



# Craved By Gray

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance, New Adult, Mc

**Description:** Scarlet

All I've ever known is a life of danger and crime.

Growing up among the Chrome Vipers, I've never known love or safety. As an adult, I still can't break free. My father's hold on me is ironclad. But I have secrets, things my father might kill me over if he ever found out. And one of those secrets just walked into my father's office with a fake name on his lips and mischief in his eyes. Now I'm left feeling like my delicately balanced world is on the verge of collapse, and I might be the one to knock it down. I'm not Juliet, and he's no Romeo, but I have to wonder if our story—and our love—will end the same way.

Gray

I'm a man of many names and faces, none of them my own.

I thrive sneaking behind enemy lines, pretending to be someone else to uncover secrets that will give my MC an advantage. Never one to stick around long, I move through life like smoke on the wind. But when my latest assignment puts me face to face with our enemy's daughter, a girl whose secrets I already know, I'm tempted for the first time to do something I never thought I would: be myself. I want Scarlett to see the real me. To love the man behind the façade. And if she helps me take down her evil father, so much the better.

Welcome to the Steel Rebels MC, where these rebels blur the lines of morally gray and keep you guessing. This is a "lite" MC, insta-love, alpha heroes, standalones, and full HEA guaranteed.

**Total Pages (Source):** 29

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

## Chapter One

### Scarlett

Whenever I think I've had enough of the city, I find my heart changing when I step into a different neighborhood, stare out a different window, or get a sweeping view from a terrace other than my own. Then I realize that I don't actually want to pack everything I own and disappear.

The city always pulls me back in, and I figure that maybe...well, maybe living in the same city as my criminal father isn't so bad after all. Not with a view like this at least.

It's prettier in the afternoons with the sun, a warm golden orb hanging so low in the sky, casting long shadows across the cityscape. From this vantage point, the city stretches out like a tapestry of concrete and glass, punctured by the distant vibrant green of parks and the meandering blue-green of the Chicago River.

My father is going to kill me.

I shake off the thought as soon as it tries to take root, my eyes dropping to the bustling street below. Cars weave through the grid, and people are like little ants scurrying through a vast maze. I shift my focus back to the dipping sun, casting the city in a warm golden glow reflected by the windows of towering buildings. The sky above, once a brilliant blue, now shimmers with hues of orange and purple.

The man who sired me will, without doubt, use the dullest tool in his office to carve me into pieces when he finds out who I've been spending time with over these last

couple of months. Or worse...he'll pass me off to his men to deal with me as they wish.

I turn away from the view of the city to the people on the rooftop terrace with me. They're bad company. The kind that could bring heaps of trouble to my door. I imagine when most parents warn their kids about being careful with the kind of friends they make, they mean kids who drink and smoke or commit petty crimes, but...not mine.

To the president of the Chrome Vipers Motorcycle Club, a merciless, homicidal man who I have the misfortune to call father, bad company is anyone who doesn't do those things. In his territory, criminality and sadism are not only prized, but rewarded. But I happen to be on the other side of town, the side not under my father's thumb. With my best friend. Someone I never should have befriended in the first place, and yet, I did. I stayed in the friendship even when I found out that she belonged to the one group of people my father hates more than anyone in the world.

The Steel Rebels MC.

He would kill me if he ever found out that not only have I become best friends with a girl from the MC, but I'm now fraternizing with the club members themselves, spending time at their clubhouse, eating and drinking with the very people he loathes with his entire being.

God, what even am I doing here?

I shouldn't be here...in a space where the air is thick with the smell of grilling meat, soft music, and laughter. A space with big comfy-looking chairs and a table overflowing with food and drinks. The terrace itself is like a giant open-air living room with a view of the city stretching out in the distance.

A place that offers a different view of the city from one see from my window every day. Here, the air is warm and alive with quiet joy. It is so unlike the chaos and danger of the world I come from, where it's always cold and quiet is dangerous.

This is not my world.

“Scarlett, are you having fun?”

I turn to the girl on my left to find her worrying her lips, her brows furrowed and gray eyes dark with concern. Brooke is one of the few people I've met who wear their hearts on their sleeves. A weakness, if you ask my father. My best friend is worried I'm uncomfortable here, that I might get up and leave. In all fairness, it's something I've seriously considered doing from the second I arrived, but I would never do that to her.

“I'm fine,” I say, a fond smile touching my lips. “This is fun.”

Brooke studies me a moment longer before her mouth forms into a slight pout. “You don't look like you're having fun.”

“Brooke—”

“If you are really enjoying yourself, why do you have that worried, frightened look on your face? I know these guys are rough around the edges, but they're all really good guys.”

Is that how I look?

I resist the urge to reach up and touch my face. I often make great effort to hide what I'm feeling, but I might have let something slip through the cracks. “I'm having fun,” I hurry to say before she can argue. “It's just... Well, I've never been to a cookout

before.” My father would scoff at the mere idea of hosting a club cookout. The thought of his men casually drinking and having fun, building community would make him sick to the stomach. He would see this as a waste of time and resources. He wants his men at each other’s throats, competing for his favor. “The air is nice, and the view is magical. I’m just trying to take it all in.”

The worry in her eyes dissipates, and she returns my smile. “It’s something, isn’t it? The place and the people,” she says, her eyes sparking with mischief. “If you want, I can introduce you to some of the guys here. I’ve noticed a few checking you out.” Brooke winks before breaking into a fit of giggles, and my eyes automatically drop to her empty wine glass. Mine sits untouched in front of me. I don’t want to seem rude by not drinking, but more than that, I don’t want to get drunk and accidentally reveal to these people that I am not who they think I am.

The Rebels might treat each other like family, but there is no telling what they would do to me if they found out...and got their hands on me before my father could.

To them, I’m just some college friend Brooke brought to a private party, not the only child of their sworn enemy. Yeah, I bet that reveal would ruin everyone’s night.

“I don’t need you to set me up with anyone, Brooke.” Least of all, a Rebel. Nothing would come of it. My father would kill him and then make me pay for so much as allowing myself to breathe the same air as one of them.

“Come on, the guys are hot, right?” she teases, anchoring her elbow on the table and pushing to lean closer, which sends her arm slipping, but I catch her before she can fall forward onto the table and face plant into her half-eaten plate. She giggles as she straightens up. “Most of the guys here are single, and did I mention hot?”

“You did.”

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

“Right.” She giggles. “Anyway, I just want you to find love. Contrary to what most people think, bikers are actually nice people.”

Not the bikers I know, but I don’t correct her on that. There’s no use popping her bubble and revealing the true nature of men like these. I know all too well the things they do; I’ve seen them do some of those things firsthand, helpless to do anything about it.

These men might treat Brooke like their beloved little sister, but outside these walls, they are different—violent and merciless like my father’s men.

“Brooke—”

“Go on, pick someone, and I’ll introduce you.” She waves her hand in the general direction of the men standing in groups around the grill and fire pit. “I mean, you’re gorgeous and aloof in an ice queen way, but I know they’ll love you once they get to know you like I do. The real you.”

A pang of guilt hits at her words. Brooke is wrong if she thinks that she knows the real me. There is a side to me that I’ve hidden, and for good reason. I’ve avoided talking about my past and my family for as long as I’ve known my best friend, but that’s how it has to be if we’re to remain friends.

“I don’t need love, Brooke. What I need right now is some of these ribs. Who made them? They’re so delicious.”

Brooke beams like I knew she would. “Axel,” she says with pride, turning around to

seek the man she's spent four years pinning over and only started dating a few weeks ago. "My boyfriend made them. I'll tell him you like them. Maybe he'll pack some to take home with you."

"They're great," I say, turning as well to follow her gaze, and there, standing with a group of men, is the one who stole my best friend's heart. Axel is watching us—her—and I imagine he hasn't taken his eyes away from her since she walked away from him to greet me when I arrived. From the way he's watching her, he probably wants to take her to some private place and devour her with the same energy I did those ribs.

It's unnerving, watching such a private moment shared between the two. Knowing I'll never get to experience such emotions with anyone, I look away, choosing to scan the rooftop terrace instead. My eyes flit over the sea of tattooed skin and leather jackets. Most of the bikers are a blur of muscles and attitude, no different from the men I've seen at my father's club, and I'm about to turn back to my food when I spot...him.

Standing by the bar is a lone figure among the boisterous crowd. Unlike the other bikers with their prominent club patches, his leather jacket is plain black, unadorned except for a small silver skull pin on the lapel. His jeans are faded and worn, and his boots are scuffed and dusty, but it's his face that draws me in.

God, it's that handsome face that steals my breath away, and for a solid minute, I take him in. Every scuffed and rugged inch of his face with a gorgeous slicked-back mane of polished oak.

"W-who is that?" I find myself asking, and it's meant to be for me, but Brooke hears me, which prompts her finally to shift her eyes from her man.

"Who? Oh, him." Brooke nods toward the tall man nursing a bottle of beer. "That's

Gray. I didn't expect to see him today. He never comes to these things."

"Why?" slips out.

"Um...I don't know. I guess he's always too busy." There's more,, but I don't expect Brooke to spill club business. I'm not here for that. My father would make me to use my friendship with Brooke to spy on his enemies if he ever found out about it, but I would never betray her. I would first run away before I let my father force me into using the only friend I've ever had. "Do you like him? I can introduce you guys—"

"No," I say quickly, my voice loud enough to draw attention to us but not enough to reach Gray, and yet, he looks up. Almost as if he can sense eyes on him. I suck in a sharp breath when his eyes lock on me, and goodness, he's a god. I cringe at the thought as it slips in, but I can't help it. The man has a strong jawline and piercing blue eyes that seem to penetrate my walls. I've had my guard up all afternoon, afraid to drop it and expose my true identity to these people, but it's almost like he can see me for what I am.

A fraud.

A hint of a smile plays on his lips, a subtle flicker of amusement that makes my pulse quicken. His quiet intensity sends goosebumps climbing up my body, and I quickly turn away, my heart hammering wildly in my chest.

God, what the hell was that?

"Scarlett?" Brooke's voice is loaded with questions as she leans closer to me. "Is that...your type?"

"I don't have a type," I say, grabbing the wine I was intent on ignoring and daring a sip. It's been sitting there long enoughthat it tastes stale. I consider getting up to get a



fresh glass, but my knees are too weak, and the cause of my affliction is standing at the bar. There is no way I'm heading in that direction, so stale wine it is.

"Then why is there drool dripping down your chin?"

My eyes widen in horror as I reach up to touch my lips, glaring at a deeply amused Brooke when my fingers come back dry. "Not funny," I say with a mock scowl, but I find my eyes shifting back to the mysterious stranger who's now been joined by Axel.

"I think it's quite funny, the way you're looking at him."

I won't ask. I don't need to know... "And how am I looking at him?" Damnit!

"Shock, lust... Want."

"That ridiculous," I scoff, turning to my stale wine again. I ignore her gaze as I bring the glass to my lips, wincing at the taste.

"Hey, even the ice queen is allowed to like someone."

Except I'm not allowed, but I don't point that out as it would need an explanation. Even so, I find my thoughts flickering to the idea of what it would be like to be in some kind of relationship with a man like... Gray.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

We'd trade secret lustful looks the way Brooke and her boyfriend often do. Sneak away from the party for a little rendezvous. My father wouldn't have to know, and I could be with Gray, share my firsts with him. Have control over who gets to have me at least.

But that is just a pipe dream. Imagination that belongs to a normal twenty-year-old college student, which is something I will never be.

"It's getting late," I whisper, my eyes shifting to the darkening skies. I try to keep my voice neutral, but I imagine some cracks show as Brooke's brow furrows.

"Don't tell me that you're leaving. You are not staying for the games?" She grabs my hand and squeezes it. "That's the best part of the night. We play against the guys, and they always win. You're smart. Like, really smart. I bet we'll win this time if you join us."

I should say no. I have overstayed my visit. God, I wasn't even supposed to be here. At this cookout. On this side of town. With these people. But then I look at my friend's gray eyes, and I feel myself waver.

My father will kill me!

"Okay, but I can't stay long."

But I do. For four more hours, long after the sun has set, I find myself playing games with people I barely know, trying and failing to ignore the heavy presence of the man my eyes keep flitting to. Of course, we lose every game to the guys. Contrary to

Brooke's expectations, I am no help, not when I can't seem to gather my wits around the man whose eyes I feel on me constantly.

But I ignore it. At least I try.

Gray is still on my mind when I finally excuse myself, waving at Brooke who's nestled with Axel on a seat meant for one. She flushes when she catches my eye, waving back, and with a shake of my head, I finally make my exit. In place of Gray, thoughts of my father take root, and I fight back the panic that follows the entire elevator ride down to the underground parking.

I let myself get carried away tonight. I wasn't supposed to be out this long.

My hands are trembling when I climb into my car, a gift I got from my father a few months ago after I helped him with some creative accounting. Helped the man hide money, and this was his gift to me. I can only hope it wasn't stolen.

I wince when I notice that it's nearly ten, flying out of the parking lot in a rush. The traffic is typical of a Sunday night in Chicago, and by the time I'm pulling into my building's parking, it's ten-thirty.

I fight the tremble in my hands as I walk into the expansive lobby, barely paying notice to anything or anyone as I beeline to the bank of elevators, rushing in when one opens for me. My apartment was another gift from my father, but it often feels more like a gilded cage.

Deep breaths, Scarlett. Slow and deep!

The doors open on my floor, and I hurry out, my heels clicking on the marble floor as I rush to my apartment. I take out my key card and press it against the scanner, holding my breath when the door unlocks and I push it open.

The lights are on. My heart drops to my feet.

“Where the fuck have you been?”

I slowly walk inside, a tremble racking through me when my eyes lock with my father’s. I inherited every part of my looks from the man—his hair, his eyes, his coloring. Nothing from the woman who birthed me. A woman I’ve never once met.

“Dad, I...I just...um, went out with friends.”

My father’s steely eyes narrow on mine for long seconds, and I wait for him to press the matter, but he doesn’t. “Nextweekend, I want you at the club,” he says, getting up from the couch he’d been sitting on. “We have work to do.”

By work, he means more help hiding the club’s dirty money. Every time I do this for him, it chips at my soul, and I hate that I’m slowly becoming like him and the band of criminals he keeps around. “I don’t want to do it anymore,” I blurt out.

My father whips around, and before I know it, he’s standing in front of me and his hand is on my jaw, gripping tight. “What did you just say?” he growls, and I push down a whimper when he digs his fingers into my cheeks. “You don’t want to work?”

“It’s...illegal.”

“Listen to me, girl,” he spits, venom in his voice. “The only reason I didn’t sell you off to some rich old man the second you turned eighteen is because you are of some use to me. The moment you stop being useful is the moment I’ll auction you off to someone who’ll know how to deal with you. Until then, you earn your keep!”

I hold back tears, meeting his hard stare head on, and it’s not until he lets go and stomps out of my apartment, slamming the door behind him, that I allow myself to

collapse on the floor. I wrap my arms around my middle, choking on the tears I refuse to shed.

I hate this city. I loathe everything about this damned city and my cursed life here!

In the comfort of my home, I find myself blaming the city all over again, cursing it for housing such monsters.

And for trapping me with them.

Chapter Two

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

Gray

Hazel eyes, black hair the color of charcoal, and a body made to inspire dreams. Fuck, I haven't stopped thinking about her for days. I had every intention of getting closer to her that evening at the club, but there was always someone getting between us. The club's president, Saint, wanted to talk about my plans to infiltrate the Chrome Vipers, Axel wanted to catch up on club business and the new car he was working on in his garage, and just about every other guy had one thing or another to ask me about. When I finally managed to break away, she was gone.

It's probably for the best. That girl was a...distraction. Still is.

I should be thinking about how I'm going to get the Vipers to trust me with access to their inner circle, but here I am distracted by thoughts of the friend Brooke brought to the club cookout. Maybe after I'm done with business, I'll find her and see if there's chemistry between us, or if I imagined it all in my head.

With a shake of my head, I turn to look at the Viper's clubhouse, a hulking four-story building that sits nestled between other, newer buildings. It's not rundown like one might expect of such an old building owned by the city's worstcriminals. No, it's polished. Almost too polished considering the filth it houses. There is a logo on the front doors, a hissing snake in front of a pair of crossed pistols.

I sigh, approaching the steel doors, and the larger of the two men guarding them suddenly steps forward, his eyes narrowed on me. "Who the fuck are you?"

It's a real battle hiding my distaste for the Vipers. I've worked as a spy for the Rebels

for years, easily blending in with whatever group I was sent to spy on, but none have been as vile as the Vipers. Most people who dabble in crime rarely touch the filth these men deal with. Trafficking women from a moral standpoint is disgusting, but these assholes don't bother with morals of any kind, rather simply what benefits them. And human trafficking is a profitable business if you can stomach it. That it's their core source of profit is proof enough that the Chrome Vipers are soulless cretins.

A few months back, Saint's fiancée was nearly sold off to some sick fuckers, and I'm here to find out if the Vipers were behind the auction she was forced into. I just need proof that they were responsible, and then we'll bring them all down. We all know it was them, but one of the things I admire most about my MC's president is that he won't act without evidence.

"Pete Brehmer here for Stone," I tell the man, using the fake name I created for this mission. "He's expecting me."

The man's features relax a bit as he nods. "You're early. He'll like that. Stone doesn't like wasting time."

"I'm all about making great first impressions," I say, but the man simply nods again, pushing the heavy steel door open, the clang echoing through what appears like a cavernous space. The man turns to ask me to follow him before disappearing inside.

The air inside is thick with the scent of stale beer and cigarette smoke, not unlike our own club on a casual Wednesday. Except Saint would kill anyone who dared smoke inside the building. We pass by the pool tables where some men have stopped playing to stare me down. The man leads me through a sea of leather-clad figures with tattoos and scowling faces, their eyes following our every move. I am guided to a narrow staircase, and the smell of smoke is less intense as we climb to the top floor.

