



The Heat of Intensity

Author: *Esther E. Schmidt*

Category: Romance, Western

Description: Lives cross and gazes collide, causing an intense and delicious rush to overtake your mind and body. The extraordinary, one-of-a-kind connection which others may refer to as “love at first sight” will kick off the ride of your life to set a path for the future.

Cosima – Coping with eyesight complications due to trauma has me at a loss and feeling only a fraction of who I was before the attack. A certain annoying, overbearing Cowboy Biker will not take no for an answer and is determined to shift my world back into place. Turns out, it's just what I need when another incident is right around the corner.

Parker – Meeting a woman who stays sassy even when she's badly injured awakens a primal instinct to claim, along with a protective streak flaring inside me. A turn of events forces us to work closely together, especially when her life suddenly hangs in the balance along with our hopes and dreams.

The Heat of Intensity is a standalone novella in the second-generation Cowboy Bikers MC series. Each story features a new couple and can be read together or separately.

Total Pages (Source): 29

CHAPTER ONE

– COSIMA –

A growl of frustration rips from me when I open my eyes. Why I even bother to open them when I wake up is beyond me. Okay, I should feel slightly better now that I regained a blurry mess of eyesight in my left eye. The right one, though? Nothing. Not even a blurry glimpse; only a whole lot of nada in capital letters.

You never stop to think about how valuable your eyesight is until you're confronted with the loss of it, either partially or completely. I move my head around to take in the blurry blob that's my room. At least I'm able to move around more now that I can at least see something with one eye, and not bump into every-freaking-thing.

One moment in time and my life as I know it takes a nosedive. Where I used to jump out of bed early to start my day and work from sunrise till at least after dinner, I'm now on a schedule that involves loads of rest and just a mere hint of work per day. I'm slowly getting back to doing things, but my head needs the rest due to the headaches and much-needed recovery.

Besides, my loss of sight doesn't leave me many options to do all the stuff I used to do. For now, I've only made a few calls and caught up on all the voicemails people have left when I had to hit pause on everything after my attack. My sister, Eastlynne, is taking care of the horses Rourke, her old man, brought to his ranch.

Our stables have to be rebuilt and that is the noise I'm currently hearing. The construction crew has started bright and early each day for the past few weeks as

Rourke and his guys arranged. My mood takes a nosedive at the thought. I'm a control freak and right now my hands are tied while others take over. I hate it.

I throw the blankets back and slide out of bed. My first trip is to the bathroom to handle my business and then I grab some clothes to get dressed. Another thing that makes me feel less like myself. Before the attack? I wouldn't even leave my bedroom without being perfectly dressed with my make-up in place.

I haven't so much as pointed my finger in the direction of a mirror and why should I? I can't see properly and rarely leave the damn house anyway. Not to mention, no one swings by because I told my sister to keep everyone away. The only ones who come here are my sister and Rourke.

I know for damn sure that annoying Parker has been sneaking into the house as well, but I've never been able to catch him if he does. How do I know he's been in the house? He lets me know through text messages and I can smell him.

Sounds weird, but I remember his scent. Parker was the one who found me after I was attacked. He has a very distinctive scent which is a combination of spice, leather, and citrus. The citrus is from the sweets he eats. The knowledge of this little tidbit is also due to a voice text message. He's been sending them since the day I was attacked. At first, I didn't reply, but the man is persistent.

There's also not much to do if you're bedbound and I do have to admit voice to text and vice versa, right between plain voice messages are entertaining when you have time to kill any time of day. He sounds nice. A little overbearing, though. A persistent asshole who doesn't take no for an answer, but also sweet in a caring way.

I have no clue what he looks like because I met him that crucial day when I was attacked so my eyes were already swollen shut by then. He sounds ruggedly handsome. Hell, we talked about sexual preferences, and he sounds like the type of

man I'd jump for a ride even if he didn't have the looks to match. Though, the way I feel about myself right now? Sex won't be a consideration any time soon.

I grind my teeth and turn, seeing a glimpse of movement in my window. Did I imagine it? Dammit, I hate not being able to see. And for fuck's sake why didn't I close my curtains? Oh, I know...not being able to see makes me forget to freaking close them. I should have though, because I was naked when I slipped into a change of clothes.

Great. I bet some of the construction workers have been enjoying the show for the past few weeks. I can't believe I flashed them my boobs and whatnot. No wonder those guys start early. Ugh. Did I mention I hate everything?

I hear soft footsteps somewhere inside the house. The kitchen maybe? Strange. Eastlynne stayed with Rourke at his ranch last night so she's not home. I wrap my fingers around the shotgun I keep beside my bed and silently walk down the hall.

My vision is shit and over the past few weeks, I've had to rely on my other senses. Scent and hearing are my main focus and right now the scent of a male enters my nose. Sweaty, smoke, and a hint of iron. My heart lurches when I hear movement and swing my gun in that direction.

"Who are you?" I snap. "What the fuck are you doing in my house?"

I can hear the rush of my blood in my ears, that's how hard my heart is pumping. Adrenaline spikes when I hear soft shuffling.

"I said don't move," I growl and try to catch a glimpse through the blurry vision when I catch a hint of movement.

Without thinking I pull the trigger and my shoulder screams at me from the recoil.

Turning my head, I blink furiously in an effort to get a tiny gap of clear vision like I had yesterday, but it's still freaking blurry.

"Cosima," I hear my sister scream. "Cosima, what the...hey, put the shotgun down."

"Put it down, you heard your sister," Rourke grunts. "We're stepping into the kitchen so point it to the fucking floor before you hurt your sister."

"Someone was here," I tell them and lower the shotgun.

"What's going on? I heard someone shooting," Parker states from behind me, scaring the shit out of me.

I spin around and Parker barely manages to grab the barrel before I hit him in the head with it.

"Easy, babe," he murmurs and I let him take the gun from me.

His spicy scent wraps around me and I want to bury my face into his chest.

Stupid. Why would I want him to seek him out for comfort? He's not my boyfriend, barely even a friend. Hell, I've never even seen him with my own damn eyes.

"Anyone come past you?" Rourke asks.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“No, why?” Parker fires back.

“Someone was in my house,” I whisper.

“Fuck,” Parker mutters. “You okay?”

My hands curl into fists, frustrated by the hard fact that I’m yet again freaking useless.

“No. I am not fucking okay,” I hiss.

Parker sighs, his breath with the scent of citrus teases my nose.

“No one came out of the back, and Parker just said he didn’t see anyone either,” Rourke states. “Eastlynne, do you see anything out of place?”

“Stay here, I’m going to check the rest of the house,” Parker states and I can hear his footsteps retreating.

“Are you sure you heard something?” Eastlynne questions.

I glare in her direction. At least, I freaking hope so because all I can see is a blobby figure against the bright light of the kitchen window so it might as well be Rourke, or both of them for that matter. Hell, maybe it’s the wall I’m glaring at, who the fuck knows? Not me, that’s for sure.

“All clear,” Parker grunts from behind me, scaring the crap out of me.

“Hey,” my sister says in a soothing tone. “It’s okay. Come on, why don’t you go lie down and I’ll fix you some breakfast. We’ll let the guys check out the noise you heard.”

I take a step back and bump into someone. Frustration and anger overwhelm me and I snarl, “I don’t want to lie down. Someone was in the damn house. In the fucking kitchen with me. I might not be able to see, am stupid enough not to close my curtains, and might have flashed fuck-knows who...but I heard someone inside the house, smelled his stinky presence, and fucking know damn well when I’m not alone, okay?”

“Eastlynne, mind making some coffee?” Parker rumbles from behind me.

I feel his fingers touch my arm.

I flinch and rip my arm away and hiss, “Don’t touch me.”

“On second thought,” Parker grunts and I hear him step around me.

I rub my eyes in an effort to clear my sight. Blinking a few times, I catch a clear view from my good eye of my sister and Rourke leaving through the back door before my vision becomes blurry again.

“Where are they going?” I ask panic now slipping through my veins.

Someone was in the house and for them it might not have seemed that way, but it was very real. What the hell am I going to do if I’m here alone and he or she returns? Or worse...what if there was someone here all along?

“They are going to check on the renovations. The stables should be completely rebuilt any day now and that’s why they were here this early, to check the progress,” Parker

informs me. “Coffee?”

“Yes.” I release a sigh and reach for one of the chairs. “Where did you put my shotgun? I need to have it before you leave.”

“I won’t be leaving, and it’s right in front of you, darlin’.”

I reach forward to wrap my fingers around the shotgun and only grab air when Parker states, “You won’t be needing it as long as I’m here. So, let me put this back where you normally stash it.”

It’s as if the asshole knew I was going to threaten him with it. Grinding my teeth, I keep quiet and hear his boots retreat. He knows where I keep the shotgun because I mentioned it in one of our voice message discussions. Ugh. Why I keep talking to him is beyond me.

I don’t want anyone in my life right now and he sure as hell can do better than a woman who can’t freaking see. Blame it on boredom. At least, that’s my excuse. Parker, on the other hand, doesn’t have a legit excuse to be around a woman who can’t even leave the damn house.

Hearing his footsteps come closer I snap, “Why are you here?”

“Cranky without coffee,” he murmurs. “Hold that thought, darlin’.”

I grind my teeth and want nothing more than to run into the hallway and disappear into my bedroom, but with my luck, I’d run into a wall if I wanted to make a quick escape.

“Incoming,” Parker states and I flinch when he wraps his fingers around my wrist. “Easy, babe. Gonna place a mug with coffee in your hand now.”

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

Easy, babe? I'll show him fucking easy. It's a shame I crave the coffee he just gave me otherwise I'd throw it at him. I mentally snort, because knowing my aim right now? I'd miss him for sure.

“To answer your question, I was swinging by to show you your blue Blagdon Gypsy Cob.”

I want to snarl at him for how considerate he is to swing by to show me something, but he mentioned the horse I agreed to buy from the Clyden's Ranch which is known for its warm and stable character Gypsy Cobs. After the incident, I asked my sister's help to cancel. There's no way I can spend time with a new horse while recovering.

He must take my silence for something else than the sadness, anger, and frustration filling me when he states, “Finish your coffee, and then we'll go out front so you can meet your new mare.”

Inside I'm fuming. Outside, though? Ice.

I slowly rise from my seat and pride myself for not flinging the coffee at the asshole. The only reason I don't is because I can't fucking clean it because I wouldn't know where it fucking lands.

Taking a deep breath, I squeeze my eyes shut to brace myself. Flashing my eyes open, I roar, “Get the fuck out of my house.”

He looks as surprised as I feel when I suddenly have complete and clear sight in my left eye. Only one eye, but fucking perfect eyesight. He looks breathtakingly

handsome. I only now become aware of this little fact because I can see. A sob escapes me and my sight becomes blurry in my left eye due to the tears. Dammit. I'm a fucking mess.

CHAPTER TWO

– PARKER –

Motherfucker. The sob ripping from her hits me square in the chest at full force. The hell with keeping my distance. I made up my mind yesterday anyway, that's why I picked up the horse that she canceled the agreement for and came here to give it to her this morning.

Stepping forward, I swoop her in my arms and crush her against my body. There's only a breath or two when she freezes and then melts against me. She fists my leather cut and I have no clue if she's gonna push me away or make sure I stay in place.

Seconds tick by as she lets all the emotion flow from her. This was part of my concern and why I told Eastlynne honoring Cosima's wish was a mistake. Sure, one needs time alone to lick their wounds and needs space to get their bearings, but continuing to push everything and everyone away is not the way to recovery.

I have no clue what to say. My lips stay sealed and my arms locked around her until the sobs fade and she slowly manages to calm down her breathing.

"You're an asshole," she mutters and wipes her tears and snot on my shirt.

"Classy." I chuckle. "And I know I'm an asshole, darlin'. It's why I don't give two shits what others say, and why I'm right here holding you. You've been alone long enough. Your sister might respect your wishes, but I'm the asshole who will gladly take your hand and drag you back to the land of the living. Your bruises have healed.

Your mind needs fresh air along with the wind blowing in your face to chase away the cobwebs inside your head that torment you.”

Cosima steps away from me and I regretfully drop my arms from around her delicious body. “If I want fresh air I’ll open a damn window.”

“Not the point, darlin’.”

She stomps her bare foot on the hardwood floor. “I don’t care. My life, my house, my own damn choice. And stop calling me darling with that southern twang. Go home or I’ll call the cops.”

“Go ahead,” I taunt. “I’m sure Kathleen will pick my side when I explain things. Especially when I tell her about the person you said was in the house this morning.”

“Or maybe she’ll share Rourke and Eastlynn’s opinion, that I’m imagining things. More rest is the best medicine and all.” Anger makes her whip out the words.

I shrug, then realize she can’t see me and I tell her, “Be stubborn. I’m gonna check on my horse and yours, then I’m going to put them into the pasture.”

“Your horse? Why did you bring your horse? And why the fuck did you buy my horse? The one that’s not supposed to be mine because I canceled.” Her voice is still raised and she places her fists on her hips when she adds, “Never mind. Just go and leave me alone.”

I lean in close and my eyes narrow when her head rears back. “Can you see me?”

She huffs and grumbles, “You’re a dark blob.”

Chuckling I tell her, “I don’t think any woman has ever described me as such.”

Her shoulders stiffen. “Probably because you’re not into blind chicks.”

Fuck. My anger flares up the way she just easily puts herself down. She takes a step forward, but I bring her to a stop by stepping in her way.

“You don’t know what I’m into, and clearly, I wasn’t either until I met you.” She snorts, but I continue. “That sassy mouth of yours gained my attention, getting to know you through voice messages was when I became intrigued by your sass and voice.”

“Cut it out, Parker. I’m not interested in—”

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Heated moments? An orgasm to make your body light up and take your brain for a spin to hit pause on the shit that’s dragging you down. You’re still very much alive, Cosima. You can get that tight ass of yours on a horse, feel the sun warm your skin, and breathe in the fresh breeze flowing through the pasture.”

She starts to sputter and I’m getting tired of her excuses. I scoop her into my arms and jolt out the front door. She’s screaming and wiggling, but I struggle with calves and ride bulls for a living, so this bundle of woman is a welcome change.

I place her on her feet right next to the trailer.

“Stay put,” I tell her and open the trailer. “So, you can see some?”

I gently step into the trailer on the right side where my horse is. The Gypsy Cob is heavier than my Quarter horse, that’s why I put her on the left.

“Nothing in my right eye. The left one I’ve been experiencing some blurry vision but when I yelled at you there was a moment where I saw you perfectly clear.”

I guide Wendy, my horse, out of the trailer. “Can you tell what color Wendy is?”

Cosima steps closer and stretches her hand out to hold it in front of Wendy’s nose. A smile slides across my face to see Wendy press her nose against Cosima’s palm.

“She’s black,” Cosima croaks and steps even closer to stroke Wendy’s back.

The longing on her face is a punch to the gut.

“We’re gonna put them in the pasture and let them get some of the fire out of their bones. Then we can go for a ride together.” She starts to shake her head and I shut down all her reasons not to go when I add, “I’ll add a lead to help you guide her. We both know you have years of experience and can saddle up a horse blindfolded, and ride one all the same.”

A stray tear spills from her cheek when she croaks, “Why are you doing this?”

I reach out and cup the side of her face. She fucking flinches and I release a string of curses inside my head while I hold my ground and caress her cheek.

