



Entangled With The Hellhound

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Description: The night brings many things. For Roxanne Brooks, one night delivers fear, mystery, lust, and best of all, Stone Rutherford, the powerful Hellhound who invokes terror and stokes her deepest desires. When Roxy steps out of her norm, her world is turned upside down. Will she let the gorgeous stranger help her, or will she try to navigate the danger all on her own? Stone is not anybody's savior. He's not a knight in shining armor, or the prince in the story. Stone is the villain. But will his darkness keep him from saving the one woman he feels a connection to, or will he walk away?

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Prologue

1 YEAR AGO

I've been looking for a piece of me for my entire life. I thought my mother abandoned me because she just didn't want a child. However, I recently found out I was placed in foster care after my mother died, and no other family members claimed me.

I always knew who my mother was, so after a long search and a relationship with an ATF agent, the director, to be exact. Finally, I found out my father's name.

The agent is head over heels in love with me, and he's been a useful ally, so I'll keep him around. Besides, I have a lot of use for a man in his position.

As I walk down the cold concrete hall, the noise of my clicking shoes reverberates off the walls. I look like a sexy lawyer in my tight pants suit and six-inch stilettos. After all, I needed to make a good first impression on the man who fathered me.

"Right this way, ma'am." A guard opens a door for me, and I bat my lashes and give him a sexy smile.

"Thanks," I purr, and the guard blushes.

It's always good to have friends everywhere, especially correctional officers.

When I walk into the private room that my director boyfriend had set up, my smile

widens when I see my father looking back at me. Once I see this man, I feel the instant connection. We have the same eyes and nose. We've been exchanging letters for a year, and it took me that long to get my hooks into the ATF agency.

"Glad you could make it, daughter."

"Father, I've been working hard to get you out, but your case is being blocked."

"Don't worry about that. My time will come."

I sigh because I don't want to wait any longer to have my father out of jail. He's the only family that I have.

"But, I want my family out now!" I slam my fist on the table hard.

"Little girl! You better check yourself." My father says in a cold tone and I instantly reel in my emotions. "Listen to me. I'll be out of here in due time. In the meantime, I have a new plan. You have a brother, and you will use your connections to get him out. Then we'll work on me."

My smile widens, and hope blooms because I have a brother!

1

Roxy

"I can't believe you dragged me all the way out to bum-fuck-ville USA. And what if a serial killer is out here somewhere." I complained as I looked around at the woodsy area we were passing through.

When my cousin suggested that I come with her to some biker bar, I thought she was

joking. Unfortunately for me, she wasn't. Not only is she serious, but this bar is in the middle of nowhere.

Why any black person in their right mind would want to go to hang out with bikers in the middle of the woods is beyond my understanding.

"You're being dramatic, Roxy." My cousin, Deidra, chuckles. But I'm being absolutely serious.

"I'm for real, girl. How'd you even know about this place anyway? It seems like it would be a good place for the Klan to gather then bury your body if you ask me." I huffed, still looking out the window at the dark shadows the trees cast.

"Girl, hush. My friend Luke is a member here. There will be black people here." Deidra laughs like she's in the front row of the Improv. I roll my eyes cause she knows I wasn't playing with her ass.

"Another friend, Dee? How many friends do you have?" I give her the side-eye, but she continues laughing.

"A girl can never have too many friends, sis. You know that."

I don't say anything else as Deidra maneuvers her little Mazda down a dirt road. I'm starting to hallucinate the sounds of banjo's when I finally see a sign of life deep in the woods of Texas.

"Thank you, God." I breathe out, sort of relieved. But, I mean, I haven't seen any other black people yet, so I will hold judgment until I see this friend of my cousin's.

"Chiiile if you don't stop being so damned melodramatic. I swear you missed your calling as an actress." Deidra rolls her big brown eyes, and I frown at her.

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“Chiiile...” I mock, “I wouldn’t be so scared if you wouldn’t have me in the Dallas version of the hills have eyes. Are we even still in Texas? Looks a little swampy out there.”

Deidra busts out laughing again, and her loud belly laugh gets me to loosen up a little, and I let out a giggle. “I assure you, cousin, we are still in Texas. Just loosen up. These people love to have a good time, and they like to have it away from the law.”

Her statement gets my attention. I don’t play with police either; I don’t trust any of them. I’ve had my run-ins with them before, and I don’t play about my freedom. I look good in all colors, but I’m not trying to wear orange every day either.

“Whatcha meanaway from the law? Are these people traffickers? Dammit! I can’t be in the next installment of Taken. Liam is too damned old to save me. Lawd!”

“Roxanne Michelle! If you don’t shut your theatrical ass up!” Deidra has tears falling down her cheeks she’s laughing so hard, and all I can do is stare at her.

“Listen, I have been here several times before. These people are cool as fuck. You need to chill and have a little white boy fun. They party different.”

“You aren’t convincing me to get out of this car. And what the hell is white boy fun anyway. I have black girl fun. I go out all the time.”

“You go out and stand around looking at people. I’ve been out with you and your little friends. Ya’ll don’t let loose and just laugh and dance. Too busy worried about how you look and what somebody got on. Fuck all that. We are gonna go in here and

drink beer and maybe smoke a little loud and fucking loosen the hell up. Now getcho black ass out my car!”

I didn’t get a chance to respond because Deidra was already out and slamming the door, I roll my eyes, but I get out of the car. I don’t move as I take in my surroundings.

The building looks completely out of place. It’s like someone placed a gigantic warehouse in the middle of the woods. There’s loud rock music coming from inside, and people are milling around outside, laughing and talking and smoking. There are what looks like a million motorcycles lined up in front of the building and trucks and cars parked further away in a makeshift lot.

When I spot a black woman with a glorious afro, I smile and follow behind Deidra. Besides, it’s not the safest bet for me to stand here by myself, especially if there really are Klansman luring unsuspected black women into human trafficking out here somewhere.

“Hey, Dee! Glad you made it back. I thought the gunfire surely ran you off last time.” A big burly white guy with a long dark beard and a pompadour hairstyle says.

My eyes widen because I hope he’s joking, but by the look of these guys, I know that he isn’t.

“Guns... Dee, what the hell?” I whisper in her ear when I catch up to her.

“Stop acting like you’ve never seen a gun before.” Dee dismisses my concern. I could be mad, but she’s right. My last boyfriend called himself a drug dealer. Of course, he had more guns and drugs on him than Tony Montana, but still.

“I’ve never seen bikers with guns before. So how am I supposed to relax around a

bunch of gun-toting white dudes? I should've stayed my ass at home."

"Roxy, you are stressing the fuck out. You can drop the bougie princess persona. There's nobody here to judge you. You're gonna relax because as soon as we find a place to sit, you're gonna hit this blunt and chill. Now, come on. Let me find Luke."

I sigh, but I give in and follow behind Deidra, holding on to her hand, so we don't get separated. The music seems to get louder, and the crowd seems to part as we move toward a game area.

There are pool tables, darts, and an old-school pinball machine. People aren't openly staring, but I can feel eyes watching us as we walk. I'm glad that Deidra told me to dress down because my usual party attire would've definitely had me standing out.

I must admit that there is an array of ethnicities here, which makes me feel a little better. However, I can tell these women are about this life. I most definitely am not. They all have on a different color of the same outfit. Short skirts or shorts, usually leather, with tiny tops.

For the first time, I notice that Deidra is dressed similarly. She has on a tiny pair of black shorts with a red tank top. When she tried to get me to change out of my jeans and into a pair of shorts, I declined. I didn't realize she was trying to get me into the biker girl uniform.

However, I'm wearing a black tank top that makes my boobs look big, I have to thank Savage Fenty for the boost, so I don't stand out too much.

When we finally make it to the pool tables, Deidra lets go of my hand as another big white dude greets her. He has a rugged look to him with bright blue eyes and a kind smile. As I give him the once over, I see why, or should I say who, my cousin has us in the backwoods of hillbilly country.

The man is standing at good six-five, and his muscles have muscles. Damn! That's a big man. My thoughts must be written on my face because I hear a chuckle, and when my eyes finally meet his, those baby blues are twinkling with amusement.

I clear my throat and give the guy a nervous smile, "Hey."

"Hey. You must be Roxy?" The guy responds, but I furrow my brow because I have no idea who he must be or why he knows me already.

I turn to Deidra and give her a dirty look because I know she's up to no good. I knew she just didn't want to hang out. She set me up.

"Uh, yeah. And you are?" I cut my eyes at my smirking cousin, but she just winks.

"I'm Stone." His voice is so deep that it reminds me of thunder reverberating around the atmosphere and sending vibrations to my core.

Just his two-word answer has me feeling some type of way, so I resort back to the sassiness that I know to keep from trying to hump this man's leg like I'm in heat.

"Stone, huh?"

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“The one and only sweet cheeks.” He smirks.

I place a hand on my hip in disbelief, “Stone, is what your mama named you?”

“Yeah. Because my daddy was a rolling one.” He smirks, and I can’t help but laugh.

“That’s clever. But is your name really Stone?” I ask again because I’m curious.

It could be a biker name or something, but there’s a twinge inside me that makes me want to know this man’s real name.

“It is. Are you askin’ so you can holler out the right name?” He has a heavy country accent, but when he licks his thick pink lips as he gives a deliberate show of looking me up and down from head to toe, my mind blanks out for a second. I’m trying to reconcile in my brain that this big country white dude has a whole lot of swagger.

“Excuse me?” I heard him, but I want to see if he’s bold enough to repeat that shit.

“You heard me loud and clear, darlin’. I don’t reckon ya hard of hearin’ since ya barely out of diapers.” He steps closer to me, and I just stand here frozen.

I’m not afraid, but I am turned the hell on. And I’m also shocked that I’m turned on. I can’t say that Stone is my type at all. But fine is fine. And this man is pictured as THE example in the dictionary.

As he stands leering at me with a twinkle in his blue eyes, I should feel offended. I should slap his chiseled face because his lustful thoughts are written all over it. I

should do and say a lot of things, but I'm stuck staring at him. I'm trying to figure out if he's serious. I'm trying to figure out why my body is on fire at the thought of me calling out his name in pure lust as he pumps into me. Damn, I can't be this horny.

I finally get my wits back and my mind out of the gutter enough to step back and put a semblance of space between us. "You're very presumptuous, Stone."

He quirks a thick eyebrow at me, but the smirk never leaves his bearded face. I have no idea what his end game is, but I want to know for some reason.

"Nah. I'm not disrespectful at all. I just tell the truth. And I can tell by the way your sweet little face lit up when you saw me that you wouldn't be opposed to hollerin' my name. Now, if I'm wrong, which I'm not, then my apologies."

I narrowed my eyes at him because although he said the word apology, it didn't sound like one at all. But, again, his response has me off-kilter. We've been talking for two minutes, and already he's accused me of wanting the dick. I mean, he's not lying, but damn he could pretend he didn't see me drooling at the sight of him. Let a girl have a little dignity.

"I accept your apology." I smile at him. Just because he doesn't know how to pretend doesn't mean I can't.

"Roxy, I like your spunk. How about I get ya'll a drink." Stone chuckles as he walks toward the bar, and I shake my head at his arrogance. He didn't even ask me what I wanted to drink.

"You ran him off quicker than I thought," Deidra says from behind me, and I roll my eyes before I turn around to face the Judas.

"I know damned well, you didn't drag me out here to the boonies to introduce me to

that guy.” I cross my arms over my chest, waiting for her to explain.

“Actually, I didn’t. But Stone is a good guy. You just have to get to know him.”

“Seems like an asshole to me,” I respond, cutting my eyes, and Deidra laughs.

“Oh, I said he was a good guy. I didn’t say he wasn’t an asshole.” She cackles.

“Well, I’ve had my fill of assholes, thanks.”

“Roxy, let it go. Stone is cool, and if you don’t want to talk to him, then don’t. Nobody is forcing you to do anything. I just want you to live a little and relax. There’s nobody here that knows who you are or who you’re trying to be. Nobody here will judge you. They’re not those kind of people.”

I nod my head at my cousin. She’s right. At the bare minimum, I can have a beer or two and maybe puff on a blunt. It’s been a long time since I let my guard down, and maybe here I can actually do that.

2

Stone

The curves on that woman ought to be against the damn law. She had my dick rock hard from the time I spotted her ass swinging in those painted on jeans. Almost every man in this bitch was drooling, and even though I understand, I didn’t like that shit one bit. I’m the only man that should be able to look at her ass like it’s mine.

I’m not the type of man who believes in love at first sight or no crazy shit like that. But lust at first glance is definitely a belief I can follow. So when my boy, Crush, said his crazy girlfriend was bringing her cousin, I didn’t really pay him much attention.

I mean, Dee is funny as fuck, and she has to be insane to be involved with a motherfucker as dark as Crush, but I wasn't expecting her cousin to be so... much. The woman has dark brown skin, deep-set onyx eyes, and plump suckable lips. And that ass is so damn juicy, I know she has to be breaking the law somehow. There's no reason a pair of jeans should look that damn good. Then there were her tits; two perfect pieces of round succulence spilled out of her tank top and made my mouth water.

But besides her physical attributes, she has a smart-ass mouth. Now, I'm not a glutton for punishment or nothin' like that, and I don't like a whole lot of dramatics. But I can't resist a woman with spice. And in a span of a two-minute conversation, I knew that Roxy was made up of cayenne peppers with a dash of Tabasco to keep you on your toes.

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So instead of dragging her ass to one of the bedrooms and slamming her against the wall to have my way with her, I decided to chill the hell out and go get a drink. Not that I need another one. I'm already feeling pretty damn good, but I needed an excuse to get away.

There is nothing more attractive to me than a strong woman. That damsel in distress shit gets on my nerves, but when women see me, for some unknown reason, they see a knight in shining armor. And that's the last thing I am.

With my rough exterior and sarcastic attitude, I'm nobody's savior. Hell, with my past, it's a wonder that I was able to save my damned self.

"Hey, Candy. Get me, two Millers." I smile at the cute bartender with short brown hair and tats.

"Sure thing, Stone." Candy smiles as she pushes her chest out before she saunters off to get my beers.

I shake my head; Candy would be cute if she didn't constantly keep shit stirred up. I'm surprised Sassy, the club's Sargent at Arms old lady hasn't kicked her ass yet.

"Stone Cold, what's shakin' bacon?"

"I was just thinking about you," I say to Sassy as she goes to hug my neck, but Ace grabs her waist and pulls her back.

"What the hell do you mean? Why the fuck are you thinking about my woman?" Ace

scowls at me hard, but I chuckle.

“Calm down, caveman.” Sassy rolls her big brown eyes and swats at his arms.

“Candy just went to get my drinks. I was wondering when Sassy was gonna kick her ass.” I smiled, and now it was my turn to get the eye roll.

“I’m somebody’s mama. I don’t have time to fight these hoes.” Sassy responds with a smirk. It’s always funny to hear the sophisticated woman slip back into her street slang. And we both know, if the crazy bartender tries anything out of line, Sassy will slip a foot in Candy’s ass.

Before I can tease her anymore, Candy returns with my beers. She greets Ace but practically ignores Sassy. I see the fire light in the depths of Sassy eyes before she turns and goes to the bar and orders her drinks from Rose.

Ace chuckles before he settles beside me on a barstool. He’s not only the Sargent at Arms of the Hellhounds; he’s also the commander of our enforcers. But it takes a dark motherfucker to be an enforcer, which is why I’m his right hand.

“I’m surprised you’re by yourself.” Ace quirks a thick brow in my direction, and I shrug and take a swig of my beer.

“I actually have a little somethin’ to get into. I’ll check ya later.” I grab the other beer from the bar and stroll back

If I sit too long talking with Ace, shit is bound to get deep. The last thing I want on a party night is to drown in the sorrow of shit I can’t change.

As I walk through the ever growing crowd, I see Po Boy and a group of Louisiana chapter members talking to Big Country. I don’t recognize a few men in the group,

but I hear Po Boy introduce one guy as Kirk something, but I keep walking. I don't particularly care for those members. They're my brothers by Hellhounds standards, but I don't have to like their asses.

I continue on and notice the party is in full swing and getting rowdier by the second. No matter what's going on in the world, the Hellhounds will always make time to throw a good party. We live by our own set of rules and fuck anybody that has anything to say about it.

That's why when I see Roxy practically hiding in the corner, I instantly know that she isn't used to our wild shenanigans. There's one of the brothers directly in front of her with a bunny on her knees. She's slurping and gagging like she's making a flick while her short skirt is pulled up over her slim hips.

Everyone else is either cheering on the performance or ignoring them completely. However, Roxy's almond-shaped eyes look like they are seconds from popping out of her skull. Although she's obviously trying not to stare, she's clutching at her neck like she's wearing her grandmama's pearls. Her mouth is opening and closing like a big mouth bass. I can see the tinge of embarrassment under her cheeks, but I'm pretty sure if her skin was lighter, she would be beet red.

My chuckle doesn't quite make it out of my mouth when I notice that Dee and Crush are nowhere to be found, and Big Country is eyeing my woman like she's the all-you-can-eat buffet. Hell no!

"Here, baby," I slid between Roxy and Big Country just before he made his move.

"Baby?" Roxy comes out of her stupor to look at me with a raised brow.

"I'm just trying to protect you from the wolves in here, little lamb." I tick my head behind me at the behemoth making lustful eyes at Roxy. She swallows hard and nods

her thanks before taking a sip of her beer.

When her eyes swing back to the porn in front of us, her eyes go wide again, and she starts to choke on her beer. I pat on her back as I try not to laugh at her.

“Damn, woman, you act like you’ve never seen a dick before.”

“I’ve seen plenty of dicks...” I cock my eyebrow at her with a wry smile, and she blushes again. “You know what I mean. I’m not a virgin. I’ve just never seen a dick just... out. All in public for everyone to see.”

“You don’t have to see it. Just turn away.” I shrug my shoulders nonchalantly. I want to know enough about this woman to get her into bed, but if she’s judgmental, I refuse to have the headache.

“It’s hard to turn away. It’s like a car wreck. You’re glad it’s not you, but you want to see what happens next. Look at her!” Roxy elbows my side, so I look. “Is she a professional? Like is she on Onlyfans or Pornhub? She has to be famous with skills like that!” Roxy chuckles before taking another sip, and I realize she’s not judging them... or us. She’s just out of her element, and I can appreciate that.

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“Nah, she ain’t no professional. But she’s got plenty of practice.”

“Hmmm. I can tell. So this is how ya’ll get down, huh? No wonder my cousin didn’t tell me where we were coming tonight.” I can feel the frown forming on my face at her comment. Maybe I was wrong.

“Oh, so you are the judgmental type?” I question because I’ll be disappointed if she is.

“No. I’m not in a position to judge anyone about anything. But I can’t say if Dee told me I was coming to the woods with a bunch of white people who suck dick in front of everybody and look at me like I’m the crazy one,” Roxy shrugs, “I would’ve probably found something else to do.”

“Well, I guess this scene ain’t for the faint of heart little lamb. But we do what we want around here without judgment. But nobody is forcing anything. You feel me?”

“I feel you.” Roxy nods, and although our conversation wasn’t deep or life changing, I feel like we’ve come to an understanding.

I couldn’t get a read on Roxy, and although her eyes were no longer round as saucers, I could tell she was uncomfortable. I can’t say that I blame her, though. The Hellhounds aren’t known for being subdued in anything we do. Hell, a blow job was tame compared to some of the other shit that goes down at the clubhouse.

“So, Dee just left you to the wolves huh?” I move closer to Roxy and stand in front of her pulling her attention away from the live action porn.

“Nah. Crush is at the bar, and Dee went to the bathroom. That’s the story they fed me before they disappeared, but I’m sure they’re somewhere fucking. She’ll be back.”

“You gotta lotta faith in your cousin,” I observe out loud. Roxy is safe here by herself. The only thing she’s in danger of is being flirted with and maybe annoyed to death, but that’s about it. We don’t force women to do shit they don’t want to; there are too many bitches willing to do any and everything.

“Dee is more than my cousin. But she said I was safe here and she would never put me in danger... not her. Not ever.”

The conviction in her words makes me wonder what her story is, then I shake myself from my foolishness. You want ass, Stone not a fuckin’ relationship. I admonish myself. I am not a fuckin’ knight!

“She’s right. You’re safe here. So, why don’t you finish that beer, and let’s play some pool.”

“Okay. But, I’m gonna need something stronger than beer before I run this table on your big ass.”

I look over my shoulder and wiggle said ass at her, and Roxy bursts out laughing. “So, you’ve been checking out my ass huh? It is quite irresistible.” I wink at her, and she continues laughing.

“I never would’ve guessed a big tough guy like you would have such a sense of humor.”

“Hey, don’t judge a book by its cover. Everybody needs a good laugh, even big tough guys.”

We laugh as I pull her toward the bar to get a few shots before I school her in a game of pool. As we wade through the crowd, it seems like it's a million motherfuckers in here tonight.

It's been a long time since we've had a celebration like this one. A few years ago, we were betrayed by some of our own, and it took a long time for our Prez to get over it. We lost some brothers behind a jealous bitch and some bullshit. Can't trust these hoes.

"Aye, Candy! Get me four tequila shots and two more beers." Candy's bright smile turns into a fierce glare when she sees Roxy.

"Fuck, Stone. Not you too?" Candy puts her hands on her hips and sucks her teeth.

"Bitch! Who the fuck are you questioning? Get my motherfucking drinks before I have Sassy kick your ass!" I snap at her, and Candy's eyes well with tears.

I could give a fuck about her crying. Nobody owns me, especially not a bitch that I've never laid down with. These bitches are getting too comfortable around here. The Prez might need to get some new blood because these old hoes think they got a say in how we do shit.

"Damn. So ya'll really be calling women bitches?" Roxy says from beside me as she watches Candy make our drinks.

"It's just how it is. Bitch don't mean the same thing as it does in the vanilla world."

"I guess," Roxy responds, but she doesn't sound convinced.

There are a lot of things that don't make sense to the outside world. Calling women bitches is one on a long list of things that won't change.

“Hey, look at me.” I turn to Roxy to see her still watching Candy intently.

“Yeah, no. I need to watch thisbitchmake my drink. I won’t be sipping spit.” Roxy shakes her head with a crinkle between her brows. I laugh at her serious expression.

“She’s not bold enough to spit in your drink. No worries.”

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Roxy continues to stare at Candy until she slides four tequila shots in our direction, and I pick one up and hand it to her. “See, she didn’t do anything to your drink.” I chuckle.

“Only because I was watching her ass. She saw me looking at her.” Roxy sucks her teeth and throws the shot back with gusto, and I do the same. We knock back the other two shots, and I wave at Candy for two more.

Before I know it, we have knocked back about five shots a piece, and I’m feeling pretty damn good. I can tell Roxy is holding her liquor, but she’s still a petite little thing, so I get her a bottle of water before we head back to the pool table.

Before we make it back, Roxy stops in the middle of the floor and turns to me. “Dance with me.”

3

Roxy

I can’t believe out of all places in the world, Raymond is here. My ex-boyfriend made my life a living hell. He was one of the worst decisions in my life. He still had a starring role in my nightmares, and I hadn’t seen him in two years. Hell, I didn’t even know he was out of jail already. He shouldn’t be out of jail.

“You look like you’ve seen a ghost.” Stone looks down into my eyes, and I can see in his gaze that he’s trying to figure out my soul’s secrets.

I look away as he pulls me into him, and we slowly sway back and forth to the country music that's playing. I wouldn't categorize the song as slow, but I don't think anybody cares what we're doing. Stone seems like the type of man that walks to the beat of his own drum anyway. So I doubt anybody would say anything even if they did care.

I can feel Stone staring down at me, but my mind is trying to figure out what Raymond is doing here. There could be all kinds of reasons for his reappearance, but to be here out of all places just doesn't sit right with me. And even though Dee said these guys wouldn't hurt me, that doesn't mean they aren't dangerous. And if Raymond Frazier is here, then I can guarantee that danger isn't far behind.

When I look up, Stone is still looking at me. His gaze is intense as his blue eyes burn a hole into my browns without flickering. I gulp down my fear. Because make no mistake, this man scares the shit out of me. Stone is all jokes and charm, but there's something dark fluttering behind that façade.

However, it's not the darkness that scares me. It's the fact that once we lock eyes, I can't look away from him. I've never been so attracted to someone in my life, and that's what scares me more than anything. How can this man I've known for a few hours make me feel simultaneously scared and safe? It doesn't make any sense.

"Are you gonna tell me what has your eyes so wide?" At Stone's deep voice, I narrow my eyes and look away, trying desperately not to show how much Raymond's appearance has spooked the hell out of me.

"No... nothing. I'm good." I lie easily, but when Stone's big hand grabs my chin and forces me to look up at him, I know I made a mistake.

"If we're gonna be friends, lyin' ain't a good way for me to trust you." The coldness in his eyes makes me shiver. I am instantly aware this man isn't somebody to fuck

with.

“Umm. Well, can we possibly go somewhere else to talk?” I look around nervously because I’ve lost sight of Raymond, and I know not to turn my back on a snake.

“Talk? You sure that’s all you wanna do?” Stone arches a dark eyebrow with a sexy grin, and I suck my teeth and roll my eyes because just like that, the cocky jokester is back.

“Yeah, I’m sure.” I keep a straight face, so he knows I’m serious.

Stone nods as he pulls me off the makeshift dancefloor and heads toward a back patio area. I’m surprised he didn’t go in the direction of the rooms. While we were at the bar, I saw Dee and Crush disappear down a hall with rooms. I can’t say that I’m not disappointed, which is a weird thought that I will unpack and overthink once I get home.

“It’s nice out here.” I look around at the lights hanging from the dark wood stained pergola. There’s patio furniture surrounding a fire pit on one side and a nice stainless steel outside kitchen off to the other side. It looks all comfortable and cozy like we’re in the backyard of a family home. It’s in direct contrast with the shenanigans that are happening inside.

“Yeah, ever since Sassy had the boys, we’ve become a little more family oriented around here.”

I nod my head even though I really don’t know who or what he’s talking about. I can only assume a woman is behind this small structure of peace.

“So, what’s up? I know my face doesn’t scream; tell me all your troubles, so it must be something serious.”

“I just saw my ex-boyfriend in there, who I thought was still in jail, by the way. I haven’t seen him in forever, and he’s not supposed to be out. So why didn’t Myers warn me?” I rush the words out in a hurry, so I won’t freak out at the thought of what I’m saying.

Raymond Frazier is a devious bastard who almost ruined my life. He tried his best, and if I had known he was out of the pen, I most certainly would’ve talked to Detective Myers. I’m surprised nobody at the department warned me. There were so many cops trying to get me to testify against Raymond. Now nobody tells me he’s out.

Myers always stayed involved in Raymond’s case because of all the high-profile people rumored to do business with him. The detective always wanted me to keep in touch with him, and he didn’t tell me!

I was twenty-three when I broke up with Raymond because of all the shit he put me through. It took almost three years for him to go to jail while I had to practically go into hiding to get away from all his bullshit.