"It's the last door at the end of the hall," the man says pointing at an imposing door

made of solid oak with a brass nameplate that reads: President.

“Thanks, man,” I say, inserting a little shakiness into my voice before running my palms over my jeans in a show of nerves, and it has the effect I was hoping for. The man buys it as he claps my shoulder, and his guard drops as I expected it to. “I’ve heard so much about Stone. The gang I was in before has nothing on the Vipers. I need to be in a place that does real shit, you know what I mean? I just hope Stone takes me in.”

I wait for him to bite on the bait, and the fucker carelessly does as he looks around to make sure there’s no one nearby before leaning closer. “We’ve run into a little trouble with those fucking Rebels, but you made the right choice coming here. You just have to earn Stone’s trust; fucking brownie points if you shit-talk the Rebels. He hates their fucking guts. Moreso now than ever.”

I feign confusion. “Why would a man like Stone care about those nobodies?”

There is a guarded look in his eyes that tells me he’s not going to reveal more than he already has. “Stick around, and you’ll find out.” And with that, he’s gone.

Oh, I plan to.

I’ll stick around alright, and if I find out that these fuckers are responsible for the human auction that affected so many women, including one of our own, then I’ll help bury every one of them.

I adjust my expression before approaching the massive door, knocking once. A loud booming “Enter!” comes from inside, so I turn the knob before walking into the massive office. Behind a large mahogany desk is a man I’ve only seen on paper.

William Reid, best known as Stone, is the president of the Chrome Vipers, and a man



the cops have never been able to pin anything on. He hides well, covering his trace without leaving so much as breadcrumbs behind.

“Mr. Stone, it’s a pleasure to meet you,” I say, going to the man and extending my hand. “My name is Pete Brehmer.”

The large man’s green-brown eyes narrow on mine as he shakes my hand. I’m hit with a sudden sense that I’ve seen this man before, though I know I haven’t. But the feeling is strong enough to rattle me, and I nearly miss Stone’s response.

“That’s a shit name. You’ll need to get a new one if we accept you into the club.”

“Of course. My parents obviously hated me or else they would never have given me such a weak-ass name.”

The man’s guard drops as he laughs, pointing at the seat across from his. “Sit,” he grunts, leaning back in his own to stare me down in a look I assume is supposed to intimidate me. It doesn’t, but I have a role to play, so I clear my throat for show before meeting the man’s stare head on.

“I’ve wanted to join the Viper for years, Mr. Stone.”

“So why now?”

“I want more,” I grind out, my eyes flashing with passion. “I’m tired of riding around town with people who lack ambition. Robbing tourists and hitting on bitches is not exactly what I want to waste my time on. I’m ready to do anything to make it to the top. I want to be a Viper.”

The man studies me for a moment, and in those couple of seconds, I question if perhaps I was laying it on a little too thick, but finally, he speaks. “I will not beat

around the bush. We make it a business to do our research on everyone who walks through those doors, but we couldn't find a whole lot about you, Pete."

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I expected this. It's what the Rebels would have done for any prospect, except we would never have stopped until we knew everything about the person. We nitpick every aspect of a prospect's life until we are sure they can be trusted.

A fraud like myself would never have made it through the Steel Rebel's front door. With the Vipers, I made it to their president's office.

"I have connections who helped clean up my record," I say, clearing my voice before I quickly add, "But don't worry, it's nothing that will come back to bite me in the ass."

Stone nods. "Best believe we'll keep an eye on you," he says. "We'll see what I think in a year."

I won't be here that long, but I smile. "Thank you so much, Mr. Stone. I promise I'll not let you down," I say, injecting enthusiasm into my tone. "Whatever it is you need to get done, I'm your man."

Stone is about to say something when there is a soft knock on the door seconds before it opens. We both turn to the door just as someone steps in, and my jaw nearly drops when a set of familiar hazel eyes lock with mine.

It's...her.

In the flesh. Dressed casually in jeans and sneakers with her hair tied in a sleek ponytail, she looks miles apart from the woman I saw at the cookout last weekend. She seems just as surprised to see me as I am to see her but expertly masks it as her

eyes shoot past mine to the man behind the desk.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know you had company. I’ll come back later,” she says, about to step out when Stone’s voice stops her.

“Get in here!” he bellows, and she flinches, but I watch her steel herself before stepping back into the room, slowly shutting the door behind her.

Scarlett.

I asked about her after the cookout, and Brooke was all too eager to tell me whatever I wanted to know. And I wanted to know everything.

She’s a college sophomore studying accounting. According to Brooke, Scarlett is a nice girl who mostly keeps to herself, but that’s obviously wrong. After all, what would a nice girl be doing with the Vipers, unless...

My eyes narrow to slits at the thought that she too could be a victim of these monsters. Someone they’re planning on auctioning like they did Saint’s partner. If so, I have to get her out of here.

“Pete,” the man booms, his voice drawing my attention back to him. “This is my daughter, Scarlett.” The initial shock of the announcement has barely passed when he drops the next bombshell. “She manages the club’s revenue.”

My eyes fly back to Scarlett, who turns to look at me, those beautiful green-brown eyes locking with mine, and I suddenly realize why Stone had felt so familiar. I wait for her to expose the fact that she knows me, that I’m really a Rebel. There is no fucking way I’ll make it out of this building alive if Stone finds out who I really am.

Fuck, his own daughter was at our clubhouse. She’s seen me interact with the

members. Seen me talk casually with my president and the others. All she needs to say is that she knows me, and it's over. This mission, my life...everything.

Scarlett walks forward and extends her hand for me to take. "It's nice to meet you."

My eyes are locked on hers as I take her hand, so much smaller than mine, soft and cold against my calloused skin. "Good to meet you, miss."

"Scarlett here is the little genius that does magic with the Viper's books. Our last accountant was stealing from me, so I buried a bullet in his skull, but my darling daughter would never do that, would you, sweetheart?" Stone asks, his voice slicing between us like a knife, and Scarlett jumps back from me.

"No, Dad."

"Women," Stone scoffs. "You have to teach them their place, or they'll walk all over you. Luckily for my daughter here, she knows the only way to earn her keep is either on her back or behind her desk. Luckily for her, she chose the latter."

"Right," I laugh without mirth, disgusted by the man's crude words, but expressing my disgust isn't going to do me or Scarlett any favors. "Gotta teach them their place."

"That's what I am saying," the man echoes before his voice quickly hardens. "That said, my daughter is off limits to you fuckers. No one in the club goes near her without my permission, or they'll be digging their own grave. Can't have any of you messing with the one person I can trust to sort out my finances, or worse, get her pregnant!"

"Of course, finding people you can trust these days is hard."

Scarlett flinches at the not-too-subtle jab as she quietly places the file she's carrying

on her father's desk and turns around to leave. "I have some more work coming your way," Stone calls. "Get it done before tomorrow." She nods once before leaving the room.

Stone turns to me, giving me a rundown on what my roles are going to be and inserting a threat or two on what will happen if I betray the club, but I hardly pay attention to a word he says. It all sounds like static in my ears as my thoughts are on the girl who left her scent behind. When Stone finally says that he'll have someone text me what errands I need to run, I have to bite back a sigh of relief, ready to get the hell out of this place.

"I won't let you down, Mr. Stone," I call out, before slowly closing the door behind me, breathing out a sigh when I step into the hallway. I start to head downstairs when a door to my left opens and someone grabs my arm. It all happens so fast; I am pulled into a bathroom before I can even think about defending myself. My first reaction is to fight, but then my eyes lock with beautiful hazel ones, bright in a dimly lit room.

"Please don't make a sound," she pleads, shutting the door behind me. Her breath is coming in short pants, and there is panic written on that gorgeous face. "God, what the hell are you doing here?"

My eyes narrow on hers. "I could ask you the same question about your presence at our clubhouse."

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

“I asked first!” I raise a single brow at her words, watching her grow more flustered by the second before she finally gives in. “I know what you are thinking,” she starts with a sigh.

“And what’s that?”

“That I was spying for my father at your clubhouse, but I wasn’t.” Her eyes are pleading when they meet mine. “Look, Brooke doesn’t know that I am the daughter—”

“Obviously not, or she would have never let you in through those doors,” I hiss, angered by the thought of anyone using Brooke. I’ve watched her grow up, and I have always treated her like a younger sister. Everyone is very protective of her since she lost her father, and the thought that someone could have taken advantage of her kindness to get closer to her and use her...

“I didn’t use her,” Scarlett whispers, her eyes filling with tears at an alarming rate, and I question if she can read my mind. “I would never do that to Brooke!”

“Did you approach her knowing she was in the Rebel family?”

“Family?” she murmurs, blinking back her tears. “Is that what you call yourselves?”

I clasp her chin and force those gorgeous eyes back on mine. “Tell me, did you know who she was before you two became friends?”

“No,” she responds, and God help me, I believe her. “I found out later when I saw the

club patches on Axel's jacket, but by then, it was too late. She was already too important for me to just toss away. I never planned on telling her about my father or letting him find out about her. I'm not some freaking spy!"

Like you, is left unsaid, but we both know what she means. And, okay, I deserve that.

"Fair enough," I say, leaning in to whisper my next words. "Your father is a sadistic fucker, and I plan on digging through the mess that is this club to expose what he is hiding." She inhales sharply, but it clearly has nothing to do with my words. A grin forms when a shudder racks through her body as my lips touch her ear. "Are you going to get in my way?"

Her chest rises and falls, quick pants of breath slipping through her lips. "My father is a dangerous man..."

Daring a move, I bring my hand to her cheek, rubbing my thumb over her soft skin, smiling when her mouth opens with a low whimper. "Is that a yes or a no?"

"Gray—"

Am I surprised that she knows my name even though we weren't officially introduced? I want to tell her to call me Pete to avoid a slip-up in the future, but there is no ignoring the way my real name sounds on her lips. It's sensual.

Fuck, I should be seducing her into helping me, but instead, I find myself getting seduced by those beautiful eyes and that sexy mouth, that body made for dreams, and Christ, the way she responds to my touch gets to me.

"You're going to help me," I say, my jaw flexing hard as I push down my desire for this woman. My cock is stiff in my jeans, but this is not the place. Down the hallway is one of the most dangerous men in the city, and downstairs are a bunch of his



goons. But I don't stop as I bring my left hand to her waist, tugging her hard against me. "You are going to help me bring down your father."

"He'll kill you," she whispers, releasing a shaky breath when my hand travels slowly down her jaw, then her neck. Her eyes flutter with lust when I cup her breasts over her blouse, biting down a growl when she pushes up against my touch. My eyes stay on hers, drinking in her flushed expression as I knead her breasts, strumming her nipple with my thumb until she's practically bucking in my arms.

"He can't kill me.... Fuck, you're so sexy," I rasp, my cock aching and jutting hard against my jeans, begging for reprieve.

"Kiss me," she whimpers, leaning in close until we're practically breathing into each other's mouths. "I'll help, just please kiss—"

Our lips brush once, twice, and I slide my hand to the back of her head, fisting her hair, ready to deepen the kiss when a loud bellow cuts between us.

"Scarlett!"

She stills against me, and I feel her breath grow heavy against mine, but this time, it has little to do with desire. She forces in deep breaths before pushing back, her eyes looking anywhere but at me. "I'll help," she hisses, straightening her clothes. "But in turn, please don't tell Brooke about my father. She's the only friend I've ever had, and I don't want to sacrifice that for my father."

"She'll find out eventually."

Scarlett nods, finally looking up at me, and in her eyes, I read need and desire. She wants me almost as much as I want her. "I know, but let me be the one to tell my best friend the truth," she begs, her eyes dropping back to my mouth, and for a moment, I

believe she'll come in for a kiss, but the bellow comes again.

"Scarlett!"

"I have to go," she says, reaching for the door, but doesn't open it. "My father is a dangerous man. I know this better than anyone else. If he finds out that you're a fraud or that I'm helping you, he'll kill us both."

And with that, she's gone.

### Chapter Three

Scarlett

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

If I had a cent for every single time I've wanted to damn it all to hell and expose my father to the world, I would be rich enough to own not just my apartment, but the entire building. But exposing my father would only cause more harm than good. The man has cops and the press so deep in his pockets, it's laughable.

To most people, the documents I hold would only show a jumbled mess of numbers, but to a trained eye, they would be able to catch the manipulation of funds if they looked close enough. A part of me wants to toss all of it from my balcony and let it scatter through the city. If this were a movie, they would land in the hands of some uncorrupted cop who would relentlessly pursue my father until he was behind bars and far away from me.

Except it's not a movie, tossing his financial records would only pollute the city, and I would be forced to start work on them all over again. There is no honest cop that would stumble across them or try to put my father away. The only man brave—or dumb—enough to take on my father is an extremely handsome biker with a death wish.

I groan when thoughts of Gray filter in once more, but who am I kidding? I haven't stopped thinking about the man and those skillful hands of his...or our almost kiss. It's been driving me mad since last night and into this morning, imagining what it would have felt like to have his lips firmly on mine. Kissing me, taking me...seducing me.

My father is going to kill him!

The thought sours my fantasies, and my hands clench around the documents I'm

holding. Barely anyone does accounting on physical record books anymore, not with so much software available to ease the process, but my father is a paranoid man and likes to keep things old school. Anything that's not on paper is on his computer, safely locked in his office. He won't even connect his work computer to the internet, afraid someone might try to hack it.

It's illegal, what I'm doing, and eventually, my father is going to bring me down with him—or make me take the fall alone.

“Don't think about it,” I tell myself, closing my eyes and forcing in deep breaths. “It doesn't matter. I just need to get through the week, and then the next...”

My fingers slowly uncurl from the papers, and I smooth them out before walking back to the couch where there are more scattered over the cushions. I organize and carefully file them before sliding the files into the safe hidden in my living room wall. My father will either come for the files himself or send someone to pick them up. I prefer the latter. Seeing my old man will only sour the week for me.

Finally done with the work, I stretch my arms over my head, rolling my neck to the side to work out the kinks. I've been bent over the files all night and should probably go to bed, but I know I'll barely catch any sleep. I turn my head in the direction of the kitchen and roll my lips as I try to talk myself into getting some kind of rest.

It's been two weeks since I've painted.

The painting supplies I keep hidden in my kitchen cabinets beckon for me, begging for my attention, but I hesitate. Painting is to me what food is to most other people—sustenance—and for weeks, I've been starving myself.

“Art is for the weak and stupid,” my father's words echo in my mind, and I chew on my lips. My talent and life will always revolve around accounting and numbers. If he

ever found out about my secret hobby, he'd be livid.

It's my escape.

Walk away, Scarlett. Starve yourself until you can live without. It's not worth the risk, whispers a voice at the back of my head, but I am too weak to resist. My feet are moving before I know what I'm doing, carrying me toward the kitchen. My heart is pounding like a drum, a steady counterpart to the silence of the apartment. My father's voice echoes in my head, a constant reminder of his expectations—and disapproval of focusing on anything outside the realm of club business.

He wants my world to revolve around the Vipers. For the band of criminals to become as important to me as they are to him, but I can't help it.

I need to paint. It's a clawing need, itchy and insistent.

My hand reaches out, almost hesitant, and touches the cool metal of the drawer handle. My heart stutters, then begins to race as I pull it open, and there they are. My precious weapons, but unlike his, these don't kill. My brushes, paints, and canvases don't leave a trail of bodies in my wake.

I pull them out one by one, the weight of them in my hands a grounding force. A tangible reminder that I have a life outside what was constructed for me. A secret. Something personal to just me.

I carry the supplies to the window and place them on the table, arranging each item carefully. My fingers are working almost on instinct, pulling the elastic band from my wrist and wrapping it around my hair, securing it in a tight ponytail. The familiar act feels almost like a ritual, and it grounds me. With the brush between my fingers, I feel more like myself than I did with that pen and calculator.

“Let’s see what I come up with today,” I breathe, dipping the brush into the paint, intent on letting my imagination take over. I don’t have a subject in mind, so I let the stroke of the brush guide me, let my mind just...dream.

It’s almost like something takes over, and I tune out the rest of the world. In here, it’s just me and my painting, and I barely glance at the clock as I lose myself in the smell of paint, the feeling of the smooth canvas, and the sound it makes as the brushes run over it.

It takes hours—days, it feels like—before the painting begins to take shape. I bury my teeth in my bottom lip as I lean in, darkening the blue of his eyes, and...

Oh God!

I jump back, dropping the brush from my fingers, and it hits the floor with a splat, spraying paint everywhere, but I barely focus on that, my eyes locked on the half-finished painting of a portrait. I rarely do those, and yet, that is what my mind wandered to. What my fingers created.

Gray.

I can’t believe I got the exact shape of his eyes, painting the man’s face from memory alone, and God, what does that make me if not insane? Obsessed with someone I can never be with.

But that doesn’t exactly mean that I’m going to stop thinking about him or the way he makes me feel. The man is a god, uber hot. He’s tall, way taller than my five-six, with broad shoulders and muscles that stretched his shirt.

And those blue eyes...

Seriously. Get a grip, Scarlett!

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I close my eyes and try to shake off thoughts of the man, but all I see are blue eyes pinning me in place, running over me with such intensity that it burns my body. The man, shirtless with those worn jeans unfastened, steps forward and crowds me to the wall. There is desire in his eyes, and his Adam's apple bobs as he swallows down his own need. My sex clenches with every action, every caress of his gaze...

"Enough!" I cry, eyes flashing open and locking on the painting of the man I have no business thinking about. My fingers are trembling and my breath comes in short pants. I fall back against my chair, staring up at the ceiling and begging for this madness to end.

