







# Stalked By Axel

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

**Description:** Brooke

I have a stalker, and I'm in love with him.

Just before my father died, he made Axel promise to look out for me. I'd be thrilled to have so much of Axel's attention if only it wasn't born of a sense of duty to his late best friend. Having grown up watching my father and Axel work on motorcycles in the shop owned by the Steel Rebels MC, I'm no stranger to big men covered in tattoos and leather. But Axel has always been special, and after a year of his overprotective stalker act, I've hatched a plan that will force him to leave the shadows and give me the kind of attention I want. But once I have it, can I keep it? Or is he only playing along to fulfill his promise to my father?

Axel

I have a brat problem. Good thing I know exactly what to do about it.

Before he died, I hadn't known that my best friend's daughter is a brat. But that's exactly what Brooke is with the way she's been behaving lately. She keeps putting her safety at risk chasing thrills. It's a difficult balancing act wanting to let her live her life but needing to keep her safe. My entire life now revolves around her—watching and protecting her. So, when she goes too far in a club one night, I'm forced to step in. And this time, I decide to teach Brooke a lesson about what happens to brats who misbehave. Except I'm unprepared for the feelings that ignite within me the moment I give in to touching her. I've always been aware of Brooke, but now she has my full attention. But what will my club brothers think? They've known Brooke her whole life and think of her as their little sister. Will they think I'm betraying the promise I made to her father? No matter what they say, I'm not sure I can let Brooke now that I've had a taste of her. She's mine.

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

**Total Pages (Source):** 26

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

## Chapter One

Brooke

This is a bad idea.

Hell, even the devil on my shoulder keeps asking me to pause and rethink my decision. That, coupled with the concerned looks my best friend keeps sending my way should be enough to discourage me from going along with what I have planned for tonight.

My mind is already made up.

There is no amount of side eye from Scarlett that's going to change that. Not even a Windy City tornado could keep me in tonight. Well, technically, that's not true since a tornado could kill me, and death would for sure dampen my plans for the evening, but that's admittedly the only thing that would stop me from going out tonight.

Now if only this damn dress would cooperate!

"I think it's a size too small," Scarlett offers unhelpfully from my bed, where she's been watching and silently judging me all evening. "Maybe you should wear one of your old dresses or...hear me out, we could stay in tonight. Order pizza and watch that boring movie you like so much."

"The Notebook is not boring," I say, gritting my teeth as I tug the stubborn dress over my hips. "And no, we're still going out tonight. Also, can you stop judging me for

like a second and help me with this dress?”

“I’m not judging you,” she says, but she climbs off the bed and walks over to me. She stops behind me and studies the dress, sucking air through her teeth at the scrap of fabric trying passing as a dress. Sure, it’s small, but it’s a stunning piece—a deep shade of emerald green that catches in the light beautifully and brightens my gray eyes. It’s not like the store didn’t have my usual size either, but I wanted something that would really hug my curves. Something that would look scandalous on me. “I mean, do you really think it’s a good idea to go out dressed like this? And to a club of all places?” She gives it another once-over. “Can you even breathe in that thing?”

“The point is not to breathe,” I insist. And no, it’s not a good idea to go out in a dress that barely covers my butt. I would even go as far as to say that it’s a terrible idea, but I am trying to make a statement and this is the only way I can think to do so. Everyone—he—is used to seeing me in boring jeans and sweaters. It’s no wonder everyone still thinks I’m a kid despite carrying an ID that says the opposite, but this dress should prove that I am not a little girl anymore. That is, if I can get it zipped. “My mind is made up, Scarlett. Now please help me.”

With a sigh, she steps forward and tugs at the sides, and with a little effort, it slides over my hips and small waist. After sliding into the sleeves, now comes the hard part. “You’re going to have to cut this dress off,” Scarlett says, and I suck in a deep breath as she tugs up the zipper, pulling it with so much effort I am half terrified that it’s going to break. With each tug, I feel the fabric stretching, and I hold my breath, hoping it stretches just a little. “Or maybe you won’t have to cut it off.” Her eyes find mine in the mirror, and I spy the sly look on her face. “Maybe your wish will finally come true and the man you’ve been drooling over all these years will simply tear it off you before the night is over.”

I gasp at her words. The thought of the man I love helping me out of the dress leaves me feeling warm all over. It makes that small sensitive part of my body that trembles

any time I think of him pulse wildly, but like a bucket of walk water, reality quickly comes crashing in and stomps on the fantasy.

“He thinks I'm a child,” I huff, annoyed by the unbidden thought.

“Not in this dress, he won't.”

I shrug off the thought. I can't think about him now. That'll only make me start to second-guess myself. “Are you almost done?”

“Close, but Jesus, Brooke. How are you going to breathe in this?”

“I don't need to breathe,” I wheeze. “What really matters is how my butt looks in the dress.”

“Molded to perfection,” she grunts with one final tug, and the zipper glides up. I let out a relieved sigh when the seams holds. “Okay, I have to admit. The dress does look gorgeous on your curves.”

“Yeah,” I mutter as I step back from the mirror to get a full view of the outfit. I hardly recognized myself. The dress hugs my curves perfectly, accentuating my figure in ways I've never seen before. The neckline dips so low, it accentuates my cleavage, and the fitted waist cinches in to create a beautiful silhouette. I give a little twirl, smiling at how tight my ass looks in the dress. Luckily, it isn't so short as to be indecent, since it's too tight to wear panties underneath. My ribs are no doubt going to feel sore when I finally take off the dress, but this is a necessary sacrifice.

Maybe when he spots me in this dress, he'll finally stop seeing me as a little girl, but as the woman I've grown into. It's about time he started treating me like one too. Tonight, I'll show that grump. He'll have no choice but to see me for what I truly am.

“Do you really need to go this far? If you bend down, the dress will snap you in half.” Scarlett comments, stepping next to me in the mirror and running a hand over her own dress, a short black number that is not nearly as tight as mine, but she's not trying to make a statement with hers, so there's that. Her hazel eyes lock with my gray ones in the mirror and I read apprehension in them. “You know you're going to have a lot of attention on you tonight, don't you? Not just his.”

“I don't care. I'm only doing this to get the attention of one stubborn man.”

“I know, but... What if he doesn't show up? There are going to be other men at the club, and anyone that has eyes and knows how to use them will be able to tell that you're young and pretty for the picking.” Scarlett grabs a hair clip from the dresser and moves behind me. She traces her fingers over the strands of my brown hair layered with teal highlights and begins to style it. “Tons of guys will approach you, and most will even try to touch you.”

“I know, Scarlett. I am not completely naive. That's why I'm not doing this alone. You'll be with me.”

She hums, pushing back to admire her work. “But you are naive and innocent. Men will sniff you out the moment you enter the club. And then they will be on you like bee to nectar.”

“Are you trying to scare me into not going out?”

She shakes her head and meets my eyes again. “No, I just want you to be sure you know what you are doing. If the man you are doing all this for doesn't show—”

“He'll be there,” I say with enough conviction. The man seems to be everywhere these days, blending with the shadows and following me around like a guard dog and I am some little girl he's tasked with protecting. But I haven't been a little anything in

years. He just hasn't noticed.

He'll stalk me as he always does, but this time, it won't be to some boring café or college campus. No, it will be to one of the most popular clubs in the city, and I intend to walk in there dressed to get noticed. This time, I'll force him out of the shadows.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

This isn't my first attempt to do so. I've tried so many ways to pull him into the light with no success. I put teal highlights in my hair and got no reaction. Then I tried to ride my late father's motorcycle by myself. He simply signed me up for lessons. I even went so far as scheduling a sky diving trip, but he called and canceled my appointment. This time, he won't have a choice but to show up himself. I won't be so easy to ignore anymore.

"Okay fine, I won't stop you if you've already made up your mind on this," she says, with a sigh before walking back to the bed. "Finish getting ready, I'll order us an Uber."

She might think it's a bad idea, but I know my best friend has my back. In a lot of ways, I know Scarlet is just as innocent as me. But she's so confident and has a "don't mess with me" attitude. Without her company, I doubt I'd have the nerve to go to the club.

I inspect the makeup Scarlett brought to my apartment. There isn't much to it, but it's more than I typically would use. I pick up the red lipstick and walk closer to the mirror. For the first time since I came up with this plan...I hesitate.

Will he like it?

I've put so much effort into my physical appearance to get him to see me as an object of attraction, but...this isn't the real me. What if my plan works and I get his attention then lose it when I go back to my usual look? With a sigh, I uncap the red lipstick and bring it to my lips, hesitating once more. What if he doesn't even like this look?

In all the years I've known him, I've never seen him with a girl or heard him speak about one. If he's had relationships, then he kept them hidden from me. There is no way of telling if he has a type. I push back the jealousy at the thought of another girl having him and in ways I've only ever dared to dream about.

“Our Uber will be here in five minutes.” With another sigh, I quickly trace my lips with the red lipstick, careful not to smudge it before finally capping it. “We need to get going, Brooke.”

“Alright, I'm done,” I say, sliding into the heels I bought specifically for tonight before hurriedly grabbing my purse. I give myself a once-over in the mirror, surprised by the stranger staring back at me.

Scarlett grabs my arm before doubt can creep in again and pulls me toward the door. We find our Uber waiting outside the building, and I stop to look around, half expecting for him to pop out of thin air and scold me for leaving my place dressed like this. He would grab my arm and drag me back to my apartment. Scold me for leaving home dressed so provocatively and exposing parts of myself that belong to him—will only ever belong to him.

He'd kiss me, swear to kill any man that dared look my way before making love to me in all the ways I've imagined in my head. He would kiss me in my sleep and promise to love me for the rest of my life. In that deep rough voice that makes my heart tremble every time he speaks, he would call me his.

“Brooke, get in!”

Scarlett's voice once more drags me from my daydream to the open car door. I look around once more, but I don't spot him. It's not like I ever do. No, the man hides so well, only popping out when he thinks I need rescuing. Annoyed with myself, I climb into the backseat next to my friend, settling down with a huff.

“Let's go,” I say, pulling the door closed.

If Scarlett notices my darkening mood, then she doesn't comment on it and leaves me to sulk in silence the entire drive to the club. We arrive at the club and Scarlett follows me out, shrugging off my offer to send her my share of the ride fare.

The cool air hits me in the face when I step onto the sidewalk, and I shiver a little. My eyes scan the street, taking in everything at once. The club is a towering structure, all glass and steel with a pulsating giant neon sign that flashes the word “Rave.” Music thumping from inside rattles the glass front of the club, but the windows must be one-way glass because we can't see inside. In front of the club, there's a line stretched down the sidewalk full of people chatting and laughing. I bet none of them are sweating buckets in their scandalous clothes like I am.

God, I'm nervous. I've gone out with friends and have even tried alcohol before, but this is my first time going to a nightclub. It's my first time doing something so...reckless. But we're here, and I am not backing out.

“Are you sure about this?” Scarlett asks when she steps up next to me, digging through her purse for something. “It's not too late to turn back and—”

“No,” I say firmly despite my nerves. “I'm doing this.”

“I figured you would say that,” she says, passing something over to me. I stare at the ID with my face and name on it, but a different birthday date. A fake ID. “You didn't think a popular place like this would allow a nineteen-year-old inside, did you?”

I swallow, taking the fake ID from her. “Did you get one for yourself?” I ask, since she's not much older than me, but she only smirks. With only a year age difference between us, I don't believe she's been in this club before either, but she doesn't seem nervous. In all fairness, I've never witnessed anything make Scarlett nervous. She

and I met in college and hit it off when we found out we shared two general education classes. Despite the year that's passed since then, I know little about the person I consider my best friend. She rarely ever talks about her personal life, and I never push her to do so.

"I don't need an ID. I know the owner," she says, surprising me with her words.

"How?"

"Family friend." She shrugs before shutting down as she normally does whenever our conversation shifts to her family. "Let's go."

I expect us to walk to the back of the line, but instead, Scarlett leads me straight to the entrance. The tall, muscled bouncer guarding the entrance gives us a once-over before shaking his head. "Get in line like everyone else," he says.

Scarlet ignores his words and instead hands him her own ID. I can't tell if it's fake or not, but after looking at it for a moment, the bouncer's eyes widen slightly and he returns it.

"You're good. But your friend doesn't look a day over sixteen," the beast of a man tells Scarlett, nodding in my direction. I fight the urge to glower at the man. I may be a little short, but that doesn't translate to my age.

"She's twenty-three," Scarlett offers with an innocent smile. "I can vouch for her."

"I'll need to see some ID," the beast says, and with a nod from my best friend, I pass over the fake ID, holding my breath as the man inspects it. He stares at it for so long that I nearly start squirming, fingering the hem of my dress, and fighting the need to tug on it. The beast looks up and runs his eyes over me before he hands me back the ID and moves aside to let us in.

I don't react until we're inside, then I let out a shuddering breath. "You've been here before?" I ask Scarlet, but she simply shrugs.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“No, I’ve never been here, but like I said, the owner is a family friend,” she responds, hooking her arm with mine and dragging me through a sea of bodies. “Let’s get some alcohol in you and then dance a little. If your man shows up, you’re going to need some liquid courage.”

I want to protest, a little terrified by the prospect of moving out of my comfort zone further than I already have, but she’s right. If I am to face him, then I’ll need a confidence boost to do so. Alcohol is perhaps a terrible way to go about achieving it, but I need all the help I can get if I am to seduce my father’s best friend.

“Okay, let’s go grab a drink.”

## Chapter Two

### Axel

There are a few rules that the Steel Rebels go by, and the most important one is to never start shit with rival clubs and other gangs in the city—without a good reason and evidence to support it. There is a silent agreement between all of us is to stay the hell out of each other’s territory unless we’re looking to start something. We don’t step foot in their territory, and they don’t set foot in ours.

Once in a while, a stray or two will wander into our part of the city looking to cause trouble, and we respond accordingly. By that, I mean we make sure they see the error of their ways, something we always leave to the club’s enforcers. I’ve always made it a point to abide by that rule and stick to Steel Rebels territory...until tonight.

Until her.

Brooke Kane. My late best friend's daughter. The girl has been under my care since she lost her father a year ago. She'd only just graduated from high school when Kane lost his fight against cancer, leaving his only child in the care of the SteelRebels. In his last moments, I promised Kane I—and the rest of the club—would look after his daughter. I vowed to protect Brooke with my life, and the brat has made it her mission to give me gray hairs.

Before her father passed, Brooke was a sweet, shy, mild-mannered girl. But recently something has changed. In the past several months, Brooke has dragged me across the city after her on multiple occasions, throwing herself into situations that forced me to intervene. I figured it was her way of grieving. I had lost my best friend and mentor, but the girl had lost her only parent, and I refused to let her spiral out of control.

But today she's crossed a line. Truly outdone herself. Of all the things the Brooke could have done, she chose this.

I tug off my helmet as I watch the scantily dressed girl and her bad influence of a best friend walk to the entrance of the most popular nightclub in the city—one notorious for its debauchery. Sex, drugs, and alcohol. You can get anything here.

Rave is also owned and run by a mid-level street gang. For the most part, they mind their own business and make their money peddling drugs through the club. So far, they've kept their poison out of our territory, and I want it to stay that way. Saint, the Steel Rebels' president, will have my ass if I cause trouble here, even for Brooke's sake. He's accused me more than once of being overprotective, but Brooke isn't just any girl. She's Kane's daughter, and I made a promise.

I try to ignore the way my body reacts as I watch her walk up to the bouncer, but it's

hard to dismiss the heat low in my gut and the tightening in my jeans at the sight of her in that short dress that barely covers any skin. I try to resist, but my eyes linger on those long legs before tracing her perky ass to that narrow waist, then to the swell of her perfect tits.

Brooke is breathtaking.

She is easily the most beautiful girl I have ever seen, with long brown hair that falls down her back and teal highlights that shimmer in the light. She is a sweet girl despite her efforts to appear mature and wild. In a sea of long legs and exposed skin, I see only her. I've only ever seen her, and I bet her father would turn in his grave if he knew that I harbor such lustful thoughts for her.

She's forbidden.

The wise thing to do would be to turn this bike around and leave. She's nineteen now, and it's time she met guys her own age. She might be a bad influence, but I know Scarlet would never let Brooke do anything truly dangerous. Maybe she'll meet, flirt, and fall in love with someone tonight. The thought of another man touching her sends my blood boiling with rage.

Mine!

The thought is unbidden. It's not the first time the word has slipped into my mind, but it will never be a reality.

Brooke is not mine. She's far too young and pure for a reprobate like me. No, she will never be mine, but I'll be damned if I let someone less deserving touch her.

My fingers clench hard on the helmet when I realize that she's attracting more than just a few glances from the men in line outside the club. Oblivious to all the attention

she's getting, Brooke shuffles nervously on her feet as the bouncer inspects her fake ID. She's not old enough to drink; there is no way they would let her in unless she is carrying a fake ID. This is proven true when the man moves aside to let the girls in. I grit my teeth when his gaze follows her inside.

"Goddamnit!" I curse under my breath as I climb off my bike. I secure the helmet before crossing the road and heading toward the club entrance. There are a few bouncers hanging outside, and I recognize them as members of the local gang from their tattoos. There is a sudden shift in the air as I approach the entrance, and it's clear they recognize the club patch on my leather jacket.

"What would a Steel Rebel be doing here?" the bouncer at the door asks gruffly, his hard eyes on mine, perhaps trying to gauge what mood I'm in. It's not good, and it will definitely only get worse from here. "Are you looking for trouble?"

"Depends," I say, sizing him up before quickly dismissing him as a threat. The bouncer looks to be about my height, with bulging muscles that I would bet are only for show. This gang is more about intimidation than action. "I'm here to collect someone. You gonna let me in?"

His eyes darken as he crosses his arms over his chest. "Depends," he says, echoing me with a sarcastic grin. "Does the someone in question want to be collected?"