The entire time Raymond was out on bond, he created havoc in my life and threatened me and everyone I was associated with if I thought about testifying against him. He wanted my silence and loyalty when all he did was hurt me. I had every reason to snitch on my bastard ex. I spent almost the entirety of my twenties dealing with Raymond in some form or fashion. I promised myself I would never be in the same room as his foul ass again, and one night of me stepping outside my normal... and here he is.

“Who? Who is your ex?” Stone’s face is just that... stone. I can’t read any emotion that he’s feeling. I can’t even hear any reaction in his voice. It makes me wonder once more if Stone is his actual name. If so, his mama knew what she was doing when she named him.

“Raymond. Raymond Frazier,” I answer, still unable to read the man in front of me.

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“What does he look like?” Stone asks.

“Umm. Black guy, real light skin, low haircut. Lots of tattoos on his neck.” I don’t exactly think that’s a very good description considering everyone has neck tattoos, but there is a tiny flicker of recognition. However, the look is replaced so fast I almost feel like I imagined it.

“What was he in jail for?” Stone’s words are measured, and the look on his face grows even colder. I’m not sure if he knows who Raymond is, but if looks can kill, Raymond is surely dead.

“A multitude of things, but what he got the most time for was drug dealing and gun running.”

“How much time did he get?” Stone asks in an even tone.

“Umm. Well, in total, for everything he was accused of, he got thirty-five to life.”

At my words, Stone’s whole body freezes. Then he nods and pulls his phone out of his pocket. I watch him closely as he types out a quick text. Then he relaxes and looks at me with a warm smile on his face.

It’s like I just watched a switch flip, and he’s gone from freezing cold to sizzling hot. The sexy look is back on his face, and he moves closer to me. I’m dizzy by the change in direction, and I don’t know what to think.

I mean, my body is still coiled tight from being on high alert with Raymond’s crazy

ass. Now, my spinning brain is trying to figure out if I should run or rub my body against the beast looking at me like I'm his next meal. I can't say it isn't a difficult decision because my flight and fight responses are all out of whack with this man around.

"So, Roxy... are you having fun? I know this isn't your usual hangout." I know he's just making an observation, especially because I've been wide-eyed most of the night. However, I still feel obligated to explain myself. Plus, he's thankfully changing the subject, so I take the lifeline he's throwing me.

"Honestly, I don't do much hanging out at all." I shrug as I try not to let my embarrassment show on my face.

Since I was able to get out of the trouble Raymond got me in, I have been keeping my nose clean. All I do is work, and even when I'm off, I'm thinking about work. I just want to get ahead in life, and being an entrepreneur was the best way I felt I could. So, I became a makeup artist.

It was difficult when I first started, but I made a name for myself with every successful client I had. Now, I have a few famous clients and a large social media following. But not a real social life. That's why Dee insisted we hang out tonight. If I do go out it's to network and make connections. Not to have fun.

"I guess this is your walk on the wild side?" Again, Stone's face is unreadable, but for some reason, I feel like he's judging me. And I really don't appreciate it.

"Please believe I have plenty of experience on the wild side. I'm good. I don't need to come to the backwoods of Texas to get a taste. But thanks or whatever." My words drip with my defensiveness, and I know Stone heard my attitude because his thick dark brow quirks up.

“Well, alrighty then. Don’t get your panties in a bunch about it.” Stone gives me a dazzling smile, and I roll my eyes at him.

He thinks he’s cute. So what if he is... I don’t have to like his smart-aleck remarks.

“Whatever,” I grumble because I can’t resist his charming ass even though I want to.

“Come on, little lamb...” Stone starts, but I cut him off.

“Yeah, that little lamb shit is not cute.”

“Yeah, but the wide-eye deer in headlights look on your face I’ve seen several times tonight is.” He chuckles, and I scowl at him.

“A deer and a lamb are two different animals genius.” I can’t help but sass him.

Stone gives a big belly laugh, and I can’t help but smile. “I know they’re two different animals, but calling you ‘deer’ makes me sound like I’m somebody’s granddaddy.”

I laugh because Stone is right. He does sound like he’s an eighty-year-old calling his grandkid.

“Okay, I’ll give you that. But, not lamb. How about just Roxy?”

“Come on, lamb. Everybody has a nickname around here.” He gives me a devilish grin, and I want to give in and tell him to call me whatever the hell he wants, but I hold up my sassy demeanor because our little battle is getting me tingly in all the right places.

“You don’t have a nickname. Right?” I quirk my eyebrow at him. After all, he did say

his real name was Stone.

“Not one you’ll ever wanna know about, sweetheart. Believe that.” Stone’s bright eyes flash with a darkness that I wish I could say I’ve never seen before, but I have.

This man might have a quirky sense of humor with witty comebacks and flirty banter, but underneath all of that is something bleak that draws me to him. I see it. And as he looks me deep in my eyes, he knows I see it.

“Well, I guess I’ll stick to calling you, Stone. And you can call me Roxy. After all, it is my nickname.”

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“Yeah, darlin’, but it ain’t the same. You need a Hounds nickname.”

I just give him a dead-eye stare. I can admit I like our little tête-à-tête, but it seems like Stone just likes to argue. Or maybe he just likes to argue with me.

“I’m not a Hound, though.” I shrug, and Stone smirks at me.

I’m not sure what the look is about, but he doesn’t say anything else, so maybe he’s done arguing.

I turn to walk back into the party when I hear Stone say, “If Sassy wasn’t already somebody else’s name, I would call you that. Little Lamb.” I turn around, and Stone’s face splits into a magnificent smile. I instantly realize he’s definitely the asshole that I pegged him as.

“I need another drink if I’m gonna deal with your arguin’ ass,” I mumble under my breath, but I know Stone heard me because he laughs.

4

Stone

Roxy has a smart-ass mouth, and I can’t say that I hate it. I can’t help but argue with her because she has to say something back. I’m not even the argumentative type of guy. I usually say what the fuck I gotta say, and that’s that. But I can’t help but go back and forth with Roxy’s sassy ass.

But when she told me about her ex being here, that shit threw me off. I had to keep up our little banter because I could tell she was shook. Hell, I was pissed too. We don't let just anybody hang with us, not even on party nights. So, that means Raymond Frazier had an invite. And we don't invite snitches to shit. And only a rat gets out of a thirty-five-year bid in two years. Shit ain't smelling right with his ass.

"Alright, Roxy, let's get something else to drink. I promise not to argue with you anymore." I wink at her, and she purses her plump lips and cuts her big doe eyes at me.

I can tell she wants to say something, but she doesn't. Instead, she sashays her juicy ass in front of me.

Before we make it back inside, Roxy stops and turns to me, biting her lip. "What about Raymond?" She asks with a small quiver in her voice.

I don't like the thought of her being scared of some rat ass motherfucker. She won't need to worry about his ass.

"Don't worry about him. You're with me, darlin'. And ain't nothin' about to happen to you that you don't want to happen. You pickin' up what I'm puttin' down?"

Roxy nods her head, but that's not going to do it.

"I need to hear the words, darlin'. You feel me?"

"Yeah, I feel you," Roxy says what I need her to, but it doesn't sound too convincing. I won't push her, though. She doesn't really know the Hounds or me.

"Good, come on."

“I need to go to the restroom and find Dee. Just to check-in.” Roxy says as soon as we step back into the party. I point her in the direction of the bathroom, and she nods and takes off.

I make my way to find the Prez, but I see Bishop instead. Our VP is a scary motherfucker when he wants to be, but nobody is scarier than I am.

“Bishop.” I nod.

“Got your text, so did Ace. We’ll take care of it.”

“You sure you don’t need me?” I ask because I’d love to get my hands dirty. It’s been a while since I’ve quenched the blood lust that turns inside of me.

“Nope, not yet anyway. Death can stay in his cage tonight.” Bishop says casually as he sips his beer.

Not many people know when the Hounds call for somebody to die, they’re calling me. So I was telling Roxy the truth about my name. Everybody has a nickname, and mine is Death.

“Alrighty. I’m here if you need me.” Bishop just shakes his head with a chuckle. He knows about my insatiable blood lust. I was fucked up as a kid, and that trauma stuck with me through adulthood.

I have a handle on my shit, but I deal with it unconventionally. I can’t claim to be a normal functioning man, but only a select few know that.

However, with the way Roxy watches me, I can tell that she can sense the darkness. She’s an intriguing woman. The fact that she hasn’t run from me when I know she can see the danger behind my eyes makes me want to chase her.

I want to know how she can see past my façade. I want to know why she didn't automatically see me as a knight but the villain I am. I want to know why she didn't run.

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The thought of her running makes a frown cover my face before I can stop it. I don't frown much; it's part of my mask. Frowning shows people the real me, and only those selected to die should see therealme.

"I think that's the first time I've seen you frown all night. You okay?" Roxy's sweet voice infiltrates my ears. I was so deep in thought that I didn't even realize she was standing in front of me.

"I'm good, Sugar. You good?" I relax my face and smile easily. Roxy tips her head to the side and gives me a strange look.

"Hmmm. Well, Dee is ready to go, so I just wanted to come to say bye." Roxy says after a minute of assessing me. She bites her bottom lip, and I can tell the feisty woman I've been teasing all night has been replaced by a shy fidgety person that I find adorable as fuck.

"So, little lamb, are you gonna give me the digits or what?" I smile when she starts laughing.

"You really sound like somebody's country grandpa. Who even says digits anymore?"

"Woman, just give me your damn phone." I hold out my hand, and she hesitates for a split second before she hands me her cell.

I put my number in and call myself. I save her number in my phone and hand her cell back to her. Roxy just watches me with a little smile on her face, and I'm glad that

she doesn't comment on my highhandedness.

I could tell she wanted my number, but she's not the type of woman to ask for it. But that's okay cause I'm the type of man to give a woman what she wants without her having to ask.

"It was interesting meeting you, Stone..."

"Rutherford..." I finish for her.

"Roxy Brooks." She formally introduces herself. I take her hand and pull her close to my body.

Roxy's soft curves melt into my hard muscles. Her breath hitches when she gasps. I lift her chin up so I can get a good look into her soft coffee-colored eyes. They look like pools of melted chocolate, and I have a sweet tooth.

"Damn, little lamb. You sure are one sexy motherfucker." I whisper as I lean down to get a taste of those juicy lips I've been admiring all night.

"I told your hardheaded ass about that nickna..." I cut off her sassy ass with a kiss so powerful it takes both of our breaths away.

I consume her mouth and taste her sweetness on my tongue. I growl and pull her closer to me. Roxy grips the back of my neck with one hand and fists my t-shirt in the other. I know she can feel me growing hard against her stomach because she whimpers when I rock into her.

When she bites my bottom lip, I push her against the nearest wall in a dark corner. I slide my hands down the front of her body and rub her pussy through her jeans. Roxy rolls her hips sensually, and all I want to do is tear her pants off her and fuck her up

against the wall. I have half a mind to throw her over my shoulder and go to my room. But, a cackling laugh breaks into my sex fogged brain.

“Oooh. Roxanne, Roxanne. I knew you had it in you!” Dee cackles from behind us, and Roxy blushes like a teenager.

“Shut up, Dee,” Roxanne mumbles as she glares at her cousin. I can’t help but chuckle at the two. I can tell by how they tease each other that they’re close. I miss not having a sibling.

“Ya’ll be safe. I’ll call you.” I peck Roxy on her lips, and she gives me a dreamy smile before she follows Dee out the door.

I can’t help but watch her ass sway until she’s out of sight. Damn, that’s a magnificent ass!

Although Dee and Roxy are leaving, the party is still in full swing. The party usually doesn’t end until the sun comes up. But I’m glad they left because I have some business to take care of.

When I spot Crush coming in from outside, I know he sent the ladies home. It’s not early, but Dee usually stays a lot longer. Crush nods at me, and I follow him upstairs and away from the noise of the party.

We make it to the large conference room where we hold church, and six of the seven voting members are here. I hadn’t seen Rock all night, so I know it’s some deep shit happening. The Prez never stays away from a good party.

I take my seat at the end of the table with the other club enforcers. Big Country and Black are here, and so are Bishop and Ace. We’re only missing one of our enforcers, but he’s out on a job which is probably a good thing.

“So, we have a rat hanging around,” Rock says in a cold, steely voice.

“According to Roxy,” I respond.

The mass text I sent out has everyone on high alert. But, unfortunately, this Raymond dude slipped through the cracks of our security. There’s no way in hell he should’ve been able to get anywhere near our clubhouse, party or not.

There were grumbles of protest when Wire, our computer guy comes waltzing in. He’s been with our Texas chapter a few years, but he’s been a Hound forever at our chapter in Nevada. His red hair is in his signature neat style, and his eyes, as usual, are twinkling with laughter.

“What cha’ got, Wire?” Rock asks in a no-nonsense tone. Wire tends to be a jokester, especially at inappropriate times, so I get Rock’s attitude. We don’t have time for bullshit.

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Wire sits down in a chair and pulls out his phone before reading the information out loud, “Raymond Frazier is logged as still being in the Mack Alford Correctional Center in Atoka, Oklahoma. Three years into a thirty-five-year bid.”

I crinkle my face in confusion. Maybe, Roxy was mistaken about who she saw because Raymond is in jail. But her freak out was genuine. She was definitely scared of whoever it was she saw.

“So, who the hell was here at the clubhouse?” Ace asks my question out loud.

“I said he was logged into the prison. I didn’t say his ass was actually there.” Wire smirks, and I can’t help but sigh. This motherfucker really thinks he’s funny.

“Cut the bullshit, Wire. Who the fuck are we dealing with?” Bishop speaks up; his eyes are narrowed at the ginger-headed bastard.

“No bullshit, VP.” Wire says but I can tell there’s more.

“Okay, if he’s not logged in, at least where’s his file. Mugshot and shit?” Ace says.

“No mugshot or record anywhere. It took me hacking several government systems before I even found where he was logged.”

“That can’t be good news.” I mumble.

“Nope,” Wire shakes his head, “I’m not sure which agency he’s sucking dick for, but his ass is officially in the clink. There were several alias I found though, Kirk

Johnson, Steven Lewis, and Max Smith.”

“So, how’d he get in our territory? It ain’t like a motherfucka can just walk up in here without an invite.” Big Black scowls as he looks around the room.

I was thinking the same thing. I hope to God we don’t have another traitor in our midst. The shit that Lip pulled had us clearing house. As an enforcer, I didn’t get any fucking sleep. Not that I complained, all the killing helped the blood lust.

“Kirk Johnson definitely came in with Po Boy.” Big Country’s answer makes me let out a loud groan.

Po Boy is from our Louisiana chapter. It’s been a bunch of shit from them lately. And now one of the “Alphabet boys” are on their asses. ATF, FBI, CIA, who the fuck knows which one, shit maybe all of them.

“I saw that dude,” I say.

I don’t care if his name is Kirk or Raymond. Hell, it can be Beetlejuice for all I care. That motherfucker is a dead man.

“We keep eyes on the sneaky asshole until we know who he’s working for. I want to know how many times he takes a fucking shit. You feel me? It was a reason he was here tonight. He just didn’t figure anybody would recognize his snake ass.”

“Did he see Roxy?” I ask. Because I was distracted by her freak-out and didn’t get a chance to see if Raymond noticed her or not.

“Nah. If he did, he didn’t act like it. We’ll be watching him to make sure he doesn’t come within fifty feet of her.” Big Country says in his slow drawl.

A knock on the door interrupts our conversation. All talking stops as a prospect sticks his head in the door.

“Hey, Prez. Po Boy left about two hours ago. The whole crew left with him.” Rock nods at the prospect, and he leaves and shuts the door behind him.

“Get in touch with Baller, but only tell him the basics. Keep an eye on Po Boy and his little friend. For now, we keep our suspicions in house. And Stone,” Rock looks at me with a smirk, “I need you to stay close to Roxy.”

My smile is wide when I reply, “I sure as fuck will, Prez.”

5

Roxy

It’s been a couple of weeks since my wild night out with my cousin, and I still can’t stop thinking about everything that happened. I was pleasantly surprised that I had such a good time with the Hellhounds. I still can’t believe I saw Raymond while I was out in the woods drinking and partying. Of all places to see the one person, I despise most in the world. I shake my head at the thought.

Stone still hadn’t contacted me, and although I’m a little disappointed, I can’t say that I’m surprised. I was probably just a distraction, somebody to just party with for the night. However, I thought maybe, just maybe, it meant more than that, especially after the fiery kiss we shared.

I haven’t had anyone kiss me like that in... shit, I’ve never had anybody kiss me like that. It’s probably why I can’t think about anything else. I have to work on a magazine shoot today, and my focus is off.

I need to get my mind off of that weekend and on my bag. Money on my mind and mind on my money and all that jazz.

“Hey, Rox. You ready for today?” Chase asks as he sets up some of the lights on the ground. I’ve worked with him on several shoots, and he’s a really good guy that knows what he’s doing.

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“As ready as I’m gonna get.” I smile at him, and he chuckles.

We both know dealing with models can be difficult sometimes. Chase is an aspiring photographer but works as an assistant until he catches his big break.

“A few of us are going to get some drinks and unwind after this. You wanna go?” Chase asks with a smile. I know he only wants me to go because he thinks my friend, Karma, the hairstylist on set, will go if I do. He’s had a crush on her since the first time we all worked together.

“Let me guess... Karma said she would go if I did...”

Chase gives me a sheepish smile, and he nods, and I laugh at him. He’s such a cutie with his baby face and sparkling amber eyes.

“Yeah, I’ll go.” I nod.

“Great!” Chase replies. Before he can say anything else, our conversation is interrupted.

“Roxy! Get over here!” Nia, one of the models, yells loudly.

I can’t snap at her ass like I want to, but she only has one more time to holler my name out like I’m a damn dog. It’s not my fault her dry-skinned having ass needs more make-up than the other girls on set. She needs to take better care of her skin instead of wanting me to pile product on top of her acne.

“What’s taking you so long. You didn’t take this long with the other girls.” Nia gripes. I love what I do, but sometimes dealing with these diva types gets real freaking old.

“I take longer with the star of the shoot, Nia. The other girls don’t need my focus.” I say with a sweet smile. Nia smiles widely because she can’t see past her ego to hear the sarcasm in my words.

“Well, it’s about time somebody recognizes who the important person is on this set.” I hum at Nia’s words and try not to roll my eyes.

I used to like Nia. I worked with her when she first started modeling. However, once she started getting more and more attention, she left the humbleness behind and became the monster we see today.

Nia is a beautiful girl with her dark mahogany skin tone and dark onyx almond-shaped eyes. Her high cheekbones and dazzling smile helps her to stand out. But her bad attitude is what people talk about the most these days.

Once I finish up with Nia, she saunters off to get into wardrobe, and I start on one of the other models. It only took me ten minutes to do her entire face; she thanked me before getting up from my chair.

Karma plops down in my chair with a heavy sigh rolling her eyes.

“That damned, Nia is something else.” Karma looks over her shoulder where the models are being fitted in their outfits, and I turn to look as well.

“Yeah, well, she better relax before she gets a bad reputation. It’s already hard out there for black models.” I shake my head, and Karma nods hers in agreement.

As black women in the beauty industry, it's already hard for us. Nia being a bitch to everybody on set, especially her fellow black women, just isn't a good look. But, she's the talent, and we dare not say anything to the "queen."

"She'll be labeled the black bitch if she isn't careful. You know they love giving us that title." Karma replies with a shake of her curly head.

Today Karma has a gigantic curly afro with silver tips. Her hair is always beautifully done with wild colors. I guess that's the benefit of doing your own hair. That's why I wear a weave. Easier to manage than my natural hair, so I keep it braided or long sew-ins.

We hang around in the back area until it's time for the shoot to start. I noticed the models were all dressed in some type of leather and chains. It looks very BDSM. When one of the models walks out wearing a leather jacket and short shorts, I automatically think of the biker bunnies I saw that weekend.

I chuckle to myself until I hear a rumble of a motorcycle. I look around excitedly, and then I mentally slap myself. Stone Rutherford is not the only person who rides a motorcycle.

Hell, I should still be freaking out about Raymond, but Stone's reassurance has me feeling safe for some reason. If I had told Dee what I saw, she would've freaked the hell out too. So, I kept it to myself.

The last thing I want is for my cousin to start worrying about me again. It took a long time for me to earn the trust of my family back, and Raymond unexpectedly popping up won't help.

"Damn! Now that's a fine ass man." Karma's dreamy-toned voice brings me out of my thoughts and back to the present.

And oh what a present it is. When I see Stone riding in on a customized motorcycle, my stomach flutters, and my panties dampen. It's like he was plucked right out of my brain and placed in front of my eyes.

The man is a vision of pure sexiness, and the smug asshole knows it too. He's wearing a baseball cap that hides his low haircut and shades his pretty blue eyes at the same time. It's like time stands still as he brings the big colorful beast between his legs to a stop.

Stone throws one long jean-clad leg over the motorcycle, and his heavy boots hit the floor with a loud thump. At first, I can't take my eyes off of him, but then I shake myself. I'm definitely more gangster than fawning over some man.

But no matter how much of a badass I tell myself that I am, I can't keep my mouth from drying out at the sight of those fitted jeans or that magnificent bulge right at his crotch. Stone's lazy gait gives off big dick energy, and the way those jeans are fitting tells me the reason. My dirty mind flits back to the way he fucked my mouth with his tongue, and I wonder if he could do the same to my body. Of course, he could, the sexy motherfucker!

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I continue to watch Stone closely as he shakes hands with the photographer, and they have an animated conversation. Well, at least the photographer is animated with his arms and hands whirling all around; Stone stands there looking at the other man with a gorgeous smirk on his face.

I know the moment he notices me because that smirk widens into a blinding white smile that I can't help but mirror.

"Well, well. Roxanne, Roxanne." Stone saunters slowly toward me, and I notice that everyone is not so subtly watching him.

"Mr. Rutherford, what are you doing on a photo shoot?" I question putting all the sass I can muster into my words. Hell, I'm just glad I didn't stutter. Especially since my tongue is practically hanging out my mouth from me drooling.

"Somebody thought it was a great idea to use my motorcycle on the cover." Stone answers as soon as he's right in front of me. He looks down and licks his lips. I swallow hard because the sex appeal of this man has got to be dangerous.

"I didn't realize you were such an artist." My words are breathless, but I'm glad I was able to string together a sentence because Stone's spicy scent is putting my senses into overdrive.

He smells so good, and he's so damn tall. He at least six-five, so I have to take a step back. Not only to see all of his face, but so I can get some relief from his overbearing presence. I slide my gaze over his body in appreciation. Anyone can see he's built under that leather jacket, all lean muscle, and fineness.

“I guess you can call my babies art. Not everybody appreciates customized wheels like I do.”

I smile as I take a closer look at the beast he rode in on, and it is beautiful. The chrome and black machine with swirls of color throughout looks like something straight out of a futuristic sci-fi film.

I can tell a lot of time and skill went into it, and it's absolutely gorgeous. I didn't think a motorcycle could be categorized as beautiful, but there are no other words to describe Stone's work.

“Alright! Chop-chop. Let's get the models on set and get this show on the road!” The photographer yells, breaking into mine and Stone's conversation.

Everyone starts moving around, and the noise of the shoot gets louder. I'm not sure if it was actually quiet, or I was just so focused on Stone that I tuned everything around me out.

Stone moves to stand out of the way, but he doesn't go far because I can feel the heat of his body right behind me. He's not touching me, but he might as well have me pinned to the floor. My body is so filled with tension at his closeness if he touched me, I might just orgasm on the spot.

We watch in silence as the models are posed on and around the motorcycle. A large fan is turned on, and the music is turned up. One of the things I love most about working photoshoots is the high energy.

“You know, I would pay top dollar to see you draped over my steel dragon like that.” Stone's breath tickles the side of my face as he whispers in my ear.

When he says the words “steel dragon,” my mind flashes once again to that nice

package he's hiding in those jeans.

I really should not be this horny. I internally admonish myself. I'm so glad Stone is behind me and can't see my face.

"Hmmm, so that's how you get all the girls, huh? You pay for them! Uhhuh... I knew it was a reason the bunnies were falling all over themselves to get at you." I tease him, and he gives a snicker only I can hear because he's still leaning down by my ear.

Stone nips my ear, and I gasp and turn around. I didn't mean to be so dramatic, but he just took our flirting to a whole new level. We're in public, and I'm at work. He can't just walk in here and make my panties wet like this.

"Sir! I am at work! You can't just be taking liberties with your fondling!" I whisper fiercely at him with wide eyes. I look around and catch a few curious looks from some of the crew, and I can feel my face heat.

Stone takes his time to straighten to his full height as he looks down into my face. His blue eyes gleam with amusement, but that's the only outward emotion he shows.

"I like the way you call me, Sir. I think you should always call me that."

"I think you must be out of your mind." I twist my lips up to keep from showing that I'm not really that opposed to the idea. Well, in the bedroom anyway.

"I see the twinkle in those big browns of yours. You ain't that mad about the idea." Stone licks his thick lips, and I swear I want to groan.

I don't know what it is about this man that makes me feel like I'm a bitch in heat. But I have got to figure it out. Stone Rutherford will not have me out in these streets looking desperate.

“Whatever...” I start to say, but I’m interrupted by the bellowing of my name.

“Roxy! Get over here!” I sigh loudly at Nia’s shrill voice.

“Who the fuck is she hollering at like that?” Stone growls. His face goes from teasing to scary as fuck in a blink of an eye.

“Oh shit!”

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Stone

I don't know who the fuck the screech-voiced bitch thinks she is, but the disrespect in her tone pisses me off. I look over at the woman who thought it was a good idea to interrupt my conversation. I notice her pretty face is scrunched up like she's been sucking on lemons.

I can tell by how she holds her nose up in the air; she thinks she's something special. So it will be my pleasure to break the news that she ain't shit.

However, before I can say a word, Roxy puts her small hand on my chest, and with pleading eyes, she shakes her head.

"This job is important to me." Roxy whispers. And although she wouldn't be the one to lose her job, I just nod at her.

I don't want her to know I'm the reason she's here. It would be pretty hard to explain how I knew she was a make-up artist and that she didn't have any jobs booked. It would bring up a whole load of things that I wouldn't be able to explain without sounding like a stalker.

Which technically, I am, but it's for a good reason. Which I doubt Roxy would care anything about. It's not like I can tell her anything we discussed in church. Even though it was because of her that we even knew we had a rat in the Hellhounds house.

I could tell her we're keeping tabs on her just in case her stupid ass ex shows up, but that wouldn't be the whole truth. I want to keep tabs on her. And the idea of her ex

messing with her pisses me off. Even more, than him tryin' to mess with Hounds, and that scares me.

Wire hadn't been able to find out any more information about Raymond. It still shows that he's in an Oklahoma prison, in solitary confinement, to be exact. Which is really convenient. It means we can't get a positive id on him.

The fact the Louisiana chapter president, Baller, hadn't heard anything from Po Boy since he came to Texas for the party a few weeks ago has everyone on guard. Baller left him an all-call which means Po Boy has forty-eight hours to check-in. At this point, I'm ready to ride out and shoot anything movin', but Prez would lose his shit, so I have to wait along with everyone else.

