finished going over which brothers will go on the next run and sent the list to Flame.

When my phone rings, I look at it to see it's Axel.

"Pres."

He growls while I smirk.

He hates us calling him Pres. We've all known him since infancy, so he thinks it's weird, but we brothers love to piss him off.

"You're a jackass." I laugh. "I wanted to let you know Slicer's gone again with Snake. Tank and Butch have gone with him. Words got to us that he's now hiding in Illinois, Springfield."

I frown. "Why on earth would he hide there?"

He clears his throat. "There's a chance Star may be there." I curse, "Yeah, I know, we're not 100% sure. Flame's done a lot of digging and couldn't find her there, so we'll have to see."

I sigh, "Alright."

"Leah's cut's here too, brother. You think she'll accept it?"

I huff, "She hasn't got a fucking choice." He chuckles. "I wanted to put a vote in with the club as well, brother, thinking about opening a family law practice in town."

I swear, I can picture his grin. "I think that's a good idea, brother."

I chuckle as my door slams open and a distraught Sliver rushes in, tears running down her face. Once Leah knew the extent of what actually happened five weeks ago, she was happy to keep

Silver on. They spoke, and Silver apologized several times. They're good now—not the best of friends, but good anyway.

“Silver?”

She swallows hard. “Someone just shoved Leah into a white van.”

I don't think, and I don't ask her any questions. I rush out of my office with Axel still on the phone. I can hear him barking orders as I rush out of the bar in time to see said white van turn down the street, heading towards Berry Lane.

I grab my bike, pocketing my phone, with Shane right behind me getting into the club's jeep. I rev my bike and speed off after them, hoping we haven't lost them. Within ten minutes, several bikes show up behind me, with Axel riding up next to me as we try to find the fucking van that I lost.

Fuck.

Something in my gut pulls at me to head right toward Momma Anderson's house. I don't know why, but I head that way with my brothers at my back, and when her house comes into view, so does the fucking van. I speed up before skidding outside. I quickly climb off, but instant fear shoots through me upon hearing Leah scream.

“NOOO...”

We all run towards the door.

“NOOOO...”

She screams again, and I lift my foot, booting the door down.

I'm not the enforcer of the club for the fun of things.

When we rush in, I instantly see red.

My woman is on the floor, blood trailing between her legs as some fat, fucking stodgy soon-to-be-dead man tries to undo her jeans, but she's trying to fight him off, causing him to punch her face while fucking Cara cackles near the mantelpiece, recording the show. I raw out in anger, causing them all to look our way. The man scrambles up, about to do a runner, as Cara freezes with fear in her eyes.

I look into Leah's eyes, true fear shining through but also relief seeing me.

I snap.

I rush over to the fucking fat son of a bitch and tackle him to the floor as Dagger grabs a hold of Cara, who's now snapped out of it, and starts screaming.

“NO, YOU WERE ALWAYS MINE, MINE; SHE CAN'T HAVE YOU.”

I punch the man in the face, left, right, left, right. I don't stop.

I wail my fists on his face for touching what's mine, for harming my girl. I keep hitting him, even when someone tries to pull me back. It's not until I hear Leah scream out in pain that I snap out of it. I turn to see her still lying on the floor, but with Doc now in between her legs and our baby's head in view.

Fuck.

I don't look back at the man; I know he's dead, and I don't fucking care. I rush towards Leah and sit behind her, helping her lean against my chest while she openly sobs.

“I-I can't do it, Lucas; I can't. It-it's too soon.”

I squeeze her to me before rasping in her ear, “Our baby's coming, Angel; bring him into this world; make us a family baby.”

She sobs before she screams as she starts pushing.

Doc keeps encouraging her, but she's getting too tired.

“I-I'm so t-tired.”

I swallow hard; she's lost a lot of blood.

“Come on, sweetheart, push for me; make me a grandpa before your brother.”

I grin while Hawk snorts, and Leah lets out a little chuckle.

“Come on, Angel, push.”

I urge her, and she does; she pushes with everything in her bearing down before we hear the most beautiful cry, making

my tears fall.

“You did it, baby; you did it; he’s here.” I rasp in her ear as Doc places the baby on her chest.

He’s got my blonde hair and is so fucking tiny.

He’s perfect.

I’m so busy looking at our boy that it isn’t until Leah goes limp in my arms that I realize something is wrong.

I look down and see her eyes shut. “DOC.” I boom, making the baby cry, and he looks up after delivering the placenta to see Leah out cold.

I press my fingers against her neck.

No pulse.

Fuck.

“She hasn’t got a pulse.”

Doc swears, “Hawk, take your nephew; keep him warm.”

Hawk does as instructed, wrapping my son in his cut, and I quickly move Leah onto her back and start CPR, counting my compressions before giving her mouth-to-mouth.

“Come on, Angel, you can’t leave me; you can’t leave our son; come on.”

I give mouth-to-mouth again as Axel rings for an ambulance.

Doc takes over CPR after finishing stitching her up, and I fall to my ass, watching my girl slowly leave me.

Please, please, please.

I hear another cry and turn to see Hawk trying to calm my son. He needs me, but I need my woman.

I can’t.

I can’t be a dad without her. Hawk looks at me and sees the look in my eyes.

He rushes over and places my son in my arms before he rasps,

“Think about how Leah would feel right now if you refused to hold your son, her son.”

A sob releases from my throat as the paramedics rush in with a defibrillator, connecting it to my girl all while I hold our son in my arms. They shock her, but she’s still flatlined. They try CPR again, then shock her a second time.

“We’ve got a pulse; let’s go,” one of them says as Doc helps load her onto a gurney while one of the paramedics comes over to me, wrapping a blanket around myself and my child, helping me up with Hawks help. It’s only then that I notice the stodgy man is gone before they guide me to the ambulance taking us to the hospital.

As soon as we get there, Mel rushes over to me with tears in her eyes. She goes to take my boy, and I stand back, making her eyes soften. “I need to take him to the NICU to get him checked over Gunner; he’s five weeks early, plus I want to hold my nephew.” I swallow hard but nod, and she gently takes my son from my arms as Doc wheels my woman, who now has a fucking tube down her throat, through the double doors. I look back at Mel to see her looking down lovingly at my boy. “Well, hello there, handsome boy. I’m your Auntie Mellie, and I’m going to spoil you rotten.”

Tears fall down my cheeks before Dagger grabs a hold of me by my neck, shoving my face into his shoulder as Mel places the baby into an incubator, hooking him up to some machines before wheeling him to the double doors. I got to take a step, but Dagger held me tighter while Mel turned to me, “I won’t leave his side, I promise.” I nod before they disappear.

Axel and Dagger drag me to the waiting room when Ink rushes in with a tear-faced Sophie. She rushes over to me, grabbing my hand.

“Where is she? Where’s the baby?”

I can’t speak, and I can’t console her.

This is my fucking fault.

I feel fucking sick.

Is this how Dagger felt when he realized it was his fault that Mel was shot?

I look at him to see if he's looking at me with concern before Axel speaks up.

"The baby is doing okay; Mel's with him now, and Leah, she coded; she's lost a lot of blood; we're not sure how she is right now."

