



Fall of Hellfire (Hellfire Society #3)

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Category: Romance

Description: Well, it all comes down to this...

We have all made choices we have to live with.

Some with dire consequences while others are just for fun.

It might have started with a game, one the current leaders of Hellfire

thought they had no chance at losing.

But none of us are backing down now.

We are our father's children after all.

No, this is more than just a game, this is our life.

One we intend to survive.

We plan to tear down our father's corrupt empire, and watch it burn.

But the Hellfire Society needs to fall in order for the sons to finally reign.

Fall of Hellfire is book three of the Hellfire Society series. This is a why choose/reverse harem romance, meaning the FMC does not have to choose a single love interest in the series. This book may contain content triggering for some. Please read the author note at the beginning of the book for a detailed trigger warning or check out the authors website.

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one

ALI

How dare they threaten to withhold orgasms from me?

Who do they think they are?

I watch as the blacked-out truck turns the corner, and I continue to make my way towards Shane's gym.

Of course, they get to go off and do exciting recon while I'm stuck doing womanly shit.

Cursing under my breath, I mentally go over everything we need and the places I will need to go to get everything.

I'll show them I'm more than a supply runner. Maybe I should withhold orgasms from them, see how they like it.

The walk doesn't take too long, with the old gym we've been staying at only being a few blocks from the new one Shane and his dad opened up a few years back.

The neighborhood turns from industrial and run-down to livelier and more modern.

It's an odd feeling being back in the area after only a few weeks of being gone.

A small part of me didn't think I was ever coming back in the first place, let alone be alive to see it.

I thought the trials were it for me, but I always knew I was a stubborn bitch, and here we are.

Swinging open the door to the gym, my nose is assaulted with the scent of sweat and hard work while my ears are filled with the pained grunts of men and women sparring and working out.

Good ole memories. My own body twitches in response, wanting to hit the floor with the others to stretch out my muscles, but that will have to wait.

I'm on a mission. Get the supplies we need and get back because once we have some decent intel, we can make our move.

That thought makes it even harder to turn away from the floor and the urge to spar and focus on the task at hand. Finding Shane.

A quick glance around and I spot him toward the back, holding a heavy bag in place while a small woman goes to town on it.

I head in that direction, nodding to a few members spread out along the way.

Shane spots me in my approach and holds up a finger to let me know it will be a minute.

I take in the small woman that I now see is a young girl no older than thirteen or fourteen.

She's a hard hitter, but I can tell it's all out of rage, not skill.

I'm almost afraid to know why a little thing like her has so much rage built up.

The girl is dressed in a plain pair of black leggings and an oversized T-shirt.

Her shoes have seen better days as well, covered in duct tape and holes.

I don't even know this girl, but my heart breaks for her. It's something about the way she looks, the way she is holding herself, and the emotion I can practically feel coming off her in waves.

"Alright. Alright. Let's take a break," Shane finally calls out, and the girl flinches before jumping back a foot.

Her breathing is erratic and I can tell it was an automatic response to cower away.

I know it's not because of Shane; his tone was low, like he knew she might have this reaction.

He glances at me in sadness before focusing back on the girl.

Something inside of me twists as I clench my hands into fists, angry at the reaction.
"Hey it's okay."

Turning back to me, Shane nods to the girl.

"Ali, this is Evie." The girl's head snaps up, her messy, dirty blonde hair swaying over her shoulder and her big blue eyes wide with shock.

"Evie, this is the woman I was telling you about." I frown at Shane for a second as Evie adjusts her shirt sleeve, taking me in.

I realized she fixed her shirt to hide the bruises on her upper arms.

“And what did you tell her about me exactly?” I cock a brow in question. Evie nibbles on her bottom lip, eyes shifting between me and Shane and back again.

“He said you might be able to h-help me.” Evie’s voice is almost a whisper as she glares down at the floor. I narrow my eyes on Shane but focus my attention on the girl.

“And what exactly do you need help with that a complete stranger could fix?” I ask, but a part of me somehow already knows or has an idea.

“I-I- I. Well...it’s just... ummm...” Before she can get anything else out, a locker room door slams open, startling Evie.

Panic flashes in her suddenly dull blue eyes as they search the room, and her skin instantly pales.

“Never mind. I gotta go.” I don’t even get a chance to stop her before she is racing towards the front door and is gone.

“Who the fuck is that? And what the fuck just happened?” I ask, staring out the front like Evie might come rushing back any moment to explain.

Shane reaches down and grabs a towel off the floor before wiping the sweat off his face. “Ali, this kid needs help.”

“Call the cops or the child protective services. Why do you need me?” The moment I say the words, I inwardly roll my eyes. Cops and CPS won’t do shit. I bet they would just write her off as some troubled teen.

“I don’t know everything, but mom’s a druggie, and I think she’s using Evie to get what she needs.

” My eyes immediately find Shane’s saddened ones.

“She won’t tell me everything, but I found her in the back sleeping one night.

Someone did a number on her, but she refused to go to the hospital.

That was a few weeks ago. I told her that whenever she needed to escape, she could come here.

I started training her about two weeks ago, but she freaks anytime a male gets near her.

So, I told her I might have a friend who could help train her maybe. ” He eyes me expectantly.

“Okay, but there are other female fighters that come here.” I glance around and spot two from where I stand.

“But none that understand what she’s going through.” When I don’t say anything further, he adds, “Will you at least think about it? I know she will be back.”

“Shane, now is not a great time, you know that.” Glancing at the door once more, I shake my head.

“Look, keep training her how you are. Give her my number and tell her to call me in case of emergency. Once we get a handle on some things, I’ll pick up some training with her but try to get more information if you can.

” He looks relieved at my words as he nods in understanding.

“Anyways, do you have keys I can borrow?”

Nodding to the front desk, we head in that direction before he tosses me keys to his truck. “Take care of my baby, not a scratch, Ali, or else,” he warns and I roll my eyes. Men and their cars.

“Yeah, yeah. Or else. Got it.” I wave behind me before heading out.

I hate shopping! I mean, who actually likes shopping? A real psychopath, that’s who.

I had decided that driving across town was a safer bet with all that’s going on.

But boy, do I regret it now. Two and a half hours of multiple stores and way too much peopling to get everything we need or that Riot wanted, and I’m exhausted.

I barely did anything, but damn, who knew this much shopping was actually a mini workout?

My phone went off a couple of times, with the guy’s updates on their recon, but I know it shouldn’t be much longer for them all to start heading back.

Pulling up to the gym, I throw Shane’s truck into park and head in.

I figured it would be easier if he gave me a ride back so that I didn’t have to make multiple trips just to drop off his “precious baby”.

I don’t spot him through the windows, but I’m barely a foot in when Mark, another trainer, nods to the back.

“He wants you in his office; something important.” He shrugs before going back to whatever he was doing on the computer.

I frown at Mark’s words but head towards Shane’s office regardless.

I don’t bother knocking since the door is cracked open. Shane’s eyes snap to mine, and I see a flash of relief before he slumps back in his chair. My confusion grows for half a second before he speaks.

“Someone came here looking for you. He said you were in some kind of serious trouble. Then he claimed he was your brother and that he had been looking everywhere for you. Told me there was a reward for any information on your whereabouts.” My body moves automatically as I step back, ready to make a run for it.

“Calm your tits. I told him I hadn’t seen you in weeks.

That you just disappeared and haven’t been seen since.

But I did give him your apartment address.

Figured it was best to give him something since he knew you came here at some point.

” He winced at that, but I wasn’t planning on going back there anyways, and it’s not like there is anything that gives me away there.

I have an idea I already know who stopped by just from the “brother” comment, but I still have to ask.

“Did he leave you a name or anything?” I cross my arms over my chest, suddenly

even more exhausted than before.

I knew Ethan wasn't going to let me killing our father go, but I had hoped I had a bit more time to figure out how to deal with him.

Because it's not like we already have killer fathers and their empires to deal with, but the universe was like: "Hey, let's sprinkle in some psycho half-brothers in the mix as well. " Thanks universe— NOT.

Opening a drawer on his desk, Shane pulls out a small piece of cardstock. "Yeah, he left a card with a number to call if I hear anything about you as well." Handing over the small white card, I read the simple black print. Ethan Black. Under the name is a seven-digit number.

"I can see your brain turning, Ali, and I don't think it's a good idea." Shane's voice startles me.

"You don't know what I'm thinking," I snap, and Shane just cocks a brow.

"You didn't see this guy, Ali. He looked off, like a screw was loose. Isn't there a saying, like don't go poking the bear?" I glare at Shane for a moment before glancing back down at the phone number. He's right in a sense, but he also doesn't understand.

"Can I borrow the office for a minute?" When Shane doesn't get up to leave, I narrow my eyes on him. "I know what I'm doing." I tell him, and for good measure I add, "Please." Shane shakes his head at me before finally standing and heading towards me.

Right as we cross paths, he gently says, "I really hope you do, Ali." A moment later the office door closes with a soft click.

Taking a deep breath, I dial the number on the card and lean against the desk, my eyes on the door.

As the phone rings, I nibble on my lip. I really hope I know what I'm doing.

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two

ALI

The dial tone ring sounds ominous, as memories of my life before I ran away try to crash through the steel wall that's blocked them for years.

I don't know what I was expecting to happen, but the moment the call connects, I freeze.

My entire body just stops, my muscles bunch up tight, and something akin to anxiety takes over.

But that doesn't make sense; I don't fear Ethan or any of my past "family", but that doesn't stop a certain memory from forcing itself through my mind and taking over. The night I left and what I had overheard hits me like a freight train. Richard's and Miranda's voices ring loud and clear as if I'm sixteen all over again.

"She needs to go, Richard."

"I think I found someone to take her."

"They are willing to pay good money. I warned them about her attitude problem, and they said that makes her all that much more wanted."

"Honestly, all they wanted to know was if she was a virgin. They didn't even ask to see a picture of her."

“If we can do a business deal with these guys, they could lead us to more business down the road.”

"They say they will come at night, something about less of a fight if surprised.”

That night I made the decision to never be afraid of the Blacks again, so why am I so nervous now?

Before I get the chance to speak, Ethan lets out a heavy and annoyed sigh, sounding like the total prick I remember.

That somehow breaks the weird spell I was under, but I’m mindful of Shane's last words.

I take a moment to breathe, taking in a lungful of air before slowly letting it out.

Deciding to pull a power move that all men hate, I wait.

He will either speak first, which will give me the upper hand to control the conversation, or he will simply hang up, which he will still lose because he folded first.

Taking a seat at Shane's desk, I kick my feet up, prepared to wait as long as I need to get my point across. I’m in control here, and I’m not afraid of him. Luckily, I don't have to wait too long. My silence finally annoys Ethan enough that he snarls, the sound static through the phone.

"Who the fuck is this? Do you know who the fuck I am?" I can't help myself; I roll my eyes. Not that he can see, but the whole “my dick is big, so don't fuck with me bit” is old and outplayed. And come on, the “Do you know who I am?” line is such a cliché.

"I do know who you are," I say, knowing that I'm taunting the man, one who is not my biggest fan right now. I mean, I did kill our father; it's not the best idea, but I can't help it. I hear a sharp intake of breath before Ethan speaks again.

"Alison?" he asks with a hint of interest. Or is it surprise that I hear? Regardless, the way he just said my name sends a shiver of disgust down my entire body.

"I've heard you've been looking for me. Why?" Now I'm rolling my eyes at myself. I know why. He wants to kill me. An eye for an eye and all that. His next words give me pause, though.

His tone suddenly turns from surprised that I called him to excitement, and not like the "I just found my long-lost half-sister kind.

"I've been looking for you since you left me.

" No, the way he says, "you left me", is the way my guys talk to me.

Obsessive, possessive. 'Where have you been, Alison? Why did you leave me?'

"I've been around." I don't bother addressing his second question, but that doesn't seem to bother him, he just continues on.

"You know, I was surprised to see you last week but not disappointed.

You've grown up since I saw you last. Filled out in all the right places too.

Honestly, I didn't recognize you at first with all those tattoos and pretty pink hair.

" He lets out a throaty sound. "Tell me, sis, is your pussy as pretty and pink as your hair? "

If I thought I was disgusted before, I was wrong. My head practically reels back in shock at his words, but I don't have time to fully process them as he once again continues.

"I was mad when I found out you ran off.

Richard was only mad because he was planning to sell you.

I disagreed with that decision. I wanted you all to myself, but our father told me no, time and time again.

I was waiting until your birthday, but I should have taken you sooner.

Staked my claim to you." He lets out another deep sigh.

"I'm not even upset you killed the bastard.

It was about time I took the full reins.

Plus, I don't think he would have accepted our relationship. "

This time I can't hold back my gag. "You're a sick fuck, Ethan. I'm your sister; there is no and will never be a relationship between us. Ever." My voice raises with each word, my disgust blatantly evident, but my words only make the bastard laugh.

"We are half siblings, Alison. It doesn't even count." The delusional sick fuck truly believes that. I try to think back to when we were younger, when he started looking at me differently, but nothing comes to mind. Honestly, he probably has always been a twisted fuck, but now he doesn't care who sees. Ethan's laugh continues as if this really is just one big joke.

Okay, Ali. Think. You called to get information but turns it out all you figured out is that your half-brother is a sick fuck. Stay calm. We need information.

Taking a deep breath, mainly to not throw up all over Shane's desk, I try to stay calm. Ignoring his previous comments, I redirect the conversation. "Why are you working with the Hellfire Society?"

"We are indebted to them because of you.

They came for you. But when Richard and my mother told them you ran away, they weren't as understanding as our father had hoped.

Instead, they threatened to kill my mother and then burn the entire house down with us in it.

Do you know what that is like? To watch as men stripped your mother bare right in front of you and threaten to make you watch while they took turns," he growls out, the sound distorted over the phone.

"Richard did what any man would do: bargained. Our family real estate business gave us access to all sorts of things, so we made a deal. We could provide real estate when needed as well as information we could dig up with access to city hall. Luckily over the years, we were able to show our family's worth, and we were finally going to be able to sit at the big table.

But once again, you had to ruin it." He takes another long pause as I absorb the information he is giving me.

"But I suppose not all is ruined. I was offered a better deal recently. "

Curious and hopeful he will tell me more, I ask, "What sort of deal?" The question

makes Ethan burst out in manic laughter, and I have to bite my lip from just cursing the fucker out.

"Oh, Alison. Your little fuck buddies have really pissed off their daddies.

Now me and Richard weren't any better, but he wasn't going to outright put a bounty on my head.

But people say everything works out in the end.

Now I do have to run, but I look forward to seeing you soon, sis.

" The line clicks off and I just sit there still a bit stunned.

I feel just as useless as I did before the disrupting conversation. I was hoping for some sort of information, even a sliver, to be able to help glue together this puzzle. But I feel like I got nothing from him. Hell, I didn't even control the conversation when he was the one doing all the talking.

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three

ALI

The longer I sit here the longer my own annoyance and rage build.

At the world I was born into, the life I was dealt, and the situations I was all but forced and thrown into as of late.

Hell, I'm even a bit mad at Cash, Arsen, and Riot for treating me like some damsel in distress.

I haven't made it this far in life because of any man. No, I'm a fucking badass because of me.

A knock at the door has me shooting daggers at the worn wood. I know it's Shane probably just checking in on me, but now I'm pissed at him too. Actually, I'm mad at anyone who has a dick swinging between their legs. Fucking men.

"Hey Ali, you doing okay?" Somehow I glare even harder at the wooden surface, but I know being mad at everyone around me won't fix my current issues.

"Come in," I call out, not bothering to remove my feet from Shane's desk. Opening the door, Shane steps through the doorway, his eyes zeroing in on my boots before just shaking his head and turning his eyes to my face.

"I'm guessing the conversation didn't go as planned.

" He moves until he takes a seat across from me.

I give him a small shake of my head in answer before throwing my head back in frustration.

"Well, Evie stopped by again. She forgot her backpack.

I gave her your number and told her to call you if anything she can't handle happens.

I told her you would understand what she was going through.

" My eyes snap to Shane's face, but he doesn't give anything away.

Tilting my head, I focus on Shane, but then his words give me a spark of an idea.

A very bad idea but one that could fan out to some good information if I can execute it right.

Ethan mentioned how he and Richard had finally paid off their debt and were about to sit at the big table, which means the Blacks have been useful to the guys' fathers, and they probably have a lot of info on them.

Pair all that with Shane's earlier words about Evie and a rough childhood so far, and a plan starts to form in my head.

He is right that I could understand what she is going through because I didn't have the best childhood growing up either.

My childhood was becoming a punching bag for my supposed family while Richard spent all his time in his home office with his perfect child, Ethan, "working".

A home office that I bet holds tons of information that could be useful to me and my guys.

"Ali, what are you thinking of doing? Because I really don't like that look in your eye. It screams that you are about to do something really fucking stupid." Shane is leaning forward now, a worried look on his own face that has every right to be there.

"Can I borrow the truck again? I think I forgot some supplies," I say innocently before removing my feet and standing.

I do a quick stretch, then turn and hold out my hands expectantly.

Shane frowns, staring at me like he is trying to figure out my plan, but ultimately digs his keys out of his sweat pockets and hesitantly hands them over. He doesn't release them immediately.

"Look, I know you are going through a lot right now, but please don't do anything stupid.

" I return his stare for another long moment before nodding. I know he will think what I'm planning is stupid, but it's more than just collecting information at this point.

This is closure. He must see something on my face because he finally releases the keys and steps back, concern painting his features.

Not wanting to lie to him if he asks any more questions, I turn to the door and head to the front.

Pulling my phone back out as I go, I open the group chat and see Cash and Arsen have already texted, only a few minutes ago.

No word from Riot, but if I know that man at all, he's probably knees deep in a pool of blood.

Plus, I don't need to worry about him, the man is obsessed with me.

I doubt even death could keep him from somehow finding me.

CASH: Got what I needed. Taking the scenic route back now.

I don't know what the scenic route is, but I'm guessing he is going to drive around for a bit before coming back.

ARSEN: Headed home. Found out something interesting.

If my plan goes well, I hope I'll have some good information as well. I know I can't tell them where I'm going or what I plan to do. They wouldn't even listen to my reasoning if I brought it up, so I realize I have to lie. At least lying through the phone is easy.

ME: Okay. I'm grabbing the last of the supplies and then need to make one last stop.

But then I add a second text for good measure.

ME: See you all soon. *kissy face emoji*

Now, fingers crossed everything from here on out goes well.

The entire drive to my destination, I go through my loosely thought-out plan over and over.

I used to know the ins and outs of the Black estate like the back of my hand when I

lived there.

I had to. It was literally my job, but doing what I needed to do without being seen also made my life easier.

Less beatings and less bullshit I had to deal with.

This crazy idea of mine only works if nothing has changed over the last few years.

I park the truck a few blocks away. If I park it any closer, it will get noticed and seem out of place among the nice cars and houses.

The Blacks live in a nicer area than most, but not so nice that it's gated.

I mean, they have guards that ride around on golf carts, driving up and down the different streets all day, but I can just say I'm new to the area and just taking a walk.

The walk in question takes me about ten minutes or so, but I keep a casual pace to not raise suspicions.

I even give a few neighbors a friendly wave as if I actually belong here.

As the Black estate comes into view, I speed up my pace, my eyes darting around for anything out of the ordinary.

Especially since I know Richard and Ethan were working with the guys' dads, there's a chance they decided to up security here as well.

When everything looks just about the same on the outside as it did the day I left, I take the chance and dart between a few oversized bushes that split the house from the neighbors.

I keep low, not wanting to chance being seen on a camera as I move toward the back of the property and toward where my father's office used to be.

He had a large sliding glass door installed when I was little, and for some reason, it was always unlocked.

I learned later that it was how the maids came in and out.

Well, the so-called maids, they were really fuck buddies that he didn't want to flaunt in front of Miranda, not that she didn't have her own.

When I get to the back of the house, I rush forward until I'm pressed flush against the brick wall.

Taking a deep breath, I slowly peek around the corner and pray no one is out back.

Luckily I don't see or hear anyone, so making my move, I creep around the corner and to where Richard's office once was.

This is where it gets really tricky. Just because the outside of the place hasn't changed doesn't mean the inside never did.

Miranda was always complaining about how they always needed to redecorate or refurnish something.

It takes me only a few steps to get to the glass door, but my luck continues with the blinds being cracked open, giving me a clear view of what is indeed still an office.

The layout has changed, but that's about it.

Using caution, I slowly reach for the handle and give it a swift jiggle.

It gives, letting me know it's unlocked, and I release the breath I didn't realize I was holding. Moving at a snail's pace, I gently turn the handle all the way until there is a soft click and the door gives, allowing me to slide the door to the right and squeeze through.

Once inside, I freeze at the sound of voices coming from further in the house.

Turning towards the sound, I spot the office door sitting halfway open.

Shit. Ever so quietly I ease the sliding glass door closed, not wanting to give away my presence if anyone were to walk by.

I decide not to mess with the main door, not taking the chance at alerting someone if it creaks or, worse, someone sees that it's suddenly shut. So, I'll just have to sneak around and stay as quiet as possible.

Keeping my steps slow and steady, I move to the filing cabinet closest to me first. Jiggling the handle, the metal makes a small thumping noise that has me tensing.

My entire body freezes as I strain to hear any movement that might be coming to inspect the sudden sound.

After a few moments of nothing happening, I abandon the filing cabinet idea and move to the desk.

I start by pulling out a few drawers, checking a few unlabeled files, and moving on.

I don't find much, other than a few sticky notes with chicken scratch written across them, some pens, paperclips, and other useless office supplies.

I do find two small black flash drives and slip those into my back pocket.

Hopefully they hold something we can use.

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The top of the desk is also pretty bare.

A few more useless file folders and random estate documents.

A small lamp, stapler, and a laptop that is already open.

This gives me pause. Glancing towards the door, I strain my ears to listen for anyone again but only hear a few low murmurs still further in the house.

If the laptop is open, someone was working and will probably be back soon, so I need to get in and get out now.

Moving the mouse, the computer screen lights up, the screensaver a picture of some perfect beach.