My body shouldn't ache the way it does, and least of all, for a Rebel. He's my father's enemy, and in turn, should be mine too.

Gray can't protect me from my father. He can't save me...

I shouldn't torture myself with the thought of the man's hands on me or the memory of those eyes pinning me in place. Or the way his warm breath brushed against my ear when he leaned into whisper yesterday at the clubhouse.

God, was that only yesterday?

Is that why I can still feel his warm breath against my skin? I bring my hand to my neck, smoothing it over the skin he brushed with his lips. My mouth parts with a sigh at the memory, and I find my fingers retracing his steps, trailing my neck to my breasts. He touched me there, fondling me over my blouse and making my nipples pebble. I was wearing a bra then, I have nothing on this time but a T-shirt and yet, his



touch felt more intense than it does when I mimic it now.

I let out a soft whimper when I run my hands over my breasts, slowly caressing my erect nipples before running a hand down my stomach, my legs opening on their own as my hand makes its way there.

I shouldn't...

"Gray," I sigh, running my fingers softly over my wet folds and parting them, moaning when I accidentally graze my aroused nub. My gaze locks on the portrait, on those dangerous blue eyes that shook me to my core the last time they were on me, and I rub my sensitive bundle of nerves. "Gray..." My legs spread wider until I'm practically exposing myself to the portrait—to him—rubbing my middle finger up and down, using my wetness to glide easily over the nub. I'm so aroused, every part of me is trembling for a man from the wrong end of town.

A dangerous man I have no business wanting but crave anyway.

"Aaah, Gray," I pant, staring at those dark blue eyes as I circle my aroused and aching flesh, nipples growing harder to the point of pain. I want him. Need him. So close...

My pussy tightens and spasms as I feel myself teeter closer and closer to the edge. My teeth gnash together and breathing begins to come in quick little busts as I stroke my clit. I picture his hands fondling my breasts, and my virginal muscles twitch when I imagine him doing the same to the rest of my body. I pinch a nipple with my free hand, rolling it roughly between my thumb and finger the way he did back at the clubhouse, but...it doesn't feel the same. His hands were big and rough and calloused.

"Please," I whimper in frustration, racing for the edge I'd felt only a few seconds ago

but is now slipping away. “Please!”

A warm, intense feeling centers in my clit and spreads through my abdomen and threatens to explode through my system. My toes curl in anticipation, and when it comes, it’s more of a flame than the blinding wildfire I’d imagined. I nearly sob in frustration, tempted to give it a second try when a sudden knock on the door startles me out of my plans.

For one solid, terrifying moment, I think it’s my father. He is the only person that just shows up, but then again, the man has never bothered to knock before.

But he could for once. The documents... Oh God!

I quickly pull my hand away, my heart racing as my brain slowly catches up to what exactly it is I was doing—touching myself to the portrait of a man. A rival.

Shit!

My eyes are panicked as I grab the canvas and look around for someplace to hide it before settling on the balcony. I toss the painting supplies back into the drawer haphazardly, sliding it closed and praying that whoever’s at the front door is not my father and that they’ll have no sudden urge to go to my balcony. I tear off some paper towels and wipe up the splattered paint, my heart racing with panic.

The knock comes again, insistent this time, and I’m halfway to the door before I realize I’m dressed only in a T-shirt. One that does little to hide my beaded nipples, so I make a U-turn and rush to my bedroom, tossing on a robe and belting it before walking to the door.

Deep breaths, Scarlett.

I ignore the third knock, reining in my hammering heart before turning the lock and opening the door. My jaw nearly drops when I see the man standing outside my apartment, and it's definitely not who I was expecting.

"Gray?"

"It's Pete," he says in greeting. "Your father sent me to pick up some files from you."

"Pete?" My brows draw in confusion. "What does that mean?"

Gray looks around to make sure the hallway's empty before pushing into my apartment. I ignore the way my heart jumps when he wraps his hand around my arm and nudges me back into the room before shutting the door behind him. "I'm Pete Brehmer as far as your father is concerned."

"But he's not here," I say, conscious of his warm hand against my skin. Besides, I don't want to call this man by his fake name, especially when I don't have to.

"I'm just saying. To avoid slip-ups," he says, eyes locking with mine, and now that I've gotten over my initial surprise of finding him outside my apartment, I allow myself to really look at him. His dark, almost black, brown hair is tousled, perhaps from riding his bike without his helmet, and those deep ocean-blue eyes seem intense as they stare at me.

And there's that feeling again.

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

The hot achy sensation between my legs and the weak tremble of my knees. An effect that only this man seems to bring out in me.

“What are you doing here?” I demand, trying not to let the weight of his stare unnerve me, but it’s a losing battle.

“Your father sent me, I just said that.” Did he? I don’t remember. In fact, I can’t seem to make my mind focus on anything but the way he smells. God, it’s all leather and musk with warm hints of wood. I could bury my nose in his neck and live there forever. “It also provides a good opportunity for us to talk.”

“Talk?” I breathe.

“About your father and his illegal activities.”

But I don’t want to talk, I nearly whine. Least of all about my father or anything to do with the man. No, I could name three or four things I would rather do with Gray than just talk.

Get a hold of yourself, Scarlett!

“Can I get you something to drink?” I ask, pulling away from the man if only to offer my fogged-up brain a moment of reprieve. “I was just about to grab breakfast.”

“It’s half past noon.”

Is it? “Oh, right. I must have lost track of time.”

“Doing what?”

I don't need to see my own expression to know that I'm spotting a dear-in-headlights look. Heat climbs up my cheeks at his question. It's a simple one with multiple responses; the realm of possibilities is endless.

I could say that I was working, watching a movie, or even napping. All of which are to be expected on a lazy Sundayafternoon. And yet, I mention none of those, stuttering through my words as I try to look for something that is the opposite of “touching myself to a portrait of you that I painted.”

So I settle on, “Nothing.” It's spoken way too quickly to not seem suspicious. “So, water or coffee? It's too early for wine or anything alcoholic, although some may say that it's five o'clock somewhere, so it doesn't really matter what time you drink. But if you ask me, wine should not be... Oh!” I gasp when I feel Gray step up behind me. A shudder rolls down my back when he brushes my hair to the side, exposing my neck before leaning to whisper against my ear.

“What were you doing before I showed up, Scarlett?”

## Chapter Four

### Gray

It's ironic, almost comical that in a city of a million women, I would become obsessed with the one that is forbidden to me. The one who belongs to a dangerous rival club. The only daughter of a freaking psychopath.

The kicker? I don't even need to seduce her into helping me. No, the girl is all too willing to bring her father down, albeit a little scared, but willing nonetheless. Considering that, I ought to keep my hands to myself.

I shouldn't touch her.

The truth is, I never anticipated getting lost in her pretty eyes. For my fingers to ache with the need to touch her, to be close to her...

My cock is hard, every nerve in my body thrumming with need for this forbidden fruit. I should steer clear of her, keep these fantasies in my head far away from her, but Christ, I can't help myself. Her scent, the little breathy sighs she makes, all strip me of any self-control.

I've made mistakes in the past. None as dangerous as the one I am about to make right now, but I wasn't always so great at my job. Before joining the Rebels, I was a delinquent with a strong hate for authority. Like most of my MC brothers, I came from an unstable home, and I found myself surrounded by what could be considered the "wrong crowd." As luck would have it, I was arrested a few weeks short of my eighteenth birthday and tried as an adult. An eighteen-month sentence for identity theft was fate's version of a joke. My life would have gone very differently if that angry teen hadn't shared a cell with an older Rebel serving time, the closest thing to a father I ever had, he ensured I had somewhere to go when I left jail.

That was ten years ago.

I've assumed different identities over the years in my role as a mole for the Rebels and skill with easily blending into all kinds of crowds. Not once in that time have I come close to getting caught. Not once have I forgotten my mission to chase after a woman.

Somehow, it's different with her.

There is so much on the line, but I can't move past the delicious way she smells to focus on what brought me here. I can't stop my face from sinking into her hair or my

nose from inhaling deeply at her sweet floral scent.

She smells like a field of flowers. Roses and lilies. Soft and warm. So goddamn intoxicating.

Fuck!

Pete Brehmer isn't supposed to have any sexual desire for the Chrome Vipers' president's only daughter. He is not supposed to picture her pretty lips wrapped around his cock, caressing his balls as she takes him deeper into her throat. It's crazy the number of times I jerked my cock raw last night thinking of this pretty girl on her knees or turned around, hand braced on the wall as I slid my dick in and out of her tight pussy. I'd make her purr with every caress of that sexy body.

## Page 10

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I'd make her mine!

"You're shaking," I rasp, sliding my hand around her slender waist and pulling her tight against me, her ass pressing against the thick outline of my erection. "Is it something I did?"

"God," she whispers, her hands locking in front of her, but I don't miss the tremble in them. She doesn't protest when I open her robe and the material parts to reveal a T-shirt underneath and...nothing else. I move back to let the robe fall to the floor, and I am rewarded with the perfect view of her flawless thighs, barely covered by the T-shirt.

A smart man would walk right out that door and never look her way again, but I seem to lose a bit of my brain power when she's around. No, leaving is no longer an option. I don't believe I am physically capable of walking away without knowing how her lips taste or hearing the sound she makes when she comes apart under my eager hands or mouth.

I want her.

I crave Scarlett more than I've ever wanted anything in my life before. With an intensity so strong it goes beyond physical. Beyond just wanting to have sex with this girl to scratch some itch. There is a need to carry her away from this place to somewhere she doesn't feel like she has to earn her keep.

Then I'll worship her the way she deserves. Kiss every inch of her perfect body and make love to her until she is convinced to stay. Those beautiful hazel eyes...I want



them locked on me as I taste her, slide into her wetness, and mark her as mine.

Mine!

“I want you,” I rasp, my voice thick and heavy with lust as if the thick rod pressed against her ass isn’t proof enough of my desire. I slide a hand up her thigh, my pulse sprinting as I caress her smooth skin. “Every inch of you. Will you let me have you?”

“L-let you?” she heaves, a shudder rolling through her body when my hands caress her inner thigh, just shy of touching her sex. I let my fingers linger, not giving in to the desire to touch that secret part of her.

“I want to touch you. Hell, I want to do more than touch you, princess.” My voice is heavy with lust as I dip my mouth to her neck, kissing the spot behind her ear and trailing my lips down. She shudders with every soft caress, her breath growing heavier by the second. “I want to kiss that sexy mouth and then lower.” I cup her soft breast with my other hand, and she whimpers when I pinch her nipple over her T-shirt. “I bet your nipples would feel smooth on my tongue.” She’s trembling and moans, panting as I tease her pointed nipple with my thumb. “Then I’ll kiss your stomach, and finally, that spot between your legs. I lick your hot arousal until you’re quivering and begging for me to fuck you.”

“Oh God!” She bucks, her thighs trembling fiercely, but I still don’t move my hand, teasing her inner thighs as I keep it there. Her grip flies to the counter to steady herself, her body taut with need. “Gray—”

“Tell me you want it too.”

“I...I’ve never done anything like this before.”

“What?”

“Sex,” she says shyly. “I’ve never had sex before.”

A virgin.

Her words shock me.

There is no way this girl is a virgin. Though, I imagine Stone has threatened or scared off the men in his club from going anywhere near his daughter, but he doesn’t have a leash on her. Heck, she lives alone in one of the most lavish neighborhoods in the city, free to have guests over. Free to go wherever she wants and meet whomever she pleases—to an extent. I’m sure her father keeps a close eye on her movements, but he can’t watch her all the time. Hell, her friendship with Brooke is proof enough of that.

And still, this beautiful flower remains untouched. Ready to be corrupted.

“I can teach you,” I tell her, my head spinning with the need to make this girl mine. I’ll be her first, and if I have my way, damn well her only. “Let me show you how a man is supposed to worship a beautiful woman like you.”

“Gray, this is crazy. We don’t even know each other.”

I realize as she speaks that this is only the second time we’ve interacted. She isn’t wrong, but I can’t deny the strength of my feelings. Still, I don’t want to overwhelm her.

“I could stop,” I say, nipping at her earbud, my breath heavy on her skin. “I could stop, and we can just sit together and talk, get to know one another. I’ll tell you all about myself and vice versa, or...” My fingertips brush her sex, and she jerks hard against me, a whimper slipping from that sexy mouth. I slip my index finger between her sodden folds, groaning when I feel her soft arousal against my skin. Fuck, she’s wet. So fucking wet, my finger easily slides over her slit. “...Or you could let my

tongue replace this finger, and we can get to know each other another way. I promise you'll enjoy it."

"God. Oh, Gray!" she pants.

"Maybe you're right, and it's better we talk first," I tease, before cruelly pulling my hand away and easing back. Scarlett whirls around to look at me. Those gorgeous hazel eyes cloudy with lust and disbelief blink up at me. Her neck is flushed, and my eyes drop to the pebbled nipples pushing against the thin material of her T-shirt.

"No," she whispers, her voice soft and raspy. "I don't want to talk. Please don't stop."

I move in and press her backward into the counter before jerking her thigh to my hip and grinding my erection against her naked sex. She moans, and her fingers grab the lapels of my jacket to pull me close. I lean in to touch my mouth with hers, a simple brush of lips before pulling back to stare into those gorgeous eyes. "Are you sure about this?" I ask, even though I can read the answer in her eyes.

"Yes." She nods, hair flying all over when she does so, and I would find it funny if my own need wasn't pushing for me to claim her. Mark this girl so the Vipers and Rebels all know that she belongs to me.

I slide my other hand around to her nape, and that's all the warning she gets before I slam my mouth down on hers. I'm supposed to be kissing her. I've done it before. A touch of lips, slowly moving over another, but with her, I can hardly contain myself. The need to devour every inch of that mouth is strong, and she, my innocent princess, opens up for me so eagerly. I swallow her whimper as our tongues graze, and then it's madness from there.

## Page 11

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

My stiff cock aches painfully behind my zipper as I crowd her to the counter, thrusting my cock against her as I kiss her lips with the hunger of a man coming off a decade-long celibacy journey. She feeds into that hunger, fingers clenching on my shirt I lose myself in the soft velvety feeling of her lips.

Mine!

A low groan climbs up my throat when I break the kiss to trail my mouth down her neck, and she lets me, arching back to allow me access. She whimpers as I drag my tongue down the curve of her throat, feeling her pulse thum fast against my mouth. Her breath catches in her throat when I nip at her skin before licking the spot to soothe the sting.

“You are right to think that this is crazy,” I rasp, leaning down to kiss her breasts over her T-shirt, hearing her cry out when I suck a bead into my mouth. “We don’t know each other beyond what we’ve been told by others, but I knew I wanted you from the moment I spotted you at the cookout.”

“You did?” she breathes, surprise clear in her voice.

“How could I not?” A shiver courses through her as I nip at her tits through the T-shirt, running my tongue to soothe the sting. “You were so regal. A dark-haired princess, oblivious to everyone else around her as she stared out into the city. I couldn’t take my eyes off you.” I drop to my knees on the floor, mouth salivating at the thought of tasting her. I nudge open her thighs for me, sucking in a sharp breath when I get a clear view of her pink heaven, glistening with arousal. “This is what I pictured myself doing that evening at the cookout.” I kiss her thigh, moving my lips

up until I'm inches away from her pussy, quickly getting high off her scent. It's intoxicating, and the animal in me roars for a taste, clawing desperately at my chest. "You were gorgeous that night, and I wanted to kiss you...lick you everywhere." She gasps when I bring her knee to my shoulder, exposing more of her sex. "Taste you."

My eyes close when I dip my tongue into her sex, dragging it over her slit and teasing her clit with the tip. She jerks hard, crying out, but I'm only getting started. My hand closes around her thigh to hold her in place as I bury my face between her legs, licking her sex feverishly and tasting her sweet arousal on my tongue.

It's addictive. I can't understand how this girl is unclaimed because no man on earth would want to share this girl with another once they had her in their arms.

I'm no different.

Bound in her spell, I am helpless to do anything but pleasure her, reveling in the feel of her softness. I worship her sex as I've imagined doing a hundred times, kissing and batting her clit hungrily. The room fills with the sound of her cries and the deep satisfied groans in my throat.

"Gray," she pants, her hips rising to ride my tongue. Her fingers slide into my hair where she grabs a fistful, pulling me closer to her sex. All sense of shyness disappears as she rolls her hips, chasing the release.

"So fucking hot," I growl against her pussy, burying my tongue in her succulent flesh and worshipping every inch of it.

She sobs when I drawl her clit between my lips, tugging hard at the swollen bud until I feel her tummy shudder. I slide my left hand under her T-shirt and palm her tit, kneading the small globe with my greedy palms and pinching her nipple even as I ravage her sex with my tongue. "Oh God. Gray... Oh... I... God!"

“Come for me, princess,” I growl, tugging at her clit between my lips. I pinch her nipple between my knuckles and tug the sensitive bud. “Want to feel your release all over my tongue. Do it!” Her nails dig into my scalp as her hips move feverishly seconds before she jolts with a scream, a rough shudder rolling through her body, and I watch her come apart, lapping hungrily at her pulsing sex as she orgasms, rough tremors rocking through her system. She chants my name, her thigh flexing against my head as I suck her clit, drawing out the orgasm until she’s sobbing for reprieve.

Mine.

There is a red fog crowding my vision when I climb to my feet, a deep feral need clawing in my chest to take this girl. To mark her as mine. I’m an animal when I slam my mouth down on hers, letting her taste herself on my lips.

She’s mine!

I tear at my zipper, tugging hard at the button before reaching in to grab my stiff cock. It’s so painfully hard, I realize that I’m not going to last. Not when I can still taste the girl on my lips. I jerk my cock fast, breaking the kiss to breathe against her lips, and it takes three strokes before I am coming all over her stomach. My breath comes in rough pants, muscles straining as I paint her with my cum, a rough shudder rolling through my muscles. “Fuuuck!”

