



# Papa's Beloved

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**Category:** Romance, Western

**Description:** Gabriel James Dupree, known too many as Papa, Vice President of the Voodoo King's New Orleans chapter, can have any woman he wants and he has. Prior to becoming a biker, he served his country. Starting with the Marines and ending up in Delta force. He's put his life on the line for strangers.

Now he must risk life and limb to save the woman he loves from her Uncle. The same man that sold her into prostitution at the tender age of twelve.

Chardonnay, Nay, Danvers will do anything for her family. She already has. She sold her body to put food in their bellies and a roof over her sibling's head. Now she's finally finished schooling and become a Nurse Practitioner.

Just when life is right, her uncle, who she thought was dead, rears his ugly head.

Can Nay get past her shame and embrace true love while staying out of the clutches of her uncle?

**Total Pages (Source):** 69

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

## Chapter 1

### Papa

I'm on my knees in front of the altar. I open a box and pull out a long wooden match. Striking the match, I light the red and black candles on the altar. Once the candles are lit, I prepare a fresh Cuban cigar and pour out a glass of Macallan twenty-five.

"Papa Legba, open the gate. Your child is calling. Papa Legba, open the gate. Let your child pass."

I continue the chant as I slip into an altered consciousness, seeking the answers I need. My heart is heavy. The woman I love keeps rejecting me. Rejecting us. She doesn't feel like she's good enough.

"Please help me show her. I wish she could see herself through my eyes. Not only mine, but our friends. Hell, everyone. She has no idea what a light she is in this dark, dark world."

Listen to your heart.

"Mémé?"

Listen to your heart, Gabriel. It will show you the way.

I feel a sudden chill and the candles go out. I stumble to my feet and grab for my phone. Finding it, I turn on the flashlight and look around my room. I head to the

windows first. They're closed. Next, I make my way to the door. I don't know why I don't turn on a light, but I use the phone to navigate through my apartment.

I know I'm drunk, but there's not a window or door open. Nothing that would cause a draft big enough to blow out all the candles on my altar. Add my grandmother's voice to that and I'm thinking of swearing off that new strain of weed Inara gave me to try.

Likely it was the copious amounts of Macallan combined with the new strain. I double-check the front door to make sure it's locked before heading for the shower.

Twenty minutes later, I'm showered and feel a whole hell of a lot better. I check my phone and see I missed a call from Gambit. He's the club president, and also my best friend. We met in basic and have been inseparable ever since. He brought me home with him on leave and introduced me to his pops, Chief. Chief is the president of the Baton Rouge chapter and co-founder of the club. He and his VP Trinity started the club together back in the day.

I return the call. He picks up on the second ring.

"Brother, meet me in Wizard's room. He has some information I think you'll want to see."

I head out of my apartment and take the stairs down to the second floor. It's quicker than waiting for the elevator. Wizard's rooms are on the second floor, unlike the rest of the brass. He has a double room because he insists on housing his computers in his room.

I don't bother knocking since my brothers know I'm coming. I find them huddled around one of Wizard's many computer screens. He not only has three on the desk in front of him, he has an entire wall of mounted computer monitors.

“What are we looking at?”

“I want you to view it without input,” Gambit says.

“Alright. Play it.”

The video on the desk is now displayed as one large video synced on all the wall monitors. I watch as a scene plays out at the docks. Men unloading young men and women from an unmarked van, forcing them into a shipping crate.

It sickens me, but the gut punch comes when the camera gets a closeup of two men after the container is closed. Linden Fucking Danvers, Chardonnay’s low-life uncle, who she thought was dead. As dead as her father. I had that mother fucker’s remains exhumed and identified.

Another sin to add to the list of things I need to ask her forgiveness for. I wouldn’t have to if she’d let me in. She’s ashamed of her past. So she hides it from me and everyone else. It’s one of the reasons she won’t be with me in public.

I’ll convince her of her worthiness if it’s the last thing I do. I have the name of a therapist from Lily, who specializes in trauma therapy.

Nay’s childhood is filled with one trauma after another. Some she has shared with me. I know she’s shared more about her past with me than anyone, but she still keeps me at arms’ length, emotionally.

“Linden Fucking Danvers. I thought that mother fucker was dead.”

“So does everyone else, including the U.S. government,” Wizards says.

Chapter 2

Nay

“Oh, girls, here comes Lord Fuckyou. You better hide your asses,” Millie whispers.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

I can't help but laugh at her antics. Doctor Montgomery does have dark hair and a square jaw, but he's not short. Well, not Farquaad short. He is handsy. Which reminds me. I turn my back to the wall while I study the chart in front of me.

"Good morning, ladies."

"Good morning Doctor Montgomery," We all say.

He comes to stand next to me, crowding my space and causing Millie to move.

"Chardonnay, you're just the girl I'm looking for."

I cringe at the wordgirl.

"How can I help you this morning, Doctor?"

"You can help me by going out on a date with me tonight."

I shake my head. "Sorry, I'm seeing someone."

His posture stiffens. "Oh, well, I'm sure it's nothing serious. Go out with me anyway."

Who the hell does he think he is? I bite back the first retort that comes to mind.

"I don't date co-workers."

“I’m not a co-worker. I’m your superior.”

“Miss Danvers, can you please join me in room 203,” a deep voice says.

I look up to find Doc, one of the Voodoo Kings, who is a doctor at Mercy General, where I’m interning.

“Of course, Doctor Moore.”

“Moore, we’re in the middle of something. Can’t it wait?”

“You’re in the middle of getting ready to have sexual harassment charges filed against you, and no, it can’t wait as the patients are our priority.”

“Moore, can I speak with you privately?” Montgomery wines.

“No, I have patients to tend to. Which is why I came to get Miss Danvers.”

“I’m right behind you, Doctor Moore. Please lead the way.”

Doc turns and walks away from the group heading down the hall toward the ICU unit. I follow behind him. When we turn the corner out of sight from the others, he stops.

“You alright?”

I nod my head. “Yeah. I mostly ignore the pompous ass.”

“I can set him straight if you or, better yet, why don’t you let Papa come in and set him straight.”

I shake my head. “No, I don’t want to bother him with Montgomery’s BS. I can

handle the slime ball. Even if he does treat anyone not a doctor like they're shit, he just stepped in."

"You could let him claim you and then all the Montgomerys in the world will know you're taken."

I narrowed my eyes on him. "Did he put you up to this?"

"You know he didn't. It's not like we all don't know you two are in a relationship."

"I don't have a patch on my back. It's not official. Now, do you have patients for me to look at?"



## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

Doc shakes his head but doesn't say anything else. "I actually do. I was headed to find you when I heard Montgomery."

"Thanks for the save, Doc, you're a good seed."

The next few hours fly by while I do rounds and avoid Montgomery. I know Papa's brothers know about us. Hell, for all I know, the entire club knows we're sleeping together, but that doesn't make it more than it is.

None of that changes the fact that I am not good enough for Gabriel Dupree. Or Papa, as the club calls him. He's the club vice-president, an important position. He comes from a nice family. Middle-class but nice. I've met them on several occasions. None of them know I used to be a bunny or, as the Kings call them, a doll. I enjoyed being a Voodoo doll, but I'm done with school now and I don't need the job.

I've had sex with most of his club brothers. He doesn't care. I do. I can't be the reason that any of them think less of him. I'm alright for him to sleep with, but I can't be his ol' lady. I can't be his forever. It's not that I don't love him, I do. It's why we can't be more. I do love him with every fiber of my being, but I'm tarnished goods. And I have been for a very long time.

My mother was murdered when I was eleven. Pops got sick. Too sick to work a year later. I have six siblings. Four brothers and two sisters. The babies were a year old and I couldn't let them go hungry anymore.

I asked Uncle Linden for help and his help came in the form, turning me into a sex worker and taking a hefty cut of the cash.

“Chardonnay, there you are.”

## Chapter 3

Papa

I tried to work, but I’ve fucked away the entire day waiting on Nay to get off work. I check my phone for the hundredth time, finally I can go in. I grab the garment bag and the small satchel. Both of which Kelsi packed for her best friend and my girlfriend. At least she let me call her that.

I even talked her into going to the last club function as my date. Baby steps. She thinks she’s dirty because of her past. I know it all and she isn’t. I know what that sick bastard of an uncle made her do. Motherfucker messed with the wrong person for the last time. Cocky son of a bitch should’ve stayed dead.

This time I’ll make sure of it. Not only do I intend to be there when he takes his last breath. I intend to feed his corpse to the gators. In pieces. I’ll butcher him myself. I’m not taking any chances he pre-fed and bribed all the gators in Lake Pontchartrain. Skeezy, low life, bastard. Chardonnay’s the only reason he didn’t get his hands on any of her siblings.

I run into Doc when I get to the lobby.

“Hey bro. How's your day?”

“Not too bad. Your girl kicked ass today.”

I smile. “I enjoy hearing that. She’s worked hard to get her degree. How are the other doctors treating her?”

“She gets along well with nurses and doctors alike. The only person she has an issue with is Ethan Montgomery.”

“What’s his issue?”

“He wants in her pants.”

“Oh, hell no. Point me in her direction.”

“I’ll do better than that. Follow me.”

I follow my brother, clutching the bags in one hand. The other one is ready to wipe a smirk off Doctor Grabby’s face. If he so much as touches a hair on my Beloved’s head, I’ll rip his head off and spit in it.

We reach an intersection when I hear.

“Doctor Montgomery. I told you before, I’m seeing someone.”

“You’re not married or engaged.”

“I don’t date co-workers.”

“We both know that’s bullshit. Come on. What’s the real reason? Is it because I’m white?”

“It’s because she said no.”

I step around the corner, completely in control of the seething anger burning inside me. I’m going to throat punch this scum bag.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“This is none of your business.”

I close the distance between us, side-stepping him at the last minute. I bend down and press a quick kiss on Nay’s cheek. I’d claim her right here, but I’m not pissing her off.

“I brought your clothes. Don’t worry, Kelsi packed the bags. If we hurry, we can catch the end of Oshun and get a good place for Cleopatra.”

She grabs the bags and spins on her heels.

“I’ll be out in five.”

I wait until she disappears around the corner before addressing dip shit.

“Let me tell you something, Doctor Dipshit, that’s my woman you were hitting on. I heard her tell you she’s involved. It shouldn’t matter if we’re married yet, or not. She’s taken. Get the hint, because this is your only warning.”

“You can’t talk to me like that.”

“I just did.”

He puffs up before turning his attention to Doc.

“Are you going to say something or let this neanderthal speak to me like that?”

“I’m more upset you called my brother a neanderthal.”

“Brother, this man is your brother?”

“He sure is, and if I see you ask one more nurse out, I’m going to take you out back and beat you until you can’t walk. This is a place of work, not a meat market.”

Montgomery turned paler and scurried off with his tail tucked between his legs.

“I’m going to get Wizard to dig up something on that guy. He’s been nothing but trouble since he started working here.”

“Lily could ask around to see what the nurses’ take is,” I say. “Since Nay is new, I don’t want her to ruffle any feathers.”

“Good call. Lily’s next round is tomorrow. I’m on too. I’ll talk to her tonight.”

Nay came back and all thoughts fled from my mind. She was a stunning picture in gold leather pants, a prince crop that ended below the curve of her breasts. Over the tee she wore a short leather jacket. And top it off, she has on sky high purple heels with gold straps that fasten around her ankle.

“Damn, baby. You look good enough to eat.”

“Later,” she says with a wink and a smile.

## Chapter 4

Nay

The ride through the city on the back of Papa’s bike is cold, but exhilarating. One of

the prospects is holding a spot for us to park and another two will help us get through the crowd so we can get closer to the floats.

Papa threads his fingers through mine and leads us through the crowd. It's full of revelers. Some in costume or masks, others dressed in the colors of Mardi Gras: gold, green and purple. Many in regular clothes. Most with beads around their neck and many carrying their alcoholic beverage of choice.

People move out of his way. Think Reacher with broader shoulders, beautiful dark skin, and a look that says I'll kill you in the most painful ways without blinking. I love that look. It stops more trouble than it causes. Few men are stupid enough to mess with him.

The only reason he's not the club's enforcer is because he's the VP. He and Smoke often work in tandem to take out the trash when needed. I may know a little more than the average significant other. I've assisted Doc a few times, patching our guys up and occasionally an enemy who needed to live a little longer.

While I'm not supposed to know about the pit or the gators, I do. I don't fault them for any man they fed to the gators. Each one of those men was evil, and the world is a better place without them. Gray morals? Maybe, but then again, when you have to sell your body at such a young age, life hardens you. It changes you and colors your world in ways only other people that have suffered the same can truly understand.

I catch movement out the corner of my eye and look up in time to see a fan flying toward me. Oshun's favor. I wrap my fingers around it, only to find myself in a tug of war. Some guy grabbed part of it.

Large fingers close over my own. I feel the warmth of Papa's body as he stands beside me.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Let go.” he commands.

I know he’s not talking to me. It takes the other man a few seconds to register what’s going on. He lets go and quickly leaves the area. I turn and look at Papa.

“Too bad you’re not dressed as Legba tonight. That really would have scared him.”

He smiles at me. “I’ve never scared you.”

“Not even a little. I see you.”

He pulls me in for a kiss that leaves me breathless. My toes are tingling and my body is on fire. Papa is the only man who ever made me feel. Something, anything. I’d deadened myself to the act of sex long before I met him. Before the Kings, I felt disgusted afterwards. It’s always been different with them. I felt safe and protected. Even care sometimes. But with Papa, it was different from the moment our eyes locked. There was a spark.

He awakened something within me I didn’t know existed. I can’t believe he wants me knowing I’ve slept with most of his brothers, including his best friend. I’ve not only slept with them, but sometimes it was more than one man. Sometimes it was him and his best friend.

It was just sex. Something I’m good at. The club paid for my tuition and gave me room and board. All I had to do was to please the brothers. My choice and, in my opinion, a hell of a lot better than turning tricks.

## Chapter 5

Papa

“You’re thinking too hard,” I say when I end the kiss.

“How do you always know?”

I lean down and kiss the tip of her nose. “Beloved, there is little I don’t know about you.”

She thinks she has a closet full of secrets. I know them all. She may be angry with me for looking into her past, but I’ll deal with it when that day comes. I know telling her I know and accept everything won’t make a difference. At least not yet. I hope one day soon that will change. She is my light in this dark world.

Oshun’s Krewe finishes their parade and behind them is Cleopatra. Oshun’s Krewe is around three hundred strong, while Cleopatra boasts eighteen hundred women. The all-female krewe started in the early seventies. It’s been one of my favorites since I got out of the Marines and moved to Baton Rouge, then New Orleans, with Gambit.

The music is loud. The beads are flowing. And my girl is smiling. I’d do anything to see that smile. The one that shines through when her guard is down. Which isn’t often enough. By the time we watch twenty-one floats and nearly two thousand women march by, my face is numb from the cold.

I bend down and whisper in Nay’s ear.

“Do you want to watch the next one or grab some food?”

“Food. I’m starved.”



“Mother’s isn’t far.”

“Oh yes. Seafood platter, here I come.”

I chuckle and thread our fingers together before guiding us through the crowds and into Mother’s. We snag the last empty table.

“I’ll grab drinks from the bar while you look at the menu,” I say, dropping a quick kiss on Nay’s lips.

I make my way through the crowd to the bar. I order a beer for myself and a sweet red hurricane for Nay. She loves the damn things. Why not? You can get them everywhere around New Orleans and some come in half-yard carry cups.

Three men stand around my table, trying to chat my woman up when I return. She’s being polite, but ignoring them.

“Come on, sweetheart. You have three empty seats.”

“And one of them is taken. If you want the extra chairs, go for it, but this table is not for you.”

“Well said, Beloved,” I drop a kiss on her forehead and hand her a drink.

The guys get the hint and wander off.

“Have you decided what you want?”

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Everything,” she says with a smile.

“Can you narrow that down?”

“I want chicken and seafood. Since it takes at least thirty minutes for fried chicken, we could split an order of each.”

In the end, when the server comes, we order the seafood platter that comes with catfish, shrimp, oysters and soft-shelled crabs. For sides, we choose red beans and rice, turnip green, green beans with tomatoes, cheese grits, and cornbread. With the chicken, we chose cabbage and French fries. Knowing my woman well, I order two slices of bread pudding with extra brandy sauce.

“How was work today?”

“Other than dealing with Lord Fuckyou, it was good. There’s a nurse I met today, Millie, she’s a stitch. I’d like to invite her to the club sometime.”

“You know you can invite anyone, anytime.”

She nods her head. “I know, thank you. Did you have a good day?”

I didn’t, but I’m not ready to tell her Linden is alive. She deserves the rest of the night worry-free. That’s all I can give her because he’s in the city. Wizard has every camera in the city running facial recognition software. We’ll know the minute he pops up.

“It was an okay day. It would’ve been better if I spent the day with you.”

“You say the sweetest things.”

“I mean it.”

“I know. It’s what makes it sweet.”

“If I’m sweet, it’s because of you. You bring out the best in me. I’m a different man with you. A better man.”

I see a blush rise to her cheeks and denial form on her lips. So I lean in and cut off her words. I pour myself into the kiss, trying to impart my love and passion for her. Trying to tell her without words that she’s my Queen. My Goddess. My beloved.

## Chapter 6

Nay

My belly is full. I only have one thing on my mind. Sex. Papa is the only man I’ve ever had sex with that didn’t involve work. Frankly, he’s the only man I’ve ever wanted to have sex with. He does something to me that no one else has. Papa has not only awakened my sexual appetite, he gives me a sense of safety and belonging.

After we pay and leave a tip, Papa leads us back out on the streets. They’re packed with drunken revelers in a variety of states of dress. When we are near an alleyway, I pull him toward the corner. He looks down at me, but lets me lead him into the darkened alleyway.

“I want you,” I say.

Standing on my tiptoes, I put my hand on his neck and pull him down until our lips meet. It's a tangle of lips, tongue and teeth which only serves to make me hornier than I already am. It must be getting close to that time of month. I'm always a thousand percent hornier during the week that leads up to and the week of my period.

Who the hell is horny when they're bleeding? Me. Yup, that's who, me. I eat at his mouth. His large hands come down to squeeze both globes of my ass. An ass I work out hours a week to make pop. Damn Kim K and JLo anyway for their perfect asses.

I groan into the kiss as he massages my ass. My panties are soaked with my juices. I want him to take me right here in the alley where anyone can see because I don't care. I need him inside me.

I break the kiss and move away enough to undo his belt and take out his massive cock. He springs free as soon as I pull down his zipper. Papa doesn't bother with boxers or underwear of any kind. I love the easy access. I squat down, running my tongue from base to tip before swirling my tongue around the head and licking off the drop of precum.

I love the way he tastes. Sweet with a hint of saltiness.

I take him into my mouth, sliding him down my throat. It takes a couple seconds longer to balance on these heels and swallow this beast without falling. No way I'm going on my knees in this filthy alley and ruining these pants

After I get him good and hard, I stop, standing up. I undo my pants and pull them down past my ass. He knows what I want. He turns me around and bends me over, ripping my panties off my body. Papa enters me in one swift thrust. I moan loudly, not worried about anyone hearing me above the noise of the crowded street.

"Fuck me."

He chuckles but obliges fucking me until I don't know where I end and he begins. It's always like that with us. A melding of our souls as we become one. It's intimate and powerful. Almost enough to give in to what he wants.

No, he deserves better; I remind myself as my first orgasm crashes over me. As if sensing my closeness, he moves one hand from my ass and presses the heel of his hand against my clit. The extra pressure and friction is all I need to send me over the edge.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

Papa

“CUM WITH ME,” SHE PANTS.

Fucking woman will be the death of me. I’m not close but I can get there. I grab her hair and pull her head back, biting her neck. Hard enough I know it’ll leave a mark.

As I bite her neck, I pick up speed, pounding her pussy. She’ll be sore later. Her cries and moans bring me closer to the edge she crests and her pussy milks my cock. I feel my balls draw tighter.

“Yes, my King,” she cries out and I’m done for.

I cum deep inside her with a moan of my own before taking her mouth in a scorching kiss. When we pull apart, she unwinds her long legs from my waist and slides down my body.

She wobbles, and I put my hands on her waist to steady her.

“Take me dancing as soon as I can walk.”

I throw my head back and laugh.

“Your wish is my command. Masquerade or Polo Club?”

“Masquerade.”

She leans against me. This woman is my whole fucking world. Now I just need to convince her she's good enough. Truth be told, she's too good for me. Nay is an amazing person with a huge heart. She's always helping others. Her desire to help people led her to become a nurse practitioner.

She doesn't know it, but the club's been talking about funding a small clinic. Doc's on board to become the chief physician. Nay could work for the clinic, too. We stop along the way and grab a drink for Nay. I'm driving, so one beer is my limit. I can drink when we get back to the clubhouse.

By the time we make it to Masquerade, my woman is giggling and ready to dance. The club is thumping and people are wall to wall. Nay laughs and pulls me through the crowd and onto the dance floor.

She wiggles, and giggles, until she gets my feet moving. The music's not bad. Not our usual, but we can move to it. I lead us through a few moves and over to a dark corner.

"You're on fire tonight, Beloved," I whisper before capturing her lips.

I devour her mouth, eating at her lips and sucking on her tongue. She grinds against me. Too bad she's not wearing a skirt. No matter how sexy it looks, to wear a skirt on a bike is dangerous. I want my girl's legs covered in case we go down. I'm an excellent driver. However, not everyone else on the road is.

I thrust my leg further in between the two of hers, making it easier for her to grind herself off on my leg.

"Take me home," she yells above the noise.

She doesn't need to tell me twice. I take her hand and lead us out of the club and back

to the bike. Nay wraps herself around me like another layer of clothing.

## Chapter 7

Papa

I back into my reserved spot and help my woman off the bike before dismounting.

“Your place or mine?” I ask, already knowing the answer.

“Mine.”

We walk through the double doors and cross the lobby. There’s loud music and sounds of partying coming from Lagniappe, the club’s in-house bar. I lead us past to the hallway where the dolls and prospects have their room. It’s a fun way to torture the prospects. They can’t sleep with the dolls until they are patched members. Hang-arounds are a different story. There’s plenty of pussy to be had when you’re part of a motorcycle club.

Kelsi comes stumbling out of one of the fuck rooms, tears streaming down her face. Nay drops my hand and runs to her.

“Kels, what’s wrong?”

“It’s Bub, he’s in the hospital. They beat him horribly.”

Saber comes out of the room seconds later.



## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Kelsi, hold on, I'll take you.”

“Come on. Let's head to the garage. We can take one of the SUVs.”

We hurry out the back and to the new garage the Jackson brothers just finished. I make my way to the keyboard while the others head straight for the SUVs. I grab a set of keys and hurry over to them.

We all pile in and I hurry to Mercy General for the second time tonight. Kelsi's brother, Bub, got in with some bad people. She's been trying to convince him to let the Kings help him get out but has had no luck so far. I pull to a stop in front of the emergency entrance.

“Go with Kelsi. I'll park and find you.”

Nay nods and gets out of the SUV with her best friend. Saber goes with them. Kelsi may be a doll, a fuck toy for some, but to us, she's family. Just because they take care of the brothers and like sex, that doesn't make them less of a person. Frankly, I'm tired of a double standard that says I can sleep with as many women as I want and I'm a stud, but my Nay is a whore because of the men she slept with. I'm not even talking about her former profession. It's not like she had a choice. The men in her family saw to that.

I park the SUV and hurry inside. I don't see them in the ER waiting area, so I give Saber a call. He tells me where they are and I hurry to the ICU unit. Saber is comforting Nay, and Kelsi is nowhere to be seen. She must be in the room with her brother. As soon as Nay sees me, she rushes into my arms. I wrap her up tight and

drop a kiss on her head.

“How bad is it?”

“It’s bad.”

She gives me a laundry list of the kid’s injuries.

“Kelsi’s worried they’ll come back and try to finish the job,” Nay finishes before bursting into tears. It sounds like the kid is hanging on by a thread.

“I’ll take care of it. We’ll have church. Will you be alright here with the trips?”

She nods. I send off a quick text to the prospects before calling Gambit. He picks up on the fourth ring.

“This better be good,” he mumbles.

“I’m at the hospital with Kelsi, Bub’s in ICU.”

“Fuck. I’ll call church. Do you need me to send prospects?”

“Already on it. I have the triplets heading this way.”

He chuckles. “I don’t know what it is about this club and multiples. Between the prospects and the babies. We’re up to our eyeballs in twins and triplets.”

Besides the prospects, Boomer and his ol’ lady are expecting twins and Smoke’s ol’ lady is having triplets.

“We are at that,” I agree. “I’ll head to the compound as soon as they get here. Saber’s

with me. He was with Kelsi when she got the call.”

“Poor Kelsi. I’ll talk to Stormy. I know she’ll rally the ladies,

and Kelsi won’t be alone.”

“Doc’ll need to talk to the board and let them know what’s going on so we don’t get kicked out. They’ve got a new doctor. He’s a real pain in the ass.”

“What’s his name?”

“Ethan Montgomery. I plan on giving his name to Wizard in the morning.”

“Now he has a head start. I’ll have him run the guy.”

“I’ll see you as soon as possible.”

“It’s going to be a long night. I’ll have Havoc and Mayhem make a food run.”

I hang up the phone and drop another kiss on Nay’s head.

“You know I’d rather be here, right?”

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

She nods her head, moving to look me in the eye.

“I’d rather you take care of the bastards that did this. Every one of them. Hear me?”

I wipe her tears away with the pads of my thumbs, nodding.