“You intrigue me even if you keep pushing me away. Through texts, straight to my face, or having your sister tell me to keep my distance. You’re captivating, Cosima. I actually enjoy our banter and the sass you throw at me. With what happened this morning? You should be able to endure my presence for your safety and my peace of mind.”

Her palm lingers on the neck of my horse. “Fine.”

“Good,” I rumble. “Let me get Wendy into the pasture. Stay put with your bare feet.”

Her mouth slides into a tight line, and I feel mine twitch from a hint of laughter. She’s definitely a sassy one who doesn’t like to be ordered around. The woman is used to taking charge and doing everything her own way.

Though, the day I met her she flirted with me while she was bleeding from being used as a fucking punching bag. Back then I promised her I’d blindfold her before I hogtie her and fuck her from behind. Cosima hummed in agreement even as her eyes were swollen shut, her body hurting from the assault she just went through. That woman is fucking strong even when life hits ground zero.

I'm getting the Gypsy Cob out of the trailer when I hear her soft words. "She's gorgeous."

"That she is," I state and bring the mare closer.

Cosima reaches out and this horse responds in the same way as mine when she presses her nose against Cosima's palm. She murmurs sweet words while stroking the horse's head and neck.

"Now do you see why I couldn't let you give her up?" I ask.

Her sad eyes hit me right in the chest. "I get your point, but seeing is not something I'm fully able to do...if I'll ever be able. It's selfish to buy a horse if I'm never able to ride."

"Bullshit," I growl. "You know damn well you're working with your sister so she'll be able to put Bluebell to work. And even if you don't ever gain back your full eyesight, it doesn't mean you'll never ride again. Being selfish is sometimes good especially when you gain joy and pleasure to balance the shitty things in life. So, the reasoning you have when it comes to Bluebell isn't valid because you're not alone and have lots of shit to make sure that horse gets everything she needs."

"Oh my stars, she's gorgeous. Is she yours, Cosima? I thought you wanted to postpone buying a Gypsy Cob?" I hear Eastlynne gush as she strolls toward us, Rourke is right behind her.

Cosima turns her face away from her sister, so I answer for her. "I picked the mare up this morning from the Clyden's Ranch. Hixon mentioned Bluebell doesn't like being in the trailer alone so I brought my own horse. Besides, with y'all's horses still at our ranch I thought it would be good to have a pasture buddy. How're the stable renovations coming along?"

“Great,” Eastlynne quips.

“They’re as good as finished so the two horses can be put in a stable tonight,” Rourke states and lets his gaze land on me. “You’d need to pick up some shavings. They are putting in the stall mats later today.”

“Some hay as well and other stuff. Most of the equipment was lost in the fire,” Cosima remarks.

Eastlynne bobs her head and turns to my prez. I’m sure she’s about to suggest they’ll handle it, but it’s time for Cosima to get her mind focused on new things. Hell, if yelling at me caused her to get partially clear vision in one of her eyes? I’d say she needs to refocus and get a change of scenery.

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Cosima and I will make a list,” I state and bob my head in Rourke’s direction for him to agree.

At this moment I’m taking advantage of the fact that Cosima can’t see me.

“You two have shit to do at the ranch,” I remind my prez of something that’s complete bullshit. His raised eyebrow causes me to add, “Cosima and I agreed I should stay here and keep an eye out in case something like this morning happens again.”

Eastlynne frowns and I shoot her a glare to keep her from blabbering out shit. I know they don’t believe her ’cause there wasn’t any evidence of someone being in the house. There’s no way of telling if there was, but I’m not taking any chances.

Rourke wraps his arm around Eastlynne’s waist and pulls her close when he states, “I assume you’ll be staying here for a few days to get the horse settled and all. I’ll take the trailer back to the ranch and have a prospect bring your bike on a flatback. Call if you need anything.”

“Will do,” I reply and ask to clarify, “So, the men working on the stable will be done later today?”

Rourke shrugs. “They should be. The contractor mentioned he, or one of his guys, could swing by tomorrow or the day after to check and finish working on the new fire sprinkler system.”

“Good,” I grunt. “At least the random folks showing up around the house will end in

a few days.”

“And then you’ll be gone as well,” Cosima says in a determined tone.

With a sly grin on my face I rumble, “We’ll see.”

Cosima flips me off, at least she tries. I’m standing on her right and with her mentioning the left eye being the one that has partial vision, she doesn’t see me and flips off my horse instead.

“I’m gonna put Bluebell in the pasture. Talk later, Prez.” I nod at his old lady. “Later, Eastlynne. I’ll text you with an update later tonight and will reach out if something is up, okay?”

“Nothing will be up, especially not your cock,” Cosima snarls. “I can manage by myself just fine. I’ve been doing it for years, and even blind for the past few weeks. This is utter bullshit.”

Eastlynne shakes her head at her sister’s outburst and stalks toward me.

Leaning in, she whispers, “I don’t like you forcing your way into her life, but I can see your point. Please don’t hurt her.”

“I can’t bear to see her hurt, it was gut-wrenching the first time I laid eyes on her. She can push me away all she likes but I’m not going anywhere. I’m determined to stay and help her see she’s ready to grab life by the balls again, and it doesn’t have anything to do with having a hundred percent visibility or not.”

Eastlynne swallows hard and gives me a nod along with “thank you.”

“Don’t thank him,” Cosima grumbles. “He’s an asshole who won’t stop butting in on

other people's lives. Go put my horse in the pasture, Parker. We all have better things to do than just standing here."

I chuckle when I watch the sassy woman stomp off in the direction of the house. Eastlynne gasps and is about to rush after her sister when I grab her elbow.

"Leave her," I grunt. "She regained partial vision in her left eye when she yelled at me earlier. I'm sure she can find her way safely inside the house."

Eastlynne's eyes widen and bounce back to her sister. We watch how she flawlessly enters the house.

Her sister's gaze lands back on me. "Really? She can see again?"

I hate being the one to talk about Cosima, but on the other hand, this is her sister. "Cosima mentioned that her right eye is still blind. She's been experiencing some blurry vision with her left eye and like I said, when she yelled at me earlier in the kitchen right after you two left, she could see me clearly with that eye."

Eastlynne surprises the fuck out of me when she collides with my chest to wrap me in a hug.

"Okay, that's enough," Rourke grumbles and pulls her back against him.

I grin at my prez, knowing how damn special it is to receive a hug from his old lady. Eastlynne has a long medical history due to a combination of triggers involving sensitivities, autism, social anxieties, and fuck knows what else.

The point is, Eastlynne doesn't open up easily and doesn't let people into her personal space. It's why Cosima handled everything and why it's been hard on both sisters since her injuries required Eastlynne to step up and Cosima to step down.

Cosima stepping down won't hold forever, I'll make sure of it. That woman belongs on the top of the world. And I'll move heaven and earth to mentally get her back up there.

CHAPTER THREE

Two days later

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

– COSIMA –

I slowly awake and feel myself smiling as I blink to clear my vision. Only one eye is cooperating, but who the hell cares? I'm able to see and that's what counts. Hell, if it would stay this way for the rest of my life, I would be forever thankful. Knowing what it's like to lose something you take for granted has opened my eyes in more than one way.

A soft knock on the door is followed by Parker's voice. "You up, darlin'? Coffee is ready and we have a big day ahead of us."

The man is persistent, I'll give him that. Two days ago, when he showed up with Bluebell, I wanted to strangle the man for forcing his way into my house. I could hardly deny him and decided to ignore the guy and let him sleep on the couch. The next day he made coffee and breakfast.

We used to send one another voice messages and it's why our chats are easy. He didn't force me to go out or anything. We just sat on the porch and enjoyed the sun. My vision was still somewhat blurry but watching his horse and mine grazing in the pasture almost brought tears to my eyes.

To be honest? I almost gave up on being normal. I'm thankful for his persistence and it's why I jump out of bed and rip off the tank top I was sleeping in. I catch movement near the window and when I glance that way I scream at the top of my lungs.

Parker bursts into my bedroom. "What's wrong?"

I'm holding my tank top in front of my breasts with one arm while I point with the other at the window. "Peeping Tom."

"What the fuck?" Parker snarls and runs out into the hallway.

I quickly jump into some sweatpants and throw on my tank top before shoving my feet into the boots near the door. There's the sound of a gunshot when I open the back door and I freeze in place.

My heart is beating in my throat, clogging it and making it hard to scream for Parker. Was he shot at? Was he the one doing the shooting? Is he hurt? Should I go out to check? Dammit, why is fear rooting me in place?

"No, goddammit," Parker growls. "I lost him but he's heading in your direction. Send Walker here with shit to put up a camera system. It's not the first—" Our eyes meet and he cuts off his voice.

Pulling his phone slightly back he tells me, "Go on inside, darlin'. I'll be right there."

Gritting my teeth, I swallow the first reply that comes to mind. Something that involves him to go fuck himself. Though, I'm glad he was here when that creep was watching me through my own damn window.

I step inside and let the door fall shut while I wonder how many times that creep has been peeping inside my window. I felt someone watching me two days ago. Was this the same guy who was inside my house that day? Worry hits me and now I'm even more glad I allowed Parker to stay with me.

"Hey," he grunts when he steps into the kitchen. "Are you okay?"

I stalk to the cabinet and pull a mug to get myself some coffee. "Hell no. Did you

manage to shoot the Peeping Tom in the balls or was he the one firing off a round?"

"I missed." Placing his hands on his hips he adds, "Walker is gonna swing by along with Luke and Silas. Kathleen will be here in ten minutes or less."

"Kathleen? You already reported it?" I guess that's a perk when the sheriff is the daughter of one of the bikers in the MC Parker is a part of.

Parker grimaces. "That nutjob was whacking off."

"Oh yuck, really?" Now I'm the one grimacing. "Great, that seriously pops my bubble of having a lovely view of the stables. I should board it up now or switch rooms to one in the front."

"Fuck no. You're not going to let a pervert ruin shit. He's trespassing and we're gonna make sure there won't be a next time," Parker grunts and steps closer. "Did you get a good look at him?"

My shoulders sag. "No. I only caught movement and noticed a figure dashing off. That's why I screamed."

Parker reaches out and cups the back of my neck.

Giving me a gentle squeeze he says, "You did good, darlin'."

His soft words make me confess, "I'm glad you were here."

Leaning in, he brushes his lips against my forehead. "I'm not going anywhere."

I swallow hard at the different kinds of emotions filling my body. The heat from his hand on the back of my neck, the way it makes me feel safe with his closeness. The

tenderness of his lips on my forehead, how he ran out of the house and shot at the Peeping Tom.

If only I was my old self and not post-attack, I'd jump his bones without a second thought. Yet, now I'm filled with doubts and am self-conscious, definitely not worth the attention of this strong and handsome cowboy biker. Dammit. I hate self-pity.

I step back and give him a slight push against his chest. "Okay, don't get too comfortable, buddy."

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

He chuckles and I'm glad we're interrupted by a knock on the door. I turn, but Parker halts my movement and without a word he's out of the kitchen. Talk about overprotective. Though, within this moment I do appreciate it. A woman's voice flows through the air and I instantly recognize it as Kathleen's.

"Hey," she quips. "Heard you had an unwelcome visit from an asshole playing with his squirting joystick."

A grin automatically slides across my face. "You heard correctly. Shame Parker missed his shot."

Kathleen narrows her eyes at Parker. "Why did you miss?"

"Wendy," he grits through his teeth as if that explains everything.

Kathleen nods and I don't understand it at all.

"What does your horse have to do with you missing a shot?" I wonder.

Kathleen chuckles. "His horse is a bit of a bitch when she's in the pasture. Parker here can't jump off and rope a calf 'cause she'll bump him right out of the way. That's why he has more than one horse for different tasks. He even has a Longhorn he rides. Now that's an impressive sight." Her face falls. "Sorry. I didn't mean to—"

I hold my hand up. "No worries. This idiot here throws out sentences with vision references like confetti. I'm used to it by now. Besides, I'm thankful enough to say that I've regained partial vision in my left eye. It wasn't enough to get a clear view of

the Peeping Tom, though.”

“That sucks. But we’ll get him, no worries,” Kathleen vows. “I’m gonna step outside and take a look.”

She walks out the back door and I turn my back to Parker as I take a few sips of coffee. My mind drifts off to the memory of two days ago, when Parker and I were in this kitchen as well.

“Do you think he was the one inside my house?” I whisper.

Parker growls low in his throat and steps up behind me. A gasp rips from me when his arms circle my body.

“I’m gonna fucking kill him.” There’s a deadly promise in his voice.

It doesn’t scare me. In fact, Parker makes me feel safe. I lean back and close my eyes. He simply holds me and slowly rocks us back and forth. Where I was feeling on edge a breath or two ago, I now feel at ease.

Again, we’re interrupted by knocking. This time it’s Parker’s club brothers who show up and instantly get to work installing a camera system around the ranch. Parker is overseeing the whole thing while I’m on pins and needles in the living room.

Kathleen is the first one to walk back into the house. “Hey, I’m heading out. I’ve gathered some evidence and the guys are installing cameras. So, if the fucker comes back, we’ll have a face to find a name and put him behind bars.”

“Maybe he’ll stay away now that I’ve caught him and Parker gave chase,” I mutter.

“Most of the time these types of perpetrators don’t stop,” she softly tells me. “I would

advise you to keep Parker around for a little while longer.”

I groan and it makes her chuckle. “Oh, come on, he’s not that bad to be around. He’s handsome too. Well, I’ve heard some of my friends mention it when he’s around. I don’t look at any of the brothers in that way ’cause they’re all...you know, brothers. Anyway, I’m not trying to be a matchmaker here, but the way he’s all fierce and has his nuts in a twist? I’d say he’s making it personal and I’m thinking it’s because of the way he looks at you.”

The way he looks at me? I frown. “How does he look at me?”

“The way my parents look at one another.” She smiles. “You do know he’s bullheaded, right? I mean, the story of his parents getting hitched also shows where he gets the genes from. His father had all the patience and time to give his old lady the space she needed to ultimately give him a second chance and realize they belonged together. Except, with you two, Parker is waiting for his first chance to be with you.”

I’m still processing her words when Parker strolls into the room. Shit. I wanted to ask Kathleen why Parker’s father needed a second chance.

“Let me know if that fucker’s spunk gives any hits in the database,” he tells her and my nose wrinkles.

“Oh yuck,” I grumble.

Parker ignores my response when he adds, “It shows that fucker has been out there a while.”

“We’ll get him,” Kathleen simply states. “Call me if you need me.”

“Will do,” Parker states.

I hear footsteps coming from the kitchen and the three guys who are installing the security system stroll into the room. One of them opens a laptop and sits down on the couch. Kathleen gives me a finger wave as she slinks out of the room.

“I also put a camera up by the stables. Let me get this up and running and then I’ll show you how shit works,” Walker states and is letting his fingers move over the keyboard of his laptop.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

I buckle through most of it, but everything that happened, along with staring at the laptop and listening to all the information, is giving me a headache. I rub my temples in an effort to lower the pressure I feel.

“Okay, that’s it, guys.” Parker stands and takes the laptop from Walker. “I’ll be here anyway and can keep an eye on the cameras and the alarm system. Cosima needs her rest.”

A few minutes later the room is coated in blissful silence. Releasing a deep sigh, I let myself slide to my back on the couch and throw an arm over my eyes.

