

CORONADO  
TEAM 2

# SEAL'S CLAIMING

*USA Today* Bestselling Author

Makenna  
Jameison

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## About this Book

**She's sass to his rebellious personality. Together? They'll start an inferno...**

Navy SEAL Owen "Havoc" O'Donnell has earned his reputation. He's reckless, wild, and can't resist a beautiful woman. When feisty, whip-smart Olivia catches his eye, all bets are off. She banters with him at every turn and sends his pulse pounding. He wants her more with each day that passes and isn't afraid to chase after the girl.

Olivia Nguyen is independent, strong-willed, and unwilling to fall into bed with a man like Havoc. The assertive and muscular SEAL makes her head spin and her body far too aware of his presence, but it's his attentiveness and persistence that's beginning to wear down her defenses.

When Olivia's plane is hijacked on a business trip, she's in for the shock of her life as Havoc's team comes to her rescue. The danger that follows her back home, however, shakes her to the very core. She knows Havoc would do anything to keep her safe, but can she trust him not to break her heart?

**SEAL's Claiming, a standalone novel, is book six in the sizzling Coronado Team 2 Series.**

# Chapter 1

*One month ago*

Olivia flipped her jet-black hair over her shoulder and posed beside the bonfire, the salty ocean breeze blowing through her tresses. Her friends were still arriving with food, beach chairs, and blankets, but she and Everly had gotten side-tracked talking fashion. “It looks amazing, right?” Olivia asked with a laugh as Everly snapped a photo. “I went shopping last weekend and found so many cute outfits. I can’t wear this to work, obviously, but the beach, bars, and girls’ nights are calling my name.”

Everly grinned. “You look fantastic. Crop tops are hot right now, and girl, you can totally pull it off. It looks killer with that skirt. Havoc won’t be able to keep his hands off of you,” she said, wagging her eyebrows.

Olivia snorted. Owen “Havoc” O’Donnell, the brash and somewhat reckless Navy SEAL she was “friends” with, had been flirting with her for months. He was hot as hell but also a womanizer, as far as she knew. The rest of the men on his SEAL team all had girlfriends now. He was as single as her, not that they needed to be a couple or anything resembling one. “Owen can look but not touch,” Olivia said lightly. “God knows the stubborn man only wants what he can’t have. I can’t even begin to imagine the number of women he chased after before I graced him with my presence.”

“The guy appreciates a challenge,” Everly said, her laughter filling the air. “And let’s be real—you’re definitely a challenge. Havoc needs the type of woman who’s not afraid to put him in his place. I think he thrives on the push and pull dynamic of it all.”

“More like he just wants a shiny new toy to play with,” Olivia countered. “He’s hot, but holy hell. I’m undecided if a night with him would be worth it.”

“Who says he only wants one night? If you’re asking my opinion—”

“I’m not.”

“I’m sure he knows his way around a woman’s body,” Everly teased. “It would be a hot night to remember for sure. And have you ever noticed his big...hands?”

Olivia burst into laughter, flashing the other woman a knowing look. Havoc was all man. Big and broad, with dark hair and eyes that smoldered when he looked at her. The chemistry between them was palpable but it was also the type of fire that would no doubt burn bright and then quickly fizzle out. Their connection was magnetic, some invisible force always drawing them close to one another. Once they connected, however? They’d repel one another. They were too different. Both too opinionated. No doubt they wanted different things out of life. Besides that, Havoc was overbearing. Bossy. He was the type of man who loved to tease her relentlessly, enjoying their banter as she gave as good as she got. Still, she’d have to be blind to miss his killer physique. “Oh, I’ve noticed,” she said. “A girl could appreciate something like that. But does he know how to wield his weapon? That’s the real question.”

“I mean, go big or go home, right?” Everly joked. “I feel like any man with the nickname ‘Havoc’ must’ve earned his reputation somehow. He’d probably drive you crazy in bed—in a good way,” she added, waggling her eyebrows.

“And what about men with the nickname ‘Mayhem’?” Olivia joked. “That’s got to mean something, am I right?”

“Oh, he knows what he’s doing,” Everly said with a wink. “Hey baby,” she added as her boyfriend Mark “Mayhem” Covington lugged a heavy cooler toward them, setting it onto the sand. Everly beamed at him, and Olivia felt a twinge of...something. The way they looked at one another—wow. Her best friends all had boyfriends now. Addison was with Everett “Ace” Walker, the leader of the SEAL team. Cassie was with Rob “Slinger” McPherson. Olivia was just...Olivia. Single. Independent. Nothing wrong with that.

“What’ll it be, ladies?” Mark asked as his muscular arm wrapped around Everly’s shoulders, pulling her close. “We’ve got beers, hard seltzers, water, and sodas.”

“I need a beer,” Olivia decided. Without waiting for Mark to assist, she opened the cooler, grinning at Everly as her boyfriend stole a kiss. Olivia

reached into the ice and pulled out a long neck. Water dripped down the side of the bottle, and she swiped it away before closing the lid. “Who’s got a bottle opener?” she asked.

A little girl shrieked as she ran past them in the sand, and Olivia watched Rachel chase after her. Rachel was dating Tyler “Trigger” Howard, another man on the SEAL team. Their other friends were walking across the beach toward the bonfire as well, including Brian “Blaze” Peterson and his new girlfriend Madeline.

“A bottle opener? I’ve got one,” Mark said, reaching into his pocket.

“Nah, I got it,” a deep voice said, right before a large hand landed on Olivia’s hip and a broad, muscular body stopped right behind her. Havoc. The icy cold bottle she was holding chilled her skin, but the heat that suddenly washed over Olivia caused the hair on the back of her neck to stand up. Even though only one part of their bodies was touching, she felt Owen’s heat and presence. Was aware of every part of him. Havoc’s warm fingers brushed over the exposed skin at her waist, and she resisted the urge to shiver. He smelled of clean soap and man, a hint of something woodsy, and the combination was intoxicating.

Everly bit her lip, smirking, and Havoc plucked the beer bottle from Olivia’s much smaller hand. He shifted slightly to pop the cap, and she instantly missed his touch. Havoc didn’t disappoint though, his muscular hand landing on her hip again as he handed her back the beer. “I like this look, hellcat.”

He caressed her gently again, sending a shiver racing down her spine, and she pulled away, turning to face him. “Owen, I could’ve opened it myself.”

Dark eyes flicked appreciatively over her, almost like a caress. She felt his gaze on her lips as she took a pull of her beer, but they dropped to her small breasts and exposed stomach. Slid down to her bare thighs. She’d felt sexy and unstoppable moments ago, and now she just felt...flushed. Off-kilter. He’d been here for less than a minute, and she was already all too aware of his very masculine presence. She glared at him.

“No need to thank me, O,” he said, his sexy lips curling into a smirk. His tongue darted out as he licked his lips, almost like he was savoring her just from a look. Dirty thoughts filled her mind—of Owen’s mouth on her neck,



her breasts. The scruff of his jaw rubbing against her skin as he kissed his way up her inner thighs and ate her out. Made her squirm.

“For the compliment?” she asked, taking another swig of her beer for strength. “I don’t think so. I’m sure you say that to all the girls. Didn’t you get into a bar fight over a woman once? I’m pretty sure I’ve heard that story several times.”

“Yeah, because I was keeping a fucking asshole from pawing at a woman. I’d do the same for you.”

She stilled, momentarily startled. Owen walked over to the cooler and grabbed a beer for himself. He popped the cap off and took a pull, his Adam’s apple bobbing. The sexy five o’clock shadow he was sporting made him look gruffer than usual, and she tried to ignore his corded forearms and strong hands as he casually gripped his beer. The tee shirt he wore hugged his muscles to perfection, and she forced herself to look casual and unaffected. To not let her gaze travel over those wide pecs and broad shoulders. She absolutely was not remembering the way his powerful body had stood behind her moments ago, making her all too aware of his presence. Owen was always so self-assured, and just once, she’d love to see the man ruffled. Nothing she said could ever faze him.

“Well, there’s no need. I can take care of myself.”

“Nothing wrong with letting a man take care of you sometimes, hellcat.” He smirked, that piercing gaze running over her again. Owen knew the effect he had on her. It was always like this between them. Sparks. Chemistry.

Arguments. Banter. The sizzle of something that could ignite at any moment.

The problem? He was the only one ready to dive head first into the inferno.

“And I suppose you think you’re the man up for the job,” Olivia said. The breeze ruffled her short skirt, and Owen’s gaze was on her legs again. She should not find the man’s eyes on her so sexy, but her core throbbed. He was everything she didn’t want. Brash. Confident. A tiny part of her loved that he didn’t back off. He just kept chipping away at her walls, forcing his way closer, demanding she acquiesce to him.

Those full lips quirked again as he stepped into her space, and Olivia looked up into his dark eyes. She could feel the heat from his body, feel the electric

current arcing between them. “You’ll never know unless you give me a shot, will you?” he asked, his voice deep, husky. “I haven’t gotten any complaints before.”

It was like a splash of cold water over her heated body. “That right there. That’s exactly why we’ll never be a thing. What woman wants to hear about your conquests? Gross.”

The others continued talking a few feet away from them, but it was like they were in their own little world. Havoc ducked down, brushing her hair back as his lips hovered near her ear. His fingers tangled through her dark locks as he palmed the back of her head, holding her in place. She felt his breath on her skin. Inhaled his musky scent. One small turn, and their lips would be millimeters apart.

“I haven’t been with a woman in months, O,” he said, his deep voice husky and coursing through her body like warm caramel. “You’re the one that I want, and I’m not going to be happy until I have you underneath me in my bed, screaming out my name for the whole neighborhood to hear.”

A delicious shiver wracked through her, and as another breeze blew in off the water, strands of her hair got caught in the stubble on his jaw. It was intimate. Intoxicating. She breathed him in, the heat between them almost unbearable. “You’re awfully confident, Havoc.”

He chuckled, shifting his beer so his other hand landed at her bare waist. His touch was so warm, it felt like he’d branded her as his. He was so much bigger than her, she felt surrounded by him. Consumed. “I like it better when you call me Owen.”

“No one calls you that.”

“You do,” he said, nailing her with a look. “I know some people think I’m a fuck-up, but you always call me on my shit. You’re feisty as hell, O, but I like that about you. I need a woman who challenges me. One of these days, hellcat, you’re going to be mine. I’ll make sure of it.” His hand slid from her waist to her bare back, his sure fingers trailing up her spine. She did shiver then, his heat and scent surrounding her. Her lips parted, and Owen smirked as their eyes locked. “But not today, hellcat. You need to meet Brian’s girl.” Her jaw dropped in surprise as he backed away, grinning. It felt like they’d

been seconds away from kissing, his hands on her back and head, his hard body nearly pressed against hers. “You did that on purpose.”

“Did what?” he asked with a wink. He moved again, his hand resting on her back as he guided her toward his teammate. Olivia took a swig of her beer, trying to cool her heated body as arousal and awareness coursed through her. Damn him for making her feel things she didn’t want. Kissing Owen? That would lead to nothing but heartbreak.

“I told Madeline all about you when we were rescuing her,” he said conversationally as they moved across the soft sand.

“You did not.”

“Oh I did. She can’t wait to meet you.”

“And last but not least is Olivia,” Brian said as she and Owen walked up to the couple. The men all knew Madeline since they’d been part of her rescue from the Middle East. Olivia had heard a little about her from Owen, but seeing her in the flesh was another story. They talked for a few minutes, and it was easy to see why Owen had spoken fondly of the woman. She didn’t put up with his bullshit either. Madeline just looked amused as Olivia and Owen bantered back and forth.

“Even Owen was impressed when I talked my way out of a speeding ticket,” Olivia said, finishing her story. “I’m not sure it’ll work everywhere though. I’m going to Asia in a few weeks for work. They probably don’t like American drivers there.”

“What? Where are you going?” Owen asked, suddenly looking serious.

“South Korea. I work for a software development company,” she explained to Madeline. “Mostly apps. I deal with marketing and will be meeting with some business contacts overseas.”

“First I’ve heard of it,” Owen said.

Olivia looked up at him, noticing the way he’d stiffened. Most people might not see the signs, but his jaw was slightly clenched, and his eyes narrowed slightly. He was usually the wildcard of the group, the laidback one, and it was somewhat surprising to see this side of him. Nothing ever ruffled his feathers. “Are you worried about me? I’ll be fine.”

“You don’t usually travel for work,” he said in a low voice. “I’m the one always coming and going. Where are you staying?”

“I still need to book flights and hotels, but I’ll be flying into Seoul.”

“Make sure the hotels are in a safe area,” he ordered.

“Hotdogs are ready!” Ace called out, and Addison said something about returning to the car for paper plates she’d left behind. The group continued talking and laughing, some of them grabbing food, but Owen surprised her by pulling her to the side, away from the revelry.

Olivia clutched onto her beer bottle, surprised by the solemn look in his eyes as he towed her away from the others. “I know you like messing with me, but I’m serious, O. I want you to be careful and make sure you’re staying somewhere safe when you go to South Korea. You never know what’s out there or what sort of trouble you could find yourself in. Maybe it’s a chauvinistic thing to say, but you’re a single woman. You’re more of a target than a guy like me.”

“Are you worried about me, Owen?”

Dark eyes caught hers. “Of course, I’m worried. I don’t like the idea of anything happening to you.”

“Nothing’s going to happen,” she said lightly. “I mean, I know you’ll miss me, but you’ll just have to put on your big boy pants and deal with it while I’m gone.”

“My hellcat is also a smartass,” he muttered. “Don’t make me toss you over my shoulder and carry you out of here,” he mock-threatened.

“You wouldn’t dare.”

Smirking, Owen moved closer, and she swatted at him, shocked as he snagged her hand midair. “I’d dare to say a lot of things I want to do would shock you. I won’t let it stop me though.” Time froze for a second, and he raised her hand to his lips. His thumb ran over her palm, sending shivers racing through her entire body. He didn’t let go, just pressed his lips against her skin as her breath caught. She could feel the stubble on his chiseled jaw, the warmth of his mouth, and the strength of his veined hand as he held hers. “I want you safe,” he said huskily. “I already told you that you’re going to be

mine.”

## Chapter 2

### *Present Day*

“You must be so excited. Traveling to Asia sounds like such an awesome adventure,” Everly said, brushing her hair back.

“I am! I’ve been waiting to take this trip for weeks,” Olivia said, taking a sip of her Bloody Mary. “I am so ready to get away, and I haven’t seen my friend in years. Stopping over in Beijing before heading to South Korea is going to be ahh-ma-zing!”

“I’ll drink to that,” Cassie said with a grin. “Old friends are the best.” The women clinked glasses, with Everly joining in as well.

“I haven’t seen her in forever, but we’ve kept in touch. I’m so glad I rearranged my schedule. It’s not like I’m traveling to Asia often, and she has no idea when she’ll be back in the States. The timing was perfect.”

“Sorry I’m late!” Addison called out, rushing across the busy restaurant toward the others. She had on dark skinny jeans and a loose blouse, but it was far too early for her pregnancy to be showing at all. Her dark hair swooshed around her as she grabbed the empty chair and sank down into it.

“Yeah, yeah,” Olivia said with a smirk. “We all know the only reason you’re late to boozy brunch is because you can’t drink anymore.”

“The only reason?” Everly joked. “She’s got a gorgeous man at home who probably can’t keep his hands to himself.” Addison turned pink, and Everly’s laughter filled the air. “I knew it!”

“Damn, girl. You’re as bad as me,” Olivia said, flashing Everly a grin.

“Touché.”

“We are not talking about what Ace and I did or didn’t do this morning,” Addison said, looking flustered.

“Well, he must be doing something right if he knocked you up,” Olivia said with a wink.

“So how do you know your friend in Beijing anyway?” Cassie asked, changing the subject. She sipped her own drink, fiddling with the cocktail straw, and Addison shot her a grateful look.

“We went to elementary school. Our dads worked together, so our families were close when I was younger. They were both police detectives,” she explained to Everly. Addison nodded, remembering. Olivia had told both her and Cassie about it when Addison had been kidnapped a year earlier. Her father hadn’t been involved in the case, but Olivia had been hellbent on helping to catch the kidnapper.

“Well, that will be awesome to catch up with her, even if you do have to continue with the business trip afterwards,” Addison said.

“You should’ve planned to come with me,” Olivia declared. “Think of how awesome it would’ve been to explore Seoul together.”

Addison shrugged, her flowy blouse shifting with the movement. “You’re in marketing. I’m an app developer. I guess I could have come along, but honestly, I’m worried about traveling that far while pregnant. I know it’s early in my pregnancy, but I’m still nervous.”

“Add, you are positively glowing,” Cassie said with a smile.

“It’s all the hot sex she was having this morning,” Olivia said with a wink.

“Oh my God,” Addison said, covering her face with her hands. “Enough. You and Havoc just need to do the deed, then you won’t be so worried about everyone else’s relationships.”

“Who said I’m worried?” Olivia teased, taking another sip of her drink.

“Damn, this place has the best Bloody Mary’s.”

Their waitress came over, taking Addison’s order, and told the women that their food would be out soon. “So, when are you leaving anyway? Next week, right?” Cassie asked.

Olivia shook her head. “No. I’m actually catching a late flight tonight. I decided to go earlier so I’d have more time with my friend before the meetings. My flight up to LAX is late this afternoon, and then it’s off to see the world. I’ll be in Beijing several days and then off to South Korea.”

“Holy crap,” Cassie said. “And you’re not frantically racing around packing

right now? I'd be a nervous wreck."

Olivia shrugged. "I'm packed. I'm ready. I wanted to do brunch with my girls before I left."

"I always keep a bag packed," Everly said. "I travel a lot with blogging, so I've got extra makeup, toiletries, and everything else ready to go. It makes life simpler."

"That's smart. I'm mostly in meetings online. This was an opportunity we couldn't pass up though. We're looking to grow, and I've got some great ideas to expand our marketing campaign. I'm looking forward to meeting with the other company in Seoul and see how we can collaborate on future projects."

"You'll miss the barbeque," Addison pointed out. "Madeline's back in town, so we're having everyone over"

"I know. Sorry I forgot to let you know I can't make it. I sort of had a last-minute change of plans."

"It's no problem. At least we're here for brunch now. I'm sure Havoc will miss you," Addison teased.

"Oh. That man. When we went out to happy hour last week with everyone, he just about lost it that I wouldn't let him give me a lift to and from the bar. He's so damn bossy sometimes."

"Well, why didn't you get a ride with him?" Cassie asked. "That's sort of how Rob and I got together. How long are you two planning to dance around one another anyway?"

Olivia blew out an exasperated sigh. "Um, forever? As soon as I give in, he'll move on to the next woman that catches his eye. I know how men like that work. Sure, the flirting is fun, but eventually I'd want an actual relationship, not a night or two with a man."

"So, you would entertain the idea of a relationship with him," Everly mused.

"What? No. He's not serious about anything. Fun? Absolutely. Hot? Check. But date the guy? I've got zero interest in getting burned. He'll move on at some point and forget all about chasing after me."

"Is that what you want?" Addison asked. "For him to move on? You can't



really tell me you wouldn't care if Havoc started showing up at our group hangouts with another woman."

Olivia swallowed. "He can do what he wants. Just like I can."

Addison exchanged a glance with Cassie, and Olivia rolled her eyes.

"How long have they been like this?" Everly asked.

"Since forever," Addison said. "Pretty much since the two of them met, they've been going at it. They flirt, they fight. It's never ending."

"Foreplay," Everly joked.

Olivia nearly choked on her drink. "Look, I'm not saying we wouldn't be good together—for a night. It would be hot. I don't disagree with that. I just don't want to get hurt. Say we have a night of amazing sex, and that's that. We're still friends. I'd still have to see him at every barbeque and beach bonfire."

"I understand," Cassie said quietly.

Olivia blew out a breath, not liking her friend's assessing gaze. It would sting to see Havoc with another woman. But it would hurt worse to have hot sex with the guy and then watch him chase after someone else. He wanted her to give in to their crazy chemistry, but then what? She'd feel like shit, and he'd move on. No thank you. "Oh, there's the waitress with our food," she said, feeling relieved. "This is supposed to be a fun, boozy brunch, not a chance to hash out my guy problems."

"You're right. Men? Who needs them. To brunch!" Everly declared, lifting her glass.

"That's the spirt," Olivia chimed in, clinking her glass against Everly's. She looked over to the waitress. "We'll take another round of these."

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Havoc looked around the gun range, sliding his headphones on. He'd gotten in the habit of coming without his buddies when he wanted to chill in peace and quiet. Not that it was quiet. The repetitive sound was more like

background noise though, soothing in a way that wouldn't make sense to most people. When he came here, he was in the zone, and he could drown out all the thoughts in his head. Why worry about people who always ended up disappointed in him? He did what he wanted and was fucking fine with that. Havoc didn't need to answer to anyone here, just slide into the zone. His finger caressed the trigger as he looked through the scope, and he tuned out everything else. He didn't need to think about shit when he was here, just focus on the task at hand.

Fuck this noise.

An hour later, he was heading toward the parking lot to his truck. He rolled his shoulders, feeling some of the tension from earlier seep away. There weren't any looming ops as far as he knew. Things were always on the horizon, and the shit could hit the fan at any time, but he wasn't about to deploy. It was a good day. Still, something niggled at the back of his mind. It was almost like he could sense when something big was going to happen. Not here on the asphalt, but somewhere. He could be home one day and flying around the world the next. There was never a dull moment, and he thrived on the challenges his career in the military threw at him.

His phone buzzed, and he lifted it to his ear.

"What's up, Ace?" he asked his team leader.

"Trigger's coming over in thirty to watch the game. Add went out to brunch with the girls, and she just texted to say they're getting pedicures and some other girly stuff this afternoon. I've got the house to myself for a couple of hours. You in?"

"Sure, why the hell not? Need me to grab a few beers on my way over?"

"Nah. We're good with what I already have. See ya when you get here."

Havoc swiped the screen of his phone to end the call, his eyes landing on his text messages. They'd all gone out for drinks the other night, and it had pissed him the hell off that Olivia had insisted on driving herself to and from the bar.

Havoc: *Let me give you a ride, O.*

Olivia: *No way.*

Havoc: *Why not? We'll be out late.*

Olivia: *You didn't ask nicely.*

Havoc: *Pretty please?*

Olivia: *Don't be a dick.*

He shook his head. That woman. She drove him crazy, but was it so wrong that he wanted to make sure she was safe? The other women had all been with their boyfriends—his teammates. Olivia was the only one who'd shown up at the bar alone. Who'd left all by herself and driven home late at night. It would've taken him ten extra minutes, tops, to swing by her place.

And hell.

She'd changed after work and was wearing a skimpy little dress when she finally showed up at the crowded bar. He swore she did shit like that just to tease him. He'd commented once that she looked good in skirts, and bam. Now she wore skirts and dresses all the time around him. She was petite but powerful, with tiny, toned muscles. She took different classes at the gym, and he freaking loved her svelte physique. He'd been with all sorts of women over the years, but something about how small Olivia was appealed to his baser instincts. He could position her any way he wanted, his large body curling over hers. Havoc could hold her up against the wall and just take her—make her beg him to let her come.

She'd be down for it. Argue with him as much as she did, he didn't miss the way her eyes roamed over his body. She left a trail of heat coursing over him with those not-so-subtle looks. He trained hard and didn't mind Olivia's eyes on him at all. And at the bonfire a month ago? Fucking hell. He hadn't been able to keep his hands to himself. That cropped top she had on with that tiny little skirt? He wanted to touch her everywhere—tease her, taste her. She was whip smart and mouthy but had a killer body. An infectious laugh. And that was the damn problem. She didn't take him seriously and always pulled away.

Unable to resist, he pulled out his phone.

Havoc: *Heard you're at brunch, O. My invite get lost in the mail?*

Olivia: *Ladies only, big guy.*

Havoc: *I'm definitely big, sweetheart.*

Olivia: *That's what they all say.*

Havoc: *Only one way to find out.*

Olivia: *Pass.*

He smirked. They'd been texting more and more recently, carrying on the banter they used to save for when they were together. He'd been surprised at first when Olivia always immediately texted him back, but then again, she loved a challenge. O wasn't the type of woman to let him have the last word, and hell if he didn't love that about her.

Havoc: *Tell me you're wearing one of those little skirts again.*

Olivia: *Only for you.*

His jaw clenched as a photo came through. Olivia, Cassie, Addison, and Everly were all grinning for the camera, holding up their drinks. The lightning that shot through him as he honed in on Olivia was surprising. Looking at her was like a punch to the gut. Long, black hair. Big, brown eyes. A tank top that showed off her toned, slender arms and skinny jeans that looked like they were painted on. Maybe he was wrong to tell her she looked good in skirts. This look was hot as fuck.

Havoc didn't have any pictures of her. The women in their group loved snapping silly photos or selfies, but he and his buddies weren't exactly sentimental like that. He pressed the download button to save the photo.

Havoc: *Nice.*

Olivia: *That's all you have to say?*

Havoc: *All the blood rushed south.*

He could almost hear her laughing. His lips quirked as his phone began buzzing. They rarely talked on the phone, but apparently this called for it. "What's up, hellcat?" he asked, smirking. He leaned against his truck, glancing up at the blue, Southern California sky. The weather was perfect, and he was feeling more settled after clearing his head at the range. Plus, hearing from Olivia always put him in a damn good mood.

"Everly thinks I'm wasting too much time texting you, Owen. Did you miss

me that much today?”

“You know it,” he said with a grin.

“I didn’t think of you once.”

“I call bullshit.”

She laughed, low and sultry, and he tried to ignore the funny feeling he felt in his chest at hearing the sound. “I guess you’ll never know for sure, Owen. Our girl talk is locked down like a vault.”

“I can be very persuasive when I want to be.”

“Nope. You’ll hear nothing from me on the matter. There’s nothing better than brunch with my girls,” she said. He heard giggles in the background and shook his head.

“Girl time. I like it. I’m headed over to Ace’s in a few minutes.”

“Are you guys leaving soon?” she asked, suddenly growing serious.

“Why? You worried about me?”

“No,” she said too quickly. A beat passed. “Well, yes. Of course, I worry when you’re gone. Your job is dangerous.”

“I’ll be fine, hellcat, but this isn’t about a mission. We’re just going to watch the game. No work stuff.”

“Gotcha. Well, the ladies and I are off to get a quick pedicure, and then I’ve got places to go, people to see. Try not to miss me too much this week.”

“When are you leaving?”

“Tonight.”

“Right,” he said, realizing he wouldn’t see her at the barbeque. “You mentioned you’d changed your flight when you were yelling at me at the bar the other night.”

“I was shouting over the music,” she protested.

“Just admit you love arguing with me, hellcat.”

“I like being right.”

He chuckled, surprising himself. This woman always managed to catch him

off guard. After dealing with aggressive women who wanted nothing more than to sleep with a Navy SEAL, shy women, and everything in between, Olivia's bluntness was refreshing.

"That you do, O, but so do I. Have a good trip. Seoul won't know what hit it when you arrive."

"Beijing."

"Oh yeah?"

"I'm spending a few days in China." Her voice was garbled for a few seconds, and then he could hear her again. "I'm shocked you said to have a good trip and didn't go on and on about my picking a safe hotel and the like."