“Every single one, Beloved. You have my word.”

## Chapter 8

### Papa

Mayhem places a large box from Mid City Pizza in front of me, along with two glass bottles of Fanta. Pineapple flavor.

“What is a kitchen sink pizza? Gambit said they have your standard on file.”

I laugh. “It has pepperoni, Italian sausage, hot sausage, ham, bacon, shredded chicken, onions, green peppers, black olives, green olives, banana peppers, anchovies, and six kinds of cheese. The sauce is a mix of pizza and sriracha.”

“Anchovies. Really bro? Those are gross.”

“So is the pineapple you eat on your pizza.”

“If you say so.”

“I do.”

Gambit sits down with his own pizza. Each brother had their own large pizza in front of them. Pump enough iron and do enough cardio and you can burn calories from a large pizza. Most of my brothers were drinking since they planned to party at home. The grease from the pizza will help sober them up.

Gambit grabs the metal skull and bangs it on the table.

“Meeting’s in order, fuckers. Wizard, what do we know?”

“Not much on who did it, but it’s the G’Dawgs. Bub’s been in their gang for about two years. Kelsi found out six months ago and has tried to get him to leave.”

“What have those hoodlums got their fingers into these days?” I ask.

Wizard winces. “Too much. I should have kept a closer eye on them. They’re running drugs, guns, and people.”

Curses explode around the table.

“What the fuck! When did they get into the last two? They were low-level dealers,” I exclaim.

“In the last few months, as far as I can tell. I have a call into Bug. He’s checking with his contacts at the Feds. It might take a day or two for him to get back to us. In the meantime, I have my camera’s searching feeds near where Bud was found. I started with when they found him and I’m going backwards until I find the culprits, or at least who dumped him.”

Nay

I BORROW A SET OF SCRUBS from Millie and sneak into the ICU to be with Kelsi. She shouldn't be alone right now. I hold her hand while she holds Bub's hand and cries.

"I should have done more. Insisted he move away."

"Kelsi, he's your older brother. A grown man. He has to make his own decisions. The King will make this right."

Kelsi nods her head, then buries her head on her brother's bed and sobs.

"I could've lost him. I still might. If they did this. they won't be done until he's dead."

"The triplets are here. Papa and the others are in church right now. You're one of us and so is he, by default."

She shakes her head. "I'm just a whore."

## Page 10

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Kelsi Lynn, don’t you dare say that about yourself. There’s nothing wrong with being a doll for the Kings. They’re good men.”

She shakes her head again and cries more. “I’m just a slut. Bub said so last time we talked.”

I gather her in my arms. “Oh, honey. That’s the drugs talking. They no doubt got him hooked on drugs. It’s one of the ways they keep them boys in line. Get them hooked. Threaten their families. I know Papa, Gambit, and the others. They won’t let this stand. And let’s get another thing straight; out of all the dolls, I’m the only one that worked in the sex industry.”

“Not because you wanted to.”

“We’re not talking about me. We’re talking about you and Bub.”

Kelsi turns, looking at me. “Nay, I’m scared. Terrified I’m going to lose my brother. He’s the only family I have left.”

“That’s not true, Kelsi Lynn, and you know it.”

She throws her arm around my neck and buries her head in my shoulder.

“You’re so right, sister of my heart. I could use something to drink.”

“I’ll text the triplets and have one of them bring something. Are you hungry?”

“I could eat.”

I sent a text to the triplets letting them know I’m ordering delivery and I’ll need one of them to meet the driver in the lobby. I order comfort food gumbo, red beans with rice, fried gator bites, and duck sausage. All of Kelsi’s favorites.

## Chapter 9

### Papa

Nay stayed in the hospital all night by Kelsi’s side. Bub regained consciousness around four in the morning. He told the cops he doesn’t know who jumped him. He’s being closed lipped about it, but he’s coming back to the compound with Kelsi when he’s released. Which won’t be for a while. Not with his injuries.

The club voted to give him around the clock protection. I hate to take Nay away from Kelsi, but I still have to tell her about her uncle being alive.

Stormy and Tawny are here. They brought Kelsi clothes and they brought food for Kelsi and Bub. Though he’ll be in pain chewing for a while. They clocked his jaw pretty good. Surprised they didn’t break it. He’s one black and blue mess.

I slip into the private room we had Bub moved to. Nay is at his bedside checking on his vitals. She’s not on duty, yet she can’t stop herself from caring for people. I observe for a few moments, pride swelling in my chest as I watch her work. She’s good at her job. I knew she would be.

“Are you going to stalk me or come over here and greet me?”

I laugh and close the distance between us. She straightens and turns to greet me. Bub’s eyes are on me as I cross the room. What little he can see through one partially



swollen eye. The other is covered to help his eye heal.

I gather Nay in my arms and kiss her until we're both panting.

"I missed you, too," she says.

"Are you ready?"

"I hate leaving Kels."

"I know, baby. I'll bring you back later."

I turn my attention to Bub. "I'd ask how you're feeling, but I already know the answer. Let us know when you're ready to talk. It's only a matter of time before we find out which G'Dawgs did this. Wizard is combing the city."

"Why do you give a fuck?"

"Kelsi is family. You're Kelsi's family. Ergo, you're family, whether or not you like it."

"She's not family. She's your whore."

I growl and bend down, getting in his space.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Say that again when you’re healed, mother fucker. Kelsi may sleep with my brothers, but that doesn’t make her less than any of us. People need to get that antiquated toxic bullshit out of their head.

You need to get your head straight. We aim to see it gets done. Ya feel me?”

I looked him in the eye when I spoke. I let him see the demon. The one I keep chained inside and let out on special occasions. Smoke has his cold, dead space. I have my demon. Is he an alternate personality? Possibly, who cares? He gets the job done and he stays in his cave until I need him. Content to wait until he’s unleashed. He has lots of memories to relive.

I went into the Marines as a communications specialist. Most would think it’d be a posh job. Combine linguistics with other skills, like killing, and you get to see the world in a whole new light.

Bub nods his head slowly. “Sorry.”

“Don’t apologize to me. Apologize to your sister. Not only for that comment, but the hell you’ve put her through the last few years. You have no idea how many times I’ve dried her tears. Not that I mind. You caused those. Think about that. Think about all the shit you’ve both been through and you’re the one she’s crying for.”

I turn my attention to Kelsi. “You call if you need anything. Any time.”

She nods and I open my arms. Kelsi steps in and I wrap her up in a hug, kissing the top of her head before letting her go.

“I meant what I said. You’re family. You’re not less. None of the dolls are.”

She nods. I see tears in the corner of her eyes. I hate when Bub puts her down. She’s not doing anything wrong. Neither are any of the other ladies. People really need to get the fuck over it when it comes to sex. Consensual sex. They need to put that hate and energy into stopping sex trafficking and sex crimes.

Nay stops me when we get into the hall.

“What did I do to deserve you?”

“I’m the one who doesn’t deserve you.”

“Well, isn’t this cozy?”

I look past my woman to see Montgomery standing there with a leer on his face. He’s looking at Nay’s ass.

“Montgomery, stop looking at my woman’s ass.”

“That’s Doctor Montgomery, and what are you going to do about it?”

“So you’re admitting to staring at my woman’s ass.”

“I’m not admitting to anything and I don’t see a ring on her finger.”

I walk around Nay and step closer to Montgomery. I tower over him by a good seven inches.

“She’s mine until SHE tells me otherwise. You need to talk to her professionally, fine. Be respectful. Other than that, keep your hands, eyes, and words to yourself.”

“Are you threatening me?”

“No, I’m promising you.”

“I can have you banned from the hospital.”

“Good luck with that,” I turn my back on him. “Beloved, are you ready to go?”

“More than. Take me home.”

## Chapter 10

Nay

Should I be mad at Papa for pissing all over me and marking his territory in front of Lord Fuckyou? Maybe, but I’m not. I love it when he claims me and Doctor Douchebag hasn’t taken the hint. I want him to claim it in front of everyone. I do. It’s just that he deserves better. He deserves a woman that hasn’t slept with all his brothers.

I know he doesn’t care and what he said to Kelsi just now hit home. It’s not him I’m worried about. I don’t want any of his brothers to think less of him. Papa might be enlightened, but that doesn’t mean all the brothers are.

## Page 12

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

I cling to his back on the ride home. Tired from staying up all night with my friend and weary from dealing with men like Montgomery. Men who think women are objects to be used for their benefit and have no value of their own. Too bad we can't dig a big hole and stick all of them in it.

I need to get out of my head. I have today and tomorrow off, then it's back to work. Which I love. And dealing with Lord Fuckyou which I hate. I'd love to give him a piece of my mind, then knee him in the balls. It's no less than he deserves.

Lost in thought, I don't realize we arrive until Papa pulls the bike to a stop.

He offers his hand to me, as always, to help me off the bike. I take it, grateful for the support. After I'm standing on the pavement. He brings my hand to his lips, kissing my palm. His smile takes my breath away. And I count my blessings that this man hasn't walked away from me.

He hops off the bike, pocketing his keys before taking my hand.

"Take me to your room."

His step falters for a second before he squeezes my hand.

"Your wish is my command, Beloved."

We walk through the lobby to the elevators and take it to the top floor. Papa recently moved into Gambit's old apartment. Several of the apartments are now empty. Gambit, Nitro, Boomer, and Dakota's houses were already complete. Smoke's house

is due to be finished in the next few weeks, and Outlaw is living in one of the townhouses the club built.

The houses and townhomes are all behind a massive brick gate topped with razor wire and monitored heavily. We also have a mini-market and an indoor/outdoor swimming pool. It's slowly becoming a community within a community.

We entered the apartment. Papa stops in the living room.

"Are you hungry? I'll make us breakfast?"

"I could eat. Do you mind if I shower while you cook?"

"Not at all."

I head to the master bathroom. I love the shower, it's programmable and has a dozen shower heads including a rain shower feature. Papa and I have already christened the shower and all the other rooms of the apartment. The memories bring a smile to my face. That man knows how to lay it down and lay me out.

I program the shower before getting a towel and shower cap. I am not getting this hair wet. It would take too long to deal with. I take my wig off, sitting it on the bare wig stand I keep here. Once I get the wig situated, I don the shower cap and step into a blissfully hot shower.

I hurry through a shower, washing a day's worth of grime off me. After I have the towel wrapped around me, I realize I don't have anything to wear. I head to Papa's dresser and pullout a tee shirt, pulling it over my head. I fluff my hair and head to the kitchen to see my man putting the finishing touches on breakfast.

"Something smells good."

He turns to me and smiles. “Not as good as you.”

“How do you know?”

“I just do. Sit down. I’m about to plate our food.”

“What did you make?”

“Crab benedict with potato pancakes,”

I sit down at the small table in the kitchen where he has two glasses of juices and coffee. He sits a plate down in front of me. Perfectly poached eggs sit on top of a crab cake, which sits on top of a potato pancake with the perfect amount of bechamel sauce on top.

I cut a piece, taking care to get everything before popping it into my mouth. It’s an explosion of flavor with a little heat.

“Ooh, heat.”

“Just a little.”

“It’s amazing. You’re a splendid cook, better than I am.”

He shakes his head. “You’re not a terrible cook, you just don’t like to cook.”

I shrug.

## Page 13

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“I had enough of that taking care of my siblings.”

“True dat,” he says with a grin. “You’re always taking care of others, but who takes care of you?”

“You do. You’re the only person in my life that’s ever taken care of me, Gabriel. One of the many reasons I love you.”

“I love you too, Nay. You’re the moon in my night sky.”

“Aren’t you poetic.”

“Not really. Just a fool in love.”

I laugh and dig into my breakfast. I’m starving. We spend the next little while eating and talking about bullshit stuff. Nothing too taxing.

## Chapter 11

### Papa

I enjoy feeding my woman and I watch in pleasure as she eats. I’m not looking forward to what comes next, telling her about her uncle. Wizard has half his screens running through cameras coming for Linden Danvers and the other half looking for G’Dawgs.

It’s only been a few hours, but Gambit already sent a crew to round up a few of the



G'Dawgs. The ones we saw dump the body are low-level thugs. I highly doubt either of them did more than dump the body. The prospects were dispatched to pick up the lower level Dawgs.

One of the lower level thugs would spill. They haven't been around long enough to develop a skin thick enough to withstand questions from me, much less Smoke. We keep the conversation light while we eat. After we eat, I send her to the living room and I put the dishes in the sink.

It's too early to drink but I could use one or six. I'm not looking forward to breaking my woman's heart and possibly sending her into a tailspin. I join her on the couch, taking her hands in mine.

"What's wrong, baby?" she asks softly.

"Beloved, I don't know how to say this, so I'm just going to blurt it out. Linden is alive, and he's in New Orleans."

She jumps up from the couch, shock apparent on her face.

"What? No, that's impossible. He died in the fire with my dad."

I shake my head. "I wish it were the case, but Wizard caught him on video. I saw with my own two eyes."

"I need to see."

I nod and pick up my phone, calling Wizard. He picks up on the first ring.

"I've got it queued up. Come on down."

“We’ll be right there,” I hang up the phone and look at Nay.

“Apparently we can add mind reading to Wizard’s long list of abilities. He has the video ready and waiting.”

She nods her head and reaches for my hand. I take it and lead us out of the apartment, down the stairs. I know my woman is impatient. And heading to Wizard’s apartment. His is directly under mine. I don’t bother knocking, since he’s expecting us.

He’s sitting in his space age looking chair with a video paused on the biggest monitor on his wall. There is a large central monitor. It’s actually a seventy-two inch TV screen. Smaller monitors cover the wall surrounding the large one. He still has them split, looking at footage for Bub’s beating and using facial recognition software to find Linden.

“I’m sorry, Nay.”

She smiles at my brother. “It’s not your fault. Unless you can bring people back from the dead, and you didn’t tell us.”

A smile turns up the corners of his mouth as he shakes his head. “Not one of my skills and, in this case, I’d rather he be dead. Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

Her body tenses in anticipation. Wizard begins the video. I watch Nay as she watches the same video I’ve viewed more than a dozen times. I kept going back, thinking I was missing something, or maybe the guy just looked like Linden. The moment her uncle’s face comes into clear view, Nay pales and does the last thing I expected, faints.

## Page 14

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

I catch her.

“Lay her down on my bed.”

I carry her to the bed and lay her down. Wizard grabs pillows and props up her legs.

“I’ll get Doc.”

I nod my head. Never taking my eyes off Nay’s face. I hear Wizard leave. She’s wearing my tee, so there are no clothes to loosen. It comes down to her knees, but it’s loose around her neck. I know it’s from shock but my heart is still racing faster by the second.

“Wake up, Beloved, you’re starting to scare me.”

But she doesn’t wake up. She doesn’t stir. What feels like hours later, Doc and Wizard come rushing through the door. Doc has an old-fashioned doctor's bag he carries with him.

“Has she regained consciousness even briefly?”

“No. She hasn’t moved.”

“Can you sit on her other side while I examine her?”

I nod and get up to walk around the bed. Wizard puts a hand on my shoulder. I can tell by the look on his face he’s blaming himself.

“It’s not your fault, brother. It’s Linden’s. Another deed on a long list of sins he’ll pay for.”

Wizard nods. I sit on the other side of the bed, then scoot closer while Doc takes her vitals. He checks her pulse, heart, lungs, and pupils.

“Shock and trauma shut her brain down. I don’t know how long she’ll sleep.”

“Help me get her back to my room.”

“You got it, brother.”

I scoop Nay up in my arms. Doc opens the door and gets the elevator. When we get upstairs, he opens the door to my apartment.

“Call me if you need anything.”

“Will do, Doc. Thank you, brother.”

I carried Nay to the bedroom, laying her on the bed. I cover her up and head to do the dishes.

## Chapter 12

Nay

I’m crouched down beside the front porch. Neither my uncle nor my father knew I was home. I’d been out working. Selling my body so I could feed my younger siblings. My father was sick. He’d been bedridden for the last three years.

I don’t know what made me duck down when I saw them. Something seemed off.

Call it gut instinct. I stayed still and listened to their conversation.

“Micah and Mason have birthdays next month,” my Uncle Liden says.

“That’s right. They’ll be twelve. Same age as Nay, when you started her.”

Started me? What does he mean?

“I want to put up a bid for the twins. Someone can take their virginity together. It’ll be worth more money.”

Tears stung my eyes. My father knows what’s going on and he plans to pimp out my siblings. Oh, hell no. The tears roll down my face as I force myself to remain in place and listen to the rest of their plans. At some point, they both went inside. I stumbled away from my hiding spot and emptied the contents of my stomach into some nearby bushes.

By the time I finished, I decided I had to save my siblings. I don’t know how, but I’ll figure it out.

## Page 15

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

I wake with a start. I haven't thought about that night for a long time. Nor the weeks that followed. I tried to push those memories into the farther reaches of my mind. Apparently, all it takes is Linden reappearing to make them resurface.

For the first time in a long time, I feel dirty. I remember those first few times Linden sent me to a client. I felt filthy. I stood in the shower for hours, the water long since gone, scrubbing my body.

Papa is beside me in bed. I look over to find him sleeping peacefully. I study his handsome face. He has a firm jaw and full lips. A straight nose. And when they're open, the most beautiful deep brown eyes. It's like looking into a pool of melted chocolate. He keeps his head shaved and I long to run my head over his smooth dome, but I don't want to wake him up.

My eyes take in his broad shoulders and muscular chest. The sheet's currently wrapped around his waist. I study the club's colors tattooed on his left pec. My fingers itch to reach out and touch the smooth skin and trace the tattoo with my fingertips. I've done it a hundred times before. It soothes me.

One by one I study each tattoo that's exposed. He has more under the covers. He has several works of art.

His eyes open.

"Are you watching me?"

"Yes," I say with a smile.

“Do you want to talk about Liden?”

“There’s something I need to tell you.”

I take a deep breath and tell him about that night. At some point, he pulled me into his lap. He’s rubbing my back as tears stream down my face.

“You did what you had to, Nay. I don’t know how Linden made it out, but we’ll find him.

His phone rings, shattering the moment. I reach for it and answer without thinking about it.

“Hello.”

“Nay, it’s Wizard. We need an emergency translator.”

Papa takes the phone from my hand. I get up and go grab a set of clean clothes for Papa while he wraps up his conversation. When I get to the side of the bed, he stands. I hold up his jeans so he can step into them, then help him on with his shoes and boots so he’s ready when the call ends. If it’s an emergency, every second counts. He disconnects the call and pulls me to my feet, kissing me thoroughly before releasing me.

“Gotta go, babe. I’ll reach out as soon as I can.”

I nod my head. “You go do you, boo. I’m hanging around here today. Thought I’d grab a few things and move them up here.”

His eyes widen for the briefest moment before he nods his head. “Of course, Beloved. Move anything you want up here.”

He drops a kiss on lips, before pulling on his shirt and cut. Then hustling out the bedroom to wherever it is he's headed.

I take a quick shower before pulling on a pair of his athletic shorts and a tee. Both are enormous on me, but they're clean. And will work until I can get some things from my place.

I need to be close to him. I know he doesn't mind staying at my place, but his place is nicer and it's on the top floor. Not that I think Linden can get past the gate. Call me paranoid, but I feel safer in Papa's apartment.

The trip to my apartment goes fast. I don't see anyone in the foyer or hall. I realize I have no idea what time it is. I hit the wake button on my phone. The lock screen says it's just after four in the morning. No wonder this place is so quiet.

I head straight to the bedroom so I can get dressed. One look in the mirror tells me I'm going to spend the next hour fucking with my hair. I didn't have my bonnet last night, because I passed out.

I go to work putting product in my hair and working it through before plaiting my hair into twin French braids.

Satisfied with it until I can get a hair appointment, I dress in a pair of baggy jeans with rips in all the right places, a body hugging long-sleeved shirt, and high-heeled ankle boots. Satisfied with my appearance, I grab my suitcase and start filling it. I can fit a couple weeks' worth of clothing in it.

It's half-filled when there's a knock on my door. I open it, to find Stormy, Lucia, Lily, Delta, Sabian, who's due in three and a half months, and a very pregnant Olivia.

"Come in, ladies. You're up early."



“The triplets think they need to be up with their father at three in the morning to do cardio,” Sabian says, resting her hand on her belly.

“Can I get you ladies anything?”

## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“We’re here to help you,” Stormy says.

“Help me what?”

“Come to your senses,” Olivia adds, easing into a kitchen chair.

“Yeah,” Lily says. “You need to get over whatever is holding you back from letting Papa claim you.”

I can’t be more shocked. I take a seat nearby. Too many shocks in a twenty-four-hour period. It’s not like people don’t know we’re together, but I didn’t know they knew I’d been refusing him.

“What did he say and to whom?”

Stormy shakes her head. “He didn’t say anything, girl. That’s not Papa’s style. His brothers know because they share everything.”

I know that about them. Gambit and Papa served in the Marines together. They couldn’t be closer if they’d been born twins.

## Chapter 13

Nay

“It’s complicated.”

“What’s your biggest objection to letting him claim you?” Lily asks.

I draw in a deep breath. I don’t need time to think about it. I know the answer.

“He deserves someone better. Someone that hasn’t slept with all his brothers.”

“We’ve added new brothers since you stopped being a doll.”

“That’s besides the point.”

“What if they vote on it?” Stormy asks.

“You mean in Church?”

“That’s exactly what I mean. Plenty of clubs have to vote ol’ ladies in before they’re accepted. Gambit’s never followed that rule. If you’re worried about how they’ll feel about Papa making it official, have them take a vote.”

“Fine.”

The ladies let out various yells and whoops of joy. Crazy bitches. I love every one of them.

“You know the way to a man’s heart, besides giving him a mind-blowing orgasm, is food,” Lucia says excitedly.

“First, let’s get more of our girl’s stuff and help her move it upstairs,” Delta chimes in.

We all work together and made quick work of getting clothes, shoes, accessories, and personal items moved into Papa’s apartment. Someone even grabs a few of my

favorite throw pillows and puts them on his couch. After that, we head to the store to gather food for a feast. Gambit texted Stormy earlier and let her know they should be back shortly after noon.

We take two SUVs with a prospect driving each one and more prospects following us. First stop the Ruby Slipper for breakfast. After all, we can't work on empty stomachs. I love their avocado toast and pig candy bacon bites. The toast makes up for the candied bacon, right?

When the girls' order loaded tots, I don't complain. Oh, I'm going to need to do double cardio tomorrow morning. Stormy orders a mimosa flight for the non-pregnant ladies to imbibe. The blueberry lavender is my favorite. Being close friends means we each taste all the flavors.

Fortified, we make a quick work of grocery shopping before converging on the club's industrial sized kitchen. Stormy and I prep the chickens right away. We bought them pre-butchered to save on time. We get them into the buttermilk and spice mixture to soak.

Next, we grate the cheese for the six cheese mac and cheese. Gruyere, Asiago, American, fontina, sharp cheddar and gouda.

"Papa is over the moon for you."

I smile and nod in agreement. "I feel the same. That's why I'm fighting him. I think the vote will surprise you. Not every brother is going to be alright with him making a former doll into an ol' lady."

## Page 17

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Maybe you’ll be the one that’s surprised.”

“It’s pretty to think so. How much hot sauce do you think we need for mac and cheese?”

Papa

NAY HELPS ME GET DRESSED while officer Vega apprises me of a situation that needs the Kings’ special touch. She has my boots on by the time I hang up. I slip on a tee and my cut before grabbing my keys and racing out the door. I call Gambit while I’m racing down the stairs.

“This better be good,” he answers groggily.

“Vega and Simmons caught someone they think is involved with Danvers. They need me to translate.”

“Send me the address. I’ll get it to the others.”

“Will do.”

I end the call and pause long enough to shoot off the address to Gambit. Once finished, I hurried to my bike. I wave at the prospect in the gatehouse as I roar past the open gate. I navigate to the highway and open the throttle wide. I heard the roar of sleds in the distance and knew my brothers weren't far behind me.

Throttle wide open, I go as fast as I dare, weaving through traffic as needed. It still

takes me half an hour to make my way across the city to the docks. I expected to see the dock lit up or at least a squad car outside the warehouse.

Vega didn't tell me to come in silent, so I ride my bike through the open doors and into the dimly lit warehouse. I spot Vega first, then Simmons. Both are in plain clothes. They have a guy gagged and tied to a chair.

"You boys dress up for Mardi Gras?"

Vega chuckles. "We'll explain more later."

"Wagon's on the way for pickup," I tell him, hearing the roar of my brother's sleds.

They nod. Gambit rumbles in, followed by several more brothers and finally a white, mostly windowless van. Tully pulled to a stop not far from us. He stays in the van waiting for orders. Gambit approaches us first.

"Are we taking him to the Woodshed?"

Vega nods. "Yes."

Vega, Simmons, and Stone are three of New Orleans' finest. They are as tired of the broken system as we are. We've worked with Stone for a few years and the other two, a little over a year. We trust each other to clean up the streets of our hometown.

Most of the Kings weren't born in New Orleans but we call it home and we want to make it a better place. We do that by keeping human traffickers and other vermin off the street when we get the chance. We can't kill them all. It would raise too many questions.

We load up the prisoner and head back to the compound. Vega and Simmons get into

a late model muscle car and follow behind the van. Flea opens the gate as we ride past, heading straight to the back of the compound.

Saint and Everest pull the prisoner out of the van and strip him down before dragging him inside and throwing him in the jail cell.

## Chapter 14

### Papa

“Have a seat, fellas. We’ll let the prisoner marinate for a while. Give you a chance to fill us in and send Tully for breakfast,” I say.