My body goes lax, and I collapse, burying my face in her neck as I try to make sense of what the hell just happened. I feel tentative arms circle my shoulders, our harsh breathing the only sound in the room. Neither one of us speaks for a long time.

There are questions, but neither one of us voices them. Instead, we choose to just...feel and bask in the moment we just shared. Later, I’ll worry about what the fuck I was thinking touching a Viper.

## Chapter Five

Scarlett

A chorus of groans rings through the hall as Professor Thompson announces our next assignment, which immediately startles me into the present. I've been daydreaming, replaying the moment Gray and I shared in my apartment over and over in my brain; I can almost recreate the entire thing.

No, I wouldn't make it out alive if someone placed a gun to my head and promised to spare my life only if I stated one thing the professor had said during the two-hour lecture. My mind was elsewhere the entire time.

On him.

The man lying to my father and a bunch of dangerous men about his identity. The man I let touch me. The man who kissed me like he was starved and then proceeded to drive that wild tongue over my sex. In my kitchen, and again later on the couch before he left.

"I'm so over this. Professor Thompson and his darn surprise assignments," Brooke whines from the seat next to mine. "God, where does the man get the time to even go through them?"

"He doesn't," I comment, nodding toward his teaching assistant, a pretty redhead who seems to have aged ten years since she started working for the professor. I can almost read the resentment in her eyes when the man announces yet another essay, but she's not the only one.

I can't help but feel a sense of dread, a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach at the thought of writing another essay. I see the same thought process mirrored in the faces

of my classmates, most of whom major in other things, but are forced to take this class in philosophy. There is a collective despair when we realize we're going to be spending the next few weeks wrestling with obscure, hard-to-understand theories instead of facts.

The professor continues to talk, his voice a monotonous drone in the background, and I find myself zoning out once more. My thoughts drift back to Gray and his very skilled mouth. I feel the spot between my thighs tingle at the memory before I am rudely yanked back to the present again.



## Page 12

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

The class is over it seems, and I wince as chairs scrape along the floor as people get up and the room falls into loud chatter, mostly complaints, but when I turn to my best friend, it's to find her watching me curiously.

"What?" I ask defensively.

"Something's different about you," Brooke says, her eyes narrowing on mine.

For a solid minute, I question if she can read my mind and tell what I did over the weekend. Or who I did. "I don't know what you're talking about. I haven't changed anything about my appearance," I say, clicking the laptop's lid closed before sliding it into my bag. "Let's go grab lunch. I'm starving."

Brooke hurries to pack up her things before following behind. "I'm not talking about your appearance," she says, falling into step next to me. "You are always so focused in class, but today you were distracted. And you have this dreamy look in your eyes."

Dreamy look. Kill me now!

"I wasn't distracted."

"You were." She muses. "I get it, philosophy is boring for most of us, but you always give it all of your attention." Brooke grabs my arm and stops me in the hallway. "Scar, did something happen?"

There is concern in her eyes, and a part of me wants to open up about it all. I want to tell my best friend about me and Gray, but that will only force me to open up about

my father, and... I can't. I am not confident that Brooke will still want to be my friend if she finds out that I am the daughter of one of the most ruthless men in the city. Which means I can't tell her about Gray, but I don't want to lie either.

"There is a guy," I start, carefully picking my words and ignoring the way her eyes light up. "Something happened, and I'm still processing it. Before you say anything, I promise to tell you everything once I figure it out." I quickly add, reading the questions in her eyes.

"That's not fair. I tell you everything about Axel."

"I know, but you and Axel are different," I comment, ignoring the little twinge of jealousy at the knowledge that I will never have an easy love like hers. One which everyone in her life supports. The jealousy is immediately replaced by guilt. Axel and Brooke's relationship wasn't exactly smooth sailing at the start either. "Did he like the key chain you got him for his birthday?"

Brooke lights up as she starts talking about her boyfriend, and I welcome the subject change. We talk about her relationship during lunch in the cafeteria, making plans to go shopping after we eat, except when we step outside the college gates, there's her biker boyfriend waiting for her. The second I spot him, I realize that our plans are canceled. Brooke turns to me in apology, but I simply wave it off.

"I'm so sorry. I didn't think he'd pick me up. I'll tell him we have plans—"

"No," I cut her off. "I'll be fine. I have a lot of work to do anyway. Let's raincheck on the shopping."

"Are you sure?"

I nod, flashing her a smile. She hugs me goodbye, and I watch her run to her

boyfriend, wrapping her arms around him. I feel a twinge of envy when he pulls her deeper into the embrace, kissing her shamelessly in front of everyone.

I'll never have that.

A love so pure. Open and free. My father would kill any man who dared touch me that way in the open. He would never allow me to go out and fall in love with whomever I wanted. Kiss and hug them in public. I'm fated to end up with a man he picks for me. A connection that would benefit him more than me. If the man runs in the same circles as my father, then my future husband is probably a cold sadistic man too.

I think of Gray.

With his warm touch, his soft caresses, and gentle words that make my heart ache with longing.

You were regal. A dark-haired princess, oblivious to everyone else around her as she stared out into the city. I couldn't take my eyes off you. You were gorgeous that night, and I wanted to kiss you everywhere.

I know I shouldn't, but I picture what an affair with Gray would look like. The entire Uber ride to the clubhouse, I picture Gray and I walking hand in hand in the streets. If his mission fails—and I'm afraid it might—my father would kill him. We're Romeo and Juliet, destined for tragedy.

By the time my ride pulls up outside the clubhouse, I've already worked myself into a fever of anxiety with my stomach all knotted up with fear. The feeling only amplifies as I walk toward the entrance. The men standing guard let me in without a word, and the second I enter, I feel all eyes on me.

I should be used to this. Hell, I was raised here and shouldn't let the looks get to me, but it always unnerves me.

No matter how many times I show up here, I'll never belong. Not with my father nor his men. Not in this city. I would run if I didn't believe my father would comb through the country until he found me. He'd drag me back here and marry me off to one of his goons out of spite.

Breathe. Slow deep breaths, Scarlett. Don't let them see your fear. Don't let them smell it.

I put on a mask of indifference as I walk through the quiet room, fingers tightening on the strap of my backpack as I count the seconds until I get to the stairs. I don't breathe even when I leave their eyesight, my expression masked as I walk to my father's office, letting out a relieved sigh when I find it empty.

I allow myself a moment to breathe before walking to my father's computer. I figure working today and moving his money around like he asked will keep him off my back for the rest of the week. I'm about to turn on the computer when the door suddenly opens. I look up, expecting my father to walk in, but my eyes widen in surprise when I spot Gray.

My first reaction is to run my eyes over him. The man is dressed in simple jeans and a T-shirt, but his outfit looks anything but ordinary on that lean muscular body. My heart starts racing as I follow the outline of his broad shoulders and the way the shirt hugs his frame. His dark hair is tousled and falls slightly over his forehead, framing that ruggedly handsome face in ways that makes me want to walk over to him and touch him.

## Page 13

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

There's an undeniable pull between us, a fire so strong it almost burns away all the nerves from earlier. When he fixes those eyes on me, I almost forget that he's forbidden to me. Almost.

"Gray," I whisper, unable to mask the longing in my voice before I shoot to my feet in panic. He's here. In my father's office. "Oh God, you need to go."

"Scarlett—"

"No, you need to get the hell out before my father arrives and finds you in his office. He'll kill you!" Gray shuts the door behind him and locks it. "W-what are you doing?"

"He's not here," the man says, walking deeper into the office. "Stone went out for a business meeting, and he'll be gone a while."

"W-what? How do you know that?" I ask, unable to keep the shakiness from my voice.

"I've made friends, princess." I suck in a sharp breath when he walks toward me, and since I'm not fully convinced of my father's absence, I back up a step. "Hey, trust me. He's not here."

"His men are," I whisper. Several of them are downstairs, and although it's unlikely any one of them would dare enter my father's office in his absence, it's not beyond the realm of possibility.

Gray takes a step forward, and I take another back, gasping when my back connects with the desk. Gray doesn't waste time caging me between him and the desk, his eyes flashing with a need I am sure is reflected in my own eyes.

"You're trembling," he whispers, lifting his hand to my jaw and gently caressing my skin before dipping his hand to my neck. "I want to touch you so badly. Scatter everything off this desk and make love to you until they hear you downstairs, but..." A shudder rolls down my spine when he trails his thumb over my lips, slipping his thumb between them when they part. He groans when my mouth closes around his digit, and I run my tongue over it. "Fuck," he growls, pulling his hand away. "I'm this close to putting you on your knees and fucking that pretty mouth, but I am not that reckless."

"Y-you should go," I force out when in actuality, it's the last thing I want to happen. "Please go. My father will kill you if he finds you in here."

Gray studies me for a moment before pushing back. "I hate seeing you this scared," he says, seeming surprised by his own words. "So I won't stay long. You promised to help me bring your father down."

Not in those exact words, but I do want to help him. "What do you need?"

"Evidence," he says, slipping his hands into his pockets as he backs further away from me. "I need evidence that your father owns the Den."

I blink at the man. "The Den? What is that?"

"I assumed you knew all the businesses the Vipers are affiliated with since he trusts you with the money and all."

"I mean, yeah, but I don't know anything about a place called the Den."

“It’s a gentleman’s club.”

I shake my head. “The Vipers don’t own a gentleman’s club. My father has connections with a couple of nightclubs in the city that pay the Vipers for protection, but that’s about it.”

Gray watches me for a long time, and I read apprehension in his eyes. Does he think that I’m lying? “Your father bought you a luxury high-rise apartment,” he starts, and I see him weigh his words carefully. “Do you really believe the money comes from protecting businesses in the area?”

“No,” I answer truthfully. For a while, I suspected that my father was exploiting these businesses, considering the numbers he was pulling, but the desperate part of me that wanted to move out of his house and live on my own convinced me to accept the apartment as payment for a job well done. “I don’t know how he makes the money. My work is to balance his books and hide the money.”

“The Den is—was a gentleman’s club where trafficked girls were auctioned to rich men.” My heart nearly stops at his words, and I stand frozen on the floor, eyes wide with a mix of surprise and horror. “Saint and his VP, along with a bunch of others, rescued a girl and closed it down. We suspect that the Vipers ran the place, and now we need evidence to prove it.”

I struggle to find my tongue, my head a jumbled mess even as I try to piece together words to voice. “My father...” I croak, clearing my voice before attempting to speak again. “He would never do anything like that.” I pause when I realize I am defending a monster. “I know he is a bad man who does terrible things, but...human trafficking? You must be mistaken.”

“We’re not.”

I shake my head, unwilling to reconcile his words with what I know of my father. Sure, he's threatened many times to sell me off to the highest bidder, but isn't that what fathers like mine tell their daughters to keep them in line? He wouldn't actually do it.

Right?

Christ, I don't know anymore.

"Gray—"

"The records," he says. "I need you to make a copy of the original records of his revenues. Before you tampered with them. I'll follow the money, and we'll see how he made it. I'll also need a list of all his properties."

His words give me pause. My father trusts me with his financial records because he believes I would never sell him out, not if I know what is good for me. By handing the records over to Gray, I would basically be signing his death warrant, and possibly my own.



*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

“It’s dangerous,” I argue, my heart aching at the thought of this man getting hurt. “If he finds out...”

Gray crosses the distance between us and slides his hand to my nape before pulling me in for a kiss, and in turn, scrambling all thoughts from my mind. I close my eyes at the soft brush of lips. This is not the time or place, and I know I should push him away, and I lift my hand to do exactly that but find myself pulling him closer, breathing in the smell of leather clinging to him.

My heart is racing when he finally pulls back, those blue eyes searching mine. “You don’t have to worry about me, princess,” he promises, placing another kiss on my lips. “I can take care of myself. You’ll get me all those files, and I’ll bring him and the rest of the Vipers down.”

“Okay,” I breathe, feeling lightheaded from the kiss.

“Good girl. I’m going to leave, but I’ll see you later.”

“Later?”

“Your father asked me to give you a ride home,” he says with a smirk, pulling back, and I immediately miss his warmth. “We can finish this later.”

I’m blushing fiercely when he finally leaves, closing the door softly behind him. He’s seducing me, I realize. I’m not blind to what is happening, but I am helpless to stop it. I’m being seduced into betraying my father.

There's hardly anything I can do but let it happen. I just have to hope we both survive the fallout.

## Chapter Six

Gray

She doesn't know?

Hard to believe that Scarlett, the girl who handles the club's finances doesn't know where most of the money was coming from. The man was making big bucks before we shut down his gentlemen's club.

Or maybe she just doesn't want to believe that for all his faults, her father is more of a monster than most people realize. Whether or not I like it, the man is her father, but her unwillingness to believe that he is capable of heinous acts could be a roadblock in my mission.

Scarlett is the key. I didn't come in expecting to get to the man through her, but she holds the key. She is the only person he trusts. Despite all the threats he's made to her, the man still trusts her. I guess blood might be thicker after all.

I try to quell my frustrations as I take a step at a time, heading downstairs to where most of the members are. Unlike the Rebels who are always on the move, the Vipers spend most of the day drinking, watching games, and playing pool. This place is more like a frat house than a biker club, but it works to my favor since I can easily access the members.

I can't afford to be irritated with how slow everything's going, so I fix my expression as I walk toward the group playing pool. There is a smile on my face as I slowly approach toward the group, trying to blend in and not make it obvious that I am there

to eavesdrop.

“Yo, Pete, do you play?”

The voice belongs to a heavily bearded guy called Hill. The man is built like one, so I figure that’s how he got the nickname. “Some,” I respond even though I could outplay every single one of them, but a prospect isn’t supposed to be good at anything. Eager, sure. Show off? Now that would draw more attention to me, and not the good kind if I show up the older members.

“Why don’t you join us for a game?” he asks, and I can tell he’s not doing it with the intention of including a prospect. I’m great at reading people, and with Hill, I can tell there’s a catch. “It’ll be fun.”

I try to appear nonchalant as he invites me to play. I’m a decent player, but there is no way I’ll let it show, so I play it cool, acting like I’m excited just to be included.

“What are the stakes?” I ask, picking up the cue stick, my fingers instinctively finding their familiar grip.

“We’ve all got a little bet going,” Hill says with a smirk, and by the sneers I spot on some faces, I figure it’s something stupid. “If you win, I will let you take my bike for a spin. A prospect like you should see that as an honor.”

I wouldn’t get on his bike if he paid me a million bucks. I sigh at the memory of my new Harley filled with the Rebels insignia, locked in my garage, awaiting my return. I’ve had to settle for a Honda Rebel 3000 I got from Axel, our club’s mechanic. The old girl is a darling on the road, but it’s nothing compared to the Harley Davidson Road King I have locked away. Whatever Hill rides is not impressive enough for me to consider it a reward.

“What happens if I lose?” I ask, stepping up to the pool table.

The men laugh, elbowing each other, and I stand patiently until they’re done. “You bring us the little princess’s bra.”

I tap my cue stick on the table, contemplating their words. “How would I even get that? Besides, Stone would kill me—”

“Stone is gone all afternoon for a meeting. He won’t know if you don’t tell him,” Hill says, eyes hardening. “And as to how you get it, that’s for you to figure out when—I mean, if you lose the game. Besides, I heard Stone instruct you to give the girl a ride home. I’m sure you can work out a way to get it.”

I fight back the urge to sigh. There is no winning this game. Not playing is not an option either. Here, I’m supposed to be a prospect. One that doesn’t challenge the members if I don’t want to start shit.

“Fine,” I say, and immediately someone jumps up to organize the balls. “I’ll go first.” With a low sigh, I aim for a casual, almost careless stance and do a great job of acting surprised when I miss the first ball, letting out a mock groan of disappointment.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

The game continues, and I play the role of a clumsy novice, missing easy shots and making sure my opponent feels confident, and sure enough, he starts to get cocky. “You’re awful at this game,” Hill comments when I purposely miss another shot, letting the cue ball bounce off the rails.

“You’re right,” I sigh, figuring now’s the time to push for answers that brought me here. “Do you spend all day and night drinking and playing pool?”

“Already bored, prospect?”

“Not really,” I cut in. “I was just hoping you guys would put me to work. I heard there are plenty of jobs that I can do to make some bank, but since coming here, I haven’t seen anyone go anywhere.”

“That’s because of those fucking Rebels who shut down—” Hill hisses before cutting himself off, but he’s said enough to verify what I was already suspecting.

I want to push for more so I lean in and take another shot, surprising Hill and those watching when I don’t fumble this one. “I think I’m getting the hang of this,” I say, but it’s clear I’ve lost the game.

“With practice, prospect,” Hill says, lifting his hand to smack my shoulder, but I easily evade it, avoiding any form of contact. I have managed to rein in my distaste of this place so far, but there is no telling what will snap me out of it. I would rather not break the man’s hand and expose myself to these people. I remind myself that I’m not Gray. Not here at least. Not to these fuckers.

“So, what did the Rebels shut down?” I ask when it’s his turn. “Did they mess with us? I haven’t heard anything about the Rebels and Vipers getting involved in a fight.”

“That’s because no one knows about it,” Hill tosses over his shoulder as he leans to line up his shot. “You think we want to spend all day drinking and playing stupid games?”

“No?”

“Of course the fuck not! Up until three months ago, we were making a killing , pulling in a shit ton of money from a club we used to run before those fuckers came in and—”

“Hill,” a harsh voice cuts him off, and he turns to look at one of the guys. “You know Stone doesn’t like it when we bring this up.”