"I know you'll have researched safe areas because I already told you to."

"So damn bossy," she said, and he didn't miss the way her voice was slightly breathless. He had a feeling that protest as she might, Olivia might like his taking control. He wasn't into submission, per se, just driving a woman wild in bed. And when Olivia finally gave in? Let him tease and pleasure her before sinking into her welcoming body and making her completely his? It would be fucking magic.

"There is one place I'd love to boss you around, hellcat," he said with a smirk.

"Your bedroom? No way, Owen."

"You know we'd be good together," he said huskily. "So damn good."

"Maybe I don't want to get burned."

Surprise washed over him. "O—"

"I've got to go." She ended the call, and he puzzled over her words for a moment as he stared at his screen. He'd thought they'd both loved the teasing and flirting that always came about when they were together, but did she really think he'd fucking hurt her?

Havoc shook his head.

Olivia would go on her trip to Beijing, but when she returned, they needed to talk. He wasn't a guy who liked heart-to-hearts, but if she thought he wanted to stick his dick in her and then shove her aside, she couldn't be more wrong.

He cared about her. Maybe he didn't want the white picket fence and two point five kids, but he wouldn't cast her away like nothing. She challenged and intrigued him. Made his chest swell with something he couldn't explain. They were together all the time with their friends, sort of a couple but not officially. Did she really think he'd get her into his bed and then be done with her?

He muttered a curse.

Havoc pulled open the door to his truck and climbed in, scrubbing a hand over his jaw. Maybe she was more sensitive than she'd let on—all brash and bold on the outside, but skittish when you looked deeper. He didn't know much about her past relationships. She'd dated a lot according to the other women, but he'd never heard anyone mention a serious boyfriend. She didn't seem hung up on any past boyfriends. And since they were always together during their group activities, he knew for a fact that she didn't bring a date to those. Damn. He'd see red if she showed up with another man. Just the thought of it made him want to punch something.

She might not be his yet, but hell if he didn't want to persuade her to actually give him a chance. They'd flirted for months and months, each time they saw one another getting a little more heated. He'd walked O to her car the night at the bar and caged her in, loving the way her breath had hitched as those dark eyes had looked up at him. She could deny it as much as she wanted, but Olivia wanted him, too. Protest as she might, he was just the type of guy that she needed. Another week of being sidelined to the friend zone while she was traveling was nothing. He'd tell her point blank when she got back that he wasn't messing with her. He wasn't after a one-night-stand. He wanted her. And hell if it wasn't time he proved her wrong about him.

## Chapter 3

Olivia wheeled her carry-on through LAX, breezing past groups of people and families milling about. “Have these people never flown before?” she muttered, watching them look confusedly around the busy airport.

“Why did they change our gate again?” a man complained to his wife, who was holding a screaming toddler. The little boy’s face was turning redder and redder as he underwent a complete meltdown.

“Good God. Please don’t let them be on my flight,” she whispered to herself, hurrying past them. She had a fourteen-hour flight to Manila, twelve-hour layover, and then it was a shorter flight on to Beijing. Olivia was hoping to catch some sleep so she wouldn’t be so jet-lagged when she finally arrived. A screaming toddler would kill those plans in an instant. She couldn’t wait to see her friend Ivy. They’d catch up over food, drinks, and sight-seeing, and after several days in the city, she’d finally be on to South Korea for the business part of her trip.

Her phone buzzed, and she was surprised to see that it was Owen texting her again. She stepped off to the side of the busy area, watching other people rush past her. She had an hour or so to kill.

Havoc: *Have a safe trip, O.*

Olivia: *I’ll be fine. I’ve got my big-girl panties on.*

Havoc: *Tell me more about these panties.*

She smirked, thumbing a response back to him. Wasn’t he supposed to be watching the game? It was probably over by now, she supposed. And he’d chosen to text her again instead of going about with his evening. Interesting.

Olivia: *No can do. You’ll just have to use your imagination.*

Havoc: *That sounds dangerous, hellcat.*

Olivia: *You, thinking? That it does. ;)*

Havoc: *Ouch.*



Olivia: *Just calling it like it is, big guy.*

Her gaze was drawn toward a group of men arguing, and she shook her head. This damn airport was full of frustrated travelers. At least her flight hadn't been delayed, and the screaming toddler was nowhere in sight. She quickly thumbed another text.

Olivia: *See you in a week.*

Havoc: *Need a ride home from the airport?*

Olivia: *Maybe.*

Havoc: *Text me when you're back home. I'll pick you up.*

Warmth flooded through her, but she didn't respond. Owen was all too tempting sometimes. When he wasn't being a dick, he actually could be kind of sweet. She didn't doubt for a second that he'd lose all interest in her once they slept together. The man was sinfully hot and knew it. He also had to realize that she was attracted to him. He'd caught her staring more than once, and she'd never denied it. She'd been more than happy to let him know when he was being an ass, however.

Had the man ever been in a serious relationship? Doubtful.

She'd dated plenty over the years but didn't have time for the games that so many guys wanted to play. She might not want to be rushing down the aisle, and she wasn't sure she ever wanted kids, but why waste her time dating a guy when the possibility of a future together was zero? She had no interest in a single night with a man. A boyfriend she could get on board with—maybe. Her best friends sure seemed happy. She didn't want to sleep with a guy and have him ghost her though.

Especially not Owen. They knew the same people. Saw each other too much. Sleeping with him would only lead to awkwardness and potential heartache. It was better to look but not touch.

Olivia blew out a sigh. She was leaving and didn't need confusing thoughts about Owen going through her head. She was going to spend the next several days having a blast and then be busy with work. She didn't have time for guy troubles.

She continued walking toward her gate, stopping in a shop to buy a pre-

packaged sandwich and some snacks. Airline food was awful, so she wanted something to eat before the overnight flight. Grabbing her plastic bag full of food, she wheeled her suitcase toward an empty seat at her gate. They wouldn't start boarding for more than an hour, so she might as well relax, eat a light dinner, and plan what she wanted to do in China. This trip was going to be something she'd never forget.

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Havoc smirked as Ace talked quietly with Addison later that evening in their kitchen. She'd been gone for the day, but you'd think she'd been gone for weeks with the lovey-dovey way they were currently looking at one another. He took a pull of his beer, getting ready to head out. Their team had won the game, and now that Ace's girl was back, it was time to make himself scarce. Ace brushed some of his fiancée's dark hair back, and Havoc shook his head. It was funny how they'd met online gaming. They seemed so well-suited to one another; you'd never have guessed they met somewhat anonymously online. If Ace hadn't convinced Addison to meet him in real life, Havoc would never have met Olivia.

That woman.

He'd texted her again at the airport and still couldn't get her out of his mind. It was weird as hell to worry about another person. Sure, he worried about his teammates when they were on missions and any people in their care, but it wasn't the same. This wasn't life or death. She sure the hell was on his mind, however, consuming more thoughts than he'd admit.

"What are you thinking so hard about?" Trigger asked, car keys in hand.

Havoc lifted a shoulder. "Not much. It's just weird how much stuff has changed around here in the past year."

Trigger slapped him on the shoulder as he headed toward the door. "We're getting old, man. But I wouldn't change a damn thing."

Havoc nodded at his buddy. "See ya."

"I just got a text from Olivia," Addison said. Havoc's ears perked up. "She's

trying to switch around her flight because her friend has a stomach bug. I think she's stopping by Beijing on the way—”

Havoc's own phone rang, and he pulled it from his pocket. A small part of him was disappointed it wasn't Olivia calling. She was probably still at LAX and had apparently texted Addison about her change of plans. The women worked together, so if she was rearranging her schedule, it made sense to contact her instead of him. It still bugged him though. Weird that he was eager for an update from O. They'd already texted and talked today, which was more than usual. Then again, he was usually the one leaving on his team's missions. Normally, Havoc knew she was safe at home. Now that she was the one flying out of the country, he felt slightly anxious. Havoc was laid back, not the type of man to worry about things, but with Olivia traveling alone, he couldn't help but feel just a bit on edge.

Mark's name flashed on the screen as his phone rang again, and he swiped it to answer. “Hey man, what's up?”

“I got a flat on the freeway, but I'm supposed to be picking up Everly from some photoshoot thing. Any chance you can get her? I'll owe you big time.”

“I thought she was with the girls earlier.”

“Yep. She was. She got a last-minute request from a clothing company to fill in on some sunset photoshoot for a new fashion line—her words, not mine,” he added with a chuckle. “She was stoked about it and rushed off this afternoon. Said it was a great opportunity and whatnot.”

Havoc raised his eyebrows. He didn't understand the first thing about Everly's blogging, but apparently, she was pretty damn successful at it.

“Sure, man, I'll get her. Text me the address, and I'll head over there now.”

He told the others he was heading out, and then Havoc walked toward the front door. Trigger was already climbing into his own vehicle, and he waved goodbye. While the rest of his buddies would no doubt be with their women tonight, Havoc would be alone. Interesting how it hadn't ever bothered him in the past. He'd never thought twice about not having a woman. Then again, he'd used to hit up the bars with his friends. He couldn't help but feel a bit restless some of the time now, and he couldn't quite put his finger on it. Sure, he'd loved teasing Olivia about wanting her in his bed, but he also liked

talking to her. Bantering. Listening to her laughter. She soothed something inside him, made him feel like less of a screw-up. Funny because she was always the first to call him on his shit, but every once in a while, he'd catch her watching him. And that look in her eyes, when she didn't think he noticed? That was damn near everything.

## Chapter 4

Massaging her temples, Olivia resisted the urge to groan. The overnight flight to Manila had been exhausting, with screaming babies and irritated passengers trying to rest. The turbulence they'd encountered hadn't helped matters—nothing like being jarred out of sleep again and again. To top it off, Ivy had called her when she'd still been in LA, letting her know she'd caught an awful stomach bug. Olivia had rearranged her schedule, switching flights at the last minute to fly from Manila to Seoul. She hoped the company she was meeting with could accommodate the last-minute change of plans. She didn't really want to tour Beijing by herself, and the main reason for going there had been to see Ivy. She'd visit China on the way home instead if she could work it out. It was unlikely she'd be in Asia anytime soon after this trip, and she hoped to make it to Beijing to visit her old friend.

When they finally landed, she was completely drained. The captain announced the local time, but she'd been too groggy to pay close attention. She stuffed her headphones and book into her tote bag, trying to make sure nothing was left behind. Frowning, she saw the two men from LA who'd been arguing in the airport. They were seated together about six rows up from her and were bickering about something once again.

Olivia tried not to roll her eyes. She stood up and lifted her suitcase down from the overhead bin and slid her tote bag atop it to wheel everything out. She still had a layover, but it wasn't as long as her original one. In the meantime, she was in serious need of coffee. She'd hang out in the airport for two hours and then be on her way once again. Hopefully her business contacts saw her email and would respond about changing their meetings. Otherwise, she'd be on her own in Seoul for a few days.

Her gaze scanned the aircraft as passengers gathered their things to deplane. One of the men who'd been arguing glanced back, his gaze narrowing as he looked at her. He was Middle Eastern, with dark, beady eyes and a full beard. She resisted the urge to shiver. Something about those two guys bothered her, but she couldn't quite put her finger on it. They seemed almost agitated.

Anxious about something.

They got off the plane ahead of her, disappearing into the crowd. After a quick stop at the bathroom, she'd found a coffee shop in the airport. Thirty minutes later, she was seated at the gate once again. She'd washed her face and freshened up, grabbed the biggest cup of coffee she could find, and was now scrolling through her emails. No one had responded yet about her request to change meeting times, but it was Sunday. Or was it already Monday here? The time change was throwing her off, and they'd flown over the international date line.

Smiling, she realized the South Korean company had responded and were able to move up the meetings by several days.

"Thank God," she muttered. Olivia shot off a quick message to her own office and coworkers, notifying them of the change of plans.

"You traveling for business or pleasure?" a woman around her age asked as she grabbed a seat across from Olivia, folding her long legs beneath her as she got comfy. She was the total opposite from Olivia in looks—wavy blonde hair, bright blue eyes, and tall.

"Both actually. I've got business meetings in Seoul but hope to catch up with a childhood friend of mine."

"Nice," the woman said. "I'm Callie, by the way."

"Olivia. So how about you? Work trip?"

Callie pulled her long, blonde waves back into a messy bun. "Yep. I'm a travel writer, so I just head wherever I want. Honestly, I do a lot more videos than strictly writing or blogging these days—livestreams and reels on Instagram and TikTok. It's crazy but fun."

"That's cool. I'll have to look you up. One of my friends is a fashion blogger."

"Oh yeah? I'm not sure I could handle that, but trying new foods, seeing new places, and traveling the world is the best job I could ask for."

"It sounds pretty sweet," Olivia said, taking a sip of her coffee. "I'm in marketing. I work for an app development company, but that's mostly gaming. I'm not into that sort of thing, just the business and marketing side."

So where are you from?” Olivia asked.

“California.”

“Huh. Same here. Were you just on the flight from LAX? I live in San Diego but flew out of LA.”

“Small world,” Callie said with a chuckle. “I’m right outside San Diego and was on that same flight. That turbulence was brutal, right?”

“Tell me about it. I ordered the biggest coffee they had and will probably need more. Combine that with the screaming babies, and I’ll probably crash as soon as I check into my hotel in Seoul.”

“Well, I know you’re there for business, but let me know if you want someone to sightsee with. I’m used to traveling alone, but sometimes it’s nice to have a friend when you’re in a new city.”

“I hear ya. Let’s exchange contact info. Oh, and tell me your name on social. I want to follow you.”

Olivia keyed Callie’s info into her phone, frowning as she saw the men from earlier heading to the gate. “Not those guys again. Damn. They’ve been arguing since we were in LA.”

Callie’s gaze followed hers as the two men walked up to the counter and spoke with a woman at the gate. One of the men was arguing about something in a low voice, and Olivia strained to hear what they were saying. The second folded his arms, not speaking as he stood there with a frown.

“They’re probably whining about how tiny their dicks are,” Callie said with a smirk.

Olivia nearly choked on her coffee. She leaned slightly to the left, catching a few words. “It sounds like they want an upgrade but paid for business class. What makes them think they should move to first class for free? Assholes.”

“Entitled pricks,” Callie agreed, swinging her long legs down. Her sneakered feet landed on the ground. “I hope they’re not bitching and moaning the entire flight.”

“I like your running shoes,” Olivia said, looking down at her own black canvas sneakers. “These are cute but not super comfy.”

“I travel so much that I reached the point that I prefer comfort over fashion,” Callie said with a shrug.

“That’s smart. I thought these looked cute, but I underestimated how much I’d be walking through different airports,” Olivia said with a laugh. “So where else have you traveled recently? I’m basically always in San Diego.”

Callie launched into some stories as Olivia settled back into her seat, content to have made a friend to kill the time during their layover. They’d be boarding in an hour or so, and then she’d be on her way once again. She glanced down at her phone, wondering for a moment if she should text Havoc. It was a random thought. He wasn’t her boyfriend. Just because they’d been in contact more recently didn’t mean he’d expect to hear from her while she was gone. If he really wondered how she was doing, he could reach out. Otherwise, she’d see him when she returned.

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An hour later, Olivia stashed her tote bag underneath the seat in front of her, sliding her headphones on. She pressed the buttons on the touchscreen of the airplane’s monitor, looking for a movie to watch. Hopefully she’d fall blissfully asleep at some point, arriving in Seoul somewhat refreshed. She’d check into her hotel, relax for a while, and then go over everything she needed for her business meetings over the next few days.

She fiddled with her seatbelt, listening to the beginning of the movie. It paused as the safety information video came onscreen. The captain announced a flight time of four hours, and moments later, they were taxiing to prepare for takeoff. Her movie resumed, and before she knew it, they were speeding down the runway to take flight. Since Olivia had the window seat, she eventually leaned against it as she tried to stay awake. The busy day of travel was catching up to her, and although she tried to pay attention, she fell into a restless sleep.

Olivia stirred, blinking groggily. Her neck was stiff from the way she’d slouched over as she fell asleep, and she sat up, trying to get her bearings. The movie was still playing on the screen in front of her, so two hours hadn’t



even passed yet on the flight. She rubbed her eyes and saw that the people seated near her were looking at a man standing up in the aisle. Frowning, she realized it was one of the Middle Eastern men she'd seen arguing earlier. She pulled off her headphones, wondering what was happening.

"Sir, please return to your seat," the flight attendant said firmly, pointing to the row at the man's side. "You cannot change seats mid-flight."

"No. I need to go to the front of the plane. Let me by and do your job. Go hand out drinks or something."

The second man he'd been traveling with began speaking rapidly in a foreign language as he stood up as well. He was gesturing and growing louder, drawing more attention to them both. Olivia had no idea what he was saying and briefly remembered how Madeline spoke five different languages. Too bad she wasn't here now. Although she guessed the man might be speaking in Farsi, she actually wasn't sure.

"Sit down," the flight attendant repeated in a stern voice. "Both of you need to take your seats."

"I insist on going to first class," the first man said, growing more and more agitated. "Let me through right now!"

Olivia glanced to the side, noticing another flight attendant radioing who she assumed was the captain. They only had a few more hours before they landed, and she couldn't imagine why these two men were acting like such dicks about their seats.

"Return to your seat, sir," the flight attendant said again. "The first-class section is full. I'm going to have to insist that you sit down so we can continue our flight as scheduled."

The man turned slightly, acting like he might obey her orders, and then suddenly whipped out a knife and raised it in the air. Olivia and the passengers around her gasped. "Let me by! There is a bomb on this plane! Move over and let me through!" He grabbed the flight attendant, pushing her down the aisle toward the front of the plane as the second man produced a knife and followed them. Olivia's jaw dropped open in shock as her pulse began to race. A passenger seated across the aisle from her rose, looking ready to intervene. She gripped her armrests, feeling panic wash over her.

“I need to stop them,” he muttered.

“Sit down!” the second hijacker yelled to the passenger who’d stood.

“Nobody move, or we will blow up this plane! Sit down!”

The flight attendant closest to Olivia began a frantic radio call to air traffic control. Olivia watched the woman for a moment then swiveled her head as she heard more shouting from the front of the plane. A third man who’d been seated in first class appeared to join the two hijackers.

“He’s got a knife! He’s got a knife!” a woman wailed.

Olivia jolted in her seat as she heard pounding on the cockpit doors. “Open the door!” the hijacker screamed. “I demand to be let into the cockpit!”

A second terrorist began yelling as well, adding to the commotion and chaos. “Let us in or we’ll kill her!”

She heard passengers yelling and saw a scuffle near the front of the plane. Suddenly, a loud scream pierced the air, followed by gasps of shock. “They slit her throat! They slit her throat! Oh my God, we have to stop the bleeding! Get a towel! Help!”

“Shut up!” one of the hijackers yelled. “Everybody shut up!”

Two men near Olivia rose from their seats, gesturing toward the front. She watched them, her eyes wide, as one man glanced back at the flight attendant. The woman nodded. Suddenly, she heard thumping as someone ran down the aisle, and Olivia’s heart nearly stopped as she saw a man holding a briefcase with a bomb inside. How the hell had he bypassed security? “I’ve got a bomb! Everyone remain seated and cooperate or I will blow up this airplane right now!”

The male passengers who’d stood to intervene hesitated but then took their seats. Olivia swallowed, trying not to panic.

“You!” the hijacker yelled at the flight attendant near Olivia. “Tell your captain to open the cockpit or I will blow this plane up! Tell him right now!”

The woman paled but remained calm despite everything. She spoke clearly into the microphone, explaining the situation. Olivia’s eyes darted around the cabin, frantic. The thumping continued as the hijackers at the front of the plane tried to take over the cockpit by force. She took a deep breath, closing

her eyes. This couldn't be happening. This couldn't be real. She couldn't be on an airplane over the Pacific that was being hijacked.

## Chapter 5

Havoc lifted the case of beer off the self-checkout counter and carried it out to his truck. His muscles bunched with the movement, and he saw a woman checking him out as he strode through the parking lot. She was blonde and busty, but he kept moving. While he might've appreciated the attention a year ago, he wasn't interested in the slightest now. The barbeque at Ace's house was starting soon. Brian's girl Madeline was back in town, and they'd all get to see her again. He'd gotten to know the woman a bit when they'd hunkered down in Pakistan together during an attack on the embassy. The shit had really hit the fan on that rescue op, but all's well that ends well. She and Brian had ended up together, and Madeline was moving out to San Diego permanently in a few weeks.

His phone buzzed as he climbed into his truck, and he frowned at the text from his commander.

*Prepare for a possible deployment tonight. A passenger plane from Manila to Seoul was hijacked earlier. 50 Americans onboard.*

*If negotiations fall through, the team will be sent in.*

Shock washed over him, every muscle in his body tensing, and then he immediately relaxed. Olivia was flying from LAX to Beijing. She'd told him herself just yesterday. Thank fuck she'd changed her plans around. She was originally supposed to be flying to Seoul, although probably not on that exact flight. Thank God she was safe and had rearranged her schedule. The fact that some goddamn terrorists had hijacked another flight still burned though. On their last rescue mission, the SEAL team had been tasked to bring Madeline home. Now fifty American lives were at stake. He had no idea how many other passengers were on board. Innocent people. Women. Children. While they were supposed to be spending the afternoon relaxing at Ace's, no doubt their team leader would now be fielding calls from their CO for any updates. If things went south, the team would be going wheels up, flying halfway around the world to stage a rescue mission.

Havoc clenched his jaw as he started his truck. He had a go bag in the back, but no doubt the relaxed barbecue he was heading to might take a decidedly different turn. The women wouldn't know the details of the situation, but Havoc and his teammates would be on alert. And if duty called? They'd roll on out of there, heading into base.

Twenty minutes later, he was pulling up to Ace's house. Several cars were already here, and as he strode through the house and into the backyard, he saw Rob, Cassie, Mark, and Everly standing together talking. Ace was at the grill but had a phone to his ear, and Addison was flitting around the tables, getting last minute things ready.

He exchanged a look with his team leader, who nodded at him and then headed back inside the house to continue the call. Havoc set the case of beers down on the table filled with drinks, ripping the box open to stash some of the beers in one of the coolers.

"Hey, you made it!" Addison called out as Brian and Madeline walked into the backyard holding hands. She walked over to chat with them as Havoc's gaze shifted to his friends. Tyler and Rachel had just shown up as well, along with her young daughter.

"I need to check on the grill," Addison said. "Ace just went inside on a call."

"I got it!" Havoc hollered, meeting Addison over by the food.

"Ace looked stressed when the commander called," she confided as he grabbed a spatula from the side and flipped the burgers. "He said you guys might get sent out soon."

Havoc nodded. "Our CO texted us a little while ago saying we might need to go wheels up tonight. That was likely the first Ace heard of it as well. We had several things on our radar, and there are always situations we're monitoring, but this incident just happened. It was news to all of us."

Addison frowned, looking worried.

"It'll be fine," he assured her. "We handle changing situations all the time. Stuff springs up, and we deal with it. That's what we're trained to do."

"You're right," she said, wringing her hands together and still looking slightly nervous.

Havoc jokingly called out across the patio to Brian and Madeline, who were currently wrapped up in each other's arms, as he tried to lighten the mood. Madeline good-naturedly rolled her eyes at him, but Brian took her hand and towed her over to where Havoc was manning the grill.

"Where's your better half?" Madeline joked.

Havoc exchanged a glance with Brian. "I knew I liked her. She's smart as hell and calls it like it is. And as for our little hellcat, Olivia? She's on a business trip to Asia."

"Oh right. She was going to South Korea or something. I remember her mentioning that," Madeline said.

"Nah. It got changed."

Addison looked over at him and frowned. "No. She's still going to South Korea. She was just stopping in Beijing to sightsee for a couple of days and see an old friend. Then she was going to Seoul."

Havoc stilled, his eyes moving to the closed patio doors. Ace was still inside on the phone, pacing back and forth behind the glass. "Here," Havoc said, handing the spatula to Brian. His jaw dropped open in surprise, but Havoc was already turning and jogging toward the house, adrenaline rushing through his veins. It couldn't be. It was just a fucking coincidence that Olivia would be in Seoul in a few days. She'd told him just yesterday that she was heading to Beijing. She'd have mentioned if she was going to Seoul first, right?

Still, concern washed over him as he yanked open the glass doors leading into the house. He'd feel better once he confirmed where she was. They'd rescue the hostages if it came to that, but if he knew Olivia was safe, he could alleviate the tightening in his chest and worry that coursed through him. She was fine. Of course she was.

"Right. Understood, sir," Ace said into his phone. His face was grim, and Havoc froze. Ace eyed him, the concern evident in his eyes. It felt like Havoc's entire life hinged on whatever was about to happen. Like seconds were ticking by, but time also stood impossibly still. He needed to know and didn't want to at the same time, because nothing would ever be the same after this. "Yes, send me the passenger manifest. We'll be ready to brief with you

at fifteen hundred. The guys are all here. She is. Yes. Roger that.”

He ended the call, his gaze again landing on Havoc. Ace’s expression was perfectly neutral, but in that second, Havoc realized that life as he knew it might never be the same. “The flight that’s been hijacked was going from Manila to Seoul. Olivia changed her plans yesterday,” he said, his voice thick with regret. “Olivia is on the hijacked plane. I’m sorry, man.”

It felt like the world around him froze in place as Havoc’s pulse pounded in his ears. He could literally hear his heart thumping, the blood rushing through him. The anger rising through his entire body. His gaze narrowed as he stared at Ace. His entire focus was on him, on the words he refused to believe.

“No,” Havoc said, his voice hoarse. “No. It can’t be.”

Ace frowned. “Olivia was on that flight. She changed her plans yesterday and was flying from Manila to Seoul. Her plane’s been hijacked.”

“God damn it!” Havoc shouted, pure rage roiling through him. His head throbbed, and he wanted to scream in frustration. To curse and rant and rave until the world made sense again. He punched the patio door, the glass shattering as the women outside gasped in surprise. Ace didn’t even comment, just stormed out, phone still in hand.

“That was the CO,” Ace announced in a clipped tone. “We’re going wheels up in three hours. A plane with fifty Americans onboard was hijacked.”

Havoc grabbed a towel for his bloodied hand, cursing as he watched the others from inside Ace’s house. The yard was silent, and it felt like someone was ripping his heart right out of his chest. He wanted to scream, to shout at anyone who’d listen, to pray to a God he didn’t even believe in to keep Olivia safe. They had to fly halfway around the world to get to her. So much could happen in mere seconds, and he wouldn’t be there for hours and hours. It might be too late. It might take too long. Anger consumed him, and he let out another string of curses as he pressed the towel against his bloodied knuckles.

Madeline looked between Ace and him in confusion, recognition setting in. “Where was the plane going?” she asked quietly.

Ace glanced at his teammates before looking back to Madeline. You could hear a pin drop in his backyard with the complete and utter silence as everyone waited for his answer. When Ace spoke next, it would change

everything. “Seoul. It’s the flight Olivia was on.”

“No,” Addison whimpered. “No!” Ace rushed toward her as she collapsed into his arms, tears streaming down her cheeks.

“It was Olivia’s flight?” Madeline echoed, looking dumbstruck. “You’re positive?”