Gambit is busy texting with his wife. Tully took everyone’s orders and headed to the local Waffle House. It’s not far and they’re fast. Plus, they’re used to us ordering en masse. Stormy doesn’t cook for us every day. Though she or one of the other ol’ ladies cook meals for us. We’ve been spoiled like that the first day Gambit and Stormy met.

Gambit grabs cold bottles of water from the fridge and brings them to the table.

“Who wants to start?” I ask.

“Simmons and I got assigned an undercover op a few weeks ago. We’ve been working on the docks looking for clues for a possible new human trafficking operation,” Vega says.

“Tonight, we were set to receive a shipment. Thirty minutes before it’s due to arrive, we have an influx of G’Dawgs and a crew of guys we’d never seen before,” Simmons adds.

“Turns out the shipment tonight was guns, but I overheard the guy in the cell and a few others talking about moving women. They have a shipment planned sometime soon. We don’t know when. We grabbed the guy who wasn’t a part of the G’Dawgs. He won’t be missed,” Vega finishes.



## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

Two things happen next: Tully comes back with food and Gambit gets a call from Stormy. I recognize her ringtone. I help Tully distribute breakfast while Gambit wraps up his phone call.

He motions for me and I follow him outside.

“What’s up?”

“Stormy wants us to vote on Nay.”

“What?”

“She thinks if the brothers vote for Nay as your ol’ lady, it will help her get past thenot good enoughfeeling.”

The thought hit me between the eyes and rattled around inside my brain while my President and best friend waited for me to respond. Could it work? Would it work? There’s only one way to find out.

“Do it.”

Not every brother was here this morning. We had a dozen but hadn’t called all hands on deck.

Gambit sends off a text to everyone. I read it and smile.

Church motherfuckers. After we take out the trash.

??

That little crown made me chuckle harder. Genni, Gambit's thirteen-year-old adopted daughter, set the crown as Gambit's signature for all his text messages. I think it's cute as fuck and it gives the brothers no end of fuel to bust the Prez's chops.

I hear the rumble of sleds while I polish off the last of my all the way hash browns. I had them with steak and eggs. The rest of the brothers pile into the main room of the Woodshed. Hell, we have a kitchenette, TV and pool table out here.

Cobra comes in looking like hell.

"Who's ass am I beating for waking me up this early?"

"Guys in holding. You can have the first punch," I chuckle.

Gambit stands up.

"Suit up, boys."

We head into the anteroom, where we don protective garb. Garb, we'll burn as soon as we're finished. We can wash our clothes and get the blood out, but this is easier and we don't have to worry about missing something. I slip the protective booties over my shit kickers with a grin.

"Doc, you've got the best ideas, man."

"It's a close second to man. I've had to don them a few times in emergency situations in the field. I kept a sterile suit shrink-wrapped in my gear."

"You saved my ass more than once in the field," I say, patting the older man on the

back.

He only has five years on Gambit and I. We all served in the Marines. We wound up in D-force with Doc and a few of our other brothers on our last tour.

Gambit leads us into the back part. We stop by the cells and grab the prisoner. A disgruntled Cobra drags the guy out by the hair of his head. He lifts his tied hands and puts a large hook through the ties. When he is satisfied, he gives a thumbs up and Everest hits the button to lift the guy off the floor, leaving him on his tiptoes.

“Did he have an ID on him?” I ask.

“Nothing,” Simmons replies.

“We found a set of keys on him,” Vega adds.

“We’ll find out what they go to,” Gambit says.

Vega digs in his pocket and produces a set of keys.

## Page 19

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“Thanks brother. When are you two going to prospect for us?”

“We can make it two days from now. How about we come by and talk then?” Vega asks.

“Shoot me a text. Papa and I will be there,” Gambit says.

I watch the two police officers step to the side. Smoke steps up with his cart of goodies. The man’s eyes widened. Smoke looks at Cobra.

“Boss says you get the first swing.”

Cobra smiles and cracks his neck. Hell, we could put the kid in a suit and he’d look like a GQ model with his dirty blonde hair and blue eyes. The suit would hide his multitude of tattoos. Kid comes from an upper middle class family that thinks bikers are scum.

He pulls a pair of brass knuckles from his pocket with a smile. He sings Betty Lou’s gettin’ down tonight as he works the guy over. He doesn’t stop when the guy begs him to. I mean, he hasn’t even worked him over yet. I don’t believe the guy’s ready to crack. He’s crying wolf. Cobra must think the same thing. He lands a blow to the guy’s kidneys.

Cobra continues to land blow after blow, leaving the guy's face completely alone. He’s not asking him questions or responding to the guy’s pleas. Cool as a cucumber, he continues to hit him. Right hand with the brass knuckles. Left hand bare. Twenty minutes later, he stops and turns to Smoke.

“I warmed him up for you.”

The guy screams when Smoke smiles at him with those cold, dead eyes and picks up a wicked-looking blade.

## Chapter 15

Papa

My mind on Nay, I head to the clubhouse with the rest of my brothers, Simmons, and Vega. I have zero doubt every single one of my brothers is behind me and Nay’s relationship. I also have zero doubt she is stressing the fuck out over it.

My woman is tough as nails, but family is her weakness. If one of my brothers didn’t think she was good enough to be my ol’ lady, it would crush her. She considers the Kings her family.

The smell of soul food hits my senses as soon as I walk into the lobby of the clubhouse. My stomach rumbles. Who knew watching someone get tortured was hungry work. I plan on participating, the first G’Dawg we get and I hope to hell it’s one of the top five.

Wizard came in earlier and said he had video of the beating and a hit on Linden. I, for one, would like to put them all on a boat and blow it to smithereens near a nest of gators. Gambit catches up to me in the lobby, throwing an arm around my shoulder.

“You look lost in thoughts.”

“Yeah, thinking of Nay, Kelsi’s brother, and Linden.”

“You have a full plate, brother. Don’t forget to ask for help if you need it.”

“Will do. Let’s go find our women.”

“I like the way you think.”

We head straight for the kitchen. Both of our women have their hands full, carrying large dishes toward Lagniappe. We eat most of our meals in the bar. I take the tray of fried chicken from Nay’s hands and drop a quick kiss on her lips.

“Mmm, them's some sweet lips.”

She smiles and swats at my arm. “Let me go grab another tray. We’re almost done.”

“No, you and the ladies sit down. We’ll get the rest of the food carried to the bar.”

“Yes, King,” she says with a smile and a wink.

I watch her link arms with Stormy and head to the bar. Gambit and I are behind our women carrying food. Gambit tells the brothers to go grab a dish. We make quick work of getting all the food out on the massive sideboard.

When we were done, Gambit called out. “Let’s eat!”

We insist the women go first. My mouth waters as I take in the bounty before me: fried chicken, smothered pork chops, wings, collard greens, red beans and rice, mac and cheese, black eyed peas, bread pudding, and pecan pie.

I pile two plates high and find my woman sitting with Stormy, Gambit, Smoke, and Sabian. Sabian was due in four and a half months. Her belly is already rounded. I hope to one day see Nay’s belly rounded with our child.

## Page 20

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

I eat until I'm too full to move. Gambit grins at me.

"Ready for church?"

"As good a time as any. I might need someone to roll me in."

Gambit stands up on his chair. "CHURCH MOTHER FUCKERS."

The sound of chairs being pushed back can be heard across the bar as the brothers all file out to church. I drop a kiss on my girl's lips before nodding at Vega and Simmons on my way out. I take a seat on Gambit's right. My usual spot. Prez waits until everyone files in before he grabs the skull and beats it on the table.

"Meetings in order, fuckers."

Those who hadn't dropped their phones in the box turn them off or on silent and face down. I put mine on vibrate and turn it over. Gambit's phone is face up. He's first in line in case of an emergency. They'll call him first. I'm next in line.

"Before we get to our former guest and what Wizard found, our Queen has asked us to put something on the docket for a vote."

"What's Queenie want us to vote on? Doc asks.

"Papa's ol' lady."

"What?" Cobra asks.

“Papa doesn't have an ol' lady,” Everest says.

“That's where you're wrong,” Gambit says. “Papa and Nay have been in a committed monogamous relationship for two years.”

I hear murmurs go up around the table. I figure most of my brothers knew.

“I don't want to be an ass, but doesn't it bother you she's slept with most of your brothers?” Demon asks.

I shake my head. “No. Who she slept with before we became an item is not my concern. We kept our relationship secret for a long time because she doesn't feel good enough. Not because she was a doll but because of her past. Something you'll learn more about AFTER the vote.

“My woman may have slept with some of my brothers, but she's also saved their lives. She's loyal, smart, and beautiful. I'm asking you, as my brothers, to help me convince the woman I love she's worthy. Because she is. She's done so much for so many.”

I see nods around the table.

“All in favor.”

Every hand around the table goes up in the air. The heavy weight of worry lifts off my shoulder.

“Wizard, what did you find out about our visitor?”

“Farid Kasim, thirty-five. His family moved from Medina, Saudi Arabia, when he was seventeen. He moved to New Orleans six months ago. I'm working on tracking



his whereabouts before then. He got a job on the docks within a week. From his confession earlier, we know he worked for the G'Dawgs for much of that time.

“He’s fairly low on the totem pole. The only useful information he gave us is the names of the G’Dawg leaders. That confirms the information we have. Reno Parks, Taylen Marshall, Jessy Breaux, Denis David, Andre David, Pablo Cotilla, and Manuel Sancho are the top of the gang's food chain.

“At four-thirty this morning, I received an alert for Linden. He was spotted not far from the docks, where the guns came in talking to Reno Parks. Reno is the G’Dawgs’ prez.”

I slammed my fist on the table. “Let’s wipe them all out. No one would miss a bunch of fucking street punk thugs. Fucking low lifes.”

I feel a hand on my shoulder.

“I feel you, brother, but we can’t commit mass murder. At least without a lot of planning.”

“Then let’s plan.”

Chapter 16

Nay

## Page 21

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

I'm a bundle of nerves while I help the ladies clean up. Kelsi is still at her brother's bedside. I feel a little guilty for not being there, but she told me they had a lot to talk about. I know the ol' ladies are taking turns visiting her and I have things to deal with.

Things I don't want to wrap my head around. I feel a hand on my shoulder and turn to see Stormy.

"Want to talk about it?"

I shake my head, then nod. She laughs.

"Yes, but not yet. First, I need to make a call. Do you mind if I skip out on the rest of the cleanup?"

"That's what prospects are for. Go take care of whatever's eating at you. Find me when you're ready to talk. No matter the time of day," she says before hugging me tightly.

"Love you, girl."

"Love you more," she says with a smile.

I head to the stairs and take the three flights to the top floor. No one is in the hall as I make my way to Papa's apartment. Papa told me they had several things to talk about in Church. Meaning they could be hours. As much as I'm not looking forward to this phone call, I know I have to make it.

After I let myself inside the apartment, I head to the bar and pour three fingers of scotch. I slam it back in a few gulps before searching my phone for my aunt's number. I take a few breaths and hit call.

Lilian Danvers, my aunt. She lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. She married a wealthy man she met when she went out east for college and never looked back. Considering how both her brothers turned out, I can't say that I blame her. While she didn't agree with my role as a doll, she never judged me or made me feel less.

She picked up on the second ring.

"What's wrong, Nay?"

"How did you know?"

"This is not your normal time, sweet girl. You call me at the same time every week without fail. Now tell me what's wrong."

I blink back the tears that sting my eyes. "Linden is back."

"What do you mean Linden is back? He's dead."

"I thought he was dead. I saw video proof with my own eyes. Papa and the Kings are looking for him."

"Girl, you need to let that man put a ring on it."

I laugh. I can't help it. She's been telling me forever to get over myself and say yes to him, making me his ol' lady.

"They're taking a vote on it right now."

“Tell me how that works. Do they vote for all the ol’ ladies?”

“No, they don’t. Though some clubs do. It was Stormy’s idea. She thought if I got all the brothers’ approval, I could finally get over myself.”

“I need to meet this young woman.”

“We can arrange that.”

“You need to tell the others everything.”

“Everything?”

“Everything, sweet girl. They deserve to know what you went through to take care of them.”

“I don’t want them to think less of me.”

“Oh honey, they won’t. Your siblings love you. They think you hung the moon.”

## Page 22

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:07 pm*

“I feel the same about each of them.”

“I’ll tell them soon.”

“No time like the present. I’ll set up an online meeting and call you back. You have five minutes.”

“I love you.”

“I love you, sweet girl.”

We end the call and I take the time I have to use the bathroom and get some sweet tea. I also raid the fridge. Papa always has sweets in his fridge. Fallon, a friend of the club, is co-owner of Cauldron Cakes, a local bakery.

Papa has a sweet tooth. She likes to indulge him. For a while I thought he would like her and the feeling was mutual, but she told me she sees him like a big brother. And now I know he sees her like a little sister.

I have just enough time to slip off my top and put on one of Papa’s tees before settling on the couch for what will be a long conversation. I settle in with seconds to spare before the meeting app goes off on my laptop. I answer the call and watch it fill with the faces of my family. Micah, Mason, Jada, Lilian, Makalya, Malik, and Imani.

We spend the next few minutes catching up before Lilian asks me to share.

“I’m not even sure how to start this. It started after mom died.”

## Chapter 17

Papa

“Who is Linden Danvers, and why is he important?” Boomer asks.

“What I say doesn’t leave this room. I’m telling you everything with Nay’s permission. This is her story, but I’m going to tell the best I can. Nay’s mom died when she was eleven. She was around the age of twelve when her father fell ill. Too ill to take care of her and her siblings.

“Nay didn’t have anyone else, so she turned to her uncle to help her find a job. She dropped out of school to get a full time job.”

“Who hires twelve-year-olds?” Decker asks.

“Fucking sick perverts,” I replied. He flinches.

“Her uncle sold her virginity to the highest bidder, then hired her out to turn tricks. She did it without complaint for three years. Then one night when her twin siblings, Micah and Maya, were a few weeks from turning twelve, she overheard her father and uncle talking. She found out her father wasn’t sick. He and Linden planned the whole thing and they were planning on doing the same on the twins’ twelfth birthday.”

A course of mother fucker and other sentiments made its way around the table.

“Nay knew she had to do something. One night, when she was supposed to be working, she snuck her siblings out the window. Told them all they were playing a fun game. She got them to the safety of the local pastor’s house. After the pastor and his wife went to sleep, she slipped out and went back to her house. Earlier that day,

she slipped sleeping meds into her father's whiskey. Nay knew her father and uncle drank it nightly. By the time she arrived, they were passed out on the porch. She dragged them inside and set the place on fire.

"Nay waited outside and watched the house until it burned to the ground. By the time the firemen arrived, the house was too far gone to save. She hid in the bushes and watched them pull two bodies from the ashes.

"It took a few days for the authorities to find a relative. Her Aunt Lilian, who lives in Charlotte. The aunt went to college out East, met a man from a well-to-do family and never looked back. Nay refused to take her aunt or uncle's money and moved out when she was seventeen. She came back to New Orleans. She made a living dancing before she came to the club as a doll. As you know, she recently finished her Nurse Practitioner's degree and she's doing her residency at Mercy General.

"Anyway, a couple nights ago, Wizard spotted Linden on the feed at one of the docks. Now he's on the docks again and this time with the G'Dawgs. I, for one, want to see this bastard go down; if we can take out a link in the chain of human traffickers. I'm all for that too."

We spend the next hour going over ideas of how to take out the G'Dawgs and Linden, preferably in one fell swoop.

## Chapter 18

### Papa

I'm bone tired by the time I take the elevator to my apartment. I can't remember when I've felt this wrung out from emotions. The anger burning inside me for Linden is eating at my energy. Later I'll go to the gym and blow off steam. Right now, I just want my woman in my arms. Blue is ordering her cut.

As soon as I open the door, I hear her crying. I hurry into the apartment toward the sound and find her in the living room, curled up on the sofa in a ball, crying her eyes out. I cross the room in a few long strides and scoop her up in my arms. I sit down with her on my lap, wrapped in my arms.

“Baby, what’s wrong?”

She tries to talk, but can’t get it out through the sobs.



*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Shh, baby. It’s alright. I’m here.”

Nay turns in my lap and clings to me. I rub her back and murmur soothing words. I don’t know how long we sit here until the tears stop. I tuck her head under my chin and continue rubbing her back to give her time to regroup.

“I told them. I had to tell them. The looks on their faces,” she says before she starts sobbing again.

I’m guessing she told her family about Linden, and in order to do that, she’d have to tell the entire story to her siblings. Her aunt already knew. She told me earlier.

“How did they take it?”

“Good, bad, better than I expected.”

“Do you feel better now that your secret is out?”

She nods her head. “I truly feel lighter, but the look on Micah and Maya’s faces when I told them about our father’s plans broke my heart. I’ve had years to deal with this. No doubt they still have dozens of questions. I answered every one they had, yet I know they’ll have more. It takes a lifetime to wrap your head around the cruelty perpetrated on you by your own father. Some days, I still can’t believe he faked his illness so he and Linden could prostitute me out. I was just a little girl.”

“Baby, this may sound crazy, but we should have a service for that little girl. The one that died the first time your uncle sold you.”

She looks at me with wide eyes. “That’s brilliant. I’ll talk to Lily. I think it’s a great way to help me mourn the loss of my innocence and maybe to finally release the pain.”

I kiss her gently. “Do you have any idea how beautiful you are? I’m not just talking about that fine ass or those tits. I’m talking about a little girl that would sacrifice everything to take care of her younger siblings. After that, you’ve always looked out for everyone you care about. I remember Kelsi’s first night at the club. She was so nervous and I thought she’d lose her mind when she saw Gambit and I spit roast you in the common room.”

She smiles. “Yeah, she was impressed, jealous, nervous.”

“Jealous?”

“Yeah, she said she wanted to be the one getting spit roasted by two hot men.”

I throw back my head and laugh. “That explains why she tried to recreate that night a few times.”

Nay shrugs, then smiles. “I’m glad we can talk about my doll days without either of us getting upset.”

“No use getting upset over the past, Beloved. I’d rather live to today and grow into the future with you. Speaking of, we took a vote like Stormy asked.”

I feel her tense up. I grasp the back of her neck and squeeze gently.

“Not one man thinks you are unworthy. We took the vote before I told them about Linden. Baby, they’ll never see you in the same light again. I don’t mean that negatively. but they know you’re a warrior. A survivor. A thriver. You’re a fucking

rockstar Chardonnay Rene Danvers.”

I see the blush rise to her cheeks and it makes me smile more. Linden stole so much from my girl, but not the ability to be genuine. By all rights, she should be bitter and jaded. She’s not, she’s the opposite and I’m one lucky son of a bitch.

“Why don’t you get dressed? I’d like to take my woman out to dinner. How does Pele’s Palace sound.”

“Can I wear a dress?”

“I can drive my cage.”

She brings her hands up to cup my head and pulls me down for a scorching hot kiss. I’m at full mast by the time she’s finished.

“I love you, Gabriel.”

“I love you, Nay.”

## Chapter 19

Nay

I hurry into the bedroom, thankful the girls packed a lot more clothes than I originally intended. They even helped me unpack. Papa had long ago made room for me in the apartment. I have my own walk-in closet, complete with a dresser.

Strong arms wrap around me and I feel lips on my neck. I laugh.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“If you keep that up, we’ll never get to dinner.”

“For now, but I intend to have you for dessert.”

I laugh. The man is sex on a fucking stick, and now I’m going to be horny throughout dinner. He knows it too.

“Pick my dress.”

He steps beside me and eyes my choices, then reaches for a turquoise dress. It’s one of my faves. A t-shirt and dress with a collar. It’s bright turquoise and ends mid-thigh. I take the dress and watch as he goes to the dresser and picks out a panty set with a matching bra. Black lace with turquoise piping.

After handing them to me, he searches through my shoes and pulls a pair of strappy silver stilettos.

“Will you wear these?”

“I will. Good thing we’re taking your sled. Those are too cold to ride in.”

“Good thing then. I’ll have a prospect pull it up to the door. Finishing that communal garage was a godsend.”

“It is nice, but I park out front most of the time.”

“I know you do. I see your little Kia when we pull through the gates.”

“Staci once accused me of not having a soul. I bought one as a joke and fell in love with the car.”

“Why did Staci say you didn’t have a soul?”

“Because I didn’t get bent when you fucked her.”

Papa and I have always had a connection. One we didn’t even understand at first. He wanted me to date him early on, but I was set on using the club to pay for my school. He offered to pay for it. As did my aunt, but I needed to do it on my own. Sex is just a thing, or it can be. It’s different when I’m with Papa. It’s much more than that. There’s a connection, A soul level connection. I feel complete when he’s inside me. When I don’t know where I end and he begins.

It takes less than twenty minutes to get ready. Since my hair needs desperate attention from Dmitiri, I donned one of my favorite wigs. It’s short and sassy. Got me bringing all kinds of early nineties, Halle Berry.

Papa lets out a long, low whistle when he sees me.

“Beloved, you are fire.”

“You don’t look so bad yourself.”

He’d put on dress pants, button up shirt and dress shoes. I lean in and give him a kiss.

“You smell good too.”

He smiles at me. “I aim to please.”

I grab my purse and a wrap in case it gets colder than expected. Papa puts his hand in

the small of my back and guides us through the clubhouse and outside to his waiting Escalade. He opens my door and helps me inside. After I'm settled, he fastens my seat belt and closes the door before getting into the driver's side. The drive doesn't take long. We park and walk inside. Papa gives his name. He has a reservation. How sweet.

The hostess seats us. A server comes by promptly with menus and water. Papa orders a bottle of their best champagne to start.

"What looks good?" Papa asks.

"Everything," I say with a laugh.

In the end, we order the seafood platter to start. It comes with oysters, shrimp, big eye tuna sashimi, and lobster tail. I get a roasted beet salad to go with my Mahi Mahi while Papa goes for the surf and turf. Kona lobster and Wagyu beef.

The champagne and food is absolutely delicious. I can see why it's booked out weeks in advance. Luckily, we're part owners and can get tables pretty much any time.

We had two bottles of champagne before we called it a night. I drank more than he did and wound up tipsy. I threaded my arm through his and leaned on him as we walked out.

"Did you enjoy dinner, Beloved?"

## Page 25

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“I did, it’s fab. You’re fab.”

“You’re drunk.”

“Nope, just tipsy. Two more glasses and I would be.”

He laughs. “Let’s get you home.”

### Chapter 20

#### Papa

While my woman is not drunk, she is tipsy. I use that as an excuse to carry her inside. We run into Tawny in the lobby.

“Looks like you two had fun.”

“We’re about to go have more,” Nay says.

“Good for you.”

I chuckle and carry Nay to the elevator. As soon as the elevator door closes, I bring my lips down on hers. She wraps her arms tighter around me and returns the kiss. Our tongues dance. She tastes so fucking good. My cock tents in my pants, pressing against the zipper of my dress pants.

When the doors open, I practically sprint down the hall and hurry to get the door

open. Nay slides down my body and starts undoing my belt. I pull my shirt off over my head and toe off my dress shoes.

She pulls my pants down. My cock springs free.

“Music,” she says before taking my cock into her mouth and down her throat in one smooth move.

“God damn, baby. Fuck.”

It takes a few seconds before I can command Lexi to play one of our sex playlist. My woman loves to listen to music while we fuck, screw, or make love. Ginuwine’s Ponyplays and she massages my balls and humming. The vibrations are killer on my fucking control, but damn, it feels so fucking good.

“Are you wet for me, Beloved?”

She nods and continues. Fuck, that’s hot. I can’t help but thrust my hips and fuck her gorgeous mouth. She makes all kinds of happy noises. I feel my balls draw tight.

“Beloved, you need to stop. I want to cum inside you.”

She stops and eases back with aching slowness. A punishment for not letting her finish. When she’s released all of my cock, I help her to her feet and quickly strip her bare.

“Here,” she demands.

I pick her up. She wraps her legs around my waist. I turn us around while she lines the head of my cock up to her entrance. I slam home and slam her against the wall at the same time.



“Hard, fast. I need it. Fuck me out of my head.”

“As my Beloved wishes,” I say, before increasing my speed.

The sound of our bodies slapping together joins the rhythm of the music playing around us. I get lost in the thrust. Lost in her openness. Her willingness to give herself over to me. To surrender to the raging passion that threatens to consume us.

Nay adds her sounds of pleasure to the already heady mixture and it's nearly my undoing. I maintain control. She turns me on so fucking much. It's sometimes hard to not blow a load when she looks at me, much less when I'm balls deep in the throes of passion. But I'm not a teenage punk and our night has just begun.

Nay digs her nails into my back and neck, leaving marks. I fucking love that. I bring my lips to her and temporarily silence her passionate cries while our tongues dance in a mating ritual of their own.

I lose myself in the kiss and the feel of her tight pussy around my rock hard cock. The coming together of our bodies. The melding of our minds and the entwining of our souls. That's what this woman means to me.

Nay breaks the kiss so she can scream as an orgasm rocks her body. Her pussy walls pulse around me. Fuck, I am not coming. Think of something nasty, I order myself. Latrine pits. The way the guys reek after a week without a shower in the field. I bite into her neck and slide one hand around to press the heel of my hand against her clit.

She screams louder, riding the wave of the orgasm. I know she's extra sensitive right now, but I don't ease up. I thrust harder and faster, while grinding the heel of my palm on her swollen bud. When she screams louder. I bite the pulse at her throat hard enough to leave imprints.

## Page 26

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

Nay screams even louder, tearing up my back with her sharp nails.

“Oh yes, Daddy.”