“Do you need anything? Some water? Food? You haven’t had any breakfast yet and it’s been hours,” Parker rumbles.

“I’m fine,” I growl and then remember the things Parker did, and keeps doing, while all I’ve been is grumpy and snappy the past few days.

“Sorry.” I drop my arm and slowly rise into a sitting position. “I’m thankful for your help and that you’re here.”

“Wouldn’t dream of being anywhere else.” He shoots me a wink and it makes my belly flop.

I direct my gaze and ask the first thing that pops into my head. “Why did your father need a second chance?”

“What?” he frowns.

“Kathleen mentioned how your father had all the patience and time to give his old lady the space she needed to ultimately give him a second chance and realize they belonged together. You walked in before I could ask why he needed a second chance.”

Parker nods in understanding. “That’s because my mother is just as bullheaded, and it involved a misunderstanding. My mother thought he was with her to keep an eye on Harlene, Rourke’s mother, as a favor to Weston, the president at that time. Yeah, my father being the VP at that time did keep an eye on Harlene for his prez, but it was only an added convenience because he was there anyway. He didn’t stick around for that reason...my father loved my mother. He knew she was it for him the day they met and it’s why he waited patiently until the time was right. Which happened to be around the same time they found out they created me.”

Laughter rips from me and Parker chuckles. I guess everything worked out for them. My laughter fades when I become a little envious of their story. It would be nice to have a man fight for me the way his father did. How Parker does. Shit. Kathleen mentioned it because Parker is...does he think I’m...it for him?

My throat runs dry at the mere thought. If only I met this man before I was attacked. Then we would have been together prior to me having issues and would know he wasn’t with me because I’m a helpless chick. Ugh. I know he’s not the type, and it’s just my head twisting ugly shit in my head. That’s why it won’t work. I’m not ready for a relationship because I don’t feel like me.

I let my gaze find his and the determination on his face is telling me this man might have inherited the same patience he needs to wait for his chance...with me.

CHAPTER FOUR

– PARKER –

She's definitely it for me. Damn. The way she reminded me of how my parents got together? Yeah, my dad's persistence is something I can now relate to. Though, for him it was easy. At least the first part 'cause they started as a one-night stand. If Cosima hadn't been attacked I'm sure we would have ended up in bed soon after we met.

Their one-night stand and days after were enough to create me; it's what made giving my father a second chance easier after she kept pushing him away. Thank fuck they both grabbed that chance, 'cause they're still together and in love.

She's staring at me and I can feel my skin heat with longing to have her naked and under me. The things she mentioned the day we met, and details she shared in our witty chats? Yeah, we're perfectly matched, I know it. I fucking feel it in my gut.

"Don't," she croaks. "I'm not ready for a relationship at this point in my life, and you shouldn't want to be with someone like me."

I grit my teeth. "You're trying to tell me that I shouldn't be with a strong woman? One who is fucking gorgeous, filled with so much sass it gets me hard at the mere sound of your damn voice? Good luck with that 'cause I'm not listening. I have my own reasoning and no one can override my mind, what I think, or feel for that matter. So, I'll be right here, waitin' till you realize what's in front of you."

She releases a tiny scream, her face shows frustration as she stomps her foot. "I do realize what's in front of me and it's why I'm turning you down."

"Turning us down," I remind her. "Because it's not just me in this, it's you too. You're depriving yourself of something that'll be damn good."

Rolling her eyes she mutters, "You're crazy. Not like Peeping Tom crazy, a whole different brand of crazy for sure. That reminds me...us...you have competition."

I jab my finger in her direction. “That fucker is not competition. He’s a disgusting fly on the window that’s going to be squashed. Whacking off to the sights of my woman. I’m going to carve his eyes out for looking at something that was never his to look at.”

She shakes her head and states with a hint of laughter, “Vicious, I like it.”

I shoot her a wink and leave the discussion for what it is. For now, I’ve laid it all out into the open. We’re both aware I’m a patient man and we will see eye-to-eye on the matter in the long run.

Over the next hour, I notice Cosima keeping the laptop with the camera feed in her sight. She’s squinting and I know she’s draining herself by focusing too damn hard.

“That’s it,” I grunt and close the laptop. “Time to give your head some rest. Either take a nap, sit on the porch to enjoy some rays of sun hitting your face, or join me for a ride ’cause the horses need their exercise.”

I expect her to go into hiding again and disappear into the bedroom, but she surprises the fuck out of me when she says, “Let me go change into my riding gear and I’ll join you.”

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Seriously?” I quip, and hate asking as soon as I throw out that word.

I’m happy she’s taking that step and shouldn’t question her, planting doubts where there is no damn reason for it.

“Yes,” she firmly states. “You’re right. I have years of experience and can handle myself on a horse.”

“Yeah.” I grin. “Like I told you, if I ride on your right side we’d have it all covered.”

She bites her bottom lip and I feel as if something is bugging her.

“Out with it.” I breach her personal space to make sure I have her attention. “There’s nothing you can say that will send me running. We can fix shit together, whatever it is.”

A deep sigh flows from her. “I don’t think I’m ready to ride Bluebell just yet.”

I give her a tight nod in understanding. “She’s new, neither of us has any experience with her yet. How about you take my girl and I’ll take yours?”

Cosima purses her lips. “Didn’t I just hear your horse is a bit of a bitch?”

Snorting at the reminder, I let her know, “Like Kathleen said, only whenever she’s not in control. Like when she’s in the pasture or if I jump off and let go of the reins.”

“I won’t be letting go of the reins,” she firmly states, but she still looks wary.

Without thinking I offer, “We could go for a ride on my bike instead.”

There’s joy washing over her face before she schools her features. “I’ve never been on the back of a bike.”

“All ya gotta do is hold on, darlin’, and keep your leg away from the exhaust pipe,” I tell her and decide it’s the better choice. “Go change and I’ll pack a few sandwiches to take with us.”

I give her a little nudge and smile when I watch her disappear into the hallway. Stalking into the kitchen, I grab a few bottles of water and make some food to take with us. Twenty minutes later we’re walking out the door and stuffing our lunch into one of the saddle bags.

Carefully I place the helmet on her head and fix the strap under her chin. I take a moment to point out the exhaust pipe and tell her to wrap her arms around me once I straddle the bike. A little squeal comes from her when I fire up the bike. I can feel myself smile when I hit the throttle once we’re out on the open road.

There’s not a day that goes by when I don’t ride. Either on a horse, a Longhorn, or my motorcycle. It’s the thrill of being in control of something powerful. Now there’s an added feeling flowing through my veins. The woman plastered against my back gives a whole new dimension to the experience of riding my bike.

Her arms wrapped around me, knowing her tits and pussy are plastered against me. Fucking hell, I can almost feel the heat of it. Desire hums through my bones, lust filling my veins while my brain is being overtaken by the thought of having this woman on the ride of our lives. Fucking future, riding into the sunset.

My chest tightens at the thought. No fear or panic of being tied to one woman, but instead it feels right. I ride past the Iron Hot Blood ranch, through town, and simply

enjoy the way this feels. Every now and then she tightens her arms around me as if to make sure this is real or to let me know she enjoys it.

At least, that's what I'm making of it. She doesn't complain nor tries to get my attention. The spot I want to take her is coming around the bend. It's a meadow and it's coming into view as I lower my speed.

I bring my bike to a stop, hit the kickstand, and pat her knee to indicate she can get off. Cosima is removing the helmet as I grab our food. I take the helmet from her and place it on my bike. She takes the water bottles from me and we both stroll into the field filled with wildflowers.

"This place is amazing," Cosima whispers in awe.

"I discovered it a few years ago when I went for a long ride with Wendy." I shoot her a smile. "Now I simply go here any time I want some peace and quiet."

Cosima reaches out and squeezes my hand. "You mentioned the feeling crowded part."

I release a sigh and sit down on a fallen tree trunk that allows us to oversee the meadow in its full glory.

"A large brotherhood working a ranch means there's always work to be done and we're all a part of it. Which means people are always around. Not a bad thing, but I like my own space every so often."

She chuckles as she hands me a bottle of water while I pass her one of the sandwiches. "I bet the few days you spent at my place were heaven."

It would have been heaven if I was buried deep inside her pussy, though being around

her was close to perfect.

“Yeah,” I croak and quickly open the bottle of water to gulp some down and hopefully lose the thoughts of burying myself deep inside her.

Fuck. Maybe throwing my intentions out in the open wasn’t the smartest move. Talking about it with her makes it real, and feeds the longing inside my body.

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Thank you,” she softly states. “Not just for believing me when they thought I imagined someone was in the house, or for stepping up to keep an eye on me. Hell, for getting the horse I’ve wanted for years. But mostly? For pushing me to get off my ass. Without you, I’d still be wallowing in self-pity.”

“You would have gotten there on your own time,” I state with determination.

“Maybe,” she muses and stares off into the distance.

We fall silent and let the soft breeze of the lovely afternoon flow over us. This is serenity. There’s no uncomfortable silence between us as we eat and enjoy the moment. The smile I’m sporting hurts my damn cheeks.

My phone gives a notification of an incoming message and I pull it from my leather vest to check. The smile is gone from my face, as is the moment of serenity.

Releasing a sigh, I tell Cosima, “There’s an issue I need to handle at the ranch. Mind if I bring you with me instead of dropping you off at your house? I promise it won’t take long.”

She instantly gets to her feet. “What’s wrong?”

“A Longhorn bull broke through a fence. He’s on the run as are a few other Longhorns and calves.”

Cosima gathers up all our stuff and rushes past me toward the bike. Where she was moving slowly around the house these past few days, she’s been getting more and

more confident in her movements.

Without a doubt there's been some post-traumatic stress that caused her to be jumpy, even more with the loss of her eyesight. The woman is damn strong to keep moving forward and clearly thankful enough with partially gaining back her eyesight.

I fire up my bike and while our time together was interrupted, I feel confident enough with the thoughts of many more moments like these in our near future. At least, that's the goal. To have her with me as we head for the Iron Hot Blood ranch shows she's not retreating.

A huge step forward. Her sister will also be pleased to see her there. I know for a fact that Eastlynne is working with her horses to train them for an upcoming commercial. It still blows my mind that Rourke managed to make her his old lady. She's a real addition to the club and ranch the way she handles, helps, and trains horses that experienced trauma. She also owns a few other horses, one of those a mare bred by us.

That's how their paths crossed, to buy a horse from us. Thank fuck our lives crossed because it also allowed me to meet Eastlynne's sister. All of it sounds like a simple explanation, but it feels like my world shifted.

Then this morning someone scares the shit out of the special woman in my life, and we find out he was jerking off at the sight of her. Anger surges through my veins as I park my bike in front of the clubhouse.

This pervert might have given me more time to stay at Cosima's house, but I don't care either way because I'm going to end the fucker as soon as possible. Our ride just now showed Cosima and myself that we will happen; now or in the long road ahead of us. We're gonna be together either way.

CHAPTER FIVE

– COSIMA –

“I’m glad you’re here and able to enjoy the view, even if it’s just a fragment of what you were used to,” my sister states from beside me.

I don’t take my gaze off of Parker who is riding a buckskin Quarter Horse. The stallion’s coat is the color of tanned deer while his manes, tail, and lower legs are black. Parker is leaning his forearm on the horn of his saddle and gives a sharp whistle to draw Rourke’s attention.

Parker is pointing out a calf currently straying from the herd when Eastlynne states, “You like him, don’t you?”

A deep sigh rips from me, and I confess, “I do.”

Eastlynne places a hand on my forearm and gives a gentle squeeze. “I’m happy for you. But please don’t spill any details if you guys hook up and do all the things you don’t want to do in a bed.”

I chuckle at the reminder of how I told her I wanted a dirty, rough, tie me up, spank my ass, choke my neck bad boy instead of a dude who is a gentleman deep down. That last part was in reference to Rourke, who is a total gentleman to my sister and has managed to draw her out of her shell...or crawl in there with her, whatever.

“I’ll keep it in mind,” I muse and glance around to make sure we’re alone when I add, “Though, I don’t know if anything will progress that way any time soon.”

“Why?” Eastlynne frowns. “You’ve told me the headaches are less frequent and the bruises have faded which means your body is healed. Well, except for your right eye,

but I'm guessing you'll have your eyes closed due to pleasure anyway."

I shoot her a glare and she bumps her shoulder against mine. "Oh, come on, Cosima. You used to be the one who would throw my anxiety issues, and everything else, in my face at any given time. We're still young, wild, and free and that's gotta stay our motto no matter what. You're the one who taught me I could do anything and was right there with me in case I needed to hide behind you to make it happen. I know you can handle anything. I've seen it many times before. Shit that makes me cringe and turn into a ball of stress while you basically walk through fire. You're still the same person, Cosima. Bad times or good, one step in front of the other makes you follow the path life gives you. And right now, you're enjoying the view."

She jerks her chin in the direction of Parker who moves his wrist but keeps his arm still while he swirls the lariat rope above his head. He moves in on his target and lets the rope fly toward the calf that's running off. The whole scene only lasts a few heartbeats as he catches the calf and jumps off his horse.

Yes. My sister is right. I should move forward and have sex. Before the attack I wouldn't think twice about hooking up, and Parker has made it clear he's interested in me.

"That dude can handle a rope," Eastlynne remarks.

I snicker and without thinking I state, "You're right. About all of it, and I should let him tie me up tonight."

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Oh, come on,” Eastlynne squeaks. “I told you no sex details.”

“Sounds like you two are having an interesting conversation,” Kathleen remarks as she steps closer to us.

“You look like crap,” my sister states and I wince because she’s not lying.

Kathleen places her forearms on the top rung of the fence and releases a bone-deep sigh. “I feel like crap too. There’s a hot shower and my bed calling my name.”

Her phone starts to ring and I jerk my chin in the direction of her pocket. “Someone else is calling your name first.”

She chuckles and grabs her phone. One glance at the screen makes her whole face shift to anger.

Jabbing the screen, she rejects the call and grumbles, “Not today, asshole.”

“Boyfriend? An ex? A colleague? Siblings?” I wonder.

“Worse.” Kathleen shoves her phone back into her pocket. “Remember the guy that showed up when I called in the help of those Cowboy Bikers MC Lawmen? Dark blond, scruffy jaw, dark eyes?”

“Marvin Wolffield?” my sister quips.

I remember the guy’s deep voice. He helped take down Erwin Desmond and his gang

of idiots. They were responsible for traumatizing a horse bred and owned by the Iron Hot Blood, killed an ex-member of the club, one of them attacked me, others set fire to the barn, and they were involved in dogfights and so much more.

“Yeah, that one,” Kathleen grunts. “He’s been calling for the past two days.”

I turn to fully face her. “Why?”

“Because that annoying, egocentric a-hole of a man thinks he can tell me how to do my damn job,” Kathleen growls.

“Still?” Eastlynne asks. “How is that even possible? I mean, the first time he did it when he came here it made sense. Now? Not so much. Or is there something we don’t know?”

Kathleen spins and leans her back against the fence. “He’s working on a serial killer case in the next town over and is obsessed over controlling the information flow. Meaning I have to check in every damn day and report if something is out of the ordinary. Hello, it’s my damn town, and it’s filled with a wide birth of weirdos, so every day is a brand new out of the ordinary. I really don’t get the idiot.”