“No!” Cassie shouted. “No! You’re wrong! Olivia can’t be on that flight!” She burst into tears as Rob pulled her against his chest, and suddenly everyone was talking. Moving. Rachel had collected her daughter in her arms, and Brian set the tray of food off to the side, moving toward them. Mark had pulled Cassie close, and Havoc realized that each couple was clinging to one another, relying on them for support. Once again, he was fucking alone. Havoc closed his eyes, muttering more curses under his breath. Olivia. His Olivia was in danger. Scared. Helpless. A hostage. Were they still in the air? Had they landed in Seoul? Had someone hurt her?

He wanted answers, and he wasn’t going to find them here. “I’m heading into base!” he yelled.

Ace nodded. “See you on base. We’ll be there soon.”

“I’m going to rip their fucking balls off,” Havoc seethed, storming through the house and out Ace’s front door. “I’m going to castrate every one of them myself. I’m going to kill them if they even touch her.” His truck was parked on the street, and he wanted to rip the damn doors off the thing. Olivia was on a hijacked plane. Olivia. It was like he couldn’t even think straight, he was so consumed with rage. She could be hurt right now, at this very instant, and he couldn’t get to her.

His phone buzzed, and he saw a text from his CO.

*Don’t do anything stupid, Havoc.*

Huh. Too fucking late for that. He’d already fallen for a woman he’d die to protect. He’d never felt so angry as he did right now, knowing she was in mortal danger. She could die before he’d even left California. To top it off, he’d busted up his hand. He’d have to stop by medical on base and make sure he didn’t need stitches and at least get it bandaged. Damn it all to hell. He’d always been hot-headed, but no one would stop him from going to Olivia. If his CO tried to bench him now, he’d go AWOL and get his ass there to save



her, consequences be damned.

Fuck this shit. They were going to end things for the evil men who'd dared to take innocent passengers hostage.

"Hang on, baby girl," he whispered as he climbed into his truck.

Havoc slammed the door shut, revving the engine.

Never had a mission felt more personal, and over his dead body would anyone hurt a single hair on her head.

## Chapter 6

Olivia whimpered as one of the hijackers smashed something glass at the front of the airplane, causing several passengers to shriek in surprise. She had no idea what it was. A coffee pot? A window? No. That would mess up the air pressure inside the cabin, and the oxygen masks hadn't dropped. She heard one of them talking, telling some of the passengers to be quiet, and then there was complete silence once again.

How much time had passed? Twenty minutes? An hour?

Time had no meaning as she sat in fear. While she'd been groggy when she first awoke, now she was tense and alert. Terrified of what would happen next. At some point, the hijackers had gotten into the cockpit. Whether they'd broken down the door or been let in because of the bomb they'd displayed, she didn't know. They'd yelled for a while and eventually quieted as their demands had been met. The man holding the bomb had disappeared to the front of the airplane, and the fear of the passengers seated around her felt like a living, breathing thing.

Her eyes glanced at the map on the screen in front of her. Her movie long forgotten, she'd taken to tracking the movement of the airplane. She was surprised they hadn't deactivated it, but it probably hadn't even occurred to them. They were still above the Pacific Ocean, heading toward Seoul. Would they be safer once they got to land? If they detonated the bomb and blew them up over the vast ocean, would the plane plummet into the depths of the Pacific, drowning them all?

Morbid thoughts coursed through her mind.

Her dad was a police detective. He'd taught her to think quickly and analyze dangerous situations. To keep herself safe under a variety of circumstances. Getting robbed in San Diego or carjacked somewhere wasn't exactly like being on a hijacked airplane, however. She couldn't stop three crazy men armed with knives and a bomb. She couldn't run and hide. Olivia was basically helpless, at their complete and utter mercy.

Looking across the aisle, she saw Callie seated a couple of rows ahead of her, looking as white as a sheet. Sensing Olivia's gaze, Callie turned her head. Olivia froze as she looked at her new friend's watery eyes. The woman looked absolutely petrified. Shell-shocked. Olivia was scared but also just angry. How dare they risk the lives of all these passengers. Callie turned back around, and Olivia saw her swiping at her cheeks. She wished she could say something to comfort her, but they'd all been instructed to stay in their seats. And really, what could she offer? They were screwed.

She looked out the window, seeing the white, fluffy clouds below. How could everything outside the airplane just seem normal? Peaceful, even?

The hijackers had restrained the flight attendants with zip ties. She had no idea what had happened to the one who'd been slashed with a knife. It was just eerily quiet. Disturbing.

"What do you think they want?" Olivia softly asked the middle-aged woman sitting beside her.

The woman glanced over, looking stressed herself about the entire situation. She took a deep breath, seemingly trying to control her nerves. "Money. Passports. Freedom. Who knows? It seems like we're still on the same flightpath, heading toward Seoul," she said, nodding at Olivia's screen. "They haven't redirected the airplane to another country."

"Geez, you're right. Those men all looked Middle Eastern. Do you think they'd want to fly the plane somewhere other than Seoul?"

"I have no idea. It seems like if you hijack a plane, you could fly to another nearby destination. We're nowhere near the Middle East, though, if that's truly where they're from. It's not like the plane could make it to Iraq or Afghanistan anyway on the amount of gas we have."

"True. It's just weird. If they're from a country in the Middle East and have a beef with their own homeland, why hijack a plane flying through Asia? What's the end game?"

"I don't know," the woman replied, looking grim.

Olivia bit her lip again, worry coursing through her. The most logical thing she could imagine was that they wanted money. She had no idea if they'd been in contact with the authorities to make their demands. Were they

continuing to South Korea? Would they just sit on the runway after they landed and wait for something to happen? Continue to hold the passengers hostage? Aside from yelling when they waved around their knives and displayed the bomb, taking over the aircraft, they hadn't said anything—not to the hostages anyway. Presumably they'd made demands of the pilots or authorities.

“Say they do want money,” Olivia said. “Do they really think they'll just get a briefcase full of cash and waltz off into the sunset? Even with electronic bank transfers, that money could be tracked and confiscated in an instant. They'll go through all this trouble for nothing. The FBI or Interpol or whoever is responsible will arrest them, and they'll be in jail for the rest of their lives.”

“You're assuming we all make it out of this alive,” the woman said stiffly.

Olivia's breath caught. She had assumed that if they didn't blow up the plane over the ocean, they'd survive. The hijackers would demand whatever they wanted, and the authorities would step in. She'd eventually go home. She'd see her friends and family.

What if none of that happened and her life ended right here over the Pacific? Suddenly, images of Havoc filled her mind. It was strange and sudden and almost like he was right there. His hand on her waist that day of the bonfire, his muscled body behind hers. The way his lips had brushed over her hand. It had only happened once, and it still sent shockwaves of heat washing over her as she recalled it. He was brash and bold but also protective of her. He'd been frustrated she didn't want him to give her a ride to and from the bar when they met up with their friends.

He was always there, keeping her safe whether she realized it or not.

What she wouldn't give to have him on the plane with her right now. Havoc and his friends were Navy SEALs. They trained for all types of horrifying scenarios, most of which she was sure she couldn't even imagine. They literally stormed in and eliminated the bad guys. Rescued people. They'd take back the plane, subdue the hijackers, and get them to safety.

He wasn't here though. Havoc and all of her friends were safe at home. He'd expect her to land in San Diego in a week's time—and what?

Tears smarted her eyes. She felt the plane begin to turn. Olivia gripped the armrests as the plane suddenly banked to the left. A woman cried out, and passengers shifted in their seats as the plane turned too quickly. Something fell over with a crash. “What’s happening?” Olivia asked. “What’s going on?”

She and the woman beside her watched the monitor, holding their breaths. The plane seemed to level off, flying more smoothly. “We’re turning around,” the woman said.

“No. They’re taking us back to Manila?”

The plane continued in a wide arc, and a minute later, they were indeed heading back the way that they’d come. Olivia stared at the screen in surprise, watching the tiny icon on the monitor. If they weren’t continuing on to Seoul, what would happen when they returned to the Philippines?

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Havoc jumped out of his truck and jogged across the black asphalt, pissed as hell. He didn’t even have words for how angry he was. He was livid and wanted answers. Ace had texted him to say the team was on their way, but he’d be here first. He’d find their commander and learn the latest update himself.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Storming through the doors to the building on base, he headed straight to the bullpen. If the CO wasn’t there, he’d bust into whatever room he had to in order to find him, consequences be damned. The hijacking would be all over the news soon. Everywhere. The entire world would know. The clock was already ticking, and his Olivia was on the fucking plane.

“Havoc,” Commander Slate “Striker” Hutchinson said as Havoc stormed in. He dropped his go-bag on the ground, trying to rein in his anger. “Sir.”

“You got here before everyone else.”

“She’s on that plane.”

His commander nodded. “She is. I’ve sent the passenger manifest to Ace. The rest of the team will be here shortly. There are fifty Americans onboard, including Olivia Nguyen. An acquaintance of yours?” the older man asked, raising his eyebrows. Slate was in his forties, a former SEAL himself, and a force to be reckoned with. He could hold his own against any of the younger men, and he and Havoc had gone head-to-head in the past when he hadn’t agreed with Havoc’s behavior.

“More than an acquaintance, sir,” he ground out.

Slate’s gaze slid to his hand. “What happened?” he barked out.

“I might have punched a glass door at Ace’s when I heard she was on the plane.”

“Head down to medical. We’re briefing soon, and you’ll want to be here.”

“But—”

“That’s an order, Havoc. Get yourself in line or be prepared to face the repercussions. You want to be a part of this mission? Then you’ll follow orders and get your head on straight.”

“Yes, sir,” he said, clenching his jaw.

Slate shook his head. “You remind me of my brother sometimes. Jett is someone who loves to make his own rules. The difference is, he runs Shadow Security. You’re an enlisted sailor and need to follow the military chain of command. Do we understand each other?”

“Roger.”

There was a sudden knock on the door. “Sir, my team will be here shortly,” a dark-haired man said, poking his head in the bullpen. Havoc’s gaze landed on the tanned, muscular sailor. He was slightly shorter than six feet but looked strong as hell. As he stepped inside, Havoc could see the SEAL trident on his uniform.

“Havoc, this is Wyatt “Wildcard” Miller, the leader of the Alpha SEALs Hawaii team. They were here in CONUS for training and were set to fly back to Honolulu tomorrow. That stands to change though, and they may help with the hostage situation overseas. Wyatt, this is Owen “Havoc” O’Donnell, a member of Coronado Team 2.”

Havoc shook the other man's hand, nodding. "Good to meet you. I know one of the guys on your team—Sawyer "Saint" Collins."

"Yep, he's a good dude," Wyatt said. "Certainly no saint," he added with a smirk.

Havoc chuckled and nodded. "I gotta go take care of this" he said, lifting up his injured hand. He stepped out of the bullpen to head down to the medical wing, listening to his commander and Wyatt talk behind him. Havoc needed to get his damn hand patched up and then hustle back for the briefing.

Although his team was well-versed in joint operations with others in the Special Forces community, they worked alone on all recent missions. He didn't give a shit who joined in on the op. His only concern was getting to Olivia and making sure she was safe. Everything else would just have to fall into place.

Fifteen minutes later, he had his hand temporarily wrapped in a sterile bandage. Fortunately, he knew how to throw a punch and hadn't broken any bones. Unfortunately, Ace now had to repair one of his back doors. He felt momentarily guilty. Addison was newly pregnant and would be there alone. The last thing she needed was broken glass everywhere. She'd be worried about her friend on the hijacked plane and worried about Ace, too.

Leave it to Havoc to cause more problems. As he rounded the corner, he saw Ace and Brian heading toward the bullpen. "Yo, Ace! Sorry about your door!" he called out.

Ace's gaze swung toward him. "You were worried about your girl," he said. "I get it. We put up some plywood before we left."

He ignored the comment about Olivia being his, but hell if he didn't want her to be. It was more than just physical chemistry between them. Her laughter, her sassiness—she was the whole package. Had he ever told her that? It honest-to-God hurt knowing there was a chance he'd never see her again.

"Thankfully, Ace had some plywood in that huge ass garage of his," Brian said, changing his line of thought.

"Glad you guys were there to help," he muttered. He clenched his jaw, trying to keep his emotions in check. "You have any updates?" he asked Ace.

"Negative. We just got here. Some of the women are staying with Add this

afternoon. Rachel left with her daughter, but the others are there.”

“Except Olivia,” he said bitterly.

“You gotta think positive. Right now, everything happening is out of our control. They likely have demands they want met. If they were suicide bombers, we wouldn’t even be here talking about staging a rescue op. Everyone would already be gone.”

“Fuck, that’s harsh,” Havoc muttered.

“It’s the goddamn truth,” Ace said. “Let’s focus on the mission. We’ll know the specifics shortly. The bottom line is that we’ve trained for situations like this. Hard as it is, you need to put your personal feelings aside and pay attention. The CO said the Hawaii team is here in town and might deploy with us.”

“I heard. I just met Wyatt earlier.”

“This is a good thing. The more eyes we have on the plane, the more trained SEALs with us, the easier this mission will go. We’ll take those motherfuckers out and rescue the hostages. We’ll get your girl,” Ace stressed.

The men walked into the bullpen, seeing the Hawaii SEAL team already there with some of their teammates. Brief introductions were made, and then Slate got down to business.

“As everyone is aware, a plane flying from Manila to Seoul was hijacked at twelve hundred local time today. There are fifty Americans and 277 total souls onboard, including the pilot, co-pilot, and flight attendants. The total number of hijackers is unknown, although there are at least two armed men. One of the flight attendants got in an emergency call before communications were cut off.”

“What are their demands?” Ace asked, his gaze narrowing.

“The authorities in Seoul were unable to maintain contact with them. They were advised the plane had been hijacked and notified the FAA and other U.S. officials. The two men who hijacked the plane have ties to the Philippines-based extremist organization, the Abu Sayyaf Group or ASG. Historically, they’ve been linked to al-Qaida, although now have ties to ISIS. They’ve been known to participate in bombings and various kidnap-for-



ransom events.”

“Shit,” Havoc muttered. “Looks like they stepped up their game. Threatening to bomb an airliner full of passengers?”

“Intelligence analysts have been reviewing the passenger manifests,” Slate continued. “Two men have probable ties to the extremist group, and a third is currently being assessed.”

“The authorities just let them on the plane?” Mark asked in disbelief.

“How the hell did they get a bomb onboard?” Wyatt asked, exchanging a glance with Ace.

“Authorities are questioning the security screening workers in Manila. The likelihood is that someone on the ground was involved. Although the plane was heading toward Seoul, we’ve just received notice that it turned around midair and is likely heading back to the Philippines. I’ve received orders from the Pentagon to send in both SEAL teams for the rescue operation. You’ll fly directly into Manila. Ace’s team will take point once on the ground, with Wyatt’s providing full support.”

“Understood, sir,” Ace said.

“They’re attempting to regain contact and negotiate with the hijackers. You’ll be enroute as this is happening, and I will provide any relevant updates while you are on your way. If the situation is ongoing when you land, you’ll head to the airport to end the standoff.”

The CO clicked a button on the laptop, pulling up the schematics of the airplane. “Let’s discuss details.”

## Chapter 7

Havoc punched the seat in front of him, barely feeling the burn. The flight across the Pacific on the C-17 cargo plane was taking too fucking long. Hours had passed since they'd initially heard that Olivia's plane had been hijacked. The men had geared up after briefing with their commander, changed into their fatigues, and then boarded the aircraft. He was agitated and pissed off, hating every second that ticked by. Every second that kept her in danger.

"You need to chill out, buddy," Brian said, grabbing a seat near him. "The hijacked plane landed and is in a separate section of the airport. All flights in and out have been canceled. They've got nowhere to go."

"Except they could blow up the damn airplane," Havoc spit out.

"They won't," Brian said calmly.

Havoc glared at his friend. "We both know how quickly situations can change. If they feel trapped or in immediate danger, they might blow everyone to hell."

Brian looked over to where Ace and Wyatt were conferring, his eyes landing back on Havoc. "Regardless, you need to pull yourself together. Punching seats on the plane when you already injured yourself once isn't gaining any confidence in you from the other team. Sawyer assured his team leader you were cool, but he's over there talking to Ace right now."

"Fuck," Havoc muttered, scrubbing a hand over his jaw. "I'm pissed as hell that Olivia is caught up in this."

Brian nodded. "I know. We just rescued Madeline, remember? I might not have known her the way you do Olivia, but it burned me up that she was being held hostage."

"Sorry man. I know she went through hell and was in captivity too damn long."

"I'm not trying to compare the women, just to let you know that I understand."

You were cool and level-headed on that op, and you need to be now. Ace knows when the shit hits the fan you'll do your job, but we've got another SEAL team in the air with us."

"Got it," he muttered. "Have you heard any more about the hijackers?"

"Just that there's definitely a third. The National Bureau of Investigation is on site, which is basically the Philippines version of the FBI. Our agents stationed there have set up a command center at the airport. They're attempting to negotiate."

"Jesus," Havoc said. "I'm not sure what the hell they think they'll get away with. If they want cash or immunity from some crime, it's not like all the law enforcement on site will let them get away."

"They're dumb criminals," Brian agreed. "They're dangerous though."

Ace called everyone over, and the two teams convened in the middle of the aircraft. Havoc grabbed a seat by Rob, feeling a renewed sense of hope. The flight over was bullshit with the amount of time it was taking, but reviewing plans and strategy meant they were getting closer.

Wyatt's men grouped near him, with the two team leaders in the middle of the huddle.

"Our ETA in Manila is four hours," Ace said, looking between the two groups of SEALs. "It's been a long flight, but we can go over specifics as new intelligence comes in. The situation is fluid, as everyone is aware. The status could change in an instant, but we'll work with what we've got for now. I just received word from the commander that the hijackers are requesting thirty million U.S. dollars and a plane to fly them into Iraq."

"Iraq?" Rob scoffed. "Why the hell didn't they hijack a plane in the Middle East then?"

"It's a damn good question, one that analysts are posing theories for now. It could all be bullshit, and they're just stalling. One possible scenario is that the hijacking is a distraction for something bigger. The hijackers are loosely affiliated with ASG. While they hijacked an airplane, intelligence analysts have considered the possibility that ASG is preparing for another event in the area."

“A terrorist attack?” Havoc asked.

“Anything’s possible. It could be a distraction. While all eyes are on the airport, something bigger could go down. They’re reviewing recent chatter and intercepts from terror cells in the region to make sure nothing was missed. My understanding is that nothing appeared to be imminent. The hijacking itself came out of nowhere. There’s been no recent intelligence indicating that any plans for hijacking a civilian aircraft was in the works.”

“It was gutsy as hell if they didn’t fucking plan it,” Havoc muttered.

“It could’ve all been done the old-fashioned way—no electronic communications or phone calls. No Internet searches. To smuggle weapons on board, however, they had to have inside help at the airport,” Ace said.

“The authorities are going over the backgrounds of airport security now, and both the FBI and Manila’s own force are involved. They’re trying to narrow down who could’ve aided in smuggling knives and a bomb aboard the plane. Once we round them up, we’ll have access to additional information.”

“What possible attacks are imminent?” Wyatt asked. “Do we have any word on that?”

“There’s a large conference occurring in downtown Manila with guests from around the world. Aside from that, it’s just the usual stuff—sporting events, crowds at shopping malls, etc. The airport itself had a large number of people inside, but the plane isn’t anywhere near the gate or terminal. The potential victims are the passengers onboard the aircraft.”

Havoc clenched his fist. Yes, every life was valuable and important, but it killed him to know that O was onboard. “It’s hard to believe they’d really expect someone to fly them from the Philippines to the Middle East,” he said.

Ace lifted a shoulder. “Maybe that part is bogus to buy some time. Thirty million isn’t that much for the government to pay either.”

“Where do they want the money?” Havoc asked.

“Deposited into offshore accounts.”

He glanced at his teammates’ faces as Ace continued talking. Every one of them looked grim yet determined. A large number of people in an enclosed space was a huge security risk for any rescue mission. One wrong move, and

the entire plane could be blown up. One panicked person, and the entire op could go to hell. It was horrifying to imagine what would happen to so many innocent lives.

And Olivia?

He couldn't even think about her any more right now. He had to focus on the mission in a clinical way or he'd never get through it. They trained to operate seamlessly as a team, eliminate the threat, and rescue civilians, if necessary. That's what he'd goddamn do. If his hellcat was among them, so be it. He wouldn't be able to survive this—physically or mentally—if he let his mind wander. All his focus had to be on the operation itself—the logistics, the execution of their plan, the end game. He was a highly-trained operator about to move in on one of the riskiest missions they'd encountered. Hundreds of lives were at stake.

And when it was over?

He'd talk to O then. Havoc would let her know he wasn't just screwing around with the flirting and teasing. He cared about her and hated even considering he wouldn't hear her laughter or see her smile again. Feel her soft skin beneath his fingers.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

"I looked over the schematics of the plane," Wyatt said, and Havoc's mind snapped back into focus. "There are two emergency exits on each side, at the middle and back of the aircraft. There are two aisles, which will expedite moving people out. The seating arrangement is three seats, four, and then three again. The exit door by the cockpit is too close to where the hijackers are to assume that will be in play, unless the tangos are eliminated."

"Even a smooth evacuation will take time we don't necessarily have," Ace said. "Our best bet is to neutralize the threat and take out the three hijackers. We don't know where the bomb is, however. If they see us coming, they can set it off in an instant."

"So how the hell are we supposed to find it? Are we breaching the aircraft with bomb-sniffing dogs?"

"I don't think they'll hide the bomb. They'll have it with them to detonate it quickly. It's a full plane, so it's not like they could easily move around and

stash it somewhere.”

“Yeah, have you ever been on those commercial flights?” Mark asked. “All the damn overhead bins are full. People are packed in like sardines.”

“Agreed,” Ace said. “And I don’t think they had the time or capability to set up a way to detonate it remotely. This was a half-baked plan that came to fruition at the last minute. These guys were barely on anyone’s radar before. No one hijacks a plane in the damn Pacific and demands to fly around the world. They’re not masterminds of some terror cell. Either their ideology is fucked up enough that they’re providing a distraction while something else goes down, or they’re just dumb as shit.”

“But we still need to locate the bomb as quickly as possible,” Rob said.

“One possibility is to attempt to contact the passengers for an update.”

“Olivia,” Havoc said.

Ace nodded. “It’s unlikely she’ll be able to use her cell phone, but with technology these days, you just never know. If they didn’t jam the signal or confiscate electronics, someone might have their phone on them.”

“Has the Bureau tried that yet?” Rob asked.

“I don’t know,” Ace admitted. “It’d be a long shot.”

“Can we listen in over the radios?” Mark asked.

“It’s my understanding that air traffic control is no longer in contact with the flight attendants. We believe they were restrained or otherwise incapacitated.”

“Fuck,” Havoc muttered.

“The bottom line is there’s not an open radio. The hijackers made contact to state their demands, but that’s been it. They’re not open to ongoing negotiations with authorities. We’re mostly sitting in the dark as far as the location of the hijackers on board, the location of the bomb, and any other potential issues.”

“Do we know the condition of the pilots?” Brian asked.

“Negative.”

“I looked at the manifest,” Wyatt said. “One of the men is former military.

Another is a retired police officer.”

“That’s good. We can use all the help we can get to evacuate the hostages. People are going to be panicking. This won’t be an orderly evacuation, as much as that would help to expedite things.”

“We’ll get everyone out,” Havoc said, his pulse pounding with anger. He felt sharper and more alert the closer they got to the Philippines. Whereas he’d been helpless in San Diego, sitting on his ass while Olivia was in danger, they were on their way. He’d get to his girl.

“We’ll need eyes on the outside of the bird,” Ace continued. “The Bureau has agents on the ground, but they aren’t trained in hostage rescue in the same manner we are. We’ll have snipers set up at various vantage points to have eyes on all exit points. We’ll need several men on the ground strictly to assist in evacuating passengers, stationed by the doors.”

“And breaching the aircraft?” Wyatt said, raising his eyebrows.

“We’ve got several options—brute force, which might not serve us well if they’ve got a live bomb. We can wait until nightfall and attempt to infiltrate, assuming the situation remains stable. Our other option is to sneak on, hidden in plain sight. At some point, they’re going to need food and water replenished. Perhaps they’ll require other necessities. Several of us can pose as airport workers in order to board the aircraft.”

The men nodded. “Unless we can confirm the bomb is bogus, that might be our best bet,” Wyatt agreed. “We can sure as shit breach the plane, but at what cost? They blow the thing up and it’s over. And waiting around isn’t ideal either. It’ll be harder to evacuate everyone at night.”

“Let’s talk strategy then. Assuming the situation doesn’t change drastically before we land, we’ll get several men on board the aircraft via subterfuge. This is what I’m thinking....”

## Chapter 8

*Olivia took a bite of her sushi, smiling. “Oh my God, this is to die for. We are definitely coming back here again soon.”*

*Havoc shifted beside her, his woodsy scent filling the air between them. She tried not to smile as he scowled at his plate. “You call this food, woman?” he joked, looking over at Olivia. “Where’s the rest of it?”*

*“What are you talking about? It’s amazing,” Olivia scoffed, lightly swatting at his arm. “You are so basic.” She tried to ignore the bundle of muscles beneath her fingertips as she touched him. The skin on his veined forearm was so warm, it felt like he could burn her from within. Or maybe she was just overheating from sitting beside him. The man was a perfect display of masculinity—hard muscles, dark stubble across his jaw, and those deep brown eyes that saw right through her. If she shifted slightly, their bare arms would be touching. Skin on skin. She could already feel the heat emanating from his large frame and tried not to shift even closer, soaking in some of that warmth. The way Owen was so much bigger than her was intriguing. Alluring. And the way he always teased her with humor in his eyes made warmth flood through her entire body. Not that she’d ever admit as much to him.*

*“Yep. Give me a burger and fries any day of the week. Plus twice on Sundays,” he added with a wink.*

*She rolled her eyes, trying not to laugh. “I think it’s amazing, and I would enjoy it twice on Sundays, thank you very much.” Havoc nearly choked on the beer he was taking a swig of as Olivia smirked. It gave her a little thrill to shock him sometimes. While she didn’t doubt that he’d be an amazing lover, she also didn’t want to get burned for the thrill of one night with the man. It was getting harder and harder to find reasons to stay away from Owen though. “Besides, you’re the one who invited yourself along just to enjoy the pleasure of my company,” Olivia continued, smiling. “Suck it up, buttercup.” He eyed her, those dark eyes smoldering, as the others at the table began*



*laughing. If anything, Havoc looked like he wanted to make a meal of her. His gaze landed on her lips, then dropped to her breasts. Her nipples had pebbled against her thin blouse, and she could tell he noticed. He shifted closer, his leg pressing against hers beneath the table. She had on a mini-skirt, and Havoc was wearing cargo shorts. The hair on his leg tickled her bare skin. She swallowed, trying not to gasp at the feel of his muscled thigh pressing against hers as his gaze raked over her.*

*He smirked, clearly enjoying her reaction, as he ducked to whisper in her ear. “I would enjoy giving you pleasure, hellcat. My name would sound good on your lips.”*

*“You’re awfully confident,” she tossed back.*

*His large hand landed on her bare thigh and squeezed, sending shocks of electricity straight to her core. “Yep, and for good reason.”*

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“Attention passengers, this is your new captain,” one of the hijackers said in accented English over the loudspeaker. Olivia’s head whipped from the window toward the front of the plane, the announcement shocking her out of her daydream. They’d been sitting on the tarmac for several hours in a weird state of limbo, so close to the freedom she could see through the glass and yet also so far away. When they’d landed, the hijackers had announced they’d blow up the entire airplane if anyone tried to escape. One of them stood watch at the front, and she didn’t doubt it was true. He was holding the briefcase with the bomb inside, ready to detonate it.