A chuckle rumbles from my chest and I suck on the bite mark, enhancing her pleasure. She shudders around me and cums again. I take by surprise and my own orgasms rips through me, shooting jets of cum deep inside the woman I love.

When we can both speak again, she croaks, “Take me to bed.”

### Chapter 21

Nay

He carries me into the bed. My legs are jelly. My insides are a little tender. My man is not small. Oh hell no, it took some time to get used to his massive cock. Most men are not made like him. Hell, I think there's something in the water at the Kings' because I haven't run into an average cock yet. They're all packing some heat. Some more than others like my man and Boomer.

I land with a bounce on the bed.

“I do need to get you out of your head, don't I?” Papa says with a chuckle.

“How did you know?”

“You spaced out.”

“Sorry, baby.”

“It’s understandable; you’ve had quite a shock. What were you so deep in thoughts?”

I laugh. “Dicks.”

“You were thinking of other men's dicks?”

“I was thinking how big your cock is, Daddy. How it took awhile to stretch my ass and pussy to take it. Then I thought the Kings are not your average Joe in the cock department.”

Papa threw back his head and laughed loud and long.

“Oh, Beloved, you are a precious gift. I hope you know that. What’s your safe word?”

“Turpentine.”

“Good girl. Face down, ass up.”

I assume the position, turning my face to watch him go to the wardrobe. It is a beautiful antique piece. A marvel of rich dark wood and inside was full of toys. He knows I’m watching him. Papa takes his time to pick out silk restraints, clamps and weights, a rope, a cane, a flogger, a heart-shaped paddle, and lube.

Papa brings everything over to the bed and lays everything out. The anticipation is killer. He knows that and drags it out for that reason. My man picks up the flogger first. Starting at the shoulder, he runs the tails down my bare back in a caress.

I shiver in anticipation of what’s to come. I need this. I need to get out of my head

after dealing with Lord Fuckyou at work and now a ghost from my past rearing his ugly head.

He continues down my ass. “Up on your knees.”

I do as he says. Papa runs the flogger down one leg, then up the other.

“Spread your legs.”

I spread them. He smacks my ass once hard with his hand.

“Wider.”

I spread my legs wider. I feel the sharp sting of the heart-shaped paddle on my pussy lips. I gasp. My juices flow freer with just those few swats.

“Face down, legs spread wide.”

## Page 27

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I go back and face first on the bed. Turning my head to the side again. I focus on my breathing as Papa uses the heart paddle on my ass and thighs. Delivering several stinging blows. I know my skin is pinkening from his attention.

Each strike sends me closer to the edge. Closer to letting go. Closer to forgetting and allowing the pleasure and pain to take over.

“Lay down. Arms and legs out. Get comfortable.”

I wasn't expecting that. I move, grab a pillow, and splay out like a starfish. Papa adjusts the pillow under my head before starting with my right arm. One limb at a time, he ties me to our bed. After testing each tie, he slips a purple silk blindfold over the back of my head and down to cover my eyes.

“Use your safe word if you need it.”

I give him a thumbs up. I feel him run a hand over my heated skin.

“Those hearts look divine on that smooth skin. So pretty.”

I feel a thick finger run through my heat.

“You're soaked. And we're only getting started.”

“You always make me wet, my King.”

“Mmm, I love hearing that from your lips. I'm going to fuck that pretty mouth later.

Before I take both holes. I'm going to fuck your throat."

His words make me wetter. For a minute, maybe more, I don't feel or hear anything. Then I feel a pricking sensation followed by several more. It takes several seconds for my brain to realize he's using a Wartenberg wheel. He's currently using the single wheel. We have three others. The others have three, five, and seven wheels, respectively.

A few minutes of switching between wheels, he uses the flogger on me. Flogging my already sensitive skin sends me soaring toward oblivion. I moan and writhe in pleasure.

Papa

I CAN TELL SHE'S GETTING close to the headspace I want her in. The headspace she needs to be in to release the stress of work and her uncle rearing his ugly head.

I grab the riding crop with a heart-shaped head and strike her ass and pussy hard and fast until she cries out. I shove two fingers deep inside her, curling them to hit her g-spot. She cries out again. This time her body shakes and convulses with an orgasm.

I drop the flogger and go to the head of the bed.

"Open wide."

She does as I command. I pump my cock a few times before sliding my hard cock into her waiting mouth. She loves it when I use her mouth after flogging. I start slow, then pick up the pace. The louder she moans, the harder I fuck her face until I'm close to exploding.

When I pull out, she whimpers.

I crawl on the bed and get in between her legs. I smack her ass hard.

“Ass up.”

She readily complies. I line the head of my cock up to her soaked entrance. I thrust into the hilt and bottom out. She cries out and mewls.

“More,” she begs.

My thrusts are hard and fast. I hit her cervix with each stroke. She cums again, her walls squeezing my cock. I bite my lip to keep from cumming. I power through a third orgasm for my beloved before pulling out. Using her own juices, I coat my fingers and lube her ass before thrusting my finger into her puckered entrance.

“Nnnngg,” she cries out.

I add a second finger, then a third, before lubing up my cock. Nay wiggles her ass and whimpers. I ease the head of my cock into her ass, then slide in slowly inch by inch. I give her body time to adjust to my girth before plundering her ass.

I know when she’s out of her head like this. She wants it hard and fast. Nay likes it when I’m relentless. Her screams of pleasure get louder. I edge closer and closer to orgasm. When I know I’m going to blow, I reach around and pinch her clit. She cries out and I shoot cum deep in her ass.

When I’m finished, I pull out and drop a kiss on her cheek before removing the blindfold.

“Stay right there. I’ll get you untied and cleaned up.”

## Page 28

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

Nay lays her head back on the pillow and closes her eyes. I untie her, rubbing each limb soothingly. After she's unbound, I head to the bathroom and turn on the water to warm before dashing into the kitchen to prepare her drink.

A few minutes later, I have her cleaned up with her chocolate milk in hand, wrapped in my arms. I hold her until she falls asleep.

### Chapter 22

Papa

I feel like I've barely closed my eyes when the phone rings.

"Who am I killing?"

"Sorry, Papa, there's a man here who insists on seeing you and says he has something for you."

"Do you have a name?" I ask, my feet hitting the floor as I scramble for clothes.

I finished fucking my queen senseless and cleaned us up less than an hour ago.

"His patch says Freak. He's a Merciless Few."

"On my way. I need to get dressed. Send a text to the brass with an update."

"On it. I'll let the guy know you're on your way."



“ETA 5,” I say, then disconnect the call.

I look at the bed to find my woman still passed out on the bed. I dress quickly before writing a note and leaving it on my pillow. I take the stairs because it’s faster. I hear the door on the second floor open seconds before Wizard appears.

He gives me a nod and follows me down the stairs. We’re on the second floor when the third floor door to the stairwell opens and boots pound down.

“Elvis is in the building,” Wizard says.

I chuckle and hurry out of the stairwell and across the lobby. Wizard calls Blue Elvis sometimes because of his appearance and voice. The gate’s far enough away. I run to my sled and fire it up. It’ll be quicker. There’s a lone biker inside the gate. He’s got his kickstand down sitting on this seat, feet crossed on the ground, toothpick in his mouth. I pull close by, but he waves me off when I go to put the stand down. Uncrossing his legs, he stands, then walks towards me as my brother’s pull nearby.

“Might as well stay on your ride. You’ll need a cage for your package.”

“Havoc’s on his way,” Mayhem shouts from the gatehouse.

I extend my hand. “Papa, VP, Voodoo Kings.”

He smirks, “Freak, VP, Merciless Few.”

“Brother,” Gambit says, pulling to a stop beside us.

I turn to see who’s with me before introducing them.

“Freak, this is Gambit, Smoke, Nitro, Blue, Dakota, Decker, and Wizard. Our

President, Enforcer, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary, Treasurer, and Security Expert.”

Freak chuckles. “Quick. I like that. Ready to roll?”

“We are,” I say.

He nods and gets on his bike. I hear Havoc pound on the side of the van to let us know he’s arrived. Freak pulls through the open gate, followed by my brothers and I. We follow him to the lower ninth. He pulls to the stop behind a boarded up church.

We park beside him and follow him inside. He leads us into the church where the office area is. There, tied to a chair, is none other than Pablo Cotilla. The G’Dawgs’ third in command.

“I heard you were looking for some stray dogs. I found this one trying to kidnap a thirteen-year-old girl. As much as I’d like to take care of the scum, scuttlebutt says the Kings’ have first dibs on their worthless hides.”

“We owe you and yours a solid,” I say.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

He grins. “Don’t forget to invite us on your April poker run.”

Chuckling, I hand him a business card. “Consider it done.”

He takes it and nods. “Barron’s Best? That’s some primo high.”

“We grow our own crops and make distillates, edibles, et cetera.”

Freak nods and holds up the card. “I’ll drop by sometime.”

“Come by and grab some product on me.”

“You can pull around back and take the guy out that way. Should be able to get him in the van with no one seeing, not that there’s many awake.”

We grab the guy and haul him to his feet while Havoc drives the van around back. The whole thing goes as planned, and we are on the way to the compound in less than five minutes. Havoc drives the van to the Woodshed once we get into the compound.

I grab the guy from the back of the van and drag him into the Woodshed. There are more prospects waiting for us.

“Strip him, hose him down, and throw him into a cell.”

I watch as the prospects cut the guy's clothes off. They have him over the drain and open the hoses on him. We put in high pressure hoses and I watched Mayhem flip the switch that goes to the ice water slurry we keep on hand. The guy screams behind the

tape as ice cold water drenches his body. They hose him down for a good five minutes before throwing him naked and wet into a cell.

“Let’s go raid the kitchen,” I say.

## Chapter 23

Nay

I wake up deliciously sore and ready to face the day. I’m on shift today. I stretch expecting to find Papa, instead my fingers encounter a piece of paper. I reach for the light beside the bed. One touch turns it on low. I give my eyes a few seconds to adjust before I read the note.

Beloved,

Called away on club business.

I don’t know if I’ll be back before

you’re shift. I’ll pick you up after.

Love,

Gabriel

My man is amazing and I finally feel like I can breathe. If the brother’s all voted for me, then they don’t have an issue with my past. I don’t feel like I’m dragging Papa down or making him less in any way being his partner.

I feel lighter than I have in years. And that’s a miracle, considering Linden is alive.

Why am I not freaking out right now? Because I'm not alone this time. I have Papa and the rest of the Kings. They're my family and they've got my back.

I gingerly make my way to the bathroom. After using the toilet and washing my hands, I decide to run a hot bath. I'll feel better after a nice long soak.

I opened the linen closet and chose one of the bath powders Papa has made and pour it into the tub. The man is a whiz with essential oils and herbs. Not to mention the little something he adds with his Voodoo. My man is magic in more ways than one.

After filling the tub, I dump in the packet and swirl the contents, enjoying the heady scent of the herbs and oils. I sink into my chin and relax until the water starts to cool. Then I grab the loofah and sugar scrub and set to work on my skin until it's soft and smooth. After drying off, I rub the oil residue from the scrub into my skin. My man uses the best all natural oils for the bath products he makes for me. Yes, my big bad Voodoo man hand-crafts bath and skincare products for me.

He's made bath products for others as well. A special soak for Stormy for the morning after she gifted Gambit her virginity. She confided in me and asked for advice. I asked my man to make her something, and he did. No wonder I love that man. I do. My refusal had everything to do with my love for him. I love him too much to tarnish his light.

I plait my hair into two braids, apply lip gloss and mascara before slipping on a pair of deep purple scrubs. Thick cotton socks and a pair of purple BALA shoes complete my uniform. Everything else I need, including my ID badge, are in my car.

I run into Doc on the elevator.

"I didn't know you worked today."

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

He smiles at me. “Yup. Ready for a day at the grind?”

I laugh. “I am. I love my job.”

“Have you thought about where you want to work when the year is up?”

“I haven’t. Are you taking your sled today?”

“No, I’m stopping by Gaia’s Hope after shift. Want to come along?”

“I’d love to. Do you know if Alena is going to be there?”

“She is. I’m giving her and baby Zander a ride home. I’m picking up an extra baby seat on the way.”

“We can stop by that store on the way. The one Stormy is always raving about whose name I can’t remember.”

“Tiny Treasures. She sent me last week to pick up a delivery for Gaia’s.”

“Isn’t that what prospects are for?”

He chuckles. “No one says no to Queenie.”

“That’s true. She is a force of nature.”

“Want to ride with me?”

“Yes, I need to grab stuff from my car.”

?

We make it to work thirty minutes early. Doc walks me to the nurses’ lounge, where I stow my gear. He leaves to do rounds and I head to do the same. I head to the nurses’ station on my floor to look at the charts.

Millie waves at me. “Morning Nay. How was your time off?

“It was good. Papa took me to see a few of my favorite krewes. The night after we went to Pele’s Palace.”

“Oh, I love Pele’s Palace. Doesn’t the club own that?”

“They’re part owners. Madison Kalani is the primary owner. She’s the best friend of one of the ol’ ladies.”

“Which one?”

“Lucia. She’s married to Nitro.”

“Nitro. Is that the one that looks like aGQmodel?

I laugh. “Hell, half of them look like tatted upGQmodels,”

“Please invite me to a party?”

“I can do that. I’ll ask Stormy when the next party is. We don’t always get a lengthy notice.”

“You’re the best.”

“Don’t thank me yet. The parties can get pretty wild.”

“I don’t mind,” Millie says with a shrug. “I could use a little fun.”

“You’ll have more than a little fun.”



“Oh, fun. Am I invited?”

If the sound of his voice didn't make me nauseous, the hand on the shoulder did the trick. I pull away and turn around to see Doctor Montgomery.

“Never put your hands on me again.”

He sneered at me. “What are you going to do about it, nurse?”

“Fuck around and find out, Montgomery.”

“Bitch.”

I feel a sting across my jaw. The bastard hit me. Without thinking, I kick out, catching his knee. As he falls to the ground, I strike him again, breaking his nose. He screams like a little kid in their first horror house. He scrambles to get off the floor, but I am ready for him. I kick out and catch him in the jaw, knocking him back on his ass.

By this time, several orderlies are here, standing in between us.

“You'll never work in this city again. You stupid black bitch.”

“Oh, I think you're the one that won't be working in this city again,” I hear Doc say behind me.

Papa

We let the scumbag stew for a few hours. The prospect hosed him down with frigid water two hours ago and threw him back in the cell, naked and shivering. Poor dumb bastard thinks he's tough. If he had pants, he'd piss them when he sees Smoke's dead look.

The Dawgs are a pain in the ass, but until recently they were all low-level thugs still wet behind the ears. Maybe not to the average citizen, but I've been to places that make the sandbox look like a play date.

Gambit stands up. "You bunch ready?"

"Hell yeah," I say, pushing up from my chair.

My phone ringing stops me. I wave the others on and answer the call.

"Gabe."

"Jimmy, what's up brother?"

"I need you to find an awol relative. Our great Aunt Evie's adopted brat. He ran away a few months ago after they had an argument. The kid slapped her and knows we're looking for him to kick his ass. Anyway, he was spotted in your area. I'll send you a text with his name and picture."

"After I beat some sense into him, am I sending him home or feeding him to the gators?"

"I'd say keep your options open. If a nineteen-year-old kid can hit a seventy-four-year-old woman, who knows what he's capable of?"

“If I think he needs to be put down, I’ll take care of it. When are you coming for a visit?”

“When are you going to do right by Nay?”

A wide smile spreads across my face. “She finally agreed to be my ol’ lady.”

“Woo, hell yeah. You better put a ring on that.”

“I will, but I have some trash to take out first. Her uncle is alive.”

“Bastard. No fucking way! How?”

“No idea, but we’re on it.”

“Maybe I’ll come down sooner. If I do, you’re putting a ring on it early, so start shopping.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Why don’t you get your ass here and we’ll shop together?”

“Fine. We can freak out the new kids who don’t know you have a twin. Better looking, but still.”

“We’re identical twins, dipstick.”

“So you say. See you on the flip,” Jimmy says and ends the call.

My parents named us Gabriel James and James Gabriel. Lucky me, I was born two minutes early. I grew up Gabe until my military days. The men started calling me Papa in reference to Papa Legba because of my spiritual preference.

Also, because I’ve dressed as him occasionally to increase the intimidation factor. Wait until Linden gets a look at twins. Two signs of death. Death to the uneducated. Most don’t understand Legba’s true purpose and, frankly, it’s not my job to educate them.

I’m nearly to the door of the anteroom when my phone rings again. I look at my phone. It's Doc.

“You need to get here now. Nay needs you.”

I disconnect the call and run through the anteroom. They already have the guy strung up. Gambit turns to look at me, the smile frozen on his face.

“What’s wrong?”

“Doc called, it’s Nay.”

“Let’s roll brother. Smoke, you got this?”

“You know it.”

Gambit follows me out to the sleds. We’re on our bikes and headed toward the gate at top speed. Someone must have alerted the prospect on duty. The gate opens and we sail through, hitting the open road and shifting gears.

We may have run a few red lights, but we made the twenty-five minute drive in twelve minutes. I barely have the kickstand down before I take the keys, dismount and run inside.

I fly through the halls until I get to Nay’s section. I see Doc, two cops I don’t know, and hospital security. I don’t see Nay anywhere.

“Where is she?”

## Chapter 25

Nay

I got fired. Can you fucking believe that? The dick hits me first and I get fired. I’m so mad I can’t think of anything but putting my fist in Lord Fuckyou’s face or maybe kicking him in his tiny, non-existent nut sack.

I left without grabbing my purse, phone, or anything else.

I speed walk to the park. Taking deep breaths and trying to expel my anger as I walk. I’ve barely burned through my anger when I hear a raised voice.

I hurry toward the sound. When I round the corner there on a bench, I see an older woman cowering as an older teenage boy towers over her, yelling.

“I already told you to hand it over, you stupid old bitch.”

When he draws back to hit her, I don’t think. I sprint the distance and launch myself at the kid. We tumble to the ground. He pushes me off and tries to slam my head into the ground. I twist his legs up in mine and take him back to the ground.

As soon as he hits the ground, I’m up. I grab his head and smash it into the ground twice before he’s up and coming at me. He lands a blow before I get out of range. I had Johns that hit harder so he didn’t ring my bell.

I lose track of the older lady. I hope to hell she’s making her way to safety.

“I’ll kill you, bitch.”

Papa

“SHE’S NOT HERE, MAN. She took off after she got fired,” Doc says.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“What do you mean, she got fired?”

“That bitch hit me,” Montgomery whines.

“Call her bitch again and I’ll give you something to wine about,” Doc says before I can.

“Careful Moore, you can be fired next,” Montgomery says.

“No need. I quit. I’d never work in a place that chose a pencil dicked, three pump chump, wussy, chicken shit, motherfucker over a bright, beautiful, successful NP.”

“Are you fucking her too?”

With lightning fast reflexes, I have Doctor Douche against the wall.

“Watch your mouth, fucker.”

“What are you going to do about it with the officers here?” he asks with a sneer.

I laugh, long and loud.

“You say that like I’m afraid to go to jail or hell, that jail is the worst place I could be. You see, you dumb fuck, I spent years in places that makes the sandbox look like a playground. You should keep that in mind before you open your filthy mouth again.”

I lean in closer so only he can hear. “There’ll be plenty of time when the cops aren’t

around. I know where you live, and by the end of the day, I'll know everything there is to know about you. If you think this is over, you're wrong."

I let him look at Doc. He's so angry his face is red from holding back the rage.

"Where's Nay?"

"She took off, left everything."

"Fuck. Let's go."

I run back to my sled followed by Gambit and Doc. Doc peels off, likely to get his ride.

"Where would she go?" Gambit asks.

"The park," I say, slinging my leg over my sled.

?

When we get to the park, I park the sled and head out on foot with my best friend beside me. The first thing I see is an old lady trying to run for her life. She sees us and runs straight to us.

"Help! Someone's being attacked."

"Which way?"

She points from the direction she came from.

"We have a friend on the way. He's a doctor. Stay here and we'll go help."



She nods with wide eyes. I don't know what made her run up to two bikers, but I'm thankful she did. Too many would have run away from us. I take off into a sprint in the direction she indicated with Gambit close by. He's got an inch on me, but my stride is longer.

I hear flesh on flesh before I clear the small copse of trees.

## Chapter 26

Papa

When I clear the trees, what I see has me seeing red and putting on a burst of speed. Some guy has Nay down on the ground. She's fighting back, but he has six inches and a hundred pounds on her.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I run full speed and punt the fucker in the ribs when I get there. With anoof, he lands on his side. I keep kicking. Gambit pulls Nay to her feet while I literally kick the shit out of this bastard. He makes it to his feet. When he faces me, I recognize him. It's Jacob Goldman, the relative my brother called me about. I know I've seen him somewhere else, but I can't place it.

Instead of coming at me, the fucker takes off. Oh, hell no. I run after him, tackling him to the ground. While I plan on doing more to him, not in public. I slam his head into the ground with enough force to knock him out, but not enough to kill him. Although I can't swear he doesn't have a concussion.

I feel a hand on my shoulder and look up to see Gambit.

"Doc's with Nay and the old lady. I'll get prospects here to pick up the trash."

"We don't have time. I have zip ties. We can throw him in Doc's cage."

I ran up to Nay and dropped a kiss on her lips. "I'll be right back, Beloved."

She nods.

"Need your keys, Doc."

He gives me his keys. I sprint to my sled, grabbing zip ties from the bags, and then head to Doc's Jeep. I drive it through the park. The earth is dry and the grass is already dead. I shouldn't leave much of a trail in the dead grass.

Gambit already has Jacob on his shoulder in a fireman's carry. Doc is tending to the old lady. It's killing me not to have Nay in my arms. She's got a busted lip and a bloody nose. Swelling around her eyes. At least one is going to be black in the next few hours.

I zip tie his hands and feet. Gambit tosses him into the jeep. I close the door and hurry to Nay, taking her into my arms.

"Thank fuck you're okay, baby."

"I had him until I tripped. He was going to hit Velma," Nay says, tipping her head slightly toward the other woman.

I keep my arms protectively wrapped around my woman.

"Velma, are you okay? Can we give you a ride home?"

She shakes her head. "You've got your hands full. I can walk."

Velma turns to Nay. "Thank you, young lady. He wanted to hurt me more than he wanted to Rob me."

"I promise you. He'll never hurt another woman again."

"I hope you feed him to the gators," Velma says with a smile and a wink.

"I'll walk her home," Gambit says. "Get your woman home."

"Can you ride, Beloved?"

"I think so."

“I’ll go slow.”

“Take me home.”

I pick her up and carry her bridal style back to my sled. I get on, then help her on before backing out of the spot and heading back to the compound. I go slower than the speed limit to lessen the jarring on Nay’s body.

Halfway home, Gambit catches up with us. We rode together to the compound. When I go to park, Gambit stops me.

“Pull up to the door. I’ll get your sled taken care of.”

I do as he suggests and drive us to the door. I help Nay off the bike before dismounting. I turn my sled off but leave the keys in the ignition. Once I have Beloved in my arms, I hurry into the building and through the lobby.

The wait for the elevator took forever. Blue’s inside when the doors open. His eyes widen and he puts his arm out to hold the door.

“I’ll help.”

“Thanks brother.”

“What happened?”

“She protected a sweet little old lady in the park.”

“Tell me we got the guy.”

“Doc has him. Velma, the sweet little old lady, requests we make him gator bait.”

“Done. I’ll round up everyone. Might take an hour to get them from their businesses.”

“Make it forty-five.”

“Will do.”

Blue holds the elevator door when we arrive on the third floor. Then he hurries around us and opens the door to the apartment. As the club’s Secretary he has a key to all of our apartments in case of emergency.

“Take me to the kitchen. I need to ice my face and hands. I’d rather be sitting when Doc gets here and you know he’ll double back.”

I nod. “I give him five minutes tops.”

“Enough time for the frozen peas.”

I sit her in a dining room chair.

“Put your hands on the table baby, I'll grab the peas.”

## Chapter 27

Nay

Stormy adjusts my pillows before handing me a cup of the tea Papa made for me. He and the others are headed to the Woodshed. I don't expect the punk to live long. Unless they decide to toy with him or torture him.

“Lucia is making you some breakfast. Papa and Doc said you need food, then painkillers. First, drink your tea.”

I laugh and settle into the pillows. I'm on the chaise end of the large L-shaped sectional. The sectional is made of a deep chocolate buttery soft suede.

The smells coming from the kitchen make my stomach growl.

“What's she making?”

“I don't know. I can check. She had the prospects bring in several bags of groceries while you soaked in the tub. I'll be right back.”

I sip on the slightly bitter brew and try to relax. I replay this morning's events in my head. Honestly, I wouldn't have done anything differently. Expect to do better not to trip. It all went downhill when I tripped. The guy outweighs me by a hundred pounds.

“She's making huevos rancheros and churros with chocolate dipping sauce.”

“Oh, that sounds amazing.”

“Do you feel like coming to the table?”

“I think I can manage,” I say with a laugh.

Truth is, my head hurts the worst of all. He slammed it into the ground and that’s after I hit it when I tripped and fell. I gingerly make my way to the table.

“Papa made an entire pot of that tea. He wants you to drink it all,” Stormy says.

I smile. “I’m not surprised. My man is a whiz with natural healing remedies.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Where did he learn that?” Lucia asks.

“His grandmother taught him.”

“He made me the most wonderful bath salts for the first time Gambit and I were together,” Stormy says.

“He did?” Lucia asks, surprised.

Stormy blushes. “It was my first time and it helped with the soreness. My man is not small.”

I laugh. “Voodoo King requirements must be droolable hot, have tats and pack more than the average schmo.”