“The fuck with it,” Hill rages, throwing the stick away and attracting attention to himself. “If Stone had ensured security was tight that night, then the Rebels would not have come in and shut us down, but no, he wouldn’t let some of us anywhere near his precious club! Throwing some bullshit claim about wanting to protect his clients’ identities, but where did that get him? Huh? He was fucking ambushed by the Rebels, and they made a mess of everything!”

I wasn’t there when it all happened. I was on the other end of town getting intel for the club, but I heard all about it. Saint and his VP, Knox, weren’t even at the Den to spy on the Vipers’ illegal activities. Ironically enough, the two men went there for an entirely different reason—to capture a man who thought he could cheat the Rebels and get away with it. Derrick Halpin, a dirty cop who had taken money from us to overlook a firearms shipment, but instead betrayed the Rebels. The man played both sides, taking bribe money from us and bringing in the cops to confiscate the weapons. Saint had intel that Derrick Halpin would be at the Den, so they paid the hefty

membership fee to get in too, horrified when they discovered that the place wasn't a typical gentleman's club.

And that barely covered woman on stage wasn't a licensed stripper, but a girl being auctioned to be used by powerful rich men and dirty cops.

Saint and Knox got their man and made him pay for double-crossing them, but they also rescued the girl and shut down the place. And now we need to know who the mastermind behind the club was to put an end to it all. We long suspected that it was the Vipers behind the trafficking. Stone and his legion of immoral goons are evil enough to use helpless girls in this way. I've seen the way he treats his own daughter. It's not enough to shut down the club. They'll just move the auction somewhere else. We have to bring down the Vipers for good.

"Walk it off, Hill," a voice in the room calls out, and the large man kicks the pool table before disappearing down the hall without another word.

I'm tempted to follow him and pry more out of the man, but force myself to stay in the room. I've got the ball rolling, and the other men are already talking about it in hushed tones, so I slowly place down the cue stick and walk to the bar, grabbing a beer and moving toward three men huddled together, whispering.

"Hill is right; Stone should have let more of us guard the place. The Rebels took us by surprise that night," says one voice.

"Stone is probably waiting for things to cool down, then he'll open another club somewhere else," counters another. "We just need to lie low for a while and get those Rebels off our backs."

"Fucking Rebels need to learn to mind their fucking business."

A part of me, one that was trying to understand Scarlett, was hoping that someone in this hellhole would be disgusted by the fact that they were trafficking women. But no, the fuckers are upset that the business went down, cursing the Rebels for causing it.

Oh, I'm going to love it when we bring the entire MC down! Send these roaches scrambling for cover. With a sigh, I move through the groups, disappointed but not surprised that they all share the same sentiments.

These men all but confirmed that they were running a trafficking ring, and I figure I ought to update Saint on all this, but first I need to give Scarlett a ride home. I turn the corner and head for the stairs, about to go up and grab Scarlett, when I catch the sound of low murmurs. Two guys, one of whom I recognize as Hill, are whispering in the corridor of the first floor.

"This a fucking mess," Hill says in a low tone. "I can't believe Stone would trust a freaking twenty-year-old with the finances. What if she's the one who snitched to the Rebels about the club?"

"No fucking way. Stone keeps the brat in line. She can't go to the cops either since she'd be the one to get arrested," says the other guy before lowering his voice further. "Everything in the club is under her name. If we get busted for anything, we can always pin it on the girl. Heck, even this building is under her name."

"Fuck, you think Stone would set up his own daughter like that?"

"She's nothing but a whore like the rest of them. He knows this," the man sneers, and my hands clench in anger, enraged that anyone would talk about my woman in this way. "I heard that Stone is planning to sell her off to his business partner once she graduates from college. He'll use her to hide the money for a little while longer, and then she'll be someone else's problem."



“Maybe I’ll get a taste before her daddy sells her off.” Hill laughs, and I decide that I’ve heard enough.

In all the years I’ve spied for the Rebels, I’ve never once broken cover no matter how far things went, but this time, I can’t hold back.

## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

It's my woman they're talking about.

Mine?

The thought gives me pause, but I decide it doesn't matter. Anyone who talks about a woman this way deserves to have their face rearranged. I don't give a fuck if this blows my cover. I plan on beating these two to a pulp. Scarlett is mine, and I'll be damned if anyone talks about her this way.

Fuck this!

There is a red haze covering my eyes; my jaw is clenched and fist ready as I take a step forward, but before I can expose my presence to these fuckers, a small hand grabs my wrist and pulls me back to the stairs.

"Don't," whispers a small familiar voice, and I turn around to find Scarlett standing behind me, her expression sad. Those pretty hazel eyes reveal that she's heard the two men, and that sends a fresh wave of rage rocking through my system.

"Let me take care of this," I grit through clenched teeth. These men are no match for me. I'll hardly break a sweat when I take them down. The fuckers need a lesson on respecting my woman.

She's mine, Goddamnit!

"No." Scarlett shakes her head, tugging at my hand. "It's not worth it."

“Scarlett—”

“Please,” she whispers, undoing me with those beautiful hazel eyes. “I just want to go home.”

Fuck!

My kryptonite, I realize. This girl could get me to do anything she wants, and right now, I want to wipe that sad look off her face. It’s clear she heard them, and if she didn’t already know about the club and everything being in her name, then she does now.

I want to punish them, Stone as well. I want to hurt and break them in the most painful ways. I’ll bring them down, I vow. Evidence or not, I’ll fucking make them all pay!

“Fuck!” I curse, trying to rein in the rage burning through my veins, but it’s not easy. “Fucking hell.”

“Gray,” she whispers, calling out a name that has no place here, her hand caressing my jaw and forcing my attention on her. Only her. “Take me home. Please. Make it...better.”

With a nod, I place a hand on her lower back and lead her in the opposite direction of the two men, down the rest of stairs, past the pool tables and stares, and to the exit. We silently walk to my bike where I hand her my helmet before climbing on. Scarlett wraps her arms around my waist, tightening her hold, and my cock juts at her touch, filling painfully in my jeans.

Mine.

She's the daughter of a rival. Someone I shouldn't care about, but somehow, I do. I wasn't prepared for her to matter as much as she does. She wrecks me. Everything about this girl, wrecks me.

Whatever happens next, Scarlett is mine!

## Chapter Seven

### Scarlett

I told myself that it didn't matter, that I didn't care what my father's men thought of me as long as they kept their distance from me. Said it so many times that I started to believe it. But sometimes, in moments of weakness, I would find myself hoping that at least some of them cared for me, but even that hope was fragile at best. So, I decided to push it aside.

And then I went to the Rebel's clubhouse—figured the women there also had to earn their keep. That they hated being a part of a MC as much as I did; surely all bikers are the same. Cruel men with over-inflated egos, but I was wrong. The women at the Steel Rebels' clubhouse were happy. Content.

They belonged. They were valued. Loved.

I heard that Stone is planning to sell her off to his business partner once she graduates from college. He'll use her to hide the money for a little while longer, and then she'll be someone else's problem. Maybe I'll have a taste before her daddy sells her off!

I don't belong.

To my father, to these men...I am simply an instrument they can use to get what they want then discard me when they decide that I am no use to them.

No, I do not belong with the Vipers. I never have and never will. There is no telling for certain what my fate will be once I graduate from college, but for now, I will use the little control I have over my life to help Gray take the Vipers down, regardless of the consequences for me.

I turn to Gray as I unlock the door to my apartment and read need in those gorgeous blue eyes—and desire that I imagine is reflected in my own. He's staring at me like a man starved, fire burning strong between us. No, I don't have to worry about the future when I can take advantage of the present.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

His mouth is on mine the second the door clicks shut behind us. I barely notice when the straps of my backpack slide off my shoulder and the bag thunders to the floor, uncaring that the move could damage my laptop. I can't think past this man's firm mouth or the way his body feels against mine.

Gray kisses me like he's drowning, and I hold the air he needs to survive on my lips. His arms go around me, and I sigh into the kiss at the warmth of this body and the unsteady beat of his heart. I whimper as our tongues search for each other, tasting beer on his and getting drunk on it, getting drunk on his taste. My hands find their way to his shoulders, and I push back his jacket, my fingers searching his firm chest and tracing the solid lines in feverish need. He shrugs off his jacket, allowing me room for my curious fingers to explore.

His hands move to my butt, fondling my cheeks as he devours my lips, leading me deeper into the apartment. My sex pulses needily, growing slick with heat as he fondles my bottom with those big hands.

Like most girls, I've thought about my first. Obsessed over it. I allowed myself to daydream obsessively over what I wished my first time would look like, while knowing fully well I would hate every second of it. That was back when I was sure I would end up with someone my father picked for me.

It's different now.

With Gray, I can't help but crave it. I want him. Lord above, I want him to take me. If I never have anything else in my life, at least I'll have this. A first shared with a man that sends my heart racing and body trembling with need.

If nothing more comes of this, at least I'll have the memory of him. Of his touch.

He's perfect. Everything I learn about this man is another reason to want him, and I allow myself a second to mourn the fact that I can't have this forever.

No, I can't think about it now.

Here's here. I have him now. Whatever happens in the future is out of my control, but in this moment, I will allow myself to feel. To dream and hope.

To love and be loved.

We break apart for air, and his eyes are dark when they drop to mine. "Your bedroom, now," he demands, and I simply nod to the door on our left. Gray's lips are back on mine, seeking—demanding—as he guides me to my bedroom. He reaches behind me to open the door to let us in, and when I push back to study his eyes, it's to find them centered on me.

"I want you naked on that bed," he says, his mouth falling on mine once more, the kiss rough and hot, it sends my toes curling in pleasure. I moan when he slides his hand under my T-shirt and fondles my tits, pinching a pebbled nipple between his fingers. "Need to see you naked, princess."

"Okay," I whisper shyly, a bit nervous at the prospect of being naked in front of a man for the first time in my life. There are insecurities, of course there are, but I am not going to allow them to get in the way of being with Gray.

I won't mess this up. I can't mess it up!

My cheeks are practically on fire, but I don't protest when he grabs the hem of my T-shirt and tugs it over my head, leaving me in my bra. "Fuck," he curses as his eyes

drop to my tits, and I blush when his hands circle my back and unclasp my bra before tugging it off my arms, but I don't have a moment to feel self-conscious about my small breasts as he bends down and licks one.

"Gray," I gasp, startled at the sudden move, my eyes fluttering to a close when he takes a pebbled nipple in his mouth and suckles softly on it. I cry out, combing my fingers through his hair to anchor myself as his tongue flicks my nipple, sending a wave of heat flooding my sex. His mouth moves to my left nipple as his hand traces my waist and pops open my jeans before tugging down the zipper. Everything in me is tuned to the sinful mouth teasing me, and I barely notice it when he tugs down my jeans right along with my panties. The next thing I realize, I am standing in front of this man without a single article of clothing on.

When Gray lifts his eyes back to mine, I'm startled once more by the heat I read in them. "Get on the bed, princess," he growls, pushing back. I walk to my queen-sized bed and climb on without a word, turning to find him stripping off his clothes. There is a sense of urgency in his movements, and I forget my own nerves to watch him rip off his shirt to reveal his lean muscles, and next come the jeans.

I try not to look down at his bulge, but my eyes drop to his fingers, a gasp slipping out when he shoves down his jeans and briefs, and his massive cock bobs out. He's huge. God, he'sso big. His cock is long and thick, the head of his shaft red and angry, glistening with a clear droplet of precum. I didn't get a good look the last time he was here, but watching him strip sends nerves rocking through my system.

Surely there's no way...

But Gray seems convinced that the massive rod he's carrying will somehow fit inside of me, as he doesn't hesitate to approach the bed.

"Gray..."



His eyes flick over my body, licking his lips as he climbs into bed and grabs my leg when I try to move back. “Don’t be nervous,” he says. “You don’t need to be scared, princess. I’ll take care of you.”

“Umm.”

My eyes drop to his manhood, unsure whether it’s safe to trust him, but all that fades away when he touches me. Gray gently presses my knees apart, his chest rising and falling heavily as his eyes settle on the spot between my legs. “I can’t fucking wait anymore,” he says roughly, leaning in and kissing my leg. His lips are fevered, seeking as he traces his mouth up my thighs, his stubble caressing my skin and sending little shivers of pleasure up my spine. “I’ve been thinking about touching you since the last time, tasting you...” Those stormy eyes look up at mine, and there’s a promise of something in them. There shouldn’t be surprises, not with this at least. I know what to expect. After last time, I should know what to expect.

I couldn’t be more wrong.

Gray grabs my thighs and holds me in place before leaning forward. My hips buck on the bed and lips part with a cry when he rubs his mouth over my sex before dragging his hot tongue over my wet slit, from the top to my hole. My fingers clench over the sheets when his tongue delves into my pulsing flesh and strokes my small bundle of nerves. He repeats the motion, hands holding my hips down when they attempt to rise off the bed. “God!” I sob, writhing helplessly as I attempt to rock my hips toward his hungry mouth. “Oh God! Gray... W-what—”

“So fucking wet,” he growls against my sex before his tongue centers on my clit again. I fist the sheets, tugging hard as his sinful mouth drives waves of pleasure through my body with every hungry lick. “Your pussy is a drug. I can’t fucking get enough!”

“I... So... God!” I heave, feeling myself teeter dangerously close to the edge.

He releases my hip to bring his fingers between my legs, and I gasp when he slides his thick digit into my entrance, spreading me a little. I wince at the invasion. It feels a little strange, but he doesn't let me focus on that as he licks feverishly at my clit, scattering the sensation until I can't place the pleasure point anymore.

## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I feel him everywhere. Doing everything. All at once

“Oh!” I cry out, my back arching when he wiggles his digit into my sex, teasing a pleasure point I had no idea existed.

“So tight,” he hisses. “Your pussy is so snug, princess. God, I could come just from touching you.”

“Too much,” I pant, even as my hands release the grip I have on the sheets to grab my sensitive tits. I knead my breasts, tugging on my nipples hard enough to send a wave of pleasure shooting to my clit. He stays lapping at my clit, circling the nub with his tongue as he starts working his finger in and out of my sex, stretching me. “Oh, God... I can’t... Gray...” I pant as he pulls me closer to an edge. He has me wound so far up, I can tell the drop will be long.

“Eyes on me,” he growls, and my eyes snap open to lock with his, breath getting choppy as he picks up the pace, his finger moving faster in and out of me even as his tongue works over my clit, playing my body like a virtuoso.

There’s no warning, nothing I can do to brace for the explosion as it tears through me. A white light flashes over my eyes, and for a solid three seconds, I am blind, mouth agape with a soundless scream as the muscles in my stomach clench before releasing rapidly with a rough shudder. One that steals my breath away and threatens to wreck me.

I can’t breathe. I can hardly see through the haze of pleasure slithering over every nerve of my body.

It's his name on my lips when I cry out again, rocking forward to ride his tongue and finger. I sob, tiny tremors rolling through me as he sucks at my clit, drawing out the climax until I'm trembling in the bed.

"I'm going to make you mine," he claims, pulling out his fingers and climbing up my body. I notice a vein pulse on his forehead when the haze clears. "No one else can have you. No one fucking touches you after this."

I can dream. I'll allow myself to dream of belonging to this man for more than a single night.

"Yours," I whisper, fantasizing about something that feels impossible. But I don't let myself linger on the thought as I wrap my arms around his shoulders and pull his lips down on mine. Wanting to be kissed. Wanting to have him breathe into me. Wanting a connection—assurance. "Take me. Make me yours!"

I'm desperate for it. A part of me is terrified that something will happen any second to end this. Stop Gray before I can give him the part of myself that is mine to give.

My innocence is not for my father to sell or for the Vipers to claim. It's mine, and I want Gray to have it. To have me!

Please.

"There isn't a man strong enough to stop me from making you mine, princess," Gray rasps as he settles between my legs, and I feel the heavy press of his erection. His cock is huge, and considering how his finger felt inside of me, I figure it's going to take some time before I get used to him, but I don't care.

As long as it's him.

Gray grasps the base of his shaft and strokes himself slowly before positioning the head of his cock at my entrance. He rubs it over my sex, his eyes on mine as he eases his thickness inside of me. “Oh!” I gasp at the pinch of pain as he stretches me, fighting the urge to lock my legs against the discomfort.

“Look at me,” he commands, and I don’t realize that my eyes have shut until he speaks. I open my eyes and lift them to those perfect blues. “I want you to see and remember who takes you. Who will only ever have you.” His left hand closes around my thigh and brings it to his hip, the move sending his cock deeper into me, stretching me and making me whimper at the intrusion. “Shh, I’m going to make it all better, princess.”

“Yours,” I breathe, wanting more than anything for it to be true.

“Damn right,” he hisses, rocking his cock in shallow thrusts until the feeling of discomfort shifts to that of pleasure. Each shallow thrust sends him deeper, and I can tell he’s holding back from the pulsing vein and the sweat beading his forehead.

He doesn’t want to hurt me. Even now, when it’s unavoidable, he still wants to make it better for me, and that sends my heart aching with affection.

I am in love with Gray, I realize with sadness.

It’s an odd moment to realize I love him, but as I stare up at the strong man, muscles tense and strained—I realize I will never love anyone more than this man. Later in life, when I’m stuck in an unhappy relationship, my heart will still beat for him. Race at the memory of his touch. Of his taste and scent.

I love him.

My hands circle his back and grip his butt before pulling him forward and rocking to

meet his thrust, his roar mixing with the cry that tears from my lips. A sharp pain tears through me at the intrusion before dulling into a throb.

I feel him. Every inch of his massive shaft, filling me...stretching me...

“So full,” I pant, gripping him and digging my nails into his muscular back, no doubt breaking his skin with my grip.

“Fuck, baby, you should have let me take it easy for you,” he says, pressing his mouth over my temple, his breath just as heavy as mine. “I didn’t want to hurt you.”

“It doesn’t,” I whisper, burying my face in his neck and hugging him tight against me. “It hurts a little, but it’s fading. Don’t stop. Please...take me.”