Sophie wails, and I squeeze my eyes shut just as she collapses in Ink's arms.

I move to the far wall and crouch down, leaning against it as my tears fall. Hawk follows me, staying by my side for hours until Doc comes in, covered in blood, and I swallow hard. I don't get up; he walks over to me, crouching down in front of me as the brothers, including my parents, who showed up two hours ago, crowd around him, but his eyes are focused on me.

"She lost a lot of blood and had some trauma to her stomach. Her placenta had detached, so we were lucky she managed to deliver the baby safely. She did hemorrhage, though, and her heart couldn't handle it. We did stop the bleeding, and now it's up to her when she'll wake." I let out a sob. "The baby is struggling a little." I shoot my head up. Please, fucking please, "He's on oxygen to help him; he had a traumatic birth, but he should be ok."

I slowly close my eyes and nod. "Can I see her, please, Doc?"

He nods. "Of course, Mel is staying with the baby."

I swallow and nod about to follow him out when Sophie speaks up, her brows furrowed. "Don't you think you should be with your baby? I mean, he hasn't got a name yet, has he?"

I shoot her a look and say, "No."

It's all I say before I follow the nurse to Leah's room.

I hear a lot of 'fucks' from the brothers when they realize I won't go near my baby without my woman, but I don't pay them attention.

I can't; I need Leah; our baby needs her.

Chapter 26

Leah

I slowly open my eyes.

Pain: so much pain.

I see Lucas holding onto my hand tightly while Sophie scowls at him. “He’s your son, Gunner; he needs you!”

He doesn’t look up from where his hand is tightly holding mine. “No, he needs his momma.”

I go to open my mouth to tell him to get his ass to our child, but blackness takes hold.

I open my eyes again to hushed voices. Lucas is lying next to me, his head on my chest.

“Sophie.”

I look to see Clitter trying to reason with Soph, “No, I’m not going anywhere until he gets his ass to the NICU for his son.”

Clitter sighs, “He won’t leave her side; you already know this. The doctors don’t even know when she’ll wake; she’s been off the vent for three days, and she still isn’t awake.”

Sophie just shakes her head and says, “I don’t care. I haven’t been a good friend. I haven’t been a good sister.”

Clitter nods. “I know, but you’d just lost your mom.”

Sophie shrugs, “So did she, and instead of helping each other through it, I pushed her away. I resented her because she saw Momma last; I didn’t even remember her graduation or the fact she had a scare. Who even does that to your last family member?”

I go to open my mouth to tell her she has a big family around her, but the darkness takes me again.

Dammit.

I woke again, and now I'm fucking frustrated, seriously.

My eyes are open, yet I can't speak.

My eyes find Lucas; his head is down on the bed, and he's asleep.

I hear hushed whispers near the window, and I see Cammy, Mel, and Annalise there.

"We seriously need to bubblewrap the women in this club because this is ridiculous now; it's like our men are attracted to danger."

Amen, Mel.

Annalie nods with a solemn look on her face as she cups her bump.

Cammy notices and squeezes her shoulder. "Are you okay, sweetheart?"

Annalise shrugs before sniffing. "When Axel told me what had happened to Leah," she shook her head, wiping away a tear. "I thought it was going to happen again, you know, but to her, then guilt tore through me because of how we've all treated her when she didn't even deserve it. I saw the signs that she had trauma, but honestly, I fell for the lies and pushed them aside. Cara used my insecurities about Axel against me; she played me, and I fell for it, hook, line, and sinker."

Mel hugs her and says, "She forgave you, Annie."

She nods when they pull apart and says, "I don't deserve it, though; none of us do."

Cammy sighs, "We may not deserve it, but we're lucky enough to have it. Besides, no one is killing themselves more with guilt than Gunner. He feels like he failed her; it's why he won't go and see his son; he doesn't think he deserves them, but he does; he's proven himself to her."

I start to feel tired again, and I scowl.

Lucas clearly needs me; he needs me to kick his ass for not being with our son.

"Sophie's not helping, though, Mom."

I love it when she calls Axel's mother-mom; they have such a good relationship. It helps that his parents basically brought her up while she lived with her grandmother after her father killed her mother when she was an infant and nearly killed her.

Cammy sighs again at Annalise's comment but nods her head. "I know, she's pushing him further into himself."

Lucas moves before rasping, "I'm fine, ladies; I just need my girl to wake up."

Mel's snort is the last thing I hear when darkness takes me again, but I don't fight it this time because damn am I tired.

"I need you to wake up now, Angel; it's been a week and our son needs you. I need you."

I slowly open my eyes to Lucas's rasp. God, he looks so tired.

"We never discussed names, Lee-Lee. He's literally baby Cooper at the moment," he sniffles. "Please wake up, baby."

I go to speak, and finally, fucking finally, my voice works.

About damn time too,

"Alexander." His head shoots up, his eyes wide before tears fill them, and I cup his cheek. "His name is Alexander Luca Cooper after his daddy, who I'm going to hit if he doesn't get his head out of his ass and go see his son." He lets out a sob before climbing on the bed, and my arms automatically wrap around him as his head goes into the crook of my neck. I feel the wetness drip onto my skin, making me hold him tighter as I rasp in his ear, "I'm okay, but you won't be if you don't go hold our baby."

He nods, "I-I couldn't and can't face him without you."

I hold him tighter. "Yes, you can, and if I hadn't made it, you would have cherished him even more. Go see our son, Lucas, please; he needs you."

He looks up and cups my cheeks. "If you hadn't made it, baby, I would have joined you."

I look him in the eye before I say softly, "Then you're not the man I thought you were because the man I love, the man who

owns my heart, would have stayed and fought for our child.”

His tears fall before he rests his forehead against mine. “But there’s no world without you in it.”

I nod. “But there is a world with our son in it who needs his daddy.”

He nods next, his hands gripping my cheeks before he kisses me hard and passionately before he rasps against my lips, “You are not allowed to leave me; do you hear me? You understand, never.”

I nod again. “I love you,” I whisper, making a sob claw from his throat before he rasps, “I love you too, Angel, so fucking much,” and kisses me passionately again when the door opens.

“For fucks sake, Gunner, you can’t make out with her to get her to wake; trust me, I fucking tried it with Mel.”

Gunner pulls back and furrows his brows because, yeah, that’s not weird at all. He turns his head to look at Dagger, and I lean around him to look at him too with a raised brow.

“Seriously Dagger?” I ask in complete confusion, because, really?

His eyes widen, and he smiles wide, seeing me awake before it hits him what he said, and his smile disappears, and he clears his throat, “Well, you see, I just thought, you know, Snow White and everything.”

Chapter 27

Gunner – one week later

A whole week without my girl's beautiful green eyes on me, and finally, fucking finally, she's awake.

Alexander Luca.

She's used my middle name for his first, which happens to be my dad's given name.

My girl, I swear.

I turn on her bed with my back against her wooden hospital headboard, lifting my arm, and she instantly leans against me while we both look at Dagger with raised brows, and I point at him with my right hand while my left plays with my girl's hair.

“You tried some Disney princess shit hoping to wake your girl up?”

You can hear the amusement in my voice; I can't help it because that shit is just funny as fuck.