"Stone? You alright?" Roxy's question brings me out of my thoughts.

"I'm good. I'ma let you get back to work. I'll see you when they're finished." I lean down and graze my lips over hers. Even though she doesn't fuss at me and her eyes dilate in response to my closeness, I know she wants to say something smart when she twists her lips up, but she keeps quiet.

I stroll away, whistling because I can. I see people watching me with curious expressions, but they better get their asses back to work before I fire them. People really need to know who they're working for. I go to the back room where a makeshift office is set up, sit behind the large desk, and pull out my burner phone. I text Wire for any updates and wait for his response. It's a good thing he doesn't try to be funny over the phone.

I shake my head as my thoughts turn back to Roxy. Even though I had just met her, my memory didn't do her justice. She had less make-up on today than when we met, but I liked the look much better. Her skin had a natural glow, and it was soft as I remembered it being when I rubbed my fingers against her cheek when I kissed her

pouty lips. And damn, the woman is built like a fucking coke bottle. Even though she's wearing a pair of simple black pants with a black t-shirt with her logo on it, the outfit can't hide her curves.

But it's not just the way Roxy looks that draws me to her; it's her quick wit and personality. I'm surprised Roxy hasn't put two and two together and figured out who she's working for. I mean, the magazine is called Blood and Stone, just like my customized motorcycle shop. However, when I called Crush to contact Dee to set up her services, I made sure neither of them said anything about me being the owner. She might not have taken the job if she knew my connection. Again stalkerish, but whatever.

I don't know if she'll be pissed or surprised. I don't know her well enough to predict how she might act. But, Roxy working the photoshoot was a good way for me to keep an eye on her until I can spring on her that we will be spending a lot of time together. At least, until we get eyes on Raymond.

Rock assigned me to Roxy, so I will do that by any means necessary. Besides, being around her isn't some punishment for me. Hell, it isn't really the job the Prez thinks it is. I was already planning on sharing my bed with her anyway, so this little task is just an extra incentive.

"Hey, boss man. They are looking for you on set." My assistant Marie calls from the door. I'm glad she's here; it reminds me to ask her about the diva model.

Marie blows her bangs out of her face then tucks her dark brown hair behind her ear. I notice that she looks a little different lately. She's dressing sexier with tighter jeans, low cut tops, and wearing lots more make-up than normal. I tick my head to the side because Marie is like a little sister to me, and I wonder what's up with her.

"You got a new boyfriend or somethin'?" I ask. Because if she does, I'll need to have

Wire do a background check on him.

“I have my eye on someone.” Marie blushes, her light brown cheeks tinge with color.

“Well, if you’re gonna bring him around, make sure I know who he is,” I say in my brotherly tone.

“Stone, you’re so overprotective. He’s fine, I promise.” Marie wines like the little sister I treat her.

“Okay, kid. You know I’m just lookin’ out for ya.” I say with a smile.

“I’m not a kid, Stone. I’m twenty-five years old.” She shakes her head at me, and I shrug.

Marie started working for me when she was barely twenty. I will always see her as the wide-eyed, naïve girl who just needed a job. She’s been loyal to me, and I appreciate all she does.

Before I forget, I ask Marie about the model, and she tells me she will look into it. But that woman had a rumored reputation of being a brat but nothing outrageous. For now, I let it go as long as she reels in her funky attitude.

When I get half way to the set, I’m accosted by someone I’m definitely surprised to see. “Christine? What are you doin’ here?”

“Hey, baby! I thought I’d come to see you. Aren’t you glad to see me?” My ex-wife asks with a Cheshire grin on her face.

I don’t want to admit it, but Christine looks hot as fuck. Her long jet black locks and blunt cut bangs bring out her hazel eyes. Her big juicy lips are painted red, and the

sight makes me lick my own.

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Damn! I can just imagine how the red would stain my dick after she wrapped those succulent lips around it...

“Babe? You good?” Christine bites her bottom lip as she watches me closely.

I smirk at her because she knows exactly what I’m thinking. It’s not unusual for us to hook up and tear up the sheets from time to time. After all, when we split, it was sort of amicable. We were young as hell when we got together. Eventually, we decided it was better if we left each other alone, sort of. However, I haven’t seen or heard from Christine in about six months. It’s like she dropped off the face of the earth.

“Yeah, I’m good. How’d you know I was here?”

“Marie. I stopped by the shop, and when neither one of you was there, I called her.” Christine says with a smirk of her own.

I can’t say that I’m surprised that Marie told Christine where I was. At one point, they were as thick as thieves. Although Marie was my assistant, you would’ve thought Christine was the one paying her salary.

“So, when did you get back into town? I haven’t heard from you in months.” I don’t like beating around the bush. There are only two reasons Christine stays gone for long periods. Either she found a new man, or she found trouble and was hiding.

“I’ve been back in town for a minute.” She airily waves her hand like I don’t know she’s full of shit. But whatever. Christine is no longer my problem.

“Alrighty. Anyways I’m kinda busy, as you can see. So, what’d you want?”

Christine forms her mouth into a pout that I used to find cute, but her tricks don’t work on me anymore. And even though we’ve slept together since our divorce, our relationship was toxic as fuck.

“I want what I always want... you.” She licks her lips as her eyes roam over my body from my boots to the top of my head. Christine lets out a little moan as she steps closer to me and grabs a handful of my dick.

I’m not shocked by her aggressiveness. Christine always liked control. Which is one reason we’ll never work. She tried to control me. She used any and everything to get me to be her puppet.

“Well, we don’t always get what we want, Sweetie.” I challenge with a grin.

Not to be outdone, Christine grips my junk tighter like she has a claim on me still. And even though she doesn’t, my dick goes stiff because he hasn’t learned to discern all attention isn’t good attention.

Someone clearing their throat behind us ends our stand-off, but Christine still hasn’t let go. Her boldness is something that has always been attractive to me.

“They called for you twenty minutes ago. They want to move the motorcycle, but nobody’s supposed to touch it, so...” A woman with a curly afro with silver tips says as she looks between Christine and me.

I brush Christine’s hand away as I turn to face the woman, “I’m coming.”

“I bet...” Silver tips mumbles as she turns and walks away.

“Listen, I’m busy. I’ll have to catch up with you some other time.”

“Really? Since when do you brush me off?” Christine’s hazel eyes narrow as she places her hands on her hips.

I can tell by her stance she’s about to start some shit, but I’m not in the mood to deal with her theatrics at the moment.

“We’re not together anymore, Chris.” I remind her with a shake of my head.

Christine gets possessive any time she thinks anyone or anything is getting my attention. It’s been five years since we’ve been divorced, and she still has the same sense of entitlement when it comes to me.

I always have to put her in her place, and taming her is part of the fun. It’s a game that we play. She gets possessive and snarky, and I bend her over and fuck her until she remembers that nobody runs Stone Rutherford.

Christine is just playing the game we normally play. I’m the one changing the rules this time. Because I can’t have my crazy ex-wife getting in the way of my assignment. Hellhounds always comes first.

And my neurotic ex-wife will not take too kindly to me having another woman in my bed. And that’s exactly where I need Roxy to be so I can keep an eye on her. I mean, I don’t have to have her in my bed to do what the Prez ordered; I’ve just made up my mind that my bed, hell any bed with me, is the best place for Roxy to be.

And if it’s one thing I know about my ex-wife, she does not like sharing. And if there’s one thing I learned from my limited conversations with Roxy, she wouldn’t be too keen on the idea either.

I definitely have to keep Christine and Roxy separated. And if I don't play this right, Christine will not make that an easy task.

“We haven't been married for a long time, but that never stopped you before. You gotta new girl or something?”

I rub my hand down my face and blow out a breath because no matter what I say, it's gonna be the wrong shit. And I'm not a man known for his patience, and Christine knows exactly what buttons to push to get me to lose it.

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I have anger issues that not even therapy can cure, and the one person who knows most of my triggers is standing in front of me, ready to pull.

“Christine, I don’t explain myself to anyone. Especially you. Now, I have shit to do.” I go to walk away, but Christine grabs my arm. Her dark brown skin is glowing with fury, and I can see the rage lighting up those hazel cat-like eyes.

“There’s another woman. Isn’t it?” Her tone is accusatory, and I can see the crazy peeking out. But like I said... I have shit to do.

“If it was, it wouldn’t be any of your motherfucking business.” I lean down into her face so she can see my eyes. “Don’t fuck with me, Christine. I don’t owe you shit. You’re not my fuckin’ wife.” I growl at her.

“You will always be mine, Stone.” Christine’s eyes are practically shimmering with defiance.

I shake my head because I am arguing with a bitch who doesn’t have my last name. I said I would never do that shit again. Fucking toxic.

I walk away from my ex-wife because a crazy bitch only brings trouble. And I have enough of that shit in my life already.

Marie comes from behind me, and something tells me she heard the entire exchange. I can’t get a read on her facial expression.

“What’s up?” I finally ask her when she’s quiet for too long. I keep walking, and she

falls in step beside me.

“I’ve just never seen you turn down Christine before. Is it this Roxy woman?” Marie asks, and I should’ve known she would eventually ask me. I’ve had a lot of conversations about Roxy lately, and although I wasn’t talking directly to Marie, she’s always around.

I dismiss both her concerns and her questions with a blank face and a shrug. “Mind your business.”

Marie gives me a scowl, but she doesn’t say anything else. I’ve never discussed women with her. Not Christine or anybody else. I’m not sure why she thinks I would start now.

The last thing I need is Marie to start acting funny, especially with Christine popping up out of nowhere. I already have to figure out how to keep my ex-wife and Roxy apart. But I know how close Marie and Christine are, but neither of them better start any shit! And I mean that!

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Roxy

“I’m telling you, girl! She had her hand gripping the hell outta his junk. And she was all up in his face. That has to be his woman. Ain’t no way a stranger was doin’ him like that.” Karma is very animated as she tells me all about Stone and the mystery woman she saw in the hall.

I’ve been listening to Karma tell me about Stone getting a hand job in the back hallway for about ten minutes. I can’t say that the news didn’t shock me, especially since Stone was just all up in my face a few minutes before. However, I can’t say that

I'm surprised.

Men like Stone go wherever the wind blows them. From the moment I saw him, I knew that he would be trouble, and I definitely know trouble.

"Karma, Stone is a grown man if he wants to get a hand job hell if he wants to get head in the hallway, it's none of my business," I say the words with a straight face, but I'm feeling some type of way.

But life experience has shown me how not to react to a man. So I don't have any claims on Stone. And even if I did like him, I'm not chasing behind any man.

"Well, excuse me. I just saw how he was all over you. I thought you'd want to know." Karma huffs.

I know she means well, but my girl can be nosey as hell. I don't have the energy to explain Stone and me. Hell, there isn't even a "me and Stone." I've only met the man once, and we made out like teenagers. We didn't exchange vows.

"It's none of my business, Karma." I shrug, but I'm glad she told me.

With Stone's little display of affection in front of everyone, I was under the impression he wanted to take what we started at the party further. I was all in once I got out of my own head about him. Now, I'm second guessing my decisions... again.

"Roxy! We need you on set!"

"The queen beckons. Let me go before she's screaming for my head." I roll my eyes, but I'm secretly glad that Nia hollered for me this time. Because now, I don't have to answer all of Karma's invasive ass questions.

I gather my touch-up kit and head to the models. I go to Nia first, who doesn't need anything done because I packed on the product and set her face. She just wants attention and to be treated like she's special. I refuse to waste my make-up on her, so I pretend to dust my brush and lightly rub it on her face, so it doesn't mess up what I've already done for her.

"Do I need more lip? I feel like they don't look as good as they should." Nia pokes her plump lips out, making a duck face, and I really want to open palm slap her in the mouth, but I smile instead.

"No, your lips look perfect. I'll change the color with the wardrobe change. For now, they're set." I put as much excitement in my voice as I could muster.

"I guess. You're the professional." Nia replies snidely.

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“I guess I’m the only one,” I mumble as I walk away.

At this moment, I know that I will not be working with Nia Adkins in the near future. Fame has gone to her tiny brain, and I won’t put up with any foolishness. I tried to be the woman that uplifts other black women, but not to my detriment. I won’t be abused for the culture, fuck that nonsense!

When I make it to the back, where the stations are set up, I see Stone making his way to set. I don’t want to be intrigued by him, but I can admit that I am. That’s the reason I need to stay away from him. I don’t do players, and I should’ve gone with my first mind and walked away from him at that party.

I’m glad I’m not truly invested in this man. I have to keep telling myself it was a one off situation. My hormones got in the way of my common sense, and I won’t let it happen again.

It doesn’t take long for Stone to switch out the motorcycles and the models to change their wardrobe. I touch up everyone’s make-up without any condescending remarks and attitude from Nia, which has got to be a miracle. And I start cleaning up my space so I can get out of here.

It’s been a long day, and this shoot has not been my favorite. I normally work on individuals for events, so photo shoots aren’t really my thing because of the long taxing hours, and the diva behavior.

I was hustling, trying to pack up my things as quickly as I could. While silently thanking the sweet baby Jesus that Karma was too busy to ask me any more

questions, and Stone was too busy talking to the photographer to talk to me again. I wasn't ready to talk to either of them, so avoidance was the way to go.

"What's the rush, little lamb?" I didn't need to turn around and look at his face to know he was smirking.

"No rush. I just have things to do." I lift my shoulders in a shrug as I slow down my movements, but I'm still packing my stuff. Just because he caught me trying to get away doesn't mean I have to stand here and talk to him.

I feel a large hand on my shoulder, and I look at him without turning completely around. Stone's gorgeous bearded face crumples into a fierce scowl. I didn't notice before just how chiseled his jaw is or how his dark eyebrows and scruff bring out his bright blue eyes.

However, I won't get distracted by his good looks. I need to get away from Stone, and his hotness just reminds me of that fact.

"You act like somethin' is wrong. What's up?" He questions, and I just give him a blank stare. I hate when men do shit like this. Do some shady shit, then act like nothing is wrong.

"Nothin' is wrong with me. Like I said, I have other things to do." I brush him off easily enough as I finish packing all my make-up into my roller case.

"Hey, Roxy. You ready?" Chase calls from the door.

With everything that has happened, I forgot all about telling Chase I would go for drinks. There's no way I can avoid Karma if we all go out, but if I stand here, I won't be able to avoid Stone. Decisions, decisions.

“Yeah, I’m ready. I’ll check ya later, Stone.” I nod to him as I roll my case behind me.

Stone doesn’t say anything, but I can feel his eyes burning a hole in my back. I hurriedly follow Chase out to the parking lot.

“Hey, I actually forgot I have some stuff I need to take care of, but Karma is going. Just tell her I’ll meet up with you guys later.” I lie to Chase as I make a beeline for my car.

I definitely will not be meeting up with them later. As a matter of fact, I plan on avoiding everyone for the rest of the evening.

Chase gives me a little frown, but he nods and says he’ll let Karma know. I smile to myself as I hop into my Honda CR-V and speed off.

“I killed two birds with one stone,” I say out loud as I laugh at the silly pun.

Stone will not make a fool of me. We aren’t even together, and Karma was all up in my business. What would’ve happened if she had known the extent of our interactions. I sigh loudly, and the sound reverberates around the cabin of my car. I flip on the radio and turn it up loud. Maybe the music will drown out my thoughts.

When I make it to my apartment complex, I feel a sense of relief. I know the small drama with Stone isn’t that big of a deal, but it’s been a long time since I put myself out there. All of the shit I had to deal with in my past relationship has left me closed off and scared.

I can admit my self-assurance took a beating after the Raymond fiasco, and it has taken me a long time to gain the little bit of confidence that I have back. Especially now that I decided to work for myself. My family thinks I’m an irresponsible idiot.

I've tried to prove myself over and over again, but they won't relent. So, I refuse to let another man shake me. I refuse to let anyone else shake me.

As soon as I step inside my apartment, my phone rings. I sigh because I know before looking at the screen it's Karma. I let the call roll over to voicemail as I take my shoes off, but no sooner than I get one off, my phone rings again.

I roll my eyes and answer without looking at the screen, "Hello."

"Hello, Roxanne. It's Detective Myers. I got your message."

At the sound of Detective Myers' voice, I feel stupid again. Here I am proclaiming not to get distracted, and that's exactly what I did. Raymond Frazier is out and about, and I forgot all about him not once but twice. To be fair, it's been almost two weeks since I left the detective a message, so it's no wonder I forgot.

But still, I have to be more careful because Raymond Frazier is detrimental to my well-being. And I fucking forgot about him... again.

"Uh, yeah. Hey detective." I finally answer after mentally berating myself.

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“I just wanted to call and reassure you that Raymond is not out of jail. He is still in the Mack Alford Correctional Center in Atoka, Oklahoma. And, believe me, he’s not going anywhere any time soon.”

I can hear the confidence in his voice, but I know who I saw. That man tormented my every sleeping and waking thought. He was able to threaten and torment me the entire time he was out on bail. I know who I saw.

“That just can’t be, detective. That was Raymond Frazier. I’m sure of it.” I can hear the desperation in my voice. If he doesn’t believe me, then who will?

“I get that you think you saw Raymond, but I know for certain he’s in Jail. I’m not sure what’s going on with you, Roxanne, but I promise you I would let you know if Raymond somehow got out of jail. Maybe you should get some rest.”

I sigh because there’s no use in arguing with this man. He’ll never believe me, and I know I’m not crazy.

“If you say so. I have to go, detective. Thanks for the call.” I disconnect before he can say anything else. Maybe I will tell Dee. She could maybe ask Crush if he knew who the guy was.

“Shit! Maybe I am going crazy.” I say out loud as I shake my head.

However, I might be a lot of things, but I know I’m not blind. That was Raymond’s ass at that party. And I don’t know how I’m going to prove it, but I am.

My first thought is to call Dee, but she'll worry and tell my parents, and that's the last thing I need. I don't want or need them harassing me about anything, especially about Raymond.

I know exactly who I need to talk to, but I just avoided his ass like he had the plague. And the last thing I want to do is ask him for anything. I bite my lip as I try to figure out what to do. My phone ringing brings me out of my indecision.

"Hello."

"Hey, cousin. I was just checking in with you. How'd the shoot go today?" Dee asks in a cheery tone.

I know when my cousin is up to no good, and the tone of that fake ass cheer in her voice tells me she knows something about the shoot today that she failed to tell me.

"It was cool. You know that model Nia was there, and she was showing her ass almost all day. But Karma was there too, so it wasn't just me she had it out for. It wasn't all that bad..."

"Girl! I don't care about all that!" Dee yells, and I smirk at my phone.

I know what she wants to know, but she'll have to come clean about Stone before I give her anything juicy.

"Excuuuuse the hell outta me. You asked about the shoot."

"Beotch, stop playin' with me! What happened when you saw Stone?" Dee smacks her lips, and I can imagine she's rolling both her neck and eyes at me.

"Whatever do you mean, cousin?" I continue to play dumb.

“Oh, okay. So it’s like that?” Dee responds.

“Ma’am, how would you know Stone was at my photoshoot today?”

“Listen, cuz. A job is a job. Stone needed a make-up artist for his magazine shoot, so I made sure to help you get to that bag.”

“I appreciate the... wait a minute. What do you mean his magazine shoot?”

“Ummm. I gotta go, cuz. Love ya, glad you got the bag today!” Dee hangs up so quickly; I’m surprised I was able to hear the end of her sentence.

I bet my cousin wouldn’t be so eager to set me up if she knew Stone was a dog. I roll my eyes cause I got a hefty salary and experience that will beef up my resume out of the whole ordeal. I guess it’s a win, even though my opinion of Stone changed. I only wish my body got the memo because, with the simple thought of his name, my whole body lights up.

Before I can reflect on my feelings for Stone and why I shouldn’t have any, my phone beeps with a text.

Unknown: MIND YOUR BUSINESS

“What the hell is that supposed to mean?”

Source Creation Date: August 15, 2025, 10:00 am

Stone

Roxy thinks she's slick. Her ass did her best to avoid me by leaving with Chase, but I already know he's not interested in her. Because even though most of the people on set didn't know who I was, the photographer and his assistant, Chase, definitely knew. So, when I texted him about where they were going, he was all too willing to tell me. He also let me know that Roxy went home.

Which is why I am on my way to her apartment. She didn't give me a chance to explain how the Hounds planned on putting her under our protection, so she will just have to be surprised. I didn't want to spring anything on her and potentially scare her, but it is what it is now that she ran from me.

I park my truck right in front of Roxy's building and climb out with my bag. I stroll to her door, taking my time to take in my surroundings. The complex is nice, but it definitely lacks any type of security. Even though there's a gate, it was left open, and anyone could drive through it just like I did.

There's also no sign of a security guard even though I passed a guardhouse on the inside of the gate. I don't even see any signs that there is a guard on duty.

I beat loudly on the door like I'm the police, and I hear Roxy moving before she calls out "coming." She doesn't sound surprised that someone is at her door, and I don't know who she thinks is here, but for her sake, she better not be expecting another man. I haven't staked my claim on her yet, but I'm here to make things clear.

I don't know why she took off, but Roxy better not fucking run from me again. I can

already tell she's stubborn as fuck. And I know I'm gonna end up chasin' her ass, but damn what an ass to chase!

"Who is it?" Roxy yells.

"Open the door, Roxanne." I holler back, but not too loud. I don't want to scare her. I already showed up at her house without her telling me where she lived, and with my overnight bag, there's no need for me to look like the total psycho that I am... yet.

The door cracks open, and a wide-eyed Roxy stands behind it. She acts like she can keep me from coming in with that flimsy ass chain she has for security. I shake my head at the severe lack of security around here; I now see why I have to stay here with her.

"What are you doing here, Stone?" Roxy asks as she tries and fails to peek around me.

I'm a large man at six-five and a solid two hundred and seventy-five pounds. Her short ass wouldn't be able to see around me if she had a step stool.

"I'm here for you, Roxy." I eye her up and down and lick my lips seductively. She's wearing a thin tank top and some little booty shorts that I know her cheeks are hanging out of. I can't wait until she turns around so I can see those fabulous brown globes.

"What do you mean? Here for me, how?" She asks, still eyeing me warily.

"Open the door, little lamb. We got shit to discuss, and unless you want everybody out in this hall to know your business, I suggest you let me in." I quirk my eyebrow at her, and she sighs loudly before shutting the door.

I hear her take the chain off before the door opens wide, and she takes a step back. I enter her apartment, and Roxy shuts the door behind me. I take in the décor of her place, and it isn't what I expected. I figured she would have lots of pink and sparkly shit everywhere. But she doesn't. That will make it easier for me to stay here.

Her place is made up of light grey, tan, and even black. The only pop of color I see is the dark red pillows and a picture of a large pair of red lips hanging on the wall. I nod my approval.

“So, what do we have to talk about?” Roxy's raspy voice comes from behind me, interrupting my perusal of her place.

I drop my bag on the floor and look over my shoulder to find her looking down at her red painted toenails shyly. I see a glimpse of the bashful woman who wouldn't ask me for my number, and I grin. I like her sass, but her shyness shows her sweet side.

I walk over and stand in front of her as she continues to look down. “First of all, I need you to look at me.” I duck my head so Roxy can see my eyes, and she huffs before placing her hands on her hips.

Roxy looks up with pursed lips and the sass that I know and like so much glittering in her gaze.

“That's better. I can see those beautiful eyes of yours.” I smile charmingly at her, and she keeps the deadpan expression.

She seems genuinely pissed about something, but I honestly don't know what it is. I normally wouldn't give a rat's ass, but I need Roxy sweet and subdued, so she will allow me to stay here. The Hounds need to keep a watch over her in her apartment. It is a nightmare from a security standpoint. Too many exits, too many apartments, too many people were coming and going, too many places to hide. It's exposed, but if

someone wanted to get in, then they could. Which is what we're counting on.

"I'm looking at you. So, what's up?" Roxy asks with a little less attitude, but that's because she hasn't noticed my bag yet.

However, while she's willing to talk, I'm not so sure what I want to say. I mean, I can't just spring the news that she did see her ex, that's supposed to be in jail, but unofficially he is out spying on our club because we deal in some illegal shit. I also can't tell her that the Hounds need to use her as bait because she may or may not be the target of some extremely shady shit.

"Can you at least offer me a drink or a seat? We just gonna stand here in the doorway?" I quirk my eyebrow at her, and Roxy glares at me.

"I'm hospitable to people I invite over. Not people who barge in talking shit. Now, for real, Stone. Tell me, what's up? Is it about Raymond?"

"Yeah, Rox. It's about Raymond." I respond in a neutral tone.

"I knew it! That was him at the party, wasn't it? I knew Detective Myers didn't know what the fuck he was talking about!"

"What did the detective say?" Because I need to know what story the cops are spinning.

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“He said I was being paranoid, and basically I was a headcase that needed rest.”

After hearing Roxy’s answer, I really wanna fuck up this detective. He either has his head so far up his own ass he didn’t check for the truth, or he’s in on whatever the fuck is going on with Raymond.

“Well, sweetheart. You’re not paranoid. So, I’m gonna have to stay here until we figure out what the deal is.”

“Ummm. Yeah. No.” Roxy didn’t even hesitate to disagree.

“I mean, I can just let Raymond come up in here and do whatever he wants. But, I don’t think you’d like it.”

“Well, listen... I’m not one of those chick’s that will tell you I don’t need help and then end up murdered. Cause I am not about that life or, in this case, death. I can admit that I’m scared as fuck. But, I can’t just let some strange man live with me.”

I chuckle at her, “You’re place isn’t secure enough where we can keep an eye on you from outside. I need to be inside, so if Raymond tries to pop up...”

I leave the sentence hanging to let her come to her own conclusion. If Raymond wants to get at Roxy, then he will have to go through me. And nobody goes through death... nobody.

“So, you want to stay here with me?” Roxy points to herself, and I nod.

“Yeah, I need to be here,” I point at the floor of the apartment. “Right here. Like I said, so if anything happens, then I don’t waste any time getting to you...”

“Because you’ll be here already...” Roxy finishes my sentence, but the reluctance is coloring her every syllable.

“Right... so you’re going to be my bodyguard? I don’t think that’s gonna work, though, cause I’m self-employed, I need to keep my appointments, and you seem like a busy guy. I’m sure you don’t have time to be watching over my every move.” Roxy worries her bottom lip with her teeth, and the movement stirs the beast in my jeans.

“Don’t worry about any of that. I’ll be here if you need me. That’s all that matters. You can work like you normally would. We don’t need you doin’ anything different anyway. It would look suspicious.”

“This is really crazy, Stone. I just met you, and now you’re staying with me...”

I shrug, “it is what it is, sunshine. You’re stuck with me for the time bein’ unless you gotta another Hound in mind you want stayin’ here. I can always call Big Country to come look after you.”

“He might be safer,” Roxy mumbles, but I hear her smart-ass anyway.

“I only have one bedroom. And the couch might be too small for you.” She looks around like she’s trying to solve the world’s problems. But the answer is easy.