“Fuck,” he curses softly as he rolls his hips, giving my body a chance to get used to his massive girth as he draws back, but for only a second before he slides back in. My back arches and mouth parts with a gasp.

## Page 19

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

There's pain, but there's pleasure I wasn't expecting. His cock is touching the spots his tongue and finger couldn't reach before, making my sex clench around him in response. Arousal flares between us when he starts moving, hands digging into my hips as he pulls out before slamming forward, so hard it knocks the breath out of me.

And I revel in every second of it.

"More," I beg into his ear, rolling my hips to meet his thrusts. "Need more, Gray, please."

"I'll give you more!" Gray withdraws then slams forward with such force that it sends the bed slamming against the wall, and then everything goes static as he starts hammering into me. Whatever pain is left morphs into toe-curling pleasure as his cock strokes a sweet spot inside me with every slam. I sob, scratching a trail up and down his back as he takes me hard and fast, sending waves of shudders rolling through my body. "Mine!"

I feel more than hear that word, my heart wrenching painfully in my chest. "Yours," I whimper, wrapping my legs around him and clinging hard to the solid wall of muscles. The wet sound of our love making echoes through the room, and it's so obscene. So dirty, and yet, so perfect.

He's so perfect.

And mine.

God, I want him to be mine!

“You feel so good, Scarlett. Your pussy is a fucking dream,” he says, breathing heavy as he picks up the pace and pistons in and out of me in a fevered pitch. Pleasure grows from the place we’re connected before seeping through the rest of my body, threatening to send me over the edge yet again. “No one else gets to have you. I’ll fucking kill anyone who touches you.”

“Yes, oh God... Yes!”

“So fucking close,” he grinds out, frustration clear in his voice. “Come with me, baby. Need to see you come apart in my arms again.”

Gray leans down and closes his mouth over my nipple, sucking the bead into his wet mouth, and that’s the push I need to send me toppling off the cliff. I scream, thrashing under him as my sex spasms and tightens rhythmically around his cock. His thrusts grow fevered, almost desperate as he pounds his manhood in and out of me, pushing deeper and deeper until...

“Gray!”

I feel his muscles tense over me, a vein pops in his temple, and his cock grows impossibly thicker inside of me seconds before he comes with a roar. It’s my name he chants as his cock spurts ropes of cum into my sex. Gray slams his mouth on mine, and I swallow the rest of his groans, letting him pump his seed into my womb without any barriers between us. We’re both shaking when he thrusts into me once last time, his body jerking hard against mine before he collapses forward, burying his head in my neck.

We lie in silence, my body deliciously lax and sated, reveling in the moment we just shared, with only the sound of our heavy breathing filling the room.

And I long for the moment to last forever.



Gray's lips touch my neck and linger for long beats. "Are you okay?" he rasps into my skin, his warm breath making goosebumps form. "Tell me I didn't hurt you, princess."

"You didn't hurt me," I answer, wrapping my weak arms around his shoulders. "Quite the opposite. I've never thought I could feel this way."

He chuckles. "There's more where that came from." Gray pushes back, and I watch him climb out of bed, blushing furiously at his nudity. He doesn't shy away from it; I imagine with a body like that, no one would. He walks to the bathroom and disappears there for a couple of minutes. When he emerges, it's with a wet towel in hand.

"Gray, what are you doing?" I ask, eyes widening with both horror and surprise when he sits on the bed and runs the towel over my thighs, hands holding them in place so they don't lock.

"Let me take care of you," he says, voice thick with affection, which floors me. I don't want to believe that he might have feelings for me. It'll only make it harder when the time comes that we have to be apart. Still, I let him. "You're mine now, Scarlett. I'll take care of you. I'll protect you. Always."

I want to believe that this man can save me from the same fate that will destroy my father. It's selfish and unrealistic to even hope for a second that I might be spared if the Vipers go down. Whether or not I want it, the truth is I was born into the MC. I helped it grow by hiding money for them. Sure, I didn't hold a gun to anyone's head or hurt anyone, but I played a role too.

I deserve the same fate that awaits the rest of the Vipers.

Not even Gray can stop that.

## Chapter Eight

Gray

I've never been good at dating. Back in my teen years, I was busy running around with like-minded delinquents and causing trouble to even think about being in a relationship with anyone. Of course, there were always the awkward alleyway rendezvous and caresses of teens who didn't know any better.

Love? That was a foreign concept where I grew up.

Love was a luxury for the rich who could afford to not worry about utility bills and an empty fridge. There was no such luxury where I came from. My parents, like many the others in the neighborhood, were gambling addicts who depended on food stamps to survive. They did not care whether their only son went to school, ate dinner, or went to prison as a young adult.

Prison hardened me. It turned me into an unfeeling man who only cared about himself. Going to prison was, however, a blessing in disguise. It was through my cellmate that I was able to join the Rebels and learn what it's like to have family, but...love?

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I glance at the girl sound asleep next to me, taking in the gentle rise and fall of her chest, and my heart swells with warmth. Her long, midnight black hair spills across the pillow like a cascade of silk, framing her features perfectly and softening them. Her eyelashes flutter slightly as she dreams, creating delicate shadows on her cheeks. I lean a little closer, careful not to disturb her as I grow captivated by the way the gentle morning light dances across her angelic face. I find myself questioning how a man like Stone, with his ugly heart and mug of a face, could have made something so beautiful.

“What have you done to me?”

I have never experienced a feeling like this before. It’s a crazy mix of strength and vulnerability, knowing this person could hurt me and that I could do the same. It’s like standing on the edge of a cliff, feeling the rush of excitement but knowing I’d jump without hesitation if it meant catching her.

And isn’t that crazy? I don’t know anything about this girl beyond the way she feels against me and that she’s the daughter of the enemy, and yet, I’d take on the world to see her smile.

I curse myself for a fool, pushing away from the girl and climbing out of bed, careful not to wake her. I walk naked to the bathroom and look through her drawers until I find a new toothbrush. I tear off the seal and clean up before grabbing a cold shower, hoping it’ll snap me out of whatever spell the girl has cast over me.

The spell stays, but I am alert after the shower.

Scarlett is still asleep when I walk into the bedroom with a towel wrapped around my waist. I dry quickly before sliding into my jeans. I figure caffeine will do what the shower couldn't, so I leave the sleeping girl and walk to her kitchen. I find the coffee beans easy enough, but decide I might as well make us breakfast.

I scan the fridge and cabinets for something to make for breakfast, and when I find some eggs and a loaf of bread, I decide on scrambled eggs and toast. I look around for a bowl, opening one cabinet after another, and that's when my handbrushes against the egg carton, sending one of the eggs tumbling off the counter. It bounces once, and then it shatters on the floor.

"Fuck!" I curse, looking around for something to clean up the mess. I lean down and yank open the lower cabinet, hoping to find some wipes or cleaning products, but I stop short when I see what's inside.

Tubes of paint, brushes, blank canvases, and a jumbled mess of art supplies spill out. A riot of color that assaults my eyes. I freeze, my hand hovering.

"What the fuck?" I whisper, staring at the contents inside but keeping my hands to myself. The canvases are white and bare of markings, but most of the brushes appear to be used.

I push back from the cabinet and climb to my feet, looking around her apartment from the open kitchen, but her walls are empty. There isn't one painting hanging on the walls, and I wonder what she does with the ones she finishes. Everything I know about this girl, I've heard from her best friend, but Brooke never mentioned anything about Scarlett painting.

I shouldn't...

I know it's wrong even as I open another cabinet, but I do so anyway, hoping to see a

painted canvas, sighing when I spot the cleaning supplies. I grab them and clean up the mess. Once I'm done, everything in me pushes to close the cabinets and forget what I just saw, but I can't ignore the nagging voice at the back of my head pushing me into curiosity.

What does she paint, and why are they hidden?

Fuck, I should wait for her to wake up so I can ask, and I almost talk myself into ignoring my little discovery when I spot something from the corner of my eye. My brows furrow as I move toward the humming refrigerator, trying to look, but the space is too small. If I want to see what it is, then I'll have to reach in.

I really shouldn't...

A part of me questions if perhaps it's evidence against Stone and the Vipers, but it's a pathetic excuse. The spy in me wants to know, to understand this girl who's grabbed my heart in her fists and refuses to let go, so I reach in.

My hand brushes against something cold and flat on the side of the fridge, and I already know what it is before I pull it out.

A canvas.

It's surprisingly heavy, tucked carefully in a spot one would never think to look. I'm careful as I pull it up, slowly placing it on the counter. My gaze falls on the canvas, a stark contrast against the sterile white granite countertop. It's a portrait, and the first thing I notice is the vibrant splash of colors and bold strokes. Don't know much or anything at all when it comes to paintings, but I can tell this one's new.

And those eyes... I've seen them in the mirror for past twenty-eight years.

The eyes are painted a deep cerulean blue, captivating in a way I've never seen before. Scarlett managed to capture the intensity I've been told they carry, and so much depth. It's almost like a reflection of my soul. A startlingly accurate piece of myself laid bare on canvas.

And she did it in my absence.

She could have used a photo, but something tells me she didn't. It's a crime for her to hide such talent behind these walls. To rob the world of her gift. Even so, I don't blame her for doing it. I've seen how the world likes to destroy beautiful things.

This is not something I was supposed to see, and yet, all it does is send me falling deeper in love with her.

A quick flare of shame for exposing what I imagine was supposed to stay hidden filters in. It's clear, from how the painting supplies were stored, that this is a secret she wanted to keep for herself. With a last glance at the painting, I slowly return it to its previous position, careful not to scratch the surface. With the painting secure, I turn to lock the cabinets, ready to get back to what I was doing before I was distracted. I'll play it off like I didn't see anything until she's ready to share this part of her life with me.

I find the bowls this time, and as I turn to place one on the counter, the front door suddenly bursts open with a bang, shattering the quiet of the kitchen. A strong wave of trepidation and tension rolls in, accompanied by the heavy thud of footsteps.

I quickly turn round, braced for danger when I am met by an angry set of eyes, face red with anger. Large burly figures, faces I've gotten to know over the last couple of weeks, stand behind him with their presence a palpable threat. The man's eyes drop to my shirtless torso, and if possible, his face gets redder, turning a frightening shade of beet.

“Stone.”

## Page 21

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

“You fucking son of a bitch,” the man roars, stepping further into the apartment, and my eyes drop to his clenched fists. The men flagging him, five in total, all press in close and trap me in the kitchen. One of them is Hill, and the rest are built just like the man. I calculate what it would take me to fight through them, but quickly realize that I stand no chance considering the fact that they have weapons, and, well, I don’t. Of course I could grab one of the men and use them as a shield, but could I really take the risk that they won’t sacrifice one of their own?

I am well and truly fucked.

Before I can work out a plan, another door flies open, and this time, it’s Scarlett. She runs out in nothing but a shirt that barely covers those sexy thighs. She doesn’t have a bra on either, exposing parts of her to the men in the room, and I want to go to her, protect her from the predatory looks they send her way. Suddenly conscious of her near nudity, she crosses her arms over her chest, trying to put up a brave front, but I read the fear in her eyes when she spots her father.

“Dad,” she says, hugging herself tighter. “W-what are you doing here?”

The man sneers, his eyes darkening as he sees the state his daughter is in. It’s obvious to everyone in the room that something happened between us, but it’s not just Stone who seems angry about the news. Hill tosses me a deadly glare, I imagine for touching what he’d tagged as his.

But Scarlett isn’t his. She belongs to me.

Only me!



Fuck, this isn't the time to think about who belongs to whom. Not when my life hangs in the balance. "Stone..."

"You're dead," the man growls. "Not just for violating my daughter, but for being a fucking dirty Rebel!"

The room falls still for a moment as the words hang in the air, tension growing thicker, and I realize that now I really am dead. There is no talking my way out of this. Stone would never let a Rebel leave just as we'd never spare a Viper if he invaded our club.

"Dad, he didn't—"

"Shut the fuck up, you little tramp," Stone roars, the sound vibrating of the walls. "You dare speak after lying with a Rebel. Of all the men you could have spread your legs for, you chose the fucking enemy."

My vision goes red with rage at the crude words Stone throws at his daughter, and I want to break his face, tear the man and his goons to shreds, but I force myself to remain calm. I promised to protect Scarlett, and I don't put it past Stone to hurt his daughter if I start shit.

"Scarlett has nothing to do with this," I say, shifting the man's attention to me and off his daughter. "How did you find out my identity?" I haven't been to the Rebels' clubhouse and have ensured not to meet up with any one of my brothers in case Stone put a tail on me.

"I have a camera in my office." Fuck! "I keep it there to make sure no one comes into mess with my shit, so imagine my surprise when I went through the footage this morning to find that our new prospect is actually a Rebel." He spits out the name like it's foul in his mouth. "You've been asking questions. Stirring up shit in my club.

Seducing my daughter!”

I was careless. I let something else become more important than the job the Rebels had entrusted me with. And now it's not only me that might pay the price.

“Dad, he didn't—”

“Fine, you caught me,” I snark, cutting Scarlett off.

“Damn right!” Stone shouts even as Scarlett turns her startled eyes to me, and I see it, the fierce need to defend me, but that would only be effective if she were addressing someone who cared about her. No, anything she tells Stone would only be used against her. I can't let that happen. I need...havetoprotect her. So I shift my gaze to her father.

“When you told me that your daughter was in charge of your finances, I made my mind up then and there to use her to get dirt on you,” I say, leaning against the counter as I meet the man's steely glare. “The camera in your office was a miscalculation on my part.”

“You son of a bitch. You have no idea what I'll do to you.”

I scoff, sending a silent apology to the girl that's stolen my heart even as the next words come out of my mouth. “Are you not the one who said that the only thing women are good for is on their backs or working behind a desk?” I wait a second before adding the rest. “It's not my fault that your daughter is good for both.”

A sound not unlike that of a wounded animal breaks through the room, but it's drowned out by the roar of an angry man, insulted and humiliated in front of his own men. “Take him,” he growls, the sound almost inhuman as he points at me. I want to turn and look at her, apologize with my eyes for letting such foul words out of my

mouth when she means the world to me. Beg her to understand that I need her father's fury directed at me and not her.

"You're dead!" Hill grinds out as he grabs my arm, and I could fight him, easily drop the man to the floor like a sack of potatoes, but that would be stupid considering I'm incredibly outnumbered and out powered.

"Take her too!" Stone hisses, his words sending fire rushing through my veins.

"What the fuck?" I growl, yanking my arm from Hill and shoving the man off as I turn my fury to Stone. "You would punish your own daughter for being the victim of the manipulation of a Rebel?"

Stone turns to me, eyes so similar to his daughter's, and yet, so different. "She needs a lesson on who to trust. Next time she'll think twice before spreading her legs for the fucking enemy."

"This is not her fucking fault!"

"I'll go," Scarlett's small voice breaks through the steely tension. "Let me get dressed. I'll come."

No! I want to shout. Fuck no!

## Page 22

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I fucked up the mission. I deserve to bear the consequences of being caught alone. I vowed to protect her, to guard her with my life, but I am helpless to do anything as one of the Vipers presses a gun to the side of my head. “Move!”

I don’t want to leave. A part of me wants to reverse the last twelve hours and take Scarlett to the Rebel clubhouse and to my room. Hide her there. The Vipers wouldn’t dare set foot in our territory, not even for their princess.

And moments later, when I’m shoved into a black van in the underground parking garage, there is regret on my mind. As I watch Scarlett climb into the SUV in front of us right behind her father, I question if it’s the last time I’ll ever see the woman I’ve given my heart to.

### Chapter Nine

Scarlett

He didn’t mean it. Those cruel and unfeeling words he spoke to my father were not true.

The same way your father didn’t mean it when he said he was going to sell you off once you stopped being of any use to him? Sneers a small voice in the back of my mind, but I refuse to believe that last night meant nothing. The way he touched me, kissed and made love to me...all the while calling me his.

And I believed him.

He used me!

My eyes shift to the one other man I foolishly believed cared for me in his own limited way. Even with all those threats to sell me off, I never once believed that my father would go through with them. Seeing him pace in his office, red eyes brimming with rage, I believe with every fiber of my being that this man could hurt me.

I flinch when he kicks his desk, turning those murderous eyes to me. “I should never have allowed you as much freedom as I did. Now look at you, embarrassing me by sleeping with a Rebel!” he rages. “What did I expect? You are your mother’s daughter, after all.”

A stab of pain shoots through my chest at the mention of the woman who left me with this monster. My mother, a term I have never used as I’ve never met the woman, fell in love with my father’s friend and ran off. A few weeks later, there was news that the two had gotten into a car accident. I’ve heard the rumors that my father had something to do with that fatal accident, but I refused to believe them.

Growing up, we never talked about her. He only ever brought her up when he was angry, cursing her out for betraying him, or me for reminding him of her. When I was young, I hated her for leaving us—me—but now, I understand why she left. Who would want to be around someone like my father?

For years, I’ve worked faithfully for a club he loves more than his own child. I was loyal to literal vipers, hoping for the affection a child would crave from their father. A kind word, but nothing. Even the apartment was gifted with the threat that it would be taken away if I stepped out of line.

And even when I realized that I would never get that, I never stopped hoping.

I drop my eyes to the hands on my lap, feeling a little sorry for myself. For the girl

who will only ever love, but never receive it in return. “I’m sorry,” I whisper, the only thing that I can say.

“You should be sorry. No daughter of mine should be associated with those fucking Rebels.” He stops dead in the center and turns to me. “Don’t tell me you have feelings for that bastard. Is that why you let him...defile you?”

Defile?

I replay the previous night, a magical night. But admitting that out loud will only add more trouble for Gray, so I shake my head. “No, I don’t have feelings for him.”