Hitting the spacebar, the password request square pops up, and I quietly curse. Fuck.

Quickly, I look around for anything that could be a password.

Everyone has their password written down somewhere, right?

They do in the movies. Movies, that's it!

If this were a movie, where would the password be?

Taking a move from the spy books, I check under the actual laptop, and bam. There it is.

Maybe I should go buy a lotto ticket after this. I am getting so lucky today.

I almost roll my eyes as I read the actual password written down.

MasterBlack1234. Really?! My father was so full of himself.

Quickly getting back on track, I type in the password, and the screen changes.

Suddenly, dozens of file folders pop up on the home page.

I glance at the door again as the voices seem to grow.

Shit, I'm running out of time. Thinking fast, I pull out one of the flash drives from my back pocket and connect the device to the laptop.

Then I'm moving all the folders to the drive as quickly as I can.

I don't even read what they are labeled as. We can go through each of them at a later time. Once I move every file, a download square pops up telling me it will take four minutes and thirteen seconds to upload everything. Fuck. I don't have a choice but to wait.

So, I sort of just stand there, looking around the office that I once knew as part of a home.

I try to envision if the rest of the house could be the same or different, but the only thing that comes to mind is the basement.

Or what used to be my room. For a moment I can almost smell the dirt from the floor.

Feel the scratchy blanket and lumpy bed I was given.

Taste the tears that I would cry, hoping and wishing someone would save me each night.

I'm shaken from my trance when the sound of voices grows louder and closer.

My eyes snap down to the download bar, reading two minutes and ten seconds before going to the door.

This time I don't have to strain my ears to hear anything when one of the voices, female and familiar, begins to yell from down the hall.

"Ethan, we should be hunting that little bitch down for what she did to your father.

I should have made her disappear when she came to us as a baby.

Not even her own whore of a mother wanted her.

But I thought having a sibling would be good for you.

Look at what we all did for her when she was younger, and this is how she repays us.

She has been nothing but a thorn in this family's side since the day she was born.

" Miranda is screaming at this point. I can almost picture her in my mind. All done up in the most expensive clothes, hair and makeup done flawlessly, everything about her fake. She probably has tears in her eyes, a hand over her chest as if she might faint at any moment. I almost roll my eyes at the image. It's the same thing she would do to ensure I got punished when I was young.

"Oh, Richard, Alison is out of control. She raised her voice to me, threatened me, hit me...". Blah, blah, blah. I would get in trouble for even breathing wrong with her. She

hated me the moment I started looking like my mother and became the reminder that her husband wasn't a saint of a man.

Another voice responds after a moment, this one just as familiar as the first and sounding more irritated.

"Mom, we have people out looking for her, but I will decide what happens to her.

We have bigger problems than Alison at the moment.

James and Henry have tasked me with finding their sons.

We won't be able to get our revenge if we are the ones six feet under. Now let me work," Ethan says coldly.

The sound of heavy footsteps can be heard, and my heart rate picks up.

Fuck, I need to get out now. The download bar reads thirty more seconds, but I can't risk it.

Yanking out the flash drive, I have a split-second decision to make when I realize I might escape in time.

Taking a deep breath, I place the flash drive in my mouth and swallow.

Almost choking on the device as I rush toward the sliding door.

The moment my hand touches the handle, Miranda lets out a horrible screeching sound before yelling out. "Fine, but I want that bitch's head on a silver platter for what she did to my Richard." But I'm too late.

A cold chill runs down my spine when I hear the click of a gun followed by a deep chuckle.

"Well, well, well. I didn't think it would be this easy to find you.

" My entire body is coiled tight as I hear and feel Ethan's vile voice move closer to me.

"And to think, I figured this would be the last place you would ever want to visit again.

" A second later, the warmth of another body steps closer to me.

With my hand not touching the door, I slowly reach for the hem of my shorts, where a small, thin blade is hidden.

I will only get one shot at my escape, and I need to make my move now, before he can get an upper hand first. Ethan leans forward; the cold metal of a gun sliding up the back of my leg in warning as he places his mouth near my ear.

"I miss you, Alison. Now be a good girl and turn around slowly and show me your hands.

Don't make me have to hurt you." His words ignite a flame of rage as I reach the blade, grip it tight, and make my move.

"Fuck you," I curse as I spin on my heel, lift my arm, and slice my hand down.

He must have been expecting me to rebel because he attempts to jump back out of my reach, but my blade catches him on his arm.

It wasn't deep enough to do serious damage, but he lets out a string of his own curses as red bleeds through his white dress shirt.

I grin at my work before attempting to yank open the door behind me.

But this time it doesn't budge. Ethan lets out a sinister chuckle from behind me as I turn to face him once more, not wanting my back to the bastard.

"After you left, Richard upgraded the security system. Automatic locks with the press of a button." He grins before looking down at his smartwatch flashing red. I narrow my eyes at the bastard before weighing my odds. I can take him easily. I've taken men bigger than him down on multiple occasions. I even left the fight with not a scratch on myself, but this is different. Ethan is holding a gun and has a glint in his eye that screams crazy, and not in my husband's—Riot—kind of way.

Ethan's eyes wander over my body for a long second before he licks his lips and smirks.

"I can't wait to ruin you, sis, but that will have to wait.

I have more pressing business to attend to, so put it down, and this will all move along a lot faster. " I snarl at him and his words.

This time I don't wait; I need out, and he is blocking my only option, so I charge him. But my small frame is no match for his much taller one. I attempt to jump to the side, swiping my blade out as I go, but Ethan raises his arm and brings it down hard. Right on top of my temple. And just like that, I'm out cold.

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four

ALI

The taste of copper coats my tongue as I come to.

My head is pounding louder than the front row of a rock concert, and as I try to take stock of what is happening, I realize I can't move.

Ever so carefully, I open my eyelids and regret it immediately.

There is a bright light directed straight at my face.

I let out a groan of pain as I mentally go through my body and check for additional injuries.

Luckily, it only seems to be my head and the fact that I bit my tongue when that douche hit me over the head.

Being a bit more alert now, I twist my arms and legs ever so slightly, not wanting to alert anyone who might be watching me.

I'm in a seated position, and my wrist, stomach, and lower legs are strapped down to the chair.

Next, I listen. After a few moments of the only sound being my own breathing and heartbeat, I attempt to peek open my eyes again.

This time, I keep them downcast until they can adjust. A minute later, I'm lifting my head to find a very familiar room, and one I never wanted to see again.

You would think the basement of the Black estate and a prestigious family would have a renovated basement that they would use as a fancy wine cellar or something else just as ridiculous, but no.

Their basement is unfinished and used as storage for unwanted junk.

Hence why I was banned from living upstairs.

My eyes take in the all too familiar surroundings, and a small part of the little girl I once was sheds a tear.

Everything I had to go through to get to where I am now flashes through my mind, and I clench my teeth in rage.

Everything this family made me go through.

Everything looks completely untouched from when I was last here.

My old dresser, the old lumpy mat I called a bed.

Even the old, raggy blankets still lie where I left them.

On the opposite side of the room, a few boxes line the wall next to a built-in counter.

I think they once had plans to turn this room into something more, but I probably ruined that plan too.

Suddenly, a jiggle of the door handle above has me snapping my eyes towards the old

wooden stairs.

Footsteps begin to descend, and I immediately shut my eyes and let my head hang like I'm still passed out.

From the sound of it, I can only hear one set of footsteps, which gives me hope I might be able to take whoever has come to check on me.

I don't know how much time has passed, but I know my guys will get worried if I don't check in soon.

Or worse, they might try looking for me.

Taking a slow, deep breath, I prepare myself for whatever is about to happen.

I wasn't prepared. It was Ethan who decided to join me down here.

He also thought I was taking too long to acknowledge him, so he planted his fist into my stomach to get my attention.

The air whooshes from my lungs in a pained groan as I turn and glare daggers at him.

The smug bastard just smirks down at me like he's the cat that got the cream.

He's lucky I'm tied to a fucking chair right now, or else I would return the favor of smacking that look off his face.

Ethan stands there for a long moment. Me glaring at him while he just smirks at me until he leans forward and...

sniffs me. What the fuck?! I knew something wasn't right inside Ethan's head but I

think he has finally lost it.

“You smell divine, Alison. Even among all this dirt and grime. You smell good enough to taste.” And then the crazy fuck licks me.

I jerk away from the assault, but I don’t get far.

Ethan laughs before standing and moving over to the table.

“Just like I thought. You taste sweet too. I can’t wait to have you all to myself, but that will have to wait a little longer.

We have a few things to take care of first.” I don’t know if it was the hit to the head or just the shock of the position I’m now in, but it takes me a few extra seconds to comprehend Ethan’s words fully.

Something inside of me finally snaps. “You’re a sick fuck, Ethan.

I should have killed you just like I did Richard.

You need some serious fucking help, but if you touch me again, you will regret it.

” If I were an animal, I would be foaming at the mouth as I yank against my restraints.

He will regret ever touching me in the first place — I plan to kill him regardless.

Ethan doesn’t seem to take my threat seriously because the fucker just starts humming a little tune as he starts pulling metal things out of a bag and placing them on the table.

Unfortunately, I'm too far to really see what he is laying out, but I have a few guesses.

This all screams B-rated horror movie in the making.

"Why don't you just kill me already and save the theatrics for someone who will care," I snap, twisting at the binds once more. If I can just get my wrist free.

"Now, Alison. Why would I kill you? I love you. We were meant to be together since the day you were born. I just knew it. I know it's taken us this long to finally be together, but those assholes have gotten in the way.

Which is why I need your help." He turns to face me now, a look on his face that I can't quite read.

I finally take him in. When I first saw him at the party a few weeks ago, I instantly recognized him.

He hadn't changed much since I left years ago, but now there is an edge to him.

One that screams crazy red flags and not the ones I like.

No. Ethan is just all wrong. He took after our father in the looks department with light brown hair and shit brown eyes.

He has a light complexion, with sharp angles, and is built like a swimmer, thin and fit.

Ethan is currently dressed like a pompous ass, in tan slacks and a light blue polo.

More like he is about to go play golf, not whatever he has planned for me.

“So, Princess.” The nickname makes me wince.

Ethan used to call me princess when we were younger as a joke.

Since, you know, I was never actually treated like one, unless it was Cinderella, but she never made it to the ball.

He either doesn't notice my reaction or doesn't care because he steps forward, hands behind his back, and continues.

“We can either do this the easy way, and you tell me what you know. Or...” He shows me his hands and the thin, small knife that glints under the overhead light.

“Or we do it the hard way. I don't want to hurt you, Princess, but I will if I need to. ”

I bite my tongue to keep from snapping out a retort that wouldn't do me any favors right now.

When he realizes I'm not going to answer him, he grins wide and nods before bringing the knife he was holding down and across my leg.

It's not a stab but a slice, deep enough that blood immediately wells.

I let out a slew of curses as my irritated glare returns.

Oh yeah. He is definitely on my kill list.

Without missing a beat, he continues on talking, and I let him, somewhat hoping he will slip up and either let out useful information or I get free and kill him.

I'll be happy with the latter but will accept the information until I can come up with a

plan.

“You know, Princess, those boys you’ve been hanging out with are going to get you killed.

Their fathers have made me a very interesting deal that I think you will like.”

I really did try to hold my tongue, but I’ve never been good at keeping my inner voice quiet.

“Go to hell!” My outburst is answered with a slap to the face, which splits my lip and has blood filling my mouth.

Looking up at Ethan, I give him my own wicked grin, bloody teeth and all, before spitting a gulp of blood right at him.

I watch in delight as it lands right on his chest, his light blue shirt soaking the bright red up.

My smile widens at Ethan’s disgusted look, but he doesn’t find it as entertaining as I do.

Suddenly his whole demeanor changes. Ethan’s stance straightens, and a blank look crosses his face.

Then he speaks, but his tone is now cold and dead-like, and it has a chill skating down my spine.

“You know, Allison, you should have listened to what I had to say first, but no worries. I’ll get what I want regardless of whether you cooperate or not.

Just know, this doesn't bring me any joy.

It hurts me, actually, but this is the way you chose. ”

Then he swings at me.

The first few punches are to my lower body, my stomach and legs, all the while Ethan is spouting out how this is my fault, my doing, and that I just need to accept my fate.

I'm able to withstand the attack for only a few minutes before the pain becomes unbearable, but by then he has moved to my entire body, and I know I will be one giant black and blue bruise when this is over.

At some point Ethan delivers a hit to my temple again, and everything blacks out.

I don't know how long I'm out this time, but I'm woken by my legs being yanked open and the cool edge of a knife skating against my skin.

I stay frozen in pain and fear as cold air rushes against my pantie-covered core, and I realize my shirt has also been cut away.

I try to open my eyes to see what is going on, but my left is swollen shut and my right barely budes, but I can see Ethan kneeling in front of me.

Every worst-case scenario flashes through my mind as he stares at the apex of my legs.

He hasn't realized that I'm conscious yet, so I take the time to take stock of the damage.

Where it was just my head earlier is now my entire being, down to my hair follicles.

Okay, Ali, not the end of the world. You can still feel pain, which means you are alive. Which means you can fight.

Without warning, I watch in horror as Ethan suddenly shoots forward and shoves his face between my legs.

He takes a deep inhale before pulling back and sighing.

“Fuck. I knew you would be sweet. I can not wait to have you all to myself, begging me to fuck you senseless.” So much for pretending to still be knocked out as my entire body bucks in disgust. “Ahh, there she is.” He chuckles before standing and sliding his fingers across my cheek.

He turns and heads back for the table to grab a new knife and returns to stand in front of me.

“I’m sorry I lost my temper earlier, Princess, but all this will heal.

In the meantime, let’s discuss this deal.

I was promised you wouldn’t be harmed as long as your new little friends were dead, so I need you to tell me where they are.

The quicker we deal with all this nonsense, the quicker we can move past the past and start a future.

What do you say?” He twirls the knife in his hand before pointing it at me in question.

I take a moment to swallow all the blood coating my mouth before giving Ethan a small nod. “Good girl. I knew you would choose your life over theirs. So where are

they?" He bends down, his face getting close to mine as I croak out my answer.

"Go. Fuck. Yourself." And then I pull back and headbutt the fucker, laughing as he stumbles back, landing on the dirt floor, not expecting the hit. Glaring up at me, he wipes the blood I left on his forehead off before he climbs to his feet.

"I really wish you chose the easy way, but don't worry, Princess, you will come around. I'll make sure of it. Now night, night." I saw the next hit coming and embraced it like a lover's kiss.

This time it's the burning pain that has me jerking awake.

"Hold her down, I'm almost done." Hands grip my arms and legs as a burning sensation runs across my thigh.

I scream out like my flesh is being ripped open as Ethan barks out a new order.

"Give her a sedative already." In the next moment there is a pinch in my neck, but the burning in my thigh continues.

"Hand me the tracker. Once I finish dropping her off at that gym, I'm sure they will know who to connect with to get her back to the targets. "

That's the last thing I hear before the pain disappears and my mind goes blank once again.

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five

CASH

For once, taking the so-called "scenic route" home is a bit more calming.

I knew there wasn't anyone following me halfway through the drive, but the quiet helped me think.

I always knew my father was a bastard, but the last few weeks made it even more evident.

Sadly, I never thought it would come down to only one of us making it out alive.

Pulling up to the old gym, our temporary home, I throw the SUV into park and climb out.

Grabbing everything I got from my father's office.

Arsen is more tech-savvy and will know how to sort out all these files for good information, or he will know someone we can trust to do it for us.

I'm the first one back, but it doesn't take Arsen long to show up next.

We don't immediately talk, because none of us like to repeat ourselves, and it's better to share everything once everyone is back.

He decides to go shower, complaining of smelling like a cheap whore, while I move around the kitchen and make some coffee.

Within the hour, Riot is pushing his way through the door, covered in blood and grinning like a maniac.

None of which surprises us. I simply roll my eyes and continue to review some of the files I had grabbed, seeing if I can find anything useful while we wait for the others.

When Riot finally notices Ali isn't home yet, he gets annoyed, huffing and puffing as he glares around the room.

Arsen, who is seated across from me doing his own research, suddenly clears his throat. "I think Ethan may be a bigger threat than anticipated." My head snaps in his direction, as does Riot's. I cock a brow in question, wondering where this statement suddenly came from.

"What do you mean?" Riot demands.

Arsen begins to go into his reasoning, explaining how one of the girls at the club he visited was talking about a Mr. E. Mr. E, apparently was bragging about his status within the Hellfire Society and how big changes were coming. Before I can ask for sure if it's Ethan, Riot beats me to it.

"Okay. Do we know if it's him?" Riot is in full guard mode. Glaring at all of us and probably going over ways he wants to kill Ethan Black.

Arsen lets out a heavy breath, a look of disgust crossing his face before he looks up. "I have a feeling it's him." I frown at the way he grinds out his words.

"Why?" I demand in a calmer manner than I actually feel. Somehow I know I'm not

going to like Arsen's next words.

"The girl said that lately Mr. E has been asking the girls to wear a black and pink wig and a bunny mask." Riot and I freeze, our bodies going tight with tension. "He even calls them Ali when he is fucking them." With those words, Riot sees red.

"What the fuck!" he screams, standing and rushing to the wall closest to him before throwing his fist into it as he curses up a storm.

"That sick fuck needs to go!" he says, turning back to couches, a look of rage on his face.

His chest rising and falling in deep pants, trying to control himself from rushing out and hunting the dead man walking down.

Arsen puts his hands up in a don't kill the messenger way. "Okay, we all need to calm down. We shouldn't make any decisions without Ali here." He has a point.

When she finds out about this new development, she is going to flip.

Probably want to join Riot on his hunt. Setting his tablet down, Arsen stands.

Turning to Riot, he says, "Why don't you go get cleaned up?"

"That's a good idea; Riot needs a minute to calm down before he actually does something stupid.

Arsen offers to make some food in the meantime while we all wait for Ali.

It's getting dark, and Ali should be getting back soon, but something feels off.

I can't place it, but I'm sure it's nothing. Honestly, it's probably the last few weeks and how I can't control anything that has me on edge all the time.

I'm used to being able to solve or fix a problem quickly, but lately it seems like everywhere we turn, a new problem presents itself. A small part of me wishes I would have killed my father years ago; then none of this shit would be happening. But I know things would have turned out differently as well. Plus, as much as my father was a bastard—all of our fathers—me and the guys still believed in The Hellfire Society. Yes, we wanted to change it, but it was for the better. We were going to go further than all the generations before us. Take the society into a new era of rule that doesn't involve as many illegal aspects as it does now.

Were we going to be saints? Fuck no. We were all born sinners, but we were going to make it so that we were untouchable.

A headache starts to build in my temples as Riot begins to pace the living room floor.

The man looks as if he is a caged animal at the moment.

Arsen is still in the kitchen, going about making food, but I see the way his eyes drift to the front door.

Watching. Waiting. I'm no better. I may have files in my lap, but my eyes can't seem to focus on anything but the sounds coming from downstairs.

Which happens to be none at the moment. Which means Ali is still not back.

I don't know what this woman has done to us, but it's like none of us can settle until we see her.

If I didn't know any better, I would say Ali somehow bewitched us to be obsessed

with her.

I'm not even surprised when Riot is the one to break first. "Where the fuck is she?" he snaps, spinning on his heel and glaring at me like I should know.

Sadly, I haven't had time to place a tracker on her.

I doubt she will be a willing participant, but I doubt the guys will disagree she needs one.

The woman is a trouble magnet. Pulling out my phone, I check when she last texted us.

She said she had to make one more stop but didn't say where she was headed.

I debate if I should call her or just wait a bit longer.

Instead, I decide to call Shane. She was borrowing his truck anyways so he could know where she was.

I don't even get a chance to connect the call before a ruckus from downstairs is heard.

All of us are on our feet, eyes trained on the door, assuming Ali is finally home, but it's not the sound of her footsteps we hear.

No, these are heavier, more rushed. Riot is the first to move, rushing to the duffle he brought back and grabbing a gun and aiming it at the front door as the footsteps get closer.

Arsen grabs a kitchen knife and readies himself as I place my hand on the gun at my back.

Seconds later the door is kicked in. It takes me a second to realize what I'm seeing as Shane stands there huffing and puffing while holding a limp, pale looking Ali.

Both are covered in blood, but my eyes are glued to Ali's small form that is more than just pale and covered in blood.

She's also black and blue, like she's taken one hell of a beating.

Riot stands there in almost disbelief as an almost whispered plea of Ali's name escapes him.

Like he can't process what he is seeing right now.

It doesn't take long before I'm snapping out of my own disbelief, rushing forward as Arsen does the same.

I gently scoop Ali into my arms and move to the kitchen.

Arsen rushed ahead of me to clear the counter.

Everything he was making moments ago now spilled across the floor, but none of us care.

Riot finally snaps out of whatever was shocking him as Shane starts to explain what the fuck is going on.

"A car dumped her in front of the gym. I didn't know what to do.

She was barely conscious, and there was so much blood.

I was going to take her to the hospital, but she kept mumbling about "the guys," so I

brought her here.

Fuck. What happened to her?" A car? Where had she even been?

Most importantly, who the fuck did this to her?

Riot moves to her lower half as Arsen and I begin to check her over.

There is not a single part of her that is not touched with bruises.

What the hell happened? I'm almost afraid to touch her, thinking I might add to her pain.

"Ali, baby, what happened? Who did this to you?" Riot's voice breaks on his question, the pain he feels for her clear as day.

Her head falls to the side as she slowly opens his mouth, but she winces in pain.

Carefully, I wipe away some of the blood on her face as Arsen grabs a wet rag and does the same around her lips.

Small cuts and broken skin peer back at us.

"Ali. Ali. I need you to stay awake. Tell us who did this," I demand.

She moans out in more pain as she tosses her head from side to side. Fuck, she's in so much pain.

Finally, she turns towards my voice, her eyes too swollen to open. "Tr-tra-track," she murmurs what little she can, but it's nothing more than a whisper. I lean in closer, straining to hear her better.

I think I hear a word, but I'm not quite sure if I even heard her right. "Track?" I ask, frowning. "What track? Track what?" Does she want us to track someone? Was someone tracking her? Looking over at Arsen, he has the same frown as me as he takes in her entire body.