The other women burst out laughing.

“Who’s got the biggest dick?” Stormy asks. “I need to know for research, of course.”

I laugh so hard I almost snort tea out of my nose. Stormy is a writer. A good one at that. Her top selling series, the Valhalla Marauders, is an international bestseller. We spend the rest of breakfast talking about our men’s junk and laughing our asses off.

My head hurts from laughing, but I’m not telling them because I don’t want it to stop. I can’t believe both these women accept me knowing I’ve had sex with their men. It blows my mind.



Papa

“THAT PIECE OF SHIT is part of your family?” Smoke asked incredulously, looking at a strung up Jacob.

“He’s adopted. I’ll let Jimmy figure out what to tell the aunt. He’s always been better at spinning the truth.”

“That fucker ever coming for a visit?”

“Says he is. I can’t wait to see his face when he sees a ring on your finger.”

“You didn’t tell him about Sabian?” Smoke asks.

“No.” I grin. “It’ll be more fun to see his face. Since you’re a sworn bachelor and all.”

He laughs. “Yeah, that ship sailed. Married with triplets on the way. That’s a much better life than being a bachelor. I don’t miss random pussy. I love coming home to my woman every night.”

“In a few weeks, your house will be done. I bet Sabian’s ready to get the nursery done.”

“She is.”

“Are you geezers going to talk us to death?” Jacob yells.

I turn to him. “We might and there’s not a damn thing you can do about it but hang there like the little bitch you are.”

I’m seething inside, but I won’t let the little bitch know he’s getting to me. No, I’ll

spring it on him when I smash his face in.

“Cut him down and tie him to the chair. Mayhem bring me an extra helmet and a baseball bat. Preferably a metal one.”

I wait while the prospects did what I asked. Jacob screams and cusses. Yelling every insult he can think of. The guys laugh at him. Which only infuriates him more.

“Tape his mouth. I’m tired of hearing his big mouth.”

Havoc tapes Jacob’s mouth shut. I chuckle as he continues to curse and rant. Hurl runs back in with a helmet and a baseball bat.

“Strap the helmet on him.”

I watch as Hurl straps the helmet on him before handing me the bat. With a wicked grin on my face, I swing the bat a few times. Whiffing it in front of his face a few times.

“Let me show you what happens to men who abuse old ladies.”

## Page 37

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I swing the bat hard, knowing the helmet will keep me from killing the turd too soon. Still, it was lights out for the princess.

“Throw him back in the cell until he regains consciousness. That hit should be good for a grade two concussion. Too bad I can’t do the same to Doctor Montgomery.”

“Who says you can’t?” Doc asks with a grin.

### Chapter 28

#### Papa

Smoke works our prisoner Pablo Cotilla over. Thanks to our new friend Freak, who got his road name because of his heterochromia, we have one of the top five members of the G’Dawgs. So far, Pablo hasn’t given us anything but names. Names we already know.

I’m impressed by his ability to withstand Smoke, but my brother is just getting started. Smoke turns to me with a grin.

“I like your idea. Prospect brain bucket.”

“Do you want us to cut him down?” Havoc asks.

“Nah, if I miss, I miss. Now hand me the baseball bat.”

Pablo’s eyes widen. Hurl lowers the chains enough to let Havoc strap the helmet on

the guy. As soon as it's strapped on, Hurl raises the chains so the guy's back on his tiptoes. Smoke takes the bat I used early and does some kick ass martial arts maneuvers with it.

"Nice balance," he says, while bringing the bat to the guy's leg. The bat hits the meaty part of his leg. No broken bones, but it'll leave one hell of a bruise. Not that it matters. This guy is gator bait. Smoke hits Pablo twice more before he brings the bat upside the helmet. I watch him pull his hit so he doesn't knock the guy out.

"Papa! Your pet's awake," Mayhem yells.

"Bring him out."

Mayhem and Hurl drag him out. Hurl rips the tape off his mouth. Jacob screams, then hurls all over the floor.

"Hose that down," I command.

"On it." Hustle yells, hurrying to get the hose.

He quickly sprays down the area and Jacob before returning the hose. Jacob continues to dry heave on the pavement, having already emptied the contents of his stomach. Grade two concussions are a bitch. Every movement or jolt of your body is excruciating.

"String him up."

"No, please. No. Don't touch me. I'll tell you anything."

"What cou--"

“Shut up, Golden, or you’ll wish you were dead,” Pablo spit out. Only it comes out all muffled because of the helmet.

“Fuck you, I can’t take no more.”

Jacob spends the next twenty minutes spewing all the information he knows. When he is done, we string him up and each one of us hits him with the bat before we cut him down and open the pit.

Jacob and Pablo scream when the floor drops out from underneath them. Pablo’s chains are yanked taut. His toes are now kissing air. Hungry gators snapped and jumped out of the water, waiting for their meal. We had the prospects chum the waters below while Jacob spilled his guts. Jacob falls into the mass of waiting gators, who make quick work of him, though he was still alive when we dropped him down.

Smoke turns to Pablo and says, “We’ll kill you first before we feed you to the gators, if you tell me what I want to know.”

Then Smoke does what he does best. He gives that cold, dead stare that makes most men piss themselves.

Nay

STORMY LOOKS UP FROM her phone.

“Looks like it’s going to be a long day for the guys. Let’s make them dinner.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“I can chop and stir,” I volunteer.

“You can also help plan. What do you think we should make?”

“Let’s do a fish and seafood fry with cornbread and turnip greens.”

“With mac and cheese and dessert,” Stormy adds.

“Chocolate sheet cake,” Lucia says.

“Are any of the prospects free?”

“Honda, Tully, and Flea,” Stormy replies.

“Let’s take two of them. I know one needs to man the gate.”

“I text Red to let her know we’re going shopping. I say we stop by Cauldron Cakes and pick up extra goodies,” Lucia suggests.

“Great idea,” I say.

“Are you feeling up to a trip?”

“We can one-stop the open air market. If I get too tired, I can sit at the outdoor cafe.”

“Brilliant,” Stormy says.

?

The trip to the market didn't take long. I immediately set to work on the greens. Good greens take hours. I don't like to cook but I know how. I take out the stems and wash them three times before adding them to a pot I started earlier with seasonings and ham hocks.

After that's done, I help the others prepare the fish. Mama always soaked chicken and fish in buttermilk before frying. Overnight, preferably. A couple hours will do just fine. Our seafood is fresh. We have a few types of fish, shrimp, oysters, crab, and crawfish. We use crawfish tail meat tonight for nuggets. The heads and carcasses we'd freeze and save for later use.

"Crank up the music," Lucia yells.

"Lexi, increase volume to five," I say.

The AI increases the volume of the music playing on surround sound. DJ Snake and Lil Jon's Turn Down For What starts playing. I start dancing around the kitchen, singing into the wooden spoon I have in my hand.

Stormy and Lucia join in. By the end of the song Tawny, Athena, Kelsi and Deedee have joined us. We just finished the song when I heard a wolf whistle and turn to see Chief and Trinity. The Baton Rouge and Mother Chapter's President and Vice President. They had someone with them I didn't know.

I'd put him at Papa's height, five inches above six feet. With broad shoulders and dark blonde hair. His brilliant blue eyes took everything in. I'd put him in his early to mid thirties.

"Daughter, where is my son?" Chief asks Stormy.

“They’re out back in the Woodshed.”

“Come, give your pops a hug,” Chief says.

Stormy hurries to comply.

“Something smells good,” Trinity says.

“Join us for dinner,” I say.

“We will and we’ll introduce you to the new guy, too.”

I laugh as the three men leave the kitchen.

Chapter 29



Papa

Pablo sang like a canary after we promised him a quick, clean death before the gators got him. We could dispose of his body some other way. But that's why we have the gator grate. Blood that gets spilled drips into the water below. Which draws the gators.

If we're feeding them someone still living, the prospects chum the water first to get the gators attention. The next day a few of us with diving skills go check for remains. We travel in teams of four or five with weapons. We also chum several hundred yards up the shoreline away from where we're searching.

The prospects are nearly finished cleaning up when the outer door to the Woodshed opens. Gambit and I hustle through the anteroom into the main room. What looks like the only room since the doors to the anteroom and beyond are hidden.

It's Chief and Trinity with some guy we don't know. He's my height with dark blonde hair. Chief greets us.

"Good to see you boys."

"Chief," I say.

"Pops," Gambit says.

"Did we miss all the fun?" Trinity asks.

“It’s all over but the cleanup and hopefully food.”

“The women are cooking up a storm. Smells so good we almost stayed,” Chief says.

“I have someone I want you to meet.”

“Son, Papa, this is Hollywood. He belongs to a club out West. Due to recent circumstances, which I’ll let him tell you, he moved to New Orleans. His old President is a friend of mine and asked us to make him a fully patched member of the Kings. He prefers New Orleans to Baton Rouge.”

Gambit takes in what his dad says and nods.

“If your friend trusts him, so do we. We’re having church after food. Hollywood, you can fill us in and meet everyone.”

Gambit holds out his hand. “Welcome on board, brother. After church will get you settled into an empty apartment.”

“Do you have a two or three bedroom? I have two cubs.”

“My old apartment is a two bedroom with a den. The den has its own bath. It’s on the top floor of the clubhouse. If you don’t mind bunking on the same floor with me,” I say with a smile.

He returns the smile. “I appreciate it.”

“Let’s eat,” Gambit says.

A murmur of agreement makes the rounds and we all head out to our sleds. The protective gear we had over our clothes is currently burning in the incinerator. We have a big old incinerator. It came with the original hotel and when Chief bought it

back in the day. He left it.

The hotel remained untouched until we bought it and turned it into the new clubhouse. Chief and the mother chapter are in Baton Rouge. Chief bought the property for Gambit's mama, who fell in love with it and New Orleans. When she died less than two years later, he left the property to sit but didn't have the heart to sell it.

Stormy's been slowly restoring the garden's her husband's mother loved so much. Gardens that Gambit planted for his mama during her chemo. He told me she'd come out and look at the flowers every day. Chief had the old owner's suite redone, so Anna Marie could spend her last days in the place she loved the most.

The drive to the clubhouse didn't take long. As I enter the lobby, the smell of fried food hits my senses, making my stomach rumble. I hurry to the kitchen. Chief said the ladies are there. Nay is sitting on a stool near the stove stirring a pot of what looks like greens. I take a deep breath. Smells like greens too.

Her back is turned to me. I cross the floor quietly and wrap my arms around her. She stiffens for a second, then relaxes.

"No one else is going to hold you like this, Beloved. I'd kill them first."

She laughs. "You're cute when you're possessive."

"Get used to it. You're mine now, Chardonnay Danvers."

She turns around and stands on her tiptoes. Her left eye is nearly swollen shut. I kiss her tenderly, but with passion.

"Does it hurt?"

“Edibles and your tea have dimmed the pain to a dull roar.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Still, we should turn in early. There’s Church after dinner.”

“I figured as much. I’ll go upstairs and lay down while you’re in Church.”

“Everything smells amazing. I’m sure you ladies have outdone yourselves again.”

“We aim to please. The greens are ready if you want to plate them and put them out.”

I turn and realize the prospects are carrying the food out to Lagniappe. Gambit gives the go ahead after all the food is carried out to the long serving table. Stormy has everything set up on the tables in serving dishes with warmers underneath them. We feed over fifty people two to three times a day.

Gambit waits until everyone gets a plate. Red brought all the kids and they’re settled with their parents. With the help of the older kids. The Pres hops up on the stage and grabs the mic.

“Family, how the fuck are ya?”

Cheers and cat calls go up around the room. Hollywood, who’s sitting next to Nay, leans in and says.

“Are those bunnies sitting with everyone?”

Nay smiles. “We call them dolls, and yes. In this family, we all get along. Any of the dolls that cause issues with one of the taken brothers will find themselves out on their ass. If they’re lucky.”

Hollywood quirks a brow. “If they’re not lucky?”

“The other dolls will beat their ass then they’ll be out on their asses.”

I chuckle. “Did you and Kelsi beat those bitches' asses when they tried to fuck with Stormy?”

“Damn straight. Stormy is the reason the dolls are not second class citizens.”

## Chapter 30

Nay

The new guy gave me a questioning look, but didn’t have time to ask it.

“Hollywood, stand up and let everyone see you,” Gambit says.

When he stands up, I come eye level with the massive bulge in his jeans. He’s fucking HUGE. I mean, my man is not slacking at a girthy ten plus inches and I’ve been with Boomer who’s almost a freaking foot long but even his doesn’t look this big at rest.

I heard a variety of reactions, including a few gasps in the direction of the ladies. Which ladies? I have no idea.

Hollywood smiles and waves at everyone. His megawatt smile made him look like a model. Add that to his square jaw and full lips and he could grace the cover of GQ.

Gambit continues. “Hollywood comes to us from the West Coast via a friend of Chief’s. He’s asked to patch into the Kings. It’s our first topic in church tonight, but I think you’ll be seeing him and his two cubs around for a good long while.

“Hollywood, let me introduce you to the kids and ol’ ladies. You’ll meet all the brothers soon and the prospects and dolls when they help you move in.”

I watch as the kids and ol’ ladies take the stage for Gambit to introduce. I feel a nudge and look to see Kelsi.

“You belong up there too, girl. Go on. They voted you in.”

I shake my head. “I don’t have my cut.”

Papa stands up and whistles. Everyone looks at him. “Blue, brother, bring me that bag.”

Blue dashes out of the room and comes back seconds later, holding a large purple gift bag. My insides go all gooey. Tears prick the corner of my eyes.

Papa pulls me to my feet before reaching into the bag and pulling out a cut.

“I was going to wait and have a party, but there’s no way you’re not getting on that stage. Will you be my ol’ lady?”

“Yes!”

I hear everyone chuckle as he bids me turn around so he can slip the cut on me. I look down to see the word Beloved stitched into my cut. I know without looking at the back, it says ‘Property of Papa’ on the back.

“I love you.”

“I love you more. Now get that fine ass up on that stage.”

Smiling from ear to ear, I hustle up onto the stage. Stormy is the first to embrace me, followed quickly by the others.

Gambit speaks again. “Hollywood, this is my ol’ lady Stormy. Our children Bastian, Geni, Remy, Acadia, Antoine, Xavier, and,” he puts his arm around Stormy with his hand on her belly, “an unknown brother or sister due this fall.”

Applause and whistles erupts around the room. Gambit waits until everyone calms down. He walks next to Lucia.

“This is Lucia. She’s with Nitro. These are their two boys, EJ and Benji. The lovely Red is next. She’s Brick’s ol’ lady. They come from Baton Rouge and settled with us last year. Olivia is with our brother Boomer. They’re expecting twins in a few weeks. Boomer, come get your woman off her feet.”

Everyone laughs. Boomer hurries up on stage and swoops Olivia up in his arms. While everyone hollers and catcalls, until he has her back in a seat.



“This is Lily and Dmitri. They are with Dakota and are expecting at the end of June. Our enforcer Smoke out did himself and him and this lovely lady, Sabian. They are expecting triplets at the end of June as well. Delta is with our brother Outlaw. No one knows the swamps and bayous as well. This is their daughter, Lila. They’re expecting their second in September. And this sweet mouse is Alena and her little one Alex. We’ve adopted them. And our newest members Tully, a prospect and his little sister Teagan. I believe you’ve met Nay, our VP’s ol’ lady. I promise not to quiz you on the names.”

Everyone laughs and we disperse from the stage. I take my seat in between Hollywood and Papa. We all dig into the delicious food.

“This is good. Do you ladies cook like this all the time?”

“We cook at least one meal a day for everyone. Usually two. Breakfast and dinner. On Sundays, we have brunch. Start times vary, but normally we start between eleven and one, depending on club business that week. I saw the look on your face earlier. Did you have a question?”

“I don't want to be rude, but...”

“I can clarify the earlier statements about bunnies and dolls. Stormy was our first ol’ lady. She embraced the bunnies and didn't look down on us. At the time, I was a bunny. I retired a few weeks later to finish my NP. I’m blessed that my man understands my past as well as my temporary chosen occupation. The club paid for my degree.

“The dolls all have apartments on the bottom floor. They cook and clean, in addition to taking care of the brothers when the kids aren’t around. They’ve also babysat a few times in emergencies and often help get the new members settled. The welcome wagon doesn’t have to have open legs.”

“Good to know. I have two little ones.”

“We recently finished construction on an indoor/outdoor pool, and a bodega within the gates. Jackson brothers construction breaks ground on the children’s playground next month.”

“This is the most kid-friendly club I’ve seen.”

“We still have more single men than married brothers. But all the guys love kids. Plus, when one falls, the others are like dominoes. We keep catching feels,” Papa adds.

I’m about to go back for dessert when Papa snags my arm.

“You’ve been through enough and you helped cook. I’ll go get your dessert.”

“You know me well.”

“I do, my Beloved. I do.”

Hollywood got up with Papa and came back with another plate loaded with food. We eat until we are stuffed. I’d just polished off my dessert when Gambit stood.

“Church mother fuckers.”

I watch the men get up and file out of the room, heading toward the room they held Church in. I did what I said I would and headed upstairs to get some rest.

Chapter 31

Papa

We all file into church, including Hollywood, Chief, and Trinity. I feel a twinge of guilt. I should've tucked my woman in. She's been through hell and I hate I haven't been there for her today. I know she understands, but I still feel like hell.

## Page 42

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I feel a hand on your shoulder and look to see my best friend.

“I’d like to say Church won’t take long. I know you want to be with Nay and take care of her, but we have a lot of shit to hash out.”

“Thanks brother. I know and understand. Yeah, I’d rather be with my woman, but this is important. And it’s for her since Linden is involved with the Dawgs.”

“Those fuckers won’t know what hit’em when we’re done with their sorry asses.”

I smile. I’m more than ready to send them all to the crossroads. Papa, Legba can sort those bitches out later. I give my usual seat to Chief and sit on his other side, with Trinity to my left and Hollywood across from us.

Gambit waits until everyone is seated to bang the skull on the table. Our table is an immense work of art with our colors emblazoned across it and enough room to seat thirty people. With the addition of three more people, we only have one empty seat. Damn, our club is growing by leaps and bounds.

“Church is called to order fuckers.”

Everyone quiets down. Phones are placed in the box by the door or turned on mute and placed face down during Church. The last thing you want is for Gambit to see you on the phone during a meeting. No doubt someone will fuck up eventually and the little imp inside me that loves trouble can’t wait to see it happen.

“We have a lot to unpack today. Let’s start with Hollywood. Pops.”

Chief clears his throat. “Hollywood comes to me from a good friend out West. We were rookies together at the academy before he moved to the West Coast. Hollywood is one of his most trusted men, but needs a change of scenery. I’ll let him fill you in on the details.”

Hollywood nods in acknowledgement. “It’s a long story. I’ll make it as short as I can. It turns out my ex is a traitorous piece of shit. I have a girl seven and a boy six. For them, I want to start over as far away from their incubator as I can get.”

I know there is more to the story and know that Hollywood will share more details in time. Sounds like the man has been through the wringer if it’s bad enough he’s moving his family.

“Do we need to watch our backs?” I ask Chief.

“Not as of right now. We’ll keep you updated if the situation changes.”

Gambit nods. “I have the dolls cleaning Papa’s old place and getting it ready. If you let my ol’ lady know what the kids need, she’ll have it in place. She’s our requisitions champion. Outfitted this place in less than thirty days. Had to put a ring on it.”

His shit-eating grin says it all. He’s head over heels in love with his wife.

“Best damned decision you ever made, son. I have the best daughter-in-law in the world. The boys hired her to outfit the club. Everything you see is all her,” Chief says, with pride.

“Not to mention she took on the Lafayette children like two days after she found out you were expecting your first,” Smoke adds.

Gambit’s smile widens. “Damn, I’ve got the best woman in the fucking world. The

older children are all adopted. They had a piece of shit for a father and an adulterer mother. The father killed the mother before the twins were two. Bastian raised them.

Which brings me to our first vote of the day. My boy turns eighteen in six months. He's been begging me to prospect for eighteen months. I'd like to let him start."

"Isn't he a little young?" Hollywood asks.

"In age, yes, but he ran boats with his dad in the swamp. The kid's seen things that would make many grown men cry," I say. Then continued. "He not only raised his four siblings, he became their mother and father. Their sole provider. Claud couldn't be bothered with things like clothing, food, or schooling. He did provide a rat-infested shanty for them."

Hollywood nods. "Kid's got my vote, if it counts."

Gambit looks abashed. "My bad. All those in favor of Hollywood coming over as a fully patched member."

Hands go up all around the table. Gambit chuckles.

"Now you can vote. Blue will get you a new cut. In the meantime we have extras and can get you a velcro name tag by tomorrow's end. Let's take a vote on Bast then I'll introduce everyone. I guess I'm more out of sorts than I thought."

I hadn't even thought about it with all the day's events, but Nay was our first doll and the first woman the two of us shared. We bogarted her often, almost exclusively for much of the time she's been with us. He's never been IN love with her, but he loves her.

I remember Nay telling me about the long conversation she and Stormy had about her

relationship with Gambit. Gambit had a mission to complete the day after he met her. Man didn't even have time to take her on a date. I stayed home to keep down the fort and keep an eye out for her. He was smitten immediately.

Nay and I have more of a slow burn. We both had issues to deal with before our hearts were open enough to let love in. Stormy adopted us the very day she met us. During that week, she changed the entire dynamic of the club and became friends with two of the dolls. Nay and Kelsi.

“All those in favor of Bast becoming a prospect.”

Another unanimous vote.

“He’s going to be over the moon,” I say.

“That he is,” Gambit agrees before turning his attention back to the table.

“We have a lot to unpack. I want to start with what happened to our beloved Nay earlier today. She was assaulted by a doctor on staff. By assaulted, I mean he got in a smack before she kicked his ass. The higher ups at the hospital fired her for assaulting a superior.

“She even had witnesses that said that the doctor struck first.”

“Is he dead?” Trinity asks.

“Not yet. We had to deal with the punk she tangled with in the park,” I say.

“After Nay got fired, she needed to leave or lose it. She headed to the nearest park and found a young punk about to assault an elderly woman. She intervened and had the upper hand, according to Velma, the older woman. Until she tripped. The asshole used it to his advantage and kicked her in the side of the head before slamming her head into the ground,” Gambit growls out the last.

Expletives and fist pounding are all I can hear for the next couple of minutes. I notice Hollywood looks outraged, but he’s also observing everyone. I’d bet he’s ex-military. He’ll fit right in.”



“Is dat’ the sonofabitch we fed to the gators still kicking?” Outlaw asks in his cajun drawl.

“Sure is,” I say with a grin.

“You have gators?” Hollywood asks.

“We do. We’ll give you the tour after we swear you in.”

He smiles, the first genuine smile I’ve seen today. Guy must’ve been through hell.

“Hell yeah I’m in. I’ve got a ton of gator bait in mind.”

We all laugh. Gambit pats him on the shoulder. “You’ll fit right in.”

He gives everyone a quick rundown of the rest of the events leading up to us, taking Jacob to the Woodshed. He also revealed Jacob’s near kinship with me and his involvement with the Dawgs for those that weren’t there.

## Chapter 32

Nay

Tully surprises me, showing up at my side as I leave the bar.

“Can I see you upstairs, Miss Nay?”

I smile at him. He asked so politely, I can’t turn him down.

“I’d like that. How’s your sister doing?”

“Teagan is thriving. She loves it here so much. I can’t believe she’s going to be a junior next year. Two more years, then she’s off to college.”

“Does she know where she’s going?”

“Not yet. It depends on where she gets scholarships from.”

“You know the club will help her with college, right?”

“I’m not a brother yet.”

“You will be when she graduates. You only have a few months left, Tully.”

“I may not get patched in.”

## Page 44

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Oh please. They love you. Boomer practically beams every time he talks about something new you’ve accomplished.”

“Really?”

“Really. He’s telling me about your many skills but he’s really proud of your chef skills. Speaking of. How’s the institute going?”

“Between school and Maddie, I’m learning so much. Thanks to cooking for Boomer, I’m ahead of the rest of the class.”

“That’s great. I’m glad you’re settling in.”

We continue to chat on the way to the apartment. Tully waits until I get inside before he leaves. I take a quick shower and head to bed.

Papa

YEAH, BY THE TIME HE’S done, the ceremony is a moot point. Good thing Chief vouched for Hollywood already. Still, the ceremony is sacred and something we do when they get there. When we do, it depends on the candidate. Not everyone needs a final test to prove their worthiness of a patch.

“Before our next vote, let me introduce everyone. Papa, my VP, is sitting in between Chief and Trinity. Blue, our secretary, is on Trinity’s other side. Going around the table Decker, our road Captain and one third of Jackson and Sons Construction. His brothers Saber and Wrath, in order. After them is Dakota, our treasurer and financial

savant. If you have money to invest, he's your guy. Every brother gets a share of the profits from our businesses. We have several. I'll go over with you later.

"Continuing around the table. Doc, our resident physician. If his name didn't give it away."

Several of us chuckle, including Hollywood.

"Wizard, the magic man and tech genius. Brick came to us from Baton Rouge. He and Red came down to help with the kids. Outlaw, the man you want with you if you go anywhere near a swamp or bayou. Our newer but no less important brothers Angel, Demon, Cobra, Everest and Saint. On Saint's left is our Enforcer, Smoke. Sergeant at Arms, Nitro, and Boomer our Brewmaster.

"As most of you know, we've talked about opening up a clinic or small hospital to deal with our own wounded and those of our allies. Earlier in the week, I reached out to our newest friend's in the Merciless Few. Freak, their VP, introduced me to Stone, the club's president. They're on board.