"She'll leave willingly," I say, nodding toward the club. "I won't cause a scene as long as no one gets in my way."

"Who is she and what's she to you?"

"Long brown hair, gray eyes, and a fake ID. You just let her and her friend inside," I grind out, my voice dangerously low. "Who she is, isn't your business."

His eyes flash with recognition. “Rebecca?” I assume that must have been the name on her fake ID. “Her ID was fake? Shit. My boss’ll have my ass if he finds out I let in an underage chick.”

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“Then get out of the way so I can go in and get her,” I make a show of pulling my phone out of my pocket and waving it at him. “Or should I have my boss call yours to settle this?”

“Fuck, man. Yeah, whatever, just get her out of her. And Scarlet too. Tell her I don’t give a fuck who her daddy is; pulling this shit ain’t cool.”

He moves his bulky frame to the side, and I slide past him into the club, not wasting a second trying to decipher what he was talking about in regard to Scarlet and her dad. I don’t know anything about the girl, aside from the fact that she’s a friend of Brooke’s from school. Anyway, she isn’t my problem. I’ll make sure she gets home safely, but that’s for Brooke’s sake, not hers.

I fight a wince at the thumping music when I walk in. I must be growing old if the loud club noise irritates me. Or maybe the DJ just has shitty taste in music. Whatever the case, it seems the people grinding on the dance floor don’t mind. My nerves are on edge as I scan the open space until I finally locate her at the bar, holding a drink in her hand and listening to something her friend is saying.

For a solid minute, I stand under the headache-inducing strobe lights and just take her in.

Brooke is breathtaking. Someone like me has no right to someone as beautiful and as precious as her, but that doesn’t stop me from watching her—and wanting her. Every part of me begs to march up to the girl and stake my claim, kiss her in front of all these strangers so they know that she belongs to me.

Control yourself!

My cock aches behind my zipper and my breath comes in short pants as I watch her. Fuck, it would be so easy to walk up to her and crowd her from the back, press my raging cock against that juicy ass. I'd whisper into her ear all the dirty things I want to do to her, feel her breath catch and her body melt against mine. The lighting in the club would allow me to slid my hands under that dress and finger her pussy past her panties without anyone knowing. I bet I could have her wet, panting, and begging for my cock in a matter of seconds. No one has to know, or hell, they can watch as I bend her over the bar and hammer my cock into her pussy. Take her over and over until her cries are lost in the music.

Mine!

As if sensing my sharp gaze on her, Brooke turns around and freezes when our eyes connect. She doesn't seem surprised to see me. If I didn't know better, I would think she was relieved with how her expression eases and her shoulders relax when our eyes lock, but that can't be right. She has to know that my presence here means her plans for the night are finished.

Or maybe not, I think as she brings a half-empty glass to her lips and takes a sip of what I assume is an alcoholic beverage, watching me for a reaction, but I give her none. My expression does little to display the burning need to bend her on my lap, smack her pert ass, and teach the brat a lesson...then kiss it better.

I am about to move and do just that when someone—a man—steps forward, blocking my view of the girl. He's barely taller than her, dressed in shiny red pants and a black shirt with long, wavy dark hair that seems to be all the rage with the younger generation these days. I stop, waiting for a distress signal from her for me to step in and take care of the man, but instead, Brooke nods at him. I watch as she brings the glass to her lips and gulps down the rest of the drink before setting it on the bar and

following him onto the dance floor. I ignore the sharp twinge of jealousy at the sight of Brooke with another man, choosing to watch them for now.

My eyes narrow to slits when he wraps an arm around her waist and yanks her hard against him. Her eyes widen in surprise before falling into discomfort, but even that fades as she gently places her hands on his shoulders. She glances over at me for a second, and I read it in her eyes.

A challenge.

The brat is daring me to do something about her behavior, but I stand rooted to the floor. Everything in me wants to step in and put an end to her games, but I remind myself that the girl is old enough to date. Maybe not flashy boys with bad haircuts she meets at random clubs, but she doesn't need me stepping in every time and ruining her chances of meeting someone.

Brooke huffs and flips her hair in annoyance when she fails to get a reaction out of me before turning back to her dance partner. She seems to be enjoying herself, twirling and smiling to the music, but a few minutes later, I sense a sudden energy shift. His hand around her waist lowers to her ass, and I feel a knot tighten in my stomach. A flicker of unease crosses her face, but he doesn't seem to notice; instead, he leans closer and whispers something that makes her expression darken.

"No," I see her mouth with a pained smile. She pushes back, but the man tightens his hold on her. I read the fear in her eyes when she looks at me with the plea for me to step in and save her. She doesn't need to ask.

She never does.

I'm already pushing through the sea of bodies as I move toward my girl and her dance partner. I grab the man by the collar of his shirt and forcefully pull him away

from her before positioning myself between them. “Walk away,” I say, my voice low and firm, cutting through the noise like a knife. The guy looks up, surprise flashing across his face, followed by bravado. Stupid. Alcohol makes people brave and foolish.

“What the hell, man?” he challenges, swallowing a whimper when I take a step forward.

“Leave before I fuck up your face.”

“W-whatever,” he stammers. “There’s plenty of pussy in this place anyway,” he throws at Brooke before slithering into the crowd and disappearing. I force in a deep breath before turning around. Brooke hugs her arms and avoids my gaze, but we don’t have time to dissect what a stupid idea it was for her to come here tonight. I’ve already the bouncers eyeing me, and I am not in the mood to deal with anymore shit tonight.

“Axel...”

“Not here,” I cut her off, grasping her wrist and turning around to look for her friend. I don’t have to search long as the dark-haired girl steps up next to us. “Here’s what’s going to happen. The two of you are going to follow me out, or I’ll drag you both out kicking and screaming. You,” I nod toward Scarlett, “are going to get into a taxi and go straight home, or so help me—”

“We’ll go,” Brooke says without a fight, and my eyes narrow on her. Convinced that she’s not trying to pull something, I nod for the girls to walk ahead of me. The door bouncer is flanked by a few others when we step out, but none of them approach us as we leave. I walk the two girls to my bike before calling a taxi for Scarlett. Brooke stands by my bike, nervously shuffling her feet as I pay for her friend’s cab. It’s not until that we’re alone that she turns to me. “Look, I didn’t mean for that to happen—”

“Not here,” I say again, conscious of all the eyes on us from across the street.

“Axel...”

I shrug off my jacket and drape it over the trembling girl before climbing on my bike. Last week, Brooke has been acting out for months, taking unnecessary risks and trying to provoke a reaction out of me. Well, she’s finally done it...consequences be damned.

“Get on. I’m taking you home.”

Chapter Three

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

Brooke

Something tells me I might have taken it too far this time. I've never seen Axel so mad before, and that's saying a lot considering the lengths I've gone to these past months to get a reaction out of him.

At first, it started off as a way to cope with the loss of my father, to feel something other than all-consuming grief. Staying out late, going to parties and drinking alcohol, trying increasingly risky activities, it was all was my way of trying to numb the pain of losing the only family I had.

Despite the chosen family of the Rebels my father had left me, I felt alone. I was seeking companionship but failing to find it, so one night I left a house party early and took a walk on the beach. I knew it was stupid and dangerous, but I didn't care. It was that night when I finally I felt it.

A soft caress on my skin. A warmth licking up my body despite the chill of the night, heating my body and warming me inside out. When I turned around, there was a lone figure watching me in the distance. It was just us two on the beach, and he made it no secret that his eyes were on me. Even with the distance, I recognized him.

Axel.

My father's best friend and protégé. The same man I'd had a not-so-secret crush on for as long as I could remember. And he was watching me, following behind, a silent sentinel. This was the first time I'd noticed him, but something told me he'd been shadowing me longer than that.

I want him, as I always have, but Axel has kept a distance safe between us. So I tried to push him, punish him and myself for the rejection I felt over these unrequited feelings. I figured he'd either leave me alone, or maybe he would start seeing me as someone worth pulling close. Tonight, I'd been so sure...

I am jerked from my thoughts when Axel stops, and I straighten up when I realize he's pulled into the parking garage of my apartment building. I climb off the bike with a sigh, expecting him to take his helmet and jacket and leave me, but Axel follows as well, even switching off the engine.

"Let's go."

I blink at the man. "W-where?" He doesn't respond, instead starts for the entrance, and it takes me a second for my brain to catch up with what's happening. Is he coming with me to my apartment? Maybe he wants to walk me to the door, but what if he wants to come inside? Oh God, my apartment is a wreck. Scarlett and I did a magnificent job of messing up the place by playing dress-up all afternoon. "Axel," I call out, running after him, but I'm not fast in heels. I catch up with him just as he's stepping into the elevator, panting as I follow.

Someone else joins us, but I barely notice them as I angle my head to look up at the man I have loved for years. At six foot four, Axel is one of the tallest men I've ever met, with muscles as solid as stone, but I guess that's what happens when you work with cars for years. My eyes shift to those strong, grease-stained fingers that I've longed to feel on my body, and I do my best to swallow down my need for the man.

Axel is good looking. In a sea of well-built men, he's the only one my eyes have ever seen. He carries a rough charm about him, and this time, I make no effort to hide the fact that I am staring at him. It's hard not to stare at the way his shirt clings to his toned physique, fabric stretching across those broad shoulders. His blond hair is a tousled mess from riding the bike without a helmet on. My eyes drop to that strong

jawline, chiseled and defined, shadowed with a bit of a stubble that adds to his rugged appeal.

I've read that it feels better when a man has stubble. When reading the erotic books I keep hidden under my bed, I always imagine his stubble caressing the inside of my thighs, burning my skin with hot caresses, and I bet it would feel great.

I bet anything his touch would send me soaring. I will those deep-set striking brown eyes to look at me, but he doesn't spare me a glance, his jaw set tightly as we rise up the floors.

"Axel—"

The doors open on my floor, the loud ding cutting me off before I can get the man's attention. With a sigh, I follow him out and to my door at the end of the hallway. To my surprise, he doesn't wait for me to dig into my purse for my keys, but instead pulls out his own set of keys and unlocks the door. Axel has a key to my apartment. How long has he had it? Has he ever used it? For some reason, the idea of Axel letting himself into my apartment sends heat coursing through me and pooling in my core.

We enter the apartment, and Axel locks the door behind us. His silence unnerves me more and more by the second. "If you are going to scold me then I have something to say first. I'm not a child anymore. I can dress how I like and go out for drinks and dance with boys if I want," I say, taking the offensive approach, which doesn't have any effect on the giant standing silently in front of me. "Okay, fine. I know it was dumb of me to do what I did tonight, but it's not my fault that guy got a little pushy. I clearly told him no, but he wouldn't stop suggesting that I leave with him and—"

"Stop talking, Brooke."

The words are spoken in a calmness that sends a chill climbing up my spine. I fish the keys out of my bag to unlock the door. Axel reaches out and takes my purse from my trembling finger, placing it on the entry way table. Then he drops to one knee and removes my shoes. My breath stutters at the feel of his fingertips on my bare ankles, and I barely have time to process what is happening before I am spun around to face the wall. “Axel,” I breathe, my heart beating hard against my ribcage. “W-what are you doing?”

“Do you realize what you did tonight, brat?” he growls into my ear, so close I can feel his hot breath brush the back of my neck. “Going to that nightclub in that part of the city, are you out of your mind? Do you realize what could have happened to you if I hadn’t intervened?”

He’s angry. Maybe I took it a step too far tonight, but... “I knew you’d be there.”

“Reckless brat,” he grinds out, and I feel his breath come out in short pants. “You’ve been begging for me to take you in hand for months, haven’t you?”

My heart pounds with excitement at his words, and maybe I shouldn’t be, but I’m more turned on than I ever thought possible. Axel is known to be a calm, steady guy at the motorcycle club, but he didn’t climb the ranks of the Steel Rebels by being soft. I’ve seen him fight before; he’s a beast of a man when he gets angry. I should be shaking with fright, trembling at the thought of this man being so angry with me, definitely not excited. But he would never hurt me, that much I can always count on.

“Axel...”

“You crossed a line tonight, Brooke. Risked your safety—”

“I was safe! Scarlett...”

My mouth parts on a gasp at the sharp slap to my butt, eyes widening with surprise, but when I attempt to turn around, his hand on my waist holds me firmly in place. He traces his hand over my ass, kneading my right cheek, then the left. “You were not safe, you clueless little girl!” he corrects, delivering another slap, which has my dress riding up. I bite hard on my lip, fighting a whimper as a storm of heat floods my sex. I’ve never been spanked before, never imagined I’d ever find pleasure in something so...obscene.

He pulls up my dress the rest of the way to my waist, leaving me naked before spanking me again, harder.

“Going out dressed like this, with no goddamned underwear. Dancing like that with a stranger, taunting me...” Axel grumbles, and I’m not sure if he’s talking to me or himself.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“Oh God!” I gasp when his palm connects with my right ass cheek again, my knees buckling at the sting when the next connects with my left, the intense pulse in my sex increasing tenfold. I bite hard on my lip to suppress a moan.

“You have been pushing boundaries for months, little girl, and tonight you finally went too far,” he says in my ear, delivering three rapid spanks to my ass that has white flashes of pleasure crossing my eyes. I whimper, then moan when he palms my ass cheeks, caressing the sting as his voice drops to a deep rumble. “Bratty little girls like you need punished so they learn to behave, to be safe. To remember who they belong to. Isn’t that right, baby?”

“Please,” I beg, turned inside out as much by his words as the swats to my sensitive skin. When his hands trail between my thighs, forcing them apart, I can’t stop my hips from pressing back into him. His rough hand caresses the inside of my thigh, his breath growing heavy against my nape as he teases my skin.

“No one is allowed to touch you. None of those men at the club deserve you.” I gasp when he slides his thick finger between my folds, knees buckling at the hot sensation that shoots through my abdomen. I’ve never been touched by another man, never wanted anyone’s hands on me but his. My own is the only touch I’ve ever known, and it never felt like this. My fingers never made my toes curl whenever I indulged.

It’s different with him. It’s better with Axel. Everything is better with Axel.

He makes every part of my body throb with heat and excitement. I’m wet between my legs, my folds damp with arousal that floods my sex. He’s touching me, is all I can think. The man I have wanted—loved—for so long is finally touching me.

And I want more from him. Need more!

“Only you,” I pant as he presses his middle finger over a sensitive spot, a thrill racing through my sex. “I only wanted you to see.” To touch. My nipples bead behind my dress, and he must sense my desperation because he tugs at my zipper, pulling it down so hard I hear it rip. With a thinly veiled growl, Axel rips the dress away, exposing my chest. His front is pressed against my back and his hand is on me, fondling my tit and pinching my nipple between those rough fingers as he drives me to madness with the hand between my legs. It’s almost like something’s taken control over him as he buries his face in my hair, touching me...everywhere.

There is no control. No finesse. No soft caresses.

His touch is hungry and desperate. “You’re such a little cock tease,” he whispers into my ear, and my breath catches when he pinches my clit, kissing my shoulder as he brings me closer to the threat of an explosion of pleasure. “But no one else can have you. They’ll have to go through me, and I won’t let them even get close!” Axel tugs at my nipple, sinking his teeth into my shoulder at the same time, and that sends an explosion through me. My breath catches in my throat, and my body locks up for a second before releasing with rough tremors. I quake against him, sobbing as he continues to work me sensitive nub, drawing out my pleasure and leaving me a sobbing mess.

I’ve barely recovered when Axel withdraws his hand and spins me around to face him. I gasp at the heat I read in his eyes, but I barely have time to see it before his mouth slams down on mine. I’ve never been kissed before, but I doubt this truly even counts as one. We’re sharing air. It’s a press of lips as we breathe in each other. There is something feral about him as he unbuckles his belt and rips down the zipper of his jeans, and I can’t help but pull back, my eyes dropping to his cock, and holy shit!

I would be lying if I said I haven’t tried to imagine what his cock looks like, but I

wasn't even close. Every inch of this man is immense, it seems.

His hand grips my waist and yanks me against him. I bite into my bottom lip as he lifts my leg to drape over his hip. I roll my hips into him, offering myself to him. He's supposed to put this cock inside me. I've read about this plenty of times. It'll hurt, but I want it. I'm desperate for it. I don't care about the pain because it's him.

"I'm ready," I tell him, wrapping my arms around his neck, blushing fiercely as those heated eyes move over my face. "Do it..."

"Fuck!" he growls, his pupils blowing wide and nostrils flaring as he grips his thick shaft. "You're killing me, baby." His hand leaves my waist to grip my hip as he slides his cock against my folds, and I nearly scream at the sensation—but it's not enough. He isn't inside me.

"It's okay, you can do it."

"Not here... Not like this..."

"I want it. Want to feel you."

"Fuuuck!" he chokes out, working his hips faster, the head of his cock brushing my clit with each stroke. A fresh wave of my arousal mixed with his precum makes the glide smooth, and the feeling is like nothing I could ever describe. The romance novels under my bed never prepared me for anything like this. I feel it the moment he climaxes. Axel stills against me, tensing before he releases with a bellow, painting my inner thighs with hot spurts, and the sensation of his cum on my skin pulls me right over the edge with him. I cling to him, burying my face in his shoulder and breathing in his scent as he spills his seed over my skin. I whimper at the feeling of his rough shirt rubbing against my sensitive tits, loving the feel of those firm muscles under my fingertips, but the elation is cut off abruptly when Axel tenses against me

once more.

“Axel...”

“Fuck,” he curses out, pushing back to look at me, and this time, the heat from moments ago has cleared from his gaze, and in its place is...regret.

Pain slams into me like a knife, and I gasp at the look in his eyes. Axel has pulled away, but he not just physically. I sense him withdraw from me emotionally, and everything we just did—what we just shared—is tainted in an instant.

“You asshole,” I whisper, sniffing back tears as I attempt to cover my naked body, but there’s barely anything left of my green dress after the damage he did to it.