I had noticed all of her when Shane was holding her, but I know I need to focus on one thing at a time.

Right now, it's what the fuck even happened to her? But I can't forget what I'm witnessing. Ali is barely even in any clothes. As scraps of fabric still cling to her body from what I'm guessing was the t-shirt and jeans she wore earlier, but right now the only thing I can see is a bloody bra and underwear.

I notice deeper cuts marring her thigh and the way her breathing is quick and shallow, like she might have broken ribs or even a punctured lung.

Fear of what damage we can't see consumes me.

What if she is bleeding out or there is something more serious happening that we can't see? Fuck.

Her head flops to the side again, like it takes too much strength to even keep her head up. "Tr- er. Track -er," she whispers out again, and this time we all hear it. My blood turns cold as I stare down at her with concern.

"Fuck! Search her now!" I bark out, and we all snap into motion, running our hands across her skin as gently and swiftly as we can. Riot's hands run up her thigh and to her new marks.

Making Ali flinch again as she cries out in pain.

That's when Arsen and I notice the actual mark and what it is. Arsen's grey eyes widen in shock as mine turn to daggers.

Riot ignores us as he begins tracing the edges of the letters now carved into Ali's once creamy flesh.

M. I. N. and still nothing as each touch makes Ali wince and cry out.

He moves to the E, pausing as he glances up at Ali, a look of true misery that he is causing her more pain right now.

But these are the only cuts deep enough someone could place a small tracker in.

Riot suddenly freezes before, as quick as he can, whips out his knife and glares at the spot his finger is touching.

Glancing up, he grinds out, "Hold her down." Arsen and I each grab a shoulder and arm before Riot nods.

With one last sad look in Ali's direction, he digs the tip of the blade into the already torn-open flesh of Ali's thigh.

In a small mercy, Ali passed out again a few moments ago, so she doesn't make a sound as Riot digs around.

A second later he removes the blade and replaces it with his fingers.

Unlike usual, Riot's happy, gleeful demeanor when he gets to play with blood is nowhere in sight as he finally finds what he was looking for.

Holding it up to the light, we see the device and realize what this means.

Riot wastes no time slamming the small device down on the counter, smashing it into pieces.

As if I haven't said it enough...FUCK!

“We need to go now,” I say, looking around the room and running through the list of shit we need to grab.

No one argues as Arsen and I start grabbing up all the files, throwing them in backpacks.

Riot gently lifts Ali in his arms, trying not to cause her any more pain or discomfort as he does.

Blood immediately coats his skin again, and there's no joy on his face. Not when it's our woman's blood and pain.

He turns to Shane, who is still standing there looking a little freaked out and unsure of what to even do.

“You know how to use a gun?” he asks. And he silently nods.

“Good, grab that duffle bag and stay close.” Within minutes we are ready to head out.

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ARSEN

“We have company,” I call out. While Cash finished packing his files and Riot was tending to Ali, I moved to the window to make sure the coast was clear. Unfortunately, it was not. “They’re packing heavy heat.” I glance back towards Riot and Ali. How the hell are we going to get out of this one?

Riot's features morph as he turns back to Shane. “Change of plan. You take her.” Shane drops the duffle as Riot approaches. Holding out his hands, Riot passes over a still unconscious Ali as he moves to cradle her gently against his chest. Riot, on the other hand, leans down and starts digging through the duffle and grabbing everything he finds useful. He throws on a tactical vest over his bare chest and loads it up as well before looking back up to Shane. “You protect her with your life. Anything happens to her; I’ll string you up by your feet and slowly skin you alive.” I have to give Shane credit as he gulps hard before tightening his hold on our girl. “Good.”

While he finishes his threats, Cash and I grab a few more weapons and each vest up as well.

None of us were prepared for the night ending in a shootout, so Riot and I are in sweats while Cash is still in his slacks, but that won't stop us.

I take another peek out the window, spotting a whole tactical team slowly moving towards the building.

There are probably six or seven men that I can spot from my position, but there is no telling if any moved to the back.

Or even if some are waiting down the street.

Riot steps up next to me to take a look as well.

He sees what I'm seeing and begins to grin.

The Riot we are used to seeing is back and looks a little too excited to play.

If only Ali were awake to see this. He turns back to the room, "We keep one alive for questions; otherwise, these fuckers hurt our girl. It's time for them to pay in blood. " At least we all agree on something.

With there only being one way in and out of the upstairs apartment, we know there is only one place where we can move this fight.

Downstairs. Riot moves to the door first but holds for the rest of us.

Cash turns to Shane. "You stay behind us.

Once we get outside, we need to move three blocks east. I have a backup vehicle parked in the garage of an old auto body shop.

You know it?" Shane nods, looking more panicked than I would like.

He has the most important job out of any of us, keeping Ali safe.

"Good." Turning to Riot and me, he continues, "Did we get a count? "

"I'm guessing a dozen or so. Fully decked out and heavily armed. Professional, if I had to guess," I tell him, and he nods.

"Okay, so a walk in the park." Shane makes a worrying sound but doesn't say anything. "Riot, you know what to do." Riot scoffs as if Cash just insulted him.

"These fuckers have no idea who they are about to dance with.

Maybe I should record this so Ali can see when she wakes up.

"As if the idea has merit, a manic smile lifts his lips as he tilts his head from side to side, cracking the joints.

I shake my head at him, because of course what doesn't scream romantic gesture more than recording yourself killing a bunch of people who tried to kill us first. It makes perfect sense.

Why don't all men declare their love for a woman this way?

Shuffling noises from downstairs have us all focusing back on the front door.

"Let's move," Cash calls out, and then Riot leads the way down the stairs.

Cash follows right behind him, then Shane holding Ali, and I take up the rear.

We've done this a million times over, but never with someone we cared for and wanted to protect in the center of the mess.

Especially since we only have an idea of what we are walking into.

For all we know, there could be an entire army on the other side of the door.

The moment we hit the bottom of the staircase, Riot glances back, nodding to each of us.

I tap Shane on the shoulder and point to the wall.

He must understand what I mean because he shifts until his back is to the wall and then crouches down until he is fully behind Cash.

Moving my gun to the ready, I give Riot the final nod before he turns back.

With one last stretch of his neck, he reaches for the doorknob and ever so slowly turns it.

The door hasn't even cracked open when the first shot goes off.

Riot throws open the door and starts firing two semi-automatic AR-15s tucked into his sides wildly.

He doesn't even care where he is aiming, but that's not the point of the move; it's to give us a chance to move away from the bottleneck attack.

The moment he starts firing, Cash moves.

I place a hand on Shane's shoulder and push, letting him know to follow.

He does as he is told and follows, staying low and keeping Ali tucked in tight to his chest. Cash and I help return fire, but the room is too dark to see any bodies.

Fortunately, the flash from the guns gives them away.

So as Riot moves in the opposite direction, Cash and I start taking out the men we can

spot.

Gunshots and pained moans fill the large room as we continue to move against the wall.

We focus on the ring for cover, and once there, Shane ducks low to the floor, using his body to cover Ali's small frame.

Moving close, I hand him the gun he had had earlier.

"Stay here and stay low. Shoot anyone that comes near you, even if you think it could be one of us.

I'll let you know when to move." In the low light I barely see him nod as he accepts the gun and repositions himself better.

Satisfied, I tap Cash on the back to let him know we are good.

Now it's time for us to have some fun.

I stay close to the ring as Cash moves further into the darkness.

The only light in the entire place came from a single glass door across the room.

All the windows had been boarded up long ago, it seems. Plus, it probably helps with the appearance of being abandoned for Shane's special fight nights.

The gunfire has quieted to a halt, and now the shuffling of feet is the only sound heard as everyone tries to get their bearings while not giving themselves away.

Someone yells over the silence, the voice echoing off the walls.

“We only want the heirs. No harm will come to the girl if you just hand yourselves over.” I hear a light scoff to my right, from who I’m guessing is Riot as the guy continues.

“Do you really want to get your little whore killed when we have you all outnumbered and outgunned?” I wince at the disgusting name he referred to our girl as, but knowing what happens when you speak ill about someone we love has me smirking.

They have no idea what they just walked into and who they are actually dealing with. It’s sort of funny, actually.

I expect Riot to be the one who calls out a response, something threatening and depraved, but I’m surprised when it’s actually Cash.

He lets out a deep, dark chuckle, the sound coming further to my left but filling the room with a sudden chill.

“You were already dead men walking for the way our girl came home to us, but now I hope you know that whoever hired you signed your death warrants.” A few scoffs of disbelief sound out around the room as if no one truly believes a word he is saying, but that is just dumb on their part.

Another voice speaks from across the room.

This time it’s not meant for our ears, but with no one wanting to give away their position with noise, we hear it loud and clear.

“Fuck this,” he hisses. “Who cares about the bitch, let’s just take them.

There’s more of us than them.” Someone shushes him, but it’s too late.

I hear a snarl come from Riot's direction before a single gunshot is heard.

Curses sound before a loud thump comes from the front, causing my head to snap in that direction.

I can see a large shadowy form laid across the floor through the dim light and grin.

I have no idea which guy Riot just shot, but one down and a few more to go.

"That is your only warning. If you wish to live, turn around and leave now.

If you stay, you will die at our hands," Cash calls out, and I wait with bated breath for these assholes to wise up and leave, but after a long, tense moment of more silence, I know this night will end in a bloody mess.

I shift around the ring, wincing at the slight pain pulling at my stomach.

It was only two weeks ago that I was shot by my own father, but I got the last laugh.

Now the last two ruling members of the Hellfire Society are trying to double their efforts to take out their own sons.

It's laughable, — they taught us most of what we know, but as we grew, we saw the change in the men that raised us.

We knew there was a chance they could pull something, but we never thought it would come as far as to send men upon men to take us out.

You would think they would learn their lesson that we aren't as easy to kill as they thought.

A pained moan sounds from behind me, and I freeze.

Shane's whispered voice can be heard among the shuffling of feet as we all decide who will make the next move.

"Shhh... it's okay. You're going to be okay.

I know it hurts, but you need to be quiet.

" I know the words were supposed to be a whispered calm, but the sound that follows breaks something inside of me.

Ali's pained moans and weak sob as she comes to breaks the silence in the room.

The sound breaks the standoff as Riot's bloodthirsty monster takes over.

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Riot lets out a snarl of fury at the sound of Ali's pain.

No doubt the images of Shane bringing her to us bloody and broken flashing through his mind as his shadowy figure jumps up and begins to move, rushing the men that stand in our way of getting Ali help.

Gunshots ring out as he rushes forward with a battle cry.

Not wanting to be left out, Cash follows suit, rushing the left side as everyone focuses on the rampage of fury coming from the right.

As much as I want to join them, I decide not to go far, knowing Shane and Ali need my protection.

Well, Ali needs me in her current state.

I keep low at the corner edge of the ring as I focus on the flashes of barrels and shadows moving to the front of me.

My eyes are trying to take everything in and process it with little light.

Shooting blind probably wouldn't be a great idea since Riot and Cash are now in the fray, so I tuck my gun to my back, pulling out a small blade.

I almost wish we were back in the trials, and I had my baseball bat.

At least there we had the moon giving us some light, and Ali was beside us.

Actually, if she were able, I bet the little spitfire would be right in the middle of this mess, betting Riot she could take out more men than him.

The thought brings a small smile to my face before the image of Ali lying on the counter, bruised and almost unrecognizable, flashes through my mind.

Pain hits my chest like a freight train.

My heart aches for the woman that came crashing into our lives.

Seeing someone in so much pain had never bothered me before until the sight that greeted us when Shane came barging through the door, holding a limp Ali.

I had never felt fear like I did in that second, thinking she was dead.

I felt so much relief once I saw that she was still breathing, but it was short-lived as I took her in up close.

Cuts, bruises, and more littered her body, but that wasn't the hardest part to see.

No. That sick fucking bastard—Ethan Black, because it had to have been him—the word MINE into her skin.

Like he truly thought she belonged to him or something.

He will get what is coming to him in due time; we will make sure of that.

A soft creak sounds from my left, pulling me from my thoughts as a figure dressed in all black lunges at me.

The asshole takes me by surprise as he tackles me to the ground.

I roll my body with his as we tumble over each other, limbs flying as we both try to get the upper hand.

My knife clatters to the floor somewhere nearby, but I don't have time to even think before a fist comes flying towards my head.

The air whooshes as I barely dodge the blow before returning my own.

We're both on our sides, holding each other down, but I take a chance and throw myself on top of the man before he can buck me off and I start raining down blows.

I don't care where I hit as long as I land them.

As the man pulls up his arms in an attempt to block the assault, my fists hit their mark.

He lets out a grunt of pain as my fist finds an opening between his raised arms, and my knuckles land across his face.

The asshole starts bucking like a wild bull, trying to throw me off, but I bear down my weight.

Next, he raises his knee, slamming it into my back, the side that is still healing from a gunshot wound.

My body flies forwards, giving the man a small window to roll us until he is now above me. Fuck.

He begins his assault, much like mine, punches flying everywhere they can land.

I grunt out as he lands a few. Both of us are huffing and puffing, but neither of us

back down.

The asshole gets a lucky punch in, the hit landing on my face and making me see stars.

I jerk my body to the side suddenly, throwing the dick off balance as I throw my elbow back and into his face.

He cries out, giving me the upper hand again as I shift my weight.

I'm climbing to my knees when another creak in the floor catches my attention.

I jerk my head to the side to see yet another figure rounding the corner of the ring and move to where Shane and, once again, quiet Ali are.

Double fuck. I lunge forward to stop the new asshole when a hand wraps around my foot and yanks.

I tumble to the ground, my chin slamming hard.

"Fuck," I curse before spinning to my back and kicking. My foot slams into a hard form, hopefully the fucker's face, as he lets go.

I scramble to my feet to attempt to lunge forward again, when my hand lands on cold metal.

Fuck yes. The blade slices my palm, but the pain is nothing but a pinch as I grab the hilt in my grip and rush forward.

I slam into the second black-clothed figure, and before he realizes what I have, I arc the blade up over my head and down into the second man's chest. Pulling the blade

out, blood splatters across my body before I slam the blade down three more times.

The figure slumps forward towards me before I shove him back and he falls to the floor with a loud thump.

I spin on my heel, expecting the first guy who attacked to attack again, but no one comes for me.

Through the dim light I can see a body slumped on the floor a few feet away.

A cry of pain echoes through the room, coming from Riot, before someone else cries out, followed by another body hitting the floor.

Suddenly the room is filled with more silence.

The only sound is the huffing and puffing of whoever is left.

I keep the knife in my grip as I turn toward the front door and call out.

"Who's left standing?" I know it's a stupid question. One, I'm giving my own position away, and two, who is actually going to answer it.

"I'm almost disappointed they didn't put up a decent fight," Riot calls out, grunting in pain before dropping what I'm guessing is a blade he was stabbed with.

"For once I actually agree with you, brother." Cash responds as his voice nears me.

"But these assholes were merely a speed bump on the way to our main destination." I snort at that. "Shane?"

"Y-Yeah."

"How is she?" I say, moving towards the back of the room where I left them. Shane shifts, turning with Ali held tight to his chest.

"Not good," he says, his tone sad and concerned.

Stepping forward, I reach for my girl, needing to hold her, to know that she is alive myself.

He releases her to me, and I stand, turning to the front of the room.

I can see Riot and Cash at the front door, already checking for any more possible threats.

I move towards them, Shane staying close.

When we're close enough, I call out, "Well, let's not wait around for more assholes to show up. "

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seven

RIOT

“ T his way,” Shane states, stepping out of the darkness of the gym and into the moonlit parking lot. Dark red stains cover his shirt, and I grind my teeth knowing exactly what or who they are from. My eyes snap to Ali as she lets out a pained moan.

“Careful with her!” I snap. I know it’s not his fault she is in pain, and I shouldn’t be taking it out on him as he cradles my wife to his chest. I take her in for a second as Arsen steps past me to follow Shane to the side of the building.

Ali’s normally creamy pale skin is nowhere to be seen.

The clothes she left in now lay in strips of fabric barely hanging on to her form.

She looks so fragile and broken. I want nothing more than to scoop her up in my arms and protect her with my last breath, but I fear I may hurt her more right now.

The adrenaline was still coursing through my veins from the fight only a few minutes prior.

I have to hand it to whoever sent these men; they put up a decent fight.

Sadly, it wasn’t enough for the raging beast inside my chest that had a point to prove.

Fuck with mine, and you won't live to see another day.

I found it funny that Cash had even given them a chance to leave, not that I would have let them.

I would have hunted every single one of them down for simply showing up.

Luckily they thought they had an upper hand because they had a few extra guns and a number of men.

Little did they know I had something to fight for, to kill for, and even die for, but now I needed to protect her.

Shane leads us to an old black pickup truck.

It's a front row seat only, so Arsen climbs into the cab with Ali as Cash and I climb into the bed.

Shane doesn't waste any time, starting her up and peeling away into the night.

"What the fuck happened to her?" I ask Cash, not expecting an answer, but the part of me that would be calm after we shed so much blood is nowhere in sight.

I'm still on edge, like my skin is crawling, and the urge to kill someone is still there.

From the corner of my eye, I can see Cash shake his head before turning and looking into the cab.

The night air is cool against my overheated skin.

The blood starts to dry and flake as we pull up to an old garage type building.

The moment the truck is parked, I'm jumping out of the bed and rushing to Arsen's door as Cash heads inside.

Opening his door, he shifts to step out, and I open my arms before yanking them back, still afraid of my emotions and hurting our woman more.

"She will be alright, Ri, but we need to clean her up and see how bad her injuries are." I nod my head as I step back, letting Arsen slip by as I follow everyone else in before shutting and locking the door.

The garage is empty, stripped bare other than the SUV that Cash has parked here.

Cash walks to the trunk of the SUV, grabs a duffel bag, and sets it on a counter.

Arsen heads for the same counter, placing Ali down gently as Cash begins to pull out a few lanterns and a first aid kit.

"It's not much, but at least we can see what we are working with and what we might need to get.

" He hands Arsen a washcloth and water bottle next.

"We need a new place to lay low. Somewhere that can't be traced back to us.

The gym was good, but I think we were still too close to the city.

Once Ali is up, she can tell us what the fuck happened.

" Cash glares at the floor as he begins to pace, his thoughts no doubt spiraling.

"Someone came looking for her today while she was grabbing supplies. Claimed to

be her family. When I told him I hadn't seen her in weeks, he gave me a number to call in case she showed up.

"All of our heads snap to Shane, standing to the side staring at Ali with so much pain in his expression.

"When she got back, I told her about him. She called the number and they spoke before she said she had another errand to run." He finally looks in my direction like he felt my eyes staring daggers at him.

"I told her she was stupid. That she needed to think whatever she was going to do through, but Ali listens to no man." I narrow my eyes, but he looks back towards Ali.

"A couple hours later, I was getting ready to close up when a car pulled up and tossed her out the back. That's when I brought her to you. "

Arsen glances over his shoulder at Cash and me.

"If he was claiming to be concerned family, it was Ethan. I feel like the carved MINE..." he grinds out the word mine, pausing to take a deep breath before continuing.

"...is a message to us. With what I've learned from the club girls, the sick fuck has some type of twisted fantasy that Ali belongs to him.

"I snarl at the asshole's name as Arsen goes about delicately wiping at Ali's skin, trying to wash away as much of the blood and grime as he can, but it doesn't seem to be doing much. There is just so much.

"Then let's hunt the fucker down," I state all matter-of-fact-like because I'm also very serious.

“No.” is all Cash says before he turns to Shane again. “Do you remember anything else?” Shane takes a second to think before he shakes his head no.

“Once I saw it was Ali, I didn’t think, I just rushed to her.

I know it was a dark sedan, but that’s all I really noticed.

” Cash nods before he continues to pace.

Arsen continues to clean off Ali’s pale skin while Shane and I just sort of stand there, not sure what to do.

I want to help Arsen take care of our woman, but she needs a gentle touch, not mine. Not while I’m like this.

It’s silent for a few minutes, all of us lost in our thoughts, when Shane suddenly clears his throat.

We all turn to face him and he winces at our combined stares.

When he stays quiet I cock a brow in question.

“Oh. I umm- I know a place that you all can stay where no one will find you. My dad and I have a cabin that we built when I was younger. We used to go hunting a lot. It’s nothing fancy and probably needs a good cleaning, and you’ll need supplies and-“ He shakes his head when he realizes he’s rambling.

“No one knows about it but me and him. It’s a few hours out of town, but it would be a good spot to...

” He glances over towards Ali. “To recover and figure out your next step.” Cash

starts to nod.

“Can you take us tonight?” Cash asks, but Shane is already shaking his head.

“I can’t go with you. I have too much going on here, plus I should stay in case that asshole comes back around. But I can get you a map and supplies you might need. There’s a small town not too far from the cabin if you need additional supplies as well, so you can stay as long as you all need.”

“Thank you, Shane. I know this isn’t your fight, but we will repay you tenfold,” Cash tells him, pulling out his phone and doing whatever he does to get shit done. I, on the other hand, glare at him. What does he get out of helping us? His eyes shift to mine before he lets out a deep sigh.

“Ali has come to be like a sister to me. All I ask is that you take care of her. She doesn’t deserve what she’s been through.

But I will ask for one thing.” My glare narrows at his request for something.

“When you finally go after the guy who did this to her, make it hurt.” My glare transforms into a wicked grin as I nod.

“Now that I can promise.”

It takes Shane and Cash a bit of time to get everything together, but a few hours later we are ready to hit the road.

Shane had made a list of everything we might need, letting us know the cabin would have extra blankets, toiletries, and a bit of pre-cut firewood.

He gave us the address of a shop in the closest town as a GPS point for our phones,

but then he handed over a paper map with a highlighted route to where his cabin is.

After loading up everything, we were off.

Cash was in the driver's seat, I sat shotgun, while Arsen held a still passed-out Ali in the back seat.

Shane was able to get his hands on some strong pain meds and a bottle of antibiotics, which is great since we can't risk going to a doctor.