"The idea is the clubs share costs equally. All fully patched members are treated without question and for free. We choose our allies carefully. In the case of our prospects, non-emergency cases will need a patched member or permission from brass for free treatment.

"Our ol' ladies and dolls are covered as well. Free healthcare. Costs fully covered by the clubs."

"How many clubs do we have?" Hollywood asks.

"Good question. Seven in total. Six local or close by and one from Georgia who visit a lot. I think they're all in love with Smoke's grandma and she's not leaving Sabian's

side anytime soon,” Gambit responds.

“She hasn’t left Sabian's side since they found out she’s carrying triplets. Good thing the brothers finished your house early,” I add.

“We put two crews on it for Mémé,” Saber says.

“You’ll meet her soon, Hollywood,” Smoke adds.

“All in favor of going forward with the clinic?”

Our third unanimous vote of the day.

“For now, we can use the small clinic we have here. I vote we hire Doc and Nay full time, plus a nurse and an aide.”

Once again, the motion carries. Gambit moves on to the information we learned. All the names, places, and dates.

“Wizard, do you have a location on the Dawgs’ clubhouse and the places they’re using to holding people?”

“Yes. There are seven places in all. We’ll need a lot of help and coordination to make sure things go off with as little injury to our teams as possible. Papa, Wizard, and I are coordinating a meeting with the brass from our allies.

“We have two weeks before the next shipment of human bodies. They’re going to miss Pablo soon, so we need to triplecheck and make sure he can’t be led back to us. In fact, Wizard, I’d like you to get with Bug and plant a false trail. Send Pablo on a trip to Texas or South of the border if he has roots there. We had his wallet. I kept a few things for us to use. We can destroy them later.”

“That’s all the business we have at the moment. Questions?”

“I have one,” Hollywood says.

“Shoot.”

## Page 45

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“How did Alena come to be with the Kings?”

“We found her when we raided another human trafficker. She was pregnant and from a foreign country. With no family to send her home to, we made one for her,” Nitro answers.

“Anyone else?”

When there were no other questions, Gambit called Church to an end. I hurried upstairs to my woman after getting Hollywood’s contact info. He’ll be back in three days with his kids.

### Chapter 33

Nay

It’s been three days since the incident at the hospital. I’m bored out of my mind, so I begged Stormy to let me take over making the kids’ rooms. Ella, Hollywood’s girl, is seven. She likes fairies and space. I split her walls, two light and two dark. The dark walls will light up at night in soft fluorescent colors. One wall is a fantasy scene of space clouds done in purples, blues and pinks. The second dark wall is an ocean scene with a full moon and trees. The ocean and moon peek through the foliage in a nearly perfect circle. Brightly colored butterflies, mushrooms and tiny winged fairies are scattered throughout the foliage.

The third wall has a large double window with a half circle topper. A strip of wall separates the half circle from the rectangles. I paint the strip and surrounding wall

dark green and the window trim light green. I use air plants and silk plants all over the wall to create a garden scene and added a small window box to the strip in between the windows with plants.

After that's done. I add fairy figurines to the wall. The last wall I paint pale green and hang posters of fairies all over the wall. Lucia helped me pick the furniture. A full-size canopy bed with gauzy pink and green panels sits in the middle of the last wall. A pale green desk with a pink chair sits under the window. With a play area in one corner of the room complete with doll house.

Brayden, six, loves everything pirate. The guys made him a wood frame for a twin bed that looks like the prow of a ship. We hand painted cannons on the side of. The walls are painted to look like the ocean and sky at different times a day. He too had a desk under the window with a navy chair and a play area with action figures, dinosaurs, legos, and more.

Voices from the front of the apartment lead me out of Brayden's room and into the kitchen.

The ladies are finishing stocking the fridge and making breakfast. Stormy looks up and smiles.

"Nay, you've outdone yourself. Those kids will love their rooms," she says.

"I hope they like it. If not, I can change it. Lord knows I'm bored out of my mind without work."

"I still cannot believe they fired you and not that jerk wad," Stormy says.

"Nitro says they're working on finding a building for the clinic as quickly as possible. He's got calls into all his contacts," Lucia says.



I smile. "I have no doubts we'll find a place soon. Still, it'll be a couple of months before I'm working full time."

"There are always projects around here that need doing. I wouldn't mind showing someone my system, so things can go smoother than last maternity," Stormy adds.

"I'll do it. I'd love to help stock our bodega anyway."

"I'd love your input. Why don't you come by the office tomorrow morning."

"It's a date."

"I'll be there too," Lucia adds. "I'm helping with office work part time. I'm room mom this year and Nitro thinks I should run for the PTA."

"At the rate the King's are having kids, we'll need our own school in a few years," I say.

"Are you and Papa adding to the pool soon?" Stormy asks.

"I'm not planning on it for a few years yet. To be honest, before I became his ol' lady, I wasn't planning on having kids at all."

"Why not?" Lucia asks.

"Papa, the only man I've ever loved. If I couldn't have kids with him, I didn't want them. I wasn't going to have kids with him if we couldn't be a couple."

"Now you can have kids and they'll have playmates."

"We do have quite the rainbow coalition when it comes to our kids," I admit.

“I can picture a baby with both your features. He or she will be stunning. Papa’s dark skin and your green eyes.”

## Page 46

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“They may be better off with my skin and Papa’s eyes. Even in the Black community, you’re judged for your skin tone.”

The ladies looked stunned.

“You mean if you have darker or lighter skin than normal, it matters?”

I nod my head. “My tone is medium black. Where Papa is dark and Deedee is light-skinned. Sometimes darker-skinned folk are jealous of the lighter-skinned folk because they think they have it easier. Like the lighter your skin, the less you’ll be judged by white people. White people absolutely treat light-skinned black people better than our darker skin brothers and sisters.”

“What about other people of color?” Stormy asks.

“I haven’t seen it in my community and as a whole I don’t think Latinx cares what shade of brown you are.”

I hugged the ladies. “No matter our skin tone, thank you for accepting me. Few women would, considering I’ve slept with your husbands.”

Lucia gasps, “You slept with my husband?” She tried to look outraged, but cracked up. “Did he snore then, too?”

I nod my head. “Yes.”

“Okay, okay. Who’s the best in bed?” Stormy asks.

“A lady never kisses and tells. Not to mention I’m in love and that’s an extra level of spice in the bedroom. Papa makes my toes curl and my eyes roll back in my head.”

“Nitro knows things now. He didn’t the first time we were together.”

I smile. “He got shit-faced one night. So much so that he didn’t feel he measured up and asked me a ton of questions. After that, every time he came to me, we spent half the time talking technique and fielding questions. He felt comfortable asking me about women.”

“Oh my God, Nay,” Stormy gasps. “The dolls are like teachers and therapists all rolled into one.”

I laugh until tears roll down my cheeks and my sides ache. Stormy and Lucia joined in.

## Chapter 34

Nay

“If you don’t kiss and tell, how about telling us who’s the kinkiest?” Lucia says.

“Depends on your idea of kinky. I think. If you’re asking about who’s into the lifestyle and things. I’ll share a few I know who tell everyone loud and proud.

“You already know Dakota is bisexual. He also dabbles into BDSM. Shibari or rope play is his favorite.”

“Makes sense, cowboy thing and all,” Stormy says.

I nod my head. “True. Havoc and Mayhem prefer to share their women. Although I

don't have personal experience with them, they prefer Kelsi out of all the dolls. I don't know Deedee as well. She might be their other spit-roast. Tawny and Athena aren't comfortable with more than one guy at a time."

"They prefer the two of them with one guy, right?" Stormy asks.

"Yes. They also enjoy having sex with an audience. They won't have sex with other women because they're in a committed relationship with each other. They do kiss and fondle other girls, though, if the guys want it.

"Smoke is totally dominant in the bedroom. He is large and in charge. Blue is very tender and sensual. And those eyes, they turn into these deep blue pools that pull you in. He's very soulful."

"All this talk about sex has me turned on," Lucia confesses.

"Me too, and the pregnancy hormones are not helping," Stormy whines.

"Good thing your men are here to save Hollywood from being ravaged by three sex crazed women," The unmistakable voice of my man comes from behind me. I turn and smile at my man.

"Hey! Only one of us is crazed," Stormy mock yells.

We all laugh. I hurry to Papa's side. He draws me to him and wraps me in his warm embrace. He drops a kiss on the top of my head.

“How are you feeling?”

“I’m good. The rooms are all finished.”

The sounds of children in the hall halted any further conversation. I hear Gambit’s voice.

“Right this way. Last door on the left. Papa’s apartment is straight ahead if you need anything, and Blue is across the hall.”

We gather in the living room. The door opens and a toe-headed girl with bright blue eyes skips into the room. Her eyes widened when she spotted us. Hollywood comes in with a little blond-haired boy who immediately hides behind his father’s leg when he spotted us.

Ella skipped forward. “I’m Ella. This is my daddy and my brother. What smells good? I’m hungry. Can I see my room?”

I laugh. “Breakfast is what smells good. Would you like to see your room first or eat first?” I say.

She turns to look at her dad.

“I’m hungry,” Brayden repeats his sister's earlier words.

“Food first. This place looks great, by the way. Thank you for the warm welcome.”

“You’re part of the family,” Stormy says. “Nay did most of the work.”

I smile. “I was bored.”

“Sorry about your job.”

Papa slips his arms around my waist. “She has a better one. A place where she’ll be treated with respect. It’ll just take a while to get started.”

Gambit leads the way to the kitchen. Lucia and Stormy cooked up a storm, so the kids had several options to choose from. Fallon sent an assortment of breakfast pastries with a prospect earlier. She sent extra along for Papa. My man has a sweet tooth. Now that I have some time on my hands, maybe I should learn to bake. Aunt Lilian has some recipes she’ll share. She’s an excellent cook and baker.

“Why don’t we give the family time to settle in?” I suggest.

The other ladies readily agree.

Papa and I walk hand in hand out of his old apartment and into our new one. My man attacks my neck as soon as our door closes.

“What got you ladies all worked up?”

I laugh. “They wanted to know about the guys’ kinks. I shared a few I knew wouldn’t mind.”

“I’m surprised they’re so open with you.”

“Lucia and Stormy are Goddesses. They support women in a way most aren’t willing to.”

## Chapter 35

Papa

I'm blown away that any of the ol' ladies are comfortable asking a woman that's slept with their husbands questions about sex. Leave it to my Beloved to bridge the gap.

"You're amazing. Do you know that?"

She shakes her head. "I'm just me. A very horny me."

"Let me see if we can take care of that."

I bend down to take her lips and her stomach growls.

"Food first, orgasms later."



## Page 48

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

She gives me a pouty face.

“I’ll keep your fire running, baby. Trust me?”

“You know it.”

I pick her up and carry her into the kitchen, sitting her on the counter instead of in a chair.

“I’ll be right back.”

I head for the fridge, grabbing eggs, leftover crab, veggies, cheese, and butter. After sitting them on the counter, I grab bowls, utensils, and my big cast iron skillet. With all the ingredients and tools gathered, the last thing I get is a stool. I move my woman to the stool and stand behind her.

I wrap my arms around her, putting the knife in one of her hands. I wrap my hand around her. I put the scallions on the chopping board, holding them the same way we’re holding the knife. We slowly cut the shallot. Once we have a rhythm going, I kiss her neck and nibble on her ears.

“Will you chop up the rest of the veggies, baby?”

“I will.”

I arrange the vegetables for easy reach: parsley, chives, and two types of mushrooms. I chose blue oyster for its bacon-y flavor and hen of the woods because it pairs well

with seafood. Besides the vegetables, there's jowl bacon and crab to go in the frittata we're making.

Nay begins to chop and I begin to nibble. I nibble on her ears and neck. I nibble her collarbone and the back of her neck. She's squirming in her seat.

I sidle up to her ear and whisper. "Are you wet for me?"

"Yes," she breathes out.

I stand behind her, sliding my arms around her. I unbutton her jeans, then pull down the zipper. I pause long enough to do a visual check in to make sure it's not too much. She is wielding a knife, after all.

"Are you doing okay, Beloved?"

"Yes. You always have your safe word if you need it. Please use it if you think you can't cut while I work."

She laughs. "I got steady hands, baby. Do your worst."

I looked to see that she was nearly done with chopping. Damn, she wasn't kidding about having a steady hand. I slip my hand down the front of her jeans. I run my fingers across the top of her silky panties before sliding down to feel her. She's soaked.

"Damn baby. Is this all for me?"

"Yes."

I slide one long finger inside of her. She gasps, but never stops chopping the food.

Her juices slicken my finger, making it easy to slide inside her tight little pussy. When I'm sure she can handle the pace. I add a second finger. Nay moans and leans back against me, her eyes never leaving her work. Her breaths are coming faster. I thumb her clit in lazy circles. Nay's breaths come in pants as she tries to focus on what she's doing and not how I'm making her feel.

When she is close to tipping over the edge, I pull back.

"I'm going to wash up, saute everything, then assemble and put in the oven. After that I'm going to eat that tasty fucking pussy until you scream loud enough Hollywood has to cover his kids' ears."

She laughs. It's a throaty, sexy laugh. We both know the rooms are soundproofed. No one is hearing shit. With reluctance, I remove my hand from her pants. I leave her jeans as is and wash my hands. I make quick work of rendering the bacon, then use the grease to saute the vegetables. While the vegetables are cooking, I crack the eggs, add heavy cream and throw them in the blender to make them extra fluffy.

Assembly doesn't take long. I put the cast iron pan in the oven and set the timer. As soon as it's set, I pick Nay up from the chair and put her back on the counter. I make quick work of removing her boots, socks, jeans, and panties. When her stomach rumbles again, I grab a banana and hand it to her.

"You want me to eat this now."

"You're recovering. You can eat while I eat or I'll wait until you're done."

She peels the banana and takes a bite before wiggling her ass. I chuckle before dropping into a crouch in front of her bare pussy. First thing I do is inhale deeply.

"Beloved, you smell good enough to eat."

And I do, plunging my tongue into her wetness so I can get a good taste. She makes a muffled scream. I smile before lapping at her juices. I lick her lower lips before sucking them into my mouth. I graze my teeth across them, eliciting more moans from my woman.

## Page 49

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

After she begins to squirm more, I insert two fingers inside her. Curling them on the out stroke to hit that magic spot. It only takes a few strokes, combined with my mouth and the pressure on her clit. She shakes and screams out as an orgasm hits her body.

The timer goes off as I finish lapping at her juices. I have time to wash my hands before the timer goes off. I pull the frittata out and let it cool before pulling Nay's panties back on and carrying her to the table. I pour her a glass of juice and a cup of coffee. I make a quick salad and pull out the container of fresh fruit.

I make a plate for each of us, putting Nay's plate in front of her before taking a seat.

"This is good."

"Of course, we made it together. Everything we make together is perfect."

### Chapter 36

#### Papa

Knees in the breeze. We're headed to Morgan City this morning. We always take a ride after a patch ceremony. Hollywood passed the initiation with flying colors and now it's time for good food and a ride.

I think about his earlier words after we were finished.

"Now that's done. Where are you going to wear our colors?"

Every member of the Kings has our colors tattooed on us somewhere. If you get kicked out of the club, we burn the tattoo or take the skin. Something Chief and Trinity had to do once. Once was enough to dissuade anyone else from betraying the club.

“I’m happy to wear your colors. And I hope one day soon to say proudly,” Hollywood says.

“Tell you what, brother. The day you're proud to wear it, you come to me and we’ll get Sabian to ink it. After all, they're your colors now, too,” Gambit says.

“Smoke’s ol’ lady?” Hollywood asks

“Yeah, she’s the club’s new official tattoo artist for colors. Unless you want to go elsewhere. We’ll show you her work.”

“I’d love to see some of her work.”

Several of us have pieces by her. We all show him her work. He is impressed.

The morning air is chilly, just like I like it. I love a good chilly ride. Separates the men from the punks. It’s in the mid-fifties right now. Not bad at all, even at high speeds.

I grew up on the east coast and rode through the winter unless the snow and ice were too deep. Gambit opens the throttle on his bike. The rest of us follow suit, picking up the pace. Glancing in the rearview mirror, I spot Hollywood riding next to Angel.

We finally arrive, pulling our bike's right onto the dock and parking off to the side. There’s a little seafood shanty that’s open twenty-four hours a day. They serve breakfast, lunch and dinner.

“Breakfast’s on Hollywood,” Gambit yells.

I see Hollywood wince, then grin good-naturedly. The guys pat him on the back as we all get in line.

“Hope you brought a lot of cash.”

“Yeah, they don’t take cards.”

“Or let you do dishes.”

I laugh, loudly. Those remarks come from three of our newer members, Saint, Demon, and Cobra. Everest always carries cash for food. And he LOVES food. I see Everest approach Hollywood.

“If you don’t have enough cash, I’ll spot you until you can get to the bank, brother.”

“Thank you, brother. I’ll take you up on that. I spent most of the cash I had with me on our trip. There’s not a place we walked into that Ella didn’t spot something for her brother. If I buy him what she finds, I have to buy her something. She’s a sweet kid. I’m blessed to be her dad.”

“Do you think you’ll have more, brother?” I ask

He shakes his head. “I’m done with women. All women, even dolls at the moment.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

It is our turn to order next. They have several delicious seafood breakfast dishes. I order cheesy shrimp and grits and crab benedicts. They serve the eggs over huge crab cakes, no bread. They're absolutely delicious and worth every calorie I'll have to work off. My woman insists she's well enough for the rigorous and often rough sex with both craves, but I know better.

Her body took a bigger beating than she let on. Doc didn't need to break patient confidentiality for me to see the bruises on her body. I've had similar bruises. We fill the nearby picnic tables. They call my name quickly. I ask for a tray and bring back food for the table. Gambit, Everest, Hollywood, and I are sharing a picnic table. Four is all one of the tables will fit. Most of us are on the burly side.

"Everest, thanks for the save," Hollywood says, as I sit the tray in the middle of the table.

Everest smiles. "I've got you, brother. Our siblings like to joke. Not everyone carries cash. If I didn't bail you out, Papa or Gambit would have."

I smile. "That's true. No one wants to piss off the owner. We love their food."

For the next little while, we talk and eat. I just finished the last bite of crab benedict when my phone rings. I don't recognize the number.

"Hello?"

"I've got your woman."



“Who the fuck is this?”

Fucker hung up. “We ride!” I yell, throwing, getting up, and running to my sled.

## Chapter 37

Nay

It’s been a week since the incident at the hospital. The men have been antsy as hell. They’re planning something, but it’s club business, which means mums the word. I knew that from day one. Long before I became an ol’ lady, I knew that there were things Papa couldn’t tell me. Not because he didn’t want to, but because it’s club business. Me not knowing protects me in the long run. I know that, but I still hate not knowing what’s coming.

I’m meeting the ladies shortly. In true King’s fashion, we’re throwing a tremendous blow out. Members from our allied clubs, our businesses, and a few select civilians are coming over to celebrate and give input into the clinic. Papa did say the clubs are all pitching in to pay for the clinic. Wizard has a few buildings that may fit the bill.

We’ll go look at them next week. Doc, Wizard, Papa, Gambit, Lily and me. Lily is going to provide mental health services for the clinic. Eventually, we’ll need to hire more. I can’t believe the guys asked me to be on the board, along with Doc. We’ll be the founding members of Artemis Outreach.

I put on my lip gloss and check my hair one last time. Satisfied with my appearance, I grab my purse and head downstairs. I’m meeting the ladies in front of the clubhouse.

Stormy and Lucia are waiting for me when I get outside. We’re taking one of the SUVs. Tully is driving. Our men insisted we take prospects.

I look to see Mayhem on his sled behind the SUV. He smiles and waves at us. I get in the back with Lucia. Since Stormy is expecting, we thought she'd ride easier up front.

"I'm not that far along," she protests.

"Far enough that riding in the back could trigger vertigo."

"Fine, but I'm buying breakfast or lunch. Whenever we stop after shopping."

Lucia and I agree. We often took turns paying. Stormy paying this time is no big deal. Lucia or I will snag the check next time.

"Where are we headed?" Tully asks.

"That new marketplace. They have a special Italian store. We can get everything we need for our Italian feast," Stormy replies.

"Did Wizard get you all of his Nonna's recipes?"

"Yes. Flea called his grandmother for a few as well," Lucia adds.

"Flea's dad was Italian, right?" I ask.

"Yes, his dad was mafia. After he was killed, Nitro's mom did her best to keep him out of the lifestyle. He has some serious cash coming his way in a few years," Lucia says.

"Hopefully he'll get his head out of his ass by then," Stormy says.

"The injury did more for him emotionally than a tour in the service would," I say.

## Page 51

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“I’ve noticed a difference,” Tully adds.

We spend the rest of the drive chatting and planning the menu. Stormy recently put a new pizza oven in the kitchen. I’ve been dying to try it out. Tully drops us off at the front of the market. We wait for Mayhem to park his sled and join us. Tully will park the SUV and join us. The party is tomorrow. Shopping today and we get up at the crack ass of dawn to start the sauce or gravy, depending on where you’re from.

Stormy pulls the list out of her purse and we each grab baskets and head to the different shops in the market.

This place has everything: fresh produce, housemade salami, pepperoni, and cheese. Crusty loaves of bread. It smells amazing and it’s making me hungry.

Two hours later, the back of the SUV is loaded with food and we’re headed to Ruby’s for breakfast. I’m jonesing for their bacon flight. Huge chunks of bacon, some candied, some savory. It’s fantastic. My stomach growls to punctuate my thoughts.

“We better get you fed. If Papa knows I let you go hungry, he’ll have my hide,” Tully says.

We load back into the SUV and head to Ruby’s, with Mayhem following us. The ride doesn’t take too much longer than normal, even with Mardi Gras traffic. The city fills up mid-January with revelers.

Tully maneuvers through traffic with ease. For a young guy, he’s got a good head on his shoulders. After his parents died, he had a rough way to go with his piece of shit

uncle and aunt. I'm glad Boomer hired him and took him under his wing.

## Chapter 38

Papa

I race to the sled, throw my leg over and start it. I backed into the space earlier. I open the throttle and take off without waiting. I knew my brothers wouldn't be far behind. My mind races with thoughts. Who did the call come from? Who has my Nay? Is it a prank call or is it real? My heart thunders in my chest as I speed down the road.

We took significant steps to not only cover our tracks, but throw anyone off our scent as far as Pablo is concerned. Wizard has tabs on Linden too. As far as we knew, he is currently out of the country. It's one of the reasons we're waiting to take out the Dawgs. We plan on taking Linden out with them.

After I get on the highway, I use my headset to call Tully. He's with the women today. It goes straight to voicemail. Fuck, something is not right. I disconnect the call and use the voice command to call Mayhem. He's the second prospect with the girls today.

Gambit sprung a surprise party slash meeting on us last night. Stormy is in full tilt mode. Gambit offered to have the party catered or order pizzas, but Queenie refused, saying she'd take care of all of it.

Said she and the others would whip up a feast of some kind for our visitors. Several members of our allied clubs are coming so we can complete our plans.

Nay

WE TALK TULLY INTO eating with us. Mayhem insists he stay outside and keep

watch. Tully convinced him to switch off with him and the two text back and forth to get Mayhem's order.

Besides the bacon flight, I order French toast bites and loaded tots. Yeah, I'm going to need to get to the gym before my ass can't fit through the door anymore.

"Nay."

"Hmm?"

Stormy laughs. "You're lost in thought."

I smile. "I'm thinking I need to go to the gym before my ass can't fit through the door anymore."

The rest of the table burst out laughing. Tully laughed too hard. He had tears coming out of his eyes.

"Nay, you could have triplets and your ass wouldn't get too big," Tully says. "Plus, Papa would love more junk in the trunk."

My smile widens. "True dat. My man does love my ass."

"It's a nice ass, Nay," Stormy says, then sticks out her tongue at me. "Here I am stuck with white girl booty and you have all that glorious ass, no fillers."

I choked on the drink I was taking, but swallowed without spitting it out. Lucia pops up and pounds on my back. It takes several seconds to be able to tell her I'm fine.

"Are you okay?" Lucia asks.

“Death by laughter. There are worse ways to go.”

Our food arrives and, for the next few minutes, we start our meal in silence, enjoying the food. I’m starving, so I dig into my bacon and French toast with fervor.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“This is amazing,” I say in between bites.”

“It’s always good, but you must be hungry,” Stormy says.

“I am. Healing takes extra energy. Anyone want some of my tots?”

“Yes,” Tully says, immediately.

I pass him the plate. “Take as much as you want. I have plenty, but couldn’t pass them up.”

Tully flags down the server and gets a to-go box for the rest of his meal.

“I’ll eat this outside and let Mayhem come in and eat while his food is still warm.”

“You’re a kind soul, Tully.” He smiles and takes his food to go.

“Isn’t it time to patch him in?” Lucia asks.

“Four more months,” Stormy replies.

“It seems like he and Teagan have always been a part of the Kings,” I say.

Mayhem slides into Tully’s empty seat.

“Hello ladies.”

We all greet him and give him a few minutes to eat. He ordered the Trifecta. It comes with two different eggs benedict, one with braised pork belly, the other a buttermilk fried chicken breast. Both on top buttermilk biscuits instead of English muffins. And gulf shrimp with cheesy grits.

## Chapter 39

Papa

My mind is whirling with possibilities, as I cannot reach anyone on the phone. I've called every prospect and ol' lady, including mine. No one is answering. I'm not the only one. Gambit and the other married brothers are close to losing their shit, too.