“I’m sorry, Brooke. I never should have touched you. Your father—”

“Isn’t here!” I hiss, turning around. Unwilling to hear his dumb apology or see the regret in his expression. “This has nothing to do with him.”

“Brooke, I am supposed to be looking out for you, and just now I crossed a line.”

I whirl around, fury burning in me, and I latch onto it like a lifeline. “How can you cross a line when it’s something we both wanted?” My eyes drop to his hands, which are white-knuckled fists at his sides. He’s fighting with himself against the urge to reach out and touch me. I can see it. He wants me as much as I want him, so why is he holding back? “You’re always watching me, so how can you be blind to the fact that I want to be with you?”

“Don’t—”

“Don’t what?” I yell, frustrated. “Am I not allowed to want you? To fall in love with

you? Well, it's too late for that, Axel!"

"Brooke—"

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

I hate the regret I see in him, but it's the pity that breaks me. My eyes swim with hurt, and I bite hard on my lip, willing the tears to not spill. I can't break down in front of this man. I've already made a fool of myself enough as it is.

"Just get out." I turn around, ignoring his pleas to listen as I gather what little dignity I have left and hurry to my room, slamming the door closed behind me.

Here, I can break down.

Whatever it is I set out to prove tonight, it's obvious that I've failed. And lost everything in the process.

### Chapter Four

Axel

A better man might turn around and leave, give the girl some space to breathe. He would honor her privacy and find some way to atone for his sins. He would repent for touching someone he never should have laid his hands on. But I'm not a better man, and I'm not leaving Brooke, not like this.

Forbidden.

I pace the floor of her living room, worrying my hair as the word rolls around my mind. Brooke Kane is beautiful inside and out. When I first met her, she was a shy little girl who never left her father's side. I met Brooke when she was only ten and already knew her way around an engine. Anything her father did, Brooke was right

there eager to help. She had this spark in her eye that lit up when she smiled, and even when she grew into a beautiful young woman, she held onto it. But it went out when her father died last year. I wanted to see that spark again, so I held back when she began to act out, allowed her to do whatever she wanted—within reason—in hopes that she would find her spark again.

She was supposed to go to college and fall in love with some stupid boy her age. Maybe he could make her eyes to light up the way they used to. Someone as warm and bright as hers shouldn't be bound to someone like me. Rough around the edges and jaded, I'm not the person for her. She deserves better than me. Brooke Kane deserves the world.

“Am I not allowed to want you? To fall in love with you?”

I stop in front of the door—the wrong door. I should be reaching for the one that leads out of her apartment, but instead, I find myself standing outside her bedroom. An honorable man would leave like she asked and apologize for what happened once she's calmed down, but I can't bring myself to leave her like this. Nothing, not a bullet or a knife, hurts worse than seeing Brooke's tears and knowing I caused them.

Fuck this!

I turn the knob and push, expecting to find the door locked, but it opens. Brooke is lying on her bed under the covers, facing the wall, and I notice her curl her shoulders inward when I step into the room.

“If you are here to apologize, I don't want to hear it,” she hisses, tugging the covers over her bare shoulder, and I find my mind racing with the knowledge that she's naked under those sheets. Those small, soft tits are hidden from my view, but I remember exactly how they felt against my skin. God, she was so perfect in my arms minutes ago; we fit like a puzzle, or maybe that was just wistful thinking.

“You deserve better—”

“I’m old enough to decide what I deserve!” she interrupts, sitting up and turning to face me. The covers slip down her shoulder and pool around her waist, exposing her tits, and my semi-erect cock hardens to full mast in seconds.

“God,” I rasp, taking her in. She looks like a fucking dream, and I am helpless to do anything but stare. She flushes and scrambles to cover up, but I must make a sound because she stops. “We should talk.” It’s the right thing to do. I have to fix things with Brooke, apologize for giving in to my baser needs. I need to say something to remind her that I will always protect her no matter what. What she feels for me is not love. She thinks she wants me, when in reality she’s just grieving and turning to the one man besides her father who has always been there for her.

“Are you just going to stand there and look at me?”

My eyes shift to her face and those gorgeous gray eyes that are identical to Kane’s, but different too. Her’s are softer, more open. Beautiful. “What happened back there was...”

“If you are about to say that it was a mistake, you should leave like I told you to,” Brooke says, pushing back the covers. I can tell it takes a great deal of courage and a lot of forced bravado to do. She’s naked, and I damn near choke on air when she climbs out of bed and starts toward me. I don’t take my eyes off her body until she stops in front of me. A foot shorter, she has to look up to meet my gaze. She brings her hands up to touch me, tracing the planes of my chest with her delicate fingers, and I track the movement, heart hammering in my chest as she slowly chips at my willpower. “If you regret it, why are you still here?”

Because she’s a drug.

And I'm addicted. Capturing the moon and all the stars would be easier than giving up Brooke. I've been taking her in small doses over for nearly a year, wanting and craving her from a distance, and tonight, I just had my first taste of euphoria. How the fuck can I walk away from that?

"I can't seem to convince myself to do the right thing," I say honestly, running the backs of my fingers over her cheek. She shudders, her eyelids fluttering from the move. My eyesdrop to her erect nipples, and it's hard to ignore her reactions to such simple caresses.

"This is the right thing," she insists when I trail the back of my hand down her jaw to neck. Her breath hitches when I circle a nipple with my finger. "How can it be wrong when it feels so right?"

I feel it. Whatever willpower I was grasping onto slips from my grasp. I have none left, I realize. Not enough of it was there to begin with, but at least then, I could trick myself into believing that I would let another man touch Brooke. I would have buried them before I let anyone else have her.

Mine.

Goddamnit, she's mine!

Her lips part with a gasp when I pinch her beaded nipple between my knuckles then lean in to capture the sound with my mouth. Brooke whimpers, wrapping her arms around my shoulders as she opens up for me, and I realize that I am done fighting this—done fighting my feelings for her. Our mouths brush with terrifying desperation. They're soft, her lips, and I taste the cocktail she had tonight. I should have figured that even her lips would be addictive. With a possessive growl, I wrap an arm around her waist and pull her naked body against mine, kissing her with the intensity of a starved man. It's wet and feral... Desperate!

Mine.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

My lips are locked on hers when I pick her up, and she moans, wrapping her thighs around my waist. She gasps against my lips when I press her to the wall, tongue fucking her mouth and exploring every inch. I give her everything. I'm hard as a rock, but how could I not be? I'm always hard when it comes to this sexy girl, and the feel of her soft naked body against mine only intensifies that feeling.

"Stop me, baby," I say hoarsely against her lips, hoping she comes to her sense and puts an end to this. Praying to any higher power that might exist that she doesn't.

"I don't want to," she whispers, the sound morphing into a moan when I thumb her nipples, drinking in her flushed expression. God, she looks like an angel. Someone a man like myself does not deserve to be in the same room with let alone touch. "Please. Don't stop."

My mouth slams back down on hers, tunneling my fingers into her hair and angling her head to the side, and I thrust my tongue between her soft lips. Fuck, I need her under me now! In bed, taking my cock in that tight, virgin pussy.

Our lips are still locked together, breathing each other in as I carry her to the bed. We tumble down together, but I manage to pry myself away long enough to strip, tearing at my clothes like a feral beast. Her fingers reach between us to help, eyes glazed over with need as she tugs impatiently at my belt. I manage to rip off my shirt then help her with the pants, my mouth back down on hers as I kick off my jeans and boxer briefs.

"Fuck, you're so beautiful," I say thickly, trailing my hand up her rip cage and cupping her tit, rolling her nipple with my thumb. "I can't walk away. How could I?"

She cries out when I squeeze her nipple between my fingers, her back arching off the bed with a loud moan. I lean in and brush my lips over her chin, licking a path down her neck and losing myself in her softness, drowning in her sweet floral scent—jasmine with notes of something velvety and warm. “You have no idea how many times I’ve imagined kissing every inch of you.” I swipe my tongue over a nipple, watching her lips part on a cry and her eyes squeeze shut.

“Y-you wanted me,” she pants.

“Like air.” And isn’t that the honest truth. I lick at the nipple again before wrapping my mouth around the bud sucking. She cries out, tunneling her fingers into my hair and holding me tight against her as I suck on the tight bead, drawing it between my lips and flicking it with my tongue before shifting to the other size to repeat the action. Brooke is trembling when I draw back. “I tried to picture how you would look with my face between your legs, licking at that hot pussy and getting you all wet and ready for my cock. How your tits would shake as I buried my tongue between your folds, body writhing as I tasted every inch of your pink heaven.”

“Oh God!”

“I don’t have to imagine anymore,” I rasp against her skin, possessiveness roaring through me as I trail my right hand over her hip and part her legs. I bite back a groan when I find her wet and dripping between her thighs.

“Axel,” she whimpers my name when I tease my middle finger along the seam of her sex slowly until her feminine lips part for me. She cries out when my finger finds her clit. I stroke the swelling bud gently, drinking in her reaction to my touch.

She’s beautiful.

Her hair is fanned out on the pillow, her cheeks flushed pink, mouth parted, and those

gorgeous pale gray eyes unfocused and dark with desire. Only I get to see her like this. Only I will ever see her like this!

Mine!

“Oh God!” she shouts when I stroke her clit fast and rough, her breathing growing heavier until she suddenly jolts, her thighs locking on my hand as her stomach trembles with an orgasm. I don’t give her time to recover before my face is buried between her legs and I am licking at her pussy, tasting her pleasure. I hold her thighs open when she starts writhing on the bed, I lick at the slippery soft petals of her flesh and lose myself in her intoxicating taste, working her tight hole open with my tongue. “Axel... God.Oh my God!” she cries out, her fingers gripping my hair as she starts rolling her hips and fucking herself on my tongue. My hips move too, thrusting into the bed as I lap at her sex, thirsty for her unique taste. My lips close around her clit tightly as I press a finger inside her, and that propels her into yet another climax. Her body stiffens a few seconds before she comes apart, flooding my tongue with her pleasure. She sobs, thrashing on the bed as I continue to work her body her through the orgasm, and she’s panting when I finally pull back, her face and body flushed.

She’s a dream.

God, she’s so young. Too precious for an undeserving beast like myself. And yet, in all of my thirty-one years, I’ve never wanted to better for anyone as much as I do her. It has nothing to do with the promise I made and everything to do with how she makes me feel.

Mine!

“You’re mine,” I growl possessively, fisting my cock as I climb up her body. “I’m going to make you mine!”

She nods; her eyes dazed when they lock on mine as her thighs open wider for me. “Yours,” she whispers, wrapping her arms around me, and I see it in her eyes. Her desperation for me to claim her is almost as strong as my need to make her mine.

Eyes on hers, I bring my aching cock to her hole. Her nails dig into my shoulder as I press an inch inside of her, fighting with myself to not thrust into her and bury myself with one motion. Fuck, of course she’s tight. Brooke has never been with a man before, and that thought alone nearly turns me into an animal. I’ve known her for years, been following her for months, long enough to know that she’s never been touched by a man before. She’s never made it a secret either, talking boldly to her best friend about her virginity knowing I could hear them. It’s almost like she wanted me to know.

Her innocence, the precious flower she’s gifting me is one I intend to treat with care. The thought of anyone hurting her, even myself, fills me with rage, and I would bear all the hurt for her if I could.

But Fuck, she’s like a vise around the tip of my cock, making it hard for me to move!

“Fuck, Brooke. You’re so tight,” I rasp as I inch my cock slowly into her pussy. I bite back a growl when she wraps her legs around me, pulling me deeper into her sex.

“Do it,” she begs. “Make me yours!” Then she pulls my head down, and her lips seek mine. I wrap a hand around her hips before lifting her up and slamming forward past the thin barrier of her innocence. She gasps into the kiss, her arms tightening around me as I fill her with my thick shaft.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuuuck!

I give her a minute to adjust to my cock, heart racing fast as I struggle not to move. Jesus, she’s so tight it takes every bit of strength I have to hold still. My balls ache

with the need for release, but I grasp on to my slipping control, fighting through clenched teeth to keep a tight hold. Our earlier encounter in her entry way helped take off the edge of my desire, but I'm still barely holding on.

I kiss her lips and jaw, trailing my mouth over her face before pulling back to look at her. "Are you okay, baby?" I ask, studying her face for any tells.

"I'm fine," she answers.

"I don't want to hurt you, but I can't hold back any longer."

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

Brooke brings her fingers to my face, cupping my jaw between her soft hands. “I want you. I can take all of you,” she says dazedly. “Don’t hold back, Axel. Make me yours. Please.”

“Mine!” I growl, pulling out before thrusting back in and flattening her on the bed. Something feral and desperate seems to take hold over me as I lift her knees to my shoulders, which sends me impossibly deep inside her. She whines at the move, eyes widening to saucers when I start fucking her with deep strokes. “You’re the most beautiful girl I have ever seen, and you are mine. No one else gets to touch you. No one else can have you.”

“Yours!” she sobs as I ram forward; her fingers fall away to grip the sheets, ripping at them. Her tits bounce with every slam into her sex, and her breath hitches with every grind of my cock until the room is filled with desperate noises and the wet sounds of our love making.

I’m close.

Goddamn it! I could spend a lifetime in this pussy, fucking her over and over again until we’re one, but I’m not deluded enough to think I can hold out much longer. Not when it comes to her and the spell she’s cast over me.

“Fuck, baby, so close,” I rasp, slamming my cock in and out of her with fevered thrusts. I rail her like a beast, and she rocks her hips to meet my thrusts, sobbing out my name when I bring my finger to her sex and strum her clit in rough circles.

“Oh God!” she cries out, her sex locking hard around my cock as she climaxes. Her

body shudders from the orgasm and her eyes roll back, a beautiful sight that I catch through lust-glazed eyes. I pin her down, snarling like an animal as I hammer my cock into her tight little pussy with primal need.

“Mine!” I growl, my hips slapping against hers seconds before my muscles tense in warning. I come with a roar, my cock spasming and firing a thick load of seed into her womb. My fingers dig into her hips as I fuck her fast and rough into the bed, filling her. This climax is stronger and more violent than anything I have ever experienced before.

I could have missed this, I realize. With my stupid guilt, I could have missed out on the best thing that’s ever happened to me—her.

I collapse on top of her, bracing my elbow over her head to stop myself from crushing her with my massive build. I run my eyes over her face, taking in her sated expression, and when she looks up at look me, I spy the smile on her lips. Her brows furrow when I don’t return it.

“Axel...”

“Are you okay?” I ask, gently pulling out of her. “Did I hurt you?”

“No,” she says, watching me carefully as I pull back and climb out of bed. I walk to the bathroom adjoining her room and grab a towel, wetting it under the sink before returning to the bedroom. “Y-you don’t have to do this.”

Her face is flushed and eyes wide as I run the towel between her legs, staring at the evidence of our love making and loss of her innocence. “I want to,” I say thickly, cleaning her up before getting back up to dispose of the towel. When I walk back into the room, she’s tugged the covers over her body and is watching me with a guarded look. Her eyes widen with surprise when I pull back the covers and climb into bed

beside her then pull her into my arms.

Did she think I'd leave? After making love to her so passionately, what kind of a scoundrel would just up and leave as if she was nothing more than a quick fuck?

Brooke leans back, her eyes searching my face. "D-do you regret it?" she asks quietly, and I hear the vulnerability in her voice. Fuck, it's my fault for making her so insecure in us as to believe that I would leave after what we just shared.

"No, I don't regret what happened tonight," I say, but it's not that simple. "I've been following you for months, Brooke." It's no secret between us, and I never put much of an effort into hiding it from her. "I tried to hold back and not step in to stop your antics as long as you were safe."

"I know," she says, seemingly confused by where I'm going with this.

"Before tonight, I didn't step in even whenever a man approached you. I told myself I was giving you a chance to form connections, to explore. But each time, I wanted to rip out their eyes for even looking at you." Brooke gasps at my confession, and I grasp her chin and force her eyes to meet mine. "You belong to me now, which makes me a very dangerous man. Anyone who tries to hurt you will have to deal with me. Any man who touches you will die."

She shivers at my words, staring up at me for a long moment before she finally speaks. "So you don't regret it? Even with your promise to my dad?"

"No. I promised your father I would keep you safe. I won't deny that I still feel some guilt for taking his precious daughter's innocence, but there is no man on this Earth who will care for you like I do, and I think Kane would understand."

"I know he would. He loved you like a son," she responds, and I know she's right.

Kane was my best friend, my mentor. He put me on the right path and taught me everything he knows. Doing right by Brooke, loving her, is another way to honor the man I owe so much.

With a yawn, Brooke pushes forward and buries her face in my neck, and in seconds, she's sound asleep. I listen to her breathing even out, hugging her much smaller body against mine, and she hums contentedly against me in her sleep.

I may not be the perfect man for her; I'm rough around the edges and jaded by life, but I will be the only man for her. Brooke Kane belongs to me now. Perhaps she has since the moment I made my promise to her father, and I just wasn't ready to admit it.

Whatever the case, she's mine now, and I'll protect her with my life.

## Chapter Five

Brooke

It's cowardly of me to hide under the covers in fear of facing the truth of what happened last night. A huge part of me believes that I dreamed up the entire thing with Axel. Maybe I don't remember the events of the night correctly and light ache in my body is just wistful thinking on my part.

Axel picking me up from the club and giving me a ride to my place before following me into my apartment. The kissing, the touching... Heck, the man gave me four orgasms in a single night. How could that happen outside of a dream? In what world outside the one in my mind would the man I am deeply in love with make love to me the way he did and promise to hurt anyone who dared touch me?

Axel probably dropped me off in front of my building and rode away in fury. The ride up the elevator and the moments shared in my apartment were all things I wished

would have happened. Certainly, my mind conjured things that would never happen in the real world, but then, why did it all feel so real?