Before we left, Arsen was able to clean Ali off enough that we could take in the extent of her injuries.

While we knew she would have quite a few cuts, due to all the blood that had dried to her skin and the carved word on her thigh, I wasn't prepared for the sight that greeted us.

When Ali left earlier in the day, her skin was a smooth, creamy, art-filled masterpiece.

Once the blood was wiped away, what was left was a dozen slice marks cutting across her skin in little crisscross patterns.

Many crossing out her artwork. Among the cuts, black and blue skin replaced her creamy pale flesh.

Her eyes were swollen shut, she had a split lip, and busted skin across her left cheek.

Ali looked like she went through a meat grinder, maybe even through it a few times.

It was hard to keep my eyes off her before all this, but now it's even harder, but not

for the same reason.

Every time I glance at my wife, I want to kill someone.

Mainly the person who thought they could touch her, hurt her like this, and get away with it.

For someone who was apparently obsessed with my girl, Ethan had a funny way of showing it.

But we've come to realize the man is sick in the head.

Ali is his half-sister, for crying out loud, but he still has some sick fantasy of being with her.

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It takes us about two hours to hit the small town Shane had talked about.

The drive is silent, all of us still lost in our thoughts about what happened tonight and our concern for our woman.

Shane told us to drive right through until we hit the end of town, make a right, and take that for another forty minutes before we would hit the actual dirt road that would take us to the cabin.

As we drive through the small town late at night, I take in all the shops.

We haven't discussed how long we plan to stay here, but Ali is going to need more than a few days to heal.

That's not even taking in the mental distress she might have after this.

We don't even know what the sick fuck did to her.

Possibilities flash through my mind, but I push them aside.

If I think of any of those, I might actually go hunt the bastard down before we are ready.

I refocus on the town and spot a few clothing stores, a grocery store, an outdoor hunting shop, and a few other random shops.

There's a diner, a little casino, and a gas station as well.

The town might be small, but it will have everything we need to survive for a few weeks, if needed.

Once we leave the small town, the forest seems to swallow us whole, as the night sky darkens to a deep blue-black dotted with brightly lit stars.

The only real light out is the full moon above and the SUV's headlights.

Cash doesn't bother speeding, taking it slower now that we aren't in any immediate danger.

Plus, all the deer crossing signs are a bit concerning.

I keep glancing at the map in my hands as we near the area that should be the turnoff, according to what Shane outlined at least. Everything seems to blur and blend with the trees before I finally spot a small gap in the forest on the left-hand side.

"There," I call out, pointing as I spot the yellow indicators flashing off the headlights, just like he said there would be, wrapped around the trees marking the small one-car path.

Cash slams on the brakes at my sudden outburst of words, swerving to the side.

Curses sound out from all of us before a pained moan from Ali has us all spinning in our seats.

Arsen is hanging onto Ali with a tight grip, glaring at us with venom.

I want to snap at him for the way he is holding her, but I know it was to stop her from rolling off his lap.

"Watch your driving!" he grinds out before slowly and carefully adjusting Ali's position.

I won't lie that I've been super worried that she hasn't fully woken up yet.

Only letting out pain-filled moans and quiet sobs every now and then when jostled too much.

Honestly, I just want her to open her eyes so I can see those beautiful emerald greens flare to life again.

I need her to tease me; tell me I'm a psychopath, then let me fuck her against the wall just to prove it.

I want her to call me her husband with that little smirk of hers because she knows what calling me that does to me. I just need her to be okay.

"Sorry. It's not like there are any real signs or even light to see where the fuck we are," Cash grumbles, slowly backing up a bit before turning the SUV onto the dirt path.

I immediately grind my teeth when I realize the path is rough and uneven.

"A, hang on to her, this isn't going to be a smooth ride," he grits out, as his hands tighten on the steering wheel, the leather creaking under his grip.

"Fuck," Arsen curses before trying to readjust Ali across his lap. Somewhat unsuccessfully, as her legs begin to slip off the seat as he tries to keep her upper half from sliding off.

I can't take more of Ali hurting from us.

"Slow down and stop. Let me climb in the back to help keep her steady.

"Cash does as I ask as I get out and jog to the other side of the SUV where Ali's feet lie.

As gently as I can, I climb onto the seat, lifting Ali's legs as I go, and slip in.

Once I'm seated, I place her legs down on my lap and lay my arms across her thighs and lower legs to make sure she can't slide off. I try to avoid the now wrapped in gauze thigh that hides her carved flesh, but it's hard when the fucker cut large and deep letters.

Every time I see it, I come up with new, creative, and very painful ways to possibly torture the fucker responsible for her pain.

Once we have her settled enough, I nod to Cash who is glancing at us through the rearview mirror. "Take it slow and steady."

He does as we follow the only path given.

Shane had mentioned that it takes ten or fifteen minutes from the main road to reach the cabin.

With our pace it takes us closer to twenty, but none of us care, since Ali hasn't made another pained sound.

Cash puts the SUV in park before turning in his seat, eyes focusing on Ali for a second before lifting to meet ours.

"A, you stay with Ali. Riot, you and I can do a once-around before checking the inside.

" He looks back down to our girl with a frown.

"Let us get some lights on and the fire started before we bring her in.

" I nod, remembering Shane mentioning a generator in the back.

As gently as I got in the back seat, I shift my body out the back door before following Cash around the back of the cabin.

Once I catch up to him, he hands me a flashlight as we start to look for the generator Shane told us about.

I decide now is the perfect time to speak my mind.

"We need to go after Ethan. We can't let what he did to our woman slide.

He is a dead man walking, and he needs to know it.

" Cash is silent as we find the small shed at the back.

He starts to fill the generator with the extra gas can beside it.

I think he is just going to ignore me when he finishes and turns to me.

"I know you're angry, Ri. Arsen and I are too, but now is not the time.

" I scoff at his response as he starts the generator up.

It makes a screeching noise, spurting a bit before finally turning over and running.

From the corner of my eye I spot a light flicker on from one of the cabin windows.

He turns back to me, a serious look crossing his face.

"Ali is going to need us more right now.

Let's come up with a plan of attack while Ali has time to heal.

Plus, we need to go through all the files and information we collected.

We start there." A part of me wants to laugh in his face and tell him the best plan of attack is to attack and kill them all, but I also know he is in charge for a reason.

That reason being he has a saner thought process than my kill-first-ask-questions-later one.

He stares at me for a long moment, cocking a brow in question like he knows what I'm thinking, and he probably does, but instead of arguing, I let out a defeated sigh.

"I'll go start the fire if you want to start bringing in the bags," I tell him, turning and heading for the front of the cabin to do just that.

Cash might have a point that we need to stop and figure out how the hell we need to move forward, but he also needs to understand I can only hold back my blood rage for so long.

And with Ali currently black and blue, it's only fueling my thirst for revenge on behalf of her.

eight

ALI

Carefully, I try to open my eyes, hoping that the coma thought was really just a crazy thought, but when my eyes don't open, my heart rate starts to pick up, and panic begins to consume me.

Oh no, something is wrong. Very, very wrong.

My body automatically jerks up on its own, panic fully taking over as I reach to touch my face.

Pain shoots through my limbs at the moment a cry escapes my throat.

Watery tears filling my eyelids. A rush of pounding footsteps sounds to my right, causing me to jerk away, not knowing where I am or what is going on.

Someone had to have done something to me.

Worst-case scenarios start to flood my mind.

Maybe I was kidnapped...again. That would be my luck.

Maybe I really was hit by a car, and now I'm in a hospital. But when I moved, I didn't feel attached to anything machine-like. Nor did I hear the tell tale sign of a heart rate machine.

Maybe I'm just dreaming and it's really, really vivid? But that doesn't seem right either.

Suddenly the bed dips beside me, and I freeze.

"Ali." Riot's usual deep, powerful tone is nowhere to be heard as he settles next to me, whispering, "Wife.

You're safe." The moment the word wife crossed his lips, my body releases the tension it had been holding as I reach for him, needing to feel that he is real.

That this isn't all in my head right now. I ignore my body's screams to not move as I all but climb into Riot's lap.

I breathe him in, trusting my senses more than my mind right now as I smell Riot's sandalwood with a hint of copper scent. Instantly I relax into his chest as he murmurs that I'm safe and that he's here.

I'm not sure how long I stayed curled up in Riot's lap, silently crying while trying to think back to what had happened, but I must have fallen asleep again.

This time when I wake, I can feel the heat of a body and hear the thump, thump, thump of a heartbeat.

Taking a deep breath, I can still smell my husband, which is a relief.

I stay like that, soaking in his warmth as I try to once again think back to what was happening.

"I think she's waking up again."

"Good, I need her to take these antibiotics, and I want to clean her.

." There's a small pause that has me frown before Arsen continues.

"...wound again. It looks like it bled through.

She will probably want to take a pain pill too.

I'll go grab everything." The body beneath me shifts, and I wince as pain shoots through my thigh.

"Shit, sorry, baby. Here, let's turn you to the other side so Arsen can clean your leg.

" I frown once more, confused about why my leg would need to be cleaned.

I open my mouth to ask what is going on, but it's so dry that I only rasp out a painful cough.

"Fuck... Cash water now! Hold on, baby." My throat feels like it's the Sahara Desert as I try to swallow what little spit I have.

I hear rushing footsteps a second before the rim of a water bottle is set against my lips.

I open greedily, trying to suck the water down as the cool liquid soothes the ache I was feeling.

Water rushes down my cheek as I try to take large gulps before someone pulls the bottle back.

I let out a sound of protest before someone lets out a deep chuckle.

"Slow down, you will make yourself sick.

Plus, I need you to take some pills." I must've made an uncomfortable face or something because Riot finally gently shifts me before I feel hands trail up my leg.

I must flinch from the touch because Arsen speaks.

"I need to clean your leg, little flame.

I'll be as gentle as I can, but I don't want it to get infected.

I also have some antibiotics and pain pills for you to take to help.

" My confusion from moments ago reappears.

This time when I speak, it feels like I've been screaming for hours, my voice raspy and harsh but less painful. "W-what happened?" I figured that was the first and most obvious question to ask. As soon as the words leave my mouth, it's like the room freezes. Like actual freezes over.

Somehow I was expecting one of them to tell me I had some freak accident or something, but Cash's ever-so-calm and cold voice fills the room. "Ali, what do you remember happening yesterday?" Yesterday? What does he mean by that?

I shake my head in answer as I stay quiet, trying to gather my thoughts and go over the last thing I do remember doing.

I was shopping for supplies. As I try to process the day's events, I feel Arsen's fingers trail up my thigh until I feel a soft material glide across my skin.

He's unwrapping something. Something cool, yet warm and wet, swipes across my

flesh as he continues to unwrap what I'm guessing is gauze.

His earlier comment clicks 'bled through', but why was I bleeding in the first place?

The room remains soundless as Arsen tends to my "wound.

" His fingers graze a spot on my thigh that shoots pain to all my nerve endings as I let out a whimper, but then it happens.

Like an electric cattle prod to the brain, my brain processes everything all at once.

So fast that I get an instant headache trying to keep up with the details.

I spoke with Ethan after he came looking for me at the gym.

We had talked, and I made the decision to try and gather more of my own information.

Stupid me had gone back to my childhood home.

What was I thinking?! Ethan had caught me in Richard's office and hit me over the head.

I woke up in my old bedroom, where the asshole decided to try and torture me for information. When I didn't give anything away, he...

"The tracker!" I screech, reaching for my thigh to where I remember Ethan putting it, ready to rip it out myself. Panic rises as what could be about to happen flashes through my mind. I blindly claw at my leg before hands grip mine, stopping me.

"Ali. Ali. Stop! You're going to hurt yourself more. You need to calm down." Even

Cash's stern, commanding voice doesn't calm me as I continue to reach for my leg. I need to get it out and destroy it.

"He- he left a tracker in my leg. He wanted me to give you up, but I refused," I cry out, needing them to take me seriously right now. This is life or death; Ethan is off his rocker and has gone insane.

"We know, baby. I need you to calm down and breathe.

The tracker is gone. You already warned us, we got away.

"Riot's words instantly have me calming down as I suck in air, filling my lungs until they hurt, and release it in a whoosh.

"That's it. Here, take these. One is a pain pill that I'm sure you need right now.

"With my eyes still swollen shut, I reach blindly until Riot hands over two small pills. Just as I'm about to stick them in my mouth, I remember something.

Shit. Not caring about the pain, I throw my body to the other side of the bed and shove my fingers down my throat.

I gag but force my fingers deeper. I need to do this.

Hands on my shoulders try to pull me back, but I shake them off.

"Ali, stop. What are you doing?" I shake my head in answer as the gagging worsens.

Come on, stupid gag reflex, work. "Ali!" Someone snaps, but with one more push deeper, I feel it happening.

My stomach tightens; my throat goes dry as saliva fills my mouth.

I lean over further, hoping this doesn't hit anything important as my stomach empties its contents. I can feel something rough scraping against my throat, almost getting stuck as I choke and cough, but I get it all out before reaching down and sticking my hand into the pile of puke. On any other day I would not be doing this, but I need to make sure the beating I took was worth it. It has to be. I almost throw up again just from the feeling of grossness I'm touching as my fingers touch it. The flash drive.

My men whisper to themselves behind me, probably thinking I finally lost it or something.

I get it; this was the least ladylike thing I've ever done, and if I look the way I feel, I bet it was one hell of a sight.

Their voices and words all blend together as exhaustion starts to hit me.

"What's wrong with her?" "What do we do?"

" "Why is she doing that?" "Okay, that's gross."

" "I'm not cleaning that." "I hope Shane doesn't expect a deposit back. "

I turn back over on my side, still trying to ignore the pain as I focus on where the voices are coming from.

Holding up the flash drive, I give them a weak smile.

"I copied and downloaded files from Richard's home office before Ethan caught me."

I had to swallow it to make sure I got it out.

Hopefully it will still work." Someone takes the drive from me and replaces it with a bottle of water.

"Take the meds, then tell us what happened.

" I give them a small nod before quickly taking the pills in one big gulp.

Someone takes the water while someone else helps me sit back on the bed.

I still have so many questions, like how I warned them and where we even are, because this doesn't feel or even smell like the gym apartment.

But I suppose I should start with how we might have gotten here.

Arsen resumes cleaning my thigh as I try to hold back my wincing, hoping the pain meds kick in soon.

Taking a deep breath, I focus on the sound of my men breathing.

I knew they were safe, at least for now, but I could have put them in a lot of danger.

For the hundredth time I ask myself, what the hell was I thinking?

! I know the guys are staying quiet, allowing me to gather my thoughts, but the silence is becoming too much.

Letting out a sigh, I begin to explain. "So, it started when I decided to call Ethan. "

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nine

CASH

I don't know what we were expecting to happen when Ali threw herself to the side of the bed and shoved her fingers down her throat.

After a few moments of confusion, we watched as she reached down and started digging through the bile before turning and showing us a small black thumb drive.

None of us were expecting that. After that bit of shock, Riot took the drive, placing it on the side table before focusing his attention back on Ali.

Handing her the water bottle again, we watch her take the two small white pills before Riot fluffs her pillows and helps her lay back.

I almost want to laugh at how whipped by a woman he is, but I can't say I wouldn't be doing the same if I were the one seated next to her.

Arsen finishes unwrapping the now bloody thigh wrap before tossing it in a small trash bag.

As if we can't help ourselves, all three of us glare at the word carved into Ali's flesh.

A stark reminder that we failed her. A part of me wants to grab her by her shoulders and shake her until she tells me what the hell she was doing to end up in the clutches of Ethan Black.

I mean, what would have happened if mine or Riot's father got their hands on her? It's bad enough that she barely looks recognizable right now, but they would have done a lot worse than just beating her black and blue.

Ali can't even open her eyes right now to see the true extent of the damage done to her body.

I've barely been able to hold off my own rage that wants to follow Ri's lead and hunt this fucker down.

Fortunately, I have more control and more sense to look at the bigger picture.

We got lucky last night. Shane was able to get Ali to us in time for her to barely warn us of what was to come.

We were also lucky that Ri doesn't take kindly to those who threaten his family.

Arsen and I have been his brothers since the time we could walk.

But Ali? Ali was his wife, the only woman in the world that could probably handle and even tame the man, and seeing her the way she was now was probably messing with his head.

I try not to stare at the dozens of marks marring Ali's flesh, but it's hard to look away.

Clenching my fists, I snap my head up and stare at the wall.

The itch I feel under my skin, the one that tells me I need to be doing something.

That standing here uselessly watching the woman that has become all three of our obsessions is doing nothing to help our bigger situation.

I could be going through files, trying to figure out the best way to hit our fathers hard, how to track Ethan, or even what our next move needs to be, but I can't bring myself to move.

It's like my feet refuse to listen to the rational part of my brain.

It's frustrating, but as Ali lets out a small whimper of pain when Arsen tries to gently rub ointment over the deepest cuts she has, I know I won't move until I know she is comfortable.

The room is silent as Arsen works and Ali gathers her thoughts.

A part of me doesn't want to make her tell us what happened, not wanting her to relive it all, but we all know she might have information that could help us move forward.

We all know Ali is a tough woman; I watched her fight a grown man dressed like a killer clown and not bat an eye.

Hell, I've seen her take on two grown-ass men in a ring, taking them down without breaking a sweat before dragging us away and demanding the three of us fuck her senseless.

She is truly one of a kind for being able to handle all three of us, but even the strongest of women break.

I don't know if she knows what is carved into her skin, but it will be a daily reminder of him and what she had to go through.

After a few moments of the silence stretching on, Ali finally lets out a long, deep sigh, like the world is just too heavy to carry, before she finally speaks.

"So, it started when I decided to call Ethan. "

We all keep our mouths shut as Ali tells us about her conversation with Ethan before she gets the idea to go to her father's office.

It takes everything in me not to snap at her, tell her how stupid her plan was, and how it could have been so much worse if Ethan wasn't a delusion and sick fucker with an obsession over her.

She doesn't even know about him going to clubs and making girls look like her to feed his perverted fantasies.

"I just wanted to be useful. I felt like you guys just wanted me to get supplies because you all thought I couldn't do anything else.

" She frowns as her head tips down, and if her eyes weren't so swollen, I have no doubt she would have sad puppy dog eyes.

Fuck. That's not what any of us thought; we just didn't want her anywhere near danger.

She had already been taken by our father's once, and I bet my left nut that they would have used her in a whole different way before selling her to the highest bidder. We just wanted to keep her safe.

"I thought I could get in and out before anyone even noticed I was there.

" She lets out another long sigh. "I almost made it out before Ethan showed up. He hit me over the head with the butt of his gun, and I passed out, but not before I was able to swallow the flash drive. I downloaded as much as I could. I was able to peek at a few of the files and it seems like the Blacks were keeping track of properties and

other things from your guys' fathers.

If I had to guess, Richard was going to try and blackmail and weasel his way into something bigger.

" I almost scoff at that; the Hellfire Society wasn't stupid.

They probably knew what her father and brother were up to and wouldn't have hesitated to kill them, which meant they were still useful to our fathers. Maybe something to look into.

As she continued to explain how she woke up in the basement and Ethan kept demanding our whereabouts, to which Ali would refuse to tell him, all three of us were tense.

Coiled tight, like a snake ready to attack.

She could have told him, could have given us up to make her torture stop, but she didn't. She let him beat her, cut her, and carve her flesh — to keep us safe.

"I was already in and out of consciousness when I vaguely heard talk about a tracker, then I blacked out.

I don't remember much after that, but I remember being shoved out of a car, and then Shane was there.

He tried to take me to the hospital, but I knew I needed to get to you.

To warn you that he was planning something.

Nothing after that until I woke up a bit ago. "

The more she talks, you can tell she is struggling to stay awake.

Her words becoming a whispered, tired rasp.

"Why don't you try to get some sleep, bunny.

We can tell you our part when you wake up.

" She gives us a mumbled agreement. Stepping forward, I gently run my finger down the side of her face before leaning down and kissing the top of her head, whispering.

"Sleep, baby. You need your strength for when we strike back.

" Ali lets out another soft humming sound before her head tilts to the side, already starting to doze off.

Standing, I turn to my brothers, both giving our woman almost loving looks.

Who knew that a tiny slip of a woman could tame three men like us.

From the moment we saw her, she has turned our world upside down.

When they finally glance my way, I nod to the living room.

The cabin has two small bedrooms, a bathroom, and a living space with a small kitchen combined area.

It's nothing fancy, but it will suit our needs for the time that we need.

Ali will need a few weeks to recover fully, and as much as I want to storm our father's castle, so to speak, Ali is as much a part of this now as we are.

She deserves her revenge as well. After what she went through for us, she deserves a goddamn fucking crown.

I head to the living space as Arsen and Riot give her their own kisses and quiet words.

I take a seat on the couch, grabbing the files and laptop I brought and start reading through more of the documents.

I haven't found anything especially useful, but I now have a small list of things I need to look further into.

Businesses, accounts, and a few names that aren't familiar to me.

Riot and Arsen come into the room, Arsen grabs his tablet and a few files and takes a seat next to me.

Riot didn't bring anything physical, but he was able to gain a little information from the men at the warehouse.

Like how his father has had extra shipments moving around from warehouse to warehouse.

Like he might be trying to hide a side deal or two.

"Do we think this thing will actually work still?"

"Riot holds up the now clean flash drive before cocking a brow in our direction.

I shrug before side-eyeing Arsen. He frowns but holds out his hand for the small device.

He cringes as the drive is dropped into his hand before taking a closer look at it.

He pops off the top cover before reaching over and grabbing my laptop off my lap, settling it into his, and inserting the drive.

Riot moves to behind the couch as I lean over, all three of us staring at the screen in anticipation.

My shoulders almost slump when nothing happens.

But as I begin to pull away, a notification box pops up.

Riot makes an excited whoop noise before I snap a glare at him for being so loud.

He shrugs, like saying "who cares," before his eyes drift to Ali's room with a small, sad worried look.

Arsen moves the mouse, clicking on the download all options, before suddenly file upon file begins to pop up on the screen. Holy shit.

"Damn. She did good." Arsen lets out a whistle under his breath.