“Look at me when you speak, girl!” A firm hand grabs my chin and pinches it, forcing my eyes up to his. “Now, did you spread your legs for that rat because you have feelings for him?”

“I don’t,” I manage through the pain in my face. “I swear it!”

“Then why did you do it?”

“I’m sorry.” I sniff, letting fat tears drop down my cheeks. He shoves away in disgust at the sight of my tears. A sign of weakness. He drilled this into me when I was a child. Crying is for the weak. For people without a backbone.

“Listen here, girl. You have a choice to make. You either choose to be loyal to the Vipers or defend those dirty Rebels and go down with them!”

“The Vipers,” I hiccup. “I...I’m sorry. I’ll stay away from Gray. I’ll pretend I never met him. I promise.”

My father studies me for a full minute, reading the fear and regret I force into my

eyes before deciding that he believes my words. “I’m going to take care of that dirty rat, but be warned, this is not over. I’ll deal with you when I get back.”

He turns and leaves the room. I wait until I hear the firm click of a lock sliding in place and his fading footsteps before I get up. I use my sleeves to wipe my wet cheeks before rushing to my father’s computer. I know now that there’s a camera in the room, but I don’t care as I turn on the computer, chewing my nails as I wait for the old equipment to start. I put in his password, and with my eyes locked on the door, dig into my pockets for the USB flash drive I grabbed from my room when I excused myself to get dressed before leaving.

Stone keeps his daughter in line. She can’t go to the cops either since she’d be the one to get arrested. Everything in the club is under her name. If we get busted for anything, we can always pin it on the girl. Heck, even this building is under her name.

My eyes are firmly on the door as I copy all the club’s financial details to the flash drive. I don’t know much about the Den that Gray was talking about; I’m hoping there will be traces of it in these records, and if not, then at least they’ll expose his other crimes. For good measure, I scroll through other documents I never touched, surprised when I find digital copies of deeds and purchase agreements, and sure enough, they’re all in my name.

Including a gentleman’s club with a business license on file. The Den!

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

Gray was right. Does this mean that he was right about the trafficking and auctioning too? I don't care to think too much about it, I don't have time. Later, when the world comes crashing down as I know it will, and these documents have landed in the right hands, then I will allow myself to confront the role I've played in all of this.

The door remains closed as everything copies onto the flash drive, and I'm half terrified my father will stomp in and catch me but it never happens. I grab the drive once it's done and shut down the computer before moving to the next step. I open and close the desk drawers, searching for a spare key to open the door. The frantic pounding of my heart echoes loud in my ears as I scan the drawers, nearly sobbing when I come back empty. He was careful, it seems.

I flop back on the seat, my heart sinking at the thought of being stuck in here until my father gets back when I catch a glimmer of metal on my father's desk. Not the key I was searching for, but a letter opener. It's a long shot, but it's all I have. I snatch it up, my fingers trembling as I rush to the door.

I drop to my knees, my breath comes in ragged pants as I fumble with the lock, the letter opener scraping against the metal. I don't think it'll work. I've only seen it in movies before, and I assume they only add this bit for the plot, but...

"Oh Jesus!" I gasp when the lock gives way, the door creaking open with a groan. I take a second to marvel at my unexpected success, but only a second before slowly pulling the door open a little more and peeking out. The hallway is empty, but I pause for a minute to listen in. All sounds are coming from downstairs, and I imagine it'll take a while before my father or anyone else thinks to come up here. Either way, I don't want to chance it.



As quietly as possible, I tiptoe down the hall until I get to the end. I swallow as I take the stairs down, following the noise. They are in the entertainment room, every last one of them, cackling and jeering.

I slip around the corner and peek in, and the scene makes my blood run cold. My father is leaning against the wall opposite the doorway, his arms crossed over his chest and an angry sneer on his face. Seated in the center of the room and tied to a chair with his back to my father is Gray. The rope binding his wrists is thick and rough, digging into his flesh, and I see the bruises already forming on his skin. His chest is bare, and I spot the red welts on his skin, but it's the blood tickling down his face that worries me.

This is my fault.

Christ, if he hadn't run into me, then this would never have happened to him. He'd never have been exposed if he hadn't come to see me in my father's office. They would never have caught him if he hadn't been in my apartment this morning.

I did this.

My eyes shift back to his face, expecting to read pain and fear in his expression, but instead, there is a smirk. A taunting smile that is sure to drive these men crazy. I slap a palm on my mouth to stop a cry when one of the guys attempts to punch the smile off his lips. Gray barely moves, smiling through bloody teeth.

"You hit like a bitch!"

He's taunting them. He probably thinks he's going to die and doesn't want to go down as a coward. The thought tugs at my heartstrings as I turn away from the scene. I creep back to the stairs and go up to the second floor where I know the window that opens to the fire escape is broken. I scramble toward it, my heart pounding in my

chest as I pray like I never do that no one fixed the broken latch. I breathe a sigh of relief when I find it still broken.

Moving carefully as to not make a sound, I squeeze through the narrow window. My clothes catch the rough edges, and the cold rusty metal bites into my hand as I slowly climb down. My heart drops to my stomach when it creaks, but when no one comes rushing up, I slowly move down. I make it out without alerting anyone, scanning around the place for what I need to do to get Gray away from a crowd of angry men when I spot them.

I don't have time to think as I run to the row of bikes, each parked dangerously close to the other. It's a chance. A perfect distraction.

Without second thought, I run to the first bike, and with a deep breath, I kick it and send it tumbling over. It crashes into the second, which crashes into the third, and like dominoes, they all follow. A loud metallic clang echoes through the air as the bikes fall, each crashing into the next. I don't stand around to watch the beautiful scene as I sprint around the building, barely making it to safety before angry bikers come out, cursing and yelling.

"Fucking Rebels. I bet they did this. Find them!"

"What about the guy?"

"He's tied to the fucking chair; he's not going anywhere."

There's no time to think. Or be scared. My thoughts are on him.

On saving the man I love.

I have a small window to save him before the angry bikers come bellowing back in. I

use code in the keypad to open the back door. I hiss out a relieved sigh when the door opens, having been afraid my father had already deactivated my code. As predicted, the entertainment room is empty, save for the man I love tied to a chair.

I hesitate before entering, afraid my father might have stayed behind as his men went to deal with the damaged bikes, but he's nowhere to be seen. Gray is completely alone in the room. At the sound of my steps, Gray looks up, and I read surprise in those blue eyes I love. I want to kiss him. Hug him. Apologize for putting his life in danger. His life would have been easier if he'd never met me. He's hurting because of me.

There are tears in my eyes when I kneel in front of him, my hands shaking as I fumble with the ropes. "I'll get you out," I whisper, my voice choked with emotion. I curse when my trembling hands fail the first time, steadying them before trying again. The thought of my father and his men coming back and hurting Gray again spurs me into action, and I finally manage to loosen the knots. When the ropes fall away, I find myself longing to wrap my arms around him and hold tight, but I don't trust in my ability to let go.

"Scarlett..."

"No time, let's go," I whisper, wiping the tears with the back of my hand before taking his. "There's a door in the back. I bet you've seen it. Use it to get away."

"Scarlett..."

"They'll be looking for you. My father will kill you if he finds you. Please go."

"Scarlett," he says again, lifting his bruised hand to my chin, the same spot my father had touched before, but Gray's touch is gentle. Kind. "I'm sorry. You know I didn't mean any of the words I said in your apartment."

I shake my head, unwilling to waste time on this. “Gray, please go.” When he hesitates, I let the cold detachment I’d mastered for my father slip into my eyes and voice. “I did not go to all this trouble for you to get caught again. Take this. It’s what you used me for, isn’t it?” I shove the flash drive into his palm and step away. “Leave. Just go. I hope to never see you again.”

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

As the words leave my lips, I see pain wash over his face like a storm cloud rolling in. Gray stares at me, his face a mask of shock then slowly, the shock gives way to a deep, raw pain. Those blue eyes that have looked at me with lust and affection, now watch me with desolate emptiness. Almost like I'm the one who's ripped his heart out of his chest and left a gaping wound, not the other way around.

Are you not the one who said that the only thing women are good for is on their backs or working behind a desk? It's not my fault that your daughter is good for both.

No, he has no right to look utterly broken. I'm the one in love, the one betrayed. The one who was stupid enough to fall for a man she knew was using her.

"Scarlett—"

The sound of people approaching sends my heart racing. "All the evidence you need is there," I whisper, nodding at the flash drive in his hands. "Go now!"

I leave him staring at me as I run away. I don't turn around to see if he leaves, hoping he's able to make his way out of the building. He is a Rebel after all. I ought to worry about my own neck.

I'm practically panting and my side hurts when I finally let myself back into my father's office. I fumble with the lock and breathe out a sigh of relief when it locks. With everything settled, I allow myself to collapse to the floor as a sob wrenches from my throat.

He's gone.

I knew we'd never work. Gray and I come from opposite sides of the same world. We were never meant to be. I don't regret him. Gray gave me life in the time we spent together, and I'll reward him by betraying my father and the Vipers. Whatever happens to me next, at least I had him.

With my face pressed against the cool floor, I softly curse out all bikers even as my heart aches for the one I was never supposed to fall for.

## Chapter Ten

### Gray

The cold metal of the fence bites into my palms as I pull myself up, my muscles screaming in protest.

I'm free, finally, but the feeling of escape is muted, dulled by the ache in my chest. My mind, a whirlwind of images of her. Those beautiful hazel eyes, brimming with tears, and that sexy mouth trembling as she looked away. Betrayal in her expression.

I hope to never see you again.

Men are yelling behind me, their voices drawing closer, but I manage to jump off to the other side before they can make their way to me. My body is battered and bruised, but the pain barely touches the ache in my chest. I turn around to glance at the four-story building, gripping the flash drive tightly in my clenched hand as I talk myself out of storming back in there to get her. I would only get us both killed. There are more than a dozen men inside, most of whom are heavily armed, and I am just one man. I need backup. But no matter what, I'm getting Scarlett out of there today.

To take down Stone and his goons, I'll need more than just will. I need backup. A lot of it.

“Fuck!” I curse under my breath, glancing up at the floor I believe she’s holed up on. Did she really expect me to run and leave her behind, rush to the safety of my clubhouse on the other end of town and leave her to deal with the consequences of my actions?

I was careless. I put both our lives at risk. Whether or not she hates me now, it’s not right that she has to stay and deal with the fallout.

I pat my pockets for my phone, heaving a sigh when I find it in my back pocket. The Vipers didn’t bother searching me, or maybe they are just sadistic bastards, hoping to torture and kill me with my phone within reach. Loving the fact that I would know help was so close, and yet, so far away. Well, they miscalculated on that.

“Saint,” the deep baritone of the Rebel’s president breaks through the speaker.

I move to a small alley between two stores as I start to speak. “I’ve been made,” I say, cursing myself for a fool.

“Where are you? Do you need help getting out?”

Not me. “I have the evidence we need to prove Stone’s and the Vipers’ involvement in the auction and with the Den.” My fist opens, and I stare at the black flash drive. My heart clenches once more at the memory of Scarlett’s tear-stained face and the fear in her eyes. “But you need to come get it, and help me eradicate a snake infestation while you’re at it.”

Long beats of silence pass before, “How many of us do you need?”

“Enough to take down a dozen men, heavily armed.”

“Well then, it’s a good thing Priest and his guys are in town; they’ll be up for some

action. Something exciting for them to do during their visit,” he muses, and I hear the smile in his voice. “Send me your location; we’ll be there ASAP.”

“And Saint,” I say before he can hang up.

“What’s?”

” Bring me a shirt too,” I say, my eyes moving back to the building that I’m sure is about to break into chaos. “And a gun.”



*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

He laughs. “You got it, brother.”

I hang up the call to share my location before leaning against the wall to catch my breath. More than ever, I’m assured the mission to get Scarlett out will be successful. Priest is Saint’s cousin and the president of our sister MC based in Austin, the Steel Order. The man has a reputation that rivals the devil and runs a tight ship, not unlike how Saint does things here.

As I wait for the men, I allow my thoughts to wander back to the girl inside that building. I know that I need to move away, walk a bit further from where I’m currently standing. If the Vipers decide to do a search for me around the perimeter of their building, they would find me in seconds, and then it would be over, but...

I can’t move. Every step I take away from the building sends what’s left of my heart breaking away, chip by chip.

“I hope to never see you again.”

Leaving without Scarlett is not an option. I’ll beg, if I have to. For love I don’t deserve. For forgiveness and a promise to spend the rest of my existence making it up to her.

My nerves are frayed when I finally catch a rumble of engines coming from the opposite direction, and relief washes over me. They’re here. My bet is on Saint bringing a small group of guys with him. Eight, ten perhaps? It’s mid-morning after all, and we don’t need to attract more attention than absolutely necessary. Still, with that number, we’d be able to take them down despite having the disadvantage of

being in their territory. But when I emerge from my cover, my jaw drops.

I am met by a sea of leather and chrome; a biker army, it seems like. I recognize most of the bikes as those of my club members with the skull insignia in all forms. Ranging from insignia on bikes to patches on black leather jackets and vests. There are others, the crossed bones symbol that belongs to our sister club, the Steel Order. The roar of the engines is deafening, a thunderous announcement that echoes through the street. There is no possible way the Vipers could have missed the arrival of such a massive force. With this crowd, they are devastatingly overpowered.

Saint pulls up in front of me, tossing me a shirt with a whistle when he gets a good look at me. I slide it on and take the handgun he passes me. “Rough morning?” He laughs, leaning back on his bike with a smirk. “They did a number on you.”

“Nothing but a few scratches,” I say, showing him the flash drive. “Scarlett gave this to me.”

Something flashes in Saint’s eyes at the name. “Brooke’s friend, Scarlett? How’d she get this kind of intel? What haven’t you told me, Gray?”

I hide a wince in the face of my president’s anger. Saint trusts me to act as I see fit during my missions, but I should have told him about Scarlett’s connection to the Vipers. We all love Brooke like our little sister. Well, except Axel. He definitely doesn’t see her like a sister.

“Yeah. Turns out she’s Stone’s daughter, but there is no loyalty there. She wants to take down the Vipers as much as we do, maybe more. I trust her,” I say, meeting his stare head on. “She’s the one who’s been taking care of her father’s finances. She slipped this to me when she helped me get out. It should have what we need. Enough, I believe, to take him and the Vipers off the streets for good.” Enough for the Steel Rebels to claim this side of town too.

Saint looks at me with an unreadable expression. He wants to avenge the pain his partner went through when kidnapped and forced into an auction, but more than that, there's power too. With the Vipers destroyed, many groups will be fighting for this territory, but the Rebels will have the upper hand. I have no doubt Saint has thought about that too.

"Good enough for me," he says finally, reaching for the flash drive, but I step back. His brows furrow in confusion at the move.

"You'll have it, but first, we need to get her out," I say.

Something like fury flashes over my president's expression. "Are you using that as a bargaining chip so I help you save your girlfriend?" Not fury, I realize. He looks insulted, hurt. "Since when do you think we need an incentive to help out one of ours? We would have come, even without the flash drive. You're family, which means Scarlett is too."

Ten years with the Rebels, and the thought of these people being my family has always seemed out of reach. Unlike my MC brothers, I spend a lot of time away on my own spying for the club, and don't visit the clubhouse much to protect my undercover identity. As a result, I've always felt like a bit of an outsider, even among them.

Family?

"Hey, are we getting some action or what?" calls out a voice that I recognize as Priest's. "I was promised a good time."

Right.

Without second thought, I pass Saint the flash drive which he slips into a hidden

pocket in his jacket. “The Vipers are likely already on the defensive. If you guys can cause a distraction at the front, I’ll take the back and try to get to her first. I wouldn’t put it past her father to use her as a shield.”

A look of disgust crosses Saint’s face, and he nods, beckoning for the men to follow. I don’t wait to see what they’ll do, trusting they have my back as I hurry back to the fence I jumped to escape. With a surge of adrenaline, I vault over the fence landing silently on the other side. The chaos will be at the front, but that doesn’t mean I won’t run into anyone at the back entrance. But as I approach, a thought occurs to me. There’s a broken lock on a second story window I’d observed when making rounds through the building. It’s my luck that the window is a fire escape. Being as quiet and fast as possible, I hurry up the fire escape to the window. The weight of the gun in my hand reassures me that I have nothing to worry about even if I do run into a Viper. A part of me hopes that happens.

The window creaks open, revealing the dimly lit interior. I hold my breath, gun at the ready as I scan the corridor. Empty. There is noise and chaos, but it’s all coming from the front of the building. But there’s no guarantee that it will last when the Vipers realize that they’re vastly outnumbered and decide to make a run for it.

Scarlett.

I need to get to her before someone else does.

I move with practiced stealth, steps silent on the wood floor. I quickly creep to the stairs, taking two at once as I make my way up, hoping she’s in Stone’s office. Praying like I never have for her to be safe.

Please be safe. I would lose my mind if something happened to her. Kill every damn one of these slithering Vipers if they touched a strand of her hair. It’s the panic that sends me at a dead run down the hall, kicking her father’s office door open before I

realize I'm doing it. I slam my foot against the door, a forceful kick that has the frame creaking in protest before giving way with a splintering crack after a second kick. It falls open, and I step in, my eyes darting across the room, searching, desperate.

“Gray?”

A broken voice from behind the leather desk chair has my heart careening against my chest, and the relief that slams in leaves my knees weak. She's safe. Thank God.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

I start for her when she quickly ducks back behind the chair as commotion rises from downstairs, forcing me to rush the rest of the way. “It’s okay,” I say, my voice thick with emotions as I gather her into my arms. “The Rebels are taking care of the Vipers, then we’ll get the hell out of this place.”