“No worries. How big is your bed?” I start walking toward the back, where I assume the bedroom is, knowing that she will follow me, and she does. I thought she would put up more of a fight, and the fact that she didn’t proves just how scared of Raymond she is.

When we get to her bedroom, I look around, and there's make-up stored everywhere that I look. Shelves and containers are neatly packed in every imaginable space. I mean, how much fucking make-up does one person need. Hell, I understand it's her job, but fuck! All I know is there must be some ugly motherfuckers out there fooling people if they wear that much shit on their faces.

"You gotta lot of shit in here, Rox," I comment.

"I'm an artist, and I'm sensitive about my shit, Stone. I need all this for my work." Roxy crosses her arms over her chest, and I chuckle at the song reference.

I place my hands up in a surrendering motion because everything is in some type of order. It's not messy and unorganized, so I won't complain too much.

I go and sit on the King sized bed and bounce up and down a couple of times. Before nodding my head. It's big enough for me. Not a California King, but it'll do.

"Get off my bed with your outside clothes on! Who raised you?"

Roxy sounds so much like somebody's mama that I instantly hop my big ass up. She purses her lips again and rolls her eyes before wiping down the spot on the bed. I shake my head because I see now that she is anal about cleanliness. It could be worse; she could live in filth.

"My bad. I was just seeing how comfy it was."

"For what? You will not be sleeping in here. I have an air mattress that I can put in the living room."

"Damn, little lamb. I come to protect you from the boogie man, and you put me on the floor? That's tough."

Roxy chuckles, “Stone, you are the boogie man.”

I chuckle too, but she doesn’t know how right she is.

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“Alright, I guess I can squeeze my six-five frame on a little air mattress.” I sigh like I’m put out at even the thought of sleeping on an air mattress when in reality, I’ve slept on concrete. Hell, I’ve slept on dirt. I’ve done what I’ve had to do in my life, but if Roxy feels sorry for me, maybe she’ll give in.

The sooner she lets me into her bed, the better. Then I can finally scratch this itch that she caused. I’m not hard up for a woman or anything, but I want Roxy. And I always get what I want.

“So, you forgot to mention that you own the magazine.” Roxy eyes me like I did something wrong, but I just shrug.

“You didn’t ask. Besides, the magazine is called Blood and Stone. I thought you’d figure it out.”

Roxy sighs, and I can see that she’s not going to argue about it, and again I’m surprised it was that easy.

“Well, I guess thanks for the job.”

“You’re welcome.” I give her a genuine smile, and she smiles before clearing her throat.

“You’re still sleeping on the air mattress.” Roxy turns around and walks from the room, and even though we won’t be sharing a bed, I finally got to see her ass in those shorts, and that was worth it.

I followed Roxy's sexy ass out to the living room, where I sat on her soft couch. Roxy hands me the remote before placing her hands on her hips; she sucks her teeth as she assesses me, and I just sit smiling up at her.

"Do you want something to drink?" My smile grows wider at her question.

Even though she asked it begrudgingly, I knew her southern sensibilities wouldn't let her be rude to her guest.

"If ya don't mind, darlin'." I tip my imaginary hat and say in my best southern gentleman's voice.

"Pft. I have coke, water, and maybe beer and definitely wine." Roxy goes into her kitchen, which I can see from the living room, and sticks her head in the fridge.

"Coke's fine," I reply.

After getting us both drinks, Roxy settles beside me on the couch, and we sit in awkward silence for a few minutes before I notice her worrying her bottom lip with her teeth.

"Thanks for coming over here. I know you didn't have to." Roxy finally says.

"You saved us a whole lotta headache by tellin' me about Raymond when you did. Hounds owe you."

"The Hounds, right." Roxy gives me a little pout.

"Right. We're no saviors, but we pay our debts."

Roxy nods, but the small scowl is still in place. Yeah, I could've let her think that I

was here outta the goodness of my heart, but the truth is I don't have one. There's a need I have for this woman that I can't quite place, but I refuse to give in to the feeling.

I have to remind myself that I'm doing this for the club. I just get the bonus of getting Roxy into my bed. Not my heart....I don't have a heart.

9

Roxy

It's been a week since Stone showed up on my doorstep with a bag in hand. I don't know how the hell he talked me into letting him stay with me. Well, that's not true. He didn't have to do much convincing because I am scared of what Raymond might do, and the police didn't even believe that he's out of jail.

The whole thing is unbelievable, like some ID channel mystery or something. Still, I'm determined not to get wrapped up in all the bullshit again. My life is finally getting back on track, and I refuse to get sucked back into Raymond's bullshit.

If Stone staying with me prohibits my involvement with whatever is going on, then I'm for it. Even though my body has been in overdrive since he walked his sexy ass through my door. I wasn't brave enough to ask about what Karma told me.

It's not really my business if he was getting a hand job in public. He's not my man. But I still feel like I got played somehow.

After our conversation, it was a little awkward. Stone made it clear he was here because of the Hellhounds and not because he wanted to be. I get that, and after I got my hormones somewhat under control, our conversations were easy. And I didn't really mind him being in my space.

But the sexual tension was still there, lurking and thicker than morning fog on the Louisiana bayou. But I won't act on it.

But I can tell by the lustful looks that Stone gives me that he's just waiting on me to say the word so he can pounce. And as much as my body is telling me to just drop my panties and ride his beard like a rollercoaster, I can't.

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Besides, my good sense is telling me that this man is more than sarcasm and a smirk. I've seen the darkness lurking behind those blue eyes since the night I met him.

And as intriguing as that look is, I've been in enough trouble chasing bad boys in my lifetime. I'm good on all that foolishness because I really can't afford to get involved with a man like Stone. On the other hand, I don't know if I can keep my head or my heart out of any encounter we might have.

As soon as the thought of me not giving into Stone's lust and my own, the door to the bathroom opens up, and out walks the dripping wet man himself. His short hair is darker from the water, and his beard is slick. The nasty thoughts jump into my mind before I can stop them. I lick my lips as I watch droplets of water run down his thick chest, down his cut abs, and disappear into the towel he has wrapped around his waist.

Damn! I wonder what that water tastes like from his body. The thought has me licking my lips again. I can damn near taste his tan skin.

"Uh hem." Stone clears his throat, and I look up at him.

I'm still in a lust daze, so I can't even feel embarrassed. But, shit, he knows how good he looks. That's why he is walking around in a towel, trying to tempt me into falling into bed with him. If he didn't want me to look, he would put some clothes on before leaving the bathroom, like I do.

"Hey," I smirk at him as he cocks a thick eyebrow at me. I shrug. We both know I was ogling his goods. No use in pretending I wasn't.

“Hey. So, how long is your job today?” Stone asks me, standing there with water still running down his strong muscled body. He rubs a smaller towel over his head, and I get momentarily distracted by the flexing of his biceps, so I have to blink several times before I can register what he asked me.

“It will only be a few hours. I’m only doing the bride’s make-up beforehand. I’m not doing touch-ups, so I don’t have to stay for the actual shoot. Why?” To distract myself, I start back gathering up all my supplies.

“Cause I can’t make it, so somebody else will need to go with you.” I stopped and grimaced because I didn’t really think the Hounds were actually going to follow me around. Not that I’m against it.

We all know Raymond is dangerous, and since the cops don’t believe me, the Hounds are my best chance of surviving whatever is going on.

“Okay. Is this person going with me or...” I look into his blue eyes because if I keep staring at his body, this conversation is going to be short, and we’re both gonna end up wet.

“He’ll meet you there. You won’t be able to miss him. Big bastard with red hair. Name’s Wire. He won’t be wearing his cut, though. The ginger asshole will stand out enough.”

I nod my head because what can I say. Don’t send someone to protect my ass. I don’t think Raymond saw me, but I know he has connections to get to me if that was him. And I don’t want to let my guard down because something in my gut won’t let me relax.

“I’m gonna get dressed. Unless you want me to stay like this. We can have a little morning delight before we go to work.”

I desperately try not to moan because that sounds like the perfect way to start my day. But I know I can't get involved with this man. Even if it's just sex because I know myself. I will catch feelings, and he'll be catching a ride on another woman. Yeah. No thanks.

"Nah, I'm good. But thanks for the offer." I use my snarkiest tone, but again Stone just smirks to himself like I'm playing hard to get.

I'm really not playing a game with him. I'm doing my damndest not to fall into the darkness that Stone radiates. It calls to me like a fix to an addict. The shit is weird.

"I have got to get away from this man," I mumble.

"What was that?"

"Huh? Nothing. I gotta go. Text me Wire's number." I say, turning back to zip up my case. I stand and move around Stone and head to the front door before he can say anything else.

I know whatever he says will run me hot. Either with desire or anger. Those are the two emotions he pulls from me the most.

Once I'm outside, I lean against my door and exhale a deep breath. My nerves are all over the place, but I have work to do, so I pull my shit together. As I walk to my car, I have an eerie feeling that I'm being watched.

I try not to be obvious that I'm looking around, so I slowly put my bag in the passenger seat while swiveling my head slowly from side to side. I don't see anything or anyone, but the hairs on my arms are standing up. My mama didn't raise no fool, no matter what she might think, so I get my ass in my car and drive off quickly.

The feeling of being watched leaves me as soon as I drive away from my apartment. If somebody is watching me, I will feel safer with Stone being there when I get home. Now, I've never been so glad that he is staying with me.

When I pull up to the venue, I see a large redheaded man leaning against a motorcycle that's as big as he is. The sight is overwhelming. He's overwhelming. I don't remember seeing him at the clubhouse. If I did, Stone might not have had all of my attention.

Speaking of Stone, he said Wire would stand out, but damn!

"You must be, Wire," I say as I get out of my car. He gives me a sparkling smile that lifts his cheeks and the whiskers of his red beard.

"And you must be Roxy." Wire gives me an appreciative grin with a nod.

"That's me. So, what'd you do to get assigned guard duty?" I ask as I round my car to get my case out of the passenger side.

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“Let me get that.” Wire says as he rushes around and pulls the case out.

“Thanks.” I smile shyly because I never would’ve suspected this rough looking man of being chivalrous.

“Not a problem. And this ain’t no punishment, darlin’. I’m honored to guard your body.” Wire winks his eye, and I blush.

I’m not starving for attention or anything, but Wire is fine. No matter how rugged he looks. He has the whole lumberjack thing going for him. And the sound of his deep voice ripples through me like hot chocolate on a cold winter’s day.

But even with all his fineness and flirting, I don’t feel even half of a spark I do when Stone simply looks in my direction. I sigh. Damn, I’m in trouble.

Wire and I walk side by side until we reach the door, and he opens it for me. I smile up at him, and he winks again. I think I’ll get along with Wire just fine. I had my reservations about having him here, but he seems like a laid back kinda guy.

When we’re inside, Wire makes himself comfortable in the back of the small room where I’m doing my client’s make-up. As we talk and giggle about her upcoming nuptials, Wire fiddles with his phone, not paying us any attention.

“So, is he your boyfriend?” Brandy, my client, whispers to me.

I was wondering if she would ask. Brandy acted like it was no big deal when I introduced my friend, Wayne from Vegas. I’m glad he supplied his name and where he

was from because I think she would've had more questions if I introduced him as Wire from the Hellhounds.

"No, he's just a friend. He came in for a surprise visit, and I didn't want him to sit in my place alone." The lie slipped out easily, and when I looked in the mirror, I could see Wire smirking behind me.

"Oh. Well, if my friends looked like him, I might not have a fiancé." Brandy giggled, and I nodded my agreement.

It didn't take long for me to finish up Brandy's make-up. I loved doing simple shoots like this one. The money was good, and the clients were usually happy and agreeable because they were in love.

"You got anything else goin' on today?" Wire asks as he pulls my case behind him to my car.

"Not really. I just need to go shopping for some more product, but I should be okay by myself." I say, not wanting to take up any more of his time.

I don't know what all the Hounds do, but I know Stone owns a few businesses. I'm sure he's not the only entrepreneur; none of the Hellhounds seem like a group of men who would take orders from others outside of their organization.

"Nope. I'll be with you until you go home for the night. Can't have you out by yourself. We don't know who's watching."

As soon as the words leave his lips, I'm reminded of the feeling I had earlier. Maybe Raymond or one of his goons is out there watching me.

"Well, I hope you like shopping for make-up, sir. Cause you're in for a treat."

“I doubt that darlin’ but lead the way. I’ll be right behind you.”

I chuckle as I get into my car and lead the way to the nearest mall. I like to shop for a lot of my products in store, so I can see how it looks in real life. The colors can be distorted online, and my clientele come in all shades, so I like to know exactly what I’m getting.

As I shop, Wire browses the shelves like he’s going to buy something. I shake my head and laugh to myself. He looks so out of place that it’s funny. The girl at the counter kept making googly eyes at him and asking if he needed anything. He would just smile and say, “no thanks, darlin’.” The girl blushed so hard her entire body turned tomato red.

One thing the Hounds had in common was they all seemed to be charming as hell when they wanted to be. Well, the ones that I’ve met so far.

“Women really wear all this shit?” Wire finally asks after we enter our third store.

“Thank goodness they do, or I’d be out of business.” I chuckled as I picked up a tube of matte black lipstick.

“Hmph.”

After all of my purchases, we grabbed a quick bite to eat in the food court. Wire was somewhat quiet as he observed everyone and everything around us. He was even silent as we left the mall, so I decided to be a little nosey.

“So, what do you do when you’re not a bodyguard?” I asked Wire as we were walking to the mall parking garage.

“I’m a consultant.”

“A consultant for what?” I ask, trying to get him to talk. He obviously doesn’t want to tell me exactly what he does with his vague answer, but if we are going to be hanging out, I might as well know a little something about him.

“Technology. I deal with all things electronic.” He says.

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And although he gave me a little detail, it was still a non-answer. All things electronics sounds like a hacker to me.

“Well, thanks for the company. I’m headed home, so you can go do technology stuff.” It’s my turn to wink, and he laughs.

“Yeah, I’ll follow you home and make sure the place is safe first.” I nod, and we start toward my apartment.

Although it was an easy day, and it was only early evening, I felt like I needed a nap. Maybe all of the extra stuff that’s going on around me is taking up my energy.

When we get to my complex, the gate is left open again. I roll my eyes because the reason I picked this apartment was that they bragged about the twenty-four-hour security and the gated entry.

I haven’t seen a guard on patrol since I moved in six months ago. And that damn gate has never been closed or locked. So now that I potentially have a need for the security, it pisses me off that it isn’t there, and I’m paying for it every month.

I make a mental note to ask the management about the security because if it doesn’t change, I’ll need to move. If they don’t find Raymond soon, there’s no way Stone can keep staying with me, or Wire can keep following me around.

I know they have lives, and I can’t keep them from living them. Even if I have to move out of state to get away from the foolishness, I would. LA is a good place to make a living as an MUA, and so is New York. I could also get away from my

overbearing family.

As I pull into my covered parking spot, my cell beeps with a message notification from an unknown number.

Unknown: MIND YOUR BUSINESS

I frown at the same message I got the other day, but before I can even click off it, my cell rings with my mother's name flashing across the screen. I don't want to answer it, so she can nag me. But I answer to get it over with and so she won't keep calling. I love my mother, but she's a lot to deal with.

"Hey, Ma."

"Roxanne. Where have you been? I've been trying to call you." My mother huffs into the phone. I roll my eyes at her dramatics. She has not tried to call me once. She's mad that I haven't called her.

"I've been working. Did you need something?"

"Do I need something? I need my wayward daughter to pick up the phone sometimes. We worry about you. You know you don't make the best decisions."

I heavily sigh because I'm twenty-eight years old, and she's still holding on to the shit I did when I was barely twenty-one. We all make mistakes when we're younger. Nobody knows everything except for my mother.

"Mama, I need to go. I just got off work, and I need to unpack my car. I'm glad you're okay. Tell daddy I said hi. Love you." I disconnect the line and turn my phone off.

When I get to my door, Wire is already inside. I frown because I didn't think Stone was here. I walk slowly inside and see Wire looking around at my trashed apartment.

I could cry when I see all of my products destroyed. There's make-up everywhere. All of my plastic boxes are broken, and there's even black graffiti on my walls. The message says, "MIND YOUR BUSINESS."

I can feel the tears slipping down my face. "Fucking, Raymond!"

10

Stone

"Hey, brother. It's been a change of plans. Roxy is on her way to the clubhouse." Bishop says from the other end of my phone. I glare because if Wire did something stupid, I'm going to fuck him up.

"What's up? Where's Wire?" I ask, trying to calm down.

"Wire is with her. I'll tell you the details when you get here. So hurry the fuck up." Bishop disconnects the line, and I growl.

If the VP is calling and he won't say over the phone, even though it's a burner, what happened. I know it must be serious. I grab up my shit because I was still at the shop, and I was planning to be here for another few hours.

"Hey, Marie, I'm heading out. Text me if anything comes up."

"Where're you goin', boss man? You know you have a meeting with Alec today for next month's shoot?"

I totally forgot about my meeting, but it can wait. Hounds come before everything, including business.

“Reschedule for next week. I’ll give him a call later.” I tell her.

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“Are you sure? I mean, what can be so important that you have to reschedule with Alec?” Marie’s tone is exasperated, and I cut my eyes at her.

I’ve never heard that tone out of my sweet assistant, and she knows better than to question anything I do. Marie knows all about my membership with the Hounds, and she knows how important the organization is to me. She also knows that when they call, there’s no rescheduling. I go when they need me.

“Hey! Do what the hell I said.” I tried to keep my voice level, but by the way, Marie’s eyes widened, and the small whimper that slipped out of her mouth, I didn’t do a very good job.

“Yes, sir.” Marie scampers away, and I shake my head.

I’ve been on edge lately with all the shit that’s been going on but hearing that Roxy is in some type of trouble and I wasn’t there has me pissed.

I headed out the door, and standing by my car was the last person I wanted to see.

“Chris, what do you want?” I hit the key fob and started my truck while staring down my ex-wife with a deadpan expression.

“I thought you’d be over your little tantrum by now.” Christine smiles at me, and there’s a twinkle in her hazel eyes.

I know she’s still on her bullshit, and I know the reason she keeps poppin’ up is cause she’s jealous. But I also know that she doesn’t stick around after rejection, so this is

new behavior for her. I suspect that she must've got into some shit she needs me to get her out of, but I can't get involved with her shit right now. I'm not a fuckin' knight, and the reason I know that for a fact is because of Christine.

"Got shit to do, move so I can get goin'."

"You always have shit to do, Stone. You can't make time for your wife?"

I chuckle at her absurdity, "The only woman with my last name is my bitch of a mama. Now, move. Or you can answer to Rock." I threw the Prez's name out cause Christine may act stupid, but she's not.

She definitely knows Rock would put her ass to ground if she fucked up. The Hellhounds don't play around about our loyalty. And if Christine wanted to cause any unnecessary trouble, she would be banned from the clubhouse, which meant staying away from anything Hounds related. Including me.

"It's like that now? Wow!" Christine has tears in her eyes as she walks away, but I just get in my truck.

Those crocodile tears don't faze me, not anymore. I pull off, thinking about all of the craziness that's going on around me. In the past three weeks, shit has been ramping up. I can feel it in my gut that something is about to go down.

My Bluetooth connects in my truck when my phone rings. I hit the steering wheel to answer the call, "This is Stone."

"It's Marie. Alec said he doesn't want to reschedule the meeting. He's pissed and demanding that you see him today."

I can feel the scowl cover my face in an instant. Nobody in their right mind would

demand shit from me. But these fucking artistic types with overinflated egos never know when to just create and shut the fuck up.

“I already told you I couldn’t see him today. Cancel the entire thing. Alec is fired! I’ll find somebody else to shoot the spread.”

“Bu-but that will put us behind schedule. Can’t you just take a few minutes to meet with him?”

I get that Marie is trying to do her job, but she is stepping way out of line. I have to take a deep breath, so I don’t completely explode. There’s some serious shit happening, and a photographer throwing a hissy fit over a meeting is low on my priority list.

“Marie... I don’t like repeating myself. Do as I said. I’m on my way to the clubhouse, so don’t call me again today. I don’t care if the fucking shop is on fire. Send me a text.” I hate that I have to explain this shit to Marie. She’s been my assistant for years; she knows better.

I click the steering wheel to disconnect the call before she can even respond. I drive entirely too fast to the clubhouse. The entire time wishing I was on my motorcycle. I need the wind in my face and the open road to clear my head. Instead, I’m trapped in this fuckin’ cage.

By the time I make it to the clubhouse, it’s pitch black outside and well after eight o’clock. However, when I pull up, the regular crowd is hanging out. Loud music is playing, and the front is packed with motorcycles, cars, and pickups.

“What the fuck?” I say out loud.

The way Bishop sounded on the phone, I thought we were damn near close to

lockdown. But I guess I was wrong.

I park my truck, grab my cut and throw it on, and make my way toward the front of the building. A few brothers nod in my direction, and I return the gesture. As I get closer, I notice a lot of our prospects are outside. That means they're on guard duty, and they better not fuck up.

When I walk into the building, the usual bunnies are hanging around, but I don't see any new faces. Rock didn't call church, but I head for the stairs to the conference room because I know that's where the voting members will be.

"Death." I cock my eyebrow at the greeting from Bishop because that means I'm going to have a job to do tonight.

I take my seat, but there are only four of us here, so whatever is going on is important but not urgent.

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“What’s the job?” I ask without preamble. I can feel the bubbling of the kill ramping up inside of me.

“First things first. Roxy’s place was broken into.”

“Wait... what the fuck! Where’s Wire’s ass?” I look around for the bastard, but he’s nowhere in sight.

“Wire was with her. Calm down. Why are you so mad? Is Roxy...” Axel doesn’t finish his question as he ticks his head to the side and studies me for a second. I take a deep breath to calm myself.

I have absolutely no claim on Roxy; hell, the only thing we’ve done is fool around a little. But I still feel like she’s my responsibility.

“I’m good. Who broke into her place? And does this have anything to do with the job?” I asked, getting back to the point.

“We found one of Raymond’s boys not too far from her complex. He didn’t feel like talking. We still can’t find Po Boy or Raymond, so we need answers that only death can scare out of him. He’s a low level dealer in the Street Lords crew. Calls himself T-money. A real gutter motherfucker. If it was him that broke into Roxy’s place, I’m glad she wasn’t there. He’s had more than a few rape charges against him.”

After Rock tells us a few more details about the break-in and T-money, I’m ready to do my part.

“He’s in the lounge.” Ace stands, and I follow him.

The lounge is what we call the basement dungeon we have. There are benefits to owning a large building in the middle of nowhere. Guests of the lounge never walk out on their own. So no matter what this asshole tells us, he is still a dead man.

Ace and I walk down the back stairs away from the crowd and party and around the corner to the lounge door. Ace places his palm on the reader, and the door slides open. The new digital palm reader is something new that Wire got from a friend of his from a place called Founder’s Island.

They must take their security seriously out there because Wire swears that the high-tech feature can’t be hacked. I’m inclined to believe him cause nobody has been able to breach our system since we upgraded it.

The metal door slides open, and we walk past two small rooms that we use as holding cells before we make it into the largest room. The man isn’t as small as I thought he’d be, but it doesn’t matter his size. I ain’t afraid of no man.

“Hey! It’s about time you mothafuckas let me outta here. My crew ain’t gone be happy about this shit.” The man is talking a lot of shit for someone tied to a chair, but I can tell it’s all bravado because no matter what his mouth says, his eyes are wide with fright.

I can smell the stench of fear rolling off him in waves, and it makes the sinister side of me stretch and take notice. I can feel the shadows of my darkness seeping into my vision. I move my neck from side to side, cracking it in the process.

“Listen, man. I can tell you a crazy peckawood. I ain’t done nothin’. You got the wrong dude. Just let me outta here, and you’ll neva have to see my black ass again.”

“Peckawood,” Ace chuckles, “I haven’t heard that in a long time. I’ll have to say it to Sassy and see her face.”

I would laugh at the thought of Sassy hearing Ace use the racial slur, but my alter ego won’t let me laugh. Nothing is funny about dealing death.

“So, it seems you’re in the talking mood now. Why don’t you tell us who broke into Roxy’s place?” Ace asks in a calm voice as he walks around the chair meticulously slow.

“Man, fuck that snitchin’ ass hoe. I don’t know shit about no fuckin’ break-in.”

“Well, hell. I thought we were gettin’ somewhere.” Ace shakes his head in mock disappointment.

I walk to my special table and unzip the leather bag that’s settled on top. I slowly pull out my instruments one by one. The largest of my scalpels has made grown men cry, beg, and pray for mercy. But the only thing that came for them was the silence of the grim reaper.

“What the hell is he doin’? Aye, man, what the fuck you doin’ ova there?” The man is really scared now, but my thirst for the kill will need to be satisfied even if he starts talking.

“You go by T-money, right?” Ace says, but the guy doesn’t respond. Instead, his scared eyes follow my every movement while I sharpen my tools.

When I’m finished, I start toward T-money, and I can see his whole body tremble. He breaks out in a sweat, and I know his bitchass is about to talk.

“Okay, okay. Listen, I didn’t break into Roxy’s place.” I stop walking and stare at

him so he can keep talking. “I was supposed to be watching her, except some huge redheaded motherfucka was with her, so I got lost. I swear I wasn’t in her place. I just got the text to go ova there when I saw big red.”

Again Ace starts to chuckle, and I know Wire just got a new nickname. It will piss him off, and the thought of pissing Wire off almost makes me smile.

“Who told you to watch Roxy? Was it Raymond?”

“I ain’t no fuckin’ rat!”

I don’t know why he’s trying to act like he didn’t just tell us exactly what we asked. I don’t know why he’s trying to be hard either, it’s not like we’re gonna tell his boys he didn’t snitch and how brave he was, but we killed him anyway. Nobody will ever find his body. It will be like he never existed.

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“You can tell us what we need to know, or we can torture it out of you, and you can die slow.” My voice is low and animalistic. I’m on the verge of killing him without getting any information. I know that I need to calm down.

But I hate this fuckin’ part. All of the talkin’ and askin’ questions grates on my nerves. That’s why Ace is here. He can do all the finesse, and I can do all the killing.

T-money takes a deep breath, and I can see his resolve kicking in. He thinks he can tell us a little info so he can keep from meeting his maker tonight. T-money doesn’t know that he’ll die regardless, so I hope he said his goodbyes. He probably didn’t. Doesn’t matter; his ass should’ve been off the streets anyway. I hate a pussy ass dude who rape women. He deserves everything that’s comin’ to him.

“I haven’t talked to Raymond, man. He don’t run shit no more since he’s been inside. I got my orders from high up. I was told Roxy was asking about shit she shouldn’t, and I needed to keep an eye on her. But that’s it. I wasn’t told what she was asking about, and I ain’t ask.”

I keep my face in a neutral expression because I don’t want the asshole to see the danger lurking behind my mask. It’s not time for him to see that he’s looking death in the face. But I really don’t have to scare him too much because sniveling cowards like T-money, who like overpowering women, usually talk with very little persuasion.