"Fuck yeah, she did. She's my wife." Riot practically puffs out his chest with pride, making me roll my eyes.

"At least she will know all her pain was worth something.

" My words are like a bucket of cold water to the room as I point out what Ali had to go through for this information in the first place.

Arsen begins to open each file, quickly skimming it and deciding if it's worth reading

more in depth.

Riot moves to the kitchen area and starts making coffee along with some food, knowing it's going to be a long night for us.

After an hour or so, Arsen and I have a few piles spread out across the coffee table.

Some could have useful information and need to be read in more detail or investigated more, others don't have anything useful at all.

We also made piles according to family businesses, knowing that will be important as well, with two fathers left standing; those are who we need to focus.

None of us have brought it up yet, but it's a topic that sits at the back of my mind.

What happens when we finally take out our fathers?

We talked about wanting to destroy the Hellfire Society entirely, but for some reason that doesn't feel right anymore.

I mean, we were born into this, bred and raised to put the society above all else.

It does rule generations back, but it was never meant to be this corrupt.

Yes, we were always taught to skate the lines of morally right.

We were never going to be saints, but our fathers crossed the line.

We knew that and we decided we were going to change it all.

Now I'm wondering if we should just reshape it.

Make it something beyond what it is now.

That sounds right. When I glance at my brothers, men who have had my back for years and the only men I would trust with my life, I know that the Hellfire Society is in our blood.

Moving forward, I have a feeling we will need to make it fall before we turn it into the empire it was always meant to be.

ten

ALI

Three days. Three long days of these men tending to my every need.

You would think any woman in the world would be in heaven, right?

NOT! They are driving me crazy. I can't even get out of bed to pee without one of them rushing to my side like I might collapse if they aren't there. I know they feel a little guilty for how I look right now, but I'm the one to blame.

I'm the one who had the great idea to go to my father's office for more information.

I made that choice, not them, but they won't listen to logic right now.

They are basically treating me like a broken doll, like I might have some type of breakdown at any minute.

They aren't wrong; it's possible, but I'm fine.

My swollen shut eyes have healed enough that I can finally see out of them.

The first day was rough since it hurt to even think, but with each day that comes, I feel like I get another piece of myself back.

While I was in the bathroom this morning, I finally got the courage to look at my

reflection.

To say that I was shocked was an understatement.

I don't even look like myself. The whites of my eyes are a bloodshot red, and my lip and cheek both have a nasty cut, but the biggest shock is my skin color.

I look like a busted-up rainbow of colors.

Yellows, greens, purples, and blues color my once creamy pale skin.

I look like something out of a horror story.

From what I saw of my body, it doesn't fare much better; there is not a single inch of me that Ethan didn't mark.

Half the cuts I don't even remember getting, and the ones I do remember, the guys won't let me see yet.

Arsen keeps it wrapped with gauze, and the few times it bled through he made Riot or Cash distract me before I could get a glimpse.

With the way they are reacting to it, it must be pretty bad, but it's my body and I should see what the asshole did.

On the flip side of those feelings, a small part of me is afraid to look.

I know it's a cut; I was semi-conscious when he was digging the blade in, but I can't recall how bad it was.

I mean, it throbs in pain every time I move, but can it really be that bad?

So far the guys have kept me in this room and in bed.

I know there is a second bedroom and a living room, but every time I've attempted to get up, one of the guys is there, talking me back into bed.

Honestly, I haven't had the energy to fight them on it, but today I feel rested.

I still feel like I was a test dummy in a car accident, but with the pain pills every few hours, it's not too bad. Plus, I'm used to feeling sore from fighting.

It's just my thigh that has the most pain, but I can't be babied all the time.

Plus, today I need answers. They told me what happened after Shane found me and how Ethan sent a small team after me, but we made it out and they didn't. Now I need to know what we've found out since then.

They all went out that day to gather information we could use, and I need to know if my flash drive was useful.

All three guys are in the living room area.

Arsen is in the kitchen getting some type of soup ready for later, while Cash reads through a stack of papers and Riot sharpens a knife.

Oh, my little psycho hasn't changed. Currently they think I'm napping, and I was, but my sleep has been awful.

It's like my subconscious wants to torture me more in my sleep.

Every time I close my eyes, I can feel the tip of a blade sliding across my flesh, hands groping me, grabbing at me, and whispered promises of pain to come.

I haven't told the guys, shaking off their concerns by telling them it's pain that wakes me, but I have a feeling they will find out sooner or later.

Ever so slowly, I scoot to the edge of the bed.

I'm wearing nothing but a large t-shirt that comes down to my knees as I set my feet on the wooden floor as quietly as I can.

Keeping my eyes trained on the doorway, I carefully stand, biting back the cry that catches in my throat when I put pressure on my bad leg.

I take a second to breathe through the pain before taking a step forward.

All I need to do is get past the doorway and then stand my ground.

Easier said than done when I can barely stand as it is.

I keep my movements slow, hoping Arsen doesn't turn around as I inch closer to my goal.

One step, two steps, almost there.

Right as my foot crosses the threshold of the door, the floor creaks and all three men snap their heads up. Ugh. Just my luck. A chorus of "What are you doing up?" "Do you need something?" and "You should be in bed!" sounds, making me glare at the room.

"No." Three semi-stunned faces stare back at me.

"I am not a broken little girl that needs to be coddled.

Yes, I was beaten to an inch of my life, but stop treating me like a wounded animal you found on the side of the road.

" Three sets of eyes widen at my words, but I continue to stand there, not backing down.

Honestly, I didn't even mean to let that all slip out, but oh well.

"Now yes, I'm still in pain and moving slower than I want, but I will not be bedridden any longer.

No more of you three whispering in here or rushing to my side when you hear me shift in bed.

I want to know what you have found out and what the plan is moving forward.

" I pause, letting out a breath. "Understood?

" I finally add when none of them say anything but stare blankly at me.

Riot is the first to snap out of it; he stands coming towards me.

I glare, thinking he is going to try and take me back to bed or tell me I'm being ridiculous, but he simply lifts me up and takes me to the couch, placing me next to Cash.

Winking, he kisses the top of my head and whispers, "Yes, wife," then moves back to where he was seated.

I sit there, now feeling somewhat awkward before Cash clears his throat.

"We're sorry. We never meant to make you feel like that.

We just wanted you to heal and feel better before we dumped even more on you.

" I can understand that. So maybe I might have overreacted just a bit.

"I know," I whisper. "I'm just going stir-crazy. I feel so, so - I don't know. I just don't want to be in that room anymore." I tell him, and he nods, a look of understanding donning his too handsome face.

"Well, now that Ali is up and moving, she will need some clothes.

We also need a few other supplies and some more food," Arsen calls out from the kitchen; I give Cash a small smile before turning in Arsen's direction.

I take a second to also finally glance around the room.

I was told that Shane let us use his family cabin.

He told them he used to use it to hunt, and I can tell.

A few dead animal heads, mostly deer, hang off the walls.

There's a small fireplace in the corner near where Riot sits against the wall.

A window sits on the wall next to the front door, where I can see a thick green forest. It's early to mid-morning if the sunlight is anything to go by.

A single couch and coffee table are placed closest to the fireplace, while the kitchen area is along one wall.

There's a fridge, stove/oven combo, sink, and small two-seater kitchen table.

A second bedroom sits next to the one I just left, and a basic bathroom setup sits shared between them.

Everything is wood and rustic and kind of homey feeling.

"Okay, Ri and I can run to the town if you want to loop Ali in on what we have found so far." My eyes snap back to Cash's already staring at me, and I smile. He returns my smile as Riot lets out a groan of annoyance.

"Why do I have to go? She's my wife, I should get to stay with her," he whines, making me let out a giggle, which then makes me flinch at the pain that shoots through my stomach. Ugh. That hurt. So, no more laughing.

"If you go, you could get your 'wife' presents," Cash adds, rolling his eyes as he gets to his feet, placing the pile of files back on the coffee table.

He turns to me with a slight frown before moving to the room and returning with a blanket that he gently places around me. I give him a grateful smile.

Riot finally stands, shoving his knife into his pocket before coming towards me again.

"I'll bring you some sweet treats." He winks before leaning in and placing an ever so tender kiss on my lips.

My lips chase his as he pulls away, smirking down at me before looking up at Arsen.

"Feed her," is all he says before moving to the front door, following Cash out as he calls out over his shoulder.

“Take care of our girl. We won’t be long. ”

Arsen lets out a chuckle as he brings me some pills, a water bottle, and a steaming bowl of soup.

Taking the pills and water, I quickly down them before Arsen sets the soup on my lap.

“You eat, and I’ll talk.” I nod my head, already lifting the spoon to my mouth and moaning at the burst of flavors exploding over my tongue.

I hadn’t eaten a lot over the last few days, mostly sleeping and trying to heal, but now I realize I’m starving.

Arsen reaches for a stack of papers and a laptop before getting comfortable next to me, grinning as I start devouring the soup he made.

“Okay, some of what I’m going to tell you won’t be pretty.

” I give him a dry look, making him shrug.

“I’m just letting you know beforehand. I’ll start with what Cash found out.

I slurp at my tasty soup as Arsen starts showing me different files and explaining what some of them mean.

Apparently, the guys found out all of their fathers were trying to backstab each other.

Each having side deals that weren't approved by everyone in the society.

Cash's father, James, has been in dealings with a few businesses that have been

helping him skim money off the top of their deposits.

He has several accounts that the money is distributed into that are under aliases.

Arsen continues on to explain that Riot was Riot and got information but no physical evidence.

Henry has been making additional deals with the cartel to the south.

Ordering more drugs and guns than prior transactions but only reporting the normal amount.

Then selling the extra for two to three times the price to people desperate for product.

This is all coming from guards he had a "conversation" with, but I've seen Riot talk, no doubt the person told him everything he knew.

Lastly, Arsen explains how his father had more clubs than he knew about.

He also started connecting dots and thinks his father was having men and women kidnapped and sold on the side for an easy payout.

That made me sick to my stomach, and I thought all the soup I had might come back up, but it wasn't nearly as bad as what Arsen told me next.

Standing, he takes my now finished bowl and takes it to the kitchen before bringing me a new water bottle.

He has an odd look on his face, like he's uncomfortable or disgusted.

But why? I take a few sips, eyeing Arsen nervously.

His entire demeanor has suddenly changed, and it's giving me weird vibes.

He went from his normal cool, collected, and clinical-like self to quiet and hesitant.

I can tell there is more he wants to say, but when he busies himself with organizing the files on the coffee table, the room falls into an uncomfortable silence.

I take a few more sips of the water before having enough.

I'm a part of this and I need to know everything, even if it's not something I want to hear.

How bad could it be? Did one of them find out they have a secret baby mama? Jealousy shoots through my chest like a spear. I don't know if I would be okay with something like that.

Or maybe they found out something about me? But I've been an open book with them so far.

The deafening quiet gets to be too much and I sit forward, trying to catch Arsen's gunmetal grey eyes.

When he finally glances in my direction, I give him a point look.

He lets out a bit of a dramatic sigh before turning and facing me.

Gently he grabs my hands, and the nerves from moments ago spike tenfold.

"What?" I ask, my palms getting sweaty as his eyes focus on me like he is looking for something. What, I have no idea.

"I was hoping the others would be here to help tell you this," He starts looking down at our intertwined hands.

"Arsen!" I snap when he doesn't continue. "Just tell me already. Delaying it will only make it worse. Plus, I'm a big girl, I doubt it can be worse than what I've recently been through," I try to joke, but he flinches at my words. I narrow my eyes at that reaction.

"Look, Ali, maybe now isn't the best time t-" He tries to state, but I'm having none of this dodgy bullshit.

I rip my hands out of his and glare. "Don't you dare finish that sentence. Just fucking tell me already." I know I'm probably being a brat, but I just told them not to treat me like a child, and here he is using kid gloves to "talk" to me. Fucking men.

"Fine, but I tried to warn you." I shrug, still glaring at him expectantly.

"When I went to the club to get information, I spoke with one of the girls there.

She told me about a Mr. E." My shoulder immediately tense, dread plummeting to the bottom of my stomach.

The soup is now boiling at the bottom of my throat, threatening to roil at any minute.

"We connected the dots that this Mr. E is Ethan Black, but what helped us realize it is that she said he has had odd requests lately.

He wants girls to wear wigs that are black and pink, and he calls the girls Ali when he is fucking them.

" He cringes at his own words leaving his mouth, but the room starts to spin as the

rest of what he was saying fades to static.

My nightmares suddenly become living ones, as the sensation of hands touching me, groping me, and clawing at me like bugs crawling across my skin causes the bile to rise.

Oh god, I'm going to be sick.

eleven

ARSEN

F uck, the guys are going to kill me for this.

I knew telling her about what I had found out wasn't a great idea, but she had a right to know.

Then it was like she knew I was leaving something out, but every time I thought about what the girls told me, how he called them Ali and made them dress like her while he fucked them, I felt disgusted.

Anger was a constant simmer just at the back of my mind, but disgust was first. He was her brother, for crying out loud.

The moment the words leave my lips, I watch Ali go from pale to sickly pale.

Like the blood had drained from her entire body.

She sits there for a long second, frozen, staring off into space, like she's here but not before she is suddenly jumping up and rushing to the bedroom.

I quickly follow behind, worried as she bumps her thigh into the door.

I know it must've hurt, but she doesn't make a sound before I catch her throwing herself into the bathroom, falling to the floor, and expelling the contents of her

stomach.

Carefully I approach her, reaching for her hair that's fallen into her face.

She flinches, hurling more watery soup into the toilet bowl as sobs wrack her body.
Fuck, what did I do?

"Ali," I call softly, realizing that her eyes are unfocused, as if her mind is somewhere else.

Damn it, I didn't think about her having flashbacks.

"Ali, sweetheart." Nothing. No response.

"Little flame, I need you to look at me.

Really look at me. You are safe. I promise.

" She shakes her head in answer but turns to stare up at me.

If my heart wasn't already breaking for this woman, it shatters as she stares up at me now.

Ali's normal bright green eyes were bloodshot, red rimmed, and completely lost. This fucker took an already cracked but strong woman and broke her.

"Oh, little flame." A heart-shattering sob escapes her before she throws herself at me.

I catch her in my arms as she all but burrows her entire being into my lap.

She grips my shirt in a vise grip as she sobs into my chest, and I let her.

I let her soak my shirt with all her tears as she clings to me like I'm her lifeboat in a thunderstorm among a sea of dread and pain.

All the while I whisper soft encouragement, letting her know she is safe, she is strong, and that she will be okay.

It might not be today, or even tomorrow, but we will be by her side every step of the way until she is.

It's an hour or so later when the guys return and find us.

I'm still sitting on the bathroom floor, my ass completely numb with a now sleeping Ali curled up in my lap and sleeping like a newborn baby.

She lets out a soft snore as she burrows deeper into my chest, seeking more warmth.

Both guys stare at us in concern and maybe a hint of jealousy at the sight of us.

I want to smirk, but I know the reason we got here on the floor in the first place.

They must see the expression on my face because Cash's lips tilt down in a deep frown like he is trying to figure it all out.

"I told her about what I found out at the club.

She had a physical reaction," I tell them.

"She zoned out for a minute on the couch before rushing to the bathroom.

We've been here since." Looking down at the sleepy beauty, a small smile graces my lips.

Fuck, she is so beautiful, none of us deserve this woman.

I shift my hand down her leg and hit her gauze-wrapped thigh, damn.

I totally forgot she bumped it in her rush to get to the bathroom; I need to check it.

Glancing back at the guys, I nod to the bed.

"We should move her. I need to look at her leg again, but I think she has some PTSD," I tell them, and they both nod in understanding as I shift our bodies, pulling Ali closer to my chest. Riot and Cash both reach out their hands, but I don't want to let her go yet.

It takes me a second to get to a standing position while trying not to jostle Ali too much, but I finally get to my feet and move towards the bed.

Cash is pulling back the covers as I gently set Ali down.

We all stand there staring down at this tiny little slip of a woman that has captured our attention wholly.

We have shared women in the bedroom before.

I mean, the more the merrier, but never did I think we would all be so ensnared by the same woman in this way.

We all want her as more than just a bed warmer; hell, Riot's crazy ass saw her and decided to marry her without her knowing.

I know the guys probably want to talk about what happened while they were gone, but I can't bring myself to move.

My feet have a mind of their own and cement themselves where I stand.

What if she wakes up and freaks out when she doesn't see me?

What if she gets sick again? Plus, I should probably take another look at her thigh.

It's looking much better with each day, but the guys and I agreed Ali shouldn't see it yet.

Especially after the reaction I got telling her about Ethan's sick foreplay with other women.

No, she doesn't remember what was carved into her flesh, and she shouldn't have to relive that yet.

As if she can feel our stares on her, Ali's eyes flutter open, the vivid green flashing bright before dulling some, mixing with the current bloodshot whites.

She tilts her head to the side curiously before glancing at the other two men who have also been standing there quietly staring like the creeps we are.

"I'm sorry," she whispers, staring up at me with sad eyes. Kneeling down, I cup her face.

"No, you have nothing to be sad about, baby. None of this is your fault, I promise." I hear affirmation come from behind me.

She lets out a guttural cry of pain that I can feel in my own bones as tears fill her eyes.

"I feel him," she states, and I freeze as she lets out a full body shiver of disgust. "His

hands touching me.

Grabbing at me. Telling me what he has planned for me.

" Another wrecked sob escapes her. Reaching up, I cup her face in between my hands, leaning in and allowing her time to pull away before kissing her plump lips ever so softly.

I meant for it to be a quick kiss, letting her know it was me here, not that bastard, but she deepens the kiss, chasing my lips as I try to pull back.

Now I'm no saint. I know I should stop this kiss before it goes any further, knowing she isn't ready for more.

Hell, her body is probably in so much pain, but when she grabs me by my shirt and leans into me and starts kissing me like I'm her lifeline.

.. yeah, how can I tell her no? She needs this.

Needs to feel something other than her nightmares and phantom touches of a sick man.

One of the guy's curses behind me, but I ignore them until Ali reaches down and tries to pull up my shirt.

I shake my head, pulling back as I take in her now swollen lips and dry eyes.

She gives me a puppy dog pout, and I almost give in, but I'm stronger than that.

"Ali..." I start, ready to explain that this won't fix her nightmares, and I know that's what she is doing.

Replacing her nightmares and fears with sex and other unhealthy feelings.

"Don't. That's not what this is." She glances at the other two men, who surprisingly have stayed quiet.

"I need this. I need to feel someone else.

Every time I close my eyes, it's him I see.

I know rationally he isn't here, and I don't plan on going off and doing anything else stupid.

"Riot scoffs, making Ali send him a sharp glare before focusing back on me. "I need this to heal. Please."

I try one last tactic to be a gentleman, not that my dick cares. The moment she said she needed me, he was hard as stone. I'm twisted like that, what can I say. "But you're injured." This time it's Ali that scoffs, cocking a brow as she glances down at my stomach, right where I was shot.

"If I remember right, it was a few weeks ago the tables were turned, were they not?" Fuck. She has me there.

"A, either you fuck our girl and make her feel good, or I will," Riot bites out, already reaching for her jeans button. Ali winks in his direction before giving me a challenging look.

I'm torn staring down at Ali, but my resolve breaks in an instant when Ali leans back and strips off her oversized tee.

Her naked body on full display. She lays back against the pile of pillows, spreading

her legs, trailing her finger down her body until she reaches her clit and swirls the digit around her exposed bud.

Fuckkkkk... Faster than I care to admit, I jump up, strip out of my own clothes, tossing them who knows where, and almost dive bomb onto the bed and between her legs.

I pull up short, climbing to my knees and leaning over her.

"If it hurts, you tell me. I want to make you feel good, but I don't want to make your pain worse.

" She gives me a small smile and nods. I take a second to take her in before leaning down and kissing her lips.

This time I don't let her deepen it. I move down to her neck, her collarbone, and to the center of her chest. I kiss every bruise, mark, and cut I find as I go before reaching her nipples.

I take my time, swirling my tongue around the perky rosy, pink peaks before moving on.

Ali arches into my lips, but her body begging me to give her more, but she can wait.

There is a rustling of clothes being taken off at the foot of the bed before I spot Riot buck naked, taking a seat in a chair in the corner of the room.

The placement giving him the perfect view of Ali's pretty pink pussy.

Dick in hand, he starts to stroke himself as I continue my descent to the apex of Ali's thighs.

I leave Ali's thigh untouched, knowing it's the most tender part of her body right now.

Leaning back on my heels, I stare down at Ali's core, a groan escaping me at seeing how wet our girl already is.

"Fuckkk, little flame. Look how wet you are.

You're practically dripping for me." I tell her as I swoop in, shoving my face in her core and inhaling her sweet scent.

Her thigh snaps around my head as my hot breath runs across her pussy.

"Please, Arsen," she pleads, squeezing her thighs tighter. I chuckle, the air puffing against her core and making her jump.

"As you wish." Is all I say before my tongue spears her channel.

The moment her juices rush into my mouth, I'm in a daze.

A man lost to lust as I give her what she wants.

I lick her like I'm a kid with an ice cream cone on a hot summer day, not wanting my sweet treat to melt.

I fuck her with my tongue until her juices coat my chin and run down my throat, and she's a shaking, soaked mess.

Suddenly her thighs tighten, her body arches off the bed as her shaking becomes uncontrollable, and her climax is close.

With that, I double down, eating her like a man starved, as she reaches down,

tangling her hands in my red-tipped hair.

A groan comes from Riot's direction making me smirk.

The sucker is probably so jealous right now, wishing he was the one pleasuring our woman.

Her body tightens and I know she is right there, so with one last long lick, I bite down on her swollen clit.

She explodes; her cries of pain long gone, replaced by pure pleasure as she finally climaxes.

Her body twitches with the release as I continue to lick her clean, drinking in every last drop of her sweet nectar.

I wait until her body calms before pulling back, grinning down at her like a madman as I finish licking my lips. She returns my grin, now more relaxed and more her. Letting out a contented sigh, she nibbles her lip. "I need more."

twelve

RIOT

I t wasn't fair that I had to go into town with Cash.