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

The memory of his touch is burned into my skin. I have to face the truth, that life as I know it as surely changed. The only question that remains is, how will Axel behave toward me now? Will he pretend our night together never happened, or will he accept that there is something real between us?

I slowly tug the covers from my face, blinking against the sharp morning light as I look around my bedroom. My very empty bedroom. I thought I would see his jeans and ripped shirt still on the floor, or at least something that showed he'd been here, but the only evidence of what we shared is the dull ache between my legs.

There's nothing.

No trace of the man anywhere in the room. The apartment is quiet, and any sign I was hoping for is absent. Maybe I really dreamed it all, or worse, he woke up with regret and left in a hurry. That would kill me. The thought of Axel regretting the beautiful moments we shared has my stomach tightening in knots.

A disappointed sigh slips from my lips as I shove the covers off and climb out of bed. I check the alarm clock, letting out another sigh when I realize that it's only seven, but it's a Sunday which means I have nothing planned for the day. I could call up Scarlett and vent my feelings to my best friend, but she's never available on Sundays. Something about having a family thing to attend, but she's never quite explained what it is. Scarlett gets a little vague and withdrawn when I bring up her family even by accident, so it probably wouldn't be a good idea to contact her today when she's around them. Maybe someday she'll trust me enough to open up about that part of her life, but until then, I'll just have to spend my Sundays alone. Of course, I could go to the Steel Rebels clubhouse for the weekly cookout this evening, but I'm not sure

that's a good idea since Axel would doubtless be there. I don't know if I want to face him after being left like this.

"I guess it's just me today," I say, tempted to climb back into bed, but the insistent call of nature is louder, urging me toward the bathroom. The cold tiles against my bare feet are a jolt, and I welcome the shock to my senses. I start the shower and wait for the water to heat up as I brush my teeth. By the time I'm done with my shower, any traces of sleep are gone, but I'm no more clearheaded about what happened last night and why Axel wasn't here this morning.

As I step out of the bathroom, towel wrapped around me, I hear it. A scraping sound, like a key turning in the lock. My heart nearly stops for a moment. I freeze as my mind races with possibilities. Who has a key to my apartment? Brooke, but she's with her family today, and she wouldn't come over without calling first.

I gasp in horror at the thought of someone picking the lock and breaking into my apartment. But before the thought has a chance to really take root and spur me into action, the door opens and my shoulders sag in relief.

Shit, I'm nearly naked. I bolt into my bedroom before Axel sees me. My hands tremble as I drop the towel and pull a robe around me. The fabric is old and worn, providing little more cover than the towel did, but the belt around my waist makes me feel secure, like a barrier to protect me from Axel inevitably telling me last night was a mistake.

"Brooke?"

I freeze at the familiar voice, then I pull the bedroom door open and step out. I see Axel standing in the entryway, and my breath catches in my throat. He is a vision, a perfect blend of rugged charm and effortless style. His blond hair is tousled, dark, and slightly mussed, probably from taking off his helmet. The beautiful messy strands

frame his strong face and accentuate his jawline.

I love him.

That has never been a question for me. From the time I was old enough to understand what romantic love is, I've been in love with Axel. Not once since that first realization have I second-guessed myself on this. I love everything about him. His sun-kissed skin—a warm golden hue that speaks of the time he spends outside—contrasts beautifully with his deep-set earthy brown eyes flecked with hints of golds. The man is gorgeous of course, but more than that, he's kind. He was my father's closet friend for a reason, despite their age gap, and I like to think that my angel of a father was a great judge of character. It only makes sense that I would fall for his best friend.

"You came back," I say, my eyes dropping to the grocery bag he's holding, its contents bulging. He's wearing a simple black shirt and slightly worn jeans, a different set of clothes from what he had on last night.

"Thought I would be back before you woke up," he says, toeing off his boots and stepping fully into the apartment. My heartrate picks up speed as he crosses the room and comes to me. "I didn't want to wake you, but I needed to run back to the clubhouse for a change of clothes, and you didn't have anything in your kitchen for breakfast.."

"I didn't... I mean, I thought maybe..," I break off, unwilling to put my fears into words, and he smiles kindly, understanding and reassurance in his eyes, and I feel the tension in my body melt away.

Last night did happen, and he isn't telling me he regrets it.

"So, breakfast?" he asks, gesturing with the bag in his hands, but I don't look away

from his face. He's here, is all I can think. He left, but he came back to me. That must mean he doesn't regret what we shared last night.

He doesn't regret me.

I'm afraid to ask what this makes us. Lovers? Is he my boyfriend now? Axel is anything but a boy. A man in every sense of the word, so the name doesn't even sound right. A part of me wants to put a label on it so it feels more real—solid, permanent—but I'm afraid to bring it up in case he's reminded of the forbidden nature of our relationship.

So I swallow the need to ask, choosing to bask in the moment and not ruin it with my neediness. I want forever. Now that I know how his touch feels, how hips lips taste... It's obvious that the man has ruined me for all others; I want forever with him.

"Do you have plans for the day?" I ask, playing it off like it doesn't matter, when in actuality, I want this man to lead me back to bed so we can recreate last night all over again.

"Yes." My heart drops. "And so do you."

"Huh?"

Axel raises a thick brow. "You didn't forget, did you?"

"Forget what?" Did we make plans last night that slipped my mind?

"The club cookout," Axel says with a chuckle. "Saint will come by and drag you to the clubhouse if we both miss it again."

"We?"

“I didn’t attend the last one either,” he says, his eyes on mine. “I was busy watching a girl walk the lakeshore alone.”

“You followed me?” I ask, more surprised by the fact that he missed out on the club’s cookout than I am that he followed me across town to simply watch me go for a walk. I always thought the Steel Rebels was his entire world—his family—and that nothing and no one could drag him away. Not that I’d want to. The MC is the only family I’ve ever known aside from my father. I know most of the members think of me as their honorary sister. I grew up in the club.

## Page 11

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

My mother died from complications associated with my birth. Her loss devastated my father, and for the first few months of my life, he was lost in his grief, so his Rebel brothers stepped in and helped raise me. The club meant the world to my father and me. We may not have lived there, but the Steel Rebel clubhouse was always home.

Why would Axel feel any different? He may not have grown up in the club, but Rebels are his only family.

“They didn’t need me. You did.” Axel’s words snap me back to the present, and I read the truth in his eyes. “I can afford to miss a few Church meetings or a chance to catch up at the cookout with my brothers, but your safety far outweighs all club business.”

“Because of the promise you made to my father?”

“Yes,” he says with a nod. There is no need for him to respond otherwise. I was there when, during his last moments, my father made Axel promise to look after me, but...I don’t want that to be the case anymore. I want Axel to be with me because he wants to and not because of some misguided promise.

“Of course,” I say, trying to hide my disappointment. “Okay, we’ll go to the cookout this time—”

“We will, but not yet. We have some things to take care of first.” He closes the distance between us. My heart is practically hammering in my chest as he reaches me and pulls the robe open, revealing my nude body. Axel sucks in a sharp breaththrough his teeth, heat flaring in those dark eyes as they meet mine.

“W-what things?” I stammer, unable to stop myself from sliding my hand over his firm stomach and feeling his muscles shift under my fingertips. I trail my fingers up his chest, and a deep growl rumbles in his chest when my nails graze his nipple, so I do it again.

“Fuck, Brooke. I was going to cook you breakfast.”

“I’m not hungry, not for food anyway,” I say, looping my arms around his neck and pulling his lips down to mine, but I stop before we touch, his warm breath brushing against mine in an intimate moment that makes my heart twist with need. “I want you. Please.”

His eyes go dark with the last word. His mouth slams down hard on mine as his hands go around me to lift me into his arms. I wrap my legs around him, whimpering into his lips when my nipples brush against the material of his shirt. I taste coffee on his lips, kissing him back with just as much need, and I barely notice it when he carries me to bed.

And then his mouth is everywhere.

He’s like a man drowning with the way he breathes me in, his need so strong that he doesn’t stop moving. His fingers are on my nipples, pinching and fondling the little buds, then his face is between my legs, lapping at my sex feverishly. I whine and sob, writhing desperately on the bed until I feel the strong pull of my orgasm, but he pulls back before I can climax.

I’m practically panting, and the spot between my legs is drenched with arousal when he finally tugs down his zipper and shoves away his jeans. Axel grabs my thigh and brings it to his hip before slamming into me, sheathing himself to the hilt. The movement is so rough, the bed frame slams into the wall, no doubt waking my next-door neighbor, but Axel is an animal, feral and brutal with his thrusts. As gentle with

me as he was last night, he's unbridled in his passion now.

Before I realize what his happening, he pulls out, then he flips me around and, on my knees, pushes my head down on the pillow as he slams back into me. The position sends him impossibly deeper, and before long, I'm moaning uncontrollably, begging for more even though I'm not sure I could handle it.

But it's him.

As long as it's him, I'll always take whatever he gives me. He is the only man I have ever wanted—will ever want.

Mine!

"Fuck, baby, I'm close!" Axel growls from behind me, fisting my hair with one hand and strumming my clit with the other, and it doesn't take long before pleasure explodes not just from the spot where our bodies connect, but from the roots of my hair to the tips of my toes. He's everywhere. I feel him everywhere! "Mine," he roars, echoing my earlier thought.

"Yours!" I sob, rough trembles rocking my body as he finally reaches his climax, burying his seed inside me. He fucks me through my orgasm before we both collapse on the bed in a tangle of limbs, our labored breathing filling the room.

God.

I never thought I'd have this, not with Axel. But now that I know how it feels to be his, the thought of losing it is soul wrenching. I can only hope that once we leave my apartment, he won't change his mind.

Chapter Six

Axel

The familiar rumble of my bike fades when I kill the engine, and Brooke's arms unwind from around my waist as she straightens up before climbing off. I'm about to swing my leg over the seat and climb off as well when I hear the unmistakable roar of another motorcycle approaching behind me, so I turn around to watch one of my brothers pull into the underground garage beneath the clubhouse.

Fuck! I haven't figured out what to say to my brothers about the new dynamic between Brooke and me. I was hoping to talk to the club president, Saint, before anyone else found out. There goes my chances of kissing Brooke goodbye.

I was convinced that I would be the last one to show and that all of my brothers would already be in the clubhouse when I did, allowing me a moment alone with Brooke before I left for Church. There is no fucking way I can touch or kiss her in the presence of one of my brothers. Every guy here sees Brooke as something like their niece or little sister. I can't say for certain what their reaction to our new relationship will be, but I don't have high hopes it'll be favorable. I want a chance to speak to Saint first before I announce our relationship to the rest of them. If I can get his approval, the others will follow his lead.

Brooke isn't just another girl being introduced to the club. Because of her father, Brooke is already part of the Steel Rebel family. Hell, she's been a fixture of the clubhouse longer than me. Before me, Kane was the head mechanic for the club. He ran the auto shop, and there is little that our members value over our bikes, which made Kane one of the most trusted and valued guys in the club. He trained me to take over the position from him when he retired. I've always been aware that it was Kane's faith in me that cultivated the high respect I have in the club hierarchy today. But that doesn't mean the guys won't have something to say about a dark horse like me pursuing their pseudo-baby sister. It's always been an unspoken rule that the daughters of club members are off limits.

I climb off my Harley just as the other rider takes off his helmet, and I am surprised to see that it's Gray, the MC's spook. Gray is a rare sight as he's always away working as a mole for the club, gathering intelligence on our behalf. For the most part, he stays away from the clubhouse to maintain his cover. He's probably the only guy in the club who doesn't have the Steel Rebel emblem tattooed on his skin. Even when he's here, he hovers on the outskirts, keeping himself apart from the rest of us.

He doesn't look surprised to see Brooke with me, though I don't think anything surprises Gray. He always knows more than the rest of us. He smiles at the girl I've claimed as mine. It's harmless, but it's enough to have me glowering with possessiveness. I fight the need to wrap an arm around her and pull her close to me, to stake my claim before one of my brothers gets any funny ideas.

Soon.

Patience!

“Hey, Gray,” Brooke calls out happily, running her fingers through her mussed hair as she hands me back the helmet. “It’s been a while since I’ve seen you.”

“You’re a rare sight yourself,” the man responds with a chuckle.

“Yeah, well, college has been kicking my butt. This semester in particular was hard, but I just need some time to adjust to the course load.”

“You’re a smart girl; I know you’ll make us all proud.”

Brooke flushes at the compliment. “I hope so. I want to find a job in city when I graduate.”

“You want to stay in Chicago?” Gray asks, his brows lifting in surprise. “Don’t you want to explore the world a little?”

The question sets my teeth on edge. It’s a valid question; Brooke has never left the state as far as I know. Kane wasn’t much of a traveler, preferring to stick close to the clubhouse. It would make sense for Brooke to want to get out and see what the world has to offer.

Fuck, Gray is right. Brooke is just getting started. She hasn’t had a chance to explore the world and or really even learn who she is. And now I’m about to tie her down to a

city she's known her entire life.

I question if maybe I jumped the gun. I gave into my baser needs without considering what she might want for her future. My thoughts are racing so quickly second guessing the promises I've made this girl that I don't notice the hand creeping up the back of my thigh and nearly jump out of my skin when I feel a touch glide over my ass, gentle and caressing.

"I want to stay." Brooke's words break through the fog of my thoughts. Her eyes are on Gray, but somehow it feels like she's talking to me. "I love this city, and everyone who matters to me is here. My memories are of my father here too. Why would I want to be anywhere else?"

A long silence follows her words. I study the girl, looking for any sign of deception, but those beautiful innocent gray eyes are clear and the smile on her face is easy and genuine. Gray clears his throat. "You're right. This is your home. Everyone will be happy to hear you want to stay, but you know we'd all support you if you wanted to see the world. Let's catch up some more at the cookout, okay?" He waits for her nod before turning to me. "We're late. Do you want to head inside?"

"Go on ahead," I tell him, waiting until he's disappeared through the into the garage elevator before I slide my hand to Brooke's nape and pull her lips to mine. She gasps into the kiss, surprised by the sudden move, but then melts into my embrace. Her mouth parts for me, and I kiss her like I hadn't spent all day making love to her.

"Axel," she breathes when we break apart, her lips wet and swollen, eyes dazed when they lock on mine. "You better head inside now, or Saint will send someone to come looking for you."

I caress her nape, and I find myself getting lost in those beautiful gray eyes. "You are mine, Brooke," I rasp. "If you want to leave the city or state, heck, if you want to

move countries, you won't need to do it alone."

Her eyes widen in surprise. "Y-you would come with me? Leave the Rebels for me?"

Before I can respond, the elevator door opens once more and outsteps Saint himself. His eyes move from me to the hand I have on Brooke's nape, then to her face. It's obvious by her swollen lips and our proximity that we were kissing, but he doesn't say a word, simply nodding for me to follow.

"I have to go," I tell her. "I'll find you at the cookout, okay?"

She nods, licking her lips before pulling back. I give her one last look before leading Brooke into the elevator after Saint. The ride upstairs is quick and quiet. We part ways outside the elevator, and I follow Saint through the heavy oak door into the clubhouse.

"We'll talk after Church," Saint says, and it's clear it isn't a suggestion.

"Figured," I say with a sigh, following him to the room where we hold Church, our weekly club meetings. I catch the faint aroma of coffee before my eyes settle on the familiar faces of my MC brothers gathered around a long wooden table. I take off my leather jacket and slide into my seat, the worn leather creaking under my weight.

The chatter dies down, and the room falls into silence when Saint moves to the head of the table. He's a huge guy with golden hair and a permanent scowl on his face. He glares at me, which I assume is in response to my late arrival and his having to come find me.

"Now that everyone is here, we can finally begin," he says, his voice commanding the attention of the room. "We have a shit ton of things to discuss but first...the Chrome Vipers."

A murmur breaks out in the room at the mention of our rival MC. The Vipers have been our enemies for as long as I've been in the club. Their president is sadistic, old-fashioned motherfucker known for his cruel nature. And his men eagerly follow his example.

Unlike the merit-based elections held in our club, their president's seat has been passed on from one generation to the next. But rumor has it that the current president was not able to conceive a son. The man has only one daughter, and there is no way in hell those misogynistic assholes would let a woman lead their club.

I fear for what might happen to the girl. Her father is certainly growing desperate for a grandson. Who knows what a monster like him might do for an heir.

"We've long suspected they're behind the illegal auction at the Den," Saint says, and the room falls into silence once more. It's no secret that Saint's fiancée was rescued from an illegal sex auction Saint happened to stumble into and disrupt. We've long since taken care of the lowlifes running the auction, but there's no way a small gentlemen's club like the Den had the resources to pull off such an endeavor without additional backing.

"Right. So why haven't we taken those fuckers out yet?" calls out one of the guys, and the others nod in agreement.

"Because we don't act without evidence; we're better than that. I'm not going to start a war without concrete proof of their involvement. And to get it, we're going to need an inside man." Saint nods at Gray, and it's suddenly clear why he's here tonight.

## Page 13

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

Only the most senior club members, those of us who attend Church every week, even know Gray is one of us. He spends most of his time away from the club, and most recently, he was visiting our sister club in the South, the Steel Outlaws, giving them a hand taking down a trafficking ring.

We all nod in approval, but Saint doesn't go into detail about how Gray will infiltrate the Vipers. My best guess is that he'll find work at one of the club-owned businesses, maybe ask to join as a prospect.

I listen with half an ear as Saint discusses club matters until we're finally dismissed for the evening. I remain in my seat as the men around me get up, all visibly excited for the cookout. Saint waits until they've all left before shutting the door behind the last person. He leans against the door, staring at me for a solid minute before finally breaking the silence.

"Really, Axel?" he says, quirking a brow. "You're going to make me drag it out of you?"

I wince at his annoyed tone. Saint was also there when Kane made me promise to look after his daughter. The man was in pain and wouldn't let go of my hand until I swore to protect her with my life. While Brooke leaned on me for comfort and support following her father's death, I leaned on Saint for strength as I grieved my best friend and mentor. The idea of this man being disappointed or angry with me makes me feel small in a way I never have before.