They seemed to be far away from the airport terminal. They’d landed on the runway and never taxied closer to the gate.

She closed her eyes for a moment, trying to stay calm and focused. It was frustrating being confined to her seat, unable to stretch her body and move about as she wanted. At the moment, she was hot, tired, thirsty, and wished for nothing more than to get off the damn airplane. When she’d been looking outside, she could see emergency vehicles in the distance—firetrucks and ambulances, police cars, and several unmarked vehicles. Authorities were

milling about from afar. No one had gotten close to the airplane, and she knew the hijackers had demanded that everyone keep away.

“Everyone shut your windows,” the hijacker announced. “Pull the shades closed. Now!”

Frowning, she did as they asked, sliding the little plastic shade shut. It was somewhat amazing they’d sat here this long without them making any such demands. It would eventually get darker, however, and with the lights on in the plane’s cabin, the authorities would be able to see in. Snipers could shoot out the hijackers, and they likely realized that. Having the windows shut was one more way the hijackers were now working against them. They’d confiscated electronics hours ago. She’d debated handing over her phone, but what was she supposed to do? One man had refused, and they’d stabbed him right in front of everyone. He’d bled out, his body dragged to the back of the plane. Clearly, they didn’t believe anyone traveling in this day and age didn’t have a phone on them.

“We will remain here on the tarmac until our demands are met!” the hijacker yelled angrily over the intercom. “They try to negotiate with us? No. We are the ones in charge here. No one is leaving this airplane until every single demand of ours is met.”

She frowned, worrying that they seemed to be coming a little more unhinged as time passed. Not that any clear-thinking, rational person would hijack a plane. They’d gotten angrier as the hours had ticked by though. More violent. Part of her wondered if the bomb was actually real. A plane full of passengers could take on three men armed with knives. They could take over the plane and fight for their freedom. Maybe it was just wishful thinking, because blowing up the plane wasn’t a chance they could take. She clenched her fists, getting frustrated.

“You look pissed off,” the woman next to her said.

“I am. We’ve been sitting here for hours. This is bullshit. At first, I was scared, but now I’m just angry. No one is just going to hand these guys money or a plane or whatever the hell it is they want. We’re stuck here for nothing and might get blown up to top off this shitty day.”

“They’re getting angry, too,” the woman said, nodding toward the front of the

plane. “Look how he’s pacing. I hope he doesn’t accidentally drop the damn bomb.” Olivia shuddered, realizing the woman was right. The hijacker was agitated, rage clear across his face. Whatever they wanted hadn’t happened yet. He disappeared back toward the cockpit, and Olivia felt herself breathe a small sigh of relief.

They were safe again—for now.

The woman next to her absentmindedly rubbed her wedding ring. “My husband was supposed to meet me in Seoul,” she said.

“Oh yeah?”

“He was traveling on business for several weeks. I flew from Seattle to Manila. He was going to show me around Seoul, and then we’d planned to take a two-week vacation around Asia. It was a dream vacation we’d waited years for.”

“I’m sorry,” Olivia said gently.

“Are you married?” the woman asked.

“Nope,” she said, popping the “p” sound at the end.

“That sounds like a story.”

“It is and it isn’t,” Olivia said. “My friends are all in serious relationships. One of them is engaged with a baby on the way. And me? I don’t know. There is this one guy—Owen—and he both annoys the hell out of me and makes me want him more than I’ve ever wanted another man. It’s complicated.”

The woman smiled. “He’s a friend?”

“Yeah. We have the same group of friends, so we’re always together. A couple since we’re the only ones without a boyfriend or girlfriend, but not really. I mean, he’s interested, but I keep turning him down. I just don’t want to get hurt.”

“Does he date other women?” she asked.

“Well, no. I mean he used to, but ever since we met, we’re mostly together at all our group things. We drive everyone else crazy by arguing so much.”

She nodded knowingly. “Well, I’m happily married, but take it from someone

with years of experience. If he wasn't interested in you—seriously interested—he'd have moved on and found someone else.”

“Huh. I guess I never thought of it that way.”

A few people gasped, and as Olivia looked back, she saw that a woman near the back of the plane had fainted. “She needs help! Please!” another lady shouted.

One of the hijackers angrily stormed down the aisle, yelling at everyone to remain in their seats as he moved toward the woman who'd slumped over. Olivia studied him as he went by—dark, angry eyes, full beard. He had a tiny scar near his temple, lighter than the rest of his skin. His gaze swung toward her, and she slunk back. One thing she didn't need was to draw any unwanted attention to herself.

“Tell her to wake up!” he yelled.

“She's not sleeping. She fainted,” a man explained. The hijacker smacked him across the face, causing the others around them to gasp.

Callie, the blonde woman she'd met earlier, looked back. “Please, just let her off the plane. She needs medical attention.”

The man's angry gaze swiveled to her, and he stormed in her direction. “You. You're coming with me.”

“What? No,” she said, shrinking back.

He held up the knife he was wielding. “Get the hell up and come with me to the cockpit. I'll show you what to do with that mouth of yours.” She gasped, tears smarting her eyes, and he reached over and yanked her up from her seat. Olivia watched in horror as the rest of the passengers did nothing. Callie was shaking as the man dragged her to the front. The woman with a medical emergency in the back was already forgotten.

“Holy shit,” she whispered.

One man finally stood up, shouting to leave Callie alone. A hijacker rushed from the front of the plane, yelling at him to kneel down. Olivia closed her eyes and then gasped as a single gunshot sounded. The people sitting around him screamed, and Callie was full on sobbing as they dragged her all the way to the front of the airplane.

“Where’d they get a gun?” Olivia asked quietly, shock washing over her.

“Maybe the pilot had one in the cockpit.”

“Where’s the pilot then?” she asked, afraid of the answer.

She shivered as they made another announcement over the loudspeakers.

“This woman is going to tell them exactly what’s happening on this plane,” the hijacker announced. Olivia could hear Callie crying over the intercom.

“We are contacting the authorities outside and giving them a deadline. They have two hours to meet our demands. If not, I will blow up this entire airplane with every single person inside.”

## Chapter 9

*Havoc raised his eyebrows at the petite, Asian spitfire who'd shown up at the potential crime scene. Her friend Addison had been kidnapped, and rather than sitting aside like a good girl and letting Ace, Havoc, and their teammates find her, she'd somehow gotten the address to the modeling agency and driven here herself.*

*The police were talking with another victim, and he crossed his arms as he looked down at the gorgeous, outspoken woman, who'd stormed into the place demanding answers like a bat out of hell.*

*"You're friends with Ace?" she asked, flicking her jet-black hair over her shoulder. His gaze traveled over her, from her dark, narrowed eyes; delicate facial features; slender neck; and all the way down that trimmed, toned body to the strappy sandals she had on. She was pretty as hell with a mouth on her, and he had to admit he enjoyed the combination.*

*"I am. How the hell did you end up here?" he asked, once again meeting her fiery gaze.*

*"I looked up Zack's address. You think I'd just sit around while my best friend is in danger? Hell no, G.I. Joe."*

*Havoc smirked. "It's Havoc. And who might I have the pleasure in speaking with?" he asked sarcastically.*

*"Havoc? Nuh-uh. What's your real name?"*

*"Owen," he said, holding out his hand like they were meeting for a casual coffee date, not in the middle of a kidnapping situation and police investigation.*

*"Olivia," she replied, slipping her slender hand into his. He squeezed it gently, not wanting to hurt her, and tried to ignore that electric shock that jolted through him at her touch. Her light, floral scent was intoxicating. As was the way her small hand fit in his.*

*"Olivia, I like it," he said, not releasing her.*

*“Do you like your balls? Because I’m about ready to bust them if you don’t tell me exactly what’s going on.”*

*He chuckled, holding her hand a moment longer before he reluctantly let go. The fire in her eyes was intriguing, and the impatient way she was tapping her foot was amusing as hell. She wanted answers and clearly wasn’t intimidated in the least by his size. He cleared his throat. “I appreciate that you’re worried about your friend, but you’ve got to let the big boys do their job.”*

*“Dick,” she muttered.*

*“You’re quite a little hellcat,” he said with a grin.*

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“ETA is thirty minutes,” came the pilot’s voice over their headsets. “We’ll be landing at twenty hundred local time. After the fourteen-hour flight and crossing the international date line, it will be Monday night in Manila.” Havoc looked up from the airplane schematics he’d been studying earlier. He wanted to know every in and out of that airplane, from the cargo hold to the cockpit to the damn lavatories. Nothing was a minor detail. Not when Olivia’s life was at stake.

His mind had drifted at one point, recalling the day they’d first met. It was crazy that when Ace’s new girl had been kidnapped, that had been what brought O into his life. He was starting to regret every second he hadn’t told her that he cared for her. Their relationship, friendship, whatever was playful and fun. They flirted. He teased her about getting her into bed. Somewhere along the way, they’d become more than simply friends though.

He was supposed to pick her up from the airport next week in San Diego, not fucking storm an airplane she was on that had been hijacked.

Havoc scrubbed a hand over the short stubble on his face, looking at the diagram of the airplane again. O was seated in 27A, not that she was guaranteed to still be in that exact spot. It was a start though. When they boarded that damn plane, nothing would stop him from getting to her.

“Roger,” Ace replied to the pilot. “Everybody else, listen up. We’ll be landing at a military base outside Manila, and the Philippine officials will be escorting us straight to the airport. An FBI agent will be there to brief us as well.”

“Do we have a new SITREP?” Havoc ground out.

“Roger. The latest SITREP indicates the hijackers have extended the deadline for their demands once more. They’ve shut all the shades on the airplane. We’ve no longer got eyes on what’s happening inside. We’ll be moving in blind. A female hostage spoke briefly with negotiators a short time ago. According to the report, she was nearly hysterical and informed the authorities that several passengers and one flight attendant have been killed.”

“Fuck,” Havoc muttered.

Brian looked at him from across the aisle, his face unreadable.

“Who’s the hostage?” Wyatt asked, crossing the C-17 over towards Ace. He glanced down at the tablet in Ace’s hands, looking at the report.

“Her name is Callie Spencer, and she’s an American. That’s all the info on her included in the SITREP. Her name should be on the passenger manifest. It’s not believed that she was with them willingly. The woman was panicking, sobbing as she spoke with the FBI hostage negotiators.”

“Damn it all to hell,” Wyatt muttered, his gaze darkening.

Havoc exchanged a glance with Brian. No one liked to imagine what would happen to any women or children on board. If this woman was alone with the hijackers, there was no telling if she’d been attacked, sexually or otherwise. It burned Havoc’s gut to know those bastards had their hands on any woman. He knew Olivia would fight like hell if they touched her, but she was small. She could easily be overpowered by a man wielding a knife.

“The Bureau is on board with our plan to pose as airport workers,” Ace said over the headsets. “It’s going to be a problem that we’re not Filipino, but we’ll make do. Hopefully we can cover our faces enough that they don’t question it. Some of the airport staff is still in facemasks, so it’s not out of the realm of possibility that we show up in them as well. The cover of night will help until we board the airplane. Then the shit hits the fan.”



“I’m going onboard,” Havoc said.

“I’m taking point on this, but yes, you’ll be on the aircraft. Wyatt’s team is going to be providing cover and monitoring the exits. He’ll determine who goes where. Havoc, Trigger, and I will be the first to board the plane. If they ask us to leave the supplies, we’ll move in by force. Once I give the go ahead, the others will rush the plane. We’ll take out the tangos and then move forward with evacuating all of the passengers and flight crew.”

“Roger that,” Trigger said.

“I don’t like that the passengers have been held hostage this long, but it works in our favor as far as boarding the plane with additional supplies, food, and water. The negotiators are already requesting that airport personnel be allowed access to deliver things. We’ll get on the ground and get the hell over there.”

“ETA is fifteen minutes,” the pilot announced.

“Buckle up, boys,” Ace said. “We’re about to move in and end this clusterfuck. Anyone have any questions before we land?”

“No.”

“Negative.”

“Understood, Ace.”

“My team knows what we need to do,” Wyatt confirmed.

Havoc let out a breath, feeling adrenaline course through him. They were about to land and would head straight to the airport. They’d get her.

“Then let’s get these terrorist motherfuckers and rescue all those innocent people,” Ace said.

“Hoorah!”

## Chapter 10

“What happened?” Olivia whispered, leaning toward her seatmate.

“They extended the deadline again,” the woman beside her said. “I’ll give whoever is negotiating with them this—they’re good. I thought for sure it was over a long time ago when they insisted their demands be met within two hours.”

Olivia rubbed her arms, feeling chilled. While it had been hot sitting on the tarmac, the plane had cooled down somewhat when the sun set. Or maybe it was just fear washing over her. No one had been allowed food or water, and there were children crying as frazzled parents tried to soothe them.

“Shut that damn kid up!” one of the hijackers yelled, storming down the aisle.

“Just let them leave!” a man yelled. “Let the children off this plane!”

The hijacker whipped around, looking to see who’d spoken. Olivia stilled, realizing it was the man with the small scar. He seemed to be the ringleader of the three, as far as she could tell. He was also the one that kept coming out of the cockpit. She wished she’d paid closer attention to the others. If they somehow got away, she’d want to provide detailed descriptions to the police.

He moved down the aisle, his dark eyes finding her again. His gaze landed on her seat number. Shit. Had she done something to draw attention to herself? While she was normally outspoken, being taken hostage had forced her to sit down and shut up.

He moved on, his assessing gaze watching the other passengers. He wasn’t very tall, maybe five foot eight or so. He was average sized. Dark clothes, and she noticed the sleeve of his dress shirt peek out from beneath his jacket. Cufflinks. Did he always dress up for a hijacking? Anger rolled off him, and he huffed away, yelling at someone else.

The longer this dragged on, the less likely it seemed that they’d escape. It was the middle of the night now, and the flight had originally taken off yesterday morning. She’d briefly fallen asleep earlier, exhaustion overtaking

her, but it was fitful and restless. Her stomach rumbled, but aside from some pretzels she'd snuck out of her bag, she hadn't eaten. The passengers had shifted slightly with the passing hours, some of them sleeping, some softly crying. She felt for the parents that had young kids with them.

She rubbed her temples, wondering what it would even feel like to have a good night's sleep again. She'd dreamed that she was back home earlier, arguing with Havoc. It wasn't the sexy banter they usually exchanged, either. He'd been mad at her, furious about something. She didn't even recall the details, because then she'd woken up, unsettled and upset.

He had to know about the hijacking. Havoc and his SEAL team monitored events around the world. They'd rescued Madeline, hadn't they? Would he realize the plane she was on was the one that had been hijacked? He'd be pissed as hell, no doubt. Havoc was the type of man who'd want to rescue someone he knew, especially her. He might joke about wanting her, but she couldn't deny the protective way he watched over her sometimes. Even when they playfully teased one another, he wanted her safe. It felt good. What she wouldn't give to have him here beside her now.

"Attention passengers, this is your captain," one of the hijackers announced. "I've agreed to let the airport staff provide food and water as a gesture of my goodwill. We will be opening the door to the aircraft shortly. If anyone moves or attempts to escape during this delivery, you will be shot. If more than one person rises from their seat, I will detonate the bomb, killing everyone on board instantly."

Another man moved through the cabin, holding up a Glock. A few people gasped around them, and then he was moving back up the aisle, yelling something in another language. The hijackers almost appeared to be arguing with one another, and Olivia was worried that the situation was beginning to unravel.

"How many bullets do you think are in that thing?" the woman next to Olivia asked.

She eyed her seatmate. "I'd guess 15 rounds, although I can't tell what type of Glock that is. It could be more."

"Quiet!" the man holding the gun yelled, and she stilled. He hadn't realized it

was her talking, but she also didn't want anyone else to get in trouble or be harmed because of her. It was weird that they were allowing airport staff to deliver food and water, but maybe the authorities said they needed more time to meet his demands. They were stalling. Biding their time. Didn't they do that in movies? Let the hijackers think they were in control while the negotiators got everything lined up for them, and then the good guys swooped in?

This wasn't a damn movie. No one was coming to their rescue anytime soon. They weren't sitting on the tarmac at LAX with countless U.S. agencies ready to swoop in. They weren't filming the next blockbuster for the big screen. They were just regular people caught on a flight from hell. Her own friends had suffered nightmares themselves. Madeline had been held hostage in the Middle East. Addison had been kidnapped.

Olivia let out a shaky breath. She rubbed her arms again, feeling unexplainably nervous. She had the weirdest sense that something big was coming. Something was going to happen. She could only hope that it wasn't the end. If those crazed men detonated the bomb, she didn't think any of them stood a chance.

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Havoc jumped out of the military vehicle alongside his teammates and the Hawaii team, adrenaline pumping through him. The sight outside the airport terminal was unnerving. Emergency vehicles were everywhere, staged to rush to the runway—firetrucks, ambulances, police cars, airport vehicles. The front of the airport had hundreds of people still milling about, evacuated and waiting. No doubt the main terminal was packed to the brim, with people moved as far away from the hijacked plane as possible. There had been police barricades at the entrance and exit ramps on the drive in, preventing unauthorized people from entering airport grounds. All planes had been grounded, and Havoc wasn't sure what airport officials planned to do with the thousands of people stranded here.

He moved through the crowd of emergency personnel, seeing the FBI

command center set up twenty yards away. Planes at the nearby gates sat empty. A vehicle filled with suitcases sat to the side, abandoned. Regular operations at the airport had completely ceased.

It was the one lone plane in the distance that sucked the air right out of him. Olivia.

The hijacked plane sat alone on the farthest runway. Although lights were on in the cockpit, the cabin was dark. The area around it was still. Bile rose in the back of his throat. Was she still alive? Was she hurt?

Ace cocked his head to the side. "Let's go meet with the hostage negotiator. They know we're coming." The men hustled after him, Havoc's gaze dark as he eyed the people standing around. It fucking killed him to be so close to Olivia and not charge straight in there. They needed to execute their plan perfectly, however, with no detail overlooked. With every minute that ticked by, they were getting closer to moving in.

A man in an FBI jacket crossed toward them when they reached the command center, shaking Ace's hand. "Our negotiator is firming up the details now," he said, nodding toward a man on the phone. "They've agreed to let airport staff deliver water and food to the hostages. We've got vehicles and equipment standing by."

"We'll have one team on the ground aiding in the evacuation," Ace said. "My team will be breaching the plane. Two of us will wheel the cart to the plane's door, with one man posing as the driver when we head out on the runway. The rest of my guys will be concealed, ready to move in."

"We've got airport ground crew jackets you can put on over your uniforms and body armor," the FBI agent said. "The helmets will need to go."

Ace looked at the team. "We'll stash our rifles and helmets in the food and beverage carts. We've got our earpieces for communication. Other weapons can remain on our person."

Havoc grunted.

The hostage negotiator ended the call and walked toward them, his face grim. "We're a go. The leader of the hijackers claims that with one wrong move, and he'll blow up the entire airplane. We've promised that his money and

another plane are coming. He wants cash, which makes the delay more plausible.”

“Fucking assholes,” Havoc bit out.

An airport truck pulled up with several food and beverage carts loaded on the back. One of the workers jumped off, hustling toward them. “We’ll need the hydraulic lift to get these up to the plane door.”

The FBI Agent in charge nodded, clearly having already discussed details with the ground crew. “Just show us what to do,” Ace said smoothly.

“I can, but it might go easier if I operate the lift,” the worker said. “It’s tricky if you haven’t done it before, and we’ll need to align it perfectly with the plane’s door.”

“And we don’t want to tip off the hijackers,” Ace muttered. “You’d be putting your life at risk to go out there.”

“He’s volunteered willingly and been cleared to participate,” the FBI agent said.

“I understand,” the worker assured the SEALs. “I’ll be on the ground operating the machine. If something happens, it happens. I can’t stomach doing nothing while all those innocent people are stuck on the airplane. You guys are doing the real work.”

The hostage negotiator’s phone rang, and he bit out a curse as he looked at the screen. He answered, listening for a moment. “I understand your concern. They’re on their way right now. ETA is five minutes.” He hung up, eyeing Ace. “The hijackers are getting jumpy that it’s taking so long. They threatened to call off the entire thing. If the details have been settled, let’s roll.”

The men all began moving, worry churning through Havoc’s gut. They’d reviewed the airplane’s schematics on the long flight over and discussed alternate scenarios if things went south. They had backup plans in place if something happened during the supply delivery. They’d looked over the passenger list but had no idea what condition they’d be in or if everyone was still alive.

Every minute counted in quickly ending the standoff, and they were about to

do exactly that.

Havoc slipped a ground crew jacket over his shoulders, setting his rifle on the beverage cart. The men still each carried their sidearm and a K-Bar knife. Shit. He was a lethal force just using his bare hands. Not that it would help much if the hijackers detonated the bomb and blew everyone into a million pieces. Rescue crews were standing by, ready to put out a blaze if it came to that.

Ace was grabbing a jacket as well, sliding off his helmet. Havoc's gaze shifted to see Wyatt discussing last-minute strategy with his men. They'd have to hoof it over to the far runway, because any unnecessary vehicles coming that way would cause alarm. He could see the FBI agents and their Philippine counterparts preparing as well. If the hijackers surrendered, unlikely as that was, they'd be arrested.

Minutes later, they were boarding the truck. It felt weird to be entering a hostage standoff without his helmet, but they couldn't exactly sneak in with them on. Ace and Havoc would be the two men wheeling the supplies, but under the cover of night, Trigger would be able to hide behind the carts. Brian was remaining in the truck, posing as the driver. Rob and Mark would remain on the ground, ready to breach the aircraft at Ace's command.

The dark night whipped by them as they drove along the runway. Havoc's gaze slid back to the lights at the airport, the people, the vehicles and commotion. They were heading to the plane, where the passengers were all sitting ducks, forced to remain onboard an aircraft with a bomb. He strained to see any movement around the airplane, but it was quiet. Calm. Almost too much so.

"We'll get her," Ace said, his hardened gaze meeting Havoc's. "There's no way we're leaving this airport without Olivia."

## Chapter 11

Olivia stilled as she heard trucks outside the aircraft, presumably pushing stairs or equipment to the door. The plane itself hadn't moved, so they weren't returning to the gate. It made sense that the airport authorities wanted to keep their plane as far away from the terminal as possible. That didn't make her feel any better though. They were sitting in an enclosed space with a few madmen who had a bomb.

She was itching to lift the plastic shade covering her window, to see for herself what was happening. It was dark outside, but there were some lights on the runway and many more at the airport itself. The hijackers had turned the lights off inside the cabin, giving the entire thing a more terrifying feel. The passengers wouldn't even see if they were detonating the bomb. Her life could be over in an instant.

The inside of the plane was starting to smell stale, the scents of sweat and urine filling the air. No one had been allowed to use the lavatories. It was gross and uncomfortable sitting in the same seat she'd been in for hours. She was thankful she hadn't drunk too much water, but at some point, she'd need liquids to survive, just like everyone else onboard.

A louder whirring noise sounded, like something had connected to the door of the aircraft.

This was really happening.

For the first time in however many hours, someone other than the hijackers and passengers would be here. Whoever showed up to deliver their supplies wouldn't have a good look at what was going on inside the plane, however, with the cabin basically dark. Would the hijackers actually pass out water to the passengers or was this just a ruse to buy time?

She heard the armed men speaking in a foreign language. Arabic? Farsi? They were arguing again, seemingly whether or not to go through with opening the door. She couldn't understand a word, but they seemed agitated, in disagreement over how to proceed.



“Oh my God,” Olivia’s seatmate whispered. “Someone’s really outside.”

Time seemed to stand still, the moment before outsiders were let onboard. Then again, maybe they’d just push the carts on. A baby was crying a few rows back from her, the mother trying to hush the child. She wished she could see what was happening. The unknown was killing her. She couldn’t even explain it, just had the sense that something big was coming.

There was a pause as the men stopped arguing, and then her breath caught as the door to the plane opened. She was far enough back that she couldn’t feel the air from outside, but she heard low voices. Something was being pushed onboard, rattling. A cart with supplies?

The whirring sound from outside was back, something mechanical.

There seemed to be some confusion, with one of the hijackers saying, “No. Leave it there. No.”

In the next instant, it was like all hell had broken loose. There was shouting and thumps of men fighting and then several shots fired in the dark. People began screaming, and a man yelled from the front of the aircraft. The passengers around her began to jump up, panicking and yelling. Bright lights from somewhere outside shown on the plane, even through the plastic shades they’d pulled. Olivia gasped, looking around the darkened cabin in a panic. Who had been shot? The airport workers? The hijackers?

She pushed her shade up, surprised at the number of vehicles suddenly racing toward the plane.

“Open the emergency exits!” a man shouted.

There was more fighting from the front of the plane and men yelling. Voices that sounded American. Suddenly, everyone was pushing and shoving. Olivia stood and pressed back against the window, terrified.

“Get off the plane! Hurry!” a woman shouted.

“Oh my God. We have to get out of here,” her seatmate said, sounding shell-shocked.

“Everybody out! Go! Go! Go!” an authoritative voice boomed from the back.

She had no idea what was happening but threw her hand over her eyes as the lights suddenly came on in the cabin. It was complete chaos, with people

pushing past one another, children crying, and some people still trying to grab their luggage in the melee.

“Leave everything!” a passenger screamed, turning red in the face. “Let’s get the hell off this airplane! Leave your damn suitcase!”

“Attention passengers,” a voice came over the intercom.

Olivia didn’t even hear the rest of the garbled message. She heard more grunts and thumping coming from somewhere. Her jaw dropped as several men dressed in camo, carrying weapons, appeared at the back of the airplane, the emergency exits open. “Drop everything and quickly evacuate!” one of the men shouted. “Hurry! Hustle along!” The emergency slides were deployed from the exit nearest her, and people in the other aisle of the aircraft were already jumping out of the airplane and sliding down. People were sobbing and shouting, and her heart was racing. The woman beside her had somehow gotten out, but Olivia was stuck in place by the people pushing around her. Someone was yelling orders from the front, too, but it was hard to hear everything in the chaos.

“My baby! My baby!”

More people shoved their way past, desperate to escape.

She eventually got into the aisle and was being pushed forward by other people. Someone elbowed her in the head, and she winced. A man in fatigues at the front of the airplane was barking orders into his headset. For the briefest moment, she thought his tall stature and broad shoulders reminded her of Ace. That was impossible though, because he was in California, and she only saw his back before he disappeared.

“Affirmative,” a muscular man in fatigues at the middle exit said into his mouthpiece as she was shoved forward. “The bomb is off the plane. Repeat. The bomb is off the plane. Roger. We don’t know if other explosives are hidden onboard. Over.”