Why couldn't Arsen go, and I could explain what we figured out so far to Ali?

She was my wife, not theirs. Even if she was their girl too.

Wife trumps girlfriend. Crossing my arm over my chest, I sit in the passenger seat pouting while glaring out the window at all the passing trees.

This was stupid; couldn't we just order shit online?

Okay, that was a stupid thought. We are in hiding and trying to lay low.

Any good hacker would be able to track online orders, but that doesn't mean I should have to like leaving Ali.

We stay quiet the entire drive to town until we reach the outskirts.

Cash finally breaks the silence with a cool tone.

"While we are here, let's make a few calls.

I'll call a few contacts of mine and see what things are being said with our sudden

absence.

If you can reach out to your cartel connections and see if they would be willing to set up a meeting to discuss a future partnership.

" I give him a nod as he pulls into a small shopping center that holds a few stores.

"I'll grab the food and other supplies. Can you manage clothes for Ali? " I scoff at the question.

"Yeah, but grab some cookies. The frosted animal ones. Ali likes those. Oh, and garlic bread, she loves that." He rolls his eyes, but I shrug, knowing he will get them for her.

"Meet back here in 30." I wave him away, heading for the clothing store while pulling out my phone and dialing Marco Flores, the head of the Los Banditos Cartel and the Hellfire south source for drugs and guns. He answers on the third ring.

His heavily accented voice fills my ears as I start heading to the women's section. "Not many people have this number. So, start by identifying yourself."

I grin. "Now, now, Marco, is that how you talk to all your friends?" There's a deep chuckle before he responds.

"Riot, mi amigo. How have you been?" He lets out a deep, rumbling chuckle before adding, "I've heard many rumors about you lately." I let out my own chuckle as I start grabbing clothes I know my wife will like and adding them to the cart.

"I'm sure you have, but this is not a social call." He lets out a hum as if expecting that. "Me and my brothers have a business proposition for you. One I think you will want to hear."

We discuss an in-person meeting place and time before reminding him that this was always the plan: working with me and not my father.

Really it was a reminder that details of our future meeting and business should not get back to my father, or there would be consequences.

Do I really want to take on the cartel head on?

No. Will I if they fuck up our plans? Fuck yes.

Marco knows I don't like people who can't keep their word and knows crossing me wouldn't be in his best interest. Plus, he has mentioned that he feels my father is doing other shady deals on the side, which Marco doesn't appreciate.

The conversation doesn't take long, both of us prefer to get straight to business.

With the meeting set for a few weeks from now, I finish shopping, grabbing a few extra things for me and the guys as well.

I meet Cash back at the SUV, checking his bags to make sure he grabbed Ali some treats before loading up to make our way back to the cabin.

Neither of us wants to be split up for too long.

The drive back feels like it took twice as long, but it gave Cash and me time to discuss our earlier calls.

I let him know Marco agreed to hear us out.

Cash's calls went similarly. We had already discussed calling for a meeting of all the major players our fathers do business with.

Before a few weeks ago, they were also under the impression we would be taking over and stepping in to make any future dealings.

I think they had a feeling our fathers were moving pieces to make a power play, but they underestimated us. As usual.

When we finally pull up to the cabin, I do a quick sweep of the woods.

We wait a few minutes, watching and waiting, but when we are sure we weren't followed, we grab all the bags and head inside.

I put a little pep in my step when I enter, ready to surprise my little beastly with cookies and some super soft fuzzy socks that I found, but as the door swings open, no one is there waiting for me.

I frown, dropping off the bags on the counter before peeking into Ali's room, expecting her to be sleeping soundly.

A moment of panic sweeps through my body, the worst case scenarios fill my mind when I spot a foot on the bathroom floor.

Stepping forward, I glance around the corner to see Arsen on the floor, a sleeping Ali curled up in his lap.

Her eyes are red rimmed and puffy, like she has been crying recently.

Narrowing my eyes, I take a step forward, ready to rip my little wife away from him, when Cash stops me with a hand on my shoulder.

Arsen quickly explains what is going on and why they are sitting here, but my annoyance doesn't wane.

I knew I shouldn't have left her. We knew there was a chance of PTSD because the fucker beat the shit out of her before carving into her flesh, all while spewing vile venom at her.

Then he threw her out in front of Shane's gym like a piece of trash.

I know it was to lead her to us, to get our location with a tracker under her skin, but by doing so, he jumped to the top of my kill list. The only reason I haven't hunted him down is because Ali needs me.

Also, Cash and Arsen holding me back and being all rational, but mostly because she needs me.

Cash and I both reach out to take Ali, but Arsen shoos us away as he stands and walks Ali to the bed.

None of us leave her immediately, all just watching her, and I'm glad we did.

It's like she knew we were all watching her as she opens her eyes and tells Arsen she needs him.

I grumble under my breath; I'm jealous she is asking him to make her feel something, but I can be patient.

Wait my turn. I can get Arsen wants to turn her down, thinking she's not ready, but she is. I get it, she needs to feel them.

All it takes is for me to volunteer to take his back to make him cave.

Then she is naked and Arsen gets to work.

I move to the chair set in the corner, undoing my pants and taking a seat and getting comfortable.

I have the best view in the room as Cash leans against the doorframe, eyes just as focused on Ali as everyone else.

My hand reaches for my cock as Arsen begins to kiss down Ali's body, her body arching into his touch until he finally reaches her pussy.

He teases her until she can't take it and demands for him to give her what she needs.

He doesn't wait for her to beg more as he leans forward and gives Ali what she wants.

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thirteen

CASH

I lean against the doorframe, taking in the sight before me.

A small part of me wants to end this right now.

Tell the guys this is not what she needs right now, that she needs time to heal, but I would be lying to myself.

Ali is a smart girl, strong and hardheaded; she wouldn't ask for this unless she truly needed it.

My cock grows thick and hard in my pants as I cross my arms over my chest. I'm stronger than this.

Just because she needs this doesn't mean we all do.

I clock Riot in the corner of the room, dick in hand, eyes trained on our woman's pussy as Arsen devours hers.

It's hot, erotic really, I won't lie. But that's just Ali.

Even bruised and pale looking, she is still the most beautiful woman I've ever seen or had the pleasure of claiming.

It's been weeks and I still can't believe we found the perfect woman for the three of us.

We had talked about how it would be, joked even that we needed a woman that suited all of us, but never thought it would happen.

But here she is. Through the trials and the rocky start of being kidnapped multiple times, she's still here. Still fighting beside us.

I'm pulled from my wayward thoughts when Ali lets out a low, pleasure filled moan.

The sound bouncing off the walls, sending an arrow straight to my dick.

I twitch, my cock pressing against the zipper of my jeans and begging to be released.

Riot has started stroking himself, eyes glued to Ali's body as Arsen continues his assault, licking and tongue-fucking our girl.

Her body begins to arch, her toes curling as she reaches down and grips Arsen's hair.

As if all she was waiting for was an anchor to hang on to, she cums. The sight is magnificent, almost like it actually healed a piece of her, her skin becoming flush and color returning to her cheeks.

Fuck, I'm actually a little jealous now.

My cock throbs at the sight, but I continue to ignore it.

She might have needed this, but she is not ready for all three of us again.

Arsen drinks her in before leaning up and grinning like the cat that got the cream.

Fucker. Ali's face is serene as she stares up at him, glancing over at me and then Riot with a soft giggle.

The bastard is still slowly stroking himself, a hungry smirk on his face.

When he sends her a wink, she flushes even more.

This is the Ali we haven't seen in days.

Her attention is pulled back to Arsen, grinning wide, she wiggles beneath him, his cock rubbing against her core and making him let out a groan.

"I need more." Those three simple words coming from those soft, bruised lips would make any man crumble.

Arsen's eyes snap to mine, then Riot's, and back.

A question of concern in his eyes. I know what he is asking, but it's not for us to decide, so I shrug.

"A, either you fuck her into oblivion like she wants or move over and I will." Arsen's head snaps in Riot's direction, narrowing his eyes on the man still just content on watching and stroking himself in his corner.

"Please. I need more." Ali's words break whatever silly little stare-off they were having before Arsen lines himself up. He doesn't need to be concerned about her being ready, that woman is so wet I can see her glistening under the dim lights from here.

"Same rules apply. If it hurts, I stop." He doesn't enter her until she nods her head in understanding.

But the moment she acknowledges him, he is slowly sliding home.

Their groans and moans of pleasure fill the room, sending a shiver down my spine before I finally give in and readjust myself.

I don't go as far as Riot, who is now actively jacking off to the sight on the bed, but my dick is definitely weeping.

Arsen keeps a steady pace, nothing hard and rough, the way we have fucked her before.

No, this is slow and steady and intimate.

Ali's head is thrown back against the pillow, her black and pink tangled hair spread out like a fan.

Beads of sweat dot her and Arsen's skin as he attempts to hold back the urge to pound into her.

Not that I think she would care right now; she looks completely lost in bliss as she revels under him.

Riot lets out a series of grunts and groans before cursing softly to himself a moment before his seed covers his lower stomach, his head falling back as his chest rises and falls in rapid beats.

Ali's sounds shift, her moans becoming longer, raspier as Arsen picks up his pace, starting to chase his own release.

"Fuck, don't stop," she begs, making Arsen double his efforts before Ali throws her head back, releasing a guttural moan that has my cock straining to be released and

sheathed inside of her.

Fuck. This is testing all of my restraints like never before.

Moments after Ali's falls over the edge, Arsen follows, his own body tensing as he releases inside her.

Another few seconds pass before Arsen rolls, slumping to the bed beside Ali's now content looking body.

The room is quiet, everyone lost in their post-lust daze before I decide to take charge again. Reaching down, I readjust my dick once more before stepping forward and scooping up Ali into my arms. She lets out a squeak of surprise followed by a giggle.

"Cash, what are you doing?" she asks as she eyes the bathroom we just stepped into.

I kick the door shut behind us, giving us some privacy as I set her down on the counter, turning to start the bath.

I was surprised by the cabin having an actual tub, but Riot said it was probably used to help keep the house clean if they ever needed to skin an animal inside.

It made sense; Riot would know. He had a room made at one of the warehouses just for easy cleanup when things got bloody.

Ali watches me from her seat as I go about checking the temperature and adding some bubbles and Epsom salt for her sore body.

"Cash?" She calls again, and I finally turn to her.

She can no doubt see my raging hard-on as I strip out of my clothes.

Her eyes snap down at the movement and my dick takes notice of her sudden attention.

“Oh. Round two.” I shake my head with a smirk as she makes grabby hands at me.

Gently I grab her wrists, placing them beside her as I step between her thighs.

Her carved thigh, still wrapped, bled some more but not nearly as bad as the first two nights.

I debate for a long second on whether it’s time to show her.

The guys and I have talked about waiting, but the longer we wait, the more possible it is that she reacts worse.

We want her to heal, but she has more than just skin-deep wounds that need healing.

“This isn’t about sex. Just let me take care of you, bunny.

” A scoff escapes her lips as she simply nods.

“I know why we needed this, but I think you need this more.” I nod to the bath.

Another nod. “Ali, I know we haven’t known each other for long, weeks really.

And I know we didn’t meet on the best of conditions, but we are here.

We want you for the long haul. Shit, Ri already tied you down with marriage.

” I wanted to add that all that was next was knocking her up, but I didn’t think that would go over well right now.

“Whatever you need, whenever you need it, we will make sure you have it. No matter what it is. Need someone to take your rage out on? Ri has a list of men waiting. Need frosted animal cookies and fuzzy socks? Already in the kitchen waiting for you.” She jerks her head down as a tear slips free.

Can’t have that. Placing my hands on her cheeks, bringing her face up to meet mine.

I hate seeing her like this. “Don’t hide from us.

Never hide from us.” Leaning forward, I place a gentle, chaste kiss on her lips.

I stare into her bright green eyes, the life and color slowly coming back to them as I wait for her agreement.

A tiny, barely there tilt of her head is all I get, but I’ll take it.

I give her a second to gather herself as I turn off the water.

“I want to see it.” I know what she wants, and though we decided to wait until it was healed fully, it’s her body.

She can’t heal her inner wound until she sees what she lived through.

Letting out a deep sigh, I nod, not saying anything else as I take my spot between her legs and slowly peel away the tape holding the end.

Out of all the wounds and cuts on her body, this one is by far the worst.

When I get to the last wrap-around I pause.

Ali’s eyes are already zoned in to her thigh; tears threaten to cascade at any second.

I wonder for half a second if I should call the others in but decide against it.

She is going to need a minute. We're both naked in the small space, the once charged sexual energy gone.

Of course, my dick didn't get the memo; our woman is hot no matter what, and if she is ever naked, he is going to be ready.

I try to think about anything else—old gym socks, sports, upcoming meetings, Ri in his workshop, but nothing deflates me.

Hopefully she can ignore it for now. Catching her eye, I ask, "Are you ready?" She gives me a shaky nod right as the first tear falls, the sight sending a pang of guilt to my heart.

Slowly, I pull away the last of the gauze before quickly grabbing a wet washcloth and wiping away some of the dried blood smears.

She flinches at the sight before her, her eyes widening in horror as the waterfall of tears begins.

Deep, heart-wrenching sobs escape her throat as she reaches for the letter now forever carved into her flesh.

"No. no. no. no. no. no," she repeats, her voice hoarse as her fingertips run across the raised, damaged skin.

I can't watch this. Watch her fall apart like she is reliving this moment over and over again.

Reaching up, I grip her hands, stopping her from exploring the damage any further.

She flinches, her eyes snapping to mine with so much pain in them it's like watching a lone ship on a sea of sorrows.

Searching and hoping a lighthouse will guide them to safety.

I will be that lighthouse right now. "Hey. Focus on me. The piece of shit might have marked your skin, but you are not his. You are a fighter, strong and unyielding in life when all it wants to do is break you down. So, I'm giving you tonight to throw yourself a pity party.

Cry, scream, or hell, beat the shit out of me if you want, but tomorrow morning when you wake up, it's done.

He took something from you, so tomorrow we plan to take back what he took tenfold.

" Her eyes are unfocused as she looks back down at her thigh; tears still fall, staining her cheeks with salt.

When she doesn't say anything I'm worried I might have pushed her too far.

"Okay." It's quiet. Almost too quiet that I think I might have imagined I heard it, but she looks up at me, and there is a flash of acceptance.

"That's my girl. Now what do you need from me?

" Turning, she eyes the bath and then her flesh, a concern tilting her lips down in a frown.

"It will sting at first, but it will help." She nods.

Without further words, I scoop her off the counter and climb into the tub with her.

Ali lets out a hiss of pain as I settle her between my legs.

It's a tight fit, but with my knees bent and dick plastered to her back, we make it work.

I get to work, using a cup and washing her hair as she lays against me silently.

We sit there lost in our own thoughts as I go about washing her.

“Bunny baby. Let it out. I'll catch you as you fall.

” As if my words broke the lock she had holding it all back, she crumbles.

Her cries have Riot and Arsen slamming through the door in worry, but when they take in the scene, the wrap on the counter, and now Ali curled in my lap crying her heart out, they understand.

Arsen mumbles something about getting food started as Riot just looks like his own heart is being ripped out before rage replaces it.

He stomps out, no doubt planning the death of multiple men in his head.

I let Ali fall apart in my arms in the tub until the water runs cold and her body begins to shiver.

Then I move her to the bed where she continues to cling to me with her body trembling.

She falls asleep like that. Broken, sad, and lost, but I know the moment she wakes up, she will start rebuilding her armor, and the sons of the Hellfire Society will make sure she claims her revenge.

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fourteen

ALI

When I had woken up this morning, tangled in bedsheets, cool air wrapped around my bare skin and my leg thrown over a very naked Cash, I had a moment of panic.

My thigh was on full display, the ugly red jagged scarring staring at me with a stark reminder of what I now have to live with and a reminder that I'm ruined now.

How could the guys even look at me now? There was no hiding the evidence of my sad and pathetic life anymore.

Just when I had thought I could have more in life.

An actual family, a twisted one of sorts, but a family nonetheless.

Men who saw more than the broken woman in front of them, but the word now carved into my flesh is a flashing light that screams, 'stay away from this one'.

As I lay there debating the best way to sneak away from these guys, last night flashed back to me.

Who knew you could cry a lifetime of tears out all in a single night?

I don't think it's even physically possible to shed another tear ever again.

My entire body still aches, but nowhere near as bad as the first day I woke up here.

It's like I feel a sudden lightness. Like my body cried out more than just my emotional pain, but that doesn't fix what I know is true.

The guys don't see me the same, but then why would Cash tell me differently? He isn't the sugar-coating type.

The piece of shit might have marked your skin, but you are not his. You are a fighter, strong and unyielding in life when all it wants to do is break you down. He took something from you, so tomorrow we plan to take back what he took tenfold.

He let me break more than I've ever broken in my life.

I clung to him like my last lifeline while I cried out everything.

I cried for the little girl I never truly got to be.

I cried for the teenager who ran in the middle of the night and for the woman who had to figure out how to be strong on her own.

Every emotion I felt, I let it out, and Cash absorbed it.

He held me in his arms until I was nothing left but a husk of myself.

Then he carried me to bed, tucked me against his chest, and told me, "Tomorrow will be a new day, and you will be stronger and ready to face it." I didn't believe him when I closed my eyes and passed out from exertion, but now I think he was right.

I had spent the first hour of the day in the bathroom.

Riot had bought me some clothes and some toiletries, and I was thankful because I couldn't remember the last time I brushed my hair or my teeth.

I had cringed at the thought before slamming the door on his face.

I suppose if the guys saw me like this and still kissed me, I must not have smelled that bad.

Arsen stopped by when he heard the shower turn off and gave me some ointment and fresh gauze.

He didn't say a word, simply handed it over with a soft smile that sent butterflies to my stomach.

Or it could have been the hunger kicking in.

My thigh had bled during sleep, the sheet now stained crimson, but with the skin now washed and cleaned, I can now see the full extent of the damage.

Cash had let me see it last night, but it was still smeared with blood from my extra activities.

I knew what it said, but now I can see the torn edges of skin that have started to scab over.

Some spots were deeper than others, and some thicker, like Ethan might have traced over his work a few times.

It was all just an ugly reminder of what happens when men think they own the world and the women in it.

So, with Cash's affirming words from last night and my new resolve to get even and take my own pound of flesh, I wrap my leg up tight and build my walls back up.

There might be a few cracks, but it will take time to fill those gaps.

Now I'm sitting on the couch, a blanket wrapped around me and a plate of food in my lap, as we all discuss how we should best handle the situation moving forward.

"I'm telling you we should just hit them where it hurts.

It's been a few days since we left their last hit team dead.

That's a message in and of itself. They probably think we went into hiding, running with our tails tucked between our legs.

They probably think they have the upper hand now, so let's hunt them down and take them out once and for all.

" Riot paces the room, his ire towards the situation easy to read.

I get it, a part of me wants to hunt down Ethan as well.

Show him he might have gotten the upper hand once, but he won't again.

I'm also rational enough to know I'm not ready for a round two. Not yet.

"Ri, we don't know the true hold of resources they have.

" Cash grabs a stack of papers off the coffee table.

"You saw how much they were hiding from each other and us. Some of these we've

never even heard of.

We can't just go charging in there and hope for the best. We need to think this through, weigh the pros and cons, and really figure out a plan.

” He glances at me and Arsen, who is sitting next to me with his own plate, before turning his focus back on Riot.

“Look, we have a meeting with the Los Banditos Cartel in a few weeks and I've set up a meeting with a few of our main business partners as well.

Let's see if we can rally the backing forces before we go off and storm the castles. ”

Riot lets out a dramatic sigh before throwing himself into the lone chair.

“Fine, whatever you say, your highness.” A snort escapes my lips at Ri's antics.

The room goes quiet, everyone lost in thought before I finish my food, setting the plate aside and clearing my throat.

All three of their heads snap in my direction.

Their attention is almost unnerving as they wait for me to speak.

“Okay, so if the plan is to wait, make them sweat and talk to possible allies for support, what happens in the meantime?” I ask.

“Don't get me wrong, I think making them sweat is a good idea.

They will be expecting an attack at any time but will also fall into a false sense of security too.

They could start making more mistakes that will make figuring out where they are easier.

” Cash nods his head. “B-but-“ I clear my throat again. “I think going after Ethan first will benefit us more.” Riot lets out a snarl as the tension in the room rises, but I continue on. “When he had me, he mentioned that your fathers made a deal with him.” My head tilts down as my eyes start tracing the lines in the wooden floor. “If he could somehow take the three of you out, then he could keep me. That they would spare me.” I have to hold back the emotion I’m feeling as my mind tries to drag me back to that night.

Instead I focus on the disgust and rage I feel.

From the corner of my eye, I see Riot’s fist clench before he jumps up, rushing to me.

With a finger under my chin, he tilts my head up until I’m looking directly into his own green eyes.

“That fucker won’t lay another fucking finger on you as long as I’m alive.

” I nod my head in understanding as Arsen reaches over and squeezes my hand.

“Okay, so we go after Ethan first,” Cash announces before rifling through the stack of papers looking for something. “Any ideas on how we get to him?” he asks, not directing the question at anyone.

Ideas start getting thrown around. Creating a trap of some sort. Get a message to him somehow. Go to his house and knock. The last one was Riot’s idea, which makes me giggle. When Riot starts naming the ways he plans to torture Ethan, a thought pops into my head.

“I think I have an idea.”

fifteen

ALI

Two weeks. That's how long I've been cooped up in this small cabin with three insanely hot and completely unstable men.

Okay, so really just one is unstable, while the other two are mildly annoyed with the daily play-by-plays Riot gives us about how he plans to treat people on his hit list. I think it's amusing, often adding in my own two cents while the others are just over it.

When I had asked them what they plan to do with their fathers, I was told it was going to be an eye-for-an-eye situation. Whatever that meant.

My thigh is mostly healed. At least it stopped bleeding daily.

Most of my bruises and cuts have faded and my eye is no longer a bloodshot red color.

Overall, I'm feeling more like myself before the incident, which is perfect timing because we are heading back to the city.