“As much as we would like to believe your story, T, you’re gonna have to give us more than that.” Ace says as he stops in front of the chair and stares at the man. His whole demeanor is... relaxed. Like, we’re not about to kill this dude.

It's amazing how Sassy and his boys have calmed him down. Before Ace had his family, we would've just beat the shit out of him and hoped he talked. All this conversation is new, and although it's necessary, I'm ready to end it and do what I'm good at.

"Okay, okay. Ummm. I ain't really that big in the crew, man. Shit trickles down, you know what I'm sayin'. All I know is the crew is under new management."

"New Management? What the fuck is that supposed to mean?" Ace asks with a sneer.

"Listen, man. Things ain't like they were before. Lots of people want to be the boss. So, you gotta go with the most power."

Ace looks at T-money and shakes his head. Loyalty is lost in this day and age. Even in the Hounds, we have to be careful.

"I was making good money before, but not so much now. All I know is the crew ain't been the same since Ray got locked up. There's even bitches tryin' to run shit!" Disgusts drip from his words like a woman telling him what to do is the worst thing he's ever heard of.

T-money keeps spilling his guts just like I knew he would. He tells us about how the Street Lords are going downhill and how he wants to get out of the game. Like we give two fucks about their fucked up crew.

"So, you sure you didn't go into Roxy's place or know who did?" I ask, getting back on track. Cause fuck the Street Lords and their bullshit.

"Fuck no! I watched the place like I said. I ain't seen or done shit to that bitch. I was just there, so I could keep my alibi tight."

I raise my brow and point my scalpel at his neck so he will get on with it. He's draggin' out this fucking story so he can live. But what he doesn't know is I'll kill his ass and figure out what's goin' on later.

T-money sighs like he's the annoyed one before continuing, "I got into a little shit. A bitch claimed I raped her funky ass. I needed a little alibi to get me out of that situation, so I watched Roxy's apartment in exchange. But I wasn't gonna do nothin' to that bitch."

The fire that burns hot inside of me at his words is like an inferno now. I know exactly what he was gonna do to Roxy. And he will pay for even thinking he could get away with it.

"Enough talking. We appreciate all your help." Ace says in a dark voice.

"So, you gone let me go, right? I can disappear. I swear you'll never see me again."

"That's the plan," I say as I step to him and slash my scalpel across his jugular.

T-money's blood squirts out, and his eyes go wide as he makes gurgling noises as he tries to breathe. I watch him struggle for several minutes as he dies slowly before I look him in his eyes and stab him once more. T-money's eyes widen before he slumps over dead.

"He really thought we were gonna just let him go." Ace shakes his head at the man's stupidity.

"Fuck that rapist piece of shit," I spit on his body. "I wish I had more time to torture his ass. He can rot in hell."

Ace nods and I walk to the bathroom in the back to get cleaned up. Can't go to the

party covered in blood.

11

Roxy

We've been at the clubhouse for a while now, and I keep watching the stairs for Stone to come down. I don't think he even saw me when he arrived. He headed straight upstairs, and I hadn't seen him since.

I'm glad Wire has been here to keep me company. He's been taking his bodyguard duties very seriously. He's also been keeping me thoroughly entertained. I didn't know he had such a crazy sense of humor because he was mostly quiet the entire time he spent with me today.

"Look at Big Country tryna dance." Wire laughs beside me.

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I look over and see Big Country, who is about six-foot-seven and a good three-hundred pounds, thrusting his hips off beat while one of the biker bunnies giggles and teeters forward drunkenly every time his pelvis connects to her back. It should be her ass, but she doesn't have one, and she's about a foot shorter than him.

I laugh at the scene the two make, and I relax a little. After I saw my apartment, my emotions were scattered. I didn't even try to clean it up, and Wire said we shouldn't call the police, so I didn't.

After taking a few pictures, I just gathered up what I could, packed a bag, and closed and locked the door. Not that it mattered. Whoever was in my apartment didn't leave anything valuable undamaged. They trashed everything. I will file a report soon because I have insurance, but Wire said the Hounds would handle it, so I will hold off for now.

I'm just glad that I had a lot of my supplies with me, so I will still be able to do the job I booked in a few days. And I especially need to work now that I will probably have to move.

As I continue to watch Big Country and his partner fumble around the dance floor without an ounce of rhythm between them, I notice just how big all the guys in the Hounds are. I mean, almost everybody is over six-foot. I wonder what they feed these men?

I continue to watch the entertainment and laugh and talk to Wire for a little over an hour when he brings me a drink. I graciously accept it and swallow down half the contents of the glass before I even ask what it is. When the dark liquid hits the back

of my throat, I cough at the burn I feel in my chest.

“Now, that’ll put some hair on my chest.” I choke out a giggle.

“Nah, I wouldn’t want you to have hairy titties. They look too good to mess up.” Wire winks and I laugh again.

“Your ass is crazy. What is this anyway?” I ask, taking a much smaller sip. It still burns, but at least I didn’t choke this time.

“Bourbon.” Wire smirks, but I don’t get the joke, so I shrug and continue drinking.

After one glass, I feel like I’ve drunk the whole bottle by myself. I’m a petite girl, but I can hold my liquor. This must be some really top-shelf shit if I’m feeling it already.

“So, what’s up with you and Stone?” Wire asks after giving me another glass. I have no idea where he got it because he didn’t leave from beside me.

“What do you mean?” I ask, sipping on my second glass of Bourbon.

“You’re a smart woman, Roxy. So, you know exactly what I mean.” Wire leans down slightly, and I can see something mischievous dancing in his green eyes. He runs a hand over his thick red hair, and for a second, I think he’s going to kiss me.

I’m not sure if it was him or me that leans back first, but Wire has thrown me off-kilter. I didn’t expect him to be all sexy. He’s been laid back, and playful all day, and as fine as he is, I already know who I want.

“What the fuck’s goin’ on here?” The voice is low and menacing, and if I didn’t recognize it immediately, it would’ve scared the shit out of me.

Wire leans back even further and takes a sip of his drink. My eyes move from his grinning lips to the furious gleam of crystal blue eyes. I frown because I don't know what Stone is so mad about.

Yeah, we've done a little flirting and exchanged some hot kisses and a few stolen touches, but he isn't my man. Especially since he has someone willing to give him hand jobs in public.

"Just having a drink with my bodyguard." I sassily reply before I take a sip of my drink.

"Don't fuckin' play with me, Roxanne. Why are you all cuddled up with this red motherfucker?" Stone never raises his voice, but he's emitting so much anger and darkness that it almost chokes me.

"Stone, we were just having a drink, I swear. Please calm down." I say with a lot less attitude as I take him in from head to toe.

His hair is damp, and I'm pretty sure he's wearing different clothes from when he walked in earlier. But there's definitely something going on with him. It's like his snarky personality has been replaced by something cold and menacing.

"Yeah, Stone. I was just showing your lady some Hounds hospitality." Wire says with amusement dancing in his eyes.

Stone turns his head so slowly that it looks like one of those scary movies about creepy dolls. You know the part when Chucky is about to come alive and stab something, and in this moment, that's exactly what Stone looks ready to do.

"That's right, Wire. My lady. Mine. Don't let death come claim you."

“Guess that answers my question. Have a good night Rox. I’ll see you Thursday for the shoot.” Wire says, getting off the stool he was sitting on.

“No, the fuck you won’t. You’ve got other shit to do. Prez needs you.” Stone still sounds like he’s about to kill somebody, but Wire just smiles and nods before walking away.

I’m reeling from Stone’s claim on me in front of everyone. I’m pretty sure we should go on a date, or I don’t know, talk on the phone before he decides that “I’m his woman.” What kinda shit is that.

But by the look on his face and that threatening tone of his voice, I won’t be asking him right now. Something tells me that Stone has been doing something that I don’t want to know about.

“Hey, you alright?” I finally ask after a few minutes of Stone staring after Wire.

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“No. We need to get a few things clear. Don’t ever stand in another motherfucker’s face grinnin’ like I’m nobody. Especially in my fucking clubhouse. Do you know how that shit makes me look?”

I rear my head back like he slapped me. His voice isn’t loud, and nobody is paying us any attention, but he might as well have yelled to the entire place that I was a whore.

“Excuse the fuck outta me. Weren’t you the one getting a hand job in public by another woman? We haven’t even had a date yet. And you act like we’re married or something!” I keep my voice as low as his, but I’m pissed.

How the hell does he have the audacity to stake some kind of caveman claim on me, and he’s fucking around in public places. I think the fuck not!

I ball my fists up and place them on my hips as I take a calming breath. I can feel my skin heat from my anger, and I know my upper lip will have sweat on it if I don’t calm down. But I can feel those glasses of Bourbon pumping through my system, and I don’t think it’s helping me stay in control of my emotions.

Stone seemingly calms down some as he straightens to his full height and looks me over. I’m still wearing the same outfit that I had on when I saw him this morning, but by the way, he’s looking at me; it’s like he’s seeing me for the first time.

“I didn’t get a hand job from anybody, Lamb. Who told you that?” The timber of Stone’s voice has taken on a new tone, but he’s still speaking low. The anger isn’t lining every word now, though.

“Karma wouldn’t lie to me, Stone. But a man I hardly know would. But you don’t have to lie because you’re not my man.” I say, staking my own claims.

I won’t be a fool again, and that’s exactly what Stone takes me for. There’s no reason Karma would make something like that up. She’s not that type of person.

“First of all, somebody having their hand on my dick doesn’t mean I’m gettin’ pleased.”

“Oh no. So what the fuck does it mean then? I really can’t wait to hear this bullshit.” I shake my head.

I don’t even know why I’m entertaining this shit. I should just walk away from him. We don’t have any ties to one another. I barely know this man. We’re not on some Netflix show about falling in love at first sight. This is real life, and shit like that doesn’t happen, especially to me.

“It means that somebody was touching me without my permission. And even though we haven’t had our first date, I wouldn’t start this off by lyin’ to you.” Stone’s voice is even softer now, almost gentle. But I will not fall for the switcheroo. He will not charm me into believing nonsense. Been there, done that.

“It doesn’t matter. I’m not yours.” I feel like my proclamation isn’t taken seriously by the look on Stone’s face.

He’s no longer the angry villain in a horror film; he’s now the hero in a romantic comedy. Stone is now smiling with a twinkle in his eyes that has me worried. Although we spent the last week occupying the same space, and he’s given me all types of looks. Lusty looks, wanton looks, I’m gonna fuck you where you stand looks; he’s never looked at me the way he’s looking at me now.

“You are mine. We might not know each other, we might not have gone on a date, we might not have done things in the traditional way. But you’re mine, and there’s no turnin’ back now.”

I just look at Stone like he’s crazy. Because he so obviously is, but I guess so am I. I want so desperately to believe what he’s saying. But all the evidence says this will never work between us. But maybe I can enjoy it while I can.

I don’t have to lose my mind or my heart behind this man. But that doesn’t mean I can’t have something with him. I know from our kisses that our sexual chemistry will be off the charts. But sex doesn’t have to lead to love. Right?

“We can talk about this later. I’m tired, and I just want to go to sleep. I have to call Dee, so I can see if I can stay with her for the night. Hopefully, Wire will take care of my apartment, so maybe I can get in there to clean up the mess tomorrow.”

“Baby, you ain’t stayin’ with nobody but me. And Wire ain’t doin’ shit about your apartment. I’ll take care of it. I didn’t see your SUV outside. Did you drive?”

I can feel the crinkle in my brow because I don’t know when Stone decided I was his baby and that I needed to be taken care of. This day has been too long, and that Bourbon was too strong for me to even contemplate everything that Stone and I need to discuss.

“I drove; my car is in the back. Wire thought it would be safer in case anybody was looking for me.”

“Hmmpf.” Stone growls, but he doesn’t comment anything further.

“Since you’re tired, we can stay here tonight. As a voting member, I have nicer accommodations than most. Come on.”

I follow Stone down the long hall. I saw Dee and Crush disappear to the last time I was here, and although my nosey nature is being satisfied, I'm too tired to even look around.

When I enter the room, there's a large sitting area with a couch and coffee table. The King sized bed is pushed up against the wall facing large picture windows that are hidden behind black blinds and curtains. There's a black dresser, and a closet on the other side of what I assume is the bathroom.

"It looks like a hotel in here," I comment. It's very tidy, and it smells like freshly washed linens.

"We Hounds have style, Lamb. The bathroom is the second door. Is there anything you need out of your car?"

"My overnight bag. I want to take a shower and wrap my hair up before I go to sleep." I look over at the bed. A nervousness fills my belly, and I know that once we take that step, there will be no turning back.

Am I ready for Stone? Really ready?

12

Stone

When Roxy finally emerges from the steaming bathroom, she's a vision of my wet dreams come to life. Droplets of water slide down her silky brown skin, and I follow them with my eyes wishing it was my tongue instead.

Roxy has placed her long hair at the top of her head in a bun, so I can see her slender neck. I know just the spot I want to suck.

"Hey... ummm. You have my clothes." Roxy points to her overnight bag in my hand.

I was so focused on her body wrapped in the towel and her wet skin, I forgot I was even holding a fuckin' bag.

"Lamb," I shake my head. "You won't be needin' clothes." The bag drops to the ground with a thud, and I think I see Roxy shudder.

I know we still have a lot of stuff to talk about, but until I get a taste of her, I won't be able to focus on shit but her beautiful body.

Roxy must agree because instead of hesitating, she drops the towel to the floor, revealing bountiful hips and an expanse of smooth, silky mahogany skin. Goddamn!

"Come here." My voice is a growl. I'm so hungry for Roxy right now that I don't know if I'll be able to control myself once I get my hands on her. "Once we do this,

there's no turning back. You know that, right?"

Roxy looks me in my eyes, and without any hesitation, she says, "I know. But do you know that?"

I know what she's asking, and I know why. Before I decided to hire her for the magazine shoot, I did my research. Roxy has been through a lot when it comes to relationships. And from what I can tell, her family isn't supportive. Not when it comes to her relationships or when it comes to finances. It looks like Roxy does everything on her own. Which for a twenty-eight-year-old isn't unusual, but for a twenty-three-year-old fighting a court case, you'd think a little help would be provided.

I know we have chemistry, and I know there could be more to us than some stolen kisses and lustful touches. And Lord knows that I know that I'm a killer, not a savior. But I also know I have to see this through. It's something about Roxy that calls to me. And that's never happened before, not even with my ex-wife.

"Yeah, I know." I finally say. Roxy looks deeply into my eyes, and my stare doesn't waver. I want her to see the truth in my eyes. I would never hurt her, and as much as I don't want to be anybody's knight in shining armor, I will be hers. I will protect her.

"Then I'm all yours..." Roxy's words die off, and I can hear thefor now, even though she doesn't say them, but I will let it slide.

We still don't know each other well, so,for now, will hang over us until we do. I don't mind proving to her that I'm here to stay. I know my change of heart came on fast, but when I thought she was in danger and I wasn't there, something clicked in my brain.

I want this woman, and I will have her.

I step forward and pull Roxy into me. I've been wanting to have her like this since her beautiful ass graced my presence. However, I'm afraid that I won't be able to take my time.

I devour her lips like her mouth holds the secrets to the universe, and she moans loudly into my kiss. There's nothing soft or slow about the way I'm fucking her mouth. I dive my tongue in and out of her wet mouth. I make the kiss sloppy like her pussy will be when I'm finished.

I palm her medium sized breasts as her body melts into mine. I'm still fully clothed, and my dick is so hard that it's painfully pushing against the zipper of my jeans. But even if I was naked, the only relief I would get is when I sink deep inside of Roxy's warm pussy.

I move my kisses to the side of Roxy's neck. I suck on her pulse point, and she grabs a hold of my head, pulling me toward her even more. My hands travel from her breasts around her waist, down her back, to grip her ass.

"Damn! That ass baby! Fuck!" I pull Roxy up by her ass cheeks, and she wraps her slender legs around my waist.

Roxy takes the end of my t-shirt and whips it over my head. Her arms go around my neck as I lick hers; she throws her head back and moans loudly. I walk her over to the bed and lay her down softly. That's as gentle as it's gonna be tonight because I'm so ready to tear her little ass up.

Roxy sits up and unzips my jeans slowly, then she tugs them down. She looks up at me with a smile and licks her lips.

"Commando, huh?" She says, but before I can answer, Roxy wraps her luscious lips around my dick.

I instantly leak precum into her warm moist mouth. She hollows out her cheeks and pulls me deep within her throat. I moan as I grab her bun, and she instantly stops.

“Don’t pull my hair too hard; it ain’t mine.” My laugh is cut off when she takes me into her mouth again.

“Fuck, Lamb. Shit!” I can’t think of any other words as she deep throats my dick. I swear she’s trying to make me marry her ass on the first night.

If her head game is this good, how the hell am I supposed to survive fucking her. I have pride about my shit. I can’t go out like some simp. But the way she’s sucking me right now makes me want to cry tears of joy like a chump that I know I’m not. But fuck!

Roxy’s lips feel so good wrapped around me. One of her hands grip my dick as she bobs her head, and the other lightly squeeze my balls. She works both hands and her mouth in tandem, driving me to the brink of insanity.

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And just when I feel like I'm about to cum, she slows down and pulls on my sack lightly. The motion has my orgasm retreating, but I'm harder than I've ever been in my life.

"Your mouth feels so fuckin' good." I moan as I throw my head back and work my hips, slowly fucking her mouth.

Roxy moans, and the vibration ramps up my excitement. If she keeps going, I'm going to blow. And I refuse to cum in her mouth. I want to fill her pussy. I pull her head back and away from my dick, and I lean down to give her a sloppy kiss.

I push her shoulders back, so she's lying down on the bed. I toe off my boots and completely take off my jeans that were still wrapped around my ankles. I climb up on the bed and hover over Roxy's beautiful body. I trail my hand down her face, over her collar bone, and between the valley of her breasts.

Her back arches toward my touch, telling me she wants more without saying the words. I can't get over how beautiful she is. I stop at a scar that's on her belly, and she gives me a small, sad smile. I don't want to ruin the mood, so I won't ask how she got it yet. I kiss the spot instead.

I continue to kiss down until I'm face to face with what I know has to be heaven on earth. Roxy opens her legs wider without me having to tell her, and I reward her with a long lick between her soaking wet folds.

"Shiiiiit!" Roxy's voice is loud, but it wasn't a scream. And I don't appreciate that. My need to make this woman scream my name might as well be my life's goal.

I lick around her hood until her clit is poking out. It needs the attention, and I am happy to oblige. I suck her nub into my mouth hard as I stick a finger into her core.

Roxy tries to scoot away when I start moving my finger in and out of her while sucking on her clit, but I wrap my other arm around her waist and anchor her to me.

“Don’t run from me, Lamb. It only makes me want to chase you.”

Roxy gasps, and her skin breaks out in goosebumps when I blow on her pussy. She wiggles and squirms, but she doesn’t try to move away from my greedy mouth.

I lick all over her pussy, inside, out, round, and round. My beard is saturated in Roxy’s sweet musky scent, and I love it. When her body starts to tense up, and her hips start to move faster, I know she’s about to come.

“That’s it, baby. Ride my fucking face.” I encourage her.

Roxy grabs my head and pushes my face into her as she grinds harder and faster. She screams my name when she comes. Her legs lock around my head as they shake with her release. I continue to lick her until she calms down. I kiss the inside of her thigh before moving up to kiss the lips on her face. She moans when she tastes herself on my lips.

“Fuck! I knew you were gonna be good at that.” Roxy sighs and stretches her arms up over her head.

“You know what else I’m good at?” I ask before pushing my rock hard dick into her soft, pliant pussy.

We both moan when I’m fully seated. The feel of her tight cunt wrapped around my dick is better than I could’ve ever imagined. I start to move slowly, pushing in and

holding before pulling out slowly. I want Roxy to feel every vein and ridge of my dick.

“You feel too good.” Roxy moans then her eyes pop open. “Wait, Stone. You feel too good. Stop! Stop!”

I instantly stop, but I don’t pull out. My dick would never forgive me if I pulled out of the tightest, wettest pussy we’ve ever had.

“What? What is it?”

“We’ve known each other for two seconds,” Roxy says, and I’m so confused because all I want to do is move.

“Okay,” I say as I slowly move my hips.

“Noooo. Stop.” Roxy moans, but I kiss her lips as I continue to move. “You’re not wearing a condom.”

“Shit!” I forgot all about protection, but I’m too far gone to stop now. “Lamb, I swear I’m clean. I’ll pull out. I promise.” That was the first lie I told Roxy. I know damn well I’m not gonna pull out. If we make a baby tonight, then so be it.

“Stone, stop playing.” Roxy breathes out, but her hips are moving now, so I know she doesn’t want me to stop. “You better not give me anything, or I swear I’ll kick your big ass.”

“I won’t.” I might. A little Roxy with big brown eyes and my sense of humor might be something I want to give her.

Roxy moans again when I speed up again. I’m pounding into her, and the feeling is

magnificent. I can feel my balls tightening up, and Roxy starts squeezing me with her inner muscles as her orgasm ripples around me.

When she cries out my name as she orgasms, I push into her deep like I'm trying to reach her stomach. Just when I'm about to bust the biggest load ever, Roxy grabs my face.

"You promised." She says, and I groan.

But I pull out and cum all over her stomach. It feels like my orgasm goes for hours before I'm finally finished. I look down on the masterpiece of my creamy white seed spread across her gorgeous brown skin, and I want to rub it in to mark my territory. Instead, I roll over and climb off the bed to get a towel from the bathroom.

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I come back, wipe off the mess I made, throw the towel on the floor, turn off the lights, and climb into bed beside Roxy. I pull her to me, and she sighs.

“Thanks for keeping your promise,” Roxy says into the comfortable silence. I smile and kiss the top of her head.

“I almost didn’t. You felt so fuckin’ good, Lamb. I ain’t gone lie, we were about to be parents.” I chuckle when she slaps my chest. And even though I’m laughing, I’m dead serious.

“We need to get condoms. The last thing we need is for me to get knocked up. We should at least know each other for a few months.”

“We’ve known each other for almost two months.”

“Stone, I met you a little over two weeks ago. You moved into my apartment a week ago, and now we’re fucking. That is barely three weeks, not two months.”

“Why are you so hung up on the length of time we’ve known each other. None of that matters. You can know somebody your whole life, and they can still turn out to be a monster.” I stop talking because I refuse to talk about my past right now. That’s not what this is about.

“I’ll get condoms tomorrow, and I can show you my test results too. I just had my physical last week.”

Roxy is quiet for so long that I didn’t think she would answer, but then I feel her lips

against my chest. She gives me soft kisses that calm the thoughts of my past.

“Okay. But what are we gonna do about the rest of tonight?” Her question is soft, but I heard it. Seems like my little Lamb is horny.

“Should I be offended? You’re ready for another round?” I ask her. Roxy giggles, and I feel her head shake against my chest.

“No, I’m not ready. But you are.” Roxy rubs her thigh against my hard dick, and I smile.

“I’m good, baby. He’s just being a greedy bastard tonight. Get some rest. We’ll have a lot of shit to do tomorrow.”

I kiss the top of her head and move to pull the covers up over us. Roxy snuggles close to me, and before long, I hear her soft snores. I lay awake, wondering what the hell I’ve gotten myself into.

I am never this reckless. I didn’t have unprotected sex with Christine until after we were married. Roxy didn’t even exist to me a month ago, and she’s right; we don’t know each other. And although I know more than I should about her because of Wire and his background check, she doesn’t know much about me, including the fact that I’m a killer.

Roxy doesn’t know that my club name is Death and that killing is a part of me that I would never give up. Will I have to keep what I do for the club a secret from her? Would she accept me? Will she stay if she knows?

I drift off to sleep, wondering how much time I will have with Roxy before she truly knows the real me.

Roxy

I wake up hot as hell, and I can't figure out why. My head is slightly fuzzy from the two glasses of pure alcohol that Wire gave me, but at least I don't have a hangover. I feel a heavy weight wrapped around my waist and over my legs and the heavy breathing on my neck.

Then it hits me. Stone fucked the shit outta me last night! If I was a nice good girl, I would be ashamed of the stuff we did. But I've always embraced my sexuality, so I'm as happy as a hoe with a bag full of dicks right now because Stone knew exactly what to do with me and how to make my body sing.

My body is a little sore, but it was so damn worth it. Once I got out of my head about being in a relationship, I realized that it's okay to just enjoy being with someone. No, we don't know one another well, but like Stone said, you can know somebody your whole life, and they can turn on you.

I mean, take Raymond, for instance. I had known Raymond from my block since I was fifteen years old. I started dating him when I was twenty, and we dated for three years before my world fell apart because of him. He was the monster that I thought I knew.

Time doesn't determine how somebody will treat you. I just hope I'm not making another mistake.

"Ummm. Lamb, you're thinking entirely too hard." Stone's gravely morning voice is sexy as hell. And it takes everything in me not to swoon at the sensual sound.

"Sorry. Did I wake you up? Did you sleep okay?" I ask as I turn in his embrace,

snuggling against his warm chest.

“No, you didn’t wake me. And I slept like a stone.” He chuckles, and I roll my eyes at his silly pun.

“As much as I’d like to lay here and luxuriate all day, I need to figure out what Wire wants to do about my apartment.”

“Lamb, don’t mention another motherfucker while you’re lying in bed with me. Especially that asshole.” Stone’s voice is cold and... deadly.

I didn’t mean anything by it. Hell, Wire is the one who was with me yesterday. I can’t just assume I can go asking questions around the clubhouse. Something tells me that would get me into the type of trouble I couldn’t get out of. But I won’t cower to Stone’s every whim. I’m in new territory here and him being an asshole to me is not something I’m willing to deal with. I won’t be a pushover. Not again.

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“Okay, I get that there might be some bad blood between you and Wi...” I swallow the words at the sound of Stone’s growl. Okay, so I’m not cowering, but I’m not an idiot either. “Uhh... between the two of you, but I don’t know how to navigate things around here.”

“Lamb, navigatin’ shit around here is simple. Come to me for any and everythin’ you need. Period.” Before I can even register or reply to what he said, Stone flips me over, and I’m on my back looking up into his sleepy blue eyes.

He hovers over me as he looks into my face. I hope I don’t have crust in my eyes because I slept hard as hell. It’s embarrassing as hell trying to be cute, and you have slobber on your face.

Stone leans down and kisses my nose, then my cheek, then my lips in the softest kiss I’ve ever experienced. Before I can think about pulling back because... morning breath. Stone deepens the kiss making my toes curl and my pussy jump.

Although we didn’t have intercourse again after the first time, Stone definitely took the time to explore my entire body. We both took a short nap, but when I woke up, he kissed, licked, and sucked parts of me that have never been touched by anyone before.

Stone sucks on the sensitive skin of my neck as he rubs his hardening dick against my quivering lower lips. He feels so good that if he slipped inside without a condom just once more, I wouldn’t be mad about it. I wouldn’t even stop him.

But I know that I’m not ready for kids, so even though he pulled out last night, and I

plan on going to the pharmacy today for an emergency contraceptive pill, it is still irresponsible to keep having unprotected sex.