We're an hour into the drive and have shaved an estimated minutes off our trip. A mile until we hit Metairie, a call comes in.

"I still can't get Stormy."

"No luck with..."

My connection goes dead. I called him back. Nothing. Gambit pulls up beside me we exchange looks and decide to hall balls to the wall to the clubhouse. Neither of us know where the women are. They planned on shopping some time today for the party. I don't know what they're making, so I don't know where to start.

Havoc is at the clubhouse today, restocking the bar. He's been trying to get us to hire this little bartender from town to work at Lagniappe for parties, if nothing else. The club's bar needs a good tender since we patched Everest in. He's the best damn bartender the club's ever had.

Fuck! I'm letting myself get distracted so I don't think the worst. But being distracted



can get you killed. Gambit signals for us to pull over. Decker roars past us. I know our road captain is searching for a place to fit all our bikes.

Not a half mile down the road, he signals us. We follow him into a strip mall and park on the far end. I pull off my helmet and take out my phone. I try using it. Nothing. I don't have a signal.

"Anyone have a signal?"

I hear no's all around.

"Wizard!" Gambit yells.

"Nothing Prez. Someone's jamming the signal."

"I say we split off into two teams," Gambit says. "Half of us will head to the clubhouse, the other half toward that new food market not far from Jackson Square."

"Ruby's isn't far from there, Prez," Everest says. "You know Stormy craves it like crazy when she's expecting."

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“We’ll go by Ruby’s on our way to the market. Thanks, brother. Blue, you’re up.”

Blue is a former Naval Intelligence and one of the top chess players in the world. The man’s a brilliant strategist.

“Gambit, Nitro, Boomer, Hollywood, Saber, Wizard, Dakota, Brick, Cobra and Demon head to the compound. We’ll have to use runners until we can figure out who or what’s blocking the signal. Second team Papa, Smoke, Everest, Angel, Decker, Wrath, Outlaw, Saint, Doc, and I will head toward Jackson Square.”

We take off, diving into the two groups. Papa and I take the lead. We continue on I-10 E while the rest of our brothers take 610 toward the compound. Traffic isn’t too bad. It slows down a few times but doesn’t come to a halt. We’re a little more than half a mile from the Superdome when traffic comes to a dead stop.

Smoke pulls toward the emergency lane, then nods. We take off, single file, to the nearest off ramp. Unfortunately, we’re not the only ones with the idea, and a few cars pull out in front of us, nearly causing a collision. One by one, we finally made it onto the off ramp and to the nearest side street.

A half-mile from the off ramp, all hell breaks loose. Guns firing from all directions. We walked into a fucking ambush.

I motion for us to go down. I get low and lean to the left. The bullets closest to me came from the other direction. Scanning the street, I find an SUV parked not far. I ride right behind it, using it as cover before pulling out my black gold-plated Desert Eagle with a fourteen round clip. Beloved gave it to me as a gift.

In the end, four of us quickly group around the vehicle with our sleds at our backs. Everest is facing away from the street, scanning the area. Blue is doing the same while Smoke and I shoot back from behind the vehicle.

Several rounds are exchanged. I hear cries of men getting hit and look around to see if it's ours. Wrath is slumped over behind a car.

"Fuck. Cover me!" I yell, running toward my fallen brother.

## Chapter 40

Nay

Mayhem polishes off his meal before any of us ladies can finish ours. I'd just flagged the server when Tully came running through the dining room.

"Are your phones down?"

I pickup my phone and see I have no bars.

"It's probably just an outage. A company had one last week for a few hours," I say."

Everyone checks their phones. No signals.

"There's no way all the carriers are down," Stormy says, after everyone around the table confirms there's no cellular service.

"Who has cash? Let's pay and get out of here.

We pull enough money from our wallets for the tab plus a generous tip, not bothering with the leftovers. The server takes our cash wordlessly.

“I’ll take up the rear, Tully. You lead us out.”

This could be some random event, but the hairs on the back of my neck are standing up. Something is wrong. I feel a sudden sharp pain and gasp for breath.

“Papa. We’ve got to get to Papa. He’s in trouble.”

“What?” Lucia asks.

“How do you know?” Stormy asks.

“What’s going on?” Mayhem asks.

“It’s a feeling. It’s like the night I came home early to find my dad and uncle plotting.”

Tully nods his head, turns back around and starts toward the door. We make it maybe ten feet before my blood runs cold. Three men stand in Tully’s path. The one in the middle makes me want to puke. Linden Danvers looks at me with a smirk.

“What’s the hurry, Chardonnay? Don’t you have time to say hello to your uncle?”

I hear the ladies gasp and the men growl. The prospects know Linden is on top of the King’s shit list. While they may not be privy to all the goings on inside the club, they know the important things. Like who to keep a watch for.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“I don’t. Now move so we can leave.”

His eyes narrow. “What, no, please? Where are your manners or did you lose them since you became a biker whore.”

“You’d know about me being a whore since you pimped me out at twelve.”

I spoke loud enough that the surrounding diners could hear me. My voice was firm and even. Not a hint of the venom I felt for him was in those words. No, he won’t know he’s getting to me. That his very presence is the bane of my existence.

“Lower your voice and step outside.”

“Fuck you. I’m not going anywhere with you. In case you’ve forgotten, landlines still work and businesses are required to have one.”

Linden steps forward with his hand going to his pocket, but I’m one step ahead of him. I have a gun out and under my jacket. I took it from my purse the moment I spotted him, but he was too busy trying to be intimidating to see me do it. His men were busy ogling my friends.

He drops his voice. “Listen, you little bitch. Step outside or I’ll put a bullet in one of your friends.”

“Not before I shoot your dick off,” I say with a smile. “I’d aim for the balls, but in my opinion, you lost those the moment you pimped out your first innocent girl.”

His face darkens. “This is not over.”

“Oh, you’re right about that. It’s not over. But know this. I’m not a little girl anymore. I won’t hesitate to defend myself or the ones I love. I’ll put you in the ground if I need to without losing a wink of sleep over it.”

I let my eyes go dead. Smoke’s been teaching me for a few years. I wanted to learn when I did my psych rounds. Some of them can get out of hand and a good icy stare is useful. I watch as fear flickers in Linden’s eyes.

He schools his features quickly.

“You’re outgunned.”

“Am I?”

“I don’t think so,” Tully says.

“I’m a card carrying member of the local gun association,” Stormy replies.

“Papi never lets me leave the house without my little horse.”

I snicker. She’s talking about the Colt pistol she packs. All of our men take us to the range. We need to be able to protect ourselves. Smoke has self-defense class once a week in the club’s gym.

“I never leave home without at least two,” Mayhem says with a smirk.

Chapter 41

Papa

Ahot, searing pain slices through my arm, near the shoulder, but I keep going. I get to Wrath and drag him behind a nearby vehicle. I can see the blood pooling near his stomach. Fuck, got shot. I slip my cut off, letting it hit the ground before ripping my shirt over my head and pressing it to his wound.

“Kill those fuckers and get me, Doc. NOW!” I bellow, rage filling me.

I have one hand applying pressure on the wound. My gun is in my other hand and I wish a mother fucker would. I see anyone, not my brother, coming my direction. I'm putting one between their eyes. Well, maybe a knee cap or two so I can pump the bastard for information before I end his miserable life.

The roar of motorcycles mixes with the gunfire. More guns are added to the fight. The cavalry has arrived and soon the tides turn. Decker, Saber, and Doc race in my direction.

“Someone grab my bag,” Doc yells.

“Wrath, brother, talk to me,” Decker says, hitting his knees beside his twin.

Wrath groans in response. Saber joins his brothers on their knees. They refer to themselves as Kentucky triplets. Something they made up when they were kids. Decker and Wrath are identical twins. Saber, born on the same day in the same hospital, minutes after his brothers, is adopted.

The brothers made room for Doc, who took over applying pressure.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Phones are back on!” Wizard yells. “Ambulance is on the way.”

Hollywood hands Doc his bag. Doc opens it and begins work on Wrath. I draw out my mojo pouch, sprinkle the mixture around my friends, and begin a prayer while we wait for the ambulance.

No one else spoke, but I could feel our brothers’ presence as they gathered around a brother in need. In reality, it took the ambulance less than five minutes to arrive, but it felt like an eternity. After they took care of Wrath, Doc approached me.

“Let me bandage your arm. You got grazed.”

I’d forgotten about the bullet grazing my arm.

“Go ahead, Doc. Gambit, how did you know to turn around?”

“Decker’s twin sense went haywire. He signaled us and we turned around without asking questions.”

“If we hadn’t split up, we would have been more wounded and may have lost a brother,” I say before asking. “Are any of them alive?”

“Unfortunately, no,” Gambit replies.

“I called the cleaners,” Blue says.

“Did you tell them it’s an extra-large job?” I ask



“I did. I also called Stone to delay any calls to this area. The cleaners are immobilizing all their units and are due to arrive within the next five minutes.

“Damn, that woman is efficient,” Gambit says.

“She is at that,” I reply before turning my attention to Doc. “Am I good to go?”

My phone rings. I answer without looking at the screen.

“Where are you?” Nay’s sweet voice comes over the line. I can hear it laced with concern.

“By the dome.”

“We’re on our way.”

“Are you okay?”

“We’re fine. We ran into Linden and sent him and his goons packing.”

Fear and anger courses through my veins. Fear that her uncle got close and anger the fucker dared approach my woman.

“The women are on their way. They had a visit from Linden.”

“That fucker needs to die today.”

“He does, but we have a week left if our plan is going to work.”

Gambit growls. I feel the same way. I want to take Linden Danvers apart piece by piece. I’m beyond done with that piece of shit. He deserved to be tortured for far

longer than any of us, the time or inclination to keep him around that long.

I have zero doubt he's the one that set this up. He wants Nay. I never should have left her with only two prospects. From now on, she'll have at least one brother and one prospect with her anytime she leaves the compound. She's not going to like it, but I think she'll agree after seeing her uncle face to face.

## Chapter 42

### Papa

We are in the hospital waiting room. Wrath is in surgery. Nay is cuddled up beside me on a loveseat. The room is filled with members of the club, ol' ladies, and the older children insisted on coming as well.

Stormy called in Summer, the child care worker we've used several times. The first time was at camp last August. Dakota owns a ranch about an hour and a half away from the clubhouse. Several of the brothers have started horseback riding and all the ol' ladies are crazy about them. The club plans on having several parties there over the Spring and Summer months.

## Page 56

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

Gambit, Stormy, Nitro, and Lucia all sat close to us. I put my arm around Nay's shoulders and pull her closer to me.

"Are you ready to tell us what happened today, Beloved?"

"There's not much to tell, honestly. We'd just finished eating at Ruby's. Tully comes in and says the phones are down. After checking, I get a bad feeling. I knew something was wrong. You were in danger.

"We were headed toward the door when Linden showed up with two guns. They were all carrying. He told me to come with him and no one would get hurt. I told him I'd shoot his dick off and he needed to back off.

"He and I exchanged a few more words. When he realized everyone with me also carried, he left. He said we weren't finished and I agreed. We're not finished until he's dead."

"Mother fucker is a dead man."

"He threatened to shoot one of us if she didn't go," Lucia adds.

Gambit and Nitro both growl, then repeat my proclamation. The next several minutes, we spend quality time soothing our women's frayed nerves. I can't help but go over the day's events. From when we first came under fire until the calvary showed up. I can't think of anything that would've kept Wrath from being shot.

When Doc enters the waiting room, we all rush to his side. He's not a surgeon, but he

knows the one who performed surgery on Wrath. The doctor let him scrub in and observe.

“The bullet did some damage, but he’s strong. He’ll make a full recovery.”

Cheers go up around the room.

“Alright brothers, we’ll all take turns sitting by his side. With Linden on the loose, I want a brother with him at all times,” Gambit says.

Murmurs of agreement go up around the room. One minute Nay is by my side and the next she’s making a mad dash out of the waiting room. I run after her. She runs into the women’s bathroom. I go in after her. I find Her on the floor kneeling. In front of the porcelain goddess puking out her guts. I rush to her side and kneel beside her. Nay’s Hair is in braids. Since I don't need to hold her hair. I pat her back soothingly until she's finished.

“Are you alright, Beloved?”

Nay

WHAT SEEMS LIKE HOURS later, Doc comes to give us an update on a Wrath. I can't tell you how relieved I am that he's gonna make a full recovery. I know my uncle was behind all this. I can't stand that I'm bringing this to the club. I know it's not my fault, but I still feel guilty.

Gambit has just finished talking about guard duty when my stomach roils and I feel like I'm gonna throw up. Luckily, I used to work here and I know where the bathrooms are.

I make a mad dash for the nearest bathroom and make it just in time to lose my

breakfast.

I'm on my knees puking my guts out when I feel a presence behind me. I know without looking or asking, it's Papa. He rubs my back and murmurs soothing words while my stomach continues to empty its contents.

When I'm finished, I lean back. Papa wraps his arms around me.

"Are you alright, Beloved?"

"Must be my nerves. It's been one hell of a day."

"I can't disagree with that statement."

"I need my purse. I have a disposable toothbrush. Of sorts."

Papa laughs. "Of course you do, Beloved. You're always prepared."

"Maybe I should have been a girl scout. Do you think they allow hookers?"

This time my man throws back his head and laughs loud and long. I rummage through my purse and find my little pack of finger toothbrushes. You fit it over a finger and brush your teeth. It comes with toothpaste already infused into it.

I finished and tossed it into the trash. The door opens and a bewildered woman takes in the scene before heading straight to a stall. She doesn't say anything at all. A rare person who knows how to mind their own business.

Papa and I head back to the waiting room. Gambit insists we both go home. Papa may have only gotten a graze, but he could use some extra rest. Not to mention how tired you feel when the adrenaline stops racing through your body.

I'm emotionally exhausted but happy when I climb on the back of his sled and we head home. Stormy and Lucia are riding back in the SUV. Tully is driving. Gambit, Hollywood, Smoke, Nitro and Blue are riding back to the compound with us.

## Page 57

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

We're all leaving in groups. After the attack, no one may ride alone and all the ol' ladies will have at least two escorts when they leave the compound. It's not the first time we've been in lockdown. Gambit hasn't made it official yet, but he won't until they have church.

Still, I've been around long enough to know the drill.

### Chapter 43

#### Papa

Gambit called church late last night. We're officially on lockdown and still throwing a huge bash. Everyone is on high alert. I even asked Detective Stone to hook me up with a few police dogs or retired police dogs to sniff the entire perimeter. Wizard and Blue are installing more cameras around the compound, inside and out.

I'm just out of the shower and getting dressed when my phone rings. It's Flea.

"Vega and Simmons are here with the dogs."

Excellent. I didn't know who Stone was sending or when they'd show up. He'll be by later for the party. Vega and Simmons are on the guest list as well. All are NOPD and we've worked together in the past to rid the streets of dirtbags.

New Orleans has a notorious past when it comes to police and other officials taking bribes.

“Let them through. Tell them I’ll meet them out front in three.”

After ending the call, I hurry through my morning routine and get dressed. Black jeans ripped at the knee, a tight black tee, shit kickers, and my cut. I reach for my shades and keys by the door. Nay put a small decorative table by the bowl with a black crystal skull with the top carved out.

It’s large. Big enough for our keys and shades. My woman is very thoughtful.

I arrive out front a few minutes to see a large SUV parked out front. Vega and Simmons are out front with all black BelgianShepherds. I recognize the breed from the shows Smoke’s showed me. He’s a dog lover.

“Morning Papa. The boys are ready to walk the grounds.”

“Let’s start with the outer perimeter. Blue and Nitro are handling the waterfront part of the compound.”

They nod and we take off toward the gate. It’ll take a few hours to walk the compound.

“Say, Papa, who do we have to talk to about becoming a prospect?” Vega asks.

“Me. You’ll both need a sponsor. I’ll be happy to submit your names next time we have church tomorrow morning.”

“Thanks, man,” Simmons adds.

“Sure thing. We’re always in need of good men.”

“Stick around until late tonight. You’ll get your first real taste of biker life,” I add



with a smirk.

“What’s the deal with the bunnies?” Vega asks. “I’ve heard a bunch of different stories.”

“We call ours dolls. They willingly sleep with the patched brothers. We provide room, board and college tuition if they want. They also help clean and cook for the parties. Stormy is in charge of everything. She set it all up and the girls all take turns doing chores. Although as big as we’re getting, I think we’ll need a professional company for the clubhouse and the brothers’ houses.

I took them towards our houses. I have a plan I picked out that I want to run by Nay and get the brothers on as soon as they can fit us in. I want a home with my woman.

Nay

I DANCE AROUND THE kitchen with the rest of the ladies, Everest, Tully, and Trinity. We’d run all the other men out of the kitchen. Lizzo’s Worship is blaring through the speakers. We were all laughing, dancing, and cooking

Trinity insisted on homemade pasta for tonight’s feast. We were all elbows deep in flour and eggs. The pasta needs time to dry. We’re making the dough first. Then the different kinds of pasta we needed for recipes.

The next few hours fly by while we cook, laugh, and fellowship. I feel lighter than I have in a long time. By the time the food is almost ready, I’m hot and sweaty. We take turns slipping out to get ready while the prospects come in and take over. They can take things from the oven, plate, and carry them to the bar.

I hurry upstairs. I volunteered the apartment for the ladies that live outside the clubhouse. I can hear them laughing when I open the door.

Lily spots me first. She grabs my hand and drags me into the master bathroom. The ladies are in various stages of dress. Hands grab at my clothes. Some help me undress while the shower is started and warm by the time my clothes are off. Deedee hands me a shower bonnet to protect my hair.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

A few minutes later, I'm clean and have a towel wrapped around me. I sit down in front of my vanity to do my makeup.

### Chapter 44

Nay

We women decided we would make a grand entrance. Showing at the party thirty minutes after it started. We were all dressed the same. Red silk dresses, red heels, and cuts. Our hair is up and Stormy got us all matching earrings and necklace sets to wear.

Stormy enlisted the prospects to help. We all went down the back freight elevator, then through the kitchen to the bar's back entrance. The music comes to a halt, our cue to enter. I strut out onto the stage with the rest of the ol' ladies. We're greeted with whistles and catcalls.

Papa hops up on the stage and takes me into his arms. He kisses me passionately. Good thing my new lip stain is kiss proof. When he breaks the kiss, music starts to play. Then I hear the first notes of *Can You Stand The Rain?* by New Edition. Seconds later, New Edition comes out from the other side of the stage.

My eyes widen. I look at Stormy. She winks at me while the ladies leave the stage. Papa takes my hand and pulls me to him. We dance to the song. When it ends, he steps away and drops to one knee.

“Chardonnay Rene Danvers, you blew me away the first moment I met you. A bright-

eyed young woman who wanted nothing more than to make her way through college and make something of yourself. Your words, not mine.”

I hear chuckles behind me.

“You survived unimaginable hell as a child and came out stronger for it. A fierce warrior queen who protects those she loves. I loved you from the very moment I set eyes on you, only it took me a good long while to pull my head out of my ass. A longer while to convince you to be my ol’ lady.”

Tears prick at the corners of my eyes. I can’t believe this. He must have arranged it all. I thought the women were surprising the men.

“Would you make me the happiest man in existence and become my wife?”

Movement behind him catches my eye, and I gasp to see Papa’s twin Jimmy strut across the stage. He looks at me with a grin and hands a velvet box to Papa. Who opens the box and presents it to me. I gasp when I see the inside. It’s the most beautiful purple and white diamond ring I’ve ever seen.

“Yes.”

Papa slips the ring on my finger before kissing me again. I hear cheers everywhere. He picks me up and spins me around before kissing me again. When he puts me down, I find myself wrapped up in Jimmy’s arms. He gives me a big bear hug before letting me go.

“I finally get a sister.”

I hug him back. “Yes, you do.”

Gambit jumps up on stage and congratulates us. So does one of my favorite groups of all time. Then he takes the mic.

“I hope everyone is ready to eat. Our ladies, Trinity, Everest, and Tully, have outdone themselves to make us an Italian feast. Guests and ladies first. Let’s eat!”

Papa

I’M STANDING IN LINE behind Nay. The ladies really did outdo themselves. They made minestrone, Italian wedding soup, and pasta fagioli. Then they made a pasta bar with several kinds of pasta and sauces so you can choose what you want. Lasagna, roasted vegetables, antipasto platters, braised Italian sausages with cheesy polenta and a dozen different kinds of desert.

I load two plates, taking them to our table before going back for soup. I love Italian wedding soup. Jimmy is sitting on Nay’s other side.

“Thanks for bringing the ring, brother.”

“I forgot a drink. I’ll be right back,” Nay says. heading to the bar.

“Anything for my twin and his boo. That’s one fine ring and it only cost half of what Jay-Z paid for Bey’s.”

I laugh. Yeah, I dropped a pretty penny on the ring, but my woman deserves it. It has a five-carat cushion cut deep purple diamond surrounded by twenty-eight round lilac diamonds. Surrounding that are twenty pear shaped diamonds that are layered to make it look like layers of petals.

“Worth every penny. I’ll show you the house plans I picked out tomorrow.”

“Has Nay seen them?”

“Not yet. If she hates the plan, we’ll choose a new one.”

“I’m sure she’ll love it. You have a good bead on your woman’s likes and dislikes.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I nod my head. “I do my best. I love seeing her face light up.”

Nay came back with some pink concoction. Likely some new drink Stormy found and asked the new bartender to make for tonight.

“No wine?”

“Not tonight. I thought I’d switch it up.”

We spent the next hour chatting and eating. I love watching my woman and my twin interact. They’ve always gotten along, but I think they’ll get closer. Now that Nay has dropped her last reservations about being my wife, I think she’ll open up even more to my brother.

### Chapter 45

Nay

I stare down at the two pink lines, trying to breathe. My breath comes in gasps. There’s no way I can be pregnant. not now. Now with Linden alive and after me. Visions of me chained to a wall pregnant pop into my head. He’d keep me until he could take my baby and then he’d sell me or kill me.

No, no, no, this cannot be.

Tears stream down my face and soon I’m curled into a ball on the floor, crying. I don’t know how long I lay there and cry. I thought I heard someone knock, but I

couldn't stop crying long enough to get off the floor.

I'm going to have to terminate this pregnancy. Oh God! I can't let him have my baby.

"Nay."

Surprised by the voice, I uncurl too quickly and slam my head against the toilet. I cry out. Hands are on me instantly. I fight not to panic.

"It's Stormy, sweetie. Let me see your head."

I stop struggling and sink back into my friend's arms. Her gentle fingers ran through my scalp, where I slammed my head.

"I don't feel a knot. Should I get Doc?"

"No," I croak.

My throat is raw from crying.

"What's wrong?"

I move gingerly. Grabbing the test, I show it to her.

"Oh sweetie, I thought you'd be thrilled."

I started to cry again. "Linden. I can't let him get his hands on this baby."

"There's no way that will happen. Papa would never allow it, not to mention the Kings. Girl, they all love you. You're so much more than just club pussy. You've got to know that. That was before you became Papa's ol' lady. Did I mention one of my



best friend's. Who else would be so kind to a scared virgin and one likely to take one of the Kings off the market?"

Those words coming from Stormy gave me pause. Breathing became easier. The fist clutching my chest lessened the pressure.

Stormy continues. "You have every man in this club behind you. Hell, every woman too. Not one ol' lady or doll would let that bastard anywhere near you or your baby."

Tears continue to stream down my face. "I'm not ready. We weren't planning this. We haven't even talked about it."

"Have you ever talked about having children in general?"

I nod my head, wince, then stop. "Yes, he told me once he wanted ten. I told him good luck having them."

Stormy laughs. "Let's get you cleaned up and get some food for you. Maybe crackers and ginger ale."

"I think we have them in the pantry."

## Page 60

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“If you don't, we have some in the bodega. I'll have one of the prospects bring some.”

“Thank you, Stormy.”

“That's what friends are for.”

Stormy heads to the kitchen after she helps me off the floor.

Papa

I'M IN MY OFFICE AT Barron's when my cell phone rings. I look at the screen to see it's Queenie.

“What can I do for you today, my queen?”

“Your real queen needs you. I can't say more. Please come.”

“I'm on my way.”

The call ends and I power off my computer with the button, grab my keys, and run out the back door. The manager knows where to find me if they need me.

“Fuck!” I yell, realizing I need my buddy. I let myself in the back and run through the shop.”

“Angel, we've got to go. Stormy called; Beloved needs me.”

Angel nods and springs from behind the counter. He's been helping in the shop today. We run down the hall and out the back to our sleds. At the same time, we throw legs over our bikes, start them, pop the kickstand and take off. We're all in the habit of backing our bikes into spots so we can pull out.

?

When I enter the apartment I find Nay curled up on the couch asleep. She's wearing her comfort pjs. They're purple and made of fleece. Something is wrong or it's her moon time.

Stormy stands up and walks to me. She motions for me to follow her.

"I got her to eat some crackers and drink some ginger ale. She's had an emotional morning. I can't tell you without telling you something that needs to come from her."

I admit I'm a little panicked by those words, but I trust Stormy. She's a good woman and I see her as a little sister. I give her a quick hug.

"Thank you for taking care of her. Did she call you?"

Stormy shakes her head. "No, I came to talk to her about the bodega. She's going to help me keep up on what everyone likes, so we can keep it stocked with staples and a few other things for variety. I brought over my laptop to go over things.

"When I knocked, she didn't answer. I could hear her crying. After a couple minutes, I let myself in. I hope you'll both forgive me, but I had to get to my friend."

"There's nothing to forgive. You heard a friend in need and took action. Thank you for taking care of my woman."