Tomorrow all the guys have meetings with potential allies, men and business partners that have previously backed their fathers.

So, there was no way in hell I was going to get left behind because I wasn't "healed" enough.

Plus, phase one of my revenge plan starts today.

Excitement stirs in my stomach as we near the city limits. I've been waiting years to pay back my so-called family for all that they had done for me. Although, they did make me the woman I am today. I should probably thank them for it.

Pulling out my phone, I check the time and grin to myself.

I shoot off a text to Shane to make the call.

Yesterday I gave him a call. The moment he heard my voice, I could hear the relief in his.

It made me feel like a shitty friend for not calling him sooner.

I knew that the guys let him know I didn't die, but I suppose it's different when you hear it for yourself.

We talked for a few minutes, him mostly telling me I scared the shit out of him and to never do that again before I got down to business.

I looped him in on my plan before asking for his help once again.

Honestly, I was a bit surprised he immediately agreed, no questions asked.

It actually made me tear up. We were never close friends; I mean, I fought and he made money off me.

We saw each other almost daily at the gym, but we were never the hanging out type.

I didn't quite understand why he was helping us still, especially after knowing what

the guys and I were now tangled up in, but I appreciate it.

After I told him what I needed from him, we hung up and I told the guys we needed to make sure Shane was compensated for all that he'd done.

Of course they agreed, and I already had an idea of what we could do for him.

SHANE: Meeting set. 1 hour.

SHANE: Good luck. Stay safe.

"Phase two is a go," I tell the SUV. Arsen is up front sitting shotgun, while Cash drives.

Riot is in back with me, sharpening a wicked looking blade.

"The diner on the east side of Redmon Street in one hour." Cash nods before heading in that direction.

In the meantime, I pull up an aerial map of the area to view all the possible ins and outs.

There weren't many, with the area being on the edge of the main city.

There were only three ways you could come in or leave, which gave us a chance to park and get our bearings before our guest arrived.

Plus, we needed to be ready for any possible ambushes that might present themselves.

We had stopped at a rest stop just out of the city to pick up a duffle that Riot somehow had dropped off.

It was full of weapons, which only made him look like a kid on Christmas as he pulled each one out to check it over before passing them out.

When he tried to hand me a 9mm Glock, I shook my head and went for the throwing knife set instead.

What can I say, I like sharp, shiny things.

He made me strap an extra blade to my back, but I wasn't complaining.

When we got to the street the diner was on, Cash pulled into an alleyway and parked.

"Okay, we have about thirty minutes to get in position. Ali, are you sure you want to go through with this?" He eyed me, not with concern but more of just wanting to make sure I'm ready to do this.

I just give him a nod. "So, you will wait in the bathroom until one of us gives you the cue. Then it will be your move." Giving him another nod, we all check our weapons before getting out.

"Riot and Arsen, you both go through the back. Make sure it's all clear that way.

Ali, you and I will go through the front.

" Another nod because suddenly I can't speak.

My nerves have skyrocketed, and I'm suddenly very self-conscious.

Leaving the cabin this morning, I made a huge decision.

One that I was confident in only hours ago.

I chose to wear a white tank top and black jean shorts, where my new mark would be exposed and on full display for the world to see.

I figured if I showed the world I accepted this new me, no one could hold it against me.

It would be a statement piece, something to scream that I'm a badass bitch who's been through shit without having to speak a single word. It would also be a blatant fuck you to Ethan when he saw I wasn't hiding it, that he failed in breaking me.

I actually had plans to make it a piece of art after Riot made a poorly timed comment the other day that he wished he was the one that marked my body.

It gave me an idea to turn something that I thought was ugly into something more.

Something that I wanted, but until then it was what it was. A reminder of why I was here today.

Cash must realize my unease because he grabs my hand, giving it a squeeze.

“Head up, Bunny, and middle finger to the world. If anyone says anything or even looks at you wrong, we will take care of them.” He places a quick kiss on my temple before pulling me away from the alleyway.

With that short and sweet pep talk, I do as he says, pulling back my shoulders and holding my head high as we make our way to the small diner.

Time for phase two and to have a little fun.

Within minutes we were walking up to the diner, hand in hand.

As we enter, a waitress greets us, nodding to the suspiciously empty room and telling us to take a seat anywhere.

I give Cash a side eye, letting him know this seemed odd.

He nods his head once before leading us to the back corner booth.

“Take your spot.” Then with a kiss on my temple, he smacks my ass in the direction of the bathroom.

As I head in that direction, I let my eyes roam the small space.

The diner isn’t anything special. Honestly, I’m surprised the place is still open.

It’s one of those places that you only go to because you’ve been coming here all your life.

Black and white checkered floors that have seen better days.

Grime permanently staining the white tiles.

Red, cracked, and faded pleather four-seater booths line three walls in a U shape.

A short laminate counter with black stools sitting in front of it is placed in the center of the room, framing a drink and coffee station.

The kitchen and serving window take up three-quarters of a wall, while the last quarter has a door that leads to the restrooms. In all, it’s an unassuming place.

Not a diner I would go out of my way to get a burger and milkshake at.

The only reason we are meeting here is because Richard Black's name is on the lease, which makes me think he could have been using this place for some of his shadier dealings.

I make my way to the restroom to wait for the signal.

I came up with this plan, it was to lure Ethan out, but I had a feeling it would have been a lot harder than just a phone call from someone claiming to have information on my whereabouts.

So, I decided to use the next best target.

Someone who would go out of their way to get information on me because she now hated my guts.

Miranda Black. I heard what dear ole step mommy said.

How she wanted my head on a platter, but Ethan doesn't want that.

I wonder if she knows what a twisted and sick fucker her little boy is.

I doubt it, Miranda is a vain bitch and only ever cared about herself.

That's where Shane came in. He made a call to her, stating he knew my whereabouts and that all he wanted was to be compensated for his information.

Now here we are, moving into phase two of my plan.

I doubt it will take much to get under her skin or for her to call in Ethan to save her from me.

I bet she thinks he would save her over me, but I have a feeling his sick obsession goes a lot deeper than we see.

My thigh is proof of how unstable he is.

The bathroom is a single stall basic unit.

A sink, dirty mirror, and toilet fill up the small space.

Heading for the mirror, I peer at myself for a long second.

Like, really look at myself. I look the same but so different after the last few weeks.

My face is bare of the normal light makeup I would wear out and about.

The bruises have faded, but most of the damage is still skin deep.

Turning on the cold water, I splash my face a couple of times before drying it with a paper towel.

I'm not sure how long I continue to stare at my reflection, but my phone vibrating in my back pocket pulls my attention.

Pulling out the device, I read the screen.

CASH: Game time.

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Taking a deep breath, I roll my shoulders and put my game face on.

"Time to fuck shit up." Double checking the blade at my back one last time, I throw open the door and stroll out.

Miranda's back is to me as she sits across from Cash, so I throw in an extra pep in my step as I approach the table.

Cash glances in my direction, a grin lifting his lips.

Cash stands holding out his hand for mine.

Placing mine in his, I grin wide as Miranda turns to see who has caught his attention.

Her shit-brown eyes grow wide when she meets my green ones.

"Miss Black, I believe you know my wife.

" I cock a brow in Cash's direction, but he only shrugs like calling me his wife too is no big deal.

I swear if he married me without me knowing like Riot did, I will start cutting off balls.

I should have a say in who I marry. Is it even legal to marry more than one man?

Do I wanna be married to more than one man?

I mean, I've already decided that Cash, Riot, and Arsen were mine, so a piece of paper shouldn't matter, right?

"You!" Miranda screeches, climbing to her feet. "You killed him. My Richard is dead because of your ungrateful little ass, and now you're whoring yourself out for protection." Her eyes turn to slits as she steps towards me, trying to tower over me in her four-inch heels. I don't move.

Cash lets out a soft chuckle as he leans down to whisper into my ear. "Do you want me to stick around, or do you have this?" I give Miranda a once over before rolling my eyes.

"I've got this. She's basically a Chihuahua; all bark, no bite." He nods, kissing my temple before turning and heading for the counter and taking a seat. I turn back to my stepmother and give her a bored look. "Why don't we sit and talk?" I nod to the booth, but Miranda just sneers at me.

"We gave you everything, and this is how you repay us?"

I don't bother reminding her that Richard and she were planning to sell me to someone at sixteen. Or that I was basically the maid of the house since I was ten. Yeah, they gave me everything. Cue dramatic eye roll.

"You know what Ethan gave me the last time I saw him?"

"She frowns before glaring at me. I lift my thigh and show her the scar now branding me for life.

"Your son, my half-brother. Someone I share DNA with carved this into my skin.

You wanna know why?" I pause for half a second as she takes in the red, raised flesh;

a look of disgust twists her fake face. "Because he is obsessed with me."

"Liar. He is just as disgusted with you as I am.

He wants you dead for what you did to his father.

" I can't help myself. A full-on belly laugh escapes me.

Water fills my eyelids and my stomach begins to ache before it abruptly stops as a sharp sting crosses my cheek as my head snaps to the side.

"You're a lying whore," Miranda spits at me.

I can faintly hear cursing come from the kitchen before pots and pans bang to the floor.

Sounds like my husband isn't too happy about the slap I just received.

Slowly I reach up and touch the sting of my cheek as I turn to face Miranda. "Now, why would you go and do a thing like that?" I ask, my demeanor shifting to one of cold indifference.

"I will not stand here and let you spew your lies about my son like that."

"Lies?" I ask, and Miranda tilts up her chin.

"Did you know that Ethan was sneaking into my room and jerking off to me sleeping?

That he would stare at me for hours as I did my chores?

That his hands would "accidentally" grab my ass or chest as I cross paths with him in the hall?

" Her anger is evident as I continue to speak my truth.

"The night he did this," I nod to my thigh.

"he told me all about what he wanted to do to me.

How he wanted me naked in his bed. How I was going to be his and only his and that no one was going to get in his way, not even you. "

"No! You killed his father. He hates you," she spits.

"Why don't you call him up and invite him over?

We can ask him ourselves," I taunt. "See who he would chooses to keep alive.

" This time I let a smile grace my lips.

"Then you can really see what type of sick fuck your son really is.

How he would rather fuck his stepsister, who killed his father, than kill her like his mother wants. "

I must finally hit my mark because Miranda charges me, hand ready to slap me again, but this time I'm ready.

With one hand I grab the blade tucked behind my back while the other grabs Miranda's wrist. Turning, I slam her hand down on the table before bringing the blade down and embedding it into the center of her hand.

Miranda lets out an ear-splitting scream.

"I'm not the same little girl I used to be.

You can no longer knock me around and expect me to behave.

So, you are going to text Ethan and tell him to come meet with you.

That you found someone with information that he needs to meet.

Then we are going to have a family reunion, without Richard, of course.

"Tears have started to streak her cheeks, her heavy makeup becoming ruined as she shakily nods her head.

"Good." Without warning, I yank the blade up before wiping the blade on Miranda's coat.

"Take a seat and pull out your phone. Time's wasting.

"I wait for her to climb to her feet before she tumbles into the booth with a pained cry.

I take a seat across from her, holding out my hand for her phone.

She glares even with tears still running down her face but digs through his purse and pulls out her phone, handing it over.

"You're wrong, you know," she mumbles as I type out a text but pause to cock a brow in her direction. "Ethan will choose me." I snort, finishing the text and rereading it.

MOTHER: Ethan, I need you to meet me at the diner on the east side of Redmon Street. Please hurry, it's about Allison.

Turning the phone I show her the text I just sent.

"I added that it had to do with me so that he would rush.

We can't sit here all day now, can we?" If her eyes could shoot laser beams, I would absolutely be dead right now.

"Do you need a first aid kit for that? We don't want that to get infected," I ask casually, sitting back in the booth as the phone in my hand goes off.

ETHAN: on my way.

I grin, turning the phone so she can see his reply. "Told you."

And now we wait.

sixteen

ALI

I hate the awkwardness in the diner right now.

No one has said a word since I showed Miranda that her son was on the way.

I have no doubt that the guys don't like this sit-around-and-wait deal either.

Cash disappeared into the back with the others as soon as I got Miranda to take her seat.

Now the bitch is cowering, her hand to her chest while glaring venom at me.

Which doesn't bother me; she is kind of like an annoying little gnat just buzzing around your head.

You want to smack it down, but it's also too insignificant to be much of a bother to you.

Once again I glance down to check the clock on my phone and see we are hitting the twenty-minute mark.

I let out a sigh of annoyance before Miranda's head snaps to the window.

Her eyes go wide with concern or maybe fear before trying to cover it up with a smug

look.

"Showtime." I smile, sitting up straighter, knowing our real target has now arrived.

"He is going to kill you when he sees what you've done to me.

" She holds out her hand as if I didn't know I stabbed her with my blade just a bit ago.

I roll my eyes, giving her a wink as the bell above the door rings as it's opened. Multiple footsteps head in our booth's direction as Miranda makes a move to throw herself out of the booth and rush to Ethan.

I stay seated for a moment longer as Miranda regales Ethan with how I tricked her here to threaten her, told hideous lies about him, and stabbed her with a knife.

Taking a long, deep breath to calm the rage coursing through me, I place my hands on the table before slowly standing and turning to face "my family".

"Hello, Ethan." I purr as Miranda turns to glare daggers at me. The pure look of disgust shines in her shit-brown eyes as if this is all my fault still.

"Ethan, you need to do something with this piece of trash.

You promised you would handle her for what she did to your father," Miranda whines, stomping her heeled foot like a naughty child who isn't getting their way.

I smirk at that, which apparently was the right move to make because in the next instant Miranda is stepping forward, hand raised to attempt to slap me again.

You think she would have learned the first time I let her get away with it, but like I told her before, I'm not the same little girl I was before.

Before she can even get close, my own hand is swiping across her cheek.

I decided to use an open hand at the last second instead of a closed fist because I knew she couldn't take it.

The sound of my hand crossing her cheek echoes in the silence of the room.

The three men standing behind Ethan go to step forward but stop as he raises his hand.

I send Miranda a smile for good measure before focusing on the asshole.

I thought I would feel anxiety or maybe some small form of fear after our last encounter, but I don't feel any of that.

I feel disgust, rage, and hatred even. Miranda stomps her foot like a child again as she holds her uninjured hand to her now red cheek.

"Ethan Black, do something about this bitch.

She's gone too far!" Ethan lets out a deep sigh, dropping his head to his chest like he is over his mother's dramatics.

Me too, brother dearest. I know the exact moment his eyes spot his handiwork from our last meeting.

His head snapped up, his eyes filled with a lustful haze.

"Allison..." he starts, but Miranda interrupts again.

"If you won't do anything, then I demand you three to kill the fucking bitch." She

looks at the men behind Ethan, but none of them move, each looking at each other before looking back at me and Ethan.

"Well, Ethan. Aren't you going to avenge our father?

Kill me for disrespecting your mother?" I taunt as I tilt my head in a 'well, what are you gonna do' manner.

I can practically hear his teeth grind as he clenches his fists at his side.

The lustful look that was there moments ago gets wiped from his face at my next words.

"Or do you want to do something else to me?

" The words taste like acid coming from my mouth, but I need to push him.

I know the guys won't actually let him touch me, so I just have to say my piece.

"Now Allison, my deal still stands. Give up the guys, and you could live a very good life." Miranda lets out a horrified gasp as I try not to throw up my breakfast.

Turning to Miranda I paste on a satisfied smirk. "Didn't I tell you already? Your son is a twisted and sick fuck with even sicker fantasies of wanting to fuck his sister," I spit at last.

My words trigger the reaction I was waiting for as the room suddenly turns into chaos.

Ethan lets out a snarl as he lunges forward, but out of nowhere Riot is jumping over the counter and tackling him to the floor.

Miranda lets out a scream as Arsen and Cash come up behind Ethan's bodyguard friends, making quick work of slitting throats.

Blood squirts across the room as their bodies thump to the ground unmoving.

Turning to my husband, he is sitting atop of Ethan, raining down body blows.

Not wanting Ri to kill the asshole yet, I tug on his shoulder until he finally stops and focuses on me.

I pull him to stand before giving him a quick kiss and whispering a "Thank you, baby.

" Ethan lets out a groan as he tries to roll to his side.

I tilt my head to the side and study him like one might study a bug before you squish it.

"Well, this has been fun and all, but we have other matters to attend to," Cash finally says, catching all of our attention.

"What are we doing with the shitbag?" Arsen asks, making me snort.

"We haven't discussed what we planned to do with him after?

" We might not have discussed it, but I had my own plans for Ethan.

I'm still staring down at the fucker when a few things happen.

Miranda lets out an ear-piercing scream of pure rage as Cash yells out a warning.
"Bunny!"

Riot and I turn as one to see Miranda rushing towards me with her own steak knife in hand.

The look of hatred flashing in her eyes as she curses me.

"I'm going to kill you, you fucking bitch.

" I move strictly on reflex as I pull my blade from my back like before and meet Miranda halfway.

Her hands are unsteady as her adrenaline pushes her body, causing her knife to loosen in her grip.

The knife barely touches me, only scratching my arm with a thin slice.

My blade, on the other hand, is firm and steady as I go low, meeting her stomach.

I hear Ethan yell, out but the damage is done.

I hit my mark. Miranda's eyes widen as I pull back, my hand and blade coming away covered in her blood.

It's warm against my skin, causing a small smile to appear.

From the corner of my eye, I see Riot punch Ethan in the face, knocking him out with one clean hit.

Good. He got to see me kill his mother. Miranda begins to slump, so I shove her towards the booth.

Her body hitting the seat hard as she spits up blood.

I lean in, studying her now. "You know, this could have all turned out differently," I tell her, reaching up and pushing a piece of hair that had come loose behind her ear.

"All you had to do was be a mother to me.

Love me. But you couldn't do that, could you?

I looked too much like my father's mistake.

" I let out a sigh. I've accepted this, but it still stings to think about.

"You only have yourself to blame for all this death.

I am this way because of you and Richard.

Now you're going to die knowing that your son will be seeing you in hell very soon.

" I give her a soft smile before pulling back.

She begins to cough up blood, her skin turning pale and the hatred fading to the fear of death.

I don't know what I hit, but it must have been important as she bleeds out right in front of us.

Turning back to the men still standing, I give them a wicked smile. It's like I suddenly feel a hundred pounds lighter. "Well, I feel better." I turn to Arsen, who asked the question before Miranda so rudely interrupted. "Also, I know exactly where we can go to talk with our new friend."

All three guys are staring at me with a wide range of emotions, from concern to

approval to lust, but it's Riot's next words that finally give me a breath of fresh air.
"Fuck, wife, that was hot as fuck."

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seventeen

RIOT

I don't think I say it enough, but God damn, my wife is sexy as fuck when she gets all stabby.

I mean, I have to readjust my dick to make sure he doesn't explode through my pants like the Kool-Aid man through a brick wall.

Unfortunately, my thoughts escape as I blurt out just, that, but I'm rewarded with the sweetest little giggle.

God damn she is perfect. Cash steps forward and runs his finger across the small cut on her upper arm, smearing the blood before nodding to himself that it's minor.

"Where did you have in mind?" Arsen asks, glaring down at the sack of shit by my feet. I kick out my foot, hitting him in the stomach for good measure.

"His place. It's where our history started.

Plus, I bet the basement is still set up to hold someone.

" I grind my teeth at that thought. Something is twisting in my stomach because I know she is referring to where he tortured her not that long ago.

Could going back there make her flashbacks worse?

I mean, she's been doing better, but what if this sets her back some?

I glance up at Cash and Arsen, trying to read their reaction, but Cash simply nods.

Arsen doesn't look as thrilled but shrugs, holding out his hand to Cash.

"I'll go grab the truck." Cash passes the keys over before A turns and heads out.

I look down at the bloody mess across the floor.

We have four bodies in here and two in the kitchen.

We let the waitress go because it was clear she had no idea what was going on, but the two cooks knew something was up.

Cash does the same before letting out a long-annoyed sigh. "I'll call a clean-up crew." He nods to Ethan still lying unconscious on the floor. "Get him ready for transport." I give him a two-finger salute as he turns to make his call.

Once he is a few steps away, I turn to Ali.

"So, how good did that feel?" I nod to the now dead Miranda Black.

Her eyes stare sightlessly ahead, a void of nothingness.

Blood slowly drips to the floor from the edge of the seat, but is cooling fast. I stare at it like it was a piece of artwork before Ali lets out another beautiful laugh, pulling my attention to her smiling face.

Her green eyes shine with something lighter, something more.

"Honestly, I've dreamt of doing that for a long time.

I would feel terrible after thinking about it, but after I ran away, I knew it was going to happen one way or another if we ever crossed paths again.

I wasn't lying when I told her she only had herself to blame.

The Blacks made me who I am. Made me have to fight for every last breath I took in this world.

If I have to become a monster to show them what happens when you push too hard, then so be it.

" She turns to look down at Ethan. "Now the only ghost from my past is him, and I have something special planned for him.

" The gleam that enters her eye as she says "special", combined with the feral grin painting her lips, has me thinking of doing wicked things to her.

Things that we currently don't have time for here.

Arsen enters the front door at that moment whistling a tune as he swings the keys around his finger.

The ring of the bell is loud as it sounds out, bringing me back to the here and now.

Rolling my shoulders, I lean down, grabbing Ethan's dead weight, and tossing him up and over my shoulder in one quick move.

His head hits one of the stools as I let out a grunt at his added weight.

"The fucker weighs a fuck ton." Arsen has the SUV pulled right to the front with the trunk door already open.

I toss him in unceremoniously, not bothering to even tie his hands and feet.

I gave him a good beating before I knocked him out, and with the extra hit to the head while moving him, I doubt he will be waking up anytime soon.

"Alright, cleaning crew is on the way. Load up and let's head out," Cash calls out as he heads for the driver's seat, followed by a grinning Ali.

I'm not sure what is going through our girl's head right now, but this is the most I've seen her act like herself in the last two weeks, and I'm glad.

I was starting to miss my little psycho wife.

Cash keeps to the speed limit, taking more back roads than usual.

Which makes sense since we still don't know where our fathers are or what resources they have at the moment. On the drive over I texted Marco, confirming our meeting in a few hours. When we finally pull up to the Black estate I'm a little shocked.