"It's not what it looked like," I say, standing up to face Saint. "I would never hurt Brooke or betray Kane. You know that."

“Spell it out for me Axel. Cuz from where I was standing, it looked like she’s your latest plaything,” he says, his voice taking on a hard edge.

I deflate. “I’m not playing with her, Saint. Brooke means more to me than anything in the world.”

“That’s nothing new. You’ve always had a soft spot for the girl, unsurprising given that she’s Kane’s daughter. So what’s changed?”

I run a hand through my hair. “Look, Saint, I will be honest with you because I know you and everyone in this club cares about her,” I say, meeting his hard gaze head on. “I have feelings for Brooke. They are complicated feelings, but they’re strong enough for me to know that I can’t let her go. I would protect that girl with my life, cross lines I never have to keep her safe and by my side. Brooke is mine... But she’s also my best friend’s daughter and I made him a promise.”

Saint studies me closely for a long moment. I can’t read his expression well enough to guess what he is thinking and brace for the worst. So, it’s a shock when he suddenly bursts out with a laugh.

“Fuck, I owe Knox fifty bucks. Damnit. You just couldn’t wait until she’s finished with school could you?” Confused, I open my mouth to ask what the fuck he’s talking about when he continues, “You’re terrible at hiding your feelings and I don’t think Brooke has ever even tried. We’ve all known for years that the girl had her sights set on you, but we knew you’d take longer to crack with your hangups over her being Kane’s daughter. I placed my bet that you’d at least wait until she finished school before you broke and claimed her.”

“A-are you going to try and stop me from being with her?” I ask, totally dumbfounded.

He sobers at my question. “No,” he says. “And I don’t think Kane would have if he were here either. He loved you like a son, and there’s no better man for his little girl. But I was there when you promised him that you would protect her with your life. So, I will hold you accountable if you break her heart. We are the only family she has left, and you’ll have to answer to all of us if you hurt her.”

“I would expect nothing less.” My bad sags like a deflated balloon. I never would have expected this reaction from Saint, let alone that my club brothers have been placing bets on my love life... Or that Knox of all people would have won the bet. That man wouldn’t know love if it smacked him in the face.

Saint walks over and claps me on the shoulder. “I’m glad you woke up and claimed her before it was too late. Watching the two of you circle each other has been downright painful. At least now I won’t have to hunt down some poor college boy if he breaks her heart.”

I glower at him. “No college boys. Brooke is mine.”

“So you’ve mentioned.” He chuckles. “Now that that’s settled, how about we head up to the roof? I’ve been craving BBQ all week, and it’s Blaze’s turn to cook. That man makes a mean brisket. Best thing I’ve ever tasted.”

“Your fiancée will be disappointed to hear that.”

“Oh, fuck off!”

We’re laughing when we head up to the clubhouse roof, the smell of roasted meat making my stomach growl, but I ignore the thought of food as I seek her out. I immediately spot brown hair with teal highlights among a group of girls as they set up flatware on a picnic table. I don’t hide the fact that I’m watching her, and God, she looks absolutely gorgeous. Even in simple jeans and a pink sweater, she’s the most

beautiful girl I have ever seen.

Before Brooke, I was never open to the idea of a relationship. I saw women, but more than anything, it was a mutual agreement of no strings attached release. All parties involved were in agreement on that, and I never had murderous thoughts at the idea of any of those women dating other people. I wasn't sad or lonely. In fact, I was pretty content with living my life for the club.

But then one winter evening, this sweet, sassy girl became my responsibility. And suddenly, I wasn't living only for the club anymore. Before Kane's death, I never viewed Brooke as anything more than an extension to my best friend, but that day, she became more. She became everything. When her father died, she clung to me, wrapping her arms around me and burying her face in my neck as she sobbed for hours. I held her until my arms were numb and my shirt was soaked with her tears. I would have gone on holding her forever if she hadn't eventually pulled away.

The blinders I had slowly fell from my eyes in the following months. When I shadowed her, I didn't just want to protect her. I wanted to break the arm of any guy that came close to her. A delicate flower like her was mine to protect.

Mine to keep!

Someone nudges Brooke's shoulder, and she turns around, her lips parting in a beautiful smile when she spots me. I watch as a pretty pink hue darkens her cheeks. "What?" she mouths, but I simply shake my head.

Everything in me begs for me to strut over to her and kiss that Cupid's bow. Sweep all the plates off the picnic table and bend her over it, fucking her over and over until mine is the only name she remembers. Until the entire goddamned city knows she belongs to me.

And now with the Saint's blessing, there is nothing stopping me from fully staking my claim.

## Chapter Seven

Brooke

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“He’s staring at you like he wants to gobble you up whole. My goodness!” Jade, Saint’s fiancée, elbows me with a knowing smile as she fans her face. “Is it just me, or is it getting hot?”

“It’s definitely hot!” Ingrid responds, fanning her face too with exaggerated movements, which makes me laugh. She’s the newest girlfriend in the club since she recently started dating Blaze, the Steel Rebel’s chief enforcer. The two girls are closer to my age than the other wives and girlfriends, which makes it easier to open up to them. Although I haven’t known either girl for long, we instantly clicked the second we met. “I think he likes you.”

“Likes her?” Jade chimes in. “The man hasn’t taken his eyes off her since he came up here. He’s staring at her like he’s seconds away from bending her over the picnic table and—”

“Girls! Jesus!” I cry out, mortified. I’m blushing fiercely as I look around to make sure no one’s heard us. I could have sworn Jade was shy. At least, that was the impression I got from her when we met. Maybe Saint has begun rubbing off on her. “Keep your voices down.”

“Why?” Ingrid asks with a smirk as she sets the napkins down. “Axel is making it obvious. I mean, look at him.”

I slowly turn around to spot the man leaning against a wall, looking hot as ever and staring me down. There is that look in his eyes I witnessed a few hours earlier when he was rutting me like a bull against my kitchen counter. God, I can still feel him inside of me. “What?” I mouth to Axel, who simply raises an eyebrow at me and

doesn't look away. People are starting to notice. I thought he would want to keep our relationship a secret from his brothers, at least for a while, but if that's the case, he's failing terribly.

A hand closes on my arm, and I look away from Axel to see Jade leading me away from the picnic table and the other women. Ingrid follows behind, and I blink in confusion when I find myself crowded by the girls to a small alcove.

"You slept with him." It's not a question, and from the way Jade's bright green eyes widen with surprise, she must read the truth in mine. "Oh my God, you finally slept with Axel! When? How? Tell me everything!"

"Everything?" I ask, my cheeks burning with embarrassment. "No one wants to hear that."

"I do!" Ingrid chimes in. "Wait, is that why you asked me the other day what lipstick shade would look best on you? Did you..." She looks around to make sure no one's listening before she completes her sentence. "Did you seduce him?"

I bite my lip and look away. Ingrid is a cosmetologist and I wanted her opinion. She was sweet about it, not prying into why I needed the advice. It seems I can't hide from that anymore.

"Um, sort of," I say, not really sure how to explain what happened. I still don't quite understand it myself.

"What do you mean? How do you sort of seduce someone?" Jade asks, just as Ingrid says, "Tell us the details!"

"I can't tell you that!" I say in horror. Surely my friends don't expect me to admit that the man pushed me hard against the wall then spanked my ass cheeks raw before

fingering me. That's too much even for them. "We just...uh, had a moment."

"And by that moment, you mean sex."

"Jade, come on!"

"Fine," she says, rolling her eyes. "Everyone with two eyes can see that you want that man. You've never made it a secret—"

"Wait, you knew?" I ask the girls, surprised when they both nod.

"You weren't exactly subtle. Even the guys had bets going on when you two would stop dancing around each other. Oh my God, I just realized Knox won the bet! Ugh, he's going to be so arrogant about this," Jade finishes with a groan. Blood drains from my face at the thought of these men, possibly even my father, knowing about my feelings for Axel for years. I thought I'd hidden them well. Apparently not. "You wear your heart on your sleeve, Brooke," Jade soothes as she reads my expression. "Axel sometimes does too. You weren't the only one with unrequited feelings. So, have you guys talked about it?"

"In a way," I say, avoiding meeting the girls' eyes. A part of me doesn't want to admit that I'm scared to know Axel's true feelings. I know he wants me, that much is obvious with how sore I feel between my legs, but I wonder if that's all it is. "I've been putting it off."

"Why?" Ingrid asks, blinking at me with her mesmerizing eyes—one a cool shade of blue and the other a warm shade of brown. "What are you waiting for, Brooke?"

For Axel to admit that he loves me. That he cares about me not because he was burdened with the responsibility of looking after me, but because it's me. "I don't know," I lie, and if they read it in my eyes, then they don't call me out on it.

“Don’t you want to know beyond a doubt if he has feelings for you or not? What his plans for you are? Isn’t it easier to get it all out now and not have the questions loom over you every time you’re together?”

I turn away from Jade and her question. It’s easy for her to say. Saint proposed marriage a few days into knowing her, professing his undying love to her even before they really knew each other. I’ve known Axel for years and have loved him for as long as I can remember. Growing up, any time I imagined my future, he was there in some capacity or another. And the older I got, the clearer that future—and his role in it—became. He knows me better than anyone, including Scarlett, and now that I get to be with him, do I really want to venture into murky waters and risk losing whatever it is we have?

A part of me wants to push everything under the rug and enjoy the moment, but it’ll probably hurt avoid it much longer. Like Jade said, the questions will haunt our relationship if we don’t address them.

“I’ll talk to him,” I say, as someone calls out for everyone to grab a plate. “Let’s get back to cookout. I’ll tell you how it goes.”

The girls nod and we head back to the table, and after some fairly obvious maneuvering by Jade and Ingrid, I find myself seated next to Axel. This is not the first time we’ve been close during a gathering, but now that I know what his lips taste like and how his hands feel on my body, I find it hard to keep my composure around him. I nearly jump out of my skin when I feel a weight on my thigh, looking up at Axel in surprise to find him watching me.

“Are you okay?” he asks, stroking his hand over my thigh and sending a fiery heat licking up my body.

“Why wouldn’t I be?”

He raises a single brow at me, and I can tell he's going to say something before he's drawn into a conversation by the guy seated across from us. I shift my attention to the food, occasionally trying to engage the other people at the table with us, but the hand on my thigh keeps drawing me back in. Axel squeezes, making my sensitive sex pulse with need, and I have to bite down hard on my lip to stop a moan from slipping out.

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

I suck in a sharp breath when his hand moves further up my leg, and I find my thighs parting for him. God, this is beyond inappropriate and I should stop him, not revel in the feeling. And yet, I do nothing to put an end to it, nearly whimpering when he runs his hand over my jean-clad sex. I grip the table when he presses his middle finger right over my clit, making it thrum with need.

“Hey, Brooke?”

My head whips to the left when Jade calls out to me. “Are you staying for the games after dinner?”

“Yeah. Why do you ask?”

“You missed the last cookout, and we missed you,” she says, and I try to keep my expression neutral as Axel’s teasing hand leaves my body; it’s all I can do to stop myself from pulling it back to me. “We played Pictionary, and the girls lost against the guys because we were outnumbered.”

Someone at the table snorts back a laugh, and I follow the sound to see Kyle, a familiar prospect and a bit of a protégé to Saint shake his head in amusement. “You really think you were going to win an artistic game with people who draw tattoos in their free time? Some of us even do it professionally.”

This seems to spark a debate, and soon, there is a heated discussion at the table with everyone arguing and cheating allegations being thrown around.

Feeling a bit of my recent rebellious streak flare to life, I decide turnabout is fair play

and put my own hand to Axel's thigh. He's just about to take a bite of food as I do and nearly chokes on it when my hand makes contact. His reaction pulls a few glances, but the debate is too lively for anyone to really pay attention to Axel's coughing. Everyone is oblivious to my daring hand exploring under the tablecloth.

Axel takes a drink of his beer to ease his coughing and I wait for him to bring the bottle to his lips before sliding my hand higher and cupping his growing erection. He jumps in his seat, knocking his knee against the bottom of the table, rattling plates and beer bottles as he fumbles the beer in his hand. I watch in horror as it slips from his fingers onto the table, only to tip sideways and pour right into his lap, soaking his jeans before he snatch it up.

"Shit, sorry," I cry out, flustered when everyone's attention turns to me. I grab a handful of napkins and pat Axel down, but it's no use; the beer has soaked through his clothes and stained them. "Oh God. I'm so sorry." I hadn't meant for this to happen. I only wanted to tease him a little like he had me, not cause a scene.

"It's fine," he says with a wicked smile on his lips. "I'll just go down to my room to change."

"I'll come with you," I say quickly, jumping up as well, and I note a few surprised expressions at my statement. "I mean..."

"You have some on you too," Jade points at the barely visible beer stain on my sweater. "Maybe Axel can lend you a shirt or something. You need to be in top form if we're going to beat the boys tonight."

"You have no chance!" Kyle calls out, and soon, everyone is back to debating who's better at what games. I flash Jade a grateful smile when she winks at me, and barely anyone notices when Axel and I slip away.

Unlike the other senior club members, Axel doesn't have an apartment in the clubhouse. His is a two-bedroom unit above the auto shop next door. It's also where my father and I had lived before his death. After he passed, I couldn't bear to stay in the same home I'd grown up in, so Axel had found me my current apartment close to campus, and he'd taken over the residence. My heart is a steady drum in my chest as we approach the building. I spot the old sign hanging over the garage door; the paint is chipped and faded, but the letters are still legible. My father made that sign years ago, and my heart swells when I realize that they've updated everything else but kept the sign.

My footsteps echo beneath my boots as we enter. The floor used to be covered in layers of oil and dirt, but now the concrete is clean, swept, and newly painted. It's a strange feeling, seeing the building after a year of avoiding it. I've been to the club several times since my father passed, but I always avoided looking this way, scared of the memories that would pop up. Afraid that I wouldn't be able to deal with them.

It seems I was worried about nothing. This place is Axel's home and has his mark all over it. Still, when I look around, I'm see echoes of all those days I would sit and watch my father and Axel work on cars and motorcycles. Axel would often have his shirt off by mid-day, sweat dripping down those bulging, heavily tattooed muscles. As I got older, I found my eyes would follow the towel he used to wipe away the sweat, and I'd be left fighting the urge to run to him and lick those muscular arms.

Around the age of seventeen, I started to dream about the man. He was older than me, but that didn't stop me from thinking of him as I explored my body beneath my sheets, alone in bed, touching myself as I thought of him. None of the boys at the school could come close to Axel.

No, this place doesn't bring back bad memories as I'd feared. Quite the opposite.

"Let's go upstairs so you can change. I can smell the beer on you," I say, turning to

Axel to find him staring at me. This time, it's not with heat but concern and, I imagine, caution. I smile at him, if only to assure him that I'm fine. "Coming back here... It doesn't hurt as much as I thought it would."

"Are you sure?"

I nod, daring a move by sliding my hand into his. He squeezes it before leading me to the side of the building where a set of stairs lead up to the front door of the apartment. The metal railing feels cool against my palm as we walk up, and I can't help but smile when he looks back to study my expression. "I'm fine." I chuckle, feeling giddy for some reason.

When we reach the top, Axel reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small silver keyring with a single key attached, and I remind myself to get the man a better keychain. Something funny so he laughs and thinks of me every time he takes out his key.

The door swings open to reveal a cozy living space that has always felt like a hidden oasis above the bustling auto shop. The walls are adorned with posters of classic cars and vintage signs. A small kitchen area is to one side, complete with a fridge and retro-style stove, and I spot a cozy-looking couch facing the window that overlooks the street below. Axel has put his own mark on the place, and it no longer resembles my childhood home, for which I am grateful.

"Make yourself at home," Axel says, toeing off his boots, and I follow suit. The air is filled with the subtle scent of sandalwood, and I'm about to start nosing around when Axel suddenly whips his shirt over his head and my mouth immediately goes dry. "I'll get a fresh shirt in a moment, but there's something we need to address first."

He's talking. Heck, his mouth is moving, but all I hear is white noise as I stare at his sculpted body. Axel is built like a brick house, all broad shoulders and defined

muscles. My eyes trail the tapestry of ink sprawled across his chest, spotting something new from the last time I took the time I studied his body. This was a year ago when the MC hosted a day at the beach and I'd gotten an eyeful of Axel in nothing but a pair of swim trunks.

God, I sound and probably look like awestruck too, ogling his body the way I am, but I can't help it. His skin is tanned and weathered, glistening slightly in places from beer I accidentally spilled on him. And I want to taste it—him.

Suddenly his words register, and I meet his eyes to ask, "W-what do we need to address?" Bet it tastes better on your skin." His eyes fire up with heat, and I realize that there will be no going back to the cookout, at least not for a while.

Don't you want to know whether he has feelings for you or not? What his plans for you are? Isn't it easier to know now and not have the questions loom over you every time you're together?

God, we should probably talk before I allow myself to fall into those gorgeous brown eyes. It's so simple. To ask him what his feelings for me are. Other than lust, of course. Does he want kids? A family with me? A home? A life?

## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

Does he want me...forever?

But as he steps toward me with a predatory gait and a glint in his eye, all my burning questions go up in smoke.

### Chapter Eight

Brooke

Axel has always had the ability to leave me breathless and tongue-tied. From the time I began to understand what attraction is, I'd become increasingly obsessed with Axel. I'd been far too young for him to see me as anything other than his friend's daughter. Over time, I'd gotten used to Axel looking past me, but that didn't diminish my attraction in the least. Now, unlike back then, I can finally do more than ogle him helplessly. My heart would break every time my friends at school would talk about their first kiss, and all I wanted was to experience my firsts with a man forbidden to me.

He's not forbidden now.