“Sounds to me like he’s obsessed with you, not so much the case,” I murmur and point at Parker who is back on his horse and has the tied calf in front of him. “Parker has the same persistence. I didn’t even have a choice when he simply showed up and stayed at my place.”

Kathleen pats the gun strapped to her hip. “Let the fucker come. I’ll fill his nutsack with bullets. There’s no way I’ll accept a man taking charge of my life.” She winks at me when she adds, “Though, I am on Parker’s side when it comes to you. He did good. You standing here and calling me when you caught that twisted fucker. I hope to have the DNA results soon and we’ll run checks. Don’t worry, we’ll have him

behind bars in no time.”

“Maybe he’ll stay gone. You know, because there were lots of men wandering around the stables with the renovations. He could come and go without being noticed. Now there are all cameras and little to no activity.” I shrug. “Besides, if he does show up again? We’ll have him on the security feed.”

“True,” Kathleen says. “I’m also fairly sure Parker won’t miss this time.”

“Another good reason to keep him around.” I grin.

“Besides letting him tie you up and have sex,” my sister adds.

“Eastlynne,” I snap.

Eastlynne shrugs. “What? You deserve some happiness and relaxation. You told me the same thing when I needed to hear it so I’m only returning the favor.”

“Oh, so that’s what you two were talking about when I got here.” Kathleen chuckles. “I do have to agree with your sister, Cosima. You deserve it, and more. Now, I’m going to head home because I deserve a hot shower and a couple of hours of sleep.”

We all laugh when Parker and Rourke stop by on the other side of the fence.

“That’s a nice sound,” Rourke states. “Glad to see all of you are having fun.”

“Definitely.” Kathleen gives us a wave. “Going home, see you guys tomorrow.”

Eastlynne climbs over the fence and leans in to give Rourke a kiss. A longing starts to burn inside my chest and my gaze automatically slides to Parker. He’s staring down at me and the heat in his gaze looks similar to the one I feel sliding through my veins.

“Mind giving me a hand with putting Pete back into his stall?” he questions.

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Oh, I can do it for you,” Eastlynne quips and takes the reins. “That will give you time to take my sister to our ranch, tie her up and have dirty, rough, and out of the bedroom sex.”

“East!” I snap. “What the hell?”

Eastlynne gives me an innocent look. “What? Time is ticking away as we stand here talking. I’m just speeding things up for you. Besides, I like Parker, you two fit perfectly together if you ask me.”

I feel my blood pressure rising and would like to release a string of curses followed by each and every insane name I can call my evil sister.

“Thanks, Eastlynne, appreciate it,” Parker rumbles. “Prez, I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow,” Rourke echoes as Parker jumps over the fence.

Parker laces his fingers with mine and tugs me toward a row of bikes. Without another word he straddles his bike and waits for me to strap on his helmet and get on behind him. My nerves are all over the place. Why? I used to be confident in my sexuality and now all of a sudden, I’m nervous?

The ride home is short and the silence between us isn’t uncomfortable, it’s more like the awareness of electricity softly crackling through the air. Parker takes the keys from me and opens the door.

“Let me check the house,” he states and doesn’t wait for a reply.

I hear him make his round and I wait patiently in the center of the living room until I can't stand myself. Why the hell am I nervous as if this would be my first time having sex? I've had lots of sex, it's not a new concept and I'm very capable of having it. Gah, what's this man doing to me?

Stomping into the kitchen, I snag a bottle of water from the refrigerator and take a few sips. Feeling somewhat normal, I place the bottle on the counter and hear Parker's footsteps approach. My gaze instantly finds his when he saunters into the kitchen.

"I don't have any rope or condoms," I blurt.

The corner of his mouth twitches.

"I guess we'll have to improvise then," he murmurs as he steps into my personal space.

My breath freezes inside my lungs when his lips descend on mine. Electricity shoots through my veins and settles a tingling fire in my lower belly. In an effort to relieve some of it, I grind my pelvis against his. His hard length presses against my belly and it's a huge boost to feel how much I affect him.

Gone are my insecurities and in their place is the need to find pleasure any way I can get it. My fingers wrap around his leather cut and I fist the material to shove him slightly back.

The move causes a break in our kiss, enough for me to grunt. "Get naked and fuck me, Parker."

I barely recognize my own voice that's overloaded with lust and longing. To see it mirrored in Parker's gaze is a triumph all on its own and my pussy clenches with

anticipation.

Parker steps back and shrugs out of his leather cut. He folds the thing and places it on the counter before he takes the gun from his belt to place it next to his leather cut. The rest of his clothes are simply pulled off as he lets everything drop where he stands. I lick my lips when I see him standing in the kitchen, completely naked and fisting his hard...oh my freaking fireballs.

The man is pierced.

Not just “I got one on a whim” pierced, but a “start with one and not stopping any time soon.” He’s a walking, talking pierced Valhalla endgame.

“Your cock is perfect,” I breathe.

And finally, after weeks I feel good about myself, and life...and the man’s cock hasn’t even entered me. Having him standing before me, cock in hand, eyes filled with lust and adoration as I start to strip naked, is enough to give me the mental boost I needed to grab life by the balls again.

Figuratively speaking, of course. Though, I sure will get my hands on Parker’s pierced balls.

CHAPTER SIX

– PARKER –

I squeeze hard to get my cock under control. This woman has my whole body brimming with the lust to claim her as mine. Thank fuck she mentioned the lack of condoms so we’re on the same line of fucking bare.

Clothes hit the floor and I'm itching to get my hands on her when those lush tits of hers swing free. Dark cherry-colored nipples are standing at attention, asking for my mouth to suck on them, when shiny ornaments catch my attention.

Motherfucker, her nipples are pierced and so is the hood of her clit. She's perfect. We not only align perfectly when it comes to everyday life at the ranch, discussions, life, and future goals, but we each have a healthy kink when it comes to our bodies and sex.

My cock hasn't entered her pussy yet and I instantly know our sex will be off the charts. Not just from the discussion we had, or shit her sister spilled about her, but merely from the look in her eyes.

Page 13

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

She licks her lips at the sight of my cock, and I'm all done for.

Stalking toward her, I grab her by the waist and am thankful the dinner table is solid wood and completely empty when I place her bare ass on it. Palming one breast, I flick the pierced nipple with my thumb and like the way she sucks in a hot breath.

"Lay back," I order and she slowly does as I say.

I spot my jeans and move in that direction to take the belt from the loops.

"Arms up and over your head." I snatch one of her wrists and shove it to the small gap in the belt.

I make sure the other is tied to it and bring them over her head. Shit. My belt isn't long enough to tie her to one of the legs of the table.

"Next time we'll make sure to have rope," I grunt with a hint of frustration.

"Definitely," she instantly agrees with a load of lust.

I grin down at her and yank at her bound wrists. "Shame I have to keep one hand on the belt, but don't worry, darlin'. Gonna make up for it with the rest of my body."

She's not fully facing me. Her head is slightly turned to the side and I'm very much aware why; she wants to fully see me. Not something she will be thinking about soon enough. I'll make sure.

Leaning forward, I take one of her pierced nipples into my mouth and suck on the dark cherry peak as I flick it with my tongue. A long moan escapes from her while her back leaves the table in an effort to press her breast tightly against my face. So fucking responsive.

I move down to get between her legs and am partly frustrated that I need to keep her hands pinned with one of mine.

I give her wrists a harsh squeeze. “Keep ’em there or I’ll put your ass on fire.”

She nods and it allows me to move down and put my face between her legs. Her pussy is glistening, the clit hood piercing holds a shiny gem and I lean in closer to flick it with my tongue.

“Yessss,” Cosima hisses on a moan.

I grab her thighs and push her legs up and open her wide. Her tiny hole clenches under her center. My cock will be buried there as well one day, but for now I flatten my tongue and lick her from ass to clit.

Soft mewls fill the air and I start to devour her pussy to sate the need in the both of us. Her orgasm is closing in, I can almost taste it. I shove a long finger inside her, pull it out and fill her back up with three.

Cosima screams and I growl against her clit, “Take it, little minx. Fuck my fingers to get ready for my cock.”

She clenches around me and it’s still not enough. Pulling out, I lean slightly back and slap her thigh before I pinch her clit and shove three fingers back inside her again. My thumb presses down on her pierced clit to keep the torment going and she starts to fall apart.

A growl rumbles through my chest and I pull my fingers free to grip her hips and plant my face against her heated center. My tongue plunges inside her to lick her orgasm right from the source and relish in her sweet and tangy taste.

She moans and repeats my name in a blissful whisper, but I freeze my assault when I feel her fingers sliding into my hair to keep me pinned to her pussy. Surging up, I smack her pussy causing her eyes to fly open while a gasp rips from her.

“You disobeyed me,” I growl and wipe her cum from my face with the back of my hand. “I’m very displeased because I was enjoying your taste on my tongue.”

Her tits rise and fall, legs still spread wide with the lips of her pussy red and puffy, showing the slickness of her pleasure still dripping out. I grab her by the hips, flip her body so she’s now on her knees, and press one side of her face flat against the table.

I make sure her good eye is facing me as I take the belt, making her hands press against her pussy. Keeping tension on the belt, I make sure the leather is pressing hard between her ass cheeks as I slap the lush flesh.

Her scream fills the air while the skin of her ass shows my handprint in red. A magnificent fucking sight and I quickly give the other cheek a matching one.

“I’ll teach you to obey me. I’ll go easy on you now, but don’t you dare think I won’t tie up your tits till they’re all red and swollen. There will be many ways to balance pain and pleasure and I’m going to make sure you experience all of it.”

I smack her ass again and tighten the belt in my hand to make her hands rub against her clit. Adjusting her position, so I can fuck her properly, it renders her immobile with her hands under her body and her legs dangling off the table. She’s balancing at perfect fuck-level and it’s exactly how I want her.

Fisting my cock, I guide her hands to the side by tugging at the belt and slide the fat, pierced head of my hard length through her drenched pussy. We both groan, and I love the way her swollen center is sucking me in.

Slow thrusts allow me to gain entrance one piercing at a time. Besides my Prince Albert, a ring that goes through the slit and exits on the underside where the head meets my shaft, I also have a Jacob's Ladder, a row of barbell piercings on the underside of my cock. That one continues down my balls with a scrotum ladder, that consists of six Hafada piercings with rings.

All of them stimulate me when I'm jerking off. I haven't had sex since I had them pierced as I was giving them the much-needed time to heal. I can tell by the way Cosima is mewling and squirming though, she's enjoying the added pleasure as well.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

I wrap the belt around my hand and grip her hips to allow myself to let my head fall back due to pleasure. Fuuuuuuck, that feels damn good to be rooted to the hilt inside her. Hot, wet, and snug. She feels like a goddamned dream and I'm ready to shoot my cum inside her right this fucking minute.

Gritting my teeth, I pull out and slam right back in. She screams and I repeat the assault over and over, fucking her hard and fast. The table moves and I step forward with every thrust, to make sure my cock stays inside her.

The table shuffles through the space and finally hits the wall, allowing me to stay in place. My fingers dig into her skin and I can feel the walls of her pussy starting to clench in waves around my hard length. She's close. So am I, but there's no way this will be over too damn soon.

Pulling out, I let go of the belt and flip her onto her back again. Wrapping my fingers around her throat, I lean forward as I fist my cock and guide it right back inside her.

"Ready to come around my cock?" I grunt and surge forward.

Tightening my grip, I feel her swallow along with the vibration of her voice when she croaks, "Please."

"I like the way you beg, little minx," I praise and fuck her harder.

With my free hand I slap her pierced tit and it causes her to spiral into bliss. She squeezes the hell out of my hard length and I'm biting the inside of my cheek to prevent myself from spraying cum. I want her to ride out her orgasm before I let

myself go.

My hips keep pumping and I wait till she's a complete boneless heap before I allow myself to come. When the moment finally comes, I step back, take my cock in hand and keep pumping as I stare down at her open pussy to brand her with thick ropes of cum.

An endless stream of cum covers her lower belly, the tiny strip of pubic hair, her thighs, drips sliding into her wide-open center. A beautiful sight I can't take my eyes off. My cock goes slightly soft as I let go and reach out to pump my fingers inside her pussy.

I'm enthralled by filling her up with my seed. "Next time I'll come inside you," I vow. "For now, I'm going to make sure to shove as much as I can inside you. Tell me, babe, are you on the pill? Or do I have a chance of knocking you up if I put more of me inside you?"

"I'm not on birth control." She's still trying to catch her breath but is already raising her hips to keep my fingers inside as I pull them out to gather more cum from her stomach.

Chuckling I tell her, "Don't worry, I'm not done filling you up, little minx. Not with my fingers, my cock, and my cum."

She moans and I'm about to fist my hard cock to take her again when I notice slight movement from the window. Fuck. It takes a few steps to lunge across the kitchen to my gun lying on the counter. Once I have it in my hands, I fire off a round through the kitchen window and like the way I see the fucker's body jerk from impact.

I run out the back door, but the fucker is fast and has disappeared from view. I hear an engine roar as I run around the house. The fucker is hightailing out onto the road

in a beaten-up truck. Thank fuck we installed cameras so we have proof this time and will hopefully find out who the hell this fucker is.

Stomping back into the kitchen, I find Cosima wearing my shirt. Her wide eyes meet mine and instead of asking me what the hell just happened she blurts, “Your balls jingle when you walk.”

The corner of my mouth twitches. “Nothing gets by you, does it?”

This woman. Strong as fuck for damn sure, and all mine.

CHAPTER SEVEN

– COSIMA –

I’m fully dressed, completely sated and relaxed, as I stare at Parker who is standing across the room talking to Kathleen. There should be a lot of things running through my mind, but to be honest? I couldn’t care less about anything.

So what if the Peeping Tom is back and got an eyeful of the fucking of the century? Because that’s what it was for me. So much passion, heat, and an explosive sexual chemistry I’ve never experienced with anyone else.

There are absolutely no complaints or suggestions from my corner and the way he kissed me after we got dressed to wait for Kathleen to get here? Yeah, I know he more than enjoyed our time together as well.

The feeling of him bare inside me felt different. I’ve only ever had sexual experiences with a condom. There’s an added intimacy with fucking bare, and with that man’s piercings? Wow. No words. And to have him pull out and cover my body with his cum? A whole new experience, as was the way he shoved most of it inside me by

using his fingers.

The overload of emotions in his gaze as he watched himself fill my pussy with his cum made my mouth run dry and definitely made me horny all over again. Hell, my ovaries exploded by just watching him so if I'm not careful I will end up pregnant sooner rather than later.

Nope, even that thought doesn't touch me. I'm completely mellow and can handle anything life throws at me. What I've experienced these past few weeks? Parker being there the day I was attacked and a solid presence every day since made me aware just now that I am ready for a relationship.

The couch dips next to me and I have to blink a few times to clear my thoughts and get back to the here and now.

"Hey, everything okay?" Kathleen asks.

I give her a brilliant and honest smile. "More than perfect."

The corner of her mouth twitches. "You had sex, didn't you?"

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Definitely.” I shoot a glance across the room at Parker who is now leaning over a laptop accompanied by Walker and Luke. “Best medicine ever. I feel like a 2.0 version of myself: completely updated and recharged.”

Kathleen grins. “I’m happy for you. Now, about the creepy fucker—”

“Kathleen, look,” Walker rumbles.