Her jaw dropped as she saw the American flag on his uniform and the name Miller stitched on the front. Was he a SEAL? Some other type of Special Forces soldier? She had no idea what U.S. military members were stationed nearby here in Asia. The U.S. didn’t have any bases in the Philippines as far as she knew.

Callie was a few people in front of her, crying, and the soldier palmed her shoulder gently as he eased her forward. She was almost as tall as him, but he still looked much bigger than her because of his broad shoulders and chest. “It’s okay, ma’am,” he said gruffly. She looked at him tearfully, and he seemed to focus on her face for a moment, his gaze tracking to one of her arms. “I’ll help you,” he said, gripping her waist and lifting her toward the slide. Olivia realized her arm was bent at a strange angle, broken. Anger coursed through her at the fact that those evil men would dare to even touch her new friend. Had they actually broken her arm? Was she hurt elsewhere? Olivia’s stomach roiled.

The soldier turned back around, directing the other passengers to exit the plane. “Wyatt! Get them out!” another uniformed soldier shouted from the front, and Wyatt nodded, speaking into his mic to give another update.

Two men began shoving one another, and Olivia fell to the side as other people yelled at them to stop. She stumbled, and suddenly strong arms wrapped around her, breaking her fall. She gasped, tensing in the man’s hold.

“This doesn’t look like Beijing, hellcat.”

“Owen,” she stuttered, shock coursing through her as he helped steady her, his strong, sure hands helping her to stand. She whipped around to face him, promptly bursting into tears as her gaze tracked over his chiseled jaw and met his deep brown eyes.

“Hey, I got you,” he soothed, lifting her up into his arms. Her legs wrapped around his waist, her arms around his shoulders, and she clung to him, desperate, burying her face in his neck, above his Kevlar vest. He still smelled slightly woody, with a hint of something else musky and male. Owen’s strong arms tightened around her. Other people were pushing past them, and he stepped into a row of empty seats for a moment, just holding her. “I’ve got you,” he said more firmly, but she heard the catch in his voice. Felt his body shudder with relief. One gloved hand slid over her head. “Are you hurt?” he asked, his voice gruff.

“I’m fine. I’m fine.”

“Let’s get you off this damn airplane.”

He turned, moving toward the closest exit, still holding Olivia like she

weighed nothing. People were still pushing and shoving in desperation, and Havoc yelled at them to calm down. She looked up, shock coursing through her as she stared into his dark eyes. He looked a little frazzled himself, his usually confident demeanor shaken up.

Was he upset because she was caught in the middle of this?

“What are you even doing here?” she asked.

“Just my job, O. In case I never told you before, I’m a Navy SEAL.” His lips quirked, but she could sense the emotion beneath his teasing façade.

“Dick,” she muttered, but tears were streaming down her cheeks. She smiled, dancing between happy and sad and relieved as hell.

“Don’t cry,” he ordered, his face softening. “I’m going to put you down. The guys will help you get away from the aircraft. I’ll be out there soon enough to make sure you’re really okay.” He gently set her down but didn’t release her, his large body hovering over hers.

“Owen.”

One large hand cupped the back of her head, and then he kissed her, hard. She was too shocked to kiss him back, too shaken with everything that had happened. The scruff of his jaw, the fullness of his lips—she barely had time to register any of it. He searched her eyes, seemingly to confirm she was really okay. “I’ll be out there soon,” he said, caressing her cheek with his gloved hand. A beat later, he was handing her off to the other U.S. soldier, Wyatt, who lifted her right onto the inflatable slide at the exit like he’d done with Callie. Strong arms held her for a moment, and then she was whizzing down the slide and into the night. Spotlights shone on the airplane.

Authorities were rushing around. Sirens were blaring. Olivia saw several K-9 units coming in, presumably to check the entire plane for bombs. She stood up on shaky feet, wobbling as emergency personnel guided her away.

Two people led her to a waiting ambulance, and she didn’t even question it as they set her down and began checking her vitals. Other people were sobbing, yelling, and she felt like she was in the middle of a movie. Like none of this was real.

It was over. The hijacking was really over.

And Owen had just kissed her like she was his.

## Chapter 12

Havoc cursed as he finally got the last passengers off the plane twenty minutes later. There were several deceased victims, whose bodies needed to be removed from the airplane, but the FBI was going to handle that aspect. Two men and a flight attendant had been killed, and another woman had died because of a medical issue. The pilot and copilot had been restrained but uninjured. It turned out that the hijackers didn't even know how to fly the fucking airplane. The pilot had landed it himself when they returned to Manila. In addition, there were now three dead hijackers near the cockpit they needed to deal with. Ace had dragged one of them out of the way to aid in the evacuation, but they still needed to ID the guys.

He didn't feel an ounce of remorse for their deaths. They'd killed innocents. Threatened the lives of countless others. Those three deserved exactly what had come to them.

Ace swiped a hand over his forehead, his eyes alert as he scanned the area. Havoc followed his gaze. Overhead compartments were partly open. Bags and purses and suitcases were everywhere. Food and drinks were spilled from whenever the initial hijacking had occurred and the panicked evacuation hours later. The inside of the entire plane smelled of sweat and fear and human waste. Havoc had been too keyed up at first to pay much attention to it. They were trained to operate under all conditions, but he'd had a single laser-sharp focus as they'd boarded the plane.

He hated that Olivia had been subjected to this hell. He'd seen some asshole elbow her in the head—probably by accident, but still. She was a small woman. What the fuck ever happened to women and children first? She'd clung to him, shaking uncontrollably, and it had taken everything in him to put her down and send her off the plane. He needed to go to her now—to make sure she was truly okay.

And that kiss?

He hadn't been able to stop himself. The tension, the adrenaline—everything.

He'd taken hold and kissed her like she was his, the consequences be damned. After nearly losing her. His heart stuttered. He wasn't an emotional man, but that had been brutal. The longest fucking day of his life.

The K-9 units were boarding the airplane to conduct a sweep for additional bombs, and he and his teammates hustled to the front. "Cargo hold is clear!" one of them shouted. They began moving through the rows and aisles, letting the dogs do their jobs.

"Let's ID the tangos," Ace said, moving toward the front of the aircraft. "The CO wants intel on who exactly these three assholes are. We'll get him the names before we get off this damn plane so they can get to work on background info for these mofos."

Wyatt crossed toward them, letting Ace know that the rest of his guys were outside assisting with the passengers. He crouched down beside one of the bodies, pulling a wallet from the man's pocket. Ace grabbed his phone and snapped a photo, sending the ID to their commander. No doubt the FBI and authorities outside would want the same information. It wasn't his team's job to secure the crime scene. They'd get the names of the hijackers to their CO before they moved out.

Repeating the process two more times, Ace fired off a text and then listened over his headset. He glanced at his teammates. "Let's move out so the bomb squad can finish their work. The Bureau wants to board the plane and start the investigation ASAP. Havoc, go find your girl."

He nodded, noticing the way Wyatt was curiously watching him. The other man had been assisting with the evacuation and had seen him kiss O. She'd looked shocked, but he'd never been so happy to see another person in his entire life. It had killed him to send her down that emergency exit slide alone, without him there to protect her.

"Olivia lives in San Diego," he explained. "We all know her. She just happened to be on the plane ride from hell."

"Looks like you're pretty close," Wyatt said, his lips quirking.

"You could say that," Havoc agreed.

"I want to check on that blonde woman," Wyatt said, his voice gruff. "She was terrified, and it looked like those bastards had broken her arm."

Ace's gaze swiveled to him. "What?" he asked sharply.

Wyatt nodded. "It was bent at a strange angle. She was shaking so much she could barely move. Hell. I want to kill those fuckers for hurting her, and they're already dead." He shook his head.

"Go find her and see if she's okay," Ace agreed. "The Bureau will be taking statements, but they weren't on here to see the shit that went down."

Havoc looked at the dead hijackers one more time. He didn't feel as relieved as he should. He was angry as hell that any of this had happened. "I'm going to find O," he said.

Ace clapped him on the shoulder. "She's strong as hell."

"I never asked. Did those assholes seem surprised when you showed up with the food and water?" Wyatt said.

"Yep, but we didn't give them a chance to react, just breached the damn plane and took them out. They were too stupid to think it through and realize it might be a setup."

"Well God damn," Wyatt said. "Thank fuck it's over. I'm going to go check on my guys and find the woman who was injured."

Havoc exited the plane, jogging down the steps that had been rolled up to the door. His teammates were still inside, getting ready to exit, but he was anxious to find Olivia. There were emergency vehicles everywhere and a sea of humanity before him. It would be hell finding her in this chaos. He moved from group to group, methodically narrowing down where she might have been taken. At long last, he found her on a gurney in one of the ambulances, an IV hooked up to her arm. She looked pale and exhausted, but she smiled when he hopped up into the back.

"Owen."

She sounded relieved as hell that he was here, and his chest clenched.

"Hey, hellcat. Are you okay?" he asked, his gaze sweeping over her. Her clothes were slightly ruffled, her face pale, but he didn't see any obvious injuries. She looked so fucking small lying there, he was almost afraid to even touch her.

"Just dehydrated. I almost passed out, so they wanted to get some fluids in



me.”

“Shit,” he said, crouching down at her side. He took her hand, not even caring that it was intimate for them. He was tired of dancing around his feelings, acting like their relationship or whatever you wanted to call it was just casual, friends flirting and nothing more. His other gloved hand smoothed over her. Whether he was trying to comfort Olivia or himself, he wasn’t sure. His eyes burned as he looked at her.

“Are you okay?” she asked. She didn’t even argue with him or protest his touch, just stared at him with those deep brown eyes. His hand came to a rest on her thigh, just about her knee. It wasn’t sexual but felt right, like he was claiming her as his. His other hand squeezed hers gently.

“I thought I lost you,” he said, his voice catching.

Her face softened. “No such luck, big guy,” she said, her smile weak. Her eyelids fluttered. “I’m tired. I feel like I could sleep for a week and still be out of it.”

“Sleep,” he said, brushing a gloved hand over her forehead. “I’m right here. We’ll talk later.”

“You’ll stay with me?” she asked, her breathing becoming slower. More even. Her eyelids were drooping, her entire body relaxing now that he was at her side.

“Of course. I got you,” he said, watching as she finally gave in to exhaustion. Her hand went limp in his, but she was breathing steadily, sleeping under his protective gaze. His eyes raked over her, drinking her in. That glossy black hair. Delicate facial features. Tiny hands. She was small but fierce. A fighter. Part of him wanted to crawl into that gurney with her, collecting her in his arms and holding her close. He was wearing full combat gear, and there wasn’t a hell of a lot of room. He edged even closer as he sat by her, letting out a sigh.

“You scared me, hellcat,” he said quietly.

Olivia didn’t stir, just slept with him watching over her. She was safe, and that was all that mattered.

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Olivia drowsily watched the men talking several seats away from her on the C-17. They'd gotten special permission to fly her back home with them from Manila on the military aircraft, not that she thought Havoc would've cared even if it had been denied. He'd hovered over her protectively for the past several hours and basically wouldn't let her out of his sight. It was a side of him she hadn't seen before. If he'd been worried that one night she'd wanted to drive herself to and from the bar, this paled in comparison. She'd woken up in the ambulance at the airport with his dark gaze watching her. The EMTs had removed the IV, and he'd assured them he'd monitor her himself. It was weird to see him so serious, but she liked not having to think about anything for the moment. She was overwhelmed and exhausted, too in shock about things to even cry. She'd let the tears flow on the hijacked plane when she'd first seen him, but now? She didn't even have the energy to sob or rant and rave. She was just...numb. Drained.

Havoc had rustled her up some clothes, and she was currently wearing his oversized tee shirt, sweatshirt, and sweatpants. It felt good to be snuggled in his clothes. Safe. She was stretched out across several seats to sleep, away from the others. She shifted slightly, still watching the guys as they talked in low voices. Sensing her movement, Owen looked over and stood. He was always attuned to her. Aware of everything.

"How are you feeling, hellcat?" he asked, his assessing gaze moving over her as he strode to her side. He was still in his camo gear and boots and had a hint of dark circles under his eyes. She wondered how many hours he'd been awake. The stubble across his jaw was longer than usual, but he still looked gruffly handsome. After being held hostage, she was shocked to even be aware of those things. Havoc always tied her up in knots though, making her body all too aware of every part of him.

"I fell asleep again," she said softly.

"Yeah. I noticed. The adrenaline crash no doubt made you feel exhausted. You've been through hell, O. And I'm sure you didn't rest during the incident."

She bit her lip and nodded.

“Hey,” he said, crouching down at her side. “Are you sure that you’re all right?”

Olivia nodded. “I’m just in shock over it all. It’s hard to believe any of that was even real. It feels like a dream—a nightmare.”

He took her hand, his thumb running gently over her skin. Her own hand looked so small in his muscular one, but she felt soothed by him. Safe. “I hate that you went through any of that. I was ready to burn the entire world down to get to you.”

The intensity in his gaze shocked her, and she felt off-kilter at his confession, like she was floating in some alternate reality that wasn’t her real life. As they flew high above the clouds, she didn’t have to think of her real life yet, to deal with the aftermath of what had happened. She was safe in a little cocoon, surrounded by two Navy SEAL teams.

“When did you get so sweet?” she joked.

“I’m always sweet,” he said, smirking at how absurd the statement was.

“Um, not at all,” she countered.

“Only for you, O. And I’m serious. I would’ve done anything to get to you.” She studied his brown eyes, her breath catching. Her gaze swept to his teammates, but they were mostly ignoring them. Everyone was used to Owen and her talking amongst themselves. Usually there was more fighting involved.

She looked back at the man hovering over her so protectively. “I’m surprised you’re not joking about wanting to join the mile-high club with me,” she said, trying to lighten the mood. She almost didn’t know what to make of this side of him.

Owen bristled. “Now’s not the time, hellcat.”

She blinked, feeling flustered. Normally they’d volley back and forth. This felt different. It was different. And he was still holding her hand, acting like it was the most natural thing in the world for him to do. Maybe it was.

“What happened to your other hand?” she asked, noticing the scabs and small bandage on his knuckles. He followed her gaze, lifting his hand up and

twisting it around.

“This? I punched Ace’s glass door when I found out you were on the hijacked plane.”

“What?” she gasped.

“I did. Guess I’m buying him a new door when we get back. The guys patched it with plywood for now. I’m dead serious, O. Nothing would stop me from getting to you.” His eyes burned with intensity, and she swallowed. He was looking at her like she was the most precious thing in the world, and her heart stuttered.

“Who are those other guys?” she asked, changing the subject to something safer. “Another team of SEALs?”

He nodded. “They’re from Hawaii but were in CONUS for training. Given the number of hostages, the CO sent both teams in. We weren’t taking any chances.”

“I saw that one guy before—the man who helped me out of the plane.”

“Wyatt? He’s their team leader.”

“God. All my stuff is still on that plane—my clothes, wallet, phone, laptop. Everything. It’s like the world just stopped. I left everything there.”

“They’ll get it back to you,” he assured her. “The FBI has to conduct their investigation, but they’ll catalogue personal belongings. Your suitcase will eventually be flown back, and they’ll box up any smaller things.”

“Shit. I don’t even have the keys to my apartment.”

“Your super can let you in, but you can stay with me if you want.”

“Is this another joke about getting me into your bed?”

His eyes darkened. “I’d never take you before you wanted me to, O. You’ve been through hell these past twenty-four hours. I figure you might not want to go home alone to an empty apartment.”

She shuddered and didn’t miss the way that he frowned. “You’re safe,” he said quietly.

“You kissed me on the airplane,” she needlessly told him.

“I’ll kiss you again when the time is right.” Heat and awareness licked through her, and she clutched more tightly onto this hand. His thumb traced circles over her skin, and her lips parted. “Like I said before, we’ll talk later. You’re exhausted. And when I do kiss you next time, it won’t be on an airplane full of people watching us.”

She inhaled sharply, and his darkened gaze moved over her. “You look good in my clothes, hellcat.” His eyes on her almost felt like a caress. Havoc was blunt and intense, and she was getting tired of fighting whatever was happening between them. He wouldn’t be looking at her this way if he just wanted a night together, if he didn’t truly care about her. He wouldn’t be holding her hand in front of his teammates, offering her a place to stay. He was different than she’d thought.

Olivia looked away, her gaze tracking over the inside of the C-17. Havoc was still watching her, but her mind was a jumbled mess. Some of the things she’d assumed had been wrong. He wouldn’t burn her. He’d burn down the entire world to save her. “So this is how you guys usually travel, huh? I guess it’s safer from hijackers than flying commercial.”

“Not funny, O.”

Ace was watching them and signaled that he wanted to come over. Owen nodded, giving him the go-ahead. Olivia was amazed how attuned to one another the men all were. Some men seemed to totally miss social cues and signals. These guys spent their careers reading others. They caught every detail and were almost too observant at times.

“How are you feeling, Olivia?” Ace asked, sinking down into a seat across the aisle from her.

“I’m ready to go home,” she admitted.

“We’ve got five more hours before we land,” he said, looking regretful. “The guys and I normally debrief right away with the CO. Given the situation, Havoc’s been cleared to see you home. Our commander will want both your statements eventually. Havoc has to give an AAR—After Action Report,” he clarified. “The CO is hoping to speak with you as well, Olivia, when and if you’re ready, of course.”

“Of course,” she agreed. “My dad was a police detective. I understand how

even small details can help. I can talk to him in a day or two.”

“Thank you,” he said.

She rolled her eyes. “You don’t need to be so formal with me, Ace. You’re the guy who knocked up my best friend, remember?”

He and Havoc chuckled, and Ace had the decency to look sheepish. Addison wasn’t exactly one to discuss her sex life. “That’s my little hellcat,” Havoc said. “Always stirring up trouble.”

“Do they know about the hijacking?” Olivia suddenly asked. “Addison, Cassie, and the other girls? I didn’t even think about that. Of course, it must’ve been all over the news. Oh my God, my parents!”

“It was in the news,” Ace said, looking at her seriously. “Your family, friends, and coworkers are all aware of what’s happened. Havoc spoke with your parents earlier, assuring them you were okay.”

“You did?” she asked in surprise.

He nodded, his dark eyes studying her.

“I...don’t even know what to say.”

“A simple ‘thank you’ will suffice,” he said dryly, but the humor in his eyes was back. He’d been so serious for the entire flight, she was glad to see him teasing her, even if only for a moment.

Ace cleared his throat and continued. “The media will report that U.S. Special Forces staged the rescue operation, but our names won’t be divulged to the public. Most of the world will never know we were in the Philippines or that we boarded that plane.”

“I understand. I wouldn’t say anything,” she assured them. “Did the girls know?”

He nodded. “We were just starting the barbeque when the shit hit the fan. They know we were sent in and that you were on the hijacked plane.”

She shuddered, hating to think about her friends worrying over her. If their roles had been reversed, she’d have been devastated to know one of them were on a doomed flight. “And the hijackers?” she asked. “They were all arrested or killed?”

Ace exchanged a glance with Havoc. He looked down at her, his eyes intense. "Don't worry, O. All those fuckers have been sent to meet their maker. You'll never have to worry about them again."

"All of them?"

"Three tangos down," Ace confirmed.

Olivia closed her eyes for a moment, listening as the men spoke about the update that Ace had sent their commander. "That guy with the scar was evil," she commented, looking over at them. "He had nothing but hate in his eyes."

Both men's heads swiveled toward her. "What scar?" Ace asked, narrowing his gaze.

"The hijacker who had the small scar by his forehead, more on his temple, I suppose. I think he was the ringleader. What's wrong?" she asked, looking between the two men as they visibly tensed.

Havoc let go of her hand and stood. "Let me see those photos," he said urgently.

## Chapter 13

“Fucking hell,” Wyatt said, frowning as the men from both SEAL teams all gathered around Olivia. She was scrolling through the photos on Ace’s phone. Try as Owen had to protect her from looking at the images, she’d needed to see them. Insisted on it. None of the IDs they’d photographed looked like the man she’d remembered. She’d asked Ace if he had actual photographs of them. It was creepy as hell to look at pictures of dead bodies, but she reminded herself that these were evil, cruel men. They deserved exactly what fate had befallen them.

“You’re sure?” Ace asked.

“Yes. None of these are him,” she insisted, worry washing over her. Havoc looked pissed as hell. He’d looked at each photograph with her, and she didn’t miss the way anger was now radiating off him. His entire body was filled with tension.

“We’re done,” Havoc said, snatching the phone away from her.

“Bossy,” Olivia muttered.

Ace took his phone back and crouched down, looking at her intently. “Tell me exactly what you remember. Every detail. We’ll need to notify our CO and reach out to the Bureau if there was a fourth hijacker. If you’re positive he’s not one of the men we took out, this guy could still be at the airport.”

“Hours have passed,” Havoc protested angrily. “He probably got the hell out of there as fast as he could.”

“We still need a description,” Ace said, glaring at him. “It’s not like he could’ve flown out of Manila with the airport closed.”

“They’ll open it at some point. We missed something, and now that fucker is in the wind. He could be anywhere.”

Olivia huffed out a breath. “Okay. Fine. Just ignore Owen. I’ll tell you what I remember. He was Middle Eastern, average-sized. He wasn’t very tall, maybe five foot eight or so. The guy had dark, angry eyes, and a full beard. He had a



tiny scar near his temple, lighter than the rest of his skin. Dark clothes. He was the one yelling orders. The meanest of them all.”

“Son of a bitch,” someone muttered in the background.

“What’s wrong?” she asked.

“That’s pretty detailed.” Ace said.

“You thought I was making it up?” Olivia asked in surprise.

“No, more like hoping that you were wrong. That description doesn’t match the three bodies on the plane though. Even the height is wrong.”

“He was the guy I got the best look at,” she said. “He’d pace up and down the aisle, and at one point, he glared at me. I even saw him looking at my seat number.”

“Call it in,” Havoc said. Ace didn’t comment but stood. Considering Ace was their team leader, Olivia assumed Havoc wasn’t supposed to be giving the other man orders. Ace motioned to the other men and then moved toward the back of the plane to contact their CO and presumably the investigators still in Manila.

“I’m pissed as hell that this guy slipped through our fingers,” Havoc spat out.

“It was dark and chaotic in there,” Trigger said. “If we had on our helmets and night-vision goggles, they’d have known for sure we weren’t airport personnel.”

“Yeah, but we would’ve fucking seen someone sneaking out.”

The other men continued talking, and Havoc crouched down by Olivia again.

“Why was he looking at your seat number, hellcat?” He was trying to make light of it, but she could tell something new was concerning him.

“I don’t know. He was pacing back and forth, and there was a kid crying. One of the passengers yelled something. He was glaring at everyone. It wasn’t long before you guys boarded the plane and saved us. When he looked at me, I just saw him glance over to see what seat I was in.”

Havoc studied her, thinking. “It’s not like he could ID you without looking at the passenger manifest. He’d need to match your name to the seat number.”

“Exactly. I just—shit,” she said, surprise washing over her. “I do know why

he was looking at me.”

Havoc raised his eyebrows. “Really? Why?”

“I saw two of the men before I even set foot on that airplane. They were arguing about something at LAX.”

“Seriously?” he said, leaning closer.

“I’m pretty sure it was them. And I’m positive they were arguing at the airport in Manila. I even joked with this woman I met—Callie—about it.”

From across the aisle, Wyatt’s gaze whipped toward her. “You know Callie?”

She looked quizzically at the muscular SEAL. “Um, sort of. We met at the gate while we were waiting and talked a bit. We exchanged contact info. She’s a travel writer or something. I specifically remember those guys wanting to get a seat in first class and arguing with the gate agent about it. We were joking about how obnoxious they were.”

“He knows you could ID him,” Havoc said, frowning.

“I mean, maybe? There were a lot of people at the airport. I only noticed them because they kept fighting with one another. I’m not sure why he would have specifically noticed me. I wasn’t doing anything to draw attention to myself.” He didn’t respond. “Owen, seriously. Everyone at the gate heard them. Anyone there could probably ID him, too.”

“Except you also saw him in LAX.”

“Yeah, but I don’t live in LA. He’s not going to randomly track me down, not if he’s running. He’ll stay out of sight. I doubt he even saw me in LA anyway. Like I said, I noticed him because he was arguing about something. Who cares if I’d recognize him? So would most of the people on the airplane.”

He nodded, concern still etched across his face. Ace came striding back to them. “I just spoke with the CO. He’ll be in contact with the agents in Manila. The FBI will get him on their Most Wanted List. Between the Bureau, multiple other federal agencies, and INTERPOL looking for him, he won’t be able to get on an airplane.”

“He could go into hiding,” Havoc said.

“Yes, but this asshole won’t be able to fly anywhere. They’ll be running through airport surveillance footage to track his movements before the hijacking. They’ve got the passenger list to match up names. In another hour or so, we’ll know more details about this guy than his own mother.”

The other men moved back to their seats, talking, and Havoc sank down into one beside her. He was quiet, thinking. Bothered by the new piece of information.

“Hey, big guy,” she joked. “Why so grumpy?”

He muttered something to himself then nailed her with a look. “Because I want you safe, O.”

The intensity of his gaze surprised her, but she nodded, reaching for his hand. Thick fingers wound around hers. He was still agitated, and she ran her other hand over their joined ones, trying to soothe him.

“It’s a loose end,” he said, “and I want this entire incident wrapped up with a fucking bow. Done.”

“Me too,” she said quietly.

More than anything, she wanted to go home. To California, to her apartment, to her regular day-to-day life. Havoc and his friends might be used to dealing with situations like this, but it had shaken her to the core. She wanted to move on. In the back of her mind, however, she wondered if the hijacking was truly behind them.

## Chapter 14

When the plane landed in San Diego, Havoc had never been so damn relieved. Olivia had slept some on the flight but still looked exhausted. He'd been too keyed up to get any shut eye, instead talking with his teammates more about the implications of the missing hijacker.

He guided Olivia down the ramp of the C-17, his lips quirking slightly at her wearing his clothes.

*Mine.*

They hadn't discussed the kiss on the hijacked plane again, but the memory was burned into his brain. It had been hard and firm, with Havoc letting her know in no uncertain terms that she was his. None of his buddies had commented, but they probably hadn't seen it either in the middle of the evacuation. And Wyatt? He'd been so damn worried about the blonde with the broken arm, he'd barely mentioned it.

Olivia's dark hair swished around as they moved, stepping into the balmy San Diego night. Her small, lithe form was drowning in his sweats, but he liked her wearing them all the same. She looked around in awe at the commotion around them as they strode across the tarmac. Military servicemen and women were busy working. Vehicles were zipping around. Havoc was hauling some of his own gear, but Ace had said he'd take care of the rest. His priority was getting O home, and thank God his teammates were on board with that.

Havoc ducked down, his lips near her ear. She still had a hint of that light, floral scent. Maybe it was her shampoo. His cock twitched, as inappropriate as the timing was. His body reacted whenever she was near, and now that they were off the plane, safe in California, he'd relaxed enough to notice every detail of her. She'd handled the flight just fine, but a military plane with two SEAL teams onboard wasn't the same as a commercial jet with hundreds of passengers. Hopefully she wouldn't be afraid to fly in the future.