“Damn, I want you so fucking bad right now.” Stone mumbles into the side of my neck. I sigh because I want him too. But... responsible. Yeah, I need to be responsible.

“Let’s go to the pharmacy, and we can take care of that,” I say on a sigh as my hips join his moving slowly.

We grind against each other to the point where I feel my orgasm building. My clit is swollen, and his hard dick is rubbing against it just right.

“Don’t stop.” I push my hips up and tense just at the right moment. Stone keeps a steady pace hitting my button over and over until a small tremble in my legs turns into shaking in my entire body.

“Stoooooonnnneeee!!!!” I scream out my release, and he moans, and I feel his sticky semen splash onto my skin.

Stone continues to rub the evidence of his release into me like he’s marking his territory with his cum. It’s animalistic and the type of nasty shit that I like.

“Let’s get cleaned up so we can go get some condoms. I want to be inside you even if I have to wear latex.” Stone grunts then he kisses me once more. He rolls off me and heads to the bathroom.

I sit up on my elbows so I can watch his tight ass as he disappears into the bathroom. I lie back and sigh like a schoolgirl with a crush. But it’s just so nice to feel this free and, dare I say, protected. I know Stone is high-handed in his delivery, but he means well. I hope he does anyway.

After we both showered, separately because I didn't know if I could resist not having sex if we started kissing again, we got dressed and headed to the front of the clubhouse. The place was way bigger than I suspected when I first visited.

The Hellhounds clubhouse had to be a good ten-thousand square feet, and who knows how many acres of land it sits on. I can tell by how the place is decked out that they invested a lot of money in it. I can't say that I'm surprised, though. No matter how rough these men might be around the edges, their motorcycles cost more than a small Texas house.

However, I know not to judge these guys because I've learned in my life not to judge a book by its cover. Raymond used to deal with all types of people, and most of them had high paying jobs and were supposed to be pillars of the community. That's why it was so hard for me to clear my name. There were all types of dirty politicians involved with Raymond and his crew. Unfortunately, some of them are still free to continue to do what they were doing.

That's why when I cleared my name, I stayed to myself and minded my business. I didn't kick up a fuss or go running my mouth. These people are dangerous, and they will do anything and everything for money and power, including killing my black ass. So, I kept my head down and my mouth shut.

Which is what I should've done this time, instead of calling Detective Myers. But I had to know if Raymond was out already. But it wasn't until after I called him that my place was broken into. I may not be a genius, but I can add. And things are not adding up. But at least I have Stone and the Hellhounds watching my back.

"You alright over there, Lamb?" Stone's question brings me out of my thoughts and back to the present.

We are standing in line at the pharmacy getting condoms and my pills and a few other

things I needed for my unexpected stay at Stone's.

"I'm good. Just a lot on my mind." I give him a small smile, and he studies me closely before pulling me to him and kissing the top of my head.

The line moves quickly, and we are on our way to Stone's house in Prosper. His place isn't far from the clubhouse, but I can tell by the land and the big houses that this is a prestigious neighborhood. I've lived in and around Dallas most of my life, and I can't say that I've ever been to Prosper.

When we pull up to a gated community, I know that Stone's magazine and the custom bike shop are way more successful than he lets on. We drive for what seems like a mile down a road before a huge house comes into view. Stone hits the garage door opener, and the door slides up. When we're inside, I see this isn't an ordinary space to park cars. Stone's garage is huge!

Stone parks his truck, and we get out. I look around in astonishment at his eight-car garage. The place is huge. It looks like a showroom. Motorcycles with custom paint jobs are showcased on platforms. There have to be at least fifteen in total. Then there's a muscle car of some sort, but I couldn't begin to know what kind it is. But it looks expensive and sexy as hell.

"Wow! This is really some set-up you have here." It's so clean, and everything is in order. It does my little OCD heart good.

"Thanks. Took me a long time to get it the way I wanted it, but it was worth it. Come on, let's get you settled. I need to make a few calls and get some shit together for the shop." I nod and follow him inside.

We enter the house through the door in the garage that leads to the kitchen. When we walk in, Stone disarms the alarm. I try to act as if I've been somewhere in my life and

I'm not some chick off the street, but this man's house is immaculate.

The kitchen is made up of white and grey marble countertops with an island so large that it can seat ten people on one side. It has pendulum lights hanging from the ceiling that spotlights the beautiful texture of the countertop. The wood floors are a greyish tan that goes well with both the countertops and the white cabinets. And all of the appliances are high-end stainless steel.

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It's a chef's kitchen, and if I could cook, I would be in heaven. I'm not the greatest cook, but I can eat, and this is a beautiful place to feed my face.

"This is gorgeous, Stone."

"You're gorgeous, Roxanne." I look at him at the sound of my full name.

Stone has this look in his eye that should scare me, but it doesn't. This man has a multitude of secrets dancing behind that crystal blue gaze of his, and instead of running away from him, I want to dive head first into the mystery that is Stone Rutherford.

Stone gives me a short tour of some of the house, but not all of it because it's so huge and he has work to do. But when he leaves me to explore on my own, I take the opportunity to be nosey.

The place is big with five bedrooms and seven bathrooms, a study, a movie and game room, and one room that I don't know what's in it because it's the only one that is locked.

It's weird for a man who lives alone to have a door locked in his house, but it's his house, so I guess he can do what he wants. Another thing that's weird is how big this house is. Why does a single man have a family home?

I make my way back to the living room and turn on the large TV. All of the rooms were simply decorated with dark masculine colors and furniture, and this one is no different. The large black leather sectional sofa and flat screen TV definitely screams

bachelor. However, the size of the house still has my nosey alarm going off.

While I was waiting on Stone to finish up with his work, I decided to get on my social media. I uploaded the pictures of Brandy and a few of the shots I took from the magazine photoshoot. When I open up one of the apps, I see a random person has commented on several of my pictures with the same message. “Mind your business.”

The same message that was on my walls. I quickly log out, and I bite on my lip in contemplation.

“It has to be Raymond. I asked questions, and now they’re telling me to mind my business. Fuck!” I say out loud as I worry about what to do next.

“Lamb, who are you talking to?”

“Arrrggghhh! Shit,” I scream.

“Fuck, woman! What the hell?” Stone’s brows are crumpled in confusion, and the look on his face would be adorable if he didn’t just scare me half to death.

“You just scared the hell outta me. Where did you even come from?” I was so deep in my head that I didn’t even hear him come into the room.

Now that I think about it, I rarely hear him unless he wants to be heard. He sure is stealthy for a guy so enormous.

“You’re rocking back and forth and talking to yourself, and I scared you?” Stone has an incredulous expression on his face, and I can’t help but laugh.

“I’m not crazy. I’m just trying to figure out what’s going on.”

“What’s up? I told you. If you need something, tell me.”

So I do. I tell him everything that has happened since I had the call with Detective Myers. The weird feeling that somebody was watching me, the black graffiti message, the same message on my posts online, even the weird text messages. I told Stone how I thought it all had to be related and that Raymond’s crew was probably behind it somehow.

After I finished my explanation, Stone was silent as he typed on his phone. He told me he sent everything to Wire, so he could trace everything. I knew Wire was a hacker... technology stuff, my ass.

“We also got a few prospects to clean up your place. Most of the damage was surface shit. You’ll have to replace some of your make-up, but even most of that was salvageable.”

“Thanks for taking good care of me, Stone,” I say genuinely. Stone gets a funny look on his face before he kisses me softly and nods.

I can’t get a read on this man, but I feel like as soon as I’m starting to open up, he’s closing down.

14

Stone

I’m falling for Roxanne. But, hell, who am I kidding? I have fallen for a woman that I barely even know. She’s so sweet and genuine. I hate that she’s even involved in this bullshit and that she had to come across a man like me.

But I refuse to let her go. I know she’s not like my mother or Christine. For starters,

Roxy actually has a heart, and she's not trying to manipulate me into doing anything.

When she said she would ask Wire of all people for help, a feeling took over me that I've never felt in my life. Jealousy. I hated thinking of somebody else doing something for Roxy that I could do. Especially an asshole like Wire. And to see him all in her face at the clubhouse. I can admit I lost my shit.

I was already riding the wave of rage from killing the rapist, but I wasn't prepared in the least bit to see Roxy smiling up at another man. Instead, she had a look of appreciation on her face and glittering joy in her eyes when she looked at Wire that I couldn't handle.

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I knew right then and there that I wanted Roxy more than I wanted any other woman in my life. And not just her body, and not just for sex. No. I wanted Roxy to be mine and mine alone. Mind, body, and soul.

Roxy was the one good thing that I wouldn't let go of. That I wouldn't let rage steal from me. And that motherfucker Raymond better count his days because he's a dead man when I find his ass. What kind of bitch shit is threatening somebody over social media? If he's supposed to be in jail, he should be keeping a low profile. So why would he break into Roxy's apartment and risk her calling the cops? Unless our suspicions are right and they are working with the police.

There are too many unanswered questions and loose ends. Wire's ass will have to work overtime tracing everything because I needed answers yesterday. I want Roxy safe so she can stop worrying.

She looks so young and innocent when she's not wearing make-up, and for her sweet round face to be covered in anxiety does something to me. It brings out the primal need in me to fuck somebody up.

When Roxy's phone rings and she starts talking to Dee, I leave the room to give her some privacy by going into the kitchen. I built my home for the family I thought I would have with Christine one day. But she was gone, and we were divorced before the house was even finished.

Christine and I grew up together. She knew all of my issues with my alcoholic parents and the toxic relationship they had. I just wanted someone to love me when I was younger. All my parents did was fight each other and neglect me. When they

weren't neglectful, they were beating the shit out of me.

Once my father was killed in a drunk driving accident that was his fault, my mother treated me even worse. Her alcoholism turned into drug use until she ended up in jail, and I was emancipated at the age of sixteen.

I had nobody but Christine, and she gave me what I thought I needed. Attention and an outlet for my rage. She would tell me she loved me, and it was okay to beat up the boy who flirted with her because she didn't want his attention. It was okay to beat up anybody that did her wrong. She was exciting, and she helped to fuel my anger.

When I decided to go into the military, Christine was pissed, but I had already signed up, so it was no turning back. That's how we ended up married so young. She needed me to prove I wouldn't leave her behind, so we got married.

We were toxic from the start, and the fact that I knew that and kept entertaining Christine is completely my fault. I should've stopped messing with my ex-wife after we divorced. Besides, she only divorced me because it was another one of her games.

Christine thought I would fold and run after her when she sent me divorce papers because I was at a low point in my life. I had been out of the military for a few months. It was hard for me to adjust to civilian life after being a killing machine from seventeen to twenty-three. It was six years of killing, and I was good at it, but I couldn't keep doing it. At least not for the government.

I was lost, and then I joined the Hellhounds. After that, my mind began to clear, and I found purpose again. So when Christine filed for divorce, I signed the papers without any hesitation. It was nine years ago, and I was just a twenty-four-year-old kid. But I'm not that kid anymore.

I'm a man that knows what he wants. And Roxy is the woman that I want in my life.

And now that she's in my home, I will protect her. But I'm still a killing machine, just in a different capacity. It is something that I hadn't been able to turn off, simply hide. I know she deserves better, but I can't give her up.

My burner phone pings with a message from Wire, and I'm glad he didn't call. I don't know if hearing his voice will set me off. I'm still pissed that he was fucking flirting with my woman. I know I hadn't laid claim to her, but that doesn't matter. Wire knows I wouldn't just volunteer to stay with some random bitch. He knew I was interested in Roxy. And he knows I'll get my pound of flesh from him for the bullshit that he pulled.

I look down at the text, and the words have shocked me speechless.

Wire:187 on Frazier.

Me:Time

Wire:Minimum two weeks. Church.

"What the fuck is happening?" I say out loud. Raymond has been dead for at least two weeks. That means he didn't have shit to do with the break-in or the messages online.

And Rock just called church, so I need to get back to the clubhouse to get all of the details on what happened.

I know Roxy will be pissed that I'm leaving her, but I'll call a few prospects to guard the house, and she can tell Dee to come over. Crush will be heading to check-in just like I am. And we don't allow anyone besides members in church, so I know Dee won't be with him.

I pick up the burner and dial Green, a prospect that will definitely be a patched member within the next few weeks. He's somebody I trust almost as much as anyone in the Hounds. He saved my life when we were in the service together. Green was a member of the Green Berets and is a scary motherfucker. Almost as scary as me.

"Hey, I need you at my place," I say as soon as Green picks up the phone.

"On my way." Green disconnects without any further comments. No questions asked, no hesitation. Fucking loyalty.

"Hey, Lamb!" I holler as I make my way back into the living room.

"Yeah, babe?" She hollers back, and the shit is so natural you'd think she's lived here forever.

Our connection is undeniable, especially after last night. And there's nothing more than I would like than to lay up with her all day and make love. I would usually say fuck, but what Roxy and I did was more than that. Even with it bein' our first time.

Roxy is flipping through the channels on the TV with her feet up, looking comfortable. I smile as I sit beside her and kiss her lips.

"Rock called church, so I gotta go. But Green is on his way over here."

"Church is like a meeting, right?" She asks, flipping off the TV and turning to look at me.

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“Right.”

“Okay, and I met Green last night at the clubhouse. He’s pretty intense, but he seemed nice.” Roxy shrugs, and I wonder why she’s so agreeable to all this.

“Do you want to call Dee back and tell her to come over?”

“No, I’m good. I’m gonna take this pill after I eat something, and I’ll probably just sleep some. I need the rest after last night.” Roxy winks at me, and I shake my head at her.

I expected her to put up a fuss or argue about me having to leave after we just got here. But she actually seems okay with me going.

“There’s food in the fridge; help yourself to anything you want. And if I don’t have it, order it. Don’t answer the door, though. Green will be here for that.”

As soon as the words are out of my mouth, the doorbell rings, and I get up to answer it. Green is standing on the other side, looking like the grim reaper. His long black hair is covering his face, and he’s dressed in all black. We stand about the same height, but Green is a little smaller than me, weight wise.

“Green.” I greet him with a nod and a dap.

“Death.” He greets me by my club name.

Instead of inviting him in, I step outside and close the door behind me. Almost all the

Hounds call me Stone. Shit, most of them thought that was my club name. I'm only called Death when he is needed. However, Death isn't just my Hounds name; it was also my code name in the military.

"I need you to stay here with Roxy."

"So, you putting in a claim?" Green asks with a cocked eyebrow.

"Fuck yeah," I say without hesitation.

"Damn! So, Wire is gonna owe a pound of flesh." He shakes his head with a blank expression on his face.

I'm not surprised that Green saw the exchange between Wire and me last night. He sees everything.

Instead of responding, I just tell Green to make sure nobody comes onto my property, and Roxy keeps her ass in the house. There shouldn't be any reason for either of them to leave unless I say so.

I lead Green inside the house and formally introduce him to Roxy. He sits down, and Roxy hands him the remote. I pull her out of the room and up the stairs into the master bedroom.

"I don't know how long I'll be gone, but I need you to stay with Green. He's here to protect you until I get back."

"Is it Raymond again? Is that why I still need a guard?"

"No, Lamb. It ain't Raymond. I just need you to be safe until I find out everything that's goin' on."

I don't want to tell her Raymond is dead yet because I want to know all the details first. And I know Roxy will want to know all of the details. It also leaves the question of who is targeting Roxy if Raymond is dead.

“Okay. I'll be here until you get back. Promise.”

I touch my lips to hers, and before I know it, I'm deepening the kiss. Roxy moans as she wraps her arms around my neck, and I pick her up. Her legs go around my waist, and I push her up against the wall.

Roxy holds the back of my head while I plunge my tongue in and out of her mouth. She's using her thighs to move up and down against my body. She's giving just as good as she is getting, but I need to go.

I pull back and peck her lips once more. I lean my forehead to hers and take a deep breath, “I gotta go, little Lamb. But to be continued.”

“Okay. Be safe.” Roxy says in a soft voice before giving me an even softer kiss.

I leave out, and in less than ten minutes, I'm back at the clubhouse. It's quiet when I pull up, which I expected. Prospects are outside on guard duty, and there aren't any bartenders or bunnies hanging around. So I park my motorcycle right at the front and stride inside.

I go to the conference room, and everybody's here already. So I sit down, and the meeting starts.

“Po Boy checked in with Baller this morning. He was banged up pretty bad.” Rock says, and I narrow my eyes.

“Where the fuck has he been all this time?” I ask.

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“Hiding out. Po Boy said that Raymond, or Kirk as he thought his name was, set him up. They were supposed to do a run for a shipment of guns, but before the meeting went down, Po Boy saw an ATF agent and Raymond talking in a bar.”

“How’d Po make the cop?” Ace asks.

“Because his cousin had gotten popped a year ago by the same dude. Po Boy ended up confronting Raymond at the motel they were at later.”

“Let me guess, the confrontation ended in a shoot-out,” Black stated with a shake of his bald head.

“Yep, and according to Po Boy, he killed Raymond. The agent showed up and shot Po. But Po wounded the cop in the process.” Rock responds with a deep sigh.

Po boy is known for his ruthlessness, but he’s only been a member for a year. And in that year, the Louisiana chapter has been in shoot-outs with the police and raided. I mean, it isn’t like they’re as subdued about their illegal dealings as we are. That’s why their asses are always under investigation.

As both the chapter president and the organization president, Rock is going to eventually have to do something about them. They are bringing too much heat to the Hellhounds, and only we bring the heat.

“So, he was in hiding until he could get well enough to check-in with Baller. Now, he’s laying low because the cop knows who he is, so...”

“So, Raymond was a snitch for the ATF?” I ask.

“Looks like it. And Po Boy’s dumbass brought him into our territory on a fucking run. Good thing Roxy spotted him because we were able to call it off and send their asses back to Shreveport before Raymond could get any information on our chapter.” Bishop chimes in, and there are multiple grumbles around the table.

“We know for sure that Raymond is dead?” I ask because Po Boy is unreliable, and he lies like a motherfucker.

“I’ll check the morgue records to make sure.” Wire says, typing on his computer.

“They aren’t updated yet, but I’ll keep checking.”

“While you’re at it, you were supposed to be checking who the fuck is threatening Roxy. She’s still getting messages online and on her cell.” I say in a disgruntled tone.

I’m still pissed about Wire being all up in Roxy’s face while I was handling business. He thinks the shit was cute. But he knows I’ll crack his motherfucking skull if he keeps on with his jokester routine.

“Oh, I found exactly who’s sending the messages. You’re gonna owe me big for this.”

I really hate the smugness in his voice, but I have a feeling that Wire isn’t joking this time. And the thought sends chills up my spine. He owes me a pound of flesh for flirting with my woman. If what he gives me is useful, then we’re even. I don’t like the idea of not being able to beat the shit outta Wire.

“You better have something I can use, or you’ll owe me more than a pound of flesh,” I growl.

“Believe me, I don’t owe you shit. Not even a pound of flesh.”

15

Roxy

I stopped trying to make conversation with Green after about ten minutes of his one word responses. He’s not like Wire, who I easily wore down with my questions. Green doesn’t have Wire’s sense of humor or Stone’s snarky personality. So, I figure it’s better to leave him brooding in the corner watching rugby, cricket, or whatever international sport is playing right now.

I’m bored as hell since I logged out of my social media, but Stone told me to stay logged out of it, so I won’t be hardheaded and get back on it. I took the contraceptive pill, and I waited for the nausea to hit like the pharmacist warned, but I don’t feel any side effects except I’m a little lethargic.

“I’m gonna go sit out on the patio for a bit,” I say to Green.

“Just don’t wander off.”

“I’m not a dog, Green.” I roll my eyes, and to my surprise, he chuckles.

I take one of the throw blankets from the couch and grab a bottle of water before I head outside. The backyard is just as wonderful as the house. The lawn is manicured, and there are acres upon acres of land.

I sit on the patio on the nice brown rattan and iron sectional couch. There’s a fire pit in the middle and matching end tables on the side. There’s a nice large jacuzzi and a water feature in the middle, and surrounding all of it is a large ten-foot fence.

The nice September evening is cooler than normal for North Texas, but I'm enjoying the calmness. The last few weeks have been stressful ever since I decided to step outside of my little box that I made for myself.

But I do have to look on the bright side; I met Stone. He's such a big personality. And I can admit that the way he flipped out made me feel some type of way, but it didn't turn me off. As a matter a fact, I'm probably a little toxic because his caveman act was hot.

Source Creation Date: August 15, 2025, 10:00 am

I know when Stone first came to my house, he made it seem like he didn't want anything from me, well, except maybe sex. But that changed last night. I felt the shift in whatever we were doing.

Stone staked his claim, but how far does that go. I'm obviously not new to relationships, but the most serious one I had ended in jail time and a restraining order. So I hope and pray that what I'm establishing with Stone isn't like that.

Stone, he's a different person than Raymond, but they are both on the wrong side of the law. I'm not naïve to think that everything the Hounds are up to is legal. When I saw a guy that was supposed to be in jail hanging out at their clubhouse, that was the first inclination. The second was when Wire told me not to call the police when my apartment was trashed.

I'm not judging anything they do, but I did promise myself once upon a time that I wouldn't fall for another man who was on the wrong side of the law. I can't go through another court case and possible jail time. I won't do it.

But I have to admit that in the short time I've known Stone, he doesn't seem like the type of man who would let me take the fall for his crimes. But still. I'd be a fool for assuming. And I might have played the fool once, but not again. Not ever again.

Before I know it, I have dozed off. But something woke me up. I'm disoriented as I look around. I know I heard something. I notice I have been out here awhile because the sun is now setting. The dusky September sky is smattered with red, orange, and a deep purple. It should be peaceful, but something is out of place.

I get up and go inside the house, but it's eerily quiet. I don't even hear the TV. I slide the patio door closed quietly. I creep into the house, slowly tiptoeing. Trying to keep as quiet as possible.

I don't have my phone, shit! I think as I creep closer to the living room where I left it.

"What the hell are you doin'?"

"AAAhhhhh! The fuck!" I jump and scream as I whirl around swinging.

"Hey! Hey! Man, stop punching me." Green says through his laughter.

I stop swinging and scowl up at his big ass. His dark eyes twinkle as he continues to laugh at my attack. I'm offended because I know I landed at least one solid punch. My stinging hand tells me I did.

"Where the hell did you come from?" I ask, breathing hard and holding my hurt hand.

"Shit! Did you hurt your hand? Fuck, Death is gonna kill my ass."

It takes a minute to register what he said because I really do think I broke my damn hand, but once I realize what Green just said, I forget about my throbbing appendage.

"Did you say death is going to kill you?" I scrunch up my brows in confusion.

"Yeah. He'll be fuckin' pissed if you hurt yourself because of me."

I feel like I'm slow or something, "Stone, are you talking about Stone killing you?"

"Uhh yeah." Green looks at me like I'm an idiot, and I feel like one.

“Stone’s club name is Death.” It’s a statement, not a question. A lot of things are starting to click. Mainly that darkness in his eyes. I’m sure you earn a name like Death, and I sure as hell don’t want to know how he did it.

I already gave myself to a man named Death. The fuck was I thinking? Don’t panic, Roxy. He hasn’t done anything to warrant me being afraid of him.

“For real, Roxy. Are you good?” Green asks me, and I believe he really is worried about Stone killing him.

“I’ll be fine. You shouldn’t be so dang muscly.” I chuckle uneasily, and Green just shakes his head while rubbing the back of his neck.

“Where’d you come from anyways? I thought you left.” I say, trying to change the subject.

“The control room.” Green shrugs like I’m supposed to know what the hell he’s talking about.

I feel like I must be having side effects from the pill, or I slept too long or something. Because I’m completely lost.

“What control room?” I ask Green, and I know my face is a mask of confusion.

Green points behind him to the room that was locked when I went on my tour of the house by myself. I nod and walk towards the door. It’s open, and when I walk in, again I’m amazed.

The elaborate setup tells me Stone must take his security very seriously because there are several large screens that have camera views of every inch of both inside and outside of the house. In addition, there’s what looks like a high-tech laptop and two

large gamer chairs.

“Why does he have all of this?” I question out loud.

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“I would say paranoia if I didn’t know all the shit that Stone knows,” Green says from behind me. And I wonder what the hell Stone knows that has him with cameras all over the damn place.

“Alrighty. My nerves really can’t handle any more surprises.” I mumble to myself.

Green doesn’t say anything, just watches me closely with those sparkling dark eyes of his. He doesn’t even have a mark on him, and I know I hit the hell outta his jaw. Damn chin of steel.

Green nods at me as he sits down in one of the gaming chairs in front of the screens. I nod back at him and go back into the living room to find my phone and check the time. It’s after seven, and I have no idea when Stone is going to come back.

I place my phone down and sigh heavily because I don’t even know if I’m ready for him to come home. I have questions that I’m afraid to ask but know that I have to sooner rather than later.

There’s a knock on the door, and I don’t even try to get my ass up to answer it. Green will have a conniption fit. Soon I hear a woman’s voice, and I scrunch up my face.

“Where’s Stone at? And when did he change the damn locks?”

I sit up to try to see who’s talking because it sounds like whoever it is, is really familiar with Stone’s house. At least she might have had a set of keys at one time, and that sounds pretty fucking acquainted to me.

“You need to leave, Christine. Nobody is allowed on the premises.” Green says, sounding like a proper security guard. It makes me wonder what he does for a job.

Whoever this Christine is, starts getting louder, and I can hear the attitude in her voice. I don’t want to be biased, but Christine sounds like a sista and a crazy one at that. Because ain’t no way I’d be hollering at a dude that looks as scary as Green.

“You need to move the fuck outta my way. If he ain’t here, I’ll wait until he comes back.” Christine yells again.

I still can’t see them from my place on the couch, but I wish I had some popcorn because they really are putting on a show.

“Leave. If Stone wanted you here, he would’ve told me.” Green replies sounding calmer than I would if somebody was yelling at me.

“I’m his motherfucking wife! Who the fuck are you to tell me to leave?” My feet are moving before she can get the question out of her mouth completely.

I round the corner and see a black woman about the same complexion as I am and about the same height. I guess Stone has a type. I scowl at the thought. The woman is attractive with a slender build and a heart-shaped face that is accentuated by her blunt bangs.

“Who the fuck is this bitch!” She yells, trying to get around Green, who is now holding her from getting in the door. “I knew his ass had another bitch. Fuck him, and fuck you too, hoe!”

“Bitch, who the fuck are you talking to?” I put my hand on my hips because my mama ain’t raise no punk.

“I’m talking to you! You the one at my husband’s house.”

“Bitch, if he was yo husband, why the fuck you don’t have a key? Sounds like a separation to me.” I chuckle at her without any humor.

I don’t know if she’s his wife or not, but I won’t let her know the revelation shook me. I’ve already had a million and one things to discuss with Stone, and a secret wife just hopped to the top of the list.

“You funky hoe! I hate a side bitch!”

“Hoe you the side bitch! The. Outside! Bitch!” I clap my hands at her. “The fuck you talkin’ bout?”

Green is still blocking her from coming in, but I want his big ass to move. This crazy bitch has called me all out of my name, and she doesn’t even know who I am. I’ve whooped ass for less.