We get to our feet and wander over to where the guys are sitting behind the laptop. The screen is frozen and Walker hits play when we’re all watching. An old pickup truck is parked alongside the road. Someone gets out and jogs toward the house.

The closer he gets the more he comes into view. The video is a bit blurry and with my limited vision it’s not easy to see, but from what I can tell? I don’t recognize him. Walker switches screens and the man pops up on another angle.

“I know him from somewhere,” Parker muses.

“Yeah, me too,” Kathleen mutters. “Isn’t that the son of the owner of the feed store?”

“Yes, Murphy Denver, I recognize him as well,” Luke states. “I was at the feed store earlier this week and his father, Bennie, pointed his kid out to me. He was complaining about how some people have the drive to work while others are plain lazy. Then he rambled about how Murphy was from a generation that had different things that he had. How the old man never watched TV or had a phone.”

“Murphy Denver was adopted by Bennie and his wife after his sister was killed in a

car accident. Murphy was eight years old at the time.”

We all turn to Kathleen who is swiping the screen of her phone.

As silence proceeds she looks up and says, “What?”

“How did you get the info that fast?” Luke asks what everyone is wondering.

Kathleen shrugs. “I have files on most people in town.”

Parker chuckles and shakes his head. “I’m pretty sure that’s not normal, Sheriff.”

“Fuck normal. I like to be prepared in case shit hits the fan.” Her eyes widen and she holds her hand out to block something from her view. “Oh, ew, that’s more of you than I ever wanted to see, Parker. Turn it off.”

“Dude. You have an abnormal addiction,” Walker grumbles.

“Fuck that, how does that dude ride a horse with a cock and balls loaded up with all that hardware, that’s the question we all need the answer to,” Luke rumbles.

I snicker, Kathleen chuckles, and Parker shakes his head.

“No, really, I need to know, man,” Luke tries again.

Parker flips him off. “What we need to know is the location of that Murphy fucker and to throw his ass in jail. Though, he might be at the hospital or the doctor in town ’cause I shot him.”

“I already put a deputy on it when you mentioned you shot him.” Kathleen thumbs through her phone. “So far there aren’t any recent reports of anyone being treated at

the hospital for a gunshot wound. They will give us a call if a patient with that kind of injury shows up.”

She nods and shoves her phone back into her pocket. “I would advise you two to stay here in case Murphy shows up again. Parker shooting him might have put an end to the stalker issue, however worst case scenario would have shit escalating and him showing up with a gun to take Parker out of the picture. We all know Bennie has a safe filled with weapons so Murphy would have easy access. Like I said, I’d rather Parker have backup. I would do it myself, but I’m completely beat and would fall asleep with my damn eyes open.”

“You can sleep in the guest room if you’d like,” I offer. “The bed is made and you could rest right now.”

Kathleen shoots me a thankful look. “Really? That would be amazing, thanks.” She pins the men with a firm look. “Wake me up if there are any developments.”

She doesn’t wait for a reply but stalks away toward the guest room.

“Are you guys hungry?” I ask and all three heads turn to me.

“Hell yes,” Walker grunts while Luke states at the same time, “I could eat.”

I feel Parker’s fingers wrap around my wrist and I turn my head to face him.

“I’ll help,” he murmurs and gently tugs my arm to follow him into the kitchen.

Parker lifts his chin in greeting to the man who is fixing the window. I have no clue how Parker was able to get someone here this fast to replace the glass, but I’m thankful for sure.

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“What are we making?” Parker questions and rubs his hands.

I roll my eyes. The man is obsessed with food. The past few days he’s been staying with me he’s done nothing but hang around in the kitchen whenever I grabbed something to eat. Another reason why I’m thankful I regained the ability to see with my left eye. Moving around was a challenge without sight, but being able to make food or eat?

Adjusting felt like grabbing a sled and sitting backward while you jump off a waterfall. Seriously. Wielding a knife while you have no idea where your fingers are or the food for that matter? Yeah, no. Frozen pre-made meals were the way to go for me. I have regained so much more respect and awe for people moving forward with such limitations.

“Let me check really quick.” I open the fridge, along with a few cabinets to see what we’re working with and come up with, “Spaghetti?”

“Sounds delicious, babe,” he rumbles and places a hand on my hip. I feel his lips on the top of my head when he asks, “What can I do to help?”

“Cut the tomatoes?” I point at the counter where vine tomatoes are.

“On it,” he simply states, and we get to work.

I focus on making the sauce and cutting up an onion while stirring the ground beef. Every now and then I feel light touches on my hip, my shoulder, his lips on the top of my head; every time he walks by he lets me know he’s right there with me.

Soon enough we're all sitting at the table. The three guys practically inhale their food all while I find myself smiling and enjoying their company. Weeks of shoving people away and being by myself has now changed in a positive way.

Even with everything happening right now, I'm still smiling and have a good and happy feeling flowing through me. My sister has found the love of her life, is putting herself out there more and more each day, and it's giving me the chance to focus less on her and more on myself.

"We're going to turn in early," Parker states after he helped me do the dishes. "Talk tomorrow."

We leave Walker and Luke sitting in the living room and head for my bedroom. Parker stalks over and closes the curtains.

"Smart," I mutter, earning me a glare.

"What?" Shrugging, I add, "Not being able to see shifts priorities. And believe me when I say I discovered the error of my ways."

"Not your fault that fucker is obsessed with you. Hell, I craved your body and wanted to possess your soul the first day we met."

I let one of my eyebrows pull up in the direction of the ceiling. "At least you didn't turn into a stalker. Though, the daily voice clips flooding my phone were a little obsessive."

Parker snickers. "You returned every single one of those. Even if the first few only held your voice telling me to fuck off and mind my own business."

"I'm glad you're persistent," I admit. "Those voice clips pulled me through the

darkest days.”

He steps closer and pulls me flush against his body, his arms embracing me as he places his lips right next to my ear. “Every single voice clip you sent me brightened my day and warmed my heart in return.”

“Sounds like we balance each other out,” I whisper, my breath hitches when my heart skips a beat.

“Damn right,” he rumbles, taking my lips right after.

My fingers fist his leather cut to keep me grounded. This man has the ability to swoop me off my feet and throw me onto a pink cloud of pure bliss. He pulls back way too soon.

Smacking my ass he orders, “Go get ready for bed, woman. We need sleep instead of fucking that sweet, tight pussy of yours raw.”

I rub my legs together, still able to feel his presence from earlier today when he took me in the kitchen. Fucking me raw sounds tempting, especially knowing it involves his heavily pierced cock and balls.

Shit. He’s right. Taking it slow keeps it real instead of throwing ourselves into the whirlwind of pleasure. Besides, the way he spilled his intentions toward me makes me aware we have lots of time in the future to indulge in whatever our bodies desire.

With a huge smile on my face, I walk to the bathroom, making sure to sway my hips. I hear his groan and know he’s just as affected as I am. He’s mine in the way I’m his. Now, if we could end the stalker issue there wouldn’t be anything holding us back from exploring this relationship to the fullest.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A week later

– PARKER –

“You’re shitting me,” I growl and stare in disbelief at Kathleen.

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

She leans forward to slide a file across the table. “I wish I was. Murphy Denver is a massive pain in the pooper. We checked hospitals and doctors for a gunshot wound but instead, the fucker used a knife to cut up the wound and get the bullet out. We would never have known if I hadn’t burst through Bennie’s door and demanded he talk to me face-to-face.”

I open the file and flip through the photographs. “That’s one twisted fucker, beating the shit out of the man who took him in as a kid and raised him as his own.”

“Maybe that was part of the problem,” Rourke states and shoves a piece of paper in my direction. “Bennie has multiple assault charges on his rap sheet. He might have smacked the kid around growing up, escalating in this beatdown.”

“I didn’t find any reports, not that it couldn’t have happened. However, his wife left him earlier this year. She didn’t take anything with her, she simply left town with the clothes on her back, a handful of cash, and didn’t look back,” Kathleen states. “I remember because I was asked by multiple people to do a welfare check due to the fact that nobody had seen her. Bennie wouldn’t answer questions from clients or neighbors. Bennie told me he didn’t want to explain to everyone that she left and took a few grand out of their cash savings in the store safe. He showed me a video where you can clearly see she goes into the vault, grabs a stash of cash, and leaves. It’s a small town so I understood his need to keep this quiet. Now, on the other hand, it felt weird so I ran a check.”

“Let me guess,” Walker rumbles. “Not a trace of the woman.”

Kathleen nods. “She completely vanished when she left town earlier this year. No use

of her cards, no job, no home, no nothing.”

Walker leans forward in his chair. “Can’t you call in a favor from that Lawmen who helped us the last time? Maybe he can—”

“So, you assholes don’t think I can do my damn job now?” Kathleen snarls. “Wanting to call in someone with a cock to use as a magic stick to do things I’m not capable of?”

“Kath,” Decker snaps, jerking Kathleen’s eyes to land on her father’s. “No one is questioning your abilities, work ethic, or the woman you are standing in church during a meeting as if you’re one of us. Walker merely suggested something that might give more abilities than the restrictions of the law give you.”

Her fingers curl into fists and she grits, “We don’t need it yet. I’m handling it because there isn’t anything he can do that I can’t at this moment. I’m not a complete idiot and will reach out if I think we need his kind of involvement. Besides, Marvin has his hands busy with a serial case.”

“On a first name basis with the man, eh? Nice.” Luke chuckles but it ends abruptly when Kathleen glares at him. Throwing his hands palms up into the air he adds, “I’m only pointing out the fact that he’ll come running when you call, you know first name basis and all.”

“He’s the one doing all the calling while I’m ignoring his annoying ass,” Kathleen mutters under her breath.

“So, now there’s no trace of Murphy Dawson? He was treated for his injury, beat the crap out of his uncle, and has gone fuck-knows where,” I spit, wanting to turn the discussion back to what’s important.

Kathleen bobs her head. “Correct. I checked the house, and their business, and then double-checked if they didn’t own any other property. Then again, he was stalking Cosima. He could easily be obsessed with other women.”

“So, you’re saying he could be hiding anywhere?” Rourke grumbles. “Someone’s barn, shed, basement?”

“Yes,” Kathleen says with determination. “From the details I’ve gathered of him growing up, flowing into working for Bennie, never getting out of that loop? I’d say he’s escalating quickly. The first time Parker caught him peeking through the window, he wasn’t scared easily ’cause he returned. He was injured this time and mutilated himself to prevent the gunshot wound from being noticed. That right there is a red flag. Yes, it could be he tried to take care of the injury himself, but he did get to the hospital for treatment hours later. Then he assaulted the man who adopted him, and has worked with for two decades. I repeat, escalating. He might return to get revenge. Bennie was knocked unconscious and woke up to find Murphy gone. He doesn’t know if any of his weapons are missing because he has a load of them. Murphy could be armed, and in my opinion, he’s dangerous.”

“It’s a good thing we had a team of brothers living with you guys to keep an eye out around the clock. Maybe it’s best to stay here with Cosima? At least till Murphy’s been caught,” Rourke suggests.

I give a shake with my head. “Cosima will never leave her sister’s house. Even after she was assaulted, and the fire to the stables and all? She stayed even though her sister has been spending nights at your place. Besides, the creepy fuck could be lying dead in a shed due to gangrene or whatever, never to be found until he’s only a heap of bones. We’d be hitting pause on life for no reason at all.”

“Or he could be standing in front of a window with a shotgun to put a bullet in your head next time,” Kathleen fires back.

“Not possible,” Walker rumbles. “He would have been caught on camera before he reached the window.”

Kathleen flips him off. “We had him on camera the last time he was there, remember?”

Walker flashes her his own middle finger in return. “Yeah, but since that happened we’re all on high alert.”

“As we should be,” I state. “Anything else we need to discuss, except for ending the fucker on sight if he’s trespassing again.”

“The new buyer for the Quarter horse Walker trained,” Rourke states. “Did you run a background check yet, Walker?”

“Yes, all good,” he replies.

Rourke nods. “I’ll need the paperwork on my desk before you contact the buyer to set up a meeting. Get the contracts ready as well.”

Rourke ends the meeting and I’m finally able to walk out back to where Cosima is watching her sister work with a traumatized horse. Or at least, I thought they were. Instead, the paddock is empty and when I glance around I notice both Cosima and Eastlynne coming toward me each with a hand on a horse’s neck.

Narrowing my eyes I recognize both young colts that were in the pasture earlier. “What happened?”

“You should call this one Houdini,” Eastlynne grumbles. “He’s a freaking escape artist and the one Cosima captured was a situation of monkey see, monkey do.”

“Or in this case horsey see, horsey do.” Cosima chuckles and it’s then I notice her nipples poking through her shirt.

Page 18

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

Following the hand that leads to where she's holding the colt by the neck I have no other choice but to laugh a full belly laugh.

"What?" Cosima quips. "I didn't have a rope or a belt so I improvised."

"By using your bra?" I chuckle.

"Works, doesn't it?" She grins and I shake my head as I open the stable for them.

They put the two colts in a stable and close the doors.

"Let me guess, the brown colt broke out again?" Rourke asks as he enters the stable.

Eastlynnne bobs her head as she walks up to her old man to hug him and explain what happened. I catch Cosima standing in front of the stall of my chestnut Quarter horse.

"Let's go for a ride while I fill you in on what was discussed in church," I suggest.

She gives me a brilliant smile. "I'd love to."

My chest swells with emotion and I can't resist so I grab the back of her neck and pull her close. Her lips find mine and the tiny gasp coming from her gives me the ability to swoop in and swirl my tongue against hers.

The instant heat flowing through my veins gives me the awareness of our intense connection, and I want nothing more than to bury myself deep. Gripping her hips, I grind my hard length against her to let her feel what she does to me. She moans and

when my hands are about to slide to the zipper of her jeans we're interrupted by the clearing of a throat.

Regretfully breaking the kiss, I glance over her shoulder and glare at Luke. "What the hell are you doing here?"

He shoves his hands in the air in a defensive move. "Working. I was checking on the horses. I saw Rourke and Eastlynne coming out of the stable and thought everyone was gone."

This woman has the ability to let me feel as if we're the only ones on this fucking earth. Everything is made just for us. My body hers, her body mine. The sun shines brighter and warmer upon us, the skies are clearer, food tastes better. Holy fuck, I'm turning into a poet with a vagina or two. Like I said; this woman made me fall hard and the impact shakes the ground I walk on.

Now I'm the one clearing my throat to get my bearings and state, "We're going for a ride. You'll have the stable to yourself in a few minutes."

"All good," Luke murmurs and stalks to the back of the stable.

"Can I ride this one?" Cosima questions and points at the chestnut-colored Quarter horse.

Her safety is my first priority and it's why I tell her, "He's an asshole and I'm still training him. I'd rather you take my mother's horse, she trained her herself." I move three stalls down to the white horse.

"Gorgeous," Cosima murmurs.

Chuckling, I tell her, "My mother would refer to her as a pain in her ass because she's

white and always lies down in her own shit, resulting in yellow spots.”

Cosima grins and just like that, my heart is full and my mood is lightened. Fuck. I really need to get this Murphy situation behind us 'cause I'd like nothing more than to feel this way all the damn time.

We take our time saddling up and when we're taking the path through the pasture, I start to explain everything we found out about Murphy Denver.

“So, you guys think he might be peeping through other women's windows as well?” Cosima questions as she stares straight ahead. “You know what's weird? I can't even remember seeing him at the feed store. I mean, I've been there, obviously, but I don't remember interacting with him. Strange how a brief encounter can be different for one person than the other.”