Leah tries to suppress her laughter, but it doesn't work; it claws from her throat, and mine follows because, really?

Dagger narrows his eyes at us before pointing at me.

“Admit it, you would have thought of it too.”

I laugh again when Mel comes into the doorway. “What's with all the laughter? I mean, it's good to hear my brother laugh, but Leah needs peace.”

Leah answers, because Mel hasn't noticed her awake yet, “Your soon-to-be husband tried the snow white move with you when you were in a coma.”

Mel looks at Dagger with a raised brow, and he blushes. He fucking blushes, making me laugh some more before Mel's head snaps towards Leah, realizing it was her who spoke. She

lets out a cry before rushing over to her on the other side of the bed, hugging her tightly before cupping her cheeks.

“You’re really awake.”

Leah nods, her eyes watering. “And I really want to see my baby, please.”

Mel grins and nods her head before getting her pager out.

“Okay, I’ve paged Doc and a nurse in the NICU. I need to do your observations before Doc shows up, then you can see your baby boy, who, by the way, is absolutely gorgeous.”

Mel does her checks as Doc rushes in, sighing at seeing her awake. “You young lady gave us all quite a scare.”

She smiles at him and says, “Sorry, dad.”

He nods while I smile wide at the title, although I know my dad hopes she’ll call him it too soon, “so you should be.”

We all chuckle while he does his checks, and as soon as he’s finished, Sophie walks in with our boy in her arms, tears shining in her eyes. Leah smiles at her, but her focus is on the bundle in her friend’s arms, who immediately places our son with his mother. I look down at him and smile as my girl traces her finger over his features. He has my gray eyes that are looking at his momma while his blonde hair tuffs up, and he’s fucking perfect.

Leah lets out a sob while holding him, knowing this wasn’t supposed to be possible and what a little miracle he is. I run my finger over his tiny hand, and he grips it, making me smile as his eyes come to me. Leah looks up at me, her eyes shining with love, and I lean down, kissing her lips gently before we both look back at Alexander.

Our boy.

Leah leans her head on my shoulder while keeping a hold of Alexander when my parents walk in. They grin at seeing the picture in front of them, and my mother whips her phone out, but I pay no attention. I keep my eyes on my little family until my mom clears her throat, making us all look at her.

She raises a brow.

“Well, what did you call our boy?”

I look at Leah, and we both grin before I turn to everyone and make eye contact with my dad, “Alexander Luca Cooper.”

Both my parents have tears shining in their eyes while Dagger, Mel, Sophie, and Ink smile wide.

After a little while, Doc clears the room so we can have some time while Mel takes our son back to his incubator, making Leah’s tears fall, and I hold her tighter, whispering to her that he still needs oxygen but he’s okay before Sophie takes a seat.

Fuck, Leah doesn’t need a heart-to-heart right now.

Can’t she see she’s emotional enough?

I look to Ink, and he nods before whispering something in his girl’s ear, but she shakes her head, determination etching her features.

Dammit.

Sophie clears her throat. “Leah, I was wondering if we could talk.”

Leah sighed and looked at her friend, her sister, “You, my sister Soph, and I love you to pieces, but really, you want this conversation right now after I’ve not long woke up, after I’ve just had to watch my baby, my son, be taken away because he still needs oxygen?” Sophie looks down while Leah shakes her head, anger shining through her features. “You pushed me away.” Sophie’s head shoots up again. “I get it; you lost your momma; I was the last one to see her, but I didn’t deserve that treatment from you when I was there through thick and thin for you.” I nod, and so does Ink. He knows his woman was wrong: “You are still my sister, Soph, even if you distanced yourself from me, but you were out of order.”

Sophie squeezes her hands into fists, getting agitated, and I really don’t want to have to have a go at my brother’s woman. “You pulled back too; I didn’t see you trying to talk to me.”

She snaps, and I have to grind my teeth while Ink tries to calm her down, but she pushes him away. Guilt soon shows all over her face, though when Leah nods,

“Your right, I did pull back. I was pregnant and scared. My secrets had been spilled open, and the whole clubhouse still thought I’d trapped Lucas. I didn’t lean on you, Soph, because you had lost momma Anderson; you found her, you tried to save her, and then you tried to leave me all alone. You didn’t need my stress, then I found out you resented me, so I did the only thing I thought you needed at the time, which was to let you be because you now had a massive family willing to kill for you when they were willing to kill me.” Both Ink and I were tense at her words because, fuck, they were true, “but I was always in the shadows, telling the brothers who hated me your favorite candy and movies to help you through the grieving process all while I grieved alone, all while I was petrified I was going to lose my baby. I mean seriously, you forgot my graduation, Sophie.”

Sophie swallows hard, tears building in her eyes as a knock sounds on the door, and a woman with mousy brown hair and brown eyes walks in, her eyes lingering on me for way longer than I feel comfortable with, making me narrow my eyes at her, especially when she has a fucking wedding ring she’s trying to twist—fucking Sarah, Leah’s OBGYN.

“Hey Leah, how are you feeling?”

Leah smiles at the woman and says, “I’m doing okay. Thanks, Sarah. I had a restful sleep for about a week, so I’m roaring to go for the sleepless nights.”

I shake my head while Sarah chuckles.

“Only you, Leah,” my girl smiles proudly. “Alright, I’ve done quite a few tests while you were ‘sleeping’,” I snort while Leah grins wide. “The chances are still the same, sweetheart.”

Leah nods. “And if I were to have more children, if I got lucky again years from now?”

I stiffen, realizing what they’re talking about while the woman smiles: “You would be placed on bed rest immediately and have a planned c-section at 37 weeks.”

Leah sighs and nods her head while the woman smiles. “Think of it this way, Leah; you got to have one natural birth.”

Leah giggles while Sarah smiles, and I squeeze my girl tightly to me, ignoring the way Sarah's eyes linger on me. I've already had one crazy woman go after my girl; I won't have another one. During my time here with Leah, Hawk, and Ink destroyed Cara bit by bit and didn't take it easy on her because she was a girl; they tortured her before killing her all while she tried to plead her innocence. I'm just pissed I couldn't do it myself.

"Alright, I'll leave you all be, and I'll come check on you tomorrow; you won't be discharged for at least three days."

Leah nods before Sarah leaves, and I turn to look at a shocked Sophie and say, "Soph." She looks my way, "Now isn't the time to try and get into something with Leah; she needs rest, and going over the past few months will stress her out. I know you want to hash it out, but sweetheart, you're in the wrong here; she needs time."

Sophie's tears fall. "I forgot about her graduation."

I see Leah swallow in my side eye, and I squeeze her tighter to me. "You did, and now you need to make it up to her."

She gives me a nod and a small smile before rounding the bed and kissing her friend's forehead. "I love you, and I'm so sorry," she rasps, and Leah smiles. "I love you too."

Sophie nods as Ink kisses my girl's head, and I swallow a growl, making him smirk, and the girls shake their heads before they both leave.

I squeeze my girl tighter to me.

"Do you think you two will be okay?"