No, this time, I can do more than just look. I can actually touch him, knowing he'll welcome it. I'll worry about his feelings for me later. Whatever it is Axel feels or doesn't feel for me can be addressed when my body isn't trembling with the need to touch him in all the ways I couldn't before.

To feel him inside of me.

“I want you,” I say, but I take a step back when he moves forward. Something in the way he moves toward me has me stepping back, despite my desire for him. He continues his slow pursuit until my back hits a wall, and I’m trapped in place.

“I want you too, baby. But first, we need to talk about the little stunt you pulled up there that led to me spilling my beer,” he growls, caging me in with his hands against the wall. He watches me with those dark, heated eyes, and I can read the need and desperation in them. I imagine it’s a reflection of my eyes.

“It was an accident. I only wanted to get a reaction out of you; I didn’t mean to the spill the beer.”

“I know. But still, naughty girls who act irresponsibly have to be punished, to be reminded why they should behave,” he says, and my mind flashes back to Axel bringing me home from the club and... how he punished me by spanking me in my entry way. Heat pools between my legs at the memory, and all I can do is look at Axel and nod eagerly.

With my eyes locked on his, I reach down and grab the hem of my sweater and pull it over my shoulders, let it drop to the floor. I reach for my jeans next, and he hisses out a sharp breath when I step out of those too, leaving me in nothing but a bra and panties, both of which do little to hide my arousal. Next, I unsnap my bra and tug it from my shoulders, and he makes a choked sound as I peel it off my body before dropping it along with the rest of my clothes. My panties are next, and maybe I wouldn’t feel so bold stripping in front of Axel if my arousal wasn’t at a fever pitch.

I’ve wanted this for so long. It’s useless to act all shy now when after what we’ve already shared. I try not to preen when Axel runs his hungry gaze over my naked body, swallowing visibly as he takes me in.

Without a word, he takes my hand and leads me to the couch. He sits down then pulls

me close to stand between his thighs, and I brace my hands on his shoulders.

“Do you remember what happened when we got home from the club?” he asks, and I nod my head. He places his hands on my hips and meets my eyes. “Well, baby, you got spanked for being reckless that night. You were reckless again tonight.”

My body trembles, and I feel like I’m about to shake apart. “P-please,” I beg, not entirely certain what I’m begging for.

“If it’s too much, we can stop at any time. Red means everything stops, yellow means we take a break, and green means go. Got it?” I nod again, but he shakes his head at me. “No, baby, I need to hear you. What color?”

“G-green,” I say, my voice thick and shaky with a mix of excitement and nerves. Axel hums in approval, then, using his grip on my hips, he guides me to drape myself over his lap, my body stretched out on the couch. Axel caresses from my shoulders down my back, stopping just before the curve of my ass. I want to cry when his touch leaves my skin, but relax again when it reappears on the backs of my knees, tracing a path up my thighs.

“So naughty, touching me under the table surrounded by our friends. What would you have done if someone had caught on to what you were doing?” he asks as his fingers reach my core and trace along my folds. All I can manage in reply is a desperate whimper.

Axel’s hand disappears from skin again, and I cry out in protest, but the sound is cut off by the loud crack of skin on skin followed swiftly by heat blooming over my butt cheek. I don’t even have time to process it before there’s a second sharp spank to the other cheek.

He doesn’t say anything as he lands on smack after another to my backside, but I can

feel the effect it's having on him as he grows hard beneath me. It doesn't take long before my cries turn to moans. He isn't using enough force to hurt, only to sting, and I'm shocked by how desperate I am for the contact. I'm floating and more aroused than I've ever been, helpless to do anything but writhe on his lap and roll my hips to meet each smack of his open palm on my skin.

I don't know how many spanks Axel gives me before he switches from stinging swats to kneads his hand over my abused skin. It's so sensitive, his touch is hot and intense, but still soothing, and I moan as he massages the mounds of my ass.

"Jesus Christ, sweetheart. You're a fucking dream. Goddamn perfect from head to toe," he says as he helps me sit up and straddle his thighs. I can feel my arousal drip down the insides of my thighs, and I have to fight the urge to rock my hips against the bulge in his pants. Axel raises a hand to cup the nape of my neck, but before he can pull my lips to his, I shake my head, stopping him in his tracks.

"I want to touch you the way I've always dreamed," I tell him, fighting the blush that climbs up my body with little success. It doesn't help that he's staring at me the way he is. "Will you let me? Can I touch you?"

It's a long shot, asking a man like him to cede control, but he nods once, his Adam's apple bobbing fast as I wrap my arms around him. I can tell he's fighting the urge to grab me and pull me into him. Instead, he keeps his hands fisted to his sides. "Fuck, baby. How do you expect me to keep my hands off you?"

"Can you try?" I ask, sliding my hand over his firm chest before leaning to kiss his left pec. He hisses out a curse at the move, groaning when I drop gentle kisses over his chest up to his neck, loving the feel of him under my fingertips. His skin is hot under my hand, muscles flexing with every caress of my fingers, and God, "I've wanted to do this since...forever," I whisper, kissing his neck as I drag my nails down his firm stomach. He hisses again, his breathing growing labored as my curious

fingers explore in ways I couldn't before. In ways I've only ever allowed myself to imagine.

"Let me touch you," he growls, heaving when my hands stop an inch from the massive bulge tenting his jeans. "Fuck, baby, let me touch you." His brown eyes are unfocused when I look up. I read the need in them, but he can be patient. I've wanted—ached for him for years; he can wait for a few minutes. "Baby—"

"No," I say, pushing up and locking my lips with his. I sling an arm over his shoulder as we kiss, drawing back when he pushes for control. "Let me." My lips find his again, pressing my tits against his sturdy chest as I seek his tongue, and this time, he lets me have control. Lets me take as much as I need—crave. My head is spinning when we break apart, my lips dropping to his neck and licking a path down to his chest. I taste the beer clinging to his skin, growing intoxicated off it and him as I drag my tongue down his skin.

My hands drop to his jeans, fingers trembling when I tug them open and his massive cock bobs out. He hisses out a sharp breath when I take the massive cock in my hand, stroking it until the man is practically panting. "Jesus Christ, baby. What are you doing to me?"

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“Nothing yet,” I answer, as I slide off his lap to the floor so I’m kneeling between his parted thighs. I have no idea what I’m doing, but it feels right. From the way his eyes flare with heat and his expression darkens with lust, I imagine he likes it too, but I’m doing this for myself, living out the fantasy I’ve always had. Me on my knees for this powerful man, watching him come apart from my touch. Knowing I own him as much as he owns me.

His head tips back with a harsh groan when I lean in and experimentally lick the tip of his rigid shaft, tasting him on my tongue. I hum contently before sliding the tip into my mouth with slow suction. “Jesus...” he chokes out, plowing his fingers into my hair and tugging hard so my eyes are on his. “Brooke—”

“I want this,” I breathe, the need settling in my stomach with fury. “Please, let me have this.”

Axel studies me for a moment before bringing his thick shaft back to my lips, and I open up for him. I feel the wet heat between my thighs grow as he fills my mouth with his massive girth. His breath releases in a guttural groan when my lips clamp around his cock, taking him in as much as I can manage without choking.

“Goddamn, baby, that’s it,” he growls, his hips rolling forward and back, using my mouth like he would a fist, and I love every second of it. I scoot closer, and he hisses when my teeth accidentally graze his shaft. “Fuuuck!” he cries, and I can tell he loves it with how he pistons his cock into my throat, making my eyes water. I cough when he pulls back, but I don’t let him stop as I sink down on him again, desperate to drive him to the edge as he’s done with me. “Shit! Baby, I need you. Now.”

I feel the same way. God, my sex is pulsing with need, trembling with the promise of feeling that warm cock fill me again.

“Want you,” I echo when I pull back, reaching for his hand to tug him down with me. The couch is there, but my legs are too weak to even consider getting up. Axel’s eyes are burning with heat when I push him to his back on the floor and straddle his hips.

“Will you let me touch you now?” he asks, but I shake my head, leaning in and locking our lips together. I run my fingers hungrily over his body as I kiss him the way I’ve always wanted. He was my father’s best friend, a man more than a decade older than me, but that never seemed to matter.

It sure as hell doesn’t matter now. Not to me at least!

His breath is coming in quick bursts when we break apart. My heart is racing fast when I brace a hand on his chest before raising my hips to position my sex over his thick shaft. I bite hard on my lip, a whimper climbing the back of my throat as I slowly ease down, feeling his cock stretch my walls. My head falls back with a loud moan as his cock sinks inside my damp sex. “God,” I breathe when I’m fully seated on him. The feeling is unlike anything I have ever felt before, beyond my wildest imagination.

“Let me touch you, sweetheart,” he pleads when I start grinding my hips over his, whimpering at the sensation of his cock moving inside of me. His fists are clenched by his side, and I watch as sweat breaks out on his forehead as he struggles to rein in the wild desire I see burning in his eyes. “I’ll make you feel good.”

I don’t doubt that. “Not yet,” I protest, planting both hands on his chest for support as I roll my hips back and forth, my breathing growing labored as an uncontrollable trembling spreads inside of me, the friction turning my limbs weak. It’s too much. My back arches as my sex grows slicker with arousal, and the wet sounds of our

bodies meeting fill the room. A scream is lodged in my chest as my hips rock harder and faster on his cock. It's dirty and desperate and hot.

It's...everything I've ever wanted and more.

My breath catches in my throat seconds before a storm blows through me. I throw my head back and sob as wild tremors rock through my body, my sex clenching and releasing around his cock in violent undulations. I brace my hand on his chest through it all, leaving me a trembling mess.

I'm panting, and when my eyes open, it's to find his dark ones staring at me. "Axel—"

"My turn," he growls, flipping us on the floor so I'm on my back, and I've barely caught my bearings before he slams back into me. My back arches with a sob as I pleasure shoots up from the spot where our bodies meet, but Axel is too far gone as his hips start thrusting wildly, his body straining with every wet slide of skin. He digs his fingers into my hips as he rails me like a bull, his breath hot on my skin as he takes me with rough, unmeasured thrusts. I wrap my arms around his neck and hang on for the ride, letting him take and chase his pleasure, knowing he'll find it in me. Will only ever want it with me!

"Close," he rasps, biting into my skin seconds before he floods me with his seed, and the sensations propels me over the edge again. He growls as he pumps his cock into me faster and harder, drawing out our shared pleasure. I cry out as tremors roll through my body, making my sex clamp hard around his cock, the violent ripples milking his thick shaft and filling me with his seed. His thrusts slow, and I feel his release drip down my thighs when he finally eases out of me.

Axel falls to the side before pulling me into his arms. I lay my head on his heaving chest, feeling more content than I ever have my entire life. "Well, did it live up to

your fantasy?”

I don't bother pretending that's not what I was trying to do. I've imagined it a million times. Kissing this man's muscular body before getting on my knees for him. I've pictured myself riding his cock like I've seen in those X rated movies I've seen glimpses of online. I wanted to re-enact that with this man, and God, it was more than I could've dreamed. So, I push up and cradle his jaw when he turns to look at me, stroking his bristled skin as I meet his eyes. “It was perfect,” I say before leaning down and pressing a kiss to his mouth and then his jawline. “In a few minutes, I'll probably want to do it again.”

He laughs at the same time his eyes darken with heat as he cups the back of my head and pulls me down for another kiss. “We're not going to make it back to the cookout, are we?” he asks when we break apart.

“Probably not.” I smile, nipping his mouth as I slowly climb on top to straddle him again. I lean down until his lips are only an inch from mine. “Maybe we'll make it for Pictionary.”

Axel pushes up and seals his mouth with mine. The kiss is drawn out, making my body ache for him, and when he takes me on the floor with slow, measured strokes, we live out yet another of my fantasies. But I have so many, I can only hope he'll stay with me long enough to act them all out.

It'll only take a lifetime to work through the list.

## Chapter Nine

Axel

Given the choice, I would pick ditching the rest of the cookout altogether to spend the

evening alone with Brooke, but that's not exactly an option. These get togethers happen for a reason, and the club members would not be as close as we are if we didn't make them a priority. And I know without being told that Saint expects all senior club members to be in attendance, except for Gray, but even he is here tonight, so I hardly have an excuse.

Despite knowing I need to socialize, I can't peel myself from this spot. My eyes have been on Brooke since the moment we returned to the rooftop, watching her laugh with her friends and joke around with the other members of the club.

God, she's a pretty sight to behold.

I watch her from my seat on the opposite side of fire pit, the flickering flames casting a warm glow around us. She's in the middle of a group, completely lost in a game of charades, her laughter ringing out like music over the crackling fire.

"Jade, look at my arms," she says, laughing uncontrollably as she waves her arms dramatically at her clueless teammate. "You can do it. Come on, the guys are already in the lead!"

“Fish out of water?”

She heaves a dramatic sigh before breaking into a fit of giggles. “What about this says fish out of water to you?”

“I don’t know! You’re flapping your fins? I have no idea!”

Her teammates keep guessing and when their time is up, Brooke laughs at the disappointment she reads on their face. My eyes are locked on her as she walks back to her place, giving room for the other team. When she turns around to look at me, her brown hair dances in the light breeze, catching the glow of the fire and for a moment, I’m mesmerized. She offers me a gorgeous smile before turning back to the game.

My eyes stay on her and just watching her is enough to send blood rushing south. This is not an ideal time to have a fucking hard-on, but I can’t fucking control my dick’s reaction to the sight of such a beautiful woman—my woman.

I start to take another sip of my beer when I sense a presence behind me. I turn and watch Gray take the seat next to me. He has a beer in hand as he settles in to watch the game next to me.

“Not playing?” he asks, taking a sip of his own beer as he nods toward the group, and I shake my head.

“I prefer to watch.”

“Same,” he says, titling his head a bit as he watches Kyle act out what appears to be the dramatic death of a...goose? There’s honking and arm flapping involved, I have no idea what else it could be. “I heard something interesting the other night,” Gray says after a moment. “Something about a Rebel showing up at Rave and leaving with two girls.”

“Did you now?”

“Yep,” he confirms, popping the P. “Caused quite a stir among the door guards.”

“And where did you hear this?”

He chuckles. “I have my sources.” Which I assume is code for some informant he’s got in the gang that owns the night club.

My brow quirks up, but since that’s not something I want to talk about, I change the subject. “Any idea how you’re going to get in with the Vipers?”

Gray hums noncommittally, reserved as usual, even with his club brothers. “I have a contact who says he can get me in front of Stone, the president. But that’s not has me most concerned right now.”

“No? Then what does?”

“That they’ve been quiet. Blaze a couple of the guys dealt with some trespassers recently. We still don’t know what they were doing snooping around our territory, and even after Blaze sent them home with their tails tucked, they didn’t retaliate. It’s not like the Vipers to do nothing. Don’t you find that suspicious?”

I mull over his words. I’ve been too tied up with Brooke to even think about it. If a Viper laid a hand on a Rebel, there would be hell to pay. That would almost be like

declaring war with the club, and I would have expected some attempt at retribution from them, and yet...nothing.

“Maybe they are gearing up to start some shit,” I say. That is the only thing that makes sense.

“Could be, but we can’t be sure. I’ll figure out what they’re planning once I earn their trust.”

I nod before turning back to the game. “Have you taken the club’s insignia off your bike? I assume you’ll have to strip it of the club’s identity before you go in.”

“You’ve never seen me in action, have you?”

“I don’t imagine I’m supposed to, or you wouldn’t be doing a good job as a mole, now would you?”

“Touché.” He laughs, sipping his beer. “And no. I’ll be an entirely different person. So much so that it’s doubtful anyone from either club would recognize me. Recognition is a risk I can’t afford.”

“You’ll be careful,” I say, although my concern is useless. This is not his first rodeo. I know enough of his history to know the one time he was caught crossing the line was a decade ago when he was barely eighteen and before he’d joined the club. He’d ended up doing time, but something good came out of it as he met with a Steel Rebel in prison who introduced him to the club. Since then, he’s been working for the us secure in the knowledge his brothers would get him out of a jam if he ever landed in one. Luckily for him and us, he’s never found himself in that position.

Even so, it doesn’t stop me and the rest of us from expressing concern when the topic arises.

“I’ll be fine,” he says with finality, and more than anything, I believe it. “So, are you not going to tell me what you were doing at Rave? Or who you left with?”

Why am I not surprised that he wouldn’t let me get away without answering? “I’m surprised you don’t already know.”

“I didn’t ask, it would have seemed suspicious if I had.”

“Then how do you know it was me?”

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“The mechanic,” he says with a laugh. “They were whining something about a fucking Rebel mechanic showing up to cause trouble.” I scoff at his words. It’s true that I’m well known in the city for the quality of my work, but I hadn’t realized I was so recognizable. “So, what were you doing there?”

My eyes shift to the group playing their game across the fire pit once more, and it’s Brooke's turn again as she climbs to her feet. She reads something on a card and nods before spreading her hands once more, giggling as she moves her arms in front of her body in a sweeping arch.

“The wave!” someone yells, followed by a series of other off-base guesses.

The time ends before anyone guesses correctly, which makes Brooke break into a groan. “It was a rainbow. Guys, we’re losing!” The girls cry out in disappointment before someone points out that the men are ahead by only a single point. This makes everyone grow even more competitive as they all start to razz the opposing team. “That was exhausting. I think I need a drink.”

A couple of the other girls call for a break as well, and Brooke flashes me a smile as she and the others walk past us toward the bar.

“She’s the reason,” I say with a sigh. “Brooke and her best friend went to Rave. I followed to keep an eye on them, and when things started to get out of hand, I got them out.”

Gray sighs. “I don’t want to know how she got her hands on a fake ID. She’s been pushing boundaries lately. Should we be worried?” he says, turning to meet my gaze,

and I'm reminded that I'm far from the only man here who cares for Brooke.

I shake my head. "It doesn't matter how she got it. I destroyed it. She won't be hitting up anymore night clubs either."