“It’s easy to do. She doesn’t understand what she does for everyone around here. I hope one day she will. Call me if you need anything.”

I nod my head. “I will. Thank you.”

I wait until Stormy leaves to scoop Nay up in my arms. She stirs, but goes back to sleep as I carry her to our room. I tuck her in, pulling the covers over her. She snuggles under them and falls into a deeper sleep.

I sit in the chair near the bed and watch her sleep for a while, wondering what happened that caused her meltdown. She’s not prone to them. In fact, they’re very rare. In all the years I’ve known her, I’ve only seen her meltdown a few times.

I’ll make one of her favorite dishes while she’s asleep. Maybe a few of them. My woman loves her comfort food. Then she lets me work it off her in bed.

## Chapter 46

### Papa

I’m sitting on the bathroom floor holding a pregnancy test in my hand. I could give a flying fuck my woman peed on the stick. She’s pregnant. We’re pregnant. I’m going to be a father. Holy fuck. I’m going to be a dad.

## Page 61

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I've got to call Jimmy. No, I need to call Gambit. Linden needs to die tonight and, while we're at it, it's time to round up Doctor Fuckface.

I put the test back where I found it and wash my hands before pulling my phone out of my back pocket. I pull up Gambit's contact info and call him. He picks up on the second ring.

"How's Nay?"

"Did Stormy tell you everything?"

"No, just that she called you from work for Nay."

"She's pregnant. I want security doubled and Montgomery picked up. It's time to take out the trash and make sure my baby doesn't have that scum to worry about."

"Four more days brother and he and Dawgs are going down. You only need to keep your cool for four more days. Have you told Jimmy yet?"

"No, I'll wait until Nay wakes up and we can talk. I'm going to cook for her while she's sleeping. Maybe Stormy could get something for nausea from Doc without giving anything away."

"I'm on it," Gambit says. "Call me back if you need anything, brother."

Instead of texting a prospect for the items I need, I text Jimmy. He's staying in one of our guest rooms on the second floor. He responds immediately, saying he'll grab the

stuff and bring it. I tell him to bring a buddy. He may not be in the club, but he's wearing my face.

With nothing but time and energy to burn, I step out on the balcony and fire up a blunt. I call the hospital and get an update on Wrath while I wait for my brother. He's in stable condition and improving daily. One of his biological brothers has been by his side the whole time.

His parents were there before we left the other day. Willow, their sister, is running back and forth between the hospital and everyone's houses.

Jimmy arrives an hour later with everything we need to make smoked turkey and andouille gumbo, beans and greens, cornbread, and sugar cream pie.

"What are you keeping from me?" Jimmy asks.

"Is your twin sense tingling?"

"It is."

"I can't tell you, but you can go wash your hands in the master bath."

My brother gave me a quizzical look, but did what I suggested. He came back a few minutes later with a smile on his face.

"I bet you have twins."

I chuckle. "Maybe, but twins don't run in her family. She's upset about it because of Linden. We haven't talked, but I'm guessing that's what made her so upset earlier."

I filled my twin in on today's earlier events. We talk while he makes the pie crust and

I start the gumbo. His crust is better than mine. Mom made sure all her boys knew how to cook.

There's six of us in all. Jimmy and I are the youngest. Our older brothers, in order, are Malik, Shamar, and Daniel.

"Mama knows about the ring. She's waiting for you to call her."

"Nay and I will call her tonight or tomorrow. It depends on how my beloved feels. We can FaceTime her and she can see Nay wearing the ring."

"I still can't believe you dropped that kinda change on a ring. Being a biker pays well."

I chuckle. "We have several successful businesses. Not to mention all the money I've made with black ops over the last five years."

"Maybe I should move to New Orleans and prospect."

"You'll hate that part of it. You have to take orders from every patched member and the ol' ladies."

"I've seen your ol' ladies. They can boss me around any time they want to."

"Careful bro. We bikers are possessive of our women."

## Page 62

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Noted. The dolls are pretty fucking sexy.”

The conversation flows as we cook. It’s good to spend time with my baby brother. I beat him by two minutes.

### Chapter 47

Nay

I wake up to the most delicious smells. After relieving myself and washing my hands, I head to the kitchen. I can hear voices when I get closer. When I enter the kitchen, I see Jimmy and Papa. They’re cutting up and smiling. I watch for a few seconds longer before making my presence known.

“Something smells good.”

Papa turns from stirring something on the stove. He crosses the room in a few long strides and pulls me into his arms.

“Did you rest well, Beloved?”

I frowned. I did, but now I have to have a conversation. I don’t want to.

“Yes, I slept well.”

“Then why the frown?”



I start to talk, then stop. Jimmy is here. This is not the time or place. As if sensing my thoughts, he comes over to us and drops a kiss on my forehead, and pats his brother on the back.

“Save me a piece of pie, brother.”

“Will do,” Papa says and pats his brother on the back.

I wait until I hear the front door of the apartment close.

“Did you see it?”

“I did, Beloved. Is that what made you so upset?”

I nod my head. “I can’t have the baby. Not with Linden skulking around.”

“How far along are you?”

That’s not the question I thought he was going to ask.

“About eight weeks. I’ll need to make an appointment with an OB to verify the test.”

“What if I told you the Linden problem will be taken care of before your first trimester is over?”

“Can you promise that?”

He nods his head. “I can. I promise you he’ll be taken care of before you hit your second trimester.”

I can wait four weeks. If he’s gone in four weeks, my baby is safe and so am I.

“Okay.”

“Really?”

“Yes,” I say as tears stream down my face. “I want our baby. I just can’t let Linden get them.”

He pulls me into his arms. “I will never let that happen.”

“Promise?”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“I swear to you, Beloved. Now, how about you? Let me show you a house plan I've been looking at?”

“You picked out a house plan for us?”

“Pending your approval, of course.”

“Show me?”

Papa takes my hand and leads me to our home office. He fires up the desktop and soon he has a floor plan pulled up. It's two stories with nine bedrooms, eight full baths, a half bath, and nine car garage. Over fourteen thousand square feet. There's a two story foyer with twenty foot ceilings that opens to a curved staircase. It has a walk-in pantry and a veranda off the formal dining room. Looks like he wants that big family, after all.

“If you want to fill all those bedrooms. I hope we have a couple sets of twins.”

He chuckles.

“You hear that, spirits? My woman wants twins.”

I laugh at his antics.

“Let me feed you.”

My stomach rumbles.

“I could eat.”

I let him lead me back to the kitchen, where he dished out some of my favorite foods. My mouth waters at the sight of gumbo. I take a bite. It’s absolutely delicious.

“Is that smoked turkey?”

“It is. Jimmy went shopping for us. Which reminds me. We need to order groceries or hit the compound’s bodega.”

“Let’s hit the bodega. I haven’t been since it’s been fully stocked.”

“It’s a date. We can pick out a site for the house, then get groceries.”

We finished dinner. I had two slices of sugar cream pie before we walked instead of taking a vehicle or sled. When we passed Stormy’s house, the kids were playing out front.

“We’re going to need a playground and maybe one day a school for all these kids.”

Papa chuckles. “We are growing by leaps and bounds. I’ll bring it up at church.”

“How about the plot next to Gambit. You can be next to your bestie.”

“Our kids will get into so much trouble,” he replies.

“Likely. I’m sending them to you.”

Gambit came out of the garage as we were about to leave.

“Good to see you two. How are you feeling, Nay?”

“Better, thanks.”

“Do you want to come in for dessert? Stormy made death by chocolate cake.”

I groan and pat my stomach. “Papa stuffed me full with gumbo, greens and beans, cornbread and sugar cream pie.”

“I love sugar cream pie,” Gambit says.

“I’ll save you a slice, unless you can talk Jimmy into making one for you.”

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

“Jimmy bakes?”

“We all do,” Papa says. “Mom made sure we could all cook. She said it would make our wives happy one day.”

“She’s a smart woman.”

Both men chuckle.

“Are you out having a nice walk?” Gambit asks.

“We are picking a home site. How do you feel about having neighbors?” Papa asks.

“I love the idea. We’ll get the brothers crew on it ASAP.”

We spend the next few minutes talking to Gambit. Stormy comes out and joins us. I feel a sense of peace I haven’t felt for a long time. Maybe I can do this. Have a happy life. A husband, children and a job I love.

All those nights I spent with perverted men and women, I never imagined I’d be anything but dead at this age.

Our fingers threaded together, we walk to the Bodega. Papa grabs a card and I grab one of the pads. The pads are to keep inventory. You scan the items you grab off the shelves and the pad records it and adjusts the inventory. When the stock is below fifty percent, it emails notification to Stormy. Wizard set it up.

“Stormy did an amazing job,” I say.

“She knocked it out of the park fo’ sure,” Papa replies.

Papa and I spend the next half an hour playing around in the bodega. We each have several bags to carry back. I needed to work off that second slice of pie anyway.

## Chapter 48

### Papa

The last few days were hectic. We had members from our allied clubs come in, as well as most of the members from our Baton Rouge chapter. The new Houston chapter showed up in force with every member coming to take part in tonight’s war games. Only it’s not a game. It’s for real. Tonight we wipe a fuck ton of scum off the face of the earth.

The cleaners are ready. They even brought in back up from a few other cities. Bastian and Outlaw have their bayou brothers on standby to help with cleanup or warfare if needed.

Two days ago, Detective Stone called us to inform us they’d found Doctor Ethan Montgomery tortured and murdered. Vega and Simmons, now prospecting for the Kings, discovered information at Montgomery’s home that ties him to Linden and the Dawgs. Piece of shit got what he deserved. He was their backup plan to nab Nay. Stupid paranoid fucker left us detailed notes in an encrypted file on his hard drive.

It took Wizard all of five minutes to crack the encryption. If we were the type to go to the police, we could turn it over and take down the Dawgs, Linden, and a few others in the human trafficking ring. Instead, we’ll keep the information on the others for future use. This is one too many times human trafficking has touched the life of one

of our women.

Last night in emergency church, we decided we were going to work to take down the traffickers in our city once and for all. Bug is going to use his government access and contacts. Nitro's friend is using his mafia connections to suss out information for us. I have no idea how long it'll take us to do this, but it will get done.

I can't begin to imagine the horrors these men, women, and children have gone through at the hands of monsters. When you work black ops, you get to see a lot of monsters. The underbelly of the earth is far darker than most can imagine, and I hope never to experience.

"Papa, are you ready?" Gambit asks.

I turn my attention back to the president, best friend, and tactical leader.

"Beyond. I can't wait to wipe Linden from the face of the earth."

We were all gathered in Lagniappe. There are nearly fifty of us not including prospects. A contingent is staying here to protect the woman and children. We would never, under any circumstances, leave them.

Four groups of ten men are hitting four different targets. With eight men and three prospects left to stay behind to guard the compound.

Smoke, Sentry, Ryker, and Reaper leading teams. Gambit is the mission commander. After Gambit goes over the mission plans, we head to the club's armory and load up. It has everything we need: weapons, explosives, night vision goggles, gear, etc.

Our cargo vans pull up a few blocks away from the Marriot. Linden is staying in the penthouse suite. We make our way into the back and a well-paid employee is slipping



us in and taking us to the roof.

Smoke, Blue, and Freak are going down the stairs. While a fully armored Angel, Rook, Cobra are taking the elevator up from one floor down. Gambit and I are repelling down from the roof and going in through the windows. Earlier today, when the window washers were there, we had them score a window to make it easier for us to break through. Two men are on standby. They'll move where needed.

I check my watch at the same time I see Gambit check his. We're less than two minutes away from go time. Each man has a com linked to his unit. Smoke and Angel gave us the signal that we were in place.

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

Gambit gave the signal. I counted down thirty seconds, then began to repel down the building. The moment we hear gunfire, Gambit and I drop and bust through the window feet first. Linden screams and scrambles. There are two other men in the room. They both draw guns. My gun is in my hand, the silencer already attached. I take aim and pull the trigger. Two shots to the chest. My president does the same with the other guy.

Linden races to the door. I tackle him to the floor, slamming his head into it as we land.

It's enough to stun him. I slam my fist into his jaw, knocking him completely out. I hear the all clear from our team. I sling Linden over my shoulder like a sack of potatoes and carry him out of the apartment. Wizard has all the cameras on a loop until we get clear.

We head out of the hotel room, down the hall, and to the freight elevator. In the elevator I duct tape his hands, feet, and mouth. Then put him in a body bag. We have a fake Medical Examiner's van outside and two guys dressed in uniform.

The drive back to the compound doesn't take long. We avoided the main road, which is filled with revelers. Our mission was the closest and the easiest. After taking Linden out of the body bag, I toss him in a cell duct tape and all. Our team makes a somber trip back to the clubhouse bar. There's nothing to do but wait for word on the other operations.

Flea, who's behind the bar tonight, pours me four fingers of Macallan. I gulp it down and sit the glass back down. I, like everyman on our team, wanted to be where the

action is tonight. One team is hitting the Dawg's clubhouse. A second team is taking down the warehouses. While a third team is raiding the holding house where they keep the people they've taken until it's time to ship them.

It's an hour later before we get word from the first team. Mission accomplished with minimal injuries and no fatalities on our side. Some of the tension eased from my shoulders. One team down, two to go. The second and third teams checked in. Same as the first.

"Mission accomplished!" Gambit yells

Cheers go up all around the bar. For the next hour, the wounded and weary wander into the bar. Doc is on hand to patch everyone up. We all head to Church and go over the details of the night. Linden is the only one still alive. Nay requested to kill him. I didn't bulk. She'd already try to kill him once to keep her family safe. Now she needs to kill him and see the gators eat him so she can feel safe. So she knows our baby is safe.

Nay

ALL THE OL' LADIES and children gather at Stormy's house while the men go on their missions. While we didn't know everything was going down tonight. Stormy and I know that Papa and the others are taking care of Linden. What else they have planned for the night. I have no clue.

We ordered pizza and played movies for the kids. The Disney channel is a lifesaver.

"Oh My God!" I say surveying the ladies. "You realize ninety percent of the ol' ladies are pregnant right now. There are enough hormones in this room to make a grown man cry."

We all laughed.

“I’m ready not to be pregnant,” Olivia says.

“A few more weeks. You’ve got this girl,” I reply.

“Talk to me when you can’t see your feet. I have no idea what my pussy looks like at the moment. I can’t even landscape.”

“Get Boomer to do it for you.”

She smiles. “He does.”

“I had mine lasered off years ago.”

“So, you have a permanent tile floor?” Stormy asks.

“It makes wood hard,” I say with a grin.

We all laugh again. These ladies are a riot. This leads to a discussion of not only our grooming habits but which of the men shaved, trimmed or went natural. The younger kids crashed by half past nine. Even the babies were sleeping. The teenagers are in Stormy’s game room playing video games and enjoying time without the grown ups.

Try as we might as the hours pass, our nerves begin to show. Lucia starts pacing. I join her at some point.

“You two are going to wear a hole in the floor,” Olivia says. Then adds, “Now help me up so I can join you.”

The door flies open as we’re helping Olivia up from the oversized chair. Our men

rush through the door. Some are covered in dirt and blood. I fly into Pop's arms and sob in relief when he wraps his arms around me.

## Chapter 49

Nay

Papa talked me into getting some sleep before dealing with Linden. He assured me he wasn't going anywhere, but I needed to see for myself. He drove me down to the Woodshed. My first time here. We held hands as he showed me the hidden door and walked me through the anteroom. In the first jail cell, his hands, mouth and feet, duck taped on the cold cement floor, lay Linden.

When he starts to scream and move against his bonds, I turn to my man. "I'm ready. He can wait until we get some sleep."

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I pat my stomach when I say we. I want him to think about it for a few hours before I end his miserable life.

Now I'm awake, showered and dressed. I wore all black today, not because my mood is somber though. For me, taking a man's life is not joyful but I won't mourn this loss of life. Black will hide the blood. I've been thinking of all the little girls and boys he must have ruined over the years. I'm doing the world a favor by ending his miserable life.

I haven't decided how I'll kill him, but I know the King's each want a shot at him. He's a human trafficker, pedophilic, piece of shit. Who deserves everything he's about to get. I lace up a pair of shit kickers that Gambit got me for my birthday a few years ago. He said I needed a good pair of riding boots and six inch purple stilettos weren't it.

Papa and Gambit are waiting for me in the living room. I needed time to get myself together emotionally. And time to vomit and clean up without my amazing man hovering over me.

Having recently moved in with him, I'm used to having my space and time to myself. It's a change. With the extra added hormones. I needed a few moments this morning. I place my hand on my stomach again.

Before Gambit arrived, Papa told me they found Lord Fuckyou dead. I can't say that he'll be missed. A doctor working with a human trafficking ring. It made my stomach sour.

“Mama’s got to take care of something today. I want you to close your eyes and sing something. This is for you, but you don’t need to see it. Just know that I love you so much already and today your daddy and I are making the world safer for you.”

I don’t even feel ridiculous talking to the little bean growing inside me. The men are gathered around the bar talking.

“Did you two have a pre-breakfast drink?”

Gambit smiles and shakes his head. Papa chuckles.

“No, Beloved. If you can’t drink, I’m not drinking. Although I admit I did last night.”

I smile at him. “I’ll forgive you the occasional slip with the boys.”

He crosses the room to me and gives me a kiss. When we break apart, I say, “I’m ready to end this. I want to talk to him. I may step out when you guys take your pound of flesh. I may not.”

“You don’t have to decide and you can change your mind as many times as you want,” Papa says.

“If the baby says any of this is a no go. Not one man in that room will think less of you. Hell, cheré, we already think you walk on water. If Stormy is our Queen, then you’re are Queen Mother, because you’ve been around longer,” Gambit says.

He drops a kiss on the top of my head. “Might I add you abdicated the throne with beauty and grace in only a way you can.”

?

Linden is strung up, hanging from a chain on his tiptoes. Stripped down to his boxers. The guys left them on for my sake. I REALLY don't want to see his junk.

“Keep the tape on. I don't want to hear a word the smug son of a bitch has to say.”

I step closer to him, with Papa by my side.

“I don't know how you escaped with your life. It doesn't matter. You won't escape this time. After I have my say, my Beloved and his brothers are going to take turns dishing out justice old school style. When they're done, I'm going to end your miserable life before I feed you to the gators below.”

“You could always feed him to the gators still kickin' cheré,” Outlaw says in his thick cajun accent.

I turn and smile at him. “I'll consider it. Can you show him how it works?”

Outlaw smiles. “Sure thing.”

I let Papa guide me to a safe spot. Soon after we get settled, the floor begins to open. Smoke comes from who knows where with a bucket of cut up chicken. He tosses it, blood and all, down the opening. The water writhes and suddenly there are a dozen gators snapping and eating at the meat.

I watch Linden's face pale. I smirk. “He's all yours, gentlemen. He's not worth any more words.”

I realize when I walk back through the “shed” to the main room that I do have more to say but that can wait. The men need time to do their thing. I have no idea what to expect. I grab a bottle of chocolate milk and set about wandering around the main room. They have a pool table, enormous flat screen TV. I spot a game system. I



haven't played in ages.

I choose a first person shooter game and get lost while the guys do their thing. I'm surprised I can't hear Linden's screams but I can't. Not a sound. The only thing I can hear is the video game.

I don't know how long it's been when Papa comes to get me.

"We're ready for you Beloved."

## Page 67

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

I turn off the game and take his hand, letting him pull me up. He pulls me into a kiss. I notice the protective gear over his clothes.

“Those are nice.”

“Makes for easy clean up when we do wet work.”

“You don’t look very messy.”

“We didn’t want you to see a mess. Smoke urged us to use things that wouldn’t cut him.”

“You beat him instead?”

“With so many things.”

I walk through the anteroom and into the back. Linden is starting to turn black and blue from the bruises. He won’t live long enough to feel the aftermath of the beating. When he raises his head to look at me. It’s a broken man that peers back at me.

I look at the tools that Smoke has laid out. I choose a wicked looking blade. I calmly walk over to him and stab him. I make sure the blade is angled right and I shove it up and pierce his heart.

“You’ll never hurt another child again. I say as I watch the light bleed from his eyes.

When he’s dead, Papa takes the knife from my hand and walks me away from the pit

area. The guys cut him down, remove the duct tape from his mouth and step back. I watch the floor open up. Linden's body drops to the water below and the waiting alligators. I peer over the edge watching the gators devour his body.

I collapse against Papa and cry. He picks me up and carries me back out front. We sit on the couch with me on his lap and his arms around me. I cry until I'm too tired to keep my eyes open.

"It's finally over. I'm safe. We're safe," I say putting my hand over my belly.

## Epilogue

One week later

Papa

I AM SO FUCKING PROUD of my woman and I can't wait to make her mine. I got up extra early this morning to make her breakfast in bed. I checked on her a few minutes ago and she's still sleeping. I put everything on a tray and carry it into the bed, sitting it down on the nightstand before waking her up.

Leaning down, I place a kiss on her cheek. "Beloved, wake-up."

I watch her striking green eyes open. She smiles up at me.

"Sit up love I made you breakfast in bed."

A frown mars her face. "I don't think I can eat."

"Trust me?"

“You know I do?”

“Sit up, please.”

She sits up. I prop pillows behind her head and neck, making sure she’s comfortable before placing the tray table over her lap. I pull back the silver dome, revealing crackers. Instead of juice in her glass, there’s blackberry ginger ale.

“Are these your morning sickness crackers?”

“It is.”

“I love you.”

“I know. Marry me.”

“I already said yes.

“Say yes to this weekend.”

“I can’t put together a wedding in three days.”

“Disney can, and Lucia arranged everything. Your siblings and aunts are coming. Most of the club is coming.”

“Yes.”

Nay

I CAN’T BELIEVE I LET him talk me into this. I’m getting married in a few minutes.

“You look beautiful,” Jada says, placing a kiss on my cheek.

“A true vision of loveliness,” Aunt Lilian adds.

“I can’t believe you’re getting married,” Imani chimes in.

“I can’t believe Papa had you all in on this before he even asked me,” I say with a laugh.

“Would you have refused him?”

“No, those days are gone. If my man wants me to be his wife, then his wife I’ll be.”

I take one last look in the full length mirror, studying my reflection. The dress I'm wearing belonged to my great grandmother, also named Lilian. My aunt is named after her. She got married in this dress, as did my grandmother, who I never got to meet.

It was once white, but it faded not to a shade somewhere between white and ivory. It has an intricately beaded corset bodice. The dress is off shoulder with gauzy sleeves that puff at the top like a faux mutton sleeve but much more delicate.

Pearls line the top of the bodice, sleeves and bottom of the corset. I wear a matching double pearl choker around my neck. The corset, instead of ending at my waist, goes on in the shape of a v to the apex of my thighs. In front and back. The skirt is full length and made of a delicate semi-opaque material. I chose not to wear a slip under, leaving glimpses of my dark skin beneath the material.

My hair is in twin buns. An homage to the mouse. Baby's breath, pearls, and Swarovski crystals surround each one. While my makeup is understated, the make-up artist, my sister Imani, placed a few Swarovski crystals around my eyes. It's truly unique and incredibly exquisite.

"Imani, my makeup is fire."

My sister laughs. "You're going to make that man cry when he sees you. You look like an angel. All ethereal and light. You're glowing."

I smile, my hand automatically going to my stomach. My family's eyes widen.

"How far along?" Aunt Lilian asks.

"Nine weeks. We found out about ten days ago."

“After he proposed,” Jada squeals and throws her arms around me. “I’m so happy for you.”

Lilian and Imani join in the hug.

“That’s it. We’re all moving back home,” Imani declares. “I don’t want to miss a minute of being an Aunty. Do you think they’d let me stay on the compound?”

I laugh. “I can ask. We do have guest quarters. Maybe we should build our families' homes on the new land they purchased.”

“Yes,” Imani, Jada and Lilian say, at nearly the same time.

“Will Uncle Louis move?”

“Of course. Especially if he gets to build the first house in the King’s Estates, residential edition.”

“Olivia’s dads might fight you over that.”

Lilian laughs. “I love a good fight.”

## Page 69

*Source Creation Date: July 19, 2025, 5:08 pm*

A knock on the door interrupts any further conversation. Aunt Lilian opens the door. Chief is on the other side. He's dressed in a Dove gray tux. My colors are purple and silver.

"Ladies," he greets everyone. "I have something for the bride."

"Please come in, Chief."

He pulls me into a hug. "That's Pops to you."

I smile. He's been trying to get me to call him Pops for years.

"Alright Pops," I say with a smile.

He pulls a box out of his jacket. He hands it to me. I open the box with a gasp. Purple and white diamond earrings sparkle in the black velvet box. They match my ring.

"Oh, Pops. This is too much."

"Nonsense. You've done so much for my boys. You deserve this and more."

I nod my head, blinking back tears. My throat constricts with emotions. Aunt Lilian takes charge and takes the earrings out of the box, replacing the pearl earrings I'm currently wearing. Another knock at the door. This time Imani answers. It's uncle Louis. He looks handsome in his tux and tails.

Behind him, Kelsi, Stormy and Lucia pile in. Kelsi, Stormy, and my sisters are



standing up with me. Aunt Lilian is acting as mother of the bride and Uncle Louis is walking me down the aisle. I hug Chief one last time and tell him we're ready. He nods and heads to tell Papa.

Papa

I HAVE MY ARMS WRAPPED around my woman. My wife. I can't believe I finally get to call her that wife.

"What are you thinking?" She asks.

"That I'm the luckiest man on the face of the planet. Patch on your back, ring on your finger, and my baby in your womb. This day couldn't get any better."

"I love you."

"I love you too."