"I need to talk with Ace a minute," he said. "Can you sit over there and wait

for me?” He nodded toward a bench, near where his buddies were temporarily stacking some of their supplies. They’d stash their gear in their lockers and meet with the CO, but Havoc was walking away with his girl.

*His.*

“Sure. I can sit down again after sitting fourteen hours on an airplane,” she quipped. “No problem.”

“Good girl,” he said, his voice husky.

“Smartass.”

His eyes flared. This woman. She did as he asked though, probably too drained to argue much. He watched her for a moment, taking in the sway of her hips. Even in the oversized clothes, she was alluring. He’d thought that cropped top on the beach weeks ago was sexy, and those tiny little skirts she liked. Olivia in his sweats set off some kind of caveman reaction in him. He’d love to see her in just the sweatshirt, her toned legs peeking out beneath. He’d lay her back on his bed and spread them, ready to feast on her sweet pussy.

Fuck.

Now that they were home, the attraction he felt toward her was rising again. So was his dick, he thought wryly. He’d been in the zone on their mission, operating as he was trained to do. He’d been able to shut down his emotions, tampering his body’s reaction to her for the most part. Her life had been in jeopardy, and he’d been focused on the op. The hostages. The hijackers. But now? All bets were off.

He stifled a yawn, moving toward Ace. When they got back to his place, he was going to crash. He’d have his girl with him though, and thank fuck for that. His team leader spotted him and frowned. “Take her home, Havoc. She’s been through hell and needs to rest.”

“I will. I’ll be in tomorrow to give the CO my AAR. Is there any update on the hijacker?”

Ace didn’t need to ask which one. “He’s been IDed. I just reviewed the latest intelligence. His name is Mustafa Abdel. Born and raised in Iraq but went to college in the U.S. He traveled back and forth to his home country. When

ISIS began to lose its stronghold in Iraq, intelligence analysts believe he discovered ASG's ideology online."

"Jesus. That's how he ended up on a plane in the Philippines? Why wasn't his name mentioned when we learned about the initial two hijackers?" Havoc asked with a frown.

"He's learned to fly under the radar. Although Olivia thought he was the ringleader given his actions on the flight, he's essentially had his henchmen do the dirty work."

"Guess it was fucking successful," Havoc muttered.

"If Olivia hadn't mentioned that one detail about his scar, we wouldn't have started investigating him yet. The rest of the passengers are being interviewed, but we'd have wasted time poring over interviews with a hundred people. She's sharp."

Havoc looked over toward her, realizing how tired she seemed. She was on the bench but leaning back, eyes closed. He clapped Ace on the shoulder.

"I'll get her home."

"You taking her to your place?" Ace asked.

"Considering she doesn't have keys and it's the damn middle of the night, yes. Tell Add she'll call her tomorrow."

Ace nodded, and Havoc moved toward Olivia. "Come on, hellcat," he said, reaching out to help her stand. She blinked as she rose, barely coming up to his shoulder. He pulled her to his chest for a moment, wrapping his arms around her. Olivia relaxed against him, and he palmed the back of her head.

"I'm taking you to my apartment. Tomorrow we'll deal with getting your keys and into your place."

"Okay," she murmured.

"No arguments?" he asked, his lips quirking.

"I'm too tired to argue," she admitted. "Maybe tomorrow we can fight about it."

He chuckled, his laughter surprising him. She'd just been a hostage for twenty-four hours and then had flown another fourteen to get home. She had to be tired and overwhelmed and yet was teasing him. This woman. He

wasn't sure he'd ever be able to let her go.

## Chapter 15

The next week passed by in a blur. Owen had taken her to his apartment the night they landed in San Diego, but things between them had been strictly platonic. Both of them had been so exhausted, they'd crashed in his king-sized bed, Olivia still wearing his sweatpants and sweatshirt. He'd held her close in his sleep, and she'd been dead to the world until late morning. He'd had to head in to base for his debrief, and they hadn't even been able to eat breakfast together or talk. He'd gotten her situated in her own apartment later that day, and she'd shooed him off with plans to have her friends over that evening. The other women were dying to make sure she was okay, and she'd needed some time with her girlfriends, too.

They'd cried when they'd reunited, hugging her fiercely and promising to listen if she wanted to talk about what had happened. They'd had a big sleepover at Olivia's apartment, and she'd managed to rotate between their homes each night since. It was easier that way. Being alone and admitting the entire incident had shaken her felt like too much. She didn't want to rehash what had happened. She just wanted to move on.

Olivia met with Owen's commander to give her statement about the hijacking, bought a new cell phone, borrowed a laptop from work, and got a new key to her apartment from her super. She'd been bouncing around from one thing to another, hoping to put the entire incident behind her and trying to ignore the uneasiness she felt at being alone. Owen's team had training that week, scheduled long before the hijacking. He'd been busy but always texted her each day, which made her smile.

Her phone buzzed on Friday afternoon, and she looked down at it as she relaxed on Cassie's couch, talking with her friend.

Havoc: *Hey, hellcat, where are you? I'm knocking on your front door.*

"Oh shit," she muttered.

"What's wrong?" Cassie immediately asked.

"Owen and I had plans tonight, and I totally lost track of the time. The movie



ended an hour ago, and we've been talking so long, I spaced on the time."

"What type of plans?" Cassie teased, grinning at her friend.

Olivia smiled. "Dinner. Hanging out. I stayed at his place the night we got back, but we were seriously too wiped out to even talk. We crashed. This week was crazy, with the men busy in training, so here we are. Me. Having dinner with Owen. Alone.

"Well that sounds promising."

Olivia winked. "The man is sex on a stick. Nothing's happened though. Well, he did kiss me once."

"What?" Cassie shrieked. "You forgot to mention that tiny little detail?"

"It was a week ago, on the hijacked plane. Everything was utter chaos, and right before I went out the emergency door, he kissed me right there."

"Well damn," Cassie said with a giggle.

"I should text him back."

Olivia: *Sorry, I'm still at Cassie's! Be there soon.*

Havoc: *Your car is here, O.*

Olivia: *Yeah. I stayed at her place last night. She'll drop me off in a few minutes.*

Fifteen minutes later, Cassie was pulling into Olivia's apartment complex. They'd both taken the day off and enjoyed lunch together and a movie marathon. Cassie knew what it felt like to be traumatized over something. Even though Olivia hadn't admitted as much, her friend seemed to sense that she just needed some quiet girl time.

Seeing Owen waiting on the landing, Olivia felt butterflies in her belly. He'd changed after his training, and the dark jeans and snug-fitting tee shirt he wore made him look mouthwatering. She had on skinny jeans and a tank top, and she felt his heated gaze rake over her.

It felt good.

They'd barely seen one another all week, but tonight it was just them. Dinner. Drinks. Alone time. She was practically vibrating with anticipation as she jogged up the steps of her garden-style apartment building.

“Hey,” he said as she approached.

“Sorry I wasn’t here,” she said, letting her eyes rake over him. Owen looked good. Broad shoulders, veined forearms, and jeans that hugged his muscled thighs. He looked slightly tired from their intense training this week, but he was still alert, his lips quirking as she got closer.

“Like what you see?” he joked.

“Eh,” she said with a shrug. His dark chuckle made her pulse with awareness. They weren’t about to rip one another’s clothes off. They were just having dinner. Talking. Still, like always, her body felt far too aware of him. Every look, every movement. Owen had an effect on her she didn’t quite understand. She’d dated before. She’d had sex with various boyfriends over the years. She’d had fun. Owen was intense. Brooding. The type of man who fought for what he wanted. And with the way he was looking at her right now, what he wanted was her.

“Since when are you staying at Cassie’s place?” he asked, his dark eyes observant.

“We thought it would be fun to have a sleepover.” She unlocked the door to her apartment, Owen following her inside. She hadn’t spent much time here at all since they’d gotten back, preferring to busy herself with work and her friends. She’d even made it to a few of her gym classes, determined to work off the jet lag.

“Ace thought we could all meet up for dinner tomorrow,” he said, looking around her apartment. He’d only been here once before, the day he’d driven her back. She’d had nothing with her, and it had felt a little empty coming home that way. She didn’t like the hollowness that filled her chest whenever she thought about the hijacking—the fear and uncertainty and very real threat that she might die. She still didn’t have her purse and laptop. Her suitcase. Her wallet. Still, it was done and over with now. She’d already moved on.

“Dinner with everyone? That’d be fun. Sushi?” she teased.

“Hell no.”

She tried to hide her laughter. “I’ll text Add and see where she wants to go. She started having some morning sickness, so we’ll have to find a place that has food she can eat. Is everyone coming?”

“I think so. The guys and I were talking about it earlier.” Owen’s eyes landed on his sweatshirt, draped over the back of the sofa. “I see you’ve been enjoying my clothes,” he said, a smirk on his lips.

“They look better on me,” she teased.

“Probably so,” he said. “Everything looks good on you, O.”

She did a double-take, listening to his laughter fill her apartment. “Cat got your tongue, hellcat?”

“You’re too much sometimes. Your commander was nice,” she said, changing the subject. “It was weird getting to see where you work every day. Except you guys were busy in training. I wanted to see some hunky SEALs working out while I was there,” she mock-complained.

He lifted a shoulder. “Join us for a morning run on the beach. I’ll even go shirtless for you,” he added, waggling his eyebrows. “Ten miles isn’t so bad. I bet you could make it.”

“Of course, I could,” she scoffed. “I’m at the gym several days a week.”

“I’ve noticed.”

“You don’t even go to my gym.”

“I appreciate the results,” he said, his eyes tracking over her again. She felt her nipples pebble beneath her tank top. Owen licked his lips, and she resisted the urge to shiver at his hungry gaze.

“Stop looking at me like that,” she protested.

“Like what?”

“Like I’m your next meal.”

He crossed toward her, dark and dangerous. She wasn’t afraid of him though. With Owen she always felt safe. “I could make a meal out of you, hellcat,” he said, his big hand running through her hair as he stopped right in front of her. “Maybe dessert,” he added with a smirk as heat coiled within her.

She playfully swatted at his chest, feeling the solid muscle beneath. He caught her hand there, holding it to him. Her breath caught, but he grew serious. “Our training the other day was scheduled in advance. I felt bad I couldn’t stick around when you were meeting with the CO. It went okay?”

Olivia met his concerned gaze. The conversation had shifted from heated to serious in an instant. She liked that he worried about her. It made her feel watched over and protected, like nothing bad would happen to her again. “Yeah,” she said, pulling away. “I was glad to get it over with, to be honest. If it helps find the missing hijacker, then I’m happy I could help. I just don’t like thinking about it anymore.”

“You haven’t been home much,” he observed.

“Nope. I’ve been keeping busy, jumping right back into life.” She turned away from Owen, hating how he seemed to notice everything. He was handling everything just fine. They rushed into dangerous situations all the time and went on missions she probably couldn’t even imagine. She’d just been through hell and didn’t want to rehash each moment of fear. If she sat still for too long, the memories crept up. Swept over her and made her feel panicky and out of control. She was angry at those men for hijacking the plane and threatening the passengers. She was angry at herself for still thinking about it.

“Did you hear me?” Owen asked, his voice deep. “I asked where you wanted to eat tonight.”

She let out a tiny breath, letting her frustration drain away. “Do you want to just grab carryout?” she said, looking over at him. Owen was a sharp contrast to the vibrant colors of her living room. Dark. Deep. A man of hard muscles and rough edges rather than the softness of her furnishings and colorful decor. Somehow, he still didn’t look out of place though. He was here with her in her space, exactly where he belonged.

“Sure thing. Grab your phone, and we’ll order whatever you want.”

“I didn’t download the app yet on my replacement phone,” she said, her face falling.

“Hey, no worries. We can order on mine.”

She nodded, feeling annoyed at one more little thing the hijackers had taken. She didn’t want to re-download every app, photo, and contact that was stored on her old phone. She wanted her life back.

Owen drove them both to pick up the Thai food they’d ordered, insisting they’d get it faster than waiting for delivery. “Thank God you finally let me

drive you someplace,” he mock-complained, looking over at her. “I was worried you’d insist on going separately.”

“What? Don’t be ridiculous. You drove me home the other night. Remember that little flight on the military plane?”

“I remember the night you spent in my bed,” he said, his voice growing deep. She looked over at him, warmth coursing through her. Sleeping in Owen’s arms hadn’t been a hardship. He’d held her close the entire night. “Hmmm,” she said dreamily. “I did really like your...pillows.”

He guffawed. “Woman. You’re killing me. You might have been asleep, but you were in my bed, in my arms. Next time that happens, you won’t have as many clothes on.”

She shook her head, trying to hold back her smile. “We’ll see.”

“I’ll see you, hellcat,” he said with a smirk. He slanted a look at her, and she didn’t miss the heat in his eyes. “I’ll strip you bare and explore every inch of that tight little body. Kiss you and make you squirm until you’re begging for me to take you.”

Her sharp intake of breath sounded loud in the cab of his truck. He chuckled. “No mouthy comeback for that, O?”

She blinked, too stunned to even speak.

“So it’s settled then. Next time you’re in my bed, I’ll make you completely mine.”

## Chapter 16

Havoc smirked as he jogged up the steps to Olivia's apartment the following evening. He'd teased her last night, flirting throughout dinner as she laughed at his antics. Despite the countless parties, bonfires, and nights out with their friends, it was the first time they'd ever had dinner alone. He was surprised at how relaxed he'd felt at her place. It was like when he was hanging out with his buddies, only better. A million times better. Not to mention sexually charged. Normally, they had everyone else around when things got too heated. They seemed to be drawn to one another like two magnets, trying to stay apart until an invisible force snapped them together.

He'd been good throughout their meal, keeping his hands to himself and enjoying her company. She always made him laugh with her crazy zingers, something that shocked the shit out of him. He liked to have a good time, but with the women he'd been with in the past, there'd been less conversation and more action. With O, the bantering was half the fun. It made him want her even more. The buildup, the months they'd known one another, the stolen caresses and heated looks. She drove him crazy, and he loved that he could drive her wild in return.

Havoc had pinned her against her apartment door right before he left, almost kissing her but holding back. His lips had hovered above the delicate skin on her neck as he inhaled her sweet floral scent. They'd brushed against the shell of her ear. He'd whispered the dirty things he wanted to do to her someday. She'd been flushed and slightly flustered at his boldness. He'd wanted her thinking about him when she went to bed last night. And Havoc knew she wanted him. He could see it in her eyes, read it in her body language, hear it in the hitch of her breath. He had a feeling that if he'd kissed her yesterday, she'd have given in. Let him take her to bed and make love to her all night.

Knocking on her door, he grinned. He could hear music blasting from her apartment and Olivia singing along, somewhat off-key. He knocked again but didn't want to pound and annoy the neighbors or scare her. Pulling out his phone, he shot off a text.

Havoc: *Hey hellcat. I'm at the door. Can you even hear me knocking over all that wailing inside?*

Olivia: *Dick. It's called singing.*

Havoc: *Eh, that's a stretch.*

Havoc: *I could make you whimper and wail later on, baby girl.*

Olivia: *You could try.*

Havoc: *Just say the word, hellcat.*

Olivia: *The word.*

He stilled, then shook his head, smirking. She'd seemed surprised when he stood up from the sofa to say he was leaving last night. They'd both had a long week, and after waiting months for her, he wasn't about to rush her to bed. Tonight however? He didn't want to hold back. When he'd texted Olivia this morning, she'd declared she slept like a baby last night. Probably just rubbing it in since he'd left without so much as a kiss. She'd been panting and breathless when he finally told her goodnight, her nipples pressing against her tank top, her body arching into his. She wanted him, and hell if that didn't make male pride fill his chest.

The door swung open just then, and his blood heated. O had on another short dress. It hit her mid-thigh, and her toned, lithe body on display made his dick twitch. Her hair was in long waves, sexy and tousled. It would look good wrapped around his fist while he took her, sinking his cock into her tight little pussy.

"Looking good, O," he said with a grin.

"You like?" she teased, spinning in a slow circle.

"Fuck. Maybe too much," he said, stepping inside. His large hand landed on her waist. "We can ditch the others and stay here for the night."

"Not-uh," she said. "You teased me last night and left."

"You like dirty talk, hellcat?" he asked, watching the hint of a blush spread across her cheeks. Olivia wasn't shy in the least, but it was interesting the way he'd gotten her slightly flustered last night. Havoc couldn't wait to explore her body, find out what she liked, and make her moan his name.

Would she flush when he took her or be back to her usual bold self? The air between them was already growing thick with the promise of what the night could bring.

“Guess you’ll never know, because we’re leaving,” she said lightly. She grabbed her purse from a table, smirking at him.

“I’d say you liked it last night,” he said. “Were you thinking of me when you went to bed?”

“Not at all,” she said with a wink.

He shook his head and guided her out the front door, watching as she locked up. “I thought you didn’t have your purse,” he commented.

“Owen,” she said, rolling her eyes. “I’ve got a million purses. The one on the plane had my wallet and keys. I travel with a different one. This one coordinates with my dress.”

“Right.”

“It also matches my thong,” she said nonchalantly, flouncing down the stairs ahead of him.

He bit back a curse, watching her hips sway as she moved. She was graceful like a dancer, although he didn’t think she’d ever mentioned dancing before. She was delicate and strong. Fierce but a bit fragile, with walls she’d put up to keep her safe. Walls he’d almost completely knocked down.

“I feel your eyes on my ass!” she called out, tossing him a saucy look over her shoulder.

Havoc guffawed. “Just wondering if your panties really match your purse,” he said huskily. Now the vision of O in a thong would be on his mind all night long. And when they got home? He’d get to see for himself what was really beneath that skimpy dress.

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Olivia laughed at the story Everly was telling, taking a sip of her wine. The Italian place Addison had picked for dinner was amazing. She’d claimed



carbs were the only thing that didn't make her sick right now, and the food was delicious. Olivia had only finished half of her chicken parmesan but declared she couldn't eat another bite. Havoc was happily sampling some of her dinner now, and she had to admit she was having a great time out with him and all their friends.

"So how'd your date go last night?" Cassie teased, her eyes dancing between Olivia and Havoc.

"Yeah, who's the lucky guy, Olivia?" Madeline asked with a wink.

"Jesus," Havoc joked. "This is a tough crowd. Did our heart-to-heart in Pakistan not sink in? My little hellcat has finally let me catch her."

Madeline burst into laughter. "It's true. I heard all about Olivia before we ever met. It was destiny, right?"

"Something like that," Brian agreed as he looked at her, clearly thinking of their own relationship.

"I'm just glad you're here," Addison said softly, tears rimming her eyes.

"Shoot. My eyeliner is going to smudge. These pregnancy hormones are messing up everything." She rummaged in her purse for a tissue, Ace's large hand rubbing circles on her back. He shrugged, and Olivia got the sense the tears were happening often lately.

"I'm glad to be here, too," Olivia admitted. "I talked with my parents again the other night and had to convince them not to fly across the country to see me."

"They were worried," Havoc said gruffly.

"They were, but I assured them everything was fine. Next week I'm back in the office every day. God knows what will happen with those meetings I never attended in Seoul. I'm sure not flying back there anytime soon, and someone else from marketing is now handling the collaboration, at least according to the emails I've read. I'm sure I'll find out more when I'm officially back at work."

The rest of the group continued talking as they finished dinner. The only hiccup of the night was when she asked about the missing hijacker.

Apparently, he still hadn't been found. Havoc had visibly tensed beside her at

the topic. She didn't want to think about it either, but his existence was still at the back of her mind, lurking, trying as she might to banish any and all thoughts of that day.

They all ordered dessert and coffee, lingering over their food. She noticed the way Owen's lips twitched as she shifted in her seat.

Sitting next to him in the crowded restaurant was a mistake. Every time he moved, she got a whiff of his woodsy scent. Felt the heat from his large body. It was heady. Intoxicating. The meal had been delicious, but his hand had slid under the table at one point and squeezed her thigh. He'd kept it there for a good portion of the evening, and his fingers dancing on her bare skin had been dangerous. She'd gasped out loud at one point, drawing the attention of the others. He'd smugly smiled, knowing the effect he had on her. The tiny circles he'd traced on her skin had left her on-edge. Aroused. Licks of heat trailed up to her core, and she was already wet for him.

Olivia had smacked him playfully as they'd walked out to his truck when dinner was over, and he'd chuckled. Damn him.

"Is there a problem, hellcat?" he'd asked, his dark eyes flashing.

"You know what the problem is," she muttered.

He caged her in at his truck, ducking down for a slow and devastating kiss. He tasted of the beer he'd had at dinner and something else that was pure musk and man. She was gasping for air as he pressed against her, his arousal evident against the confines of his pants. "I'm taking you back to my place," Havoc said, his voice thick with desire. "Does that work for you?"

"Yes," she breathed.

Owen helped her into his truck, his hands running over her body. They brushed over her waist as he'd fastened the seatbelt. Her arm when he'd adjusted it just so. Her bare thighs because his eyes had lingered there. He kissed her again, ducking into his truck. The gesture felt so sweet, it almost hurt.

He was quiet as he walked her to his apartment ten minutes later. They'd teased each other throughout dinner, but it was like he'd cockily whispered in her ear afterward.

*Foreplay.*

He looked at her like he was going to devour her once they were inside his apartment building. The heat of his gaze on her was searing as they moved down the hall. “You’re sure about this. About tonight.”

She turned to look at him, licking her red lips.

“Fuck. What are you doing to me?” he asked, his voice almost pained. She could see his eyes were wide with arousal, his body on edge.

“Me? I’m not doing a thing,” she said innocently.

“Olivia,” he said more firmly, tugging on her hand.

She stopped walking and looked into his dark eyes. “I’m sure, Owen.”

When they were inside his apartment, he pressed her gently against the back of his front door. “You’ve been teasing me all night, hellcat,” he said, his voice thick. “Telling me about your little panties, shooting me those heated looks.”

“Maybe you deserve it,” she sassed back.

He pressed closer, and she could feel the length of his erection pressing against her belly, the heat of his body against hers. He looked dark and dangerous as his hands landed beside her head, caging her in. But she felt safe. Desired. “Maybe I should just show you what you do to me,” he said, lowering his head. She gasped as his lips caressed the skin on her neck. Soft. Supple. He nipped at her, the scruff of his jaw rubbing against her skin a sharp contrast to the gentleness of his lips.

He nibbled on her, tasting. Teasing. He kissed her softly along her jawline. And then his mouth was on hers. Taking. Conquering. She gasped in surprise and clung to him, desperate. His hands grabbed her wrists, pinning them to the door. He pressed even closer, kissing her how he wanted. Taking what they both needed. Owen transferred her hands to one of his, and then he caressed her cheek, sliding his hand down until it lightly clasped her neck. She swallowed, shocked by his dominance.

His next kiss was brutal, bruising, but his thumb lightly tracing over her throat was so damn gentle. He released her hands from his grip, cupping the back of her head instead. She tilted it back, granting him access, and he

consumed her. She was panting as she gripped his shirt, pulling him impossibly closer. She wanted to rip it right off him but felt like she wasn't even in control of her own body anymore.

Olivia whimpered as she opened to him, Owen growling in approval. His tongue slid inside her mouth. Every single nerve ending in her body electrified at his touch. Her breasts pressed against the thin cotton dress she wore, her nipples rubbing against the fabric. Her thong was soaked, completely drenched with arousal at the way her body always responded to him. And Owen's hands were suddenly everywhere—touching, caressing. One slid down over her ass and landed on the back of her bare thigh, just beneath the hemline of her short dress. She shivered at his touch, moaning into his mouth.

Suddenly he turned her around, pressing her stomach against the side of the large sofa in his living room. His big hands moved her hair aside, gentle, and then held the zipper at the back of her dress, ready to bare her to him.

She was panting. Breathless. “Just do it,” she said, turning her head to continue kissing him. His lips were hot. Demanding.

“You want me to take you right here, baby girl?” he asked.

His normally careful control around her seemed to be unraveling. He might be reckless in some parts of his life, but he'd always been perfectly in control around her.

But this? Now?

His hands slid to her hemline, pushing up the dress as he bent her over the sofa. He lightly swatted her ass before squeezing one cheek gently. “That's for teasing me all night, hellcat. Telling me about this sexy thong you have on. Fuck. The things you make me want to do.... Spread your legs for me, baby girl.” One hand trailed down the back of her thong, and then he was cupping her pussy, teasing her through the soaked fabric.

She cried out in surprise as he fingered her clit through the damp material. He grunted, muttering her name under his breath.

“You're so wet for me,” he murmured. “So ready.”

“Owen,” she pleaded.

“I’ve got you, baby girl.” He circled her clit, listening to her tiny mewls of pleasure. She couldn’t move away from him, couldn’t do anything but take the pleasure he was giving her. It was too much. Not enough. She was panting and gasping, bent over in front of him like she was his. He toyed with the back of her thong with his other hand, and she felt the material moving between her bare cheeks.

“You’re so fucking sexy. So ready and willing.”

“Owen. Now,” she demanded.

“You need my cock, O?” he asked, his voice dark with desire.

“Owen.”

His hands disappeared. She heard him unzipping his pants, then ripping the foil of a condom. She wanted to turn around and watch him, but the way he had her bent over the sofa, his body holding her in place, was erotic as hell. Olivia had never shied away from sex. She’d had her fair share of partners over the years, but she’d never felt as reckless and wild as she did in this moment.

His large hand was on her pussy again, tugging the damp scrap of fabric aside. She felt cool air wash over her, and then the head of his cock was there, nudging against her swollen lips. “You’re so wet for me, baby girl,” he said, and she whimpered. “That’s my good girl,” he said, one large hand gripping her hip as the other guided his impressive length through her folds.

“Take me,” she said.

“When I’m ready. I love you like this, begging for more.” He teased her a moment, rubbing his cock against her drenched folds, and then she felt him right at her entrance. Thick. Hard. One hand shifted to her hair, trailing through her long strands. The one at her hip tightened, and then Owen was pushing in. Claiming her.

Olivia gasped at the intimate invasion, of the feel of Owen pushing inside her body and owning every part of her soul. He felt so big. Broad. She ached to be filled by him, gasping as he stole her breath.

“You feel that?” he asked, his voice husky. “Your sweet little pussy is going to take every inch.”

“Owen,” she pleaded.

He sank in slowly, surprising her. Owen was in complete and utter control, holding her where he wanted, giving her what she needed. She was stretched full as he slid along every nerve ending, igniting a spark so fierce, she cried out in shock. She let out a sound she’d never heard before as he pulled out and slowly pushed back in, the exquisite pressure almost too much to bear.

“Owen, more,” she demanded as he kept up the slow, languid pace.

His hand in her hair tightened, and he pressed a kiss to her temple. “I’m in control, baby girl. You’ll come when I say you can.”

“So. Bossy.”

He huffed out a laugh and kept up his torturous pace. Slow. Steady. He stroked her inner walls in a way that was almost unbearable. Sparks of heat flashed through her body, and she couldn’t move, couldn’t do anything but surrender to this man. She tried to buck back against him but was pinned in place by his hard body, thick cock, and strong hands.

“I can feel you getting tighter, O. My little hellcat is about to go up in flames.”

She gasped as he took her slightly harder. Faster. Her body felt like it didn’t even belong to her anymore. She couldn’t control any of her reactions. Her emotions. Owen controlled it all, dominating every part of her. He pressed her down into the sofa as he began to buck harder. His muscled body caged her in, and with every thrust, he took her closer to the peak.