She looks up at me and smiles. "We will be. I knew she needed time, so I gave it to her even though it hurt me, and I needed time to learn to forgive everyone." I chuckle before kissing her lips once, twice, and three times before deepening the kiss and holding her close to me, relishing the chance to finally have her back in my arms again.

Three days later, I'm standing outside the NICU doors, watching my girl fall apart over leaving our son here. He's still

struggling with his oxygen levels, so he has to stay, and it's killing her while I'm trying to be strong for them both.

Axel saddles up next to me,

“She's struggling.”

I nod. “I can't watch her like this, brother; it's killing me.”

He sighs. “I know, brother, but you need to be strong for her and for him.”

I nod. “Did you know Dag tried making out with Mel when she was in a coma? wanted to see if she'd wake up like Snow White?”

He slowly looks at me with wide eyes, and I grin, nodding my head. I needed a distraction, and poor Dag gave me one. Leah walks out while Axel is still looking at me with wide, shocked eyes, and she furrows her brows before she starts to laugh, fucking finally.

Thank you, Dagger.

“You told him what Dagger did?”

I nod, and she laughs harder, making both of me and Axel join in just as Dagger walks around the corner. He sees us laughing, then the raised brow Axel is giving him, and he sighs, dropping his head with a shake, making us laugh harder.

Leah looks at the window again, and a sniffle comes out, making us men soften towards her.

Axel gives me the cut with a smile, and I drop it over her shoulders, making her look at it with a furrowed brow before her eyes widen and she looks at me.

I smile. “Put your arms in your cut, baby.”

She shakes her head as a few tears fall before doing as she's told, and I take her into my arms.

“We'll come here every day if we have to, alright? Soph said she'll do the books at the bar while the brothers will delegate my responsibilities.”

Leah sniffles and nods her head.

Sophie's trying to earn her forgiveness now too, which is something none of us brothers thought would happen with how tight they were, but Sophie struggled and basically forgot about her best friend, who needed her more than ever. It's hard to forgive, just like it was hard for her to forgive me.

We look into the window one more time. Mel waves at me to get her to go, and I nod before wrapping my arm around my girl's waist, holding her close to me as I guide her out of the hospital with my property patch on her back. She cries all the way home, and I have to carry her inside, where all the brothers tilt their heads towards her, showing concern as I carry her to my room.

Going home isn't an option; our boys' room is done up, and it'll send her in a spin.

I lay her on our bed before climbing in behind her and holding her tightly as she cried her heart out, missing our son.

Chapter 28

Leah – two weeks later

I sit on the comfy black chair that's near the window in Lucas' room at the clubhouse. I've been up since 3 a.m. and I'm struggling to sit still as I watch my man's bare chest move up and down as he sleeps. I look at the clock again: 6:59 a.m. One more minute, and then I'm jumping on him.

Today's the day we bring Alexander home.

He's managed three whole days without needing extra support with his oxygen, and finally, they're discharging him. It helps that Doc and Mel live here and that I'm friends with Meghan.

I look at the clock again. Right, that's it, 7:00 a.m.

I get up and run over to the bed before jumping on Lucas, and straddling him. He doesn't shoot up in surprise like I thought he would; instead, he runs his hands up my thighs as a smile appears on his face before he looks at me, his gray eyes twinkling.

"You took your time to try and wake me, Angel."

I furrow my brows. "You knew I was awake?"

He snorts as his hands run up my stomach, cupping my breast before his thumbs lightly move over my nipples, making me gasp. "I always know when you're not next to me, baby."

He sits up as he pushes his shirt that I stole a few years ago after he left it at the bar one night up and over my head before he takes one of my nipples into his mouth, making me gasp. They're a little sore. I've been pumping eight times a day for my boy, which they bottle-feed to him when I'm not with him; otherwise, he latches on perfectly.

"Mm, delicious," he groans as he gently bites my nipple, most likely getting some milk, and I gasp again. "Our boy is going to have to learn to share, baby." I giggle as he kisses up my

neck before taking my lips, and I grind myself on his member, making him groan. “Fuck Angel, keep doing that, and I’m going to end up cumming on our sheets,” I smirk before kissing down his jaw to his neck as I push on his shoulders, making him lie back.

We can’t have sex for another three weeks, but I can make him happy.

I kiss his chest before running my tongue down his torso.

“Angel, you don’t need to do this.”

I ignore his tortured groan before moving the sheets off his naked body because, as it turns out, my man loves to sleep naked. Not that I’m complaining; he’s a freaking Greek god.

I slowly lick his member from underneath, up and around the turning purple head, before sucking it into my mouth, and he groans, his hand gripping my hair but still letting me have control. I take his whole member inside, sucking it as his head hits the back of my throat, making me gag, but I ignore it and swallow around the head, making him groan some more.

“Fuck Angel, that’s it. Suck me, baby.”

I do, suck him hard as I move my mouth up and down on his member while my right-hand grips the base, squeezing it gently and twisting it as my left fondles with his balls. His hand grips me tighter in my hair, and I move my mouth quicker while squeezing his balls in my hand.

“Fuck Angel, I’m about to cum.”

He tries to move me away, but I just tighten my mouth around him, and he groans as his warm, salty release squirts down my throat. I swallow until there’s nothing left before licking the tip, making him moan. His hands grip under my armpits before lifting me up and over his body, his now softening member sitting against my slit as he grips the back of my head to pull me down to him, kissing me with passion as his tongue tangles with mine, making him groan as he tastes himself on my lips. He pulls back a little bit, keeping his lips touching

mine as he holds me tighter to him before rasping against my mouth.

“I love you, baby.”

I smile wide before whispering back, “I love you too,” making him grin.

“How about we shower together, have some breakfast, then go get our boy?”

I grin wider before pecking his lips, then jump off him, making him chuckle as I dash into the bathroom and turn on the walk-in shower. Lucas comes up behind me; he twists me around before gripping my hips and lifting me. I wrap my legs around his waist and my arms around his neck, my fingers splaying in his hair as our lips meet. He walks into the shower, our lips never parting as he crushes my back up against the wall, the head of his member hitting my clit making me gasp before he starts to rub against it over and over while one of his hands plays with my oversensitive nipples.

I gasp in his mouth as my stomach starts to tighten before he rasps,

“That’s it, Angel; cum for me; cum over my cock; give me what’s mine, baby.”

The head nudges my clit faster, and he pulls at my nipples before I see stars, cumming over his member like he asks,

“LUCAS!” I shout, and he groans before I feel the warmth between my legs, and I know he got off again as he places his head in the crook of my neck,

“Fuck, I can’t get enough of you, Leah.”

I smile, holding onto his head, before placing my nose into his hair and inhaling his musky scent, feeling so happy to have this man in my life.

An hour later, we’re sitting in the club’s kitchen eating the pancakes Annalise just made me. She places several on Lucas’ plate, making him raise a brow at her, and she just shrugs.

“I’m nesting, but instead of cleaning and organizing, I’m overcooking.”

I giggle and rub her bump. She's due any day now and is nervous, but I've been holding her hand these last few weeks. She'll be an amazing momma, and our boy will have a playmate, so it's perfect.

I check the time before looking at Lucas, and he just grins.

"Let's go get our boy."

I squeal, making Annie giggle as I jump from my seat and run into the common room, which is starting to fill up.