“Everyone's mind works differently. Murphy had history and could have gone to live or work elsewhere if he didn't like his life or situation he was in,” I state. “You don't see any of us looking through windows, dick in hand, to feel good.”

She wrinkles her nose. “Thanks for that image. Though, thinking of you with your decorated dick in hand is quite nice.”

“Every thought involving you is nice,” I croak in return.

Cosima shifts in the saddle to turn her good eye toward me. “Right back at ya, handsome.”

Her hair flows through the air and the careless look on her face as she turns to watch where she's guiding her horse is making my throat run dry. The ranch life isn't for everyone, and surrounding yourself with people who share the same interests, work ethic, and drive is golden. Finding those strengths within a stunning woman, who

makes sparks fly, and returns what's brewing in my chest? One-of-a-fucking-kind.

"Now catch me if you can," she bellows and gives pressure with her legs to urge her horse to go full speed.

I watch her ass rise out of the saddle as she stands in the stirrups. What a sight. There's no doubt I'll catch her...every damn time, and whenever it's needed.

CHAPTER NINE

Nine days later

– COSIMA –

I inhale deeply and release my breath slowly. There's a lot to be thankful for but right now I'm having a moment on my back porch with fresh coffee and just plain me. I'm not talking about having my eyesight back completely. The specialist at the hospital where I had an appointment yesterday made it clear that I should be prepared for the fact that I will never regain my sight back in my right eye.

Ever since Parker pushed me to move forward, I've adjusted, and am accepting my new body and life. Especially the way that man makes me feel. Inside and out. A mere touch on my skin is enough to make electricity shoot through me, lighting a fire that can only be sated with his cum. Oh, yeah. Dirty talk, sex, lots and lots of sex. I blame the man's piercings, they are magical.

I grin to myself and take another sip of fresh coffee. It's still early and Parker is sleeping in our bed. Walker is crashing on the couch and Rourke and Eastlynne are in their room. It's been days since we heard something about Murphy.

The last details Parker shared were the ones where they discovered Murphy had himself treated at a hospital for the bullet wound he masked by poking it with a knife. He also assaulted Bennie and that's where the trail went cold. Everyone agreed to stay on high alert, which basically means I'm not allowed to be alone.

So, why am I sitting here alone, breathing in the early morning of a brand new day? Because it's safe enough if I stick to the porch. If I place one step near the dirt beyond the porch? It will trigger an alarm that wakes up everyone inside the house and it'll send a signal to Kathleen, and the Iron Hot Blood ranch. That's why I can sit here by myself and enjoy the freedom I've regained after being attacked, and the Murphy issue.

We're all wondering if Murphy has left town. No one has seen him and I heard the injury Parker gave him was a rough one. Murphy's shoulder has some serious healing to do. They still think he might return at some point...vengeance and all, because of what he did to Bennie.

I decided not to let anyone steal my thunder, and let my mind focus on tomorrow. Dreams, goals, and wide-open possibilities are the positive things in life that need attention.

"Why didn't you wake me?" Parker's sleep-ridden voice croaks from the doorway.

Every night sharing a bed with that man is a dream with wide-open possibilities. Parker is definitely a positive thing in my life and when it comes to attention? We're both equally capable of getting and receiving what our bodies need.

The way my breath catches at the sight of his half-naked body is a good indication that desire is flooding my veins. He's only wearing jeans, half unbuttoned, and he's standing barefoot on the porch with a fresh cup of coffee in his hand.

"Need a refill?" he rumbles.

Of his dick deep inside me with all those piercings? Hell yes, my dirty mind offers.

A mere few weeks ago I would have pushed him away, but now? A new version of

me evolved. The sass has returned full force, and I have no restrictions; my life is my own and I won't let anyone take anything away from me again.

“Wanna lose the pants and bend me over the chair instead of sitting on it and drinking coffee?” I fire back.

His eyes flash with desire and he takes a sip of coffee before carefully placing it down on the table next to me. He reaches for the zipper of his jeans and reaches a hand inside to keep his cock covered while unzipping. Parker's commando and his cock springs out once his jeans open.

I lick my lips at the sight before me. He's palming himself, rubbing a thumb to play with the piercing that's through the tip of his cock. Thick, long, hard, and within reach. Without looking I place my empty cup of coffee on the table and lean in to let my tongue lick his pierced slit to taste the pre cum leaking out.

“Fuuuuck, that's good,” he rumbles as I take him deeper into my mouth.

His fingers sink into my hair to guide my head the way he wants me to move on and off his length. I take my time and move my hand to gently knead his balls, loving the weight of them along with the piercings.

The rumbles vibrating through them are spurring me on. When I tilt my head and look at him, I find him staring down at me with such a load of open lust and desire, it halts my movements for a heartbeat.

“My cock looks good between your lips,” he murmurs and presses his thumb against my chin to push down. “Open wider and take more of me.”

He groans when I follow his order. His hips move forward, causing his length to slide even deeper, hitting the back of my throat. My eyes start to water, but I keep sucking,

keep bobbing my head to give him the pleasure he arises within me.

“Suck. Suck harder. Yes. Fuck, that’s it, little minx. Here it comes.” Both hands are gripping my head, keeping me immobile as he unloads himself into my mouth.

Warm, salty cum hits the back of my throat and I swallow to keep up with the never-ending flow. I feel some drip down my chin when Parker slowly steps back to let his cock fall from my lips.

“Stay still,” Parker rumbles and scoops up the drop of cum with his thumb to push it back into my mouth. “That’s it. Can’t have you spilling my cum ’cause it belongs inside you.”

I rub my legs together to get some friction where I need it most. Dammit. This man takes getting horny to the highest level of all.

His fingers wrap around my throat and he gives a gentle squeeze. “Stop. The only one giving you pleasure is me.”

Parker moves and I shift in the chair as he steps between my legs.

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“I haven’t had breakfast yet,” he states with a load of lust.

Adoration fills his eyes as our gaze collides when he sinks to the ground. His hands slide under the long shirt I’m wearing. I’m about to grip the hem of my shirt to pull it up, but he prevents me from doing so and simply shoves his head underneath it.

Thank fuck I’m not wearing any panties ’cause his tongue slides through my folds and flicks my clit with my next breath. A loud moan rips through me and I place a hand on his head that’s covered with my shirt.

I let my head fall back and close my eyes, completely overwhelmed by the pleasure this man gives me. A gasp rips from me when I feel one of his fingers graze my ass. My mind takes a spin when I feel him pumping two fingers inside me while sucking my clit into his mouth.

My whole body is already worked up from sucking him off. I feel as if my senses are overheating when he throws one of my legs over his shoulder to get a better angle to eat my pussy. Damn, this man is a dream.

A long moan rumbles through me when I feel a digit slide through my pussy and rim my ass. There is no time to think, only feel and experience when he pumps his finger into my ass, sliding out as he fills my pussy with two others. Overwhelmed by all my senses being triggered I have no other option than to submit to the orgasm Parker rips from me.

“Parkerrrrr...hmmmm,” I groan and relish in the waves of bliss that flow through my veins.

I slump back into my chair and am somewhat aware of his fingers leaving my body. He gives my sensitive flesh one last lick and reappears from under my long shirt.

“Yo, bro,” Walker rumbles from inside the kitchen. “You do know there are cameras out there, right?”

“Why the fuck are you interrupting me and my old lady while you can see we’re fucking busy?” Parker snarls in return.

I should be embarrassed but to be honest? There isn’t a single bone in my body that regrets what we just did. Having sex outside of the bedroom gives the extra thrill. Parker grins down at me as he gets to his feet.

Leaning in he captures his lips with mine and licks his way into my mouth where I taste myself on his tongue. I moan and dig my nails into his shoulders to pull him closer. He just gave me one hell of an orgasm and yet I’m ready for more.

“What the hell are you looking at?” Luke states and I can feel my eyes widen with realization.

Parker rips his mouth away from mine and curses. “I’ll be right back.”

He rushes into the house and I can hear someone getting punched and some shuffling before Parker stalks out onto the porch again.

Parker is holding the laptop up and rumbles, “A man can’t even get some privacy with his old lady.”

I shoot him a coy grin. “Maybe they needed some pointers to snag their own special person.”

Parker snorts. “Fuck that. They can wield their own cock, not follow mine. Or at least shut the fuck up and not interrupt.”

“I bet they learned their lesson,” I quip.

Parker places the laptop on the table and picks up my empty coffee cup. “Want another one?”

“Love one.” I give him a beaming smile.

His hand disappears from my sight and a breath later I feel his knuckles sliding against my right cheek.

“I’m gonna check on the horses,” Walker states and strolls off the porch as he heads toward the stables.

“Be right back,” Parker murmurs and picks up his mug before he disappears into the kitchen.

I sigh, completely content. Post orgasm bliss. Happiness flows through my veins and I can feel myself smiling as I watch Walker slip into the stables. I fill my lungs with the fresh air. Damn, what a way to start a morning off right.

“Want some pie?” Parker rumbles from inside the house.

“Yes, please,” I fire back. “Need my help?”

I start to rise but let myself drop back into my chair when Parker bellows, “Nah, I got it.”

I did mention he was perfect, right? Perfect for me anyway. The sound of a board on

the porch creaks from my right and I have to fully turn my head to see what caused it. Before I can even manage a glimpse, I feel a sharp sting in my neck.

Something covers my mouth and I start to scream, but it's muffled as a strong arm rips me from my chair. My body feels weird and is fighting against me as I slowly sink into oblivion where I have no clue what's real and what's not.

Page 21

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

Panic hits me for a heartbeat until there's nothing left to worry about, except the darkness that pulls me under.

CHAPTER TEN

– PARKER –

“Want some pie?” I question.

Luke rushes into the kitchen and has wide eyes as he points at something.

“Yes, please,” Cosima fires back. “Need my help?”

Following Luke, I notice what looks like a body on the ground near the road, right at the entrance of the ranch.

I glance over my shoulder and bellow at Cosima, “Nah, I got it,” to make sure she stays put.

Luke and I rush out the door and I'm already palming my phone to dial Kathleen as I get closer. A feeling in my gut tells me this person is no longer alive. Why? Because the body is lying at an unnatural angle.

She picks up when I have my fingers on the cold neck of the woman's body and I instantly state, “Kathleen, you need to come down to Cosima and Eastlynne's place. We have a dead woman's body that seems to have been dumped here.”

“Is she naked?” Kathleen asks.

“Yes,” I slowly state.

A curse rumbles from her. “Make sure no one touches anything. I’ll be right there.”

She hangs up and I take a few steps back. “Kathleen ordered us to keep everything and everyone away from the body. She’ll be right here.”

“Do you think it has something to do with that serial killer case she mentioned?” Luke questions.

I release a deep sigh and wince at the sight of the body. “By the looks of it? Yeah.”

We both fall silent. Concern hits me when I realize I’ve left Cosima on the back porch by herself. She shouldn’t come here and see this. I mean, she’ll eventually know, it’s inevitable, but at least I don’t want her to see it with her own eyes.

I jab the screen of my phone and call Walker, he picks up on the second ring. “Hey, mind going to Cosima? She should still be sitting on the back porch. We have a situation at the front of the house and I don’t want her anywhere near it.”

“You got it, VP,” Walker rumbles and hangs up.

From a distance, I notice Kathleen approaching and it’s then I hear Walker bellowing from the front porch, “VP, where is she?”

Confused I turn and jog toward Walker. “What are you talking about? Cosima was sitting on the back porch when I headed out front.” I watch Kathleen park. “Go look in every room and wake Rourke, tell him in private so Eastlynne doesn’t freak out, that there’s a dead body on his old lady’s doorstep. I’ll be right back.”

I jog in Kathleen's direction and give her a quick update on what happened when Luke signaled me to see the dead body until the moment she arrived.

It's then I tell her, "I need to leave you to it. Cosima was sitting on the porch when I walked out of the house and when I asked Walker to keep her there since he was working in the stables, he said she wasn't there and can't find her."

"Go," Kathleen orders. "I got this."

Rushing into the house, I almost run into Rourke.

"I sent Walker to the stables to check. There's no trace of her in the house. I just fired up the laptop to check the security feed," Rourke states.

Walker jogs into the living room while Rourke and I have our eyes set on the laptop.

"Nothing in the stables," Walker grunts.

"Where the fuck can she be?" I snarl. "She was sitting on the back porch, waiting for me to bring her coffee and pie. There's no damn way she would have left without saying something. Hell, she wasn't even fully dressed."

"I can see that," Rourke mutters as we all watch the screen to see Cosima strolling onto the back porch with a cup of coffee. "What time were you in the...oh, for fuck's sake."

Page 22

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

Watching myself on the screen of the laptop while Cosima is sucking me off would be fucking awesome if she wasn't missing. Now, though? I bat Rourke's hand away to speed shit up and let the feed continue from the moment I step away to enter the kitchen.

We all watch how Cosima talks to me until I tell her I can manage without her help. Murphy appears from an angle that's a blind spot for Cosima due to the loss of sight in her right eye.

The fucker has a syringe and stabs her with it. He kept her immobile until whatever he gave her tainted her blood, making her sag into herself. Cosima was unconscious as he threw her over his shoulder and dragged her off in the direction of the stable. Rourke tries to get another angle, but it's as if the fucker disappeared into nothing.

"How the hell is that possible?" I snarl. "Why wasn't the alarm triggered? How did he sneak past our defenses? And where the fuck did he take her 'cause we don't see him walking off in any direction. He can't have gone into the stables. You checked, right?"

"Yeah," Walker states. "I just came from there and double-checked every stable. She's not there. Besides, I was working in the stable when you asked me to keep an eye on her, remember? That's why the alarm was off, we were all there walking around."

Frustration, fear, and despair hit me as I try to make sense of this shit. "Was he working with the fucker who dumped the body in front of the ranch?"

Without another word, I whirl around and run out the door and I hear Rourke bellow, “I’m gonna call Decker to ask if they’ve seen something coming their way. Maybe that fucker has somehow gotten onto our land through the pasture or by truck, who knows. The fucker can’t simply disappear into thin air.”

I don’t reply but keep running. Kathleen is talking to someone on the phone. Her whole face is red from anger and she snarls something to the person on the other side of the line before she ends the call.

“Everything okay?” I question, not wanting to have a discussion since I have more fucking pressing matters at hand.

“No,” Kathleen growls but instantly readjusts her voice when she asks, “Did you find Cosima yet?”

“We have a visual of Murphy taking Cosima. He injected her with something and she quickly fell unconscious. We tried to see if we could get a different angle that gives a visual of the side of the stables, but so far nothing. It’s like they disappear into thin air.”

Kathleen jabs the screen of her phone. “I’m letting my deputy know so he can send out an alert. Did you check the side of the stables?”

“No. Walker did check the stables, and he was there when Cosima was taken. He didn’t hear or see anything.” I glance in the direction of the house. “I’ll double-check myself. What the fuck are we going to do?”

“Stay calm and find her,” Kathleen firmly replies.

I give her a tight nod and hope to fuck she’s right as I jog off to walk around the house in the direction of the stables. There’s nothing other than the wall of the house,

the stables, pastures, fence, nothing out of the ordinary. Whipping my head left and right I come up empty as I search for any tracks or clues.