Sparks began to sizzle through her body, the friction from the base of his cock rubbing against her clit impossible to ignore. She clutched onto the sofa, crying out. White hot pleasure coursed through her. One large hand moved from her hip to where their bodies joined, and he expertly circled her swollen bud. He thrust again, his cock thickening even more, and as his fingers pinched her clit, she exploded, screaming his name into the night.

Owen pulled her head back toward him and kissed her, hard. She collapsed over the sofa as he released her, and then he moved faster, coming moments after her. He held her body tightly as he released inside her slick pussy, and then he eased back, his hands everywhere as he touched and soothed her. Olivia was gasping for air as he pulled his erection free and helped her to

stand. Owen was still half-hard, and he tied off the condom, then lifted her into his arms.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“Taking you to my bedroom. I’m going to spend all night making you scream like that, baby girl.”

## Chapter 17

Havoc drowsily looked over at Olivia sleeping in his bed the following morning. He'd claimed her again and again last night, putting her on all fours, letting her ride him cowgirl style, and then taking her the old-fashioned way, Havoc on top as Olivia lay spread beneath him, both of them coming as he gazed into her eyes.

It was almost fucking poetic. Olivia. In his bed. Exactly where he'd told her she'd be.

She'd slept in his arms, both of them naked and tangled together. It felt right. So fucking right it shocked him. He didn't want her to leave; he wanted her there where she was safe. She stirred slightly, and he rose, heading to the bathroom. He was already half-hard but knew she needed to rest and was probably sore. He showered and pulled on boxer briefs, listening as he heard her whimpering in his bed.

"Olivia," he said as he crossed over to her. She thrashed slightly, fighting with the sheets she was tangled in. "Olivia." She woke up with a gasp, her hand to her chest. Her eyes were wild, but she settled as she saw him and took in his bedroom. Her lips parted as she took a deep breath.

"Are you okay?" he asked, sinking down beside her.

She was clutching the sheets to herself, scared. He brushed one hand down her arm, trying to soothe her. "Yeah. Just a bad dream."

He frowned, moving his hand to brush some of her dark hair back from her face. "You slept okay last night."

She nodded. "Yeah. I guess I don't sleep well when I'm alone."

"Were you having nightmares all week?" Havoc asked, studying her. He'd taken her to his place that first night they got back, and then she'd had her friends over for a girls' sleepover. She didn't answer. "O?"

Olivia shrugged, looking sheepish. "I only spent one night by myself this week. I was staying with friends."



“All week?” he asked, surprised.

“Well, yeah. You guys had that training and were busy. I was at Addison’s one night, then Everly’s, then Cassie’s...” Her voice trailed off. “What?”

“You didn’t tell me you were having nightmares.”

She sat up in bed, wrapping the sheets around herself. “Well, what was I supposed to say? I’ve lived alone for years and shouldn’t have trouble staying at my own apartment. I’m an adult.”

“You went through a traumatic experience,” Havoc said. “Hell. I was terrified knowing you might’ve been hurt—or worse.”

Tears smarted her eyes. “I just feel like I have to keep busy and be around other people or I start thinking about the hijacking. I was scared, Owen. Terrified. My dad was a police detective and taught me some basic self-defense and how to protect myself and be cautious in different types of situations, but I was so far out of my element, that advice was almost a joke. I felt powerless.” A few glistening teardrops rolled down her cheeks.

“Hey,” he said softly, collecting her in his arms. Her head fell against his bare chest, and he felt her tears on his skin. “You were brave as hell, O. We train for shit like that, and I was still scared. You did everything you could to stay safe until I could get to you.”

She swiped at her cheeks, trying to wipe away the tears. “I’ve never been so surprised in my life as when you showed up on that airplane.”

“Nothing would have stopped me from getting to you.”

“I still can’t believe you punched Ace’s glass doors,” she said with a tiny laugh, looking up at him.

“Yeah. Sometimes I don’t make the best choices.”

She lightly swatted at his stomach, her fingers lingering there. He felt her hand on his abs and sucked in a breath. It wasn’t meant to be a sexual touch, but it still felt good.

“Down boy,” she teased, noticing his cock thickening.

He kissed the top of her head. “I’ll make us breakfast. I’m sure you’re sore after last night.”

“Owen,” she chastised.

“What?” he asked with a chuckle. “I’m surprised your voice isn’t hoarse from screaming my name so many times.”

“Jerk,” she muttered, but she let out a sigh and settled against him.

Havoc’s phone began buzzing on the nightstand, and he swiped it, noticing the text from Ace.

*Ace: The CO needs us to come in for a briefing ASAP.*

“Shit,” he muttered.

“What’s wrong?” she asked, pulling away to look at him. The sheet fell away from her, and he grabbed one of his tee shirts for her to slip on. He couldn’t handle looking at her tempting body when he needed to leave.

“I’ve got to go in to base,” he explained. “Ace said it’s urgent.”

His phone buzzed again, and his gut clenched.

*Ace: Mustafa Abdel is in the U.S.*

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Twenty minutes later, Havoc was hustling toward the bullpen for their briefing. He’d wanted to feed Olivia breakfast and enjoy a leisurely morning together, and this shot that plan to hell. The update on the fourth hijacker, however, made his blood run cold. What the hell was Mustafa doing on U.S. soil? How had he managed to enter the country? Havoc clenched his fists, furious that they were still dealing with the hijacker a week later. He’d escaped in Manila and was a goddamn thorn in their sides until he was brought to justice.

“What’s going on?” Rob asked, joining him at the conference table.

“No idea. Just saw that text from Ace and rolled right in here. Damn,” he said, scrubbing a hand over his jaw. “That was not the news I needed this morning. He’s in the States? That seems fucking impossible.”

“No shit. How the hell that asshole got out of the country and onto a plane

defies all logic.”

“Mother fucker” Havoc ground out. “Did he have a private jet? Did he parachute in? Jesus.” Joking aside, it was urgent that the man be tracked down immediately before he could hurt anyone else. Although several lives had been lost on the airplane, he’d planned to kill nearly two hundred people. What was to stop him from escalating things further?

They heard voices in the hallway, and Havoc glanced at the door, but the group outside continued on. The rest of their teammates and CO would be there shortly. Havoc felt on edge, the need to know the latest intelligence burning through him. He also wanted to get back to Olivia. He’d driven her to his place last night in his truck, so it’s not like she could leave. She didn’t even have her things—just that sexy little dress she’d been wearing. He’d need to get her home so she could change, not that he was opposed to letting her borrow some of his clothes again. Aside from that, leaving when she’d confessed she didn’t like being alone didn’t sit well with him. It was his job to protect her. Although she wasn’t in immediate danger, he wanted to be there to make sure she felt safe.

“How’s Olivia?” Rob asked with a grin.

His gaze snapped to his friend’s. “I left her in my bed,” Havoc muttered.

Rob’s laughter filled the empty conference room. “It’s about damn time, buddy. You two have been going at it for months. How’s she doing anyway, after everything that went down?”

“I would say good, but she had a nightmare this morning after I got up. Then she confessed that she’d barely been in her own apartment all week. She’d been spending the night at her friends’ places.”

“Shit. Cassie did mention something about her staying over, but I figured it was because we were gone for training.”

“Yeah. They had that girls’ night sleepover, too. I should’ve been paying closer attention. She’s tough, but she also went through hell. I need to mention to her the idea of counseling. She’s trying to stay busy to avoid thinking about the hijacking, but I don’t want her to tamp down those feelings and then be unable to cope when they rise to the surface someday.”

“Those are some wise words, buddy,” Rob said.

“Dumbass. I’m not a total fuck-up,” he muttered.

Rob slugged him in the shoulder. “It wouldn’t be the worst thing for her to speak with someone. Cass said she didn’t want to talk much about it. I think she’s worried about her.”

“Me too. She was fine last night at dinner, but she does okay when she’s around other people. I get the idea she doesn’t want to be alone.”

Their conversation was cut short as the CO and their teammates strode into the room, a frown on Slate’s face. Everyone took their seats as their commander moved to the front. He typed something into the laptop, and Mustafa Abdel’s image appeared on the massive TV screen at the front of the room. “I appreciate everyone getting here so quickly,” he said. “New intelligence indicates that Mustafa Abdel likely entered the U.S. two days ago under an alias. A man matching his description landed at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Friday at thirteen hundred. He’s on the no-fly list as well as the FBI’s Most Wanted list but somehow averted detection by flying into the country using false identification. Surveillance footage and facial recognition software detected that it was him. The FBI is currently looking for him.”

“Shit,” Mark muttered under his breath.

“Mustafa went to college on the West Coast and has contacts here in the States,” Slate continued, showing another slide. “The FBI is already moving to question his former roommates to see if they’ve been in contact with him. Although he landed at the airport on Friday, his whereabouts are currently unknown.”

“How do we play into this, sir?” Ace asked.

Their commander’s gaze swept the room, eyeing the team. “Because the bombing of the aircraft was thwarted, it is believed that he is planning another terrorist attack, this time on U.S. soil. He is familiar with several cities in California and is believed to be heading in this direction.”

“Why didn’t he fly into LAX?” Trigger asked, looking at their CO.

“One of his former roommates now lives in Seattle, but it’s unknown if he’s made contact yet. Given that three of the hijackers were killed, analysts believe Mustafa could be planning to involve persons already known to him

within the U.S. as part of his terror plot.”

“What’s he targeting?” Ace asked.

The CO’s gaze swung toward Havoc, and he felt his blood run cold. “Some of the belongings from the passengers on the hijacked plane were tampered with or stolen from the airport in Manila,” Slate said. “Investigators stored the luggage and personal items of the hostages in a secure area of the airport as they were catalogued in preparation to return them. It was already believed that Mustafa had someone inside the airport working with him.”

“No shit,” Havoc said. “They brought a fucking bomb on board.”

Slate leveled him with a glare.

“Sir,” Havoc said with a nod.

“To continue,” Slate ground out, “Multiple items were taken. Purses. Wallets. The luggage tags were ripped off some of the suitcases.”

“He’s tracking passengers,” Havoc said, shock washing over him.

“He is, and Olivia’s personal belongings were among some of the things stolen. An unstable man like Mustafa is livid that nearly all of the passengers on that plane escaped without harm. The attacks he is plotting involve them. Analysts assess there is a high probability that he’s looking to cause the maximum amount of death and destruction. He’s not going to be showing up at people’s homes. Their places of work and worship will be targeted. Schools. Offices. Churches.”

“Shit,” Havoc muttered. “And we’re certain he has Olivia’s name and information?”

Their CO nodded. “The authorities catalogued the passenger’s things. Her purse and wallet were among the items stolen. They also found the passenger manifest and flight seating chart among the remaining bags. It looks like they were dropped accidentally by Mustafa’s contact at the airport. Several seats were circled.”

Havoc watched their CO pull up copies to show on the massive screen. Several seats in first class were circled in red ink, no doubt passengers who’d witnessed the entire hijacking firsthand. There was one seat circled by the emergency exit. Havoc froze as he looked closer at the next circled location.

Seat 27A. Olivia.

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Havoc wanted to punch something as he drove back to his apartment. Slate had continued the briefing, telling them Olivia would need eyes on her at all times until Mustafa was located, something Havoc agreed with one hundred percent. His little hellcat would both love and hate that. She'd already admitted that she didn't like being alone, so this was the perfect excuse to have people around. But to know that she was actually among the passengers being targeted by a madman? His gut churned.

It made no damn sense.

Their CO had briefed them on Mustafa's background. He'd been beaten and abused by his father as a child in Iraq, happy to escape to the U.S. for college. Somewhere along the way he'd become radicalized, blaming the western world for his own father's hatred of him.

He was a loose cannon, set on seeking revenge. Someone unhinged like that wouldn't be satisfied knowing all those passengers escaped, so he was targeting them. Plotting a terrorist attack but twisting it enough so that he could include some of the people who'd escaped. It was sick and fucked up. And to know the asshole was missing?

Havoc jogged across the parking lot of his apartment complex, anger rolling off him in waves. He'd have to tell Olivia about this. Until the tango was brought in, she'd need to stay with him. Maybe she should work from home. He didn't know what would happen with the other passengers who were evidently targets. Would the Bureau step in? Havoc hadn't even thought to ask his CO their location, and he wondered if any were in California. With fifty Americans onboard, it was quite possible. As much as it gutted him, he had to admit that it made sense for Mustafa to go after passengers in an area he was familiar with. Didn't it just fucking suck that Olivia lived in that exact place? He should whisk her off to a remote tropical location, keep her away for a while.

Shit. Shit. Shit.

His gaze scanned the area as he moved, but nothing seemed amiss. He punched in the number at the door to his building and then went inside. Thankfully it was more secure than Olivia's place, something he'd noted the very first time he went there.

Havoc stilled as he opened his apartment door, shocked to see Olivia standing there in his kitchen, wearing nothing but his tee shirt. She was washing dishes at the kitchen sink but turned to wink at him over her shoulder. Suddenly, all thoughts of talking to her went out of his head. Her toned legs beneath the hem of that shirt were a fucking tease. As she shut off the water and turned, he could see her nipples pushing against the cotton of his shirt. He moved toward her then, running a hand through her hair as he pressed her against the counter and stole a heated kiss.

"I had to use your bodywash and shampoo," she said, running a hand over the stubble on his jaw. He wanted to close his eyes at her gentle touch, but he was too wound up.

"You smell like me," he said, his voice gravel. "I love my scent and clothes on you."

Suddenly he was lifting her up, one hand under her ass, the other around her waist, and crossing the kitchen.

"What are you doing?" she asked with a giggle.

"Just something I've been fantasizing about." He placed her on the edge of the kitchen table, helping her to lie back so her legs dangled off the edge as she stared up at him in wonder. He moved closer, hovering over her, his rough hands palming her breasts through the soft material. He squeezed gently, his thumbs skating over her nipples.

Her breathing was growing shallow. "And what's that?" she teased.

"You in my shirt and nothing else while I eat out this sweet pussy," Havoc ground out.

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Olivia gasped as Havoc's big hands landed on her thighs, spreading them, baring her sex to his gaze. "Fuck. You're not wearing panties." His gaze was scorching, and maybe she should feel embarrassed, but she felt desired. Beautiful. She was already growing wet from the way he looked at her.

"Is that a problem?" she asked breathlessly, her heart fluttering as he ducked closer.

"It's fucking perfect."

Time seemed to stand still for a moment as their eyes locked, his expression hungry and wild. He'd looked agitated when he'd first come into the apartment, and now he looked on edge in an entirely different way. He held her gaze a moment longer, and then he was feasting on her, swiping his tongue over her swollen folds as he spread her legs wider, licking and completely devouring her. Olivia whimpered, her hands flying to his head. Owen wasn't slow or hesitant. He saw what he wanted and took it.

His hands gripped her hips as his broad shoulders spread her thighs apart. Her nails raked through his shortly cropped hair. "Mine," he said gutturally, swiping his tongue through her folds again.

"So. Bossy."

And then she yelped as he gently nipped at her. She lay there panting, gasping as he continued to drive her crazy. Sucking. Teasing. Swirling his tongue over her exposed clit. "Good girl," he murmured, and sparks shot straight through her. She didn't think she'd get off on a man telling her that, but with Owen? She loved his dominating, bossy side.

"You're going to come on my tongue, O," he murmured, sinking two fingers into her pussy as his mouth never let up. She felt herself fluttering against him. He kissed her sex, slowly thrusting his fingers in and out. Her abdomen was tightening, her body coiling as he wound her up higher.

"You're so wet. So very much mine."

His thick fingers twisted inside her, and when he sucked her clit between his lips, she screamed, writhing on the kitchen table as she orgasmed for him. Owen growled in approval, slowly bringing her back down. He kissed her inner thigh, and she felt his stubble rubbing against her skin. His thumb slid over her clit again like he couldn't resist touching her.



But when he stood up a minute later, helping her to her feet, he was frowning. “I love you relaxed and sated like this, but we’ve got to talk, hellcat. The CO had an update you’re not going to like.”

## Chapter 18

Olivia sat in the passenger seat of Havoc's truck as he drove to her apartment that afternoon. She'd get some of her things to stay with him until the situation was resolved and Mustafa was under arrest. She'd been tearful and shaking when he told her the update about the missing hijacker, and he'd cursed, promising to keep her safe.

"Do the other women know?" she asked, looking over at him. Once he'd given her the terrifying news, they'd headed straight to her apartment. She hadn't even gotten a chance to call her friends yet.

He nodded. "Normally we wouldn't be able to share intelligence like that, but in this situation, it's for everyone's safety to be on alert. Cassie and Addison work with you. If your office building was targeted—"

"Oh God, don't even say it," she said, shuddering. "This guy is seriously insane. He looked like pure evil on the plane. That's why I noticed so much about him to begin with. What kind of sicko would try to blow up an airplane and then target the same passengers afterward?"

"He's deranged," Havoc said. "And an egomaniac. He doesn't like that he didn't finish the job, so to speak. You escaped, along with nearly everyone else on that airplane. In his twisted mind, attacking nameless people is no longer enough."

"That's sick," she muttered. "What if he comes after you?" she suddenly asked, eyes wide with alarm.

"Mustafa doesn't know who we are, O. Even if he saw our faces at some point, he doesn't have our names or know where we're stationed. Besides, we're in a secure military installation and highly trained. It's you I'm worried about." Havoc reached over and snagged her hand, hating the worry on her face.

"Right. I'm the one with a crazy terrorist looking for me."

"We'll handle this," he assured her, keeping hold of her hand, his other on the

steering wheel. “The police and FBI are already looking for him. Once we get a location on this asshole, they’ll round him up. Aside from the long list of charges he’s already wanted for, they’ll add plotting the new terror attacks to the list.”

“And stealing my belongings,” she muttered. “If he really has my wallet, I guess I need to cancel all those credit cards and look into getting a new driver’s license.”

Havoc grunted.

“What would he use anyway in these attacks, like if he really targeted my office building or something? Explosives?”

“Yes. The bomb he displayed on the plane was the real deal. He’d assembled it himself from parts he’d obtained and has working knowledge on how to make bombs and explosive devices.”

“It seems insane he’d even go through the trouble tracking down passengers.”

“A rational man wouldn’t hijack an airplane, hellcat.”

She shuddered, and he squeezed her hand. “I still don’t understand how he even got out of the Philippines,” Olivia said.

“He used false identification,” Havoc said. “There’s big money to be made in that business. Fake IDs, passports, birth certificates, and the like. He had false credentials and was able to get in to the States. It no doubt helped that he’d been here before as a college student. He’d flown in and out of the country multiple times and was comfortable with the process. It’s easier to blend in that way without raising suspicion.”

“Whatever happened to those other guys—Wyatt’s team?”

“They flew back to Hawaii after the op. That’s where they’re stationed.”

“Oh. I feel like I should’ve thanked them for helping to rescue me. I didn’t even think about it when we were all flying home on the military plane.”

“It’s fine, O. Don’t forget, you helped us figure out there was a missing hijacker in the first place.”

“My mom called me a little while ago when we were still back at your place,” she said, studying his profile as he drove. “You were on the phone with Ace.”

“Oh yeah?”

“My parents really want to come visit me. Of course, now I had to tell them not to come because it’s not safe.” She blew out a breath.

“It won’t go on forever,” Owen assured her. “You’ll stay with me for now, and then once we get Mustafa, life will get back to normal. When this is over, tell them to fly out here. I’d love to meet the people who raised my hellcat.”

Olivia burst into laughter. “You would not.”

“Why not?” He lifted a shoulder. “I’ll be the first to admit I’m not looking to drag you kicking and screaming down the aisle—”

She giggled, and he shot her a heated look.

“I figure that saying you’re mine when I was balls deep inside you at least means you’re my girlfriend.”

“Romantic,” she quipped.

“I’ll leave that part out when I meet them. And the part where I feasted on you at my kitchen table.” He smirked, and she swore she felt herself flushing.

“So what would you tell them?” Olivia asked, only partly joking.

“That you’re mine. Seriously, O. We’ll tell them how we were friends first and now we’re together. It’ll be fine.”

“What makes you think I was worried?”

“Because I know you. You’re smart as hell but can overthink things. This? Us? It works. Sure, we’re different in some respects, but I like that you’re opinionated and tell it like it is. We’ve already been hanging out together for months, with you drooling over me.”

“Oh stop,” she protested with a laugh.

“You think I didn’t notice you watching me? I wanted you, too, O. Except now I get to make all that a reality and listen to you beg for me,” he added, winking.

She shook her head in amusement. “What about you? I’ve never heard you mention your family.”

“Left when I was eighteen and never looked back,” he admitted. He looked

over at her, and she realized what an amazing man he really was. Yes, Havoc was slightly rough around the edges, but he was protective when it came to those he cared about and people who needed his help. Some of the impulsive stuff he'd done in the past was that part of his personality coming into play. Standing up for a woman in the bar? Doing what he thought was right? She couldn't fault him for that.

"I'm sorry about your family," she murmured. "You haven't had any contact since then?"

"Nope."

"Well, then I'd love for you to meet my parents." He looked over and smiled, an honest-to-God smile. It was a little surprising since he liked to joke around and smirk at her half the time. "Just promise me you'll never mention the kitchen table."

His bark of laughter filled the truck. "That memory is for me alone," he said, his voice deep. They pulled into her apartment complex and got out, Owen snagging her hand as they walked toward her building. She'd rolled a pair of his shorts at the waist and was still in his tee shirt. He'd teased her again that he liked her in his clothes, but she was looking forward to wearing something that actually fit her small frame.

Ten minutes later, Owen was carrying her large suitcase out to his truck. He'd laughed at how much she was bringing but sobered quickly when she told him her smaller carryon had been on the hijacked plane. He easily lifted the suitcase into the bed of the truck, his muscles bunching with the movement. "Oh, I should've grabbed a jacket. Be right back!"

She hurried off before he could answer, jogging up the steps to her place. When she came back down a minute later, a man she didn't recognize was loitering near the stairs. Owen was already crossing the lot, a dark look on his face. Olivia frowned in confusion, and as Owen's arm wrapped around her shoulders, he bodily moved her forward, away from the building and man.

"Owen, it's fine. That's not him," she said as he hustled her along. Her hand was tightly clutching her jacket, and she realized Owen's reaction rattled her more than she wanted to admit.

"Just get in the truck," he said, opening the door.

“Owen,” she pleaded.

He leveled her with a gaze. “Just do it. Please.”

Trembling, she quickly opened the door and climbed in, watching as the man approached. Owen was already on his phone, talking to either his teammates or CO. She wasn’t sure. Olivia looked down at her hands, realizing that they were trembling. He climbed into the driver’s side, and the man continued on, not sparing them another glance.

“Who’d you call?”

“My commander. I sent him a picture of the guy just in case. Something seemed off about him appearing there when you were inside.”

“Is that really necessary?” she asked.

He lifted a shoulder. “I’m not taking any chances.”

“He was probably just at the wrong building. Look, he’s climbing into that convertible over there,” she said with a nod. “I bet he just got the building number wrong.”

Owen started the engine and backed out of the parking space. “Maybe. Maybe not. I’m not taking any chances. Are you good with working from home this week? From my place,” he clarified. “I’ll have to go into base, but you can work at my apartment.”

“Well, it’s not ideal, but I could make it work. My office building is huge, so if this crazy guy really did come after me, there’d be a large number of people there. Should I notify security or something?”

“We already sent the FBI Most Wanted poster to them. The security guards there know to be on the lookout and call the police if he appears.”

“Well damn. That’s efficient.”

“I could drop you off at Addison’s one day if you’d like. Ace’s home is secure, and she’ll be working from there for now,” Havoc said.

“Really? Yeah, that would be good. I don’t like being alone.”

“That reminds me. I should’ve mentioned it before, but we’ve got a list of counselors on base who deal with PTSD.”

“I don’t have PTSD.”

“Maybe you don’t, but they help people work through things. I can give you their contact info. Just think about it,” he said, knowing she was going to protest. “Being on a hijacked airplane is a traumatic experience. It might help to get someone else’s perspective.”

“Yeah. Maybe. Are you sure it’s okay to leave my car at my apartment complex?” she asked, changing the subject.

He nodded. “Might as well since you’re not driving anywhere alone for the time being.”

“Bossy.”

“You seem to like me bossing you around sometimes, hellcat,” Owen said, his voice growing deeper.

She smiled. “I wouldn’t have guessed it, but yeah, I guess I kind of like that dominant side of you.”

“I noticed,” he said with a wicked grin.

“I put on another thong when I changed clothes at my apartment,” she said nonchalantly.

The truck sped up as Owen’s foot hit the accelerator, and she laughed, her hand landing on his thigh. She slid it higher as he cursed, clutching onto the steering wheel. “Payback’s a bitch, isn’t it?” she teased.

## Chapter 19

Olivia sipped her iced coffee on the patio at Addison and Ace's house the next morning, shaking her head at the plywood on his back door. The patched-up area was a sharp contrast to the rest of the well-maintained house and nicely landscaped backyard. "I still can't believe Owen did that."

"He was furious," Addison said. "Seriously, I've never seen him so worked up before."

"He was," Everly agreed. "Ace was inside on the phone, and when Havoc found out what happened, he went crazy. He punched the glass and then left before the rest of the guys, rushing over to meet with their commander."

"Well damn," she said.

Addison eyed her. "He really cares about you. I mean clearly, he's still worked up now, what with bringing you over here. Ace was a little concerned about leaving us alone to work today, but it's not like that crazy hijacker knows our name or address."

"Believe me, Owen was circling around making sure no one was following us when he dropped me off earlier. I did insist we stop for coffees though," she added with a wink.

"And thank God for that," Everly said, smiling.

"So do you have any trips coming up?" Olivia asked her. "I remember you did that one clothing launch from someplace in Florida."

"Oh gosh, please don't mention airplanes," Cassie muttered.

"Just local stuff for now," Everly replied, eyeing the other woman. "A lot of the companies I team up with let me blog or post about their products whenever. They send me clothes, beauty products, and all sorts of things. I love the flexibility of it," she said.

"That sounds pretty awesome," Olivia admitted. "I've thought about branching out on my own sometime for marketing."



“Oh yeah?” Everly asked, intrigued.

“What?” Addison asked, looking surprised. “You’d really leave? You can ask not to take any business trips. Given what happened, I’m sure everyone would understand.”

“It’s not even that,” Olivia explained. “I’ve worked there a while doing marketing, but I’m not a developer like you, Add. If I started my own small business, I could pick and choose projects I want. I’d have to grow a client list, maybe rent out some office space somewhere in San Diego.”

“Wow. You’ve really thought about this.”

“Yeah. It might be time to step up my game, set some goals for the future. You’ll be busy with a baby,” she pointed out. “Will you work full time after your maternity leave is over or cut back your hours?”

“I don’t know,” Addison admitted.

“Wait—you both might be leaving?” Cassie asked. “Geez. That would be sad at the office with neither of you around.”

Olivia frowned as her gaze landed on the borrowed laptop she was using. “I can’t wait until I get my suitcase back with my own laptop. They confiscated our phones,” she added offhandedly. “All my contacts are in there, pictures, everything.”