The men all chuckle when they see me dashing for the front door with Lucas coming hot behind me.

"WE'RE BRINGING OUR BOY HOME," he shouts, and as I rush through the door, the whole clubhouse cheers, making me grin.

I climb into the Jeep, bouncing my knees, making him chuckle as he gets into the driver's seat.

He picks up my hand and kisses my knuckles.

"Ready Angel."

I grin and nod my head as he puts the car in reverse, heading to the hospital.

When we get there, Mel's already there, jumping up and down with excitement, and I grin wide, walking up to her before she hugs me tight.

"He's ready for you."

My eyes tear up, and she squeezes my arms before we head into the room. Sarah's already in there, and I take a step closer to Lucas, making Mel smirk and Lucas chuckle. I loved Sarah; I did until she hit on my man when she thought I was in the bathroom.

Now I don't like her so much.

We walk over, and I go to grab my boy as Sarah walks up to Lucas.

I grind my back molars, trying my hardest not to let her ruin today, and I look down at my baby boy, about to pick him up,

but I stop noticing the outfit he has on. It's not the one I chose; instead, it's an all-in-one black one with red motorcycles all over it and words in the middle.

Momma, will you marry Daddy?

today?

I spin around to face Lucas to see him staring at me with a gorgeous pink sapphire ring in his hand, and my tears fall.

Sarah stands back with her arms crossed over her chest, sulking, while Mel grins wide.

I let out a sob before I nodded my head, making him grin. I rush over to him and jump into his arms as Mel cheers.

I kiss him with passion before I rasp against his lips, "I love you so much." He grins and says, "Not as much as I love you, baby."

A few hours later, we're walking hand in hand, with our boy strapped to my chest, into the clubhouse. Mel goes in first, whistling, making everyone look at her confused, and I realize he never told anyone we were going to get married.

I raise a brow at him, and he just shrugs. "I didn't want them overriding our day."

I just shake my head and smile before Mel shouts,

"PLEASE WELCOME MR. AND MRS. LUCAS COOPER..... and they're gorgeous baby boys, Alexander."

The clubhouse is quiet for all of five seconds before they all cheer loudly as Doc and Ava rush over along with Butch and Hazel, hugging us tightly. I squeeze Hazel and Ava's hands, hoping they aren't mad, but they just grin at us before Hazel steals my baby, making me laugh when Ava tries to grab him. Lucas puts his arm around my waist, and I lean on him, watching our family fawn over our son.

I can see Sophie in the background.

She looks upset, but Ink's trying to calm her down, so I walk over to her and grab her into a hug before she mumbles.

"I wanted to throw you a bachelorette party with strippers."

I grin wide before both Lucas and Ink shout at the same time, “NO FUCKING STRIPPERS,” making everyone laugh, and I pull back from Soph.

She knows I’d never want a bachelorette party, so it’s a moot point.

“Come see your nephew.”

She smiles wide and grips my hand before taking my baby from Ava, who sulks, and I laugh as an arm goes around my waist and I lean back on my husband, my flipping husband, enjoying time with our family before we take our baby to his home, where we get word of Annalise going into labor expanding our family with a little girl.

Best Day Ever!

Chapter 29

Gunner – 6 weeks later

I roll my eyes before gripping Dagger's shoulders.

"Seriously, brother, she'll be here. Stop fucking worrying; my little sister loves your ass."

He clears his throat and nods before hugging me, and I don't fucking take it for granted. I hug him back. I know he hates touch, so this is fucking perfect.

His dad Stormy comes in grinning with my boy in his arms, and I smile wide as he lifts his arms for me, and I take him instantly.

"Well, look at you in your little tux with your baby cut; momma's heart is going to melt seeing this."

He grins at me; his gray eyes, which are so much like mine, sparkle brightly while Dag and Stormy chuckle. I

kiss his head, inhaling his baby scent. Fuck, I love this kid.

I look towards Stormy and ask, "Where's my wife?"

He grins, "with the glowing bride."

I nod before the door opens again, and Slicer walks in with a weird look on his face, and I furrow my brows. The men returned two weeks ago after losing Hairy a-fucking-gain, but our intel is showing Illinois is where he keeps going, and I have a gut feeling he's following Star.

"Are you alright, brother?"

He looks up towards me and swallows hard before he looks at Dagger and just nods his head, clearing his throat.

"Clitter just told me she's in love with me."

We all snort and shake our heads because we know it's bullshit and not fucking true.

She may have become a good friend to Sophie, but she still has one goal in mind: a patched brother, which isn't fucking happening, but the problem is, she's seen Amy, aka Bubbles, a sweet butt turned sweetheart, with Buzz, our newly patched brother. They've been very cozy, and he hasn't been seen with another woman in months, so most of the sweet butts now have it in their heads that they have a chance, but the difference between them and Amy is that Amy didn't actually want to be a sweet butt; she just wanted protection after not having it all her life.

There's a knock at the door, and my mom pops her head through, grinning, her gray eyes sparkling when they see her grandson, but I hold him closer to me, not letting her take him. She had him a few days ago, then refused—fucking refused—to hand him back.

She rolls her eyes at me while the men chuckle before she looks at Dagger.

“It's time, Dag.”

Dagger takes a deep breath and nods before slapping me and Slicer on our backs, and we all head toward the front of the church.

I shake my head, a fucking biker in a church. I'm surprised we haven't been burned down yet for our sins. Axel is officiating; how they managed that I don't fucking know, but it means I'm Dagger's best man with Alexander in my arms because, according to Ink, Dagger's a groomzilla, which he fucking is, so he's standing next to Slicer, who is next to me as a groomsman. The church is full of brothers and family as well as Dagger's squadron from his Navy Seal days; it's a packed house.

We all stand tall when 'a Thousand Years by Christina Perry' starts. My girl walks down the aisle first, and I grin. She looks fucking perfect in a light pink off-the-shoulder floor-length gown that hugs her curves perfectly, her light blonde hair clipped to one side of her head while her blue highlights are curled slightly.

She looks like a vision.

When she gets closer, she grins at seeing our boy before giving me a wink and Dagger a kiss on his cheek. She then takes her spot, and I have to hold in my growl, making Dagger smirk at me while Axel, Ink, and Slicer chuckle. Meghan comes next, in the same dress as my girl, with her black hair in the same style too, looking beautiful. Her hand is holding a little girl, who must be her daughter, which we've heard so much about. She's in a pretty white, flowery dress. Her brown hair is curly down her back, her hazel eyes hesitant as she squeezes her momma's hand, and I instantly freeze before looking at Slicer, who looks ready to fall a fucking part.

Holy fucking shit.

I look at Dagger, who bites his lip and winces, looking at me. He obviously had already figured it out, but shit, that's his missing waitress from five fucking years ago, which means that's... fucking hell.

She's the spitting image of him, right down to her hazel eyes - damn.