From the corner of my eye, I notice movement and direct my gaze toward Wrench.

Luke jogs my way. “Kathleen told me to let Wrench sniff things out, but he’s a cadaver dog, not a search and rescue. She called her father; he should be on his way with Sadie’s dog.”

I nod. It completely slipped my mind that Sadie is a search and rescue dog handler. She left the country two days ago with one of her dogs to help with finding survivors after an earthquake.

I jerk my chin in Wrench’s direction. “Is he on to something or what?”

Wrench has his nose to the ground and is walking in a straight line, heading in the direction of the Iron Hot Blood ranch. Luke and I both follow at a small distance to give Wrench the room he needs to do his thing.

My fingers curl into fists. I don’t think I’ve ever felt this useless in all my damn life. Fucking hell, I told her I’d protect her. How nothing will ever hurt her again, the way she suffered through the trauma of being assaulted a few months ago.

It took weeks for her to heal and then she finally regained half her sight back and only lasted barely two weeks of getting back to her full routine, and now this. Motherfucker, life can’t kick a woman harder in the guts than this shit right here.

For a moment my mind wanders off to the fact that I saw her slipping into oblivion. She’s not conscious and I hope to fuck Murphy keeps his damn hands off her. Anger unlike anything I’ve ever felt flows through my veins and I pick up my pace to keep up with Wrench.

The dog takes a hard left and picks up speed. He's heading straight to a small pond located at the far end of our property. It's a remote space where Wrench climbs on top of a large boulder and jumps off to start barking on the other side of it.

"Goddamn it," I grumble and jog around the thing.

Luke is right behind me when I come to a stop. I stare at Wrench, the dog must have lost his fucking mind because there's nothing here. The ground surrounding us is also untouched.

I fish my phone out of my pocket and hit Kathleen's number. "Your dog has lost his mind."

It's useless to let her know because I'm fairly sure she can hear him barking through the connection.

"Is he standing, sitting, or lying down?" Kathleen asks.

"Lying down," I reply.

“Fuck,” Kathleen snaps.

My heart takes a plunge in ice-cold water.

“What’s going on, Kathleen?” I grit while panic seeps through me, hoping Cosima is still alive.

“Hang on.” Her words are muted, but I hear her talking to someone who is there with her. “Can you take over here? I need to check on something. No, asshole, small-town shit can’t wait because I’m fairly sure my dog just found another body so I need to fucking check. Now, this serial killer case is all yours and even if it’s in my town, you’re going to take lead anyway so stay here and let me do my damn job.” Her voice softens when she tells me, “Give me directions so I can come to you.”

I let her know and we hang up. Luke jogs in her direction to make sure she doesn’t take a wrong turn. A few minutes later Luke returns with Kathleen who is carrying a large bag over her shoulder.

Kathleen gives Wrench a ball and praises him as she walks to the place Wrench was lying. Taking out a shovel she gently moves some dirt around. All too soon she replaces the shovel with some kind of small broom and then she steps back.

She takes her phone in hand and says, “Marvin, I need you to let your guy watch over that crime scene and get your ass to me. Yeah, no shit. You need to see this. Wrench found a body. No, this one has been here a while. Yeah, bones, but I can still tell it’s a woman. Okay.”

Her eyes find mine. “Sorry. Clearly this isn’t Cosima, but it might fit the profile of the serial killer. Marvin predicted the serial killer would come to this town since it fits his requirements. I do have to tell you that the search warrant came through on Bennie’s house and Wrench found a body in the backyard. We’re certain it’s his missing wife but we’re waiting on the official report. Bennie must have killed her when he caught her stealing money from the safe. Now, I’m sure Sadie’s dog can do more than mine at this point so be sure to head back to the house. I have to stay here and handle this until Marvin gets here.”

Kathleen has a pained look in her eyes and I know she’s trying to do everything she can, but I’m starting to feel fucking helpless. How the hell can my old lady disappear while we have eyes all over the damn place?

Whirling around, I run back to the house to retrace my steps and glance at the video one more time to see if we might have missed something...anything. My heart squeezes painfully inside my chest. I have to get her back, I just have to. There’s no way I could get back to living without the only woman who brightens my life and gives meaning to the sense of living.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

– COSIMA –

I don’t want to die. I’m not going into the light and I want out of this freaking darkness. And why the hell is my body not doing what I want it to do? I feel weird. Am I dead? Shit. The last time I thought I was going to die I had a lot of regrets.

Now? My only regret is that I’m dying right now, or am dead already, and didn’t have a lot of time with the man I fell for. One voice clip after another, he pulled me toward him and never let go. I don’t want to let go.

Again, I attempt to open my eyes but darkness still has a hold on me. Did I get hit on the head again? My body feels weird, not painful, just...weird as if I'm not the one in charge of it. My movements are sluggish and I'm finally able to shift some, it's then I realize my hands and feet must be bound.

I feel woozy. Did someone drug me? What the heck happened? Think, dammit. I take a choppy breath and try to grasp onto the last memory I have. Parker. A sob rips from me. Again, I hugely regret not having more time with him.

"Ssshhh, I'm here, we're together now," a voice I don't recognize states and I instantly freeze.

A stench of sweat and a strong putrid ammonia-like smell assault my senses right before something falls away from my eyes. The new sob that rips from me is one of small relief at the realization that I'm not completely blind again; I was blindfolded. The small relief doesn't last long when I see Murphy sitting in front of me.

He's close and leaning half over my tied legs. I quickly glance over the space we're in but don't recognize it. We're in what seems like a long hallway where each side is made from wood. The scent of horses is strong and I can even hear them moving around.

My shoulders almost touch the walls, that's how small this space is. I'm leaning against a wall and the one across from me is far away. The space is as high as the stables behind the ranch. From a distance, I hear voices and recognize Parker's who bellows out my name.

Holy fuck. Did Murphy create this hidden space in our own stables? If so, how the hell is Parker going to find me if no one knows about it? Panic is now flowing freely inside my veins and it skyrockets when Murphy suddenly palms a knife.

He holds it close to my throat when he says, “Stay quiet. I don’t want our time together to end yet.”

I flinch when Murphy reaches out to stroke my cheek with his thumb. “Don’t cry, we’ll be alone again soon enough.”

Parker’s voice sounds closer and I want nothing more than to scream his name but there’s tape covering my mouth by the feel of it. Fuck it. I try to scream at the top of my lungs but it comes out muffled.

Fear hits me hard when I feel the tip of the knife Murphy is holding breach my skin. Warmth trickles down my neck and chest while I shiver at the thought of losing my life by this man’s hand.

A dog starts to bark really close. Murphy mutters something while I hear muted voices from the other side of the wall. Murphy shoves himself away from me and I feel as if I can momentarily breathe again.

It doesn’t last long, though. Murphy opens what seems to be part of the wall and glances out through a crack. My relief of him escaping doesn’t last long when he grabs my ankle and jerks me toward him. My arms and legs are tied causing my body to fall back, and my head hits the floor, rattling my brain.

Pain radiates through my neck and an instant headache assaults me. Whimpers are the only muted sound penetrating through the tape covering my mouth. My shirt gets caught on the raw wood underneath me. Murphy gives another yank on my leg and I feel like a wiener being smacked into a bun when the fucker knocks me around to fit through the slim passage.

Another yank and my body catches up with my legs, causing my knees to bend. Murphy grunts and I remember how Parker shot him in the shoulder. Without giving

it a second thought, I kick out with both my bound legs and hit him hard against his shoulder, hoping I remembered the correct one that was injured.

Murphy screams in agony and to my relief, I hear a mixture of voices coming from inside and outside. The flash of steel reminds me of the knife Murphy is holding and I'm momentarily stunned by fear as I try to force my mind to come up with a next move to regain my freedom.

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Big mistake,” Murphy snarls.

His body shifts but I don’t see what’s coming until there’s a burning heat on the right side of my face from being backhanded.

Murphy holds the knife against my throat once more and snarls, “Stop fighting me or I’ll knock you back out again. You’re mine and I don’t care what I have to do to make you realize it. There is no way out for you other than death and I’m not ready to kill you just yet.”

“Well, I’m ready to kill you now,” Parker states from somewhere while at the same time, the sound of a gunshot cracks through the air.

The knife falls from Murphy’s hand, his body crumbling down to the ground along with it. I start to struggle against the restraints on my arms and legs. I feel as if I can’t breathe and my head is throbbing, ready to explode in a splitting headache. Black spots enter the only vision I have left and I can feel myself slip away into the darkness.

“Cosima, please, open your eyes, baby, please.” Parker’s torn voice sounds muffled.

I want to open my eyes but can’t find the strength so instead I get sucked right back into oblivion.

Faintly, I hear Parker’s voice once again. “She could be pregnant, how would the ketamine affect her and the fetus then? And when the fuck will she wake up? She suffered a concussion weeks ago and she also lost eyesight in her right eye. Can you

please double-check if everything with her left eye is still okay or something that gives me the knowledge she won't lose more than she already had."

I know exactly what drives him to ask. Though, lying here, unable to open my eyes but hearing the desperation and fear for my well-being in his voice? It makes me thankful to know we're still here, breathing and able to touch and feel one another.

"Parker," I croak, my voice raw and hoarse.

I feel his big, strong, callused hand cover mine. "I'm right here, baby."

Trying again, I barely manage to blink a few times and relief hits me when I can see Parker clearly with my left eye.

"You found me," I whisper, still stunned they managed to do so.

Parker leans in and brushes his lips against my forehead. "I had help. Decker brought Sadie's search and rescue dog. The dog kept barking at the back of the stables, but we couldn't figure out why."

My sister's face comes into view behind Parker. "That creepy fucker built an extra wall to create a space where he's lived ever since they renovated the stables. Ugh, I'm ready to burn the stables down again and build it back up with my own damn hands. Great way to blow trust to smithereens with actions like that. I really hate people."

I wince at the volume of her voice.

"Keep it down," Parker grumbles. "She has a concussion...again, and needs to rest."

"I wholeheartedly agree," a man with a white coat states. "Visiting hours are over and

Miss Hazel needs her rest.”

I glance at my sister. “Please don’t burn down the stables. Removing the double wall, yes, but don’t let one idiot fuck up shit for all of us.”

Eastlynnne huffs out a frustrated breath. “Fine. Maybe I’ll move in with Rourke and let you and Parker live on the ranch. Enough room to go around and balance between ranches.”

Rourke chuckles. “We’ll talk about this shit later. Let your sister get some rest.” He pats my leg. “Hope you’re back on your feet sooner this time.”

The corner of my mouth twitches. “I’ll try.”

They leave the room and the doctor is looking expectantly at Parker, probably wanting him to follow the others out the door.

“I don’t give a fuck what you think, say, or do, but I’m not leaving my old lady, and soon-to-be wife ever again,” Parker states with a deadly tone that leaves no room for arguments.

The doctor releases a deep sigh. “Very well. Your earlier concerns along with the way you handled her sister just now give me the impression you will make sure her care and well-being come first. Now, to answer your earlier questions. The ketamine is leaving her body and the blood tests showed her level of HCG is considered negative for pregnancy. As I said, she has a mild concussion and needs rest. With her recent medical issues, we will monitor her overnight and will have her release papers ready come morning if all goes well.”

“Thank you,” I croak and try to sit up.

Parker gently places his hand over my shoulder. “Don’t try to sit up. Relax and try to get some sleep.”

The doctor is grinning behind Parker when I give my old man a grumpy look.

“I can see everything is under control here,” the doctor states and I ignore the rest of his words as he excuses himself and leaves the room.

Once we’re alone I whisper, “You killed him.”

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“I did and I’d fucking do it again if I could,” Parker states with venom in his voice. “He took you from me. He fucking hurt you, and locked you away somewhere and I was unable to find you. I was going out of my fucking mind. Especially when Kathleen’s dog led us to a dead body. Two dead women, one on the front of the ranch and one far behind it, and you, missing in between.”

I can feel my eyes widen and my head throbs even harder.

“Damn,” I muse and sink into the pillow.

“Yeah, damn is about right. Kathleen has her hands full at the ranch. Marvin is helping her since the two dead women are linked to the serial killer case he’s working on.”

My mind is finally able to process all the information and I frown. “Wait. Two dead bodies were found at the ranch?”

Parker nods. “One I told you about when Kathleen’s dog helped us find you, but her dog is a trained cadaver dog so Wrench ran off as soon as he caught the scent. Anyway, when I was getting you coffee and pie, Luke signaled me to see something that was happening at the front of the ranch. Someone dumped a naked woman and drove off. I didn’t want you to see it, so I left you on the back porch. Once we were staring down at the dead body I called Walker to check on you and make sure you wouldn’t come out front to see it. It’s then we noticed you were gone.” A pained look crosses over his face. “While they were checking you out in the hospital, Rourke and the others talked and made sense of why the fuck Murphy was able to do that shit. Kathleen mentioned Murphy might have witnessed Bennie killing his wife, creating

some twisted line he could cross when it comes to women. We think Murphy must have posed as one of the construction workers and was able to prepare things to make the hidden space in the back. Once that was set, he had the perfect room to eavesdrop and find out everything while staying close to the house to watch you. That's also why he knew the alarm was off when Walker entered the stables. The only thing he had to worry about was the cameras. All he cared about was taking you and he had the perfect opportunity when someone dumped a body in front of the ranch."

All the information blows my mind and makes me say, "I'm glad he's dead. It's over now."

Parker is silent too long and I slightly turn my head to see his face.

He has a grim look when he grumbles, "The Murphy issue is handled, but there's still an active serial killer. One body at the back of the ranch, close to our land. The other was dumped by the road at the entrance of the ranch. Now, we do need to know why the fuck this serial killer targeted the ranch, if he was working with Murphy, or if it was all just a clusterfuck of a coincidence. Until then I'm gonna be your shadow."

I reach out and link my fingers with his. "I thought you were gonna be my shadow from now on no matter what."

He gives me a blinding smile. "Damn right, I am."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Two weeks later

– PARKER –

"Waaaahooooo." Cosima's voice stretches through the air as she races by.

A chuckle flows through me and I enjoy the vision of my old lady having fun a few heartbeats more before I give chase. My Quarter horse is faster than Cosima's Gypsy Cob, but her mare gives us all a damn fine race.

Cosima leans back and brings Bluebell slowly to a stop. I bring Wendy to a stop right next to her. Up ahead Eastlynne and Rourke are coming back from their ride. They've been staying at the Iron Hot Blood ranch and are spending the night at Eastlynne's ranch every now and then.

Eastlynne bought the ranch a few months ago to have a place to train and foster traumatized horses, also branching out for her business to use said horses in movies, commercials, photographs, and whatever.

When Cosima came out of the hospital two weeks ago, she didn't want to stay at the clubhouse like I offered. She wanted to go home. At first, I was a bit hesitant, thinking she might slip into a relapse the way she shut everyone out and locked herself up the last time she suffered trauma.

Yet, she surprised the fuck out of me by bouncing right back into the sassy woman she was the morning before it happened. No trace of fear, no holding back, just simply loving life every damn second after the next. Her statement when I asked if she was okay with living at the ranch and shit? "It's over, he can't get to me anymore."

That simple. It's as if she's taking every day as a gift and I guess it's a perfect state of mind. Especially when I feel the same way when it comes to having this perfect woman in my life. The day she was kidnapped was a huge eye-opener.