She jumps as a loud shot rings in the air, and there’s silence before the noise comes again. “You shouldn’t have come back,” she whispers in my arms, her words piercing straight into my heart. I didn’t want to do this here, but I don’t have much choice, so I push back from the embrace to stare at her, biting back a curse at the dry tear streaks on her cheeks. “Why did you come back?”

“I couldn’t leave without you, princess.”

“You said—”

“And I meant none of it,” I interrupt, dropping my forehead against hers. Her ragged breath brushes against my lips, and I soak in her warmth, praying she doesn’t push me away. “I never meant to hurt you. I was hoping to redirect your father’s anger to me and spare you. I was cold and crude; I’m sorry. I promise was only thinking of protecting you.”

Despite the noise and the chaos, I find myself leaning in to brush my lips over hers. “Gray...”

“I’m so sorry, Scarlett.” Slowly, I lift the hand not holding my gun to her cheeks and brush a thumb over her tear stains. “I did what I thought would save you. Nothing matters more to me than your safety.”

She eyes me dubiously. “Why?”

“Because I am in love with you and can’t imagine a moment when I don’t have you in my life.” My lips brush over her soft ones, which puff open in surprise. “I was sure I was going to die, and I didn’t want the same fate for you.”

“You love me?”

“More than anything in the world.”

Her breath hitches in surprise, and she’s calm for a second before she throws her arms around me. “I love you,” she breathes, pushing up so she’s practically on my lap, and my cock stiffens in an instant. Her arms tighten on my neck, breasts pushing against my chest, and then we’re kissing. No idea who moves first, or perhaps we move at the same time, but in the next second, my mouth is moving fervently over hers and is met with the same passion. Our breaths blend heavily between us, my tongue seeking hers as I deepen the kiss.

This is not the time. Not the place. There is a dangerous confrontation happening below us, the door is hanging on its hinges, and two fierce clubs are battling it out. Well, three if we’re being technical, but still, it’s not safe to lower my guard, but her arms are wrapped around me, and the only thing I can think is...

She loves me.

With a growl, I lay Scarlett down on the carpeted floor, my lips dropping back on hers as my hand seeks under her T-shirt, groaning deeply when I realize she didn’t bother with a bra when we left this morning. The gun is still in my left hand, ready to fire at the door if anyone dares to interrupt us.

I break the kiss to trail down her jaw and throat, all the while fondling her tits and

pinching her nipples roughly, and I'm half convinced I leave an imprint of my hand on her breasts. I shove the shirt up, and my hungry mouth falls on her tits, sucking and teasing, rolling my tongue over the small globes until she's sobbing and writhing needily under me. "Take it off," I hiss, palming her pussy over her jeans. "Want you now."

Her hands drop between us where she unfastens her jeans before shoving them down her thighs, and I see she skipped wearing panties too. She seems too far gone, like I am, as she kicks off her shoes and jeans, her hips spreading wide to accommodate me. "Want you... Aaah," she cries out when my teeth scrape her nipple. "God, Gray!" Her fingers tug at my jeans, pulling the zipper down hard, and I hiss out a sharp breath when her hand snakes in and closes around my shaft.

"Fuck, baby!"

"Never thought I'd touch you again," she admits, stroking my cock in awkward moves as she struggles to wrap her hand around the massive girth. "Need you inside of me. Now. Please, Gray, I need to feel you."

"You're not ready," I protest, kissing a path down her stomach. "Let me take care of you."

"No," she cries out, fisting my hair with her free hand and forcing my eyes to hers. There is lust there, but underneath the need is...fear. "It broke me, Gray. Thinking I'd never feel you again. I need to feel you inside of me. I'm ready, please." Her voice breaks on the last word, and it chips at my heart. At my sanity.

"Shh, I'm not going anywhere," I reassure her, gripping my cock and rubbing the head over her clit, determined to get her slick for my shaft, but fuck, she's already wet, her pussy pulsating under the tip of my cock.



“Gray—”

My hand slides under the perfect curve of her ass as I slide my cock into her. She moans, back arching off the carpet as I slowly inch into her, her velvety smoothness wrapping warm around my cock, and I darn near spill on the spot.

God.

How the hell did I live before this woman? Without spending every waking moment next to this beautiful girl with those entrancing hazel eyes. She’s beautiful beyond anything I have seen in my years of traveling through cities in and out of state. And it isn’t just her looks. Despite being raised by the Devil himself, she has a pure soul. “No one compares to you. Every inch of you is perfection. You’re meant to be mine. Made for me.”

Mine.

“Yours,” she whimpers when I start thrusting in and out of her, slow at first. She presses her hands against my back as she rocks forward to meet my movements, crying out softly with every slam into her wet pussy. “Harder, please!”

“I’ve got you, princess,” I growl, pulling out of her before spinning her around and pulling her up to her knees. I grab a fistful of hair before ramming back into her. She cries out, the sound echoing through her father’s office as a rough tremblerocks through her body. “Yes, baby. Let them hear you!” I demand, pounding away at her pussy.

Her fingers spread over the carpet, bracing herself as I slam into her over and over again. Her pussy clenches rapidly around my cock, getting wetter with every rough slam. My fingers tighten on her hair, hammering violently into her, and when she comes, it takes us both by surprise. A scream rips from her throat and her back dips

as tremors rock through her body. I ram my cock into her, fucking her through the orgasm, and when I come, I come hard. Shuddering as her pussy's contractions milk me of my seed. I slam hard into her, burying my seed in her womb until my dick begins to soften inside of her. My muscles lose tension, and I drop on top of her, bracing my arm next to her so I don't crush her with my weight.

## Page 27

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

There is still violence playing out a few floors below us as I pull out of her and drop on the floor before pulling her on top of me. She sighs, burrowing into my arms as we lie in silence, listening to the sounds coming from downstairs. I can only hope that since no one has come upstairs, they've forgotten about her.

"Shouldn't we get dressed?" Scarlett finally breaks the silence. "What if someone comes in here?"

I wave the gun at her. "They won't make it past that door."

"And it's a good idea to just wait up here?"

"Yes," I assure her, dropping a chaste kiss on her forehead. "The Rebels have our backs. They're my family, and now they're yours too. You're not alone anymore." Neither one of us is. I'll make it my life's mission to make that true. Vowing to remind her every waking moment that she has me. Always.

There's a commotion outside the door, and I roll on top of Scarlet, covering her with my body and aiming my gun at the doorway. A large shadow comes into view, then I hear the familiar sound of Saint's voice.

"Fucking hell, Gray. Really? You couldn't wait until we got out of this hell hole?" he demands, but his tone is teasing.

"Like you would wait if it was your girl and you were in my place," I fire back, as Scarlett and I quickly dress.

“Yeah, yeah. Fucking get dressed and get out here. The fun’s over.” He pauses for a minute, then adds, “You okay, Scarlett?”

I’m not surprised by my president’s concern for her, but I can tell Scarlett is. I smile and nod reassuringly at her, and she finally answers, “Y-yes. Thank you. I’m so sorry for everything.”

“No one to blame but your piece of shit father,” Saint tells her, and that seems to remind her that her father was among the men downstairs when the fighting started.

“Where is he?” she asks, and I can’t tell what she’s thinking, her face a mask.

Saint hesitates, then tells her honestly, “You don’t have to worry about him bothering you again. He tried to come at Knox, and he did what he had to do.” He doesn’t go into detail, but it’s obvious Knox had no choice but to kill her father.

Scarlett turns to me, a mixture of grief and relief on her face. “So, it’s over? I’m free?”

I gather her in my arms and smile down at her. “You’re free. We both are.” She smiles as tears slip down her face and she snuggles into my embrace. Holding her close, I guide her out the door, to join our family and start our new beginning.

Epilogue

Six Years Later

Scarlett

A sigh escapes my lips, a soft and contented sound that mingles with the gentle brush against canvas. I’ve been painting for hours, lost in the world of color and texture,

reveling every second of it. A family portrait I've been working on for weeks is finally coming alive, which means I'll finish it in time for my best friend's birthday. The painting will be ready to be framed with just a few more touches.

I push back to stare at the portrait with a sense of pride. A few years ago, when I decided to quit my accounting major, I was scared that I was making a terrible decision. Despite being great with numbers, some might even say talented, accounting never held appeal for me. The main reason I picked the major in the first place was because I was terrified to go against my father's wishes. But a bigger part of me craved his attention. I figured that if I was helpful and took the path he wanted for me, then he'd value me. It didn't work.

Choosing art was for me. A passion I'd kept a secret and perhaps would have carried on hiding out of habit if my husband hadn't confronted me with the truth. The change was terrifying, but my decision was solidified when Gray dropped me off at the first class with a promise to support whatever decision I made.

With a smile, I brush my finger over the portrait, reminiscing about the memories that often come with every painting. A deep happiness I didn't imagine I was capable of feeling until I met Gray settles over me, bone deep. He and our Chrome Rebels family didn't just save me from my father but gave my life color.

I find my mind drifting to the man who raised me, though that's being generous. It's bittersweet, grieving for a man that I'd wished he was while feeling relief to finally be out of the clutches of a man who never had a kind word for his daughter. With his death, the Vipers who could, scattered. Those who couldn't were taken care of by the Rebels, with some hefty pay offs to the local police force.

The Vipers are no more. Haven't been in years. I sold off everything belonging to the club since it was under my name and used some of the funds to turn the Den into a women's shelter. I did everything I could to atone for my sins despite Gray's constant

reminders that I had done nothing wrong.

In hopes of being rid of thoughts of the past, I turn back to lose myself in the painting. And I become so lost that I don't see or hear him coming until suddenly, I feel a warm presence behind me. Before I can turn around, I'm enveloped in an embrace, arms circling around my waist as my husband buries his face in my neck.

"Gray!" I exclaim, slapping my husband's hand playfully. "You scared me. Jesus, you have to stop creeping up on me when I'm painting."

"Old habit," he says into my neck, his warm breath caressing my skin. Goosebumps climb up my body when he kisses my neck, his hands teasing over my dress. "I missed you."

My heart swells at his words, and there's that feeling again. The same feeling I had the first time I saw him on that terrace. It's the same feeling I had when he came to find me in my father's office, even though I was brokenhearted at what I'd thought was his betrayal.

It's the feeling I had when I walked down the aisle to the man three weeks after the incident at the clubhouse because Gray wouldn't have it any other way—and I wouldn't either.

"I missed you too," I answer, leaning back against his firm chest, basking in the contentment that comes whenever he's close. "Where did you guys go this time?"

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

“Downtown. Saint has me training the new prospects on surveillance techniques.”

I smile at that. “Trying to create mini versions of you?” I tease. From the moment we got married and decided to settle down, Gray cut back on his riskier jobs, picking those that didn’t require him to be gone overnight. Now he is more careful with the kinds of gambles he takes and makes sure he was in bed with me every night.

“As long as the prospects don’t fall in love with our rivals’ daughters, they’ll be fine.”

“Hey!” I exclaim, playfully slapping his arms, but he simply laughs, his attention turning to the painting, and I turn my head to the side to watch him as he studies it.

“I’m in awe of you,” he says, turning his eyes from the painting to mine. “Your talent is exceptional.” His lips brush over mine, the move so soft and intimate it sends a shiver rolling down my spine. “Your beauty and that heart of yours. Everything about you is beautiful. One of a kind.”

“You’re one of a kind,” I return, my heart thumping unsteadily in my chest. “Do you think Brooke will like it?”

“I would bet everything on it,” he says, turning back to the painting. “How about working on our family portrait next?”

I shake my head, heaving a feigned sigh. “It’s going to take several months to complete ours.”

“Why?” His brows furrow in confusion. “You’ve only been working on this for a couple weeks, and their family is bigger than ours.”

“Well...” I bite back a smile as I get up from the chair and walk to the kitchen where I left my purse earlier. I dig around for the white envelope before passing it over to my husband. “This is why.”

Gray takes the envelope and opens it, his eyes widening in surprise when he sees what’s inside. He tugs out the black-and-white image of the ultrasound. “No way,” he exclaims, dropping his hand on the countertop. “Princess...”

“I’m two months along,” I say with a smile, grinning from ear to ear as I take in his reaction. It’s the same one I had when the doctor gave me the news that after years of trying for a baby, I’d finally conceived. “I can’t paint our family portrait until I know what we all look like.”

Arms circle my shoulders, and I am pulled into a tight embrace. Despite our different upbringings, neither of us came from a loving home, and we shared fears that we wouldn’t be any different from the people who had us, but after becoming an aunt and uncle to the Rebels’ babies, we decided we wanted nothing more than to be parents ourselves, to have a chance to do what our own parents hadn’t and love our baby the way they deserved. A part of me didn’t expect it to happen after so much time, and now, it feels fated.

“You’re everything,” he says shakily into my neck. “God, I can’t put into words what you mean to me.”

“Then show me.”

My lips move to kiss his jaw, slowly moving to his lips. Gray backs me to the kitchen counter, his palm warm as he moves it upward, lifting my dress as he goes. “I love



you.”

“I know,” I say, reading the needy desperation in his eyes. “I want you.”

“Me too.” I reach between us and unbuckle his belt before twisting open the button on his jeans. His breathing grows ragged when I slide the zipper downward. My heart is racing with excitement when I take him into my hand, gently stroking his warm shaft.

“Christ, the things you do to me,” he grinds out through his clenched teeth, his eyes flooding with heat. “Harder, baby. Stroke me faster.” I lean in and kiss his jaw, doing as he asks. My hand moves faster, his need feeding into mine as I feel my underwear grow damp and sticky with arousal. “Fuuuck!”

His hand grips my nape before his mouth sweeps over mine in a hungry kiss. It’s wet and warm, incredibly obscene as his tongue glides against mine with the desperation of a starved man.

Gray combs his hand through my hair and grabs a fistful, angling my head before slamming his mouth back down on mine, deepening the kiss to such intensity it feels primal. So overwhelming it has my toes curling and sex cinching desperately. I wince at the emptiness.

“Gray,” I whimper, needing more. He jerks hard against me when my hand tightens around his shaft.

“I know,” he rasps, sliding his hand back under my dress before tearing my panties away in a violent jerk. He tears them completely off then hooks his arm under my ass cheeks and lifts me to the countertop.

“Please,” I sob against his lips, my sex pulsing so needily, I feel close to exploding.

“Gray, please!”

“Fuck, Scarlett,” he growls, positioning himself between my legs. I whimper desperately when he rubs the head of his shaft over my wet hole, teasing but not quite giving in. He stops me when I inch closer, the hand on my waist holding me in place.

The cruel man!

“Gray!” I sob, clawing his shoulder, trying to force him closer. “Please, I need to feel you. Want you inside of me.”

“You beg so prettily; how can I say no to that?”

My thighs are practically trembling when he lifts my legs to his hips, and with his arm wrapped around my waist, he slams forward, sheathing his manhood deep inside me. Moving so hard, he knocks the air from my lungs.

“Oh!” A rough shudder rolls down my body, and I cry out at the blissful feeling of fullness, shifting my legs to take him deeper.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 9:40 pm*

“Is this what you wanted?” he demands, pulling out and leaving just the tip of his massive cock inside before he slams back in. I cry out, my arousal coating his shaft when he starts hammering into me. “Fuck baby, you’re practically dripping, leaking all over me.”

“Hmm,” I moan, bucking up to meet his thrusts, breaths hitching as he picks up the pace. His cock strokes the sweet spot inside of me, and I find myself chanting, sobbing, begging even, for him to fuck me faster and harder.

“Mine!” he growls as his thrusts turn frantic and uncoordinated. He grunts roughly, his hips punching forward before he changes his mind. He slides out of me then pulls me off the counter. I barely have a second to catch my breath before I’m spun to face the counter, then he’s slamming back into me.

“Oh God, yes,” I sob, gripping the edge of the countertop as he pistons his massive cock in and out of my dripping sex. Gray reaches his hand around my hip and a cry tears from my lips when his fingers expertly strum my clit in rough circles. “Close... Baby...”

I’ve never been able to do it myself. My fingers, soft and small, are no match for his. Those long fingers, rough and calloused, are the only ones that have ever brought me pleasure. Will only ever bring me pleasure.

Fireworks spark from the point where our bodies join before firing off to the rest of my body. I scream, knees buckling and sex cinching hard around the massive cock as I climax. Stars shoot behind my eyes as waves of rippling pleasure roar through me.

“Fuck! I’m coming...”

Gray goes stiff behind me, muscles tense before he releases into me with a deafening roar. His cock jerks inside of me as he fills me with hot bursts of his seed, my sex pulsing hard around him and milking him to his last drop. His thrusts turn slow until he stops, pulling out of me with a rough grunt.

“Woah,” I heave, struggling to stand upright, but my knees have turned to jelly. Gray doesn’t stop me when I slide down to the floor, but instead follows as well.

“The floor is cold,” he pants, pulling me on top of him, and I’m too weak and sated to protest.

“We should probably attempt to crawl to the carpet.”

“Later,” he whispers, hugging me tight to his chest. “For the record, I don’t regret falling for the rival’s daughter.”

“Damn right,” I say, weakly slapping his chest.

He laughs, and we lie still for a second before I feel him reach above me, and when he comes back, he’s holding the ultrasound pictures. “I can’t believe we’re going to be parents. You and me.”

“We’ll be the best parents ever,” I say, kissing his chest.

“We’ll love this little peanut the way we never were, won’t we, princess?”

“We will,” I agree. “And it’s not one peanut. Try two peanuts.”

I look up just in time to catch the surprised look on his face before settling back to laugh. “Two? We’re having two babies? At once?”

“That’s how twins work, honey.” I chuckle, burrowing into his chest with a contented smile. Any doubts or fears I had before all disappear, and I close my eyes, thanking my lucky stars for sending this man to me. To fate for bringing him to my doorstep. I plan on keeping him forever.

~The End