Meghan grins at Dagger while the little girl quickly rushes up to him, hugging him tightly, making the women sigh as Slicer tenses some more, seeing the bond our brother already has with the cutie. Once she's kissed Dagger's cheek, she rushes off to Cammy, who instantly puts her on her lap while Meghan kisses Dagger's cheek too. I hear a slight growl from my left, and I smirk as Meghan takes her place near my woman before Sophie walks past us next, in the same style dress as the others, looking beautiful too. She also kisses Dagger's cheek, making Ink growl, and we men grin as she stands behind my girl when the wedding march sounds, echoing through the church as everyone stands as Mel stands at the top of the aisle with my dad, who was extremely pleased to have been asked for this job.

My sister looks perfect in an off-white floor-length gown. Her brown hair is down and curly while her eyes shine, and she is finally getting to marry her love. My eyes find my woman, and we grin wide at each other as our boy babbles in my arms.

As soon as Mel's near the front, Axel starts the wedding.

“We are gathered here today to finally marry these two love birds.”

We all chuckle before I quickly look around the room, ensuring there’s no danger because, you never fucking know, it’s my job to keep everyone safe, but when I see someone at the back with dark blonde hair, I do a double take. I turn slightly to get a better view, and I’ll be fucking damned - Star.

Our eyes connect, and she tilts her head, her caramel ones showing pain and longing. She gives me a slight smile before her eyes shine. Seeing Alexander in my arms made her smile widen. When she looks back at the couple who are going over their vows, I discreetly nudge Slicer, making him look at me and taking his eyes off Meghan. I tilt my head in Star’s direction, making him look, and he tenses before looking to where Flame is sitting in front of us, trying to look happy for our brother. I shake my head, and he nods in understanding.

After the ceremony, we’ll tell him.

As soon as Axel says, ‘You may now kiss your old lady’ Dagger grabs his woman and plants one on her while lifting her up, making us all cheer. I look towards Star again and see she’s making a break for it as the bride and groom start to leave their spot, and I quickly give Slicer Alexander, making him nod as I rush towards Flame, who’s clapping for our brother. I grip his shoulder, making him look at me in confusion.

“Brother, you need to fucking hurry. Star was at the back of the church; she’s just left.”

His eyes widen before he rushes down the other side of the church to the front door, making some people look at him. Dagger turns to look at me, and I mouth ‘Star’, making his eyes widen before he nods, gratitude shining through his eyes, realizing she came for his wedding. Slicer walks over to me, passing my son. “Do you think he’ll make it?”

I shrug before I rasp, “I hope so,” then walk over to my woman, ready to follow Dagger and Mel with her in his arms. Slicer quickly went ahead of me, making him walk down with Meghan, who tenses, and I swallowed hard. We’d already

planned for him to walk with the maid of honor, which is Meghan, because I wanted to walk with my girl and our son, but this revelation—shit.

With the way she's acting towards him, she must have been the one; she has to be; her daughter is a spitting image of Slicer.

Fuck I hope I'm not wrong. I hope he's finally found his one.

I meet my girl halfway, who instantly takes our son, and I pout, making her grin.

The women in our club are always taking him or Annie's bundle of joy, who's currently in Cammy's arms after Meghan's girl went straight to her. Annabel is gorgeous, though, with her mom's violet eyes and her daddy's black hair.

A little heartbreaker in the making, that's for sure.

I wrap my arm around Leah's waist before kissing her head and saying, "Star was here."

She looks up at me with a hint of guilt, and I raise a brow at her.

"She asked me not to say anything, but I was going to hint to you as we walked down the aisle so you could tell Flame."

I nod in understanding and smile; she's trying to be a good friend to everyone, but that's my girl for you. I kiss her lips before we walk outside, ready to head to the reception.

A few hours later, Mel and Dagger are on their way to Hawaii, and I'm leaning against my headboard, waiting for my wife to finish in the bathroom. I'm scrolling through my phone when she emerges and speaks, but I don't look up.

"Did Flame catch up with her?"

I hum, "He has; he hasn't spoken to her yet, though; he's waiting in the shadows. She's in Illinois, like we all thought, which means Hairy's stalking her without her realizing. He's going to try and convince her to come home so we can finally grab him."

She hums back, "Lucas."

“Yeah, Angel.”

When she doesn't tell me what she needs, I look up and instantly swallow my tongue, holy fuck. My eyes trail her body, which's covered in black lace lingerie, and I lick my lips, my cock standing to attention. I take in my fill of her gorgeous curves and pebbled nipples that are standing to attention before making eye contact with her, and she grins and walks over to me, crawling over my body while pulling the black sheets down my body, making the cold air hit my rock-hard cock, which stands proud at the vision of my woman.

She straddles me, my cock nestled between her bare pussy lips, and I swallow hard - fuck.

She leans forward and takes my lips, and I let her, enjoying the feel of her wetness over my cock, when she suddenly lifts her hips as her hand grabs a hold of my cock, making me groan. Before I ask her why she's teasing me, I'm suddenly at her entrance. She tenses but ignores it, and my brave girl lowers herself onto me, swallowing my cock whole.

“Fuck Leah, we, shit, we...”

I can't finish the sentence; she feels too fucking good, and I end up moaning instead.

Fuck...

She leans forward and kisses me again while I grip her hips to ensure she doesn't move. She's going to hurt herself; she hasn't been discharged yet; she's still healing. I try to control myself, ready to pull her off my cock, until she whispers against my lips, throwing all the rules out of the window.

“Sarah discharged me today after I got the all-clear.”

I flip us over, making her squeal, and I quickly swallow the sound with my lips so she doesn't wake our boy. I don't want any interruptions.

It's been weeks, fucking weeks, since I've had her pussy.

I shove my tongue down her throat as I gently move my hips back before snapping them forward, thrusting hard into her

and making her moan.

“I hope you’re not tired, Angel, because I’m owning this body tonight.”

She grins at me, wrapping her legs around my waist and digging her heels in.

“Bring it on, baby.”

I grin back and tear the lingerie from her body, making her tits pop out, and she gasps.

“I really liked that one.”

I chuckle as I rasp against her lips, “I prefer you like this anyway,” and I make good on my promise, owning her body over and over again because fuck if it isn’t the best place to be, surrounded by her heat.

Epilogue

Leah – 6 months later

I grind my back molars; that son of a...

“Nope, I’m not going to think it; I love his mom; she’s amazing and definitely not a bitch.”

I take a deep breath and say, “I’m not going to kill my husband; nope, I’m not going to kill him; I love him; things are amazing. I’ve opened Fire’s family law in town with the club’s help; everything is going to be fine, and I’m not going to kill my husband.”

I look down again and yep,

“he’s dead.”

I grab the stick and storm out of our home on club property before taking myself towards the clubhouse, where I know he is. It’s tradition, that every time a brother is patched, they celebrate, and Cal deserves to have every brother there. Shane was patched just after Dagger got back from his honeymoon, and he had the same result. The only reason I was not there when it started was because I was at work.

As soon as I get to the back door, I slam it open, making everyone look at me in shock, but I only have one person in my sight.

His eyes widen as I point at you.

“You mother fucking bastard, I’m going to kill you.”

The brothers all look at me with wide eyes while Ava covers my innocent son’s ears, and my eyes start to tear up. Dammit, he’s not supposed to be in here; he’s supposed to be at Cammy’s with Annabel. I sniffle before Lucas starts to walk towards me, but I glare at him, ignoring the tears in my eyes and making him stop in his tracks, lifting his hands up.