Having something taken from you that makes the world shatter into a disarray of gray, knowing from experience it should be vibrant with colors, made my soul weep. I'm incomplete without her and I never want to experience a moment apart ever

again.

Cosima's giggle draws me back to the here and now.

Her eyes still twinkle with joy when she asks, "Wanna go home or race so I can beat your slow horse again?"

I voice the one thing that's been on my mind since the day I wasn't allowed into the room with her until her sister showed up at the hospital, "What I want is for you to become my wife. So, I guess we should go home and head to the courthouse. Better yet, I'm going to call Collins as soon as we're home. He's ordained so we can get married within the hour."

"You're serious," Cosima states, the corner of her mouth twitches.

"Damn right, I am. I don't need any confirmation or long-time trial shit to know our lives entwine perfectly. We each know what's important in life, share the same work ethic, family, goals, and dreams, we're on the same line and I say it requires tying the knot so you're not only my old lady but my wife as well. I want everyone to know you're mine."

"Hey, you don't have to convince me." She shrugs and adds, "You just have to catch me."

Laughter flows freely again when she races off in the direction of the stables. This time it's on and I give pressure with my legs to make Wendy go faster, giving her the freedom she loves to gain speed.

There's no contest, there never was, when it comes to taking what's mine and I easily catch up to my old lady before we reach the stables. The utter joy on her face is infectious and I feel myself grinning as we both dismount. Reaching for her, I wrap

my arm around her waist and pull her flush against me to give her a hard kiss.

Page 26

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

“Put the horses back in the stable before you mount the woman, VP,” Rourke says with laughter in his voice.

Without taking my mouth from my woman I flip him off and grab Cosima’s ass to knead it in my hand just for the hell of it.

Cosima pulls away and pats my chest. “I’m going to handle the horses while you call Collins.”

“Why do you need to call Collins?” Eastlynne questions as we break apart and take the horses into the stable.

“Because we’re all getting married,” Rourke states and I narrow my eyes at the fucker.

He’s the one flipping me off now while he gives his attention to Eastlynne. “If they are tying the knot we damn well should as well ’cause I claimed you before that asshole claimed your sister.”

Eastlynne rolls her eyes. “It’s not a competition.”

Rourke and I lock eyes, both of us silently disagreeing; I was the one who asked first, that fucker is stealing my fucking thunder and he damn well knows it. Though I know he wants it all with his old lady, but, he had to take it slow.

Not anymore, though. Even if Eastlynne still has days where she has migraines, they are becoming less frequent because she has gotten a good handle on the triggers.

Rourke plays a big part in this too, making sure she's on top of her intake of fluids, meds, and social limitations. He's protective of his woman, just as I am when it comes to Cosima.

"Collins is busy with the farrier. As soon as he's done he'll head this way," Rourke states.

I unsaddle Wendy. "Good, it'll give us time to take care of the horses and hit the shower."

"Did you hear Kathleen locked up Marvin?" Rourke questions.

All heads turn his way.

Chuckling I ask, "How the hell did she manage to do that?"

Rourke shrugs. "I have no clue. All Decker mentioned was the fact that she locked him up in a cell two days ago. This morning Decker received a call from Atticus, his father, who was checking in since he hadn't heard a peep from his son in two days. That's how everyone found out."

"Damn. Is she in trouble?" Cosima wonders, and the question is on my mind as well.

Rourke gives a short shake of his head. "When Decker got there he made Kathleen cut him loose. Marvin didn't want to press charges, but he did leave town."

"Damn," Cosima states a bit softer this time.

We all fall silent and get to work. Twenty minutes later I've cleaned Wendy's hooves and made sure she's all taken care of. Cosima walks beside me as we head for the house. Rourke and Eastlynne are still busy with their horses. I place a hand on

Cosima's lower back and steer her in the direction of the bathroom, making sure to kick both the door shut of our room, and the one of the bathroom.

It's a miracle I'm focused enough to turn the water on first before I start to rip away Cosima's clothes. I want her naked, and I want her now. Her body against mine, my cock in her pussy, my fingers in her hair, the feel of her warmth surrounding me as our minds slip into the bliss only we can create together.

Yeah, this woman holds all the power. We might create magic together but it's she who is the fuel that causes the heat to epic proportions. I step back to gaze down at her full tits, bare pussy, and when she turns, I get a glimpse of her lush ass. Over her shoulder, she gives me a look that allows me to see her pupils which are filled with desire and love.

A growl rumbles through my chest as I peel away my clothes, making sure to leave my cut on the counter while the rest drops to the floor. My gaze stays locked on my old lady. Water glides over her skin and the little minx starts to roam her body with her own hands.

"Stop," I order.

She gives me a coy look and turns to give me a full-frontal of her tits, her fingers still lingering on her clit.

"You're not going to distract me with that stunning rack, now get your hands away from my pussy. The only one giving you pleasure is me. No other cock will ever come near you, no one, not even yourself is allowed to touch what's mine, am I making myself clear?"

Her eyes gleam with defiance and she slowly trails her hand up her belly until she reaches her nipple and starts to fucking tug the hard peak. Fucking hell. My cock

twitches and a growl rips from my throat.

In two steps I have my fingers wrapped around her throat and her back flush against the cold tiles. She gasps, tits rising and falling while open lust is staring right back at me.

“Little minx,” I rumble. “Taunting me is going to put your ass on fire.”

I don’t give her a chance to process my words. Within her next breath, I spin her around and press those lush tits against the tiles. I bring my palm down on her ass, letting my handprint brand her skin red. Another smack makes her yelp turn into a moan as she pushes her ass back.

Yeah, she likes the heat of intensity flaming with pleasure, just like me.

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

I kick her legs further apart and grab her hips to pull her into position. Palming my cock, I coat myself with her wetness and slide between the lips of her pussy to bury myself to the hilt in one stroke.

My piercings rub the walls of her pussy, and give my cock extra pleasure each time I tunnel in and out of her hot and tight center. I let my head fall back for a second or two to relish in the unique pleasure this woman gives me before I bite back the urge to come.

I know I won't last long, taking her from behind to allow me to go deeper. This feels too damn good, but at least I'll make sure to feel her orgasm all over my cock first. Staring down to where we're connected, I grip her hips rougher to yank her on and off my cock with force.

"Push that tight pussy back on my cock, little minx. Show me how much you need that hole of yours filled," I grunt.

I swear her asshole winks at me, knowing where my mind is at as I watch myself pumping my woman's lush body. I shift my hand, letting my thumb slide through her wetness, even if we're surrounded by water. Cosima moans when I let the digit caress her ass and slowly start to push in.

Cosima pushes her pussy back on my cock and automatically fills her ass with my thumb. Fuck. What a sight. Not to mention the feel of my cock pumping in and out through the thin membrane, making her pussy even tighter as I pump her ass, switching to two fingers instead of just my thumb.

The sight alone has me balancing on the edge of ecstasy and I have to bite the inside of my cheek to keep focus. It's completely blown to smithereens when Cosima screams in pleasure, her pussy violently squeezes my cock as she slams back to make sure she's filled to the brim.

"Fuuuuuuck," I grunt and slowly slip my fingers out of her ass to balance myself with a hand on the tiles.

It's as if the woman sucks the cum and the energy right out of my body till the last drop. My cock keeps twitching and pulsing, making sure every inch of her womb is covered. Damn. Each time with this woman is better than the last and we're barely getting started.

Having her in my bed each day, waking up with the knowledge we get to share our lives together is a promise of a bright and joyful future. Even if dark days will cloud some of the good, our connection won't let that shit overshadow our lives. As long as we have each other, we'll have a reason to live a life that stretches way beyond our dreams.

EPILOGUE

Three years later

– COSIMA –

My throat clogs up and I place the pregnancy test on the counter. I stare at my reflection and see myself smile while my eyes are filled with unshed tears. Happiness. It's all due to happiness because I'm pregnant for the second time in my life.

I take a deep breath and wipe away the tears that spilled down my cheeks. The test on

the counter, along with the box, ends up in the trash can. It's late in the afternoon and I have dinner almost ready in the oven.

Parker is outside with our son, Tomlin, who is a year and two months old. I have a bounce in my step when I head outside. Today is our three-year wedding anniversary. My sister and I got married on the same day.

Collins, a member of the Iron Hot Blood ranch, is ordained and was very willing to come to our ranch and make it happen. The whole getting married on the same day, sisters, getting married to the president and the vice president of the Iron Hot Blood motorcycle club made it even more special.

The first anniversary we had a special get-together with a barbeque, the second year we did the same, but today we all decided to spend the day together. Why? Because my sister is pregnant and is due any day now.

She just went to bed and Rourke is with her since he doesn't leave her out of his sight. Normally they live at the Iron Hot Blood ranch, but Eastlynne is grumpier than ever these days and likes the quiet of her own ranch. Well, she technically signed ownership over to me and Parker two years ago, but my house is hers, so whatever.

I come to a stop on the porch at the sight of Parker who is riding a Longhorn. In front of him is Tomlin who is waving his tiny hands in the air, his face filled with joy. Again, my throat clogs from a truckload of emotions. To see the man I love sharing his passion with our son is amazing.

He keeps telling me how I already complete his life, but being able to create new life together, expanding our love and lives by creating a family of our own is a dream come true. Parker is my dream come true. However, his goal of adding a herd of kids isn't a dream of mine if it involves me popping them out.

Besides, it's not up to us but whatever we're graced with. Tomlin is fourteen months old and we've been trying to get pregnant for almost a year and it took a long time to get pregnant with Tomlin as well. Life isn't as easy as saying yes and moving toward a goal.

It's why the sight before me causes a tear of happiness to slide down my cheek. Yes, I'm overemotional, I can't help it. Even after three years, the love between us has only grown stronger, our relationship keeps evolving, and our goals and dreams expanding.

"Hey," Parker quips and narrows his eyes.

The man hardly misses anything so I tell him, "I'm fine. Really."

"You've been crying and you're crying now. Clearly, you're not fine," the man rumbles.

"I'm pregnant," I blurt both as excuse and the fact that I'm excited to tell him.

His face fills with pure joy. "Yeah?"

I hum and hold out my hands to take Tomlin, who in return leans over to let me pull him off the Longhorn. The first time I saw my husband ride a bull was a sight to behold, and it still is. I have to admit, the thought of riding a bull with such long horns is a bit terrifying.

Parker showed and explained how these amazing animals are intelligent, easy to train, and pleasant to work with. I might not favor riding one but watching my husband ride and train them sure has its perks.

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

Our son is completely obsessed with all livestock, it's clear he's going to follow in our footsteps as well. I place Tomlin on my hip while Parker takes care of the Longhorn so he can graze in the pasture.

Parker turns to me and frowns. "Should you be carrying him?"

He holds out his hands and Tomlin instantly switches to his daddy.

I roll my eyes. "Don't you start. You didn't want me lifting a finger when I was pregnant with Tomlin, and the second you know we're pregnant again you fire back up the overprotectiveness."

"Totally rational," Parker murmurs and brushes a kiss against my lips. "Dinner ready?"

"Yeah," I sigh dreamily.

Man, I love him. One kiss is never enough and even after years he manages to swoop me off my feet.

Parker chuckles. "Come on, let's eat some food, get this little man to bed, and then spend some time between the sheets ourselves."

Another reason why I love him; head in the gutter, right next to mine.

I shoot him a grin as we stroll toward the house. Inside I take Tomlin and grab the high chair to help wash his hands. I put him in the high chair while Parker is now

washing his hands.

Without looking I ask Parker, “Can you take the parmesan chicken out of the oven and put it on the table? I’ll grab some plates.”

We work side by side to get the table ready and when we’re sitting across from one another we simply eat in silence while sending each other heated looks. Sometimes there are no words needed.

Apparently, my sister thinks differently and bellows, “Get him out of me now!”

Parker and I widen our eyes.

Rourke barges into the kitchen with a bewildered look on his face. “It’s happening. Right now.”

He spins around and leaves just as quickly.

Parker grabs his phone and jabs the screen before placing it against his ear. “Hey, Ma. Can you watch Tomlin for us? I think we’re heading to the hospital.”

Eastlynne screams and I jump up from the table.

“We might need an escort to the hospital, is Kathleen on duty?” Parker questions.

A sigh rips from him. “I know I asked for her, but anyone will do. Yeah, sure undersheriff, whatever, just get here fast.”

“Kathleen at work?” I ask and grab the suitcase Eastlynne packed to take with her to the hospital and place it by the front door.

When I walk back into the kitchen I see Parker taking Tomlin out of the high chair to put him on his hip. “Yeah, we’re stuck with the undersheriff.”

“Marvin,” I reply with a grin.

My sister calls my name and I rush in her direction. Rourke is guiding her out of the hallway and I open the door just in time to see my mother-in-law step out of Marvin’s patrol car. She rushes inside to take Tomlin from Parker.

“Keep me updated,” she says and I lean in to place a quick kiss on my son’s chubby cheek.

“We will. He’s ready for his bath and then off to bed,” I tell her.

Cassidy ushers me out the door. “Go, go, I got this.”

I give her a quick kiss on the cheek as well and jump into the front seat of Parker’s truck. Rourke and Eastlynne are in the back. Parker follows the patrol car as we head for the hospital.

“Everything okay?” I quip without looking back.

My sister shoves her head between the two front seats and snarls, “No, happy worm, I’m not. There’s a person inside me that wants out and it feels as if he’s swimming in circles deciding which way is out and I’m sure my pussy will never be the fucking same ever again.”

Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 4:54 am

Rourke chokes on his own saliva and Eastlynne whirls her head his way. “It’s all your fault. You and your sperm hitting jackpot with an orgasm that lasted a fragment while I’m gonna be in pain for hours. This was a bad idea. Really, really baaaaaaaaaddddd ouch, motherfucker.”

“Cosima is pregnant,” Parker suddenly states.

My sister’s attention slides to him, the pain still edged on her face as her eyes now slide to mine. “How the fuck do you want to do this all over again when you experienced it once before?”

The corner of my mouth twitches. “Let’s finish that discussion once you’re holding your little one.”

She falls into Rourke’s arms and he gently rubs her back while everyone falls silent until we reach the hospital. They usher her away while Parker and I wait in the waiting room. Hours later, when it’s early morning, we finally get the news that Rourke and Eastlynne’s son is born.

Both are healthy and are resting. When we’re allowed to visit, I can see for myself how my sister looks bone tired, but the smile on her face as she stares down at her son is priceless.

“That’s how I can do it again,” I tell her.

My sister’s gaze collides with mine.

She nods. “I get it, but I also get waiting till the time is right. I’m happy you’re pregnant, and I’m even more happy I’m not anymore. This little bundle here was a weight to carry around and one hell of a pain to put on this earth. Right now, though? The weight of him has shifted and it feels like it’s now pressing on my shoulders in the way of responsibility. Scary as fuck.”

Rourke leans in and brushes a kiss against her temple. “That’s why we have a huge brotherhood filled with family, blood or no blood. We all carry that burden to lighten the load. Jensen here already has a load of brothers, and many more to come.”

“Damn right,” Parker rumbles and places a protective hand over my belly.

I lean back and cover his hand with mine. My heart is overflowing with love and gratitude for the life we’re all graced with. Through havoc and smiles, heavy burdens, and painful events, we’re there for one another no matter what.

That prospect opens doors for new adventures, and I personally can’t wait to see what the future might hold. Besides giving birth in about seven months from now.