“Aren’t they stored in the cloud?” Addison asked. “You could transfer data over to your new phone. Most things automatically back up.”

“I’m sure they are. I don’t remember my password though. How dumb is that? I don’t want to accidentally lock my account. I programmed your numbers into my new phone, obviously, but I’m missing most of my contacts. I met this woman named Callie at the airport. She was on the hijacked plane a few seats up from me. They singled her out for some reason, and I think the hijackers broke her arm,” she added in a low voice.

The other women gasped.

“We had exchanged contact info at the gate before that flight from hell. I want to text her and see how she is when I get her number. I programmed it in the phone I haven’t gotten back yet.”

“Oh, that sucks. I hope they get your phone and suitcase back to you soon.

Maybe you could try to look her up on social media,” Everly added thoughtfully. “Do you know her last name?”

“Oh my God, you’re right! She’s a travel writer and blogger. Callie Spencer. I’m sure I could find her that way.”

Everly grinned. “There you go. I bet she’d want someone to talk to about everything. I mean, shoot, we’re happy to listen, but we weren’t there.”

“Owen thinks I should talk to a counselor,” Olivia admitted.

“It’s a good idea,” Addison said. “They might be able to help you sort through your feelings. I know I’d be pissed as hell to be helpless like that on a hijacked plane, trapped inside.”

“You wouldn’t believe the guys when they stormed the plane. I didn’t even know it was them at first. Holy crap. They were in control of the situation in minutes, taking out the bad guys and getting us off the plane.”

“They’re scary good at what they do,” Everly said.

Olivia’s gaze landed on her laptop. “I guess I better actually get some work done this morning. Since I took off last week, I’m behind on just about everything.”

“Yeah, I’ve got this new app I’m coding that I need to tweak a few things for,” Addison said.

The women settled into their work, enjoying the peacefulness of the backyard. Despite being outside, Olivia felt a little keyed up. She’d been at Owen’s apartment all day yesterday and didn’t like feeling confined to Ace’s house. She was used to being on the move, talking to everyone at the office, going out for coffee or lunch, and hitting up the gym.

“Hey, are any of you up for the gym later on?” she asked, suddenly feeling better. A good workout always helped.

“I could do a spinning class with you,” Everly offered.

“You’ll have to drive since I don’t have my car.”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea?” Addison asked.

Olivia shrugged. “I thought we were staying out of the office because it’s such a huge building—a good target. Our company’s space might be small,

but there are hundreds of people working in the entire building. I'm easy to track there since my name and photo are on the company website as the contact for marketing. I doubt the gym is a problem. I'm here at your house, right?"

"I guess," she said, looking uncertain.

"I'll text Owen. Not that he's my keeper," she added, "but he is grumpy enough to be mad if I don't tell him where I am given the circumstances."

Olivia: *I'm going to spin class with Everly later on.*

Olivia: *Gotta keep up this tight little body you enjoy so much. ;)*

She smirked, remembering his words from the other day. They'd had a quickie in the shower this morning, but he'd promised her he'd spend time savoring every inch of her body later tonight. She'd cook dinner for him and after they'd relaxed and talked about their days, they'd enjoy each other in his big, king-sized bed. Olivia couldn't wait.

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Havoc dropped to the ground, unclamping his carabiner from the rope. They'd been repelling during their training this morning, and he could feel his muscles still burning from when they'd initially scaled the wall. He swiped the sweat from his brow, walking over to grab his canteen. He chugged some water, looking up at the blue San Diego sky. It was a fucking pretty morning. He'd dropped O off earlier at Ace's house, and she'd declared that she was going to work outside today. She'd be on a laptop, not working the same way he and his teammates did. Cassie and Everly were joining them as well, and he was glad she'd be around her friends.

He'd been disappointed when he'd arrived on base and learned there'd been no sightings of Mustafa. The FBI had been in contact with his old roommate, and he hadn't seen Mustafa in more than a year.

Ace moved toward them, his phone in hand. The rest of the men had their phones stored in their lockers for the training exercises, but Ace was keeping in contact with the CO. "Just checked the security cameras at my house. All

is good.”

He held it up, and Havoc grinned as he looked at the screen. Olivia and her friends were laughing in the backyard about something. He couldn't hear the conversation, but they were smiling. “Doesn't look like they're getting much work done,” he noted.

Ace's lips quirked. “No kidding. It's good the women are together though.”

“Olivia was annoyed I drove around so much this morning,” Havoc said. “I wasn't taking any chances, not that it matters much since that asshole hasn't been spotted in the area.”

“He'll turn up.”

“I'm counting on it,” Havoc said darkly.

“We've got one more training exercise, and then we can hit the showers and chow hall. The CO already called a briefing for thirteen hundred to update us on the situation.”

Havoc nodded, a sense of uneasiness suddenly rolling through him. It made no sense. Mustafa hadn't been sighted. Ace had just pulled up the feed from his house. He snagged his canteen from where he'd left it on the ground and took another long pull. He'd feel better when he picked up O later on and had her in his sights. Having her in bed at night wasn't a hardship, but it was more. He needed her safe.

“Everything okay?” Rob asked, quirking his brow.

“Yep.”

Two hours later, Havoc was moving through the locker room, grabbing a clean uniform. There'd been a delay because of the equipment, and he was starving. He showered and dressed, scrubbing a hand over the stubble on his jaw. Olivia had declared she loved how it looked and especially loved the way it felt when he buried his head between her thighs.

That woman.

He reached for his cell phone to shoot her a text since he hadn't checked in, when Ace's string of curses filled the air. “The CO needs to brief with us, stat. Mustafa was in LA this morning.” Havoc pulled his hand back and slammed the locker shut, quickly pulling on his combat boots to hustle down

to the bullpen.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me. Did they arrest him?” he asked.

Ace was frowning at his phone. “No idea. Let’s move.”

Adrenaline coursed through Havoc as the team jogged down the hall, hurrying to meet with the CO for their briefing. They hustled into the bullpen, and Slate’s face looked grim. “Grab a seat.”

Havoc yanked out a chair, almost knocking it over. The other men looked somewhat agitated as well, eager for the latest intel as they sat around the conference table. “One of the passengers from the hijacked plane was killed early this morning in Los Angeles,” Slate said, his steely gaze sweeping the room. “Mustafa was spotted on surveillance footage outside the victim’s office building at oh four hundred this morning. He planted a bomb in a parking garage under the structure, but it didn’t detonate. When the victim returned to the garage at eleven hundred, Mustafa killed him. Authorities said that his throat had been slit.”

“Damn,” Havoc cursed, his fists clenching. “Was Mustafa waiting for him all that time?”

“He was seen reentering the garage at ten hundred. It’s believed when the bomb didn’t detonate, Mustafa vandalized the man’s car to lure him down there. When emergency personnel responded to a man bleeding out in the parking garage, they discovered a bomb on the scene. It appeared to have malfunctioned but was powerful enough to have done serious damage to the structure, causing a partial collapse of the building.”

“Why wouldn’t he detonate another device at a later date instead?” Brian wondered. “If his goal was to hurt or kill hundreds, he didn’t succeed.”

“The FBI believes he will strike again. Although Mustafa just arrived in the U.S. several days ago, he still had belongings in a storage locker outside of LA. He went there in the middle of the night before arriving at the office building.”

“He was storing explosives,” Mark muttered.

“Yes. He had the components and likely had already built the bombs,” Slate confirmed. “The FBI is removing the contents of the storage locker now, but

Mustafa had already taken a few boxes.”

“Shouldn’t they have searched that storage locker ASAP?” Trigger asked.

“They needed a warrant to access it,” Slate said.

“Why the fuck weren’t they monitoring it then?” Havoc ground out. “If the Bureau thought there was any chance he would head there, they should’ve gotten their shit together and had agents waiting with handcuffs.”

“Agreed. Given that he flew into Seattle, however, the roommate lead made the most sense. Mustafa worked with three other men to hijack the aircraft. FBI profilers thought he would seek to recruit others to carry out a bombing here in the U.S. He’s not a lone wolf terrorist. He likes the validation he gets from others.”

“Guess they thought wrong,” Havoc spat out. “An entire building could’ve been blown up because of the miscalculation.”

“We don’t know how many bombs Mustafa may have with him,” Slate continued. “After slitting the throat of the former passenger, Mustafa was seen leaving the parking garage in a rental car. Traffic cams show him getting on the I-5, headed south.”

“So they can pull him over and arrest the bastard,” Rob said, sitting up straighter. “They can end this bullshit now.”

“His rental car was found abandoned on the side of the highway. We don’t know the type of vehicle he’s driving in now,” Slate said.

“Do they think he’s headed to San Diego?” Havoc asked.

“Possibly. Mustafa had a list of people he was targeting. One of the passengers lives in Santa Ana, just south of Los Angeles. The police are on their way to inform the person that he may be in danger. A woman on the list of targets lives in Colorado, so he’s not driving there today. If he bypasses Santa Ana, he’ll come to San Diego.”

“What’s to say he won’t give up this asinine idea to target individuals and just plant bombs somewhere else? Targeting specific people is calculating and sinister,” Ace said.

“It is, but he’s not a rational man. We’re sending undercover police and federal agents to Olivia’s apartment building and office. If he shows up, he’ll

be arrested.”

Havoc watched as their CO pulled up some slides, showing a map of Mustafa's movement over the past twenty-four hours. He hated that the asshole had ever seen Olivia, let alone learned her name and address. He shifted in his seat, feeling restless. Slate's eyes landed on him. “Go wait with her,” he said. “Our training is done for the day, and the rest of the team will be here. He wouldn't be able to track her to your apartment, but I know you're worried.”

“She's at my house with Addison,” Ace said.

“Good. It's secure. This will be over soon.”

Havoc nodded at his commander and stood, saying goodbye to his teammates. He was ready for this entire day to be over. While he didn't want to frighten Olivia, he'd text her to say he was on his way. He'd feel better when she was with him. And if Mustafa showed up? Havoc would end things himself.

## Chapter 20

“Oh my God, I’m so glad we did this,” Olivia said, sitting back down on her exercise bike beside Everly. She had a faint sheen of sweat coating her skin, but she felt energized and strong. There was nothing like the adrenaline rush from a good workout. Sitting still working in the backyard of Addison’s house was unnerving. She’d felt trapped, like she needed to just get up and move.

“Girl, you don’t even look winded!” Everly said with a laugh. “I think it’ll take me all day to recover.”

Olivia winked. “Maybe Mark can tend to your injuries,” she teased.

“Oh yeah. I definitely need some tender loving care,” Everly joked.

Olivia grabbed her water bottle and took a sip as the women finished their cooldown, riding slower on the exercise bikes. “Man. I never go to the juice bar but feel like something today. You in?”

“Sure. Let’s grab a drink and then shower and change.”

They crossed the gym, which only had a light crowd for the afternoon.

“Usually I come in the evenings,” Olivia said. “Maybe I should sneak out of the office sometime. I like how there aren’t many people here today.”

“Yeah, it’s nice.”

“I’m just glad they let me in. I didn’t have an ID or my gym membership card.”

“Well, your photo was in the system,” Everly said with a shrug. “Once you told them your name, it wasn’t a problem. I hope you get your wallet back someday.”

“You’re telling me. My entire life was in there—credit cards, membership cards, even my health insurance info. I’m going to need to start calling places this week and get new everything.”

Her cell phone rang, and she slid it from the pocket of her workout leggings.



“Oh, it’s one of my coworkers. Let me just take this really quick.”

“Hey Beth! Did you get the email I sent earlier with the new details?”

“I did, yeah. Thanks. Some man stopped by a little while ago saying he needed to talk to you. I was in a meeting and meant to call you sooner. When I told him you weren’t here, he said he’d head to your apartment.”

“It’s probably one of the FBI agents. They’re investigating some stuff related to the hijacking. Did the building security guys let him up to our actual office?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay. Well, I’m sure he’ll be in touch if he needs to speak with me. Thanks for letting me know.”

She swiped the screen to end the call, wondering why the FBI wouldn’t have just called her themselves. She and Everly ordered drinks, and Olivia sank onto one of the tall stools, sipping her green juice.

A man wearing jeans and a blazer walked into the gym and stopped at the front desk, speaking with the receptionist about something. He’d set a box down and seemed agitated. She couldn’t hear the conversation from across the room, but her gaze trailed over his shaved head. He looked like he might be Hispanic, but she couldn’t see his face from here, just one side of his head.

“Did you hear what I said?” Everly asked.

“No. What?”

Olivia kept watching the man a moment, listening as his voice grew louder. Everly’s voice trailed off as her gaze landed on the front desk as well. “No, I don’t have a membership! Fine, if I can’t look around myself, then give me a tour. I demand to use this gym right now!” He sounded congested, like he had a cold, but he wasn’t Hispanic like she’d first thought. He had an accent.

“Damn,” Everly muttered. “That’s some tiny dick energy right there.”

Olivia chuckled. “No kidding. He doesn’t even have a gym bag with him. Is he planning to wear those designer loafers to lift weights?”

The man raised his arms as he spoke, seeming angrier. Clearly, the guy did need to burn off some energy, but she couldn’t say she’d want him here in

her space. He seemed like a total dick. His blazer shifted, and she caught the gleam of his cufflinks in the overhead light. That was a weird fucking thing to wear to the gym. She smirked, thinking of how Havoc's cursing was wearing off on her. Suddenly, she gasped.

Cufflinks.

He moved again, yelling at the receptionist, and then time seemed to stand still as his gaze locked on hers. Beady dark eyes. That small scar at his temple. He'd shaved off his beard and the hair on his head, but he was the right height. The right build.

She screamed as he pulled out a knife and ran toward her. Other people in the gym began screaming as well. Although there were some muscular men over by the weights, there were only a few women out front by the juice bar. A few women and the fourth hijacker.

Olivia screamed again as she stumbled, and then she and Everly were running, trying to escape a killer.

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Havoc grabbed his keys from his locker, sliding them into his pocket, and then grabbed his cell phone, slamming the locker door shut. He swiped the screen, and his heart stopped as he saw Olivia's texts from earlier.

Olivia: *I'm going to spin class with Everly later on.*

Olivia: *Gotta keep up this tight little body you enjoy so much. ;)*

She'd left Ace's house? What the hell had she been thinking? He called Olivia, cursing as the phone rang and rang. It went to voicemail, and he called it again, his pulse pounding. She was just in a class. She was fine.

"Owen," she panted, and his blood ran cold at the terror in her voice. "He's here. He's at the gym. Call 911."

"Fuck!" Havoc yelled, punching the locker as the call went dead. He sprinted back to the bullpen, shouting as he ran inside.

"Mustafa is at Olivia's gym! She's there right now and saw him! Shit. Why

didn't she stay at Ace's?" He scrubbed a hand over his face, frantic, and then his gaze landed on Mark. "Everly's there, too."

The other men were already jumping up, with Slate crossing to a secure line. "I'm calling the Bureau. You," he said, pointing at Ace. "Call 911. Havoc, what's the address?"

"Shit, I don't know. I'll look it up," he said, fumbling with his phone. He told the others the name of the gym as he Googled it, trying to get the information. When the address popped up, he barked it out to them, and then he was running, nothing on his mind but his girl.

Trigger had followed him to his truck, and Havoc didn't comment as he jumped in the passenger side. Havoc started it up and revved the engine, backing out so quickly the tires squealed. He could see Mark climbing into his vehicle as well, Rob with him. Brian was racing to his own SUV, shouting that he'd meet them there.

"Ace is staying here to handle things and possibly get into the gym's surveillance system," Trigger said. "We'll have eyes on the inside if we need it."

Havoc nodded. "Let's hope it doesn't come to that."

He sped across town, praying he didn't get pulled over. Not that he'd have stopped for the cops. He'd teased O before about talking her way out of a speeding ticket, but he'd go to jail for reckless driving if it meant keeping her safe. It felt like an impossibly long time to get to Olivia's gym, but he knew it had been mere minutes. Havoc tried calling her several times, but her phone just went to voicemail.

Trigger's phone buzzed, and his buddy glanced down at the screen. "Mark spoke with Everly. They're hiding in a storage room, but he's shouting for them to come out. He says Ev and Olivia are terrified."

"Fuck." Havoc screeched to a stop in front of the gym, Mark arriving at the exact same time. The four men jumped out and were moving forward without discussion, trained to work together seamlessly. Havoc had left his door open, his truck double-parked on the street, but he didn't give a shit. His gaze swept the area as sirens wailed in the distance. A woman came running outside, crying, yelling there was a man in there with a knife.

“He could’ve planted a bomb,” Rob said in a low voice. “We’ll need to be careful moving in.”

“The CO just texted and said K-9 units are on the way,” Trigger told them.

“We can’t wait that long,” Havoc said. “I need to get to her. Olivia and Everly are inside.”

“I’ll tell him we’re moving in.”

The men yanked open the glass doors, seeing the mess that had been left in the reception area. Two chairs were knocked over, water dripped on the floor from where a water bottle had fallen, and there were food and drinks spilled at the juice bar. A green liquid pooled on the counter, a plastic cup on its side, and Havoc’s eyes darted across the gym as he heard a scream.

“What’s that?” Mark asked, his eyes on a cardboard box near the weightroom. They crossed the gym, fanning out as they went, and Havoc saw the weight area had several men and women inside who were standing far back, clear of the doorway.

“It’s a bomb!” one of them yelled. “Don’t come closer. If you move that box, he’ll detonate it! He’s got a camera hooked up. Don’t walk near the doorway!”

The four men stilled. “Where’s the camera?” Havoc asked, his eyes narrowing as he looked at the cardboard. “He can’t be watching from every angle.”

“It’s pointed at us,” a woman said. “At the weightroom. The man with a knife said if we come after him or try to leave, he’ll blow the entire gym up. He showed us the bomb!” she added tearfully.

“It must have a remote detonator,” Rob said in a low voice. Havoc clenched his jaw.

“It’s okay,” Trigger said, holding his hands up. “We’ll stay over here so we’re not on the camera. The police and K-9 units are already on their way, and the FBI will send in the bomb squad. You’ll be okay,” he assured them. “Just stay put while we find this asshole.”

“Which way did he go?” Havoc asked.

“Toward the back” one of the weightlifters said. “There are locker rooms and

a storage area.”

Havoc was already moving, silently crossing the gym. They were all crossing to the same side now, staying away from the weight room. Trigger was calling the CO with an update, but Havoc’s sole focus was on his girl.

There were more water bottles and towels on the floor where gymgoers had dropped things and run. “Ev’s not answering her phone anymore,” Mark said in a low voice.

The team slowed down as they approached the end of a hallway and heard someone muttering to himself around the corner. The rantings didn’t sound like that of a sane man. Although a few words were in English, he was slipping back into Arabic.

“If we rush him, he might detonate the bomb,” Rob said quietly.

They heard pounding on a door as he screamed at the women to let him in. “If we don’t rush him, he’ll get to O and Everly,” Havoc said. “We might not have a fucking choice.”

“If he’s actually watching a video feed, he’ll need his cell phone. If we tackle him, one of us can confiscate the phone so he doesn’t detonate the bomb,” Trigger said in a low voice. He edged closer, glancing back at his teammates. Havoc could see he wanted to peek around the corner, but they might not have that luxury. If Mustafa spotted them, and they weren’t ready to move in, it was game over.

Havoc signaled to the others, indicating who should go left and who should go right as they rushed down the hall. It wasn’t wide, but they didn’t need to be running into one another. His phone buzzed, and he saw a message from Ace.

*Ace: I’m in the gym’s surveillance system and see Mustafa.*

*Ace: That fucker shaved his head.*

*Ace: I’ll give the go ahead.*

“Ace has eyes on the tango,” Havoc told the other men in a low voice, adrenaline coursing through him. “Mustafa shaved his head, but it’s him. Ace will tell us when to move in. Trigger, you’ve got the phone?”

“Roger. I won’t let him detonate the bomb.”

“If he looks away for a moment, we can take him. He’s muttering so much he doesn’t hear us, but he’s close,” Havoc said as they all edged toward the corner.

*Ace: Storage room is the last on the left.*

*Ace: Move in!*

“Move!” Havoc growled, and then he and his teammates were surging forward. None of them had weapons aside from their own bare hands, but that didn’t matter. Mustafa turned back in surprise, and Havoc was already flying through the air, tackling him to the ground. The phone went sliding across the floor as Trigger leapt for it, and Havoc wrested Mustafa’s knife-wielding hand, pinning his wrist to the floor.

“It’s over,” Rob growled, confiscating the weapon as the sirens from outside grew louder. Havoc kept him on the ground, and Mark called Ace, giving an update as he moved toward the storage room.

“Ev, it’s me,” he said urgently. “Mustafa is on the ground.”

Rob came running back with a rope he’d found, and he and Havoc twisted the hijacker around, binding his wrists behind his back. Mark was helping Everly and Olivia out of the storage room, and Havoc leapt up as she ran toward him, tears in her eyes.

“What the hell were you doing here?” he asked, angry and relieved at the same time.

“I’m sorry! I thought it would be safe to come here,” she said, throwing herself into his arms. They tightened around her, and she clung to him as Havoc ran his hands over her head and back. “I knew my office was a target because if he Googled me, he could easily see my name and face on the website. I thought the gym would be safe. He had my wallet,” she said, realization setting in. “My ID and membership cards. Holy crap. That’s how he found me.”

“It’s okay,” Havoc murmured. “It’s over.”

She looked over and saw Mustafa cursing on the floor, hands behind his back.

“Did you tie him up?” she asked in surprise.

“Yeah. Let’s get you out of here. There’s still a bomb in the building, and I don’t want to take any chances. The authorities need to evacuate the rest of the people inside the gym and send in the bomb squad.”

“I’ll stay with this asshole,” Rob said, nodding at the rest of them. Mark was rushing Everly out, and Trigger went to update the people trapped in the weightroom.

“Does this mean it’s really over?” Olivia asked.

“The situation with Mustafa is over,” Havoc confirmed. “But you and me, hellcat? We’re just beginning.”

# Epilogue

*Two weeks later*

“I like the new doors!” Olivia joked, nudging Owen in the ribs as the group stood around Ace’s backyard, drinking beers and wine coolers. The balmy San Diego night was perfect, and the scent of charcoal filling the air made her mouth water.

Ace looked up from the grill and grinned. “Thanks! Now try to keep that man of yours under control so I don’t have to replace them again. Those doors cost a small fortune!”

“Will do,” she said, laughing as Owen tugged her closer.

“Damn woman. You don’t need to rub it in,” he muttered, but his eyes were twinkling as he gazed down at her. His muscular arm wrapped around her waist, his thick fingers caressing her bare skin.

“There’s only one thing I want to rub,” she said suggestively, and he muttered a curse. Her gaze dropped to his pants, and she giggled. He squeezed her waist in warning.

“I heard payback can be a bitch,” he joked, throwing her words back at her. “And while I like this crop top on you,” he said huskily, pressing his lips to her ear, “I like you in skimpy lingerie even more.”

She shivered at his words, recalling the way he’d stripped her bare last night. She’d worn a pale pink negligee, and Havoc hadn’t been able to keep his hands to himself. Olivia had lost track of how many times he’d made her come, his mouth and hands on her nipples, stomach, inner thighs, and pussy. He’d touched her everywhere, making her moan out loud and squirm. By the time he’d taken her, sinking his thick cock into her swollen folds, she’d come almost instantly, unable to resist the sweet pleasure as Owen made her completely his.

“Who’s to say I’m not also wearing skimpy lingerie tonight?” she teased. “A lacy bra and sexy thong do seem to be your favorites,” she said, innocently



batting her eyelashes at him.

“Keep it up, and I’ll tie your wrists together with that tiny little thong and tease you until you’re begging for me,” he growled.

“It’s a date,” she joked.

“Woman. You’re killing me.”

“Wouldn’t have it any other way,” she quipped. He laughed, his hand at her waist driving her crazy as his fingers trailed in tiny circles. She shivered, and he smirked.

Mark and Everly walked over, his arm slung around her slender shoulders. “I heard you finally got your things back,” she said. “That must feel good.”

“It does. I even got my cell phone. I tried looking up my friend Callie that I met in the airport, but I think she must have taken down all her social media stuff. Now that I have my phone, I’m going to contact her. I want to see how she’s doing.”

“I think that’s great,” Everly said.

“Yeah. I just hope she’s okay. I was surprised I couldn’t find anything online. She seemed really into traveling and blogging, vlogging, all that stuff.”

“What the hell is vlogging?” Havoc asked.

“Video blogging,” both women said. Mark shrugged.

“Oh, I need to go tell Rachel not to drink any of that punch I made,” Everly said, dragging Mark away. “We’ll talk more in a minute!”

“What was that about?” Havoc asked.

“I don’t know,” Olivia replied, watching Everly hurry over to the table with drinks. “She told me she made rum punch—oh.”

“I don’t get it.”

“She told Addison not to drink it because she’s pregnant!”

Havoc looked down at her and then back toward the drinks table, watching Everly talking to the other woman. “Wait, Trigger and Rachel?” Havoc asked, raising his eyebrows.

Olivia playfully swatted at him. “I guess so. I’m not sure how Everly knew

about it, but another one bites the dust.”

“What about you, hellcat? Do you ever want kids?”

“I don’t actually know,” she said with a shrug. “Never say never I guess, but I’ve got stuff I want to do. So no, I don’t think so. What about you?” she asked Havoc.

“Honestly, no.”

“See? We’re meant to be together.”

He turned her to face him, his big hands running down her bare arms.

“Speaking of together, I was thinking you might want to move in to my place. You’re over there every night, sleeping in my bed,” he added, his eyes darkening.

“Well, we don’t do a lot of sleeping,” she pointed out.

His lips quirked. “No, we sure the hell don’t. So what do you say? You. Me. My king-sized bed. It’s silly to have two places, especially when you can’t stay away because of how much you love my big...pillows.”

She burst into laughter, swatting at him again. He caught her hand in his, pressing it to his chest. “Seriously, O, I thought I lost you. Twice now. You’re it for me, baby girl. I didn’t think it was possible, but damn. I’m in love with you and want you with me every night.”

Her eyes watered, and she smiled at him through her tears. “I love you, too, big guy.”

“I know you like things big, O. No need to mention it all the time.” He winked, but then he took her face in his hands and kissed her, hard, right in front of their friends in the middle of the backyard. Everyone was laughing and cheering by the time he let her come up for air, and her face was flushed with arousal and happiness.

“Is that a yes?” he asked.

“Yes! Of course I’ll move in with you, Owen.”

“Hell of a barbeque,” Mark called out, chuckling.

“Yeah, well, we needed a do over after the last one went to hell,” one of the men said.

“No surprises this time,” Ace ordered.

Addison wrapped her arm around his waist, snuggling close. “Well, only if anyone has a good surprise to share. But I think everyone here is right where they’re supposed to be.”



Thank you so much for reading Havoc and Olivia’s story! If you enjoyed this book, you’ll love reading about Wyatt “Wildcard” Miller and travel blogger Callie, coming in the new Alpha SEALs Hawaii series!

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## About the Author

USA Today Bestselling Author Makenna Jameison writes sizzling romantic suspense, including the addictive Alpha SEALs series. Makenna loves the beach, strong coffee, red wine, and traveling. She lives in Washington DC with her husband and two daughters.

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