"Is that right?" Gray cocks a brow at me.

"That's right," I confirm, meeting his stare head on. He studies me for a while, reminding me of the look Saint gave me earlier before looking away with a laugh.

"I guess everyone expected this," he says, taking another sip of his beer. "She's always had her eyes on you. No one stood a chance against the infamous Rebel mechanic. I was less certain about you, though."

"What about me?"

"Do you love her?"

I pause, searching through my mind for a way to put into words what I feel for Brooke. She's easily the most important person in my life. Has been for a while, perhaps even before Kane asked me on his death bed to look after her.

The thought of not having her in my life threatens to send me into a tailspin. My feelings for Brooke are stronger than I can articulate. It goes beyond love, but I don't have a word for it. Obsession, maybe?

"I care about her," I tell Gray. If I am to profess my love, then Brooke is the first person who will hear it. "She deserves better than me. Some guy her own age that's going to give her everything she deserves, not some obsessive fucker who wants to kill anyone that dares look her way. But I made her father a promise."

“That’s...not what I expected,” Gray muses.

“Yeah, well, it’s how I feel about the girl. I can’t help but think Kane would have wanted a better man for his little girl.”

“Would it have made a difference if he were still here and objected to you being together?”

“No,” I say without hesitation. Kane was my hero, but the feelings I have for Brooke are easily stronger than any opinion anyone has of us. I would have worked my ass off to prove to my mentor and best friend that I was worthy of being with Brooke, but I wouldn’t have let her go.

“We both know Kane loved and trusted you. Otherwise, he would never have asked you to look after her. He could have easily asked Saint or any one of us to look out for Brooke. We all would have been willing, but he asked you.”

He did.

And I’m going to make it my life’s mission to protect the girl, make her happy. Give her a life where she never has to feel alone. I’ll do my damndest to make sure she never wants for anything.

The talk with Gray clears a bit of the lingering doubt in my mind, and I realize that I need to speak to Brooke. I turn around to look at the bar, surprised that they are not back by now. I assume that she just went to the bathroom and force myself to wait a little longer, chatting with Gray about club matters before I decide that I can’t take it anymore.

I’m about to head out to search for Brooke when I notice Ingrid and Jade walking back in our direction. I breathe out a relieved sigh until I notice that Brooke still isn’t

with them.

Where is she? Did something happen? Is she sick?

My brows are knit in confusion and worry as I push out of my chair and approach the girls. They stop in their tracks when they notice me, and at first, I don't make out their expressions, and when I do, I realize that they are glaring at me.

"Jade, Ingrid," I start, ignoring their glares. My worry for Brooke overrides whatever personal beef they have with me. "Where is Brooke?"

"You would love to know, wouldn't you?" Jade says, accusation in her tone.

"Yes, Jade. That's why I asked." She might be the president's girl, but I'm not going to be intimidated by her.

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“Why? So you can break her heart again?” It’s Ingrid this time. “Haven’t you done enough?”

I blink at the girls in confusion. Moments ago, Brooke was smiling at me, and now I’ve supposedly broken her heart? These girls are making no sense, and I find my patience slipping quickly. “Ladies, where is Brooke? Is she okay?”

“No, she’s not. Thanks to you.”

I clench my jaw and gather the tattered shreds of my composure. “How about you tell me what it is you’re talking about and where Brooke is. I’m sure whatever is going on is a simple misunderstanding.”

“Brooke went to ask if you wanted another beer and overheard you and Gray talking. She came back sobbing,” Ingrid says after a moment, then Jade chimes in.

“She didn’t tell us what she heard, but it was enough to make her cry. We offered to leave with her, but she said she wanted to be alone,” Jade says with another glare. “You really are a jerk, you know that? Brooke is head over heels for you, but you just had to go and break her heart.”

I tune the girls out for a moment, searching my memory for what Brooke could have heard Gray and I say that would upset her so much.

“If you don’t love her, then leave her alone so she can find someone who does!”

Those words send a heavy boulder settling in my stomach, and I turn back to the

girls. They must read the fury and possessiveness in my expression because they both back up a step. “Brooke won’t be finding anyone else. The only way someone else can have her is over my dead body.” I turn to look in the direction of the elevator. “She’s everything to me.”

“Well, she seems to believe otherwise,” Jade says, her voice softer now.

And that’s my fault. Fuck, I shouldn’t have waited to tell Brooke how I felt. That what I feel for her is deeper and stronger than just lust, stronger than love even. The thought that Brooke is somewhere second guessing me is enough to have me running after her.

I turn back to Gray, and he motions for me to go. “Get out of here. I’ll see you next week, and when I do, I want to hear that you fixed this. Tell Brooke I’m sorry if something I said upset her.”

Fuck, I have to fix this.

## Chapter Ten

Brooke

I shouldn’t have gone over to ask Axel if he wanted another beer. Maybe then, I would have remained oblivious to what Axel felt about us, but no, I just had to overhear something I didn’t want to.

“Do you love her?”

Everything in me had wanted to turn around and run the moment I heard Gray ask Axel that question, but for some reason, I couldn’t make myself move. My feet felt glued to the ground, air stuck in my throat as I waited for his answer. If he had told

Gray that he was still figuring it out, I could have accepted that, but no. Axel's feelings are rooted in a sense of obligation to my father.

"I made her father a promise."

The tears don't stop spilling, but I've long quit trying to hide them from the Uber driver, a nice older gentleman who keeps tossing worried looks my way. "Are you okay miss?" he asks when we pull up at a red light, and my first instinct is to tell the man that I'm fine, but that would be lying.

No, I'm not fine.

"The man I love doesn't feel the same about me," I blurt out, dropping my phone to my lap. He wants me, sure. The attraction between us is undeniable, but "I want more than what he can offer me."

The driver sighs. "You young girls and your fragile hearts."

Well, that was unhelpful. What use was it asking me if he was going to judge me for my answer anyway? I sit back with a sigh, sniffing into the sleeve of my sweater as I stare out the window. Maybe I shouldn't have been so quick to leave, but I couldn't stay after hearing those words.

"I care about her... I made her father a promise."

To anyone else, this would have meant everything, but to me, it sounds like a man stuck in the responsibility he was given. It's the basis of everything he's done so far. Of course he cares about me. I'm his best friend's daughter.

I wanted his love, not his obligation.

For years, I've craved his love. A feeling exclusive to me, but it seems I'll never get that. In a perfect world, Axel would have told Gray that he was madly in love with me. Loved me so much that he was terrified by the intensity of it.

"I made her father a promise."

My thoughts wander, and before I know it, we've arrived at my apartment building. My shoulders sag in relief when I see Scarlett waiting outside the entrance holding a bottle of wine. I don't know how she got here so fast, but I'm grateful she was willing to leave her family to meet me.

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

I quietly thank the driver before climbing out and walking toward my best friend. She opens her arms before I reach her, and I fall against her, crying into her shoulder. After a few moments, I push open the heavy glass door of the lobby and lead the way to the elevator. The elevator arrives quickly and ride in silence. I wince when I catch a glimpse of my red-rimmed eyes and the tear stains on my cheeks. I look like a pitiful mess.

When we reach my apartment, Scarlett helps me unlock the door and guides me inside and immediately over to the couch. She sits next to me, holding my hand in both of hers and asks gently, “What happened?”

Between tears, with my head on her shoulder, I pour my heart out to my friend. She’s known since we met how I feel about Axel, and I’d kept her updated via text since we left the club the other night, but I hadn’t told her what happened when I’d asked her to meet me after leaving the clubhouse tonight.

“That jerk,” she offers sympathetically, drawing me fully into her arms. Her tone is soft, but she looks ready to find Axel and break him to pieces.

“I appreciate you coming over. I’m sorry I interrupted your Sunday with your family.”

“None of that,” she cuts me off, and I can’t tell if she’s avoiding the family conversation as she always does or trying to comfort me. My bet is on a mix of both.

Not for the first time, I question about Scarlett’s family. The one time I asked, she said something about her father being an investor in several local businesses before

quickly changing the subject. I've had suspicion that her family is into some shady stuff, but I'm not exactly in a position to judge seeing that I turn a blind eye to things I've heard about the Rebels.

In a sense, I understand her. I would never betray the Steel Rebels for anything. They were my father's family, and now they're mine. Maybe this is why Scarlett and I have been friends for as long as we have. We understand the need for discretion when it comes to protecting the people we care about.

Even when they break our hearts.

"I really thought he was at least starting to love me," I say miserably, reliving the past couple of days in my head. "The sex was mind-blowing every time, but I thought it was more than that between us."

"Every time? You've done it more than once?" she gasps. "It's only been, like, a day since I last saw you!"

Has it? I could have sworn it'd been longer, considering how much Axel and I have been all over each other. "Well, I guess it's a good thing we did, since I don't think it'll ever happen again," I pout, feeling a fresh wave of sorrow roll through me. "He doesn't love me, Scar!" I sniff into her shoulder when she pulls me back into a hug. "He's only stuck around because of that stupid promise he made my father."

"That can't be right. Surely he wouldn't have made love to you if he didn't have feelings for you."

"He does." And that's the worst part. "Just not the feelings I want." I push back from the embrace to meet her eyes filled with pity. "Axel is only with me out of a sense of obligation, to keep me safe. He promised my father he would. He cares about me, but he doesn't actually love me, not romantically at least."

“Did he say that?”

“Not to me.” I sniff, thanking her when she passes me a tissue. “I heard him talking to his friend about it. God, I feel terrible knowing that I might have trapped him in a relationship against his wishes. That first night, he never would have made a move if I hadn’t pushed—”

Her eyes flare as she grips my shoulders, shaking her head fiercely. “Axel is a grown man; you did not push him into anything—”

“I seduced him! I made him mad on purpose!”

“He could have left after he took you home! He didn’t have to sleep with you to keep you safe.”

“He couldn’t. He’d never hurt my feelings on purpose. I pressured him.” I shake my head, replaying the moments of our first time together. What he said after he gave me my first orgasm should have been a warning sign.

“I’m sorry, Brooke. I never should have touched you.”

“Fuck this,” Scarlett curses, something she rarely does. “I propose we drink some wine and forget about men named after car parts.”

An incredulous giggle escapes me, but I don’t argue as she gets up and heads toward the kitchen. I stand and follow, settling on one of the stools to watch her pour out two glasses. “You have great taste in wine,” I say when she passes me a glass.

“It’s my Italian roots.” She chuckles, flinging her beautiful long dark hair over her shoulder as she brings the glass to her lips.

If my father were here, he'd have a thing or two to say about me drinking underage. I bet Axel wouldn't approve either, but he doesn't have to worry about me anymore. Once the sound of heartbreak stops echoing in my brain, I'll talk to him about ending whatever it is we've started. It'll only take me a lifetime to get over the man, but I have to accept the truth. Maybe I'll try traveling after all. I look across the counter at Scarlett and wonder if I could convince her to come with me.

I bring the glass to my lips and take a sip, humming at the taste. It's dark and smooth, with a hint of cherries and chocolate. It's far better than any cocktail I've tried before. "This tastes...expensive," I comment, but Scarlett only tosses me a smile.

"Let's grab some snacks and have the wine while we watch a movie—"

Her words are cut off by a sudden pounding on the door that echoes through the room. It's a jarring intrusion that disrupts the easy air. Scarlett's smile falters, her gaze shifting away from me and to the entrance and growing uneasy. She gives me a knowing look, then places the glass on the counter. "I think I can guess who that is."

I watch her walk to the door and look through the peephole before turning to me with a sigh. "It's Axel."

I turn in surprise, quickly lowering my wine glass to the counter and rushing to my best friend's side. "What should I do?" I ask her, unsure if I'm ready to face the man just yet.

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“Do you want me to ask him to leave?”

“No,” I whisper. If Axel is here for me, nothing short of a dozen men will force him away. Besides, it’s probably best to clear the air now. I’ll end things, and then he can move on with his life without feeling obligated to be with me because of a promise he made. “I’ll talk to him. I’m sorry for dragging you into this.”

“We’re friends, I will always come to you when you need me.”

I smile at her, but it’s nervous at best. “Thank you, I’ll just...”

She nods when I point to the door, turning the knob and pulling it open. She doesn’t move out of the way or invite Axel inside, just stares at the man I’ve fallen desperately in love with.

“Don’t you want to know whether he has feelings for you or not? What his plans for you are? Isn’t it easier to know now and not have the questions loom over you every time you’re together?”

My conversation with Jade and Ingrid from earlier this evening comes back to me as I look at Axel. Well, now I do know and wish I didn’t. If I could turn back time, I would have stayed at the bar with the girls and let Axel get his own beer if he wanted one. Knowing the truth, I can’t keep this man bound to me any longer. I need to absolve him of all responsibility. Free him from the promise he made to a dying man.

“I care about her.”

Somewhere out there is a girl who will be gifted this man's whole heart, and it hurts that she is not me. That it will never be me holding his heart.

But I have to free him so he can find her.

## Chapter Eleven

Axel

Flowers.

Brooke loves red tulips. It's late and a Sunday, so I imagine that there aren't any flower shops open, but I should have scoured the entire city until I found one that was open. If they didn't have the tulips, then maybe they'd have something similar.

I shouldn't have arrived empty handed. I bet I would have gotten a better reception if I'd shown up with flowers in hand, but in my race to get here, I didn't think about it.

Getting to her was my priority. Above all, I need to see her.

"We need to talk," I say, expecting resistance considering how hard her friend is glaring at me, but Brooke simply nods.

"Okay," she says, turning to her friend who is practically boring holes into my skin with her piercing eyes. "Scar, I'll call you later, okay?"

"Don't break her heart any more than you have already, Axel, or I'll make you pay," she threatens, and I find myself wanting to smile. She can't be much older than Brooke, but something about her threat seems genuine. Not that she scares me, but unlike Jade, I can tell hers are not empty threats. There is something about Brooke's best friend that I can't put a finger on, but I decide to push it to the back of my mind.

Whatever her deal is, at least I know she would defend Brooke, and that is all that matters.

“I won’t,” I offer the girl before stepping out of the way. Scarlett goes back into the apartment to grab her purse from the couch, then returns to the door. She hugs Brooke and whispers something about wine in her ear, then leaves after giving me another warning look. Brooke watches her walk to the elevator before turning to me and gesturing for me to come inside.

In her living room, she crosses her arms over her stomach protectively and stares at me without a word. She’s closed off from me in a way she never has been before. This silence and the distance... I hate it.

For as long as I’ve known the Brooke, she’s never hidden her emotions from me. She could be shy as a young girl, but never around me. Not once have I seen this blank expression on her face before. I hate that I am the cause of it. I don’t know what the hell Brooke heard, but I need to fix this.

Fix us.

“How did you know I’d come home?” she asks after a prolonged silence. “I didn’t tell anyone where I was going.”

“I tracked your phone.” I imagine there’s no need to lie about it.

“Huh,” she offers emotionlessly, not bothering to question how I got access to her phone in the first place long enough to install a tracking app on it.

“Brooke—”

“I’m fine,” she cuts me off. Those pretty pale gray eyes seem determined as she fixes

them on me. “I promise you, I’m fine, Axel.

I run my eyes over her. “I can see that, but you shouldn’t have left the clubhouse without—”

“No, you are not listening,” she demands. “I mean, I’m fine. Better than I was a year ago. Hell, even a month ago. I don’t cry myself to sleep anymore...or take walks alone. I don’t drink alcohol to numb the pain. I don’t spend all day feeling sorry for myself.” Her eyes fill up, but she quickly blinks back the tears. “I’m fine now, Axel. I don’t need your constant attention and protection.”

“Brooke—”

“I know you promised my father that you would look after me, and I am grateful, truly I am, but it’s become too much of a burden for you. I want you to have the freedom to live your life, to find the person you want...” She trails off, breaking eye contact as she runs a shaky hand through her beautiful hair. “What I mean to say is I absolve you of the promise you made my father. I’m an adult now. I can take care of myself. You can go back to your life knowing you kept your promise to my father.”

“Absolve me?” I ask, crossing my arms over my chest in an effort to stop myself from reaching for the girl spouting such ridiculous words.

“Look, I know my father loved you and considered you his best friend, but he wouldn’t want you to sacrifice yourself—”

“And you think that’s what I’ve been doing?” I ask, stepping forward, making her back up a step. “Sacrificing myself.”

“Axel—”

“I would have done everything the same even if your father hadn’t asked me to look after you.”

“I know you care about me—”

“Fuck that,” I growl, the beast inside me demanding that I take this ridiculous girl into my arms and show her just how much she means to me. The world. She means

the fucking world to me. “I care about the Steel Rebels. I care about my bike and the auto shop. I cared about your father. But what I feel for you, Brooke Kane, goes beyond care, or else I would never have touched you.”

“Don’t lie to me,” she fires back. “You told Gray that you care. That’s it. When he asked if you love me, you told him that you care about me.”

God, is that what caused this whole thing? Is that what had me breaking traffic laws across the city to get to her? I force in deep breaths, studying the girl that has stolen my heart, and I realize that all this is my fault. Perhaps I should have made things clear with her before speaking to my brothers. I just never imagined it would backfire like this.

“Did you hear the rest of what I said?” I ask, already knowing the answer.

“What else was there to hear?” she says in a sulky voice, turning away from me. “You don’t love me. I can’t make you love me. It’s time to put a stop to whatever misplaced sense of obligation led to this so we can both move on with our lives.”

The thought of Brooke moving on without me is not one I am willing to entertain. Maybe I could have let her go if I hadn’t felt her body pressed against mine. If I didn’t know the taste of her lips or how it feels when I am inside of her. No, I never want to share that knowledge with any other man. They belong to me.

She belongs to me!

I close the distance between us and pull her around and against my body. She struggles at first, then seems to melt into me against her will.

“I love you, Brooke,” I say, my voice thick with possessiveness. “I care about you, not because I was tasked to, but because you’re you. I am in love with you, Brooke

Kane. There is nothing in this world or any other that I want more than you.”