“Angel, what is it I’ve done?”

My nostrils flare, and I throw the stick at him, making him catch it.

The woman gasps, recognizing it, while he looks down in confusion before a massive grin takes place on his face, and I point at him.

“NO, OUR SON ISN’T EVEN A YEAR OLD YET AND I’VE JUST GOT THE PRACTICE UP AND RUNNING PROPERLY, I’M GOING TO BE PLACED ON BEDREST LUCAS.”

He ignores my outburst as he rushes over to me and lifts me into his arms.

I try to hit him, but he ignores it while he shouts.

“WE’RE HAVING ANOTHER MOTHERFUCKING BABY.”

The men cheer while the women grin as he places my feet on the ground.

My tears start to fall, making him wipe them. “Baby, everything is going to be fine.”

I nod and sniffle before I cry out, “But she’ll hit on you again,” making the clubhouse roar out in laughter, realizing it’s not the chances of miscarriage or the delivery that’s upsetting me or the fact I’ve just opened the practice; it’s because of fricking Sarah, who tries it on with anyone who has a fricking penis.

I know the risks, and I’m always willing to go through them to expand our family. We said four kids at the most, just like Axel and Annie, who have two already and apparently another one on the way. I mean, she’s literally just given birth, but they want four too. Sophie’s now pregnant with a little girl she’s naming after me, as is Mel. Babies are popping out left, right, and center around here, growing the family and the club, but not that woman. I can’t go through nine months of stress because of her; I just can’t. I’ve struggled for the past six months. I know he loves me, but it’s hard to forget everything that I was put through by him and the club and how different my friendship with Sophie is now because of her pushing me away when I needed her. I had to

go through therapy for my trauma, so I now don't feel tense during penetration, but I still struggle to have his fingers inside me. I worry I'm not enough for him and that I'm too much of a burden most of the time. I hate it when women talk to him or flirt with him, and Sarah is the worst. I still have some issues despite being his wife, and I know I'm hard to deal with, so that doesn't help.

Lucas wraps his arms around me.

“Meghan can take over your care; you know she's going through the residency to become an OBGYN doctor; she hasn't got long left, so we'll request her only, OK? I won't let anything stress you out, Angel; nothing; you're doing so well.”

I sigh in relief and squeeze him tighter, making him chuckle.

“I love you,” I rasp as he kisses my head, “not as much as I love you, Angel.” He squeezes me tighter, “another fucking baby.”

I look up as he shakes his head, his eyes shining, and I grin wide. “Another fucking baby.”

He chuckles before he takes my lips, lifting me up at the same time while the clubhouse roars in happiness.

I didn't think we'd get here; I didn't think I'd have a family, but I do, and things couldn't be any better as we grow our family and our love, all while feeling grateful I gave him a chance despite our start because this man, this man, is my heart and soul.

Dear reader

Thank you so much for reading the fourth book of my second series! I hope you consider leaving a review to let others know what you thought of this book. I thoroughly enjoyed every second of writing it, creating Gunner's story and his struggles to win his girl over. This story is based on fiction places.

Book 5 Slicer's story next.

If you haven't yet, please check out my first series, Bound Mafia Series which is made up of three books that can be read individually but better reading altogether.

About the author

C L McGinlay is a full-time mum to two boys, but also a full-time carer for her youngest who was born with a medical condition and requires more care than the average child and had to leave her job in order to care for him.

Writing is something that she's always wanted to do but never had the courage to pull through with it, she loves to read and creating stories is a passion. With much self-doubt she didn't think she could do it but with the support and encouragement from her husband and her family she decided to try and write to see what she can come up with, and the bound series was born and before long more stories flowed out. When she's not taking care of her family or spending quality time with them then she's reading, then writing in the evenings, hopeful a career might be born with her stories and people can fall in love with the characters and laugh and cry with them just like she does when she reads books.

Untamed Hellfire's MC

Axel: An MC Romance (Untamed Hell Fire's MC Book 1)

Axel

I'm the president of our club, making my father proud every day.

I love my life of freedom, booze, girls, brothers, and family. Nothing else mattered to me.

But then she walks into my world.

She takes my breath away and she's all I see.

But she's in danger and I'll do anything to save her.

Even take a life if I have too.

Because she's mine. And I protect what is mine.

Annalise

I haven't had an easy start to life.

But with help of the people who love me, I managed to get to where I want to be.

I live for baking and had opened my own bakery.

I didn't want a relationship or the hassle of heartbreak I'd rather just settle.

I didn't count on him though or how he makes me feel.

I fall for him without realizing.

He's all I want; all I think about.

But then I'm in danger and I can't let him get hurt because of me.

I try to push him away, but it doesn't work.

Because he's mine as much as I'm his.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 1 of 7 of Untamed Hell's fire MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Dagger: An MC Romance (Untamed Hell Fire's MC Book 2)

Dagger

Growing up in a clubhouse is supposed to be fun and I guess
with my friends it has been,
But with my family, not so much.
My father's been basically absent while there for my blood
brother.
And his wife has made my life hell.
I made sure to grow strong to stop the abuse, I made sure to
grow in the club as a screw you and succeeded,
I'm now the Vice President,
I'm stronger than I was when I was a kid,
And I refuse to be vulnerable again,
Until I meet HER.
She makes me want to be vulnerable and show her a different
side to me,
She makes me feel period.
But I messed up and she doesn't want to know,
She thinks I'm a player, not knowing my demons.
But she has some demons of her own,
And come heaven or hell,
I'll make sure we face them together.

Melanie

I can't remember the last time I felt happy,
Maybe before my father left when I was only four,
Or maybe when my momma overdosed, and I had to stay
somewhere else for a few months until she was better?
Life hasn't been nice to me growing up and I've been living
through the motions,
Concentrating on school,
I refuse to be vulnerable to anyone,
People always disappoint, people always leave,
And I prefer being alone dealing with the shadows,
Until I meet HIM.
He's a player but I can see the same pain in his eyes that I have
in my own,

I want to help him, but I don't want to get hurt,
He'll be the end of me, I just know it,
But he's persistent despite my turning him away over and
over,
He wants to fight our demons together, to burn them,
But how do I let myself fall into the flames with him when
I've been burning inside from the memories of my past?

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 2 of 7 of Untamed Hell's fire MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Ink: An MC Romance (Untamed Hell Fire's MC Book 3)

Ink

I grew up spoiled,
Always got what I wanted,
I was arrogant, cocky,
And I didn't give a damn about anyone but myself,
Until I met her,
She blinded me with the pain in her eyes,
I wanted to tear the world apart to rid her of her demons,
She became my everything,
Until I screwed up,
Until I realised the pain my brother was put through while I
lived it up.
I took it out on her and she pushed me away not realising I
was still holding on tightly,
Because I wasn't giving up, never letting her go,
She was mine as I was hers,
It's just a shame I was blinded by those closest to me,
Blinded by someone who wanted to tear us apart.
But the question is, would they succeed or would our love pull
through?