At my words, Christine lunges, but Green is standing there, but what neither of them expects is for me to lunge too. My fist connects with her cheek, but it would’ve been a much more satisfying hit if I would’ve got her in that smart-ass mouth of hers.

Christine stops fighting and crumples to the ground like I killed her. This bitch is crazy!

“If you don’t get cho ass up off the ground!” Green finally loses his shit, and we both look up at him. I flinch a little because even though he’s scary as fuck, he’s also quiet. Even when I socked the shit out of him, he didn’t yell.

“Stone is gonna make you pay for slamming me to the ground! And you for hitting me, bitch!” Christine’s hysterics would be comical if I didn’t believe she was serious.

I really think this woman is having a mental break of some kind. I swear before the good Lord, baby Jesus, I will not be dealing with this type of nonsense. If she is included in the Stone package, then I will politely decline.

“Bitch! I’ve had enough! Get the fuck up and get outta here. And please believe you are not Stone’s priority.” Green yanks Christine off the ground and marches her toward a little black sports car.

I watch from the door with my arms folded over my chest, I want to follow them and get a few more licks in, but I’m not fucking with Green. I can tell his mean ass doesn’t play. He shoves Christine into the driver’s side and leans down, pointing in her face. Her tears are completely dry, and she’s pouting like a toddler.

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I don't know what the fuck Stone saw in a woman like that, but I hope he doesn't think that's how I am. The damsel in distress thing is really not me. Yes, Stone might have come to my rescue with this Raymond thing, but it wasn't because I asked him. I wasn't in a position to turn down the Hounds offer to help, but I didn't ask for it either. Neither did I run crying and falling out. I shake my head. I can't believe this is my life.

Whatever Green said to Christine makes her drive away without any more theatrics. I sigh because I thought I would be able to gloss over the whole "wife" thing, but since I tried to fight her, I guess I will have to confront Stone about it after all.

I never really had a bad temper when I was younger, but I refuse to be a pushover after Raymond and all of his bullshit. I know I'm twenty-eight, and I should be more mature, but fuck that. Sometimes, you have to show people not to mess with you.

Green saunters back into the foyer and closes the door behind him. He gives me a chastising look like I'm his misbehaving daughter, and I shrug. I need to do better, but there's always tomorrow to grow.

"I guess Stone has a type." Green looks down at me, and I hold my face in a blank expression even though I want to cuss his ass out.

I walk away without saying anything else because I'm pretty sure that was his idea of a joke, but his ass ain't funny.

Later that night, before I decide to go to bed, I go into the control room to tell Green goodnight.

He has all the screens displayed as he's flipping through each angle. When the front door comes into view. There's a guy standing on the porch, but he didn't ring the doorbell.

"What the fuck is Po Boy doing here?" Green asks, and I frown.

"What did you call him?" I move closer to the screen to get a better look.

"That's Po Boy. One of the members of the Louisiana chapter."

I shake my head vehemently, "I don't know what name he goes by with ya'll. But that's Raymond Frazier."

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Stone

I pace back and forth as I continue to read all the information Wire gave me. I still can't believe the betrayal. Well, that's not true, I actually can, but I just don't want to. I can't figure out the motive. What's the reason?

As soon as I look up, Wire's smug face is looking back at me. I hate to admit it, but he was right. I owe him big time for this information. Which means I can't take my pound of flesh from his ass for flirting with my woman.

But his information shows me how I had my head up my own ass, and I never put two and two together. It's my fault for not being more careful.

I tried to think back on everything that I missed. All of the clues and red flags that would've told me what was going on. But I missed it.

“What led to you getting this?” I ask Wire.

“The messages online. Easily traceable. I wish Roxy would’ve told me sooner. We could’ve figured this shit out as soon as she got them.” Wire shakes his head, and my scowl grows deeper.

I hate that he and Roxy seemed to have grown close in a day. What the fuck did they do and talk about for those couple of hours that made them bond so quickly? I can say the shit bothers me, but I don’t have time to deal with it right now. I have other shit to handle.

“Is she in the Lounge?” I already know the answer. It only took a few minutes to locate and bring the Judas here. Now I have to deal with her.

Again I’m walking down the back stairs with the rest of the Hounds enforcers. I watch as Ace scans his palm, and the door slides open. The bleach smell hits my nostrils, and it’s a shame that somebody worked so hard to clean up the last mess I made, and I will have to cover this place in blood once again.

I walk into the room until I’m standing in front of a woman who I once trusted. Who I thought of as family, who betrayed me for no reason. I still can’t believe she did this after all of the shit I’ve done for her.

“Why would you do this, Marie? You’ve inserted yourself in something that had nothing to do with you.” My sweet assistant was the one posting and sending messages to Roxy.

“Because the bitch needed to mind her fucking business!” Marie says defiantly, and I’m still confused as fuck.

“What business does Roxy need to mind? You don’t even fucking know her!”

I talked to Marie about Roxy once. One fucking time! I thought I knew Marie, but as she sits in front of me covered with this air of entitlement, I have no clue who the fuck this person is.

“I know enough! She ruined everything for Ray! If she would’ve just minded her business, he would’ve never been in jail.” I look at Marie like the crazy person she is.

“How do you know even know Raymond?” I say in a menacing tone that I’ve never used with Marie before. But, unfortunately for her, she doesn’t seem to hear my tone, and she doesn’t know what it means for me to use it.

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“Come on, Stone. You don’t think I’ll just tell you everything because you have me in some dungeon?” Marie chuckles, and I lose it.

I grab her by her throat in an instant. Marie’s eyes bulge with shock. She’s never met my alter ego, but she’s about to find out.

“Do you think I would just let you play in my face? Do you think I can’t kill you with my bare fucking hands?” I growl right into her bloodshot face. “Raymond is dead. And bitch, you’re next!”

“Wait! Wait! Stone, please.” Marie gasps out with tears running down her face. “He loves me, and I love him! Haven’t you ever been in love?” I tighten my grip around her throat as I look at her dumbfounded.

“Raymond is fucking dead. Your love doesn’t mean shit, bitch.”

Marie’s tears dry instantly at my words, and it’s like looking in a mirror. I’m dealing with a psychopath. How did I miss the signs? This woman has worked closely with me for years, and I never picked up on the fact that she’s as crazy as I am.

“Why do you keep saying that? Raymond isn’t dead! He’s alive!” Marie’s voice chokes out hysterically.

“I think she might be on somethin’, cause this bitch is cuckoo-for-cocoa-puffs.” Big Black says from behind me. I have to agree with his assessment. Marie’s eyes are dilated, and I don’t think she’s blinked the entire time I’ve been questioning her.

“Fuck this! I’ll just kill her now; it the least she deserves.” The bloodlust has kicked in, and I want payment for her duplicity.

“Can’t kill her yet. We need to know who else is involved in this shit.” Crush says, and I really don’t want to loosen my grip around Marie’s neck, but I do.

As soon as I remove my hand, Marie’s face breaks into a wicked smile that I’ve never seen before. I’m dealing with a completely different person.

“You’ll never be able to kill Ray or me. We’re untouchable, motherfuckers. We have connections theHellhoundswished they had.” Marie’s raspy words are tinged with crazy, and I reallyreallywant to slice her throat open.

“I will kill you. Whether you give me the answers or I find them out on my own. You are a dead bitch walkin’. Throw this bitch in a cell, and don’t give her shit. She’s about to detox the hard way.”

Crush removes the cuffs from Marie, snatches her from the chair, and drags her, kicking, fighting, and screaming into the room we call a cell. There’s not a single window in the room because we’re in the basement, so there’s no way for her to escape. The room is also soundproof, so she can scream all she wants to. Nobody is going to save her. Especially not her beloved dead ass boyfriend.

We leave Marie in her cell and head back upstairs, where Wire is still working on his computer.

It’s been a long day, and my ass hasn’t gotten to sit down yet. I plop down in my chair and breathe a heavy sigh. I still don’t know how in the hell Raymond and Marie even met. Maybe that’s something we can figure out without having to talk to her high ass again.

“What have you found out about the coroner report?” Rock asks, and I can tell that his brain is moving a mile a minute.

There’s a reason we call Jagger the Rock of our organization. He’s the type of man that takes care of all of us because we’re his family. He’s the foundation of the Hellhounds, and I trust him more than anybody.

“For some reason, it isn’t there. I have hacked the entire Caddo and Bossier Parish systems and nothing.” Wire red brows are crinkled in confusion as his big finger glide quickly over the keyboard.

“Fuck! I can’t believe this shit!” Rock runs a hand through his long blond hair.

I can tell that he has an idea of what’s happening, but I don’t know what yet. Rock knows a lot more than what he tells us, and I respect that. However, sometimes the leader has to lead, and that means keeping information to himself.

“Rock, it might be time to tell everyone what’s going on,” Bishop says, and I’m not surprised that our V.P. is the voice of reason.

Bishop is a very level headed type of man. I’m surprised with his sage advice and wise words; his name isn’t Preacher. But there’s always a reason behind our names. They are definitely earned.

“Two of our main warehouses were hit today. One by the Street Lords, and the other by the AFT. Neither were successful because our shit is tight.”

I instantly feel rage. Who the fuck do the Street Lords think we are. We can wipe out their entire fucking gang without a second thought. Why would they try us?

“The Street Lords are working with law enforcement,” I say after a minute of

thinking. That's why they felt comfortable enough to try to take our warehouse.

"The ATF didn't find anything because our boys turned away an unscheduled shipment." Rock continues.

"Because we're not fucking idiots." Ace interrupts.

No, we aren't. The Hellhounds might be a lot of things, but we're not stupid. And although most of our businesses are legit, we still dabble in the illegal. We are the biggest gun runners in the South. And the money is too good to stop. We're not greedy by any means, which is why we don't just take shipments of guns out of the blue.

"So, why do the ATF suddenly have a hard-on for us?" Black asks, and I'm wondering the same.

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“Election year is coming up,” Rock shrugs, “they always want to make a name for themselves when it’s time for votes. Plus, there’s a new director. Ya’ll know how new boys need to be broken in.”

I can feel the rage building up inside of me at the nerve of these motherfuckers. I’m ready to wipe out the entire ATF and the fucking Street Lords.

“So what happened at the other warehouse? Where did the Street Lords go?”

“They didn’t get past the security system. Fucking morons. Their amateur asses are six feet under where they deserve to be.”

“How did they even know where our warehouses were?” Crush asked.

As soon as the question left his mouth, I knew that we had rats in our midst. Again! How did we get to this again? After Lip’s disloyalty and trying to kill Sassy, we locked our shit down tight for over two years. We just opened up membership again a year and a half ago. Now, it looks like we’ve been infiltrated once more.

“We don’t hide our assets. It’s easy to find out who owns the warehouses. Hellhounds is an incorporated entity.” Wire answers and I give a sigh of relief. Maybe we weren’t betrayed after all.

I own and operate my own businesses; I should’ve remembered that. But the rage had slipped in and taken over for a second. That’s one thing I haven’t learned to control completely yet. When the rage starts, I lose myself.

“The warrant they got was bogus. And I’ve already started the paperwork on the harassment suit.” Bishop says in his lawyer voice.

I still can’t get over the fact that our rough and menacing V.P. is an attorney for his nine to five. Bishop isn’t a regular attorney though, his clientele consisted of people who weren’t exactly on the up and up. People like the Hellhounds.

Bishop is skilled at what he does, one of the most ruthless and highest paid attorneys in Texas. Most politicians know not to fuck with him or us, for that matter. Looks like we will be going to war with the Street Lords and the ATF.

“We won’t be going on lockdown just yet, but I want everybody to stay alert. We have too many snakes around us.” Rock’s tone is stern, and I feel the shame wash over me.

I’m smarter than to let anyone get too close to me. Especially a woman. I’ve learned that lesson time and time again. First with my mother, then with Christine, and I still let Marie get close enough to hurt me.

“Dismissed. But stay close. We need to be ready to ride if anything else pops off. You feel me.” Rock states his demeanor leaves no room for argument. “Stone, hang for a sec.” Rock calls before I can leave, and I feel like I’ve just been sent to the principal’s office or some shit.

Once everyone is gone, Rock sits down in his chair with a heavy sigh. I can see the worry in his eyes, and I can tell he’s tired. I’m Ace’s right hand. I’m supposed to have my shit together. The Hellhounds count on me to be discreet with all my shit, and I let them down. I let myself down.

I can feel myself spiraling and my focus waning. I hate being out of control. It sends me back to when I was a kid and my parents beating the shit out of me. Back to a

time after my father killed himself by driving drunk, and my mother blamed me. Back when I couldn't defend myself, and she almost beat me to death. That's why the bitch is rotting in jail, where she belongs. If she ever got out, she would die by my hand.

"Stone, you don't need to feel anything about that bitch's disloyalty. Raymond has only had his hooks in Marie for a few weeks. From what Wire was able to dig up, it looks like Marie got herself into debt."

"Money. She did this shit for money. Who the fuck did she owe money?"

"We don't have any clue. All we know is she made big withdrawals in the past month. She has a negative balance in her account."

"Fuck!" I take off my baseball cap and rub my hands over my head and down my face.

I'll probably never find out what the hell Marie was into. She's definitely hooked on some type of drug and brainwashed at that. How can she claim to love a man she only met a few weeks ago?

Although I'm not really one to talk, I just claimed a woman I don't know shit about. However, Roxy isn't like Raymond or me. She isn't tainted by the darkness. Roxy is an innocent even though she's been emerged into the underworld.

I should let her go. I want to let her go to protect her. I don't trust myself to fuck things up with her. We don't know each other, and every woman that I've gotten close to has betrayed me. I don't know if I can let go and give Roxy what she needs even though I've already claimed her as mine.

Fuck! What the hell have I done!

“Stone! Stone! Fuck man!” I hear Rock’s voice calling me, but it sounds like he’s in a tunnel. I knew I was gonna fuckin’ do this. I squeeze my eyes shut and breathe through my nose. I keep breathing until the darkness recedes.

“You alright?” Rock is standing over me now, and I have no idea when he even moved.

“Yeah, yeah. I’m good.” I breathe out. I really need to kill something right now. I’ll be in control then, and I’ll be able to think straight again.

My phone starts to blow up before I can completely reign in my temper fully. I can feel my face morph into the monster I tried to put back in his cage. This isn’t a regular alert; somebody is trying to break into my motherfucking house!

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“What the fuck do you mean, that’s Raymond Frazier?” Green asks me, and I’m so confused right now.

I told Stone when I saw him. I described who I saw, but I guess it was lost in translation somehow. Now that I think about it, I just said a black guy with light skin and tattoos. That was at least four people there that night. Shit!

“The guy on the screen, that’s Raymond.”

“Fuck! I need you to get in the safe room.” Green hits a panic button on the side of the computer, and then he grabs my arm.

Green puts his hand over a scanner that I didn’t notice before. A door swooshes open, and Green pushes me inside. The door closes before I can even blink. I look around the room and see it has a small bed, a refrigerator, a microwave, and a TV.

It also has a smaller version of the set-up in the control room. Except there are only two screens and a laptop. I go over to it to see what’s going on. I see Green typing on the computer, but then I hear a crash, and Green stops and looks up.

I’m scanning the screens as fast as I can to see where Raymond went, but instead, I see Christine’s crazy ass slamming a chair into the patio door. It must be reinforced glass or something because it’s not breaking, but it’s making one hell of a noise.

I can’t see where Raymond went as I click through all the damned camera angles, but I see Green when he gets to Christine. Although I can see everything, I can’t hear shit.

Christine is flinging her arms all around, and her face is scrunched up. Her hair is disheveled, and her mouth is wide open. She looks like a demented toddler.

“Damn, what is that crazy bitch saying?” I say as I watch the scene in front of me. The camera doesn’t have sound, but I can hear her yelling outside. However, I can’t make out what she’s saying through the thick door and walls of the safe room.

Green approaches Christine like she’s a wild animal. I can tell he’s trying to calm her down, but whatever he’s saying, he’s whispering because I can’t even hear the rumble of his deep voice through the wall.

Suddenly, I see Raymond creeping up behind Green, and I scream for him to watch out. But of course, he can’t hear me. I look around the room, frantically searching for something that I can use as a weapon, but I don’t see anything. I know for a fact that Stone has to have guns around this house. A guy like him has to have weapons.

Then it hits me; in the kitchen, there’s a huge butcher block of knives. I remember wondering if Stone could cook because of all of the different types there were. I get to the door and push a button, and it slides open. I’m glad that it didn’t have the fancy palm reader on the inside, or I wouldn’t be able to help Green.

I creep into the kitchen and slide the biggest knife out of the block quietly. I can hear voices, but Green’s isn’t one of them because I would know Raymond’s voice anywhere.

When I look around the corner, I see Christine with her hands up, pleading with Raymond. I can’t see his face though. I slide to the floor and crawl behind the counter and out of sight.

“You’re supposed to be in Louisiana, Christine.” I hear Raymond say to her and I’m shocked.

How the fuck do they know each other?

“Listen, I’m the one who told you about the Hellhounds to get you out of jail in the first fucking place. You were fucking up. I told you not to bring your ass to Dallas. But look at you!” Christine is yelling at Raymond like he’s a child, and I’ve never heard anyone talk to him like that before.

And I had only encountered Christine once, not even an hour ago, and the sniveling, crying, hysterical woman is replaced with this ruthless Pitbull. She must’ve been putting on an act to catch Green off guard.

“I didn’t have a choice! That fucking Myers was breathing down my neck. I had to come here and give him something, or my black ass would’ve been back in Mack Alford. I ain’t goin’ back to prison, Christine. No fuckin’ way!”

Damn! Detective Myers knew the whole time his ass was out of jail. I knew it!

“Brother, we’ve come too far for you to go back. I still can’t believe out of all the bitches in Dallas, Stone is fucking with your ex.” Christine shakes her head, and I have to agree with her.

Out of all the people in Dallas, I don’t know how I got caught up in Raymond’s web once again!

“I knew that bitch saw me that night, but I thought I was good until she called Myers to tell him she saw me. I had Marie threatening her online, and I even got that stupid ass T-money to break into her apartment. But I guess that didn’t work either.”

I know I need to creep my ass up out of here, but I don’t want to leave Green, who I spotted lying on the ground with a pool of blood surrounding his head.

Shit! What should I do? I can't fight Raymond and Christine! Dammit!

"Speaking of Marie, where is her dumbass? I told that bitch to be here over two hours ago." I hear Christine ask.

"I don't fucking know. It took a lot of finesse to get her ass on our side."

"You mean a lot of dick." Christine cackles.

I almost throw up in my mouth at the thought of Raymond's community dick. He was such a cheater when we were together. I put up with so much shit and so many women. I was dumb.

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“We need to find out where that bitch Roxy went. It’s obvious that the Hounds don’t know who you really are yet. And dead hoes can’t talk.” Christine says, and I want to stab this bitch right where she stands.

“Marie said there was a safe room in the house. I bet that’s where her scary ass is at. But we got to get to her before yo boy comes back. He ain’t gonna go down as easy is this motherfucka.” Raymond kicks Green, and I grimace.

Raymond was always a coward. He would’ve never been able to take Green without sneak attacking him.

When Christine and Raymond start moving toward the kitchen, I use the darkness of the night to slide around the corner and hide in the pantry. I know I won’t be able to hide for long because they will eventually find me. I’m just hoping that Stone is on his way here.

I saw Green hit a button before he shoved me into the safe room; I just hope it alerted Stone that something was wrong. Now, I wish I would’ve stayed my ass in that room. I know they wouldn’t have been able to get to me, but Green needs my help.

I peek out of the door to see if I can make out anything in the dark. When I hear the siblings down the hall, I run to check on Green. I make it to him and feel for a pulse. It’s slow, but he’s still breathing, but if I don’t get him help now, he won’t be breathing for long.

“Green, if you can hear me. Just hold on, okay. I’m gonna get help.” I say to him, and I slip back into the living room and find my phone.

I dial Stone with one hand while holding the knife in a death grip. Then, I creep back into the pantry while the phone rings.

“Roxy! Baby! I’m on my way! What’s goin’ on?” Stone shouts into the phone, and I can hear the panic in his voice.

His panic makes me want to panic, but I take a deep breath and calm my ass down. I cannot lose focus. I have to keep my wits about me if I’m going to survive this mess.

“Stone, Christine and Raymond are in the house, and they’re looking for me. They attacked Green, and he needs a doctor. There’s blood everywhere.” I whisper furiously into the phone.

“Christine? What the fuck! Hold tight, baby. I’m on my way!” Stone disconnects the call, and I can’t feel the relief until I see his gorgeous face.

“I don’t know if that asshole hit the panic button or not. Marie said it calls Stone immediately. I don’t know how much time we got. Go check upstairs and see if she’s up there.” I hear Raymond’s voice right outside the pantry door, and I pray with all my might that they won’t find me.

No sooner than I think the words, the pantry door flies open, and the light is flipped on. Raymond is standing there with a sinister grin on his face. I know if I don’t get the fuck out of here, I’m a dead woman.

I’m trying to look past him, but he’s taking up the entire door with his lanky frame. I back up in the large pantry until I hit the back shelf.

“Hello, Roxanne. Long time no see. Well, I guess it hasn’t been that long. What, a few weeks?”

I hate looking at his face. I wish I could wipe the satisfied look from his eyes. Raymond Frazier is a sadistic bastard.

“I guess you thought I didn’t see you all up in that fucking white boy’s face. You’re so fucking pathetic.” Raymond sneers, and I feel the rage creeping up inside of me.

There are so many reasons for me to hate Raymond, but the main one is he tried to kill me. When he was out on bond, I came home, and there he was...

PAST

I walk into my condo, but things seem off. Everything is how I left it, but the energy is different. I slip my shoes off by the door and put my bag down on the table. I walk into the living room and gaze out of the floor-to-ceiling windows.

“I’m really gonna miss this place.” I regretfully sigh.

I loved this condo from the moment I saw it. The open floor plan, the wood floors, the stainless steel appliances, the marble countertops. Everything about this place screamed elegance and class. And although my name is on this place, I could never afford it on my own. I don’t even have a job because Ray paid for everything.

A noise coming from behind me makes me turn around quickly. My eyes widen when I see a man wearing all black with a black mask.

“What do you want?” I gasp out in surprise.

“Bitch! You know what I want.”

“Raymond? What are you doing here?” I would recognize his voice anywhere, mask or not. I know exactly who’s standing in front of me. “I have a restraining order.” I

remind him, but my voice quivers, showing how scared I am.

“Fuck yo restraining order, hoe! Did you think I was going to let you testify against me?” Raymond says, lifting the mask up but not taking it off. He wants me to see him, and that is bad news for me.

“I’m not testifying against you.” I know he doesn’t believe me when he growls and moves closer.

I knew there was a possibility of Raymond getting bond, but I didn’t think he would come after me. I was never going to testify against him even though the police were hounding me to do so. I know what happens to people who snitch.

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Raymond's crew is ruthless, and they've already threatened my family and me. They cut my mama's brakes, for goodness sakes! We couldn't prove it, but who else would do such a thing. So no, I'm keeping my mouth shut. But there's no convincing Raymond of that, so I got a restraining order to keep him and the cops off my back.

I look at the door, trying to figure out how far it is and if I can make it past Raymond, but before I can break into a run, he grabs me and slams me hard on the floor.

"Umpf." The air whooshes out of my body, and I feel like the back of my head is on fire.

I can't focus, and I feel dizzy, but I know if I don't get up, Raymond is going to kill me. I feel the weight of his body on top of mine, and when my blurry vision clears slightly, I see that he has a knife.

"Don't do this, Ray." I wheeze out, but I can see in his crazed eyes that he's about to stab me.

When there's a knock on my door, I buck, and the movement surprises him. The knife slices across my stomach, but I scream as loud as I can. The knock turns into banging, and Raymond jumps up and rushes out of the apartment. I see him slam into our neighbor and knock him to the floor.

"Roxy! Are you okay? Oh my God, you're bleeding!" My neighbor's frantic voice is the last thing I hear before I lose consciousness.

PRESENT

When I woke up in the hospital, I refused to tell them what happened. I got the message and the scar on my stomach as a reminder. I got my shit and moved from Dallas until after the trial was over.

They had enough evidence to convict Raymond without me, and I'm glad I didn't go on record against him because the cops didn't even try to help me.

Raymond is standing imposingly in the door, and for the life of me, I can't figure out how law enforcement would ever let a man like him out, even if he was working for them. What kind of shit is that. But I guess when you're dealing drugs and blackmailing top politicians and CEO's anything is possible.

I have a death grip on the knife in my hand, and I think if I can slash him real good, I can at least get back to the safe room. I don't know where that crazy ass Christine went, but I'll fight that battle when I come to it.

Raymond stalks toward me, and I stand still and bide my time. The pantry is large but not huge, so he's within striking distance. I size him up, thinking about what I need to do. All I know is, it's either him or me, and I chose me!

I slash at Raymond's chest, and he jumps back. But I see blood, so I slash at his ass again. I miss the second time, but I keep swinging like I'm Freddy Krueger.

Him or me, him or me, him or motherfucking me! I chant over and over as I slash, and Raymond moves from side to side, trying to dodge my movements. Suddenly Raymond charges me, and he grabs my arm, forcing it over my head.

But I refuse to give up. I refuse to die by the hands of this psychopath without a fight! Not today, not ever!

"Bitch! I'ma kill yo funky ass!" Raymond growls as he slams me against the shelf,

but I refuse to let go of the knife.

The slam hurt like hell, but I think fast, and I bring my knee up and get him right in his community dick. Raymond hollers, and his hand loosens enough for me to stab him in the shoulder.

But before I can take off running, he grabs my leg, and I hit the floor. Raymond turns me over and climbs on top of me. He uses his body weight to keep me down as he pulls the knife out of his shoulder. He howls out in pain, and I feel satisfaction at the sound.

The knife clinks to the floor, and he looks me in my eyes. His dark brown eyes are almost black, and the evil staring back at me is unmistakable. Raymond picks the knife up and stabs me in the stomach. I feel the irony of the situation just like I do the pain radiating throughout my body.

I promised myself I would never be in this position again. But here I am once again lying in a pool of my own blood from a stab wound from my sadistic bastard of an ex. I want to fight, but I can feel myself fading. I don't want to die.

18

Stone

My heart is racing as I push my motorcycle as fast as it can go. The rumble and power of the machine would usually settle me, but the only thing that will calm me down is seeing Roxy safe.

I pull up to the gate in my community, and all the lights are out, and the guard is gone. Neither is a good sign. Unlike Roxy's place, the security is always on point. There are guards on duty twenty-four-hours a day, so someone should be on duty

even with the late hour.

Big Black pulls in front of me and hops off his bike. He goes over to the guardhouse, and a few seconds later, the gate is lifted.

Ace, Rock, Wire, Bishop, and myself speed through the lifted gate, and Black follows. We head around the corner to the beginning of my driveway. Rock stops before we get close to the house, and everybody follows his lead.

We kill our motors and turn off the lights. I want to keep going until I know what the fuck is happening in my home. How the hell did Raymond and Christine hook up and break into my house? Especially since Raymond is supposed to be fucking dead.