My words seem to stun her as her jaw drops and eyes go wide with surprise. “B-but you said...”

I cup her jaw, tracing a finger over her soft skin. “If you’d stuck around long enough, then you would have heard me tell Gray the same thing,” I say, wanting to assure her, but the feel of her against me has my body reacting. My heart rate picks up like it never has around anyone else, and all blood rushes south, making my dick harden in my pants.

“If you’re saying this because—”

“Brooke, you don’t really believe that I have been following you around because your father asked me to, do you? We both know that wasn’t what your father intended when he asked me to keep you safe.”

“W-why else would you follow me around?”

“Because the thought of another man touching you made me sick!” I shout, unable to contain myself a moment longer. I wrap an arm around her waist and back her to the wall. “I tried convincing myself that I would be fine, even welcome it if you fell in love with another man, but I was lying to myself. I was there in the shadows watching you, not just to keep an eye on you but to make sure no other man could come close to having you.”

Brooke gasps, and I can feel the rapid beat of her heart. “You wanted me?”

“You are young and beautiful. You have a whole life ahead of you that’s yet to be explored. The last thing you need is someone like me tying you down.”

“You wanted me? All this time?” she repeats.

“I still do. Like my next breath. Is it so hard for you to believe that an undeserving man like me could fall in love with a beautiful woman like you?” I rasp, my jeans getting tighter as my cock pulses behind my fly. “I don’t deserve you, and it’s true that part of reservations were because you’re my best friend’s daughter, but that was hardly the main reason I held back. But I don’t care anymore. I’m not going to let that come between us. If you want me, I’m yours.”

God, I want her. Everything in me wants to wrap around her and claim her, to leave my mark on her so the world knows she’s mine. After spending the better part of a year wanting her, it would kill me to lose her.

“Axel...” I read the conflict in her eyes as she struggles to accept that I have real feelings for her. “Are you sure about this? Please don’t say words you don’t—”

My mouth slams down on hers, cutting off her words. I’m done talking. It’s about fucking time I showed her that I mean every word I said.

Mine!

The thought comes unbidden as I press her against the wall, and I am reminded of the first time I had her in this same spot, and fuck, what an experience that was. The way she trembled in my arms, sobbing as her pussy pulsed around my finger. I want to give her that again, but this time, it'll be my cockinside her as she comes, rutting her like a bull as I breed her. Claim her.

Mine!

Brooke moans into the kiss, bringing her slim fingers to my shoulders and clinging as she kisses me back. "I'm going to fuck you," I breathe into the kiss. "I'm going to show you that you're mine and only mine. No one else gets to have you."

"Oh God, is this real?" she whispers, her breath hitching when I slide my left hand under her top and cup her tit over her bra, fondling it in my greedy palm. Her breast fits perfectly in my hand, and I groan as I feel her nipple pebble under my eager touch. My mouth stays on her, kissing and lapping into her mouth, tasting the wine on her tongue, and fuck, it tastes more intoxicating than anything I've ever had in my life.

I drop my hand from her tits to undo the button of her jeans before tugging them down along with her panties. Brooke breaks the kiss to pull them the rest of the way down before stepping out of them. She helps me strip off her top and bra, leaving her nude, and Jesus Christ, Brooke is a dream. Before this girl, I wasn't exactly a saint, but I didn't place much importance on sex. On intimacy. On taking a moment to appreciate my partner and realize that I never want another man to look at her.

I want her to belong to only me.

“You turn,” she says, her fingers reaching to unfasten my belt, and I move to help her. I unzip my jeans and groan when her fingers close around my hard cock.

“Fuck, baby, want you so bad,” I growl, skating my left hand up her thighs and nudging them open for me. “Need to be inside of that pussy. Show you I mean it when I say you’re more precious to me than the air I breathe.”

She releases a broken sound when I slide my middle finger between her feminine lips, groaning when I find her slick with arousal. Christ, I’ve barely touched her. It seems I am not the only one who can’t hold back when we’re close to each other. Her breathing turns choppy when I slide the thick digit over her wet pussy, teasing her sensitive nub and hole with slow strokes that send her rising to her tiptoes and burying her face in my throat.

“Axel...want more. Want you,” she whimpers, rocking against me as she rubs against my hand, crying out when I slide my finger into her wet entrance. “Oh God... Oh!”

My cock aches with the need to be inside of her, begging to replace the finger thrusting in and out of her. She writhes needily, burying her nails into my shoulder as she rides my finger, and I wait until I feel her close to the edge before pulling out. She whines at the move, trembling helplessly against me, begging for my cock.

“You are mine,” I grit out between my teeth. “I want to hear you say it.”

“Axel...”

I don’t hesitate to flip her around and lay a quick smack to her lush ass. She cries out in surprise, then moans when I do it again to the other side.

“Say it,” I growl, guiding my cock to her entrance and rubbing the tip through her sodden folds, but not giving into her silent plea for more. “Save us both from this torture and tell me you understand that you are mine. Will only ever belong to me.”

“Yours,” she whimpers when I push in the tip. “I... Yours. I’m yours. Please take me. Please...”

Instead of sinking into her like she wants, I drop to my knees behind her and bury my face in her core without warning. I use my tongue to tease her clit, then drag it along her sex to her entrance and thrust inside. I moan at the taste of her, sweet and heady. She cries out my name when I repeat the motion, lifting onto her toes to arch her back and give me better access to her delicious center, wet with her arousal. I continue to work her sex with my tongue and at the same time, drop quick, stinging smacks to her ass. When she’s sobbing for release and begging me to fuck her, I pull back.

Still on my knees, I deliver one last spank, enjoying the way it makes her ass move, and ask, “Do you believe me? Believe that I want you and only you? That I love you?”

“Y-yes! Axel, please!” she sobs. “I need you. Now!”

I climb to my feet and position myself behind her. Her back arches and she lets out a scream when I slam forward, burying my cock into her sex with a single thrust, stretching her with my girth and groaning as her tight channel pulses wildly around me. It’s pure bliss. Her pussy is a fucking haven, warm and tight around my aching cock.

“So tight,” I grunt, and fuck, I don’t have the strength or will to wait as I grab her ass and lift her to the wall, before slamming back into her. “It should be illegal for someone to feel this good. This perfect.”

“If that were the case, then we’d both be arrested.” She moans, rolling her hips to meet my thrust in an experimental move. “Feels so good. You feel so big inside of me.”

“If you can still talk, then I’m not doing a very good job fucking you senseless.”

“No, I... Oh God!” she shouts when I part her ass cheeks and fuck her deeper. Her tits brush the wall with every thrust, making her moan louder. Her beautiful mouth is parted on broken sobs as I hammer in and out of her, taking her. Giving her everything I have.

“Mine!” I growl, pounding her into the wall, faster and harder until her breath begins to come out in choppy gasps, and I can feel her cresting orgasm. Thank fuck because I am not too far off myself.

“So close,” she whimpers, tears streaming down her cheeks, and I groan when I feel myself tip closer to climaxing. I shift the angle so my cock hits that spot inside of her with every thrust, and it’s enough to send her over the edge. She throws her head back and screams as she orgasms, her walls clamping so hard around my cock it’s difficult to move.

One rough tremor after another rocks through her body. I press her against the wall, thrusting into her with fast, rhythmless strokes, her release easing the glide into her sex, and the wet, obscene sounds of our lovemaking fill the room, mixing with her cries. It doesn’t take long before the gathering pressure at the base of my spine becomes too much and I erupt. I’m coming, grunting like an animal as I spill thick streams of come inside of her. My fingers dig hard into her ass as I grind my cock into her tight hole, burying my seed into her womb.

This is not the first time we’ve had sex without protection. In fact, I don’t believe the thought to use a condom ever crossed my mind, and unless Brooke is on the pill, she

could get pregnant.

She could already be pregnant, seeing how we've barely kept our hands off each other since the first time we had sex. The image of gray-eyed mini versions of Brooke fill my heart with a bone-deep contentment.

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“I love you,” I rasp, turning her to face me and finding her lips. She moans as she kisses me back just as desperately until we’re both out of breath. My semi-erect cock begins to swell again, and I pull back to meet her eyes. “I want you forever. There will never exist a moment in my life when I don’t want you.”

Her eyes fill as she nods. “I love you. There’s never existed a moment since I met you when I didn’t want you, Axel.”

“I will do anything to deserve your love,” I say, my voice thick with emotion. I lean in and brush my lips over her temple, vowing to her love her for the rest of our lifetime and the next. “You’re mine, Brooke Kane.”

“Yours.”

### Epilogue

#### Six Years Later

#### Brooke

The heavy scent of oil and gasoline hits me as I step through the open garage door, a familiar scent that brings a smile to my face. My husband is hunched over the engine of an old Ford Mustang, his brow furrowed in concentration as he fiddles with a wrench. My eyes leave him and drop to our five-year-old son, Kane, perched on a toolbox. His small hand is gripping a toy bike, its plastic wheels spinning wildly as he pushes it across the concrete floor. A beautiful terrier, a present from my best friend Scarlett to my son on his fifth birthday, runs around the room, chasing after a squeaky

toy, tail wagging furiously with excitement, and all I can think is...

Home.

Everyone in this room is my home, and I never imagined that we'd be here. That my ring finger would shine with a wedding band tying me to the only man I have ever loved. The only man I will ever love. Six years ago, it felt like an impossible dream, a teen's wishful thinking, but it's reality now. I don't just get to be with the love of my life. No, I married him. We had a son. Built a home together.

It's all so perfect. I couldn't have asked for a better man. A better family. A better...home.

My lips stretch wider in a smile as Kane leans forward, his eyes on the toy bike as he drives it across the floor. Seemingly so engrossed that he doesn't even notice my presence, and I'm still watching him when he pushes the bike with all his might, then releases it to fly past me, dangerously close to my toes before it crashes against the wall and shatters into pieces. I gasp at the impact.

"Mom!" comes right before a surprised, "Honey, are you okay?"

"Better than that bike," I say with a laugh, walking deeper into the room. I pat my son's hair before leaning in and kissing his forehead. Then I turn to my husband and brush my lips over his, allowing myself to linger, but only for a few seconds before pushing back. It's so hard being close to this man—especially when he's shirtless and dirty—and having to stop myself from jumping him. Axel shirtless, in jeans that ride low enough to reveal that perfect V-line that disappears into his waistband is a devastating sight.

"You're early," he says, his deep voice sending heat climbing up my body so I move away from him before I do something stupid like lick the sweat off his chest. Shit, I

need to get a hold of myself. Surely after six years of marriage, I shouldn't be this shamelessly horny and desperate, but my husband brings out the worst in me. Just being close to him is enough to have my sex pulsing with need.

Focus, Brooke.

"I promised you I would be back early," I say, picking up Kane's toys and throwing them into a basket just so I have something to do. "I had a lot of work at the office, but I promised to be back in time to make it to the cookout. You know I would never miss that."

I don't make it a habit to work on weekends. No, those are set aside for my family, but I've been trying to wrap up an important project before we leave for vacation to celebrate our anniversary. I don't want work hanging over my head the whole time. Despite having my dream job at a large marketing firm in the city, I've never allowed it to get in the way of family time. Whether it's our small family of three or the bigger one full of rough bikers.

"I, for one, I'm glad you made it," Axel says, running his eyes over my body. "Have I told you how good you look in a business casual?"

"You have, a million times," I say, watching his gaze heat, and I have to remind myself that we're not alone, so I turn to our son. "Hey, sweetheart, why don't you head inside and put away your toys. Aunt Jade said that she got the supplies to make S'mores."

The boy nods eagerly, and rushes with his basket of toys up the stairs to our apartment, followed closely by his ever-loyal dog. We watch them both disappear inside and hear the click of the door. Alone at last, I turn to my husband, grinning when I find his heated eyes tracking me. "Our kid is lonely," my husband says, reaching out and taking my hand before drawing me to him. "Why don't we make

him a sibling. Maybe sister to play with.”

“Are you speaking for Kane or yourself? Because I have it on good authority that he has a half-dozen playmates running around the clubhouse at any given time. The next generation of Rebels already nearly outnumbers the first.”

“A daughter for me to dote on then.”

I gasp when he spins me around so my back is against the Mustang. My clothes are going to get stained, but I find that I don’t care. When this man is close and those brown eyes are on mine, I find that little else matters. It’s almost like he cast a spell on me the moment we met. I didn’t realize it until I was a teenager, but I’ve loved Axel in some form or another my entire life.

With his protective demeanor, good looks, and body of a Greek god, who wouldn’t be?

With our eyes locked, I take his hand and bring it to my breast. Moaning when he rubs my nipple, causing it to pebble. “I guess it’s a good thing I’m off the pills,” I say, bushing my lips over his bristled jaw and trailing them up before sinking my teeth gently into his earlobe. “I don’t see what’s stopping us from making a baby now.”

“Nothing,” he growls, his hand sliding up my leg, pushing my skirt up in the process. My knees instinctively open for him, thighs parting for his hand. “Absolutely nothing is stopping me from breeding you like a beast and planting another baby in your womb.” He slides a finger under the waistband of my panties and tugs them down to my knees, then letting them drop to my ankles, leaving me bare for him. I bite back a moan when his fingertips trail back up my thighs, gasping when one slides between my damp feminine lips. “God, you never fail to amaze at how fast you’re ready for me. One touch, and you’re already leaking all over my finger.”

I flush at his words. “Axel—”

“I love it,” he rasps, brushing his lips over mine. “I love that I make you react this way. That after six years of marriage, you still want me with the same desperation I feel for you.”

“I’ll always want you,” I say, reminding him of our wedding vows. I’ve never wanted anyone before Axel and have never met anyone that could live up to the man he is. “You have and will always be it for me... Oh!” My lips part on a cry when he slides his thick digit into my sex. His breathing turns heavy too as he starts thrusting in and out of me, stroking my clit with his thumb as he fucks me with his finger. “Want to feel you inside of me, baby. Fast before we’re interrupted.”

*Source Creation Date: July 7, 2025, 6:36 am*

“Fuck,” he curses when he realizes that it could happen, withdrawing his finger to undo his pants, tugging down his zipper before shoving them away. My leg is on his hooked around his waist in record time, and we both groan when he enters me. “Aah! Fuck, baby. Your pussy is a dream!” He exhales roughly, his thick shaft stretching and pulsing inside of me. There is a fierce throb between my legs that begs for relief. I scrape my fingernails down his shoulders as I attempt to get my bearings, too stimulated by the feel of the man I love above all inside of me. “So fucking tight and wet. I can’t get enough of you. I never will.”

“I love you,” I say, my heart full. A part of me is still scared that this is just a dream and I’ll wake up alone in my old apartment, but sharp slap to my ass jolts me back to the present, and I realize that this is reality.

“Stay with me, baby. I’m so fucking close,” Axel says.

His blunt fingers dig into my ass as his throbbing manhood moves inside of me, filling me. Stretching me. Pleasuring me.

“I love you,” he says raggedly, flattening me against the hood of the car as his hips slap against mine in fevered pitch. Fire blooms in my abdomen before slowly spreading to the rest of my body. Axel cradles my thigh as he thrusts his shaft into my wet sex, his pumps furious as he takes me, and I have to bite hard on my lip to stop myself from crying out and calling attention to us. At least I try to be quiet, but it’s hard to control the noises coming out of me.

“Yes, oh God, yes!” I cry into his chest, trying to muffle the sounds as he hammers into me ruthlessly. It borderline brutal, and I love every second of it.

“You like that, don’t you? Taking your husbands cock where anyone could walk in and spot you whining and writhing on my dick?”

My eyes shoot to the doorway, and sure enough, it’s still slightly open. God, if someone decided to stop by the garage, they would be treated to quite the sight. In a sick twist, the thought of being caught sends a thrill rushing through me, and my sex pulses wildly at the idea of someone seeing Axel claim me like this. It shouldn’t turn me on as much as it does, but my reaction is obvious in the way I tighten around his shaft.

“Yeah, you like that,” he growls, his cock pistoning furiously into my sex and rubbing my clit with the base of his thickness. “My horny little wife like’s the thought of people watching her take her husband’s big dick in her tight little pussy.”

My tummy seizes, and white spots burst in my eyes before it all crashes down with a scream. I bury my face in his neck, sinking my teeth into his skin to curb the cry as he ruts me furiously. I claw his back, no doubt breaking his skin from the intensity of my climax. My legs buck as pleasure traps me in its grip, punishing me with one vicious tremor after the other. I whimper as the intensity begins to recede, clinging on to him as he fucks me through it, my sex clenching and releasing around his shaft.

“I’m coming,” he growls, and it takes three more strokes before my husband stills on top of me, his muscles taut before he releases with a curse. “Fuuuck!” He’s an animal, feral as he slams hard into me, and I feel the warmth of his release, his grunts are hoarse as I clench my sex around him, milking him of every drop before he goes lax against me, the sound of our heavy breathing the only one in the room.

I stroke his back as we catch our breaths. “Do you think it worked?” Axel asks after a moment.

“I don’t know,” I answer, dipping my hand into his hair and brushing it back, “We’ll have to wait and see, but in the meantime we’ll just have to keep trying until we’re

successful in giving Kane a little brother or sister to play with.”

He shifts his head to the side to kiss my shoulder. “I’m not opposed to that.”

“We’ll do it every morning and every night...”

I stop when he pulls back with a smirk on his face. “Don’t get me excited. We have a cookout to get to,” he says with a smile that brings on my own.

“Tonight then,” I say, pulling him back into the embrace. We have to get cleaned up and ready for the cookout, and no doubt our son has gotten into something with how quiet he’s been upstairs, but that can wait a moment longer, I decide, soaking in Axel’s warmth. A deep satisfaction settles inside of me, and I realize this is exactly the life I always dreamed about having with Axel. I wouldn’t trade any of it for the world.

~The End