Sophie

My family was my world,
They put me first, made me follow my dreams,

Life was perfect,
Until it wasn't,
I lost my way when I lost part of my family,
Living day by day trying to survive,
Then he came along,
He made me feel, made me alive,
He became my new world, my new family,
But someone wasn't happy about it,
Someone wanted to tear us apart,
And the question is,
Can we get through it, fighting together and come out on the
other side?
Or are we done before we even got started?

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 3 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Slicer: An MC Second Chance Romance **(Untamed Hell Fire's MC Book 5)**

Slicer
I loved playing the field, never wanted to settle down,
Until I met her.
It was supposed to be a onetime thing,
I just didn't expect the connection we shared and I wanted
more.
I wanted her.
But she was gone the next morning.
So, I turned back to my player ways all while trying to search
for her,
Needing her like I needed air to breathe,
Keeping a hold of the only memory I had left of her,
Her gold bracelet.
Until she moved to my town, with something of mine in tow,
She doesn't want me anymore though,
She's seen my player side and she doesn't like it,
But what she doesn't realise,
Is that she's mine, always has been and I'm playing for keeps

this time.

Meghan

He showed up in my life when I least expected it,
My parents were pressuring me to settle down,
Marry the man they wanted me too,
Then he walked in on my shift,
I wanted to finally rebel, finally have something for me,
All while trying to put myself through med school and leave
this dead-end town behind.
I just didn't expect the spark that shone between us,
But he doesn't do relationships, he doesn't do commitment,
So I left him the next morning, not expecting to see him again
when he leaves town.
Only he left something of his behind.
I searched for him for years, until finally, there he is,
Wrapped around another woman.
I decide to put my feelings behind me and concentrate on my
residency,
But he has other ideas, he wants me.
And whether I'm ready or not,
He's taking me.

This can be read as a standalone but is better if books are read
in order to get an understanding of other characters. This is
book 5 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA.
Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended
for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

[Flame: An MC Best Friends-Lovers Romance \(Untamed Hell Fire's MC Book 6\)](#)

Flame

We've been best friends for as long as I can remember, grown
up together.
But I've been in love with her since she was sixteen,
The problem; there's eight years between us,
And she deserves a better life than what I can give her,

One without the MC.
I push her away, throwing women in her face, including her
own sister hoping she'll hate me,
But It was all a mistake and I realised too late,
She gets hurt because of the MC, because of me,
She blames me and leaves me without a trace.
Until I finally find her.
She's in danger but she's stubborn.
I want her home, in my life, in my arms where she belongs.
I know I screwed up but I'm willing to do anything to have her
back,
Including kidnapping her.
Because whether she likes it or not, she's mine.
Always has been, always will be.
And ready or not Star, I'm coming for you.

Star
I've been in love with my best friend for as long as I can
remember.
He was my hero, my heart.
But he kept pushing me away, throwing women in my face
whenever he could.
Including my own sister who uses me whenever she can as her
piggy bank.
I try to just be his friend but it's hard,
He hurts me every day thinking I'm better without this life,
without him,
But he forgets, I was born into it, born to be his.
I'm the club princess while he's always been my biker prince.
And I wanted him, he just didn't want me enough back to
fight.
Then I get hurt because of him, because of the club,
And I know I can't stay; I have to leave.
Leave him.
I decide to give him a part of me no one ever has before
leaving for good,
Finding my own path without my demons,
Without my mother and sister taking everything from me,
Without the man who I loved more anything but treated me
like crap in return.

Without my family.

I guess I didn't think he'd try to find me,

But I'm not their Starfish anymore, or his Firefly.

He may come after me and try to bring me home but I won't make it easy for him.

I won't fall at his knees anymore, I won't let his touch ignite me,

Instead I'm going to watch him burn from the fire for what he put me through.

Come and get me Flame, I dare you.

This can be read as a standalone but is better if books are read in order to get an understanding of other characters. This is

book 6 of 7 of Untamed Hell fire's MC series, with a HEA.

Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Books By This Author

Bound To You: Friends-Lovers-Enemies-Lovers (Bound Mafia Series Book 1)

Sofia

I met him when I was eight years old.

I thought he was my best friend.

I thought he loved me, it is why I agreed to marry him.

He was my everything.

Until he was not

It was all a lie, an agreement between his family and mine

I cannot stay.

I must save myself and our unborn child that he doesn't know about from my fate.

Leaving him was the only option.

But what happens when he finds me again?

Damian

It was all an arrangement from when I was twelve.

One I did not want.

I had to woo her, make her fall for me.

She was more than I realise.

I fell for her without realising soon enough.

I lost her.

She left me on our wedding day.

I hurt her, lied to her but I need her.

I am trying to find her.

But what do I do now that I have found her.

She is not alone.

I must fight for her, but she doesn't trust me.

I can't let her go a second time.

It is not just about us this time.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 1 of 3, bound mafia series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Bound By You: Enemies-Lovers (Bound Mafia Series Book 2)

Phoebe

I had always been quiet and shy.

Until I wasn't, I had to hide my true self behind a shield.

Doing what my family requests without complaint even if I didn't want too.

He was supposed to be an arrangement.

Married in name only.

An alliance between the Greek Mafia and the Bratva

I was not meant to fall in love with him.

But I did and he didn't feel the same.

He's having a child with someone else.

He broke the terms of our contract.

It is now void.

And I do the only thing that makes sense to heal my broken heart and get away from my father.

Run and finally become the person I was always meant to be.

Alexandr

It was an arranged marriage.

To strengthen our Bratva.

I had no problem filling the terms of the contract.

For Family and my younger brother who got stuck as a leader when it was supposed to be my job.

It was the least I could do.

But I wasn't expecting my bride to be the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

She made my cold heart beat.

I thought we had a connection.

I wasn't expecting her to disappear.

I wanted to find her to punish her.

But then I realised it was all my fault, now I want forgiveness, to have my love back.

When in the end getting forgiveness is no easy feat when I am the one being punished for my sins.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 2 of 3, bound mafia series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this

book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.

Bound For You: Mafia Romance (Bound Mafia Series Book 3)

Avery

I don't have any family.

Everyone who was supposed to love me left.

Until he walked in on my shift.

He made my heart race, my body tingle.

I fell hard for him, and he became my world.

I was bound for him, but he wasn't bound for me.

He grew distant, then I found out he isn't who he said he was, his whole demeanor changed instantly.

He's a killer, an underboss for the Bratva Pakhan that I didn't even know existed outside of movies.

He didn't give me a chance to come to terms with it, instead he threw me away, just like everyone else.

He broke me after I spent years putting myself back together.

I try to move on from him, concentrate on my upcoming residency.

But then I find out I'm pregnant with his child.

Sergi

She was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen.

She was pure, not from our world, had suffered a lot from life.

But I was selfish, my whole body tingled just being near her, she was mine.

Then I lose myself, I push her away, and she finds out who I really am.

She runs without looking back, destroying me.

I make mistakes I can't take back and hurt her even more.

She gives up on us, on me.

But I can't let her go, I can't give up.

I will win her back, whether she likes it or not.

She's bound for me.

This can be read as a standalone, it is book 3 of 3, bound mafia series, with a HEA. Due to mature content and themes this

book is recommended for readers aged 18+, this novel may contain triggers.