“Our bikes are too loud. If shit is goin’ down, they’ll know we’re comin’.” Rock says in explanation.

Everyone nods, but I don’t give a shit if anybody knows we’re on the way. Hell! Christine, out of all people, should know that I wouldn’t just let anybody come uninvited into my home without repercussion. I don’t know what she has to do with all of this, but there’s no turning back now. She’s dead to me.

Source Creation Date: August 15, 2025, 10:00 am

“We can park at the hunting shed and get to the house through the tunnel,” I say, and everybody nods. Only the guys know about the tunnels, and now I’m glad I didn’t tell Marie about them even though I trusted her.

There are a million reasons why I love living out in the country, but having twenty-five acres of land is the best. My house sits off by itself even though it’s in a gated community. My house isn’t a mansion like the other houses out here. I wanted more land than house, but my place has things that no other house has. Safe rooms, security rooms, tunnels, and even my very own torture chamber.

And I have no idea why Christine and Raymond thought they could break into my house while my woman is there, but both will get an up close and personal introduction to the Stone dungeon.

From the time I got the alert until now, it’s only been ten minutes, but that could be a lifetime, especially since Roxy said Green needed my help. We slip into the shed under the cover of darkness, and I scan my palm, and the hidden door slides open.

“I owe Sawyer big time for these palm scanners.” I hear Wire say, but I ignore his ass.

He gets a hard-on for anything high-tech, and I don’t have the patience right now to argue with his ass.

We make our way quickly through the tunnel that comes out in the safe room of the house. When I open the door, the room is empty.

I pull out my bowie knife while everyone else pulls out their weapons of choice. We don't know what we'll be dealing with, but we won't take any chances. In this room right now are some of the deadliest men in Texas, hell, maybe in the United States. Raymond, Christine, or whoever else is in my house won't make it out alive.

When I make it to the kitchen, my heart drops to my stomach when I see Roxy lying with blood surrounding her body. Po Boy on top of her with a knife in his hands. My feet are moving before I can completely register what I'm seeing. I drop my bowie knife to the floor, and I tackle Po Boy.

The knife he was holding slips out of his hands as we hit the floor. I'm on top of him when I notice that he's bleeding already. I'm going to make him bleed all over this damned kitchen. Po Boy is one dead motherfucker!

The darkness takes over my entire line of sight, and the only thing that will satisfy my thirst is Po Boy's head on a platter. I punch him in his face, and his jaw breaks like it's made of glass.

"You weak motherfucker! You stabbed my woman!" I continue to punch him until I feel his nose break. I want to break every bone in his damned face. I want his shit to look like silly putty when I'm done.

I normally like to use my knives or scalpels when I'm ready to bring death to a motherfucker, but today I'd rather use my hands. I wrap my large hands around Po Boy's scrawny neck and choke him. I want to see the life leave his eyes.

He's already half dead by the looks of him, and the measly attempts he makes to get my hands from around his throat are laughable.

"You disloyal pussy! You should've never been able to wear the Hellhounds patch!" I growl as I tighten my hands.

“Death! We need him alive.” I hear Rock’s voice through the fog, but they know not to touch me when I’m like this.

It takes a full minute for the fog to clear, but I reluctantly loosen my grip from around Po Boy’s neck. All I really want to do is snap it like a twig, but I let him go, and he drops to the floor with a loud thud.

“We need to get Green to the doctor!” Bishop hollers from the patio.

“And Roxy too. Her pulse is weak.” Wire says, but when he goes to pick her up, I take a menacing step toward him.

“Don’t fuckin’ touch her.” My voice is low and grating. I sound like a wild animal, but I don’t care. I don’t want anybody else touching Roxanne right now.

I pick her up, and her sweet clean scent and the metallic copper smell of blood surround me. She’s covered in blood and it looks bad. I press my hand to her stomach to keep pressure on the wound, as I rush out of the kitchen.

“We can take my truck. Put Green in the back. The keys are on the hook.” I shout out directions as I carry Roxy’s limp body to the garage.

Bishop and Black are carrying Green, and Rock grabs the keys, so he can drive.

“We’ll secure your house and look for Christine. Then, we’ll meet ya’ll at the clubhouse.” Ace says, and he and Wire disappear back inside.

Once we pile into my truck, I pray like I’ve never prayed before. I’ve dealt a lot of death in my life, but this one time, I don’t want death anywhere near me. Roxy and I just found each other, and I’ll never forgive myself if she dies.

I should've protected her. It's my job to keep her safe, and I left her with someone else. And although I know Green is capable, I left him unprepared, and that's my fault. It's my fault that two people that I care about are lying unconscious right now.

I hope to God that Ace finds Christine's trifling ass because she will wish that she'd never crossed me. But, mark my words... that bitch is dead!

We made it to the clubhouse even faster than we made it to my house. I'm surprised my pick-up could even go that fast. When we get there, Caesar is already waiting in our updated medical unit.

We used to have one room with a few medical supplies, but we've upgraded in the past few years. It helps that Wire is related to people who own a hospital. So the equipment we have is top-notch. And Caesar even got his medical license back. He still works for us, but it's helpful that he's a licensed physician again.

"Tasharie, we need to suture Roxy's wound, and get an IV going on. She might need a transfusion too." Caesar calls to his nurse.

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I know it's serious if Tasharie is here. She's a registered nurse, and she used to work for Caesar back in the day, but now she only comes around if he really needs help.

Tasharie rushes over to Roxy, and I hesitantly move out of her way so she can work. I watch as she cuts Roxy's shirt off and starts cleaning the wound. Caesar starts sewing up Roxy's wound as Tasharie expertly finds a vein and starts the IV. She turns on the pulse machine and clips the oximeter to Roxy's finger, Tasharie continues placing pads and connecting machines to Roxy as I stand there helplessly watching.

"Let's let them work." Rock places a hand on my shoulder, and I nod and move toward the door. I notice for the first time that Tasharie and Caesar aren't the only ones in the room, and there are two other women there as well.

Looks like Caesar has a whole surgical team now, and I'm glad that they are here. Not for the first time, Caesar has been a lifesaver for the Hounds. A group like ours is always in need of a good doctor.

When we leave, I see that they are cleaning up Green and have him hooked up to machines as well. I'm not sure what injuries he suffered because Roxy didn't say, and I was too preoccupied to see about my friend.

The thought makes me feel like an even bigger piece of shit because he was helping me, and I didn't even check to make sure he was okay.

I run my hands down my face, and I see that they're covered in dried blood. In fact, my entire body is covered in dried blood. I shake my head at myself. I'm drenched in blood, but I still wasn't able to save my sweet little lamb.

I leave the medical unit and go to my room to shower and change. I pull off my boots, jeans, and gray t-shirt and put them all in a black trash bag. I go into the bathroom and turn the water on steaming hot. But no matter how scorching the water, it will never wash away all of my sins. But I scrub my body hard anyways. I try to wash away the guilt while I hope with all my heart that Roxy and Green will survive this shit.

Once I'm finished with my shower and dressed, I take the trash bag out back to the fire pit. I get a good fire blazing, and I toss the bag in. It takes a while, but when it's nice and burned, I snuff out the fire and head back inside.

I go back to my room and lay on the bed, I'm exhausted, but I can't go to sleep. It's been hours since we got back to the clubhouse. I look at the clock on the wall, and it's almost seven in the morning. The sun is up, but with the black-out curtains in my room, I can't tell.

I should go to the unit to check on Roxy, but I'm hesitant. I know her status hasn't changed because nobody has come looking for me. I'm a big motherfucker whose nickname is Death, but I'm scared to see how Roxy is doing. Because if she dies, I won't be able to come back from that.

I slowly walk toward the medical unit when I see Ace coming from the Lounge. I stop in my tracks and wait for him to make it to me.

"You alright, brother? I know what it's like to have your woman laid up in the medical ward and not being able to do shit about it." Ace frowns, and I nod.

When Sassy and Ace first got together, he saved her from being almost beaten to death. The situation brought them together, but I never wanted to know how it felt to watch another man attack the woman that I'm falling for.

I'm still reeling at the fact that Po Boy stabbed Roxy, and we didn't find Christine or Raymond. I'm so confused about everything, and I hate the feeling. I am always so sure. I never falter or second guess myself. Not since the army, and now every thought that I have I question.

"Go check on Roxy and get some rest. There will be a shit storm coming, and we all need to be prepared." Ace claps me on my back and walks away.

I continue to the medical unit with dread weighing down every step that I take. There's something special about Roxy, and I know she's a fighter. She never would've been able to survive all the shit in her life if she wasn't. I just hope she knows that I care about her more than I let on.

I know that she's spooked about the amount of time we've known each other. But Roxy needs to understand, she's confusing the length of a relationship to the strength of a relationship. And those two things should never be misconstrued.

Our bond is like nothing I've ever felt before, and she can feel it too. Our connection is strong, and I pray that we get to keep building it.

When I walk into the room, Green is surprisingly awake. I head over to talk to him first to see what happened and make sure he's alright.

"Man, fuck, I'm sorry about this shit," I say, looking Green into his eyes. I always look a man in his eyes to show my sincerity.

"You're saying sorry? To me? You must be going soft in your old age." Green rasps out with a chuckle.

I shake my head, "Motherfucker we're the same age."

“Nah, you’re two days older than me.” Green jokes, and I chuckle.

When we were in the service together, we were the youngins of the crew. We stuck by each other, and Green always had my back. He saved my ass more times than I care to count, and I owe him.

Green stayed in longer than me, but when he recently showed up, I didn’t even have to talk him into joining the Hellhounds. He’s a prospect, but in name only; he has definitely earned his patch after this.

“Tell me what the fuck happened?” I say after our laughter dies down.

“Roxy told me that Po Boy is really Raymond.”

“Wait! What!” I shout, but when Green grimaces at the noise my loud voice makes, I try to calm my ass down.

“Yeah, that was my reaction. I hit the panic button and got Roxy in the safe room, but then Christine tried to break the patio door. So, I went to take care of her crazy ass, and when I stepped outside, I was hit in the back of the head.”

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“Damn, man. I didn’t know I needed to warn you about Christine. I thought her crazy ass was just being, well... crazy. I had no idea about her and fucking Raymond.” I lean against the wall with a heavy exhale.

My crazy ass ex-wife and Roxy’s crazy ass ex-boyfriend are working together, but why?

19

Stone

It’s been a full two days since all the shit went down at my house, and I’m still waiting on answers. Roxy is in and out of consciousness, but Caesar says she lost a lot of blood, so it may take a few days for her to completely wake up. However, she will be okay.

When Caesar told me that me that Raymond had stabbed Roxy in an old wound and that’s why it was hard for him to stop the bleeding at first, it made me wish I would’ve killed him. The fact that Raymond was close enough to cause that much harm has the rage building up inside.

We’re just waiting on Raymond to heal enough for me to torture him to death. But unlike Roxy, the motherfucker is still knocked out. I can’t wait to get my hands on him again.

When Roxy groans and her eyes flutter open, I’m right there holding her hand. She gives me a small smile before whispering my name. It’s the sweetest sound I’ve ever

heard.

“Hey, little Lamb. How you feelin’?” I swipe the hair from her face softly.

Sassy told me to put a bonnet on her head while she was lying there, but I don’t think she’ll care. What woman is worried about her hair while she’s recovering from an attack? Not my Roxy.

“I told you about that dang nickname, Stone.” Roxy’s voice is raspy, but she still has that little grin on her face, so I know she’s joking.

“I’m so sorry, Lamb. I’m so fuckin’ sorry, baby.” I kiss her lips softly, and she just holds my hand as I try and fail to rid myself of the guilt for not protecting her.

“It’s okay, Stone. None of this shit is on us. This is all Christine and her fucking brother.”

“Brother? Nah, you must be mistaken. I grew up with Christine. She doesn’t have a brother. Hell, she didn’t have any family. She grew up in a group home.” I say, wondering where the hell Christine found a fucking brother. Especially Raymond Frazier.

“I don’t know.” Roxy shrugs and then grimaces. “I just heard her call him brother. Maybe, she was just using slang or something.”

I take in Roxy’s words, but I don’t think that’s it. Christine always wanted a family; that was another reason we got hitched so young. Maybe she looked for her parents after we divorced and found a brother. Whatever the case, I need to know why she turned on me.

Because when it all boils down to it, Raymond got out because he’s snitching. And

there's a reason he joined the Hellhounds out of all the motorcycle clubs in the South.

"Don't think about that shit anymore, Lamb. It's done. I'll take care of you, and you can take my word; neither Christine nor Raymond will be able to hurt you ever again." I promise. I lean down and kiss her lips once more.

A throat clearing makes me look up. I see Dee standing in the doorway of the medical unit. She's been by Roxy's side since I called her and told her what was going on. To say that Dee was shocked was an understatement.

As many times as she'd been to the clubhouse, she'd never come across Raymond. Not even the night that Roxy saw him.

"Hey, cousin. How you feelin'?" Dee sits beside Roxy, and like me, she pushes her hair out of her face.

"You should've put a bonnet on her head." Dee frowns, and I mirror her expression.

"What is with you women and these damned bonnets. Roxy is recovering; she don't need that shit on her head."

"See, that's that white boy shit." Dee shakes her head disapprovingly. "You had a whole black wife. Didn't she wear a bonnet? Never mind, that bitch is crazy. Crazy bitches probably don't protect their hair." Dee keeps shaking her head, and I roll my eyes.

As far as I'm concerned, Dee is the crazy person. I would ask her if she wears a bonnet, you know since she's insane. But knowing her lunatic ass, she would try to fight me. And I don't want to deal with her mouth or beating the fuck outta Crush, so I keep my mouth shut.

My phone beeps, and I look at the notification that Rock called church. I feel both relieved and anxious. Relieved because I know he's found some answers to the many questions that I have, and anxious because who the fuck knows what those answers will be.

"I gotta go, Lamb. Get some rest, and I'll be back." I kiss Roxy once more and stand up from the chair I am sitting in. "Dee, make sure she gets something to eat. Rose made some food." Dee nods her head, and I leave the unit to head upstairs.

Ace and I enter the conference room at the same time, and all the guys are waiting except for Crush, who I'm shocked isn't here since Dee is.

"Where's Crush?" I ask as I look around. When shit like this happens, I like to know where all my teammates are, especially when Rock calls church.

"I sent Crush on an errand. He'll be back." Bishop says, and I nod.

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Source Creation Date: August 15, 2025, 10:00 am

“So, all of this feels like déjà vu. Because we’ve been betrayed once again by a motherfucker we called brother.”

“Raymond or Po Boy. That gutter motherfucker infiltrated the Louisiana chapter a year ago. Raymond was here to get the information on who our connect was. And if Roxy hadn’t seen him, it would’ve worked. The asshole he brought with him was an undercover ATF agent.” Rock’s anger is palpable, and I can understand why he’s so pissed.

The Hellhounds have kept things tight for two years, and our Texas chapter hasn’t taken any new members. We just started taking prospects, and Rock was reluctant to do that after Lip betrayed us. But the Louisiana chapter has been going on like nothing happened because it didn’t happen to them.

I want to know why the Hellhounds have been targeted and what Christine has to do with all of this.

“That crazy ass Marie said that motherfucker was alive. I guess she wasn’t as high as I thought.” Black says, his face twisted in disbelief.

“So, did Raymond actually have a shoot-out or not? Does Baller know any of this?” I ask.

“Yeah, he had a shoot-out alright with enemies of the Street Lords. Shit didn’t have anything to do with us. We think the agent who was working with him had it covered up.”

“Damn! That’s a lot of shit going on.” Ace remarks and grumbles of agreement sound around the table.

“It’s easy to have aliases and backgrounds made when you’re dealing with the law enforcement. They are the biggest gang in the world.” Wire’s words have never been truer.

Law enforcement is the dirtiest, most ruthless, downright foulest motherfuckers I’ve ever encountered. That’s why I hate being involved with them at all, but it’s a necessary evil in the Hellhounds business.

“So, Roxy just told me that Christine called Raymond, brother. Are they really siblings?” I ask the question that is burning in my soul.

I hate that the woman I brought around could be the root cause of the Hellhound problems. Especially when the alphabet boys are involved. I was greedy, thinking I could have my cake and eat it too when it came to Christine. I should’ve left her ass alone after our divorce.

“Unfortunately, they are, in fact, brother and sister. They have the same dad. Who abandoned her, but not his son Raymond. His current residence is the Mack Alford Correctional Center in Atoka, Oklahoma.” Wire reports, and I am dumbfounded.

“Why’d they target the Hellhounds?” Ace asks the question that I already know the answer to. Christine is the reason why they chose us because she wanted to get back at me. I just know it.

“That would be my fault,” Bishop speaks up, and I’m shocked as fuck.

“What do you mean?” I ask, sitting up in my seat.

“I put Kevin Frazier away when I worked as a prosecutor. This shit runs deeper than any of you could ever imagine.” Bishop’s eyes go dark, and I can tell by the look that there’s more than just some bad blood in their history.

“Well, fuck! I didn’t think Kevin Frazier would come back to haunt us. We should’ve killed his ass when we had the chance.” Rock says, and now I’m sure the history is tainted.

Before anyone can respond to the information. Crush walks in looking like he’s ready to kill someone or like he already did. He has the haze of rage in his eyes, and I wonder what errand Bishop sent him on.

“I couldn’t get to Myers. He knows we’re coming for his snake ass. He’s in hiding. Took a vacation.” Crush scowls. “But I got another package. She’s in the lounge.” Crush’s face morphs into the most sinister grin I’ve ever seen him make.

“Stone, you think you can question Christine without snapping her neck?” Rock asks, and I shrug.

“Bitch has it comin’. We know why she did what she did. Tryin’ to help her deadbeat ass daddy and her son-of-a-bitch brother. I don’t need to know shit else.” I guess the corrupt gene runs in the family. I shake my head at the craziness of it all.

This time I don’t care about her reasons. Christine has played one game too many. I won’t save her. I don’t want to save her. She’s put my entire brotherhood in jeopardy behind some bullshit ass revenge plot from two motherfuckers she doesn’t even know. Fuck her and her foul ass family.

Once again, I’m headed to the lounge to deal with more disloyal assholes. The more I think about the two women I trusted to be a part of my life turning on me without a second thought, the more the darkness takes over, and the anger rushes in.

Rock scans his palm, and the door opens, Stone is gone, and Death takes over. Christine is still in the holding cell along with an unconscious Raymond. Marie is in the other room awaiting her fate.

There's only me, Ace, Rock, and Bishop down here. Now that we have neutralized the threat, for now, the other guys could go take care of other things. We still needed to find Detective Myers, but his time was coming.

We had his puppets, after all, and Kevin Frazier was behind bars. The Hellhounds were safe from at least one threat. The ATF would have to regroup and come at us differently now that we had their snitch.

I opened the door to see a dead-eyed Christine. When she notices me, her face lights up, and a smile breaks out over her face. She looks at me like she used to when I beat up some guy that she said wronged her in some way.

The past manipulations are so clear to me now, that foolish is too light of a word for how I feel. But that shit is over now. She's made a fool outta me for the last time.

"Stone, I knew you would come." Christine purrs my name like the sex kitten she pretends to be for me. In reality, she's a snake.

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“You knew Death would come, yet you still thought you could get away...” I don’t miss the way her eyes widen at the name. I once trusted Christine, and she knows all about who I really am.

“I-I... let me explain.” Christine puts her hands up in surrender as she backs further into the cell. I stalk toward her.

I don’t know why she’s trying to run. We both know how this is going to end. She’s just prolonging the inevitable.

Christine is trembling with fear, and I think she finally registered that today would be her last. The game is always fun until somebody dies.

“You left me, and I just wanted a family. This is your fault too, Stone.” Christine is still trying to manipulate me, and I’m disgusted with myself that it worked so easily in the past.

“Fuck you and your family.” I sneer at her.

“My father will make sure you bastards pay for this. You need me alive so I can help you.” Christine’s tone is smug and if this woman has nothing else... she has the motherfucking audacity.

“Didn’t you hear what I said? Fuck your family.” I say slowly. I’ve had enough talking. I grab Christine by her neck, and she tries to fight me, but there’s no use.

“You will cease to exist. I told you not to fuck with me.” I smile as her eyes go wide

and tears start to run down her cheeks. Christine stops fighting me, and her hands go around my wrists.

“I love you, Stone.” Christine chokes out. Those words would’ve stopped me in the past because she’s one of the few people who said it to me in my life. But today, I don’t stop. Today, I squeeze even harder.

“You only love yourself. I hope it was worth it.”

I squeeze until the little light that she had in those dead hazel eyes snuffs out. I never would’ve imagined putting my hands on Christine before. Now that I’ve taken her life, I honestly don’t know what to feel.

“Do you want to handle Marie and Raymond?” Bishop asks.

“Shoot em’ in the head and burn their bodies together. You know, since they were so loyal to each other.” I say as I leave the cell.

There’s only one person that can make the darkness recede, and I plan on spending the rest of the day and maybe a few more, making her forget all the shit she’s been through. We both deserve to forget.

Epilogue

Roxy

I sip my drink at the bar and watch the shenanigans of the Hellhound clubhouse, and I chuckle. It has been a whirlwind of chaos and foolishness these past few months. Stone didn’t tell me everything that happened to Raymond or Christine, but I can read between the lines. You won’t have to worry about them again means they’re most likely buried on Hellhounds property somewhere.

And although he did tell me that Detective Myers took a leave of absence from the force, I know he's not dead because Stone warned me to keep my eyes open. And if I saw him call him immediately. So wherever Myers is, I doubt that he's coming back to Texas.

When Bishop filed a harassment suit against the Metro Police Department, he named Myers personally. He had all types of evidence of Myer's corruption that is now under investigation. However, Raymond being out of jail, or his disappearance was never mentioned. It was like he never existed. And I'm sure Myers was too busy covering his own ass to even think about Raymond.

When the news broke of all the corruption, Myers went into hiding, and the department had no comment about his whereabouts. They always protect their own.

I'm just glad that my name was nowhere near any of this shit this time, even though I was dab smack in the middle of it all. But I can never regret coming to the clubhouse on that faithful night. The fact that I met Stone and essentially gained a second family who is loyal and protective of me no matter what, is something I will never regret.

These men are crazy, and their old ladies are even worse, but I've never felt more welcomed and loved than I do here.

"Hey, Lamb! Come help me show these bunnies how we do it." Sassy grabs my hand and pulls me to the makeshift dance floor. As soon as we hit the floor, Dee and Blue joins us.

The DJ automatically switches the song from rock and roll to Meg, and we all yell, "ayyye," simultaneously. We shake and pop our asses to the beat. We laugh and hype each other up, knowing these hoes in here are super mad.

"Oh, I told you what would happen if I caught you shakin' that ass." Stone is behind

me, and I have no idea when he got here.

He and some of the boys were out on a run for a few days, and I had no idea that he was due back today.

“Hey, baby!” I turn around and wrap my arms around his neck. Stone bends down and lifts me up so I can wrap my legs around his waist.

“I missed you so fuckin’ much, Lamb. I hope you had fun with the girls ’cause I’m not lettin’ you outta my bed for a few days.”

I’m pretty sure he means it as a threat, but I take it as a promise because I’ve been missing my man.

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I hear the girls cheer us on as he kisses me deeply. I would've been embarrassed at such a public display in the past but not since becoming a Hellhounds old lady.

It's only been six months since Stone staked his claim on me, but we've been together ever since. We've been getting to know one another better, and the darkness that I saw the first night is still there at times.

I know all about what he does for the club and how his nickname is Death. None of it matters as long as we're together.

Stone carries me into his clubhouse bedroom and lays me on the bed with him hovering on top of me. He kisses me hungrily, taking every ounce of the breath from my lungs.

I gasp for breath when his greedy mouth moves to my sensitive neck. I moan loudly when he sucks my skin hard into his mouth. I know Stone is marking me like some horny teenager because he always does whenever we've been a part for more than a few days.

Stone thinks he has to stake his claim every time he comes back from a run. I don't mind because I love the savage in him.

Stone pushes my skirt up around my waist and slides my panties to the side. He slips his thick digit inside my soaking wet pussy, and we moan out our pleasure in unison.

"Damn, Lamb. Your pussy is so fuckin' wet." Stone slips his finger out of me and into his mouth.

He sucks his finger while looking me in the eyes. His blue eyes twinkle with mischief, and I know I'm about to be in for a long night. And I can't wait!

"Take all this shit off, baby. I need to eat your pussy. Come ride my face." Stone strips me by ripping my shirt in half and tearing off my panties and skirt. I'm so turned on that I don't even complain that the outfit was new.

Stone is on his back, palming his dick when I climb on top of the best ride I'll ever go on. I start to rotate my hips and slide my core over his beard, his lips, and his nose until he grabs my hips and holds me right over his mouth.

Stone slurps and sucks my lips into his mouth, and I feel euphoria creeping in. Not to be out done, I flip around, and with my ass in the air, I dive down face first onto his pulsating dick. I return the favor by slurping and deep throating his manhood like it's the tastiest treat I've ever had.

He moans into my pussy when his dick hits the back of my throat, and I gag. Stone lifts his hips up and pushes my head down, and I know he's about to come, so I palm his balls in my hand and start to massage.

"Fuuuuuuck! Yeah! Yes, baby! Fuck!" Stone's words vibrate against my pussy, and I feel my own orgasm starting at the tip of my toes and move through my entire body.

"Stone! Fuuuuuuck! I'm coming, baby! Yes!" Stone adds a finger and hits my g-spot as I squirt all over his face.

He doesn't even give me time to catch my breath before I'm flat on my back, legs in the air, and a hard cock deep inside of me. I scream out his name while he pounds into me hard and fast.

Stone gives me nasty open mouthed sloppy kisses full of my juice, and I love the taste of me on his lips. He continues to rock into me at a crazed rhythm that shows

how much he missed me this past week, and all I can do is hold on for the ride.

He flips me again, and I'm on all fours as he slaps my ass and kisses the back of my neck. Stone leans down and bites my earlobe as his fingers find my clit. He rubs in tight circles as his hips begin slowly at first and then builds up to a blinding pace that has me screaming the place down.

I don't even care that the clubhouse is full of people, and they can probably hear me getting the hell sexed out of me, but if they had dick this good, they wouldn't be worried about what I was doing.

"Cum for me, Lamb. Let me feel those juices on my dick. I want to feel that shit dripping down my balls. You're so fucking wet, baby." Stone's words do something to me, and I cum with a blinding yell.

Stone follows soon after, and the animalistic roar he lets rip out of his throat is one of the sexiest sounds I've ever heard in my life. If he hadn't just put my ass almost to sleep, I would be ready for another round.

"I love you so fuckin' much, Roxanne." Stone kisses my lips while he's going soft inside of me.

"I love you too." I rasp as my legs give out, and I collapse as he climbs off.

I'm completely out of it when I feel a warm towel clean me up. Stone wraps me in his strong arms, and I fall asleep tangled in the sheets, tangled in our love, entangled with the Hellhound.

THE END