The place looks only a little smaller than one of our places.

With clean-cut landscaping, the place is a picture-perfect image of higher class suburbia.

"Well, I wasn't expecting this," I tell the small space as Cash parks.

Ali lets out a snort before leaning over and staring at the place with disdain.

"All the pretty things in life often hide the ugliest secrets.

" Her tone turns dark, like she'd rather not even be here.

I'm about to say we can find a different place, but she is already reaching for the door handle and climbing out.

Arsen turns in his seat from the front and frowns as his eyes follow Ali heading for the front door. "Ri, let her work through this. She needs this. We just need to be here for her." I roll my eyes at how reasonable he sounds but don't respond, hopping out and jogging to catch up to my wife.

"Wait, you don't know if they have guards or something inside," I tell her, reaching for her arm to stop her, but she once again snorts at my words and shoulders her way in.

I follow a step behind her, ready to take out any additional threats, but the place is empty.

As quiet as the dead, not even an alarm.

I frown, but before I can ask about my confusion she holds up a phone and waves it at me.

"Ethan mentioned he updated the security to be more high-tech, I figured he would want to manage everything from one device.

He also has the camera app on his phone.

No one is home." She throws me a wink before heading down a hall.

I follow like the lost puppy dog I am as she leads us to the garage and opens it to allow Cash to pull in.

Once he's parked, he and Arsen climb out.

"The basement is this way." They quickly move to the back to grab Ethan before we all follow Ali to the door she indicated.

She pauses, her hand on the handle before taking a long, deep breath, closing her eyes and opening the door.

The familiar smell of copper assaults my nose first as we begin to descend.

I already know what I'm going to see before we even hit the bottom, the sight making Ali tense before she forces herself to move further into the open space.

There is a single chair in the center of the room, blood covering it as well as splattering the floor.

I dig my nails into my palm, needing the pain to center myself before I turn around and kill Ethan for the fun of it.

Taking a slow breath in, I fill my lungs before releasing it fully and taking in the rest of the room.

A small bedroom-like area sits across the way near a small window.

On the opposite side, a table with blood instruments lines the wall next to a pile of old boxes.

The floor that is not covered with blood is covered in dirt and grime.

It suddenly hits me; this is where they made her live.

The place she called home until she ran away.

If Richard and Miranda weren't already dead, I would make sure they were.

"Let's tie up the asshole for now. If he wakes up, let him wait.

We need to prepare for our meetings anyways.

"Cash and Arsen shove Ethan down and into the chair before tying his legs and arms down. Ali watches them with a blank look on her face and I'm worried this might be getting too much, but she once again surprises me as she turns away from the fucker and heads for the stairs.

"Let me make you all a quick lunch before you go." And then she's gone and I'm reminding myself if it gets too much, she will tell us, or maybe she will snap and kill him herself.

After we ate the sandwiches Ali made us, she gave us all a quick tour of the house. We figured we could stay here a few days until we decided how to finally end this all. We've been playing with an idea but are not sure if the plan will go as smoothly as we wish it would.

Now the three of us are standing at the front door staring down at Ali as she tells us once again she will be fine here alone.

None of us want to leave her, not after what happened last time, but all three of us have checked the restraints holding Ethan.

The fucker is so pathetic that he is still passed out, even hours later.

I was half tempted to take a piss on him when it was my turn to check on him, but I didn't want to have to smell it later so I held that urge at bay.

"Seriously, you guys. I'm fine! Go run off to your little meetings.

I plan to go through more of Richard's office and see if I can find anything else useful.

I'll have my phone on me as well, just in case.

" When we all continue to just stand there, she rolls her eyes, pops her hips, and glares.

"Go! Or no sex for a month," she threatens, and I gasp in outrage.

With a hand over my heart, I narrow my eyes on her.

"You wouldn't dare." I call her bluff, but she just cocks her brow in a "try me" manner.

I throw my hands up in defeat. "Okay, okay.

I'm going, but you call the moment that fucker gets up or something happens.

" The stern look on her face softens as she nods.

"I will, I promise. Now go so you can come back faster."

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"Keep your phone on, Bunny," Cash adds, leaning in to kiss her.

Arsen steps up next, planting a quick kiss on her lips as well before ducking out of the way and heading to the car we plan to take.

It's my turn to step up and I swoop in, grab Ali by the back, and yank her against me before slamming my lips down on hers and devouring her.

"Be good, baby." I nip at her lip before finally pulling back and winking as I grin at the flushed look on her face.

With that, I turn and head for Arsen, nodding at Cash, who is pulling away in the SUV.

"Let's go get this over with." We climb into one of the extra cars the Black's own and head out.

I gave Marco an address of an old warehouse we stopped using years ago.

It's a bit out of the way, but men like Marco prefer to meet in secret.

Our line of business isn't one that is done in public.

I pull up and park up front before getting out to lean against the car.

Arsen follows suit before pulling out his phone and sending out texts.

His phone starts to ding back and I glance in his direction.

"I'm letting clubs' managers that I trust know that a few changes will be happening this week.

" He shrugs like that explains it all. I suppose it does on his side of the business.

He will probably want to head to some of the clubs to make sure they know new management is moving in.

The sound of crunching gravel catches my attention as two sleek black sedans round the corner and pull to a stop.

I don't need to ask if Arsen is packing any heat because I know he is. He knows my line of business and the men I meet with, not that I'm worried about Marco.

He is a man of his word and agreed we would meet as businessmen.

But then again, I learned you can never truly trust a man, so I make sure my pistol is positioned for easy access.

When Marco nor his men get out right away, I almost want to roll my eyes.

It's a power move of his, letting me know he doesn't have to be here, but it is so we will need to wait until he is ready to meet.

After about five minutes, car doors open before Marco and his men step out.

Marco is a few years older than me, in his mid-thirties.

He took over for his father a couple of years ago, much like I was supposed to.

As he comes closer, I take him in. He is dressed in a pair of dark jeans and a long-sleeved black button down.

He even has on a pair of sneakers to match his laid-back appearance.

It's much different than the times I've met with him before.

The other times he looked the part of a cartel boss in three-piece suits and dress shoes.

"Ah, Riot, mi amigo." He opens his arms wide before reaching forward and meeting me halfway in a handshake. I nod my head in a sign of respect.

"Marco, my friend. How have you been?" I glance around at the men he's bought before dismissing them. They eye me and Arsen with caution, but I'm no threat to their boss unless he makes me one.

Looking behind me Marco spots Arsen. "Been well.

You know how it goes. Business here and there.

The wife wants to go on a vacation and has started talking about babies.

"I let out a chuckle because I do know how it goes, at least the business part.

"What about you? Any woman been able to tame you yet?

"My eyes automatically turn to slits at the mention of a woman in my life.

Does he know about Ali? Interest lights Marco's face before he grins wide.

"Well, God damn. I didn't think it would be possible.

She must be a very special woman." When I don't say anything he lets out another chuckle.

"Okay, okay. We are here to discuss the future, are we not?

Tell me, Riot, what is this proposal you mentioned? "

I keep my face blank as I cross my arms over my chest and lean back against the car.
"I'm sure you've heard the rumors."

"Ah yes. You, my friend, are supposed to be dead, are you not?" I nod, knowing that's exactly what my father wishes I was.

"Yes, well, as you can see, I'm very much alive.

" I throw my arms out to my side to prove that point.

"But your current business partner won't be for much longer.

" He cocks a brow in question. "There has been some.

.." I glance at Arsen, debating how to explain what we are dealing with without giving too much away.

"Some management restructuring as of late.

" I smile. That's a good way to put it. Marco nods her head slowly in understanding.

He has lived the same life as us and understands our way of things.

"How do you propose moving forward?" he asks.

"I'm here today seeking support. We want to know when the time comes that you are an ally that will stand with me and my brothers.

We do not wish for assistance in any way but an understanding of such that soon, it will be me who does business on behalf of the Hellfire Society.

" It's my turn to cock a brow in question. Marco stares at me for a long minute.

"Can you guarantee your..." he waves his hand in the air, seeking the word. "problems won't spill out of house? I do not like it when other people's problems become my own."

"Yes, we don't expect our problems to be around for much longer," I tell him vaguely.

He lets out a low humming sound. "I like you, Riot.

You've always been honest with me. So, I'll give you two weeks to settle your in-house affairs.

In two weeks let's meet again, maybe with our women, a double date.

We can discuss a new partnership and how we want to move forward.

In the meantime, yes, you have an ally in the Los Banditos Cartel.

" He holds out his hand for me to shake again. Grasping his, I make the deal.

"Thank you, friend. I look forward to meeting with you in two weeks." We nod to each other one last time before he turns on his heel, getting back into his car and

driving away.

We continue to watch them until the cars are completely out of sight. "Well, that went a lot smoother than I thought it would. Can we trust him not to tell Henry?"

"Yes. Marco is a man of his word. I think he was overworked with Henry as well.

He mentioned before that Henry was trying to buy more at a cheaper price, then turning around and selling it for more than what it was worth.

Rumor has it, he is making other shady deals as well.

Marco is a good man to have in our corner, but now we need to work fast. Two weeks is not a lot of time.

" I side-eye Arsen before nodding to the car.

"Let's go. I'm sure Cash's meeting will go just as smoothly, but I want to get back to Ali. "

eighteen

CASH

N one of us wanted to leave Ali alone. Especially alone is a place that holds such bad memories and is currently holding one of her tormentors captive in its basement.

She assured us that she will be okay, and I trust that she knows herself and what she can handle right now, but it wasn't that long ago that she was tied to a chair in that very same basement while her sick fuck of a brother cut her up to try to get to us.

We are the ones to blame. It was our fathers that decided to play the games.

Who kidnapped people to make it all seem legit, when really the objective was to kill their own sons off.

And for what? To stay in power for longer.

To rule the empire that our families built, but they were already burning it to the ground.

The Hellfire Society was started by three main families: the Grants, the Parkers, and the Castros.

Three friends went into business together generations ago and built something that was more than they imagined.

What started off as small-time crimes turned into working with cartels to supply and move guns and drugs overseen by the Parkers.

The Castros were all about the flashiness, so it made sense for them to oversee the sex clubs.

What started as strip clubs and private shows turned into buying pleasure anytime you wanted.

You need to bribe someone, bring them to a club, and buy them some top-notch pussy.

Lastly, you had the Grants. With dirty deeds comes dirty money.

The Grants were the "clean" side of our empire.

We ran the business that took the dirty money and cleaned it in various ways.

We kept our businesses legit so that if the Feds ever came knocking, they couldn't prove anything.

This was how it was run: all three families worked together, pulled equal weight, and made equal profit, or at least that's how it was.

Everything changed when our fathers took the ruins.

Now here we are. Having to clean up the mess they have made.

As I pull up to the meeting spot, I leave the SUV running as I step out and hand the keys over to the valet.

He hands me a ticket that I tuck into my jacket pocket.

Unlike Riot and Arsen, who can get away with looking laid-back in jeans and tees, I'm dressed as if I'm headed into a board meeting.

With a dark gray three-piece suit with a light gray dress shirt.

It's not far off, since I've asked multiple men here today.

All businessmen who, as of now, thought my father was a decent man.

When I contacted each of them, I made it clear that my father had been hiding some very important things from each of them.

I still kept it vague by not telling them what, but that was how you hooked them in.

I've piqued their interest and they all agreed to meet because they want to know what information I have.

I straighten my suit jacket, adjusting my cufflinks as I approach the front door.

A doorman spots me, quickly opening the door and bowing his head as I pass.

I smirk. I chose a gentlemen's club that me and the guys own on our own.

It's a place that our fathers can't touch and made for the perfect meeting spot.

The hostess spots me next, eyes widening before a flush paints her cheeks.

"Mr. Grant, sir. Your party has already arrived.

Would you like me to take you to them?" I eye the long-legged blonde.

She's cute. If this was weeks ago, I would take her up on her offer, making a pitstop at my office for a quickie. But alas, I'm a changed man.

Plus, I have a feeling if any of us ever cheated or thought about it, my Bunny might go on a murder spree.

"I think I can manage walking around my own club, don't you think?

" The lustful flush turns to one of embarrassment as she ducks her head and nods.

I can't even bring myself to care that I was rude to her as I simply start to walk away and to the back room where the meeting is being held.

I made sure to tell them a time at least ten minutes before I planned to be here.

It's a common power move, but one that is effective.

One of the servers stands right outside the door and immediately rushes to open the door as he sees me.

I'm a man on a mission as I waltz in, head held high as I move to the head of the table.

"Gentlemen," I say, taking a second to look at each and every man joining me tonight.

There are a dozen or so seated around the table, all older than me and around my father's age.

I have concerns that some of the men in this room will see this as me being upset that my daddy didn't hand over the family business and now I'm trying to overthrow him behind his back.

That's the furthest from the truth, but tonight will also give me an idea of which men I will be cutting ties with in the near future.

"Thank you for joining me on such short notice.

" I take my seat as I eye each man. I'm getting a wide range of expressions from each, from annoyance to concern.

"Tell us, young Grant..." he sneers at my name.

"Why have you called us here today?" one of the men asks, glancing around the room as others nod approving of the question.

"You gave little to no information yet asked that we did not include your father.

Why is that?" I give the man a smirk as I give him my full focus.

He squirms in his seat a bit before narrowing his eyes back. A challenge?

The man, Mr. Smith, if I remember correctly.

Such a boring name for such an unassuming man with his dark, greased back hair and cheap looking suit.

I can tell right away that he is not here to discuss future business deals with me, so in one swift move, I pull a gun from my shoulder holster, aim, and pull the trigger.

A single shot sounds out, echoing in the small space before Mr. Smith's eyes go wide before he slumps back in his chair.

Men around the room scramble to get out of their seats as chairs fly backwards in their rush.

"Take your seats!" I yell out, and everyone freezes, eyeing me with caution as they slowly inch back to the table.

All too afraid to challenge me now. I set the gun on the table facing the room at large.

"Now. Anyone else working for my father?

" I ask, watching each man carefully. No one speaks, but they all shake their heads in answer.

"Good. Now let's get right to business." I glance at Mr. Smith, now sporting a bullet hole in his head.

I let out a sigh before pulling out my phone and sending out a text.

Seconds later two men come in and carry the dead man away.

"That's better. Now where was I?" I pause, giving the men remaining a chance to breathe.

"Ah. I've asked you all here today because I've discovered that James Grant has been double dipping.

" Some of the men glance around at each other with frowns on their faces.

Another man clears his throat, staring at the table as he asks.

"What do you mean, sir?" He flinches when he feels my attention turn to him.

I can't remember most of their names right now, though I should probably learn the names and faces if we do continue business, but that can be for another day.

"James Grant has been skimming money from all of your books for a little over a year now.

" My words are met with confused gazes. "I've recently discovered that he has been using a few bookkeepers, ones most of you have in common, to adjust the numbers so that they reflect a smaller profit than what you are actually making.

If I had to estimate, he has stolen over 50k from each of you.

Probably more." The confused gazes have turned into angry ones.

Another man, this one younger than the other, abruptly stands, slamming his hands on the table as I lean back in my seat. "Why the fuck are you telling us this? Aren't you his son? That means you are probably in on this scheme with him. Why the hell should we believe anything you say?"

"Because I plan to kill James Grant and take his place.

" I get to my feet. "I'm telling you this because I have proof of his crimes.

I'm here today because I know the men in this room do good work, and I want it to be known that once I take my rightful place, things will change.

" Slowly I begin to move around the room, trailing the backs of the chairs as I speak.

"The Hellfire Society has been around for years, and many of you have worked with my grandfather before.

This empire was once a commanding force in this state, but James Grant and the others have rotted it from the inside out.

Me and my brothers see this empire going bigger, being more than the nickels and dimes James has been feeding you.

I'm not asking for your blind trust, but I am asking for you all to become our allies in what's to come. "

"And what is to come exactly?" The younger man still standing asks, crossing his arms over his chest as I pass him. He's a well-dressed man, and I think I recognize him from somewhere but can't seem to place it.

"New leadership. New structure. We want to reshape the way we do business and move our empire into a new era."

His eyes narrow on me. "This all sounds like a lot of pretty talk, but you haven't explained what we will get out of all this." I nod, giving the man a clever smile. He's smart; I like that. He will make a good ally.

"As I mentioned, James has stolen from you all.

I have all the proof with the exact amounts.

Become our ally and continue to do business with me and my brothers, and you will get what is owed plus interest, of course.

" I give the room a light smile, trying and probably failing at trying to seem non-

threatening.

The men begin to murmur among themselves as I return to my seat, giving them a moment to decide.

After a few minutes another man speaks up.

Once again I remind myself to look into each of their names.

"And if we agree, what then?" I cock a brow in question, wondering what he is getting at.

"What happens if we agree? Most of us have weekly meetings with your father.

Are we to pretend this meeting never happened or that we don't know what he has done?

And if he finds out we are going behind his back, then what?

What kind of protection do we have against your father?

" I nod, approving of his question and train of thought.

"This is where your alliance comes in. If you agree to new terms today, then you will stop all contact and partnership with James moving forward.

Take a few weeks off, go on vacation if you want.

" I throw my hands up in a go crazy, who cares motion.

"Look at it as cutting the head off the two-timing snake.

James won't understand what is happening and you will be cutting him off from his extra funds.

" I shrug. "Give me a few weeks to take care of a few family matters.

Once I've finished my part, you will get your money back, and we can all discuss new terms moving forward.

" I hold out my hands with a satisfied smile. "How does that sound?"

A few of the men begin to nod, while others still seem unsure.

I understand why, I am the son of the man they just found out was stealing from them.

I would be hesitant as well, but we are all grown men in a corrupt world and know how these things work.

You will win some, and you will lose some.

That's how our world goes, but right now I'm offering them a chance to be on the winning side.

It's up to them on whether or not they will take the offer.

Not wanting to sit around all day and discuss the full terms since we aren't even there yet, I decided to move this along.

"You have five minutes to decide how you would like to move forward. After that time, I will rescind my deal, and you will be on your own." I look down at my clock and note the time, then wave at the room to continue to discuss.

When no one speaks, I grin. “So, I will take everyone’s silence as agreement that I have your full support moving forward?”

” A round of yeses go up. I clap my hands together causing a few of the men to jump at the sudden noise.

“Good.” I stand, adjust my suit jacket, and wipe away invisible lint.

“As I mentioned, I recommend you sever all contact with James moving forward. He needs to know you no longer support him. I will contact you all once we can move forward with discussions for a new partnership. Until then, I suggest you all skip town for a few weeks.” I eye them seriously.

“You are making the right choice today with your decision, but let me make one last thing clear.” I grab my gun off the table and tuck it back into its holster then move towards the door, ready to get back to Ali.

I face the room, dropping my friendly smile and donning my usually cold disdain.

“Cross me and my brothers, and you’ll find yourself in the same position as Mr. Smith.

If you’re lucky, I won’t let Riot play with you first.” Each man in the room does a full body shudder, making me grin.

Riot’s reputation precedes him, that should make the psycho happy.

“I’m glad we could all come to an understanding today, gentlemen.

Until next time.” I tip my head before turning my back to the room and heading out to valet.

I quickly hand over my ticket as he quickly runs off to grab the SUV.

Pulling out my phone, I see a text from Arsen.

ARSEN: We are headed back now.

Perfect, a small part of me eases knowing that Ali won't be alone for much longer. My SUV pulls up to the curb and I give the valet a hundred before climbing in and sending off my own text.

ME: On my way as well.

As I pull away from the curb, I can't help but smile to myself. Everything is starting to fall into place. A few more pieces to move and we will have a checkmate.

Then the real game will begin.

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nineteen

ALI

And just like that, I was alone.

A small part of me wanted to call one of the guys back, tell them I lied about being okay.

I mean, I wanted to be okay, but this is a house full of nightmares.

Everywhere I turned, memories that I thought no longer existed popped back up.

Images of me as a young girl sneaking around the house trying to get chores done without being seen.

Waiting for everyone else to go to bed so that I could sneak to the kitchen to get a bite to eat.

The times I was caught and punished for simply just being there.

No, as much as I wanted to be brave and put on a front that I was okay, I wasn't feeling it right now.

I knew the guys had to leave, play their part so that pieces could be put in play and we could all finally stop running and hiding, but I've become accustomed to one of them always being around.

The me from the pre-kidnapping incident would shake her head in shame at the way I crave my men's presence.

I was never a woman that needed a man around, but lately it's almost like they are a piece of my soul.

I don't think I could see my life without them.

Who would have thought it would take three crazy psycho yet beyond hot men to tame a wild soul like mine.

Knowing I have a bit of time to myself before any of the guys get back, I start my way around the house.

So much of it is the same yet different, and knowing Richard and Ethan, I'm sure there are valuable items or information hidden about the place.

I move room to room, taking in the differences, searching cabinets and drawers high and low.

I'm somewhat expecting to find something scandalous, like photos of criminal actions or maybe one of them in a compromising position.

On second thought, I don't think there would be enough bleach in the world if I saw something like that. Gag.

As I move from room to room, I load up a small box of Miranda's jewelry, like rings and necklaces, a few expensive men's watches, and little knickknacks that look like they cost a pretty penny.

I'm sure I could sell these things and start a little savings.

They owe me that much. The last room I end up in is Richard's office again.

It's the same as it was when I was here last, so I head for the desk and take a seat.

Leaning back in the office chair, I stare at the room at large.

"If I wanted to hide ultra secret documents or something important, where would I hide it?

" I ask the room as I slowly spin, tilting my head to the side as if that would help.

"The filing cabinets?" I've tried them, they need a key or one of the guys to break it open.

"The desk?" Too obvious. "The bookshelf?

" I pause, taking in the bookshelf. If this were a spy movie, then yeah, someone could hide shit in books.

With that thought, I glance around the room looking for a large picture of some sort that could hide a safe, but of course that would be too easy.

Bookshelf it is. Popping up, I move to the shelf to run my fingers along the spines of the middle row.

None of the titles stand out or are even familiar.

I'm about to give up, thinking I'm just stretching for crazy ideas now, when something catches my eye.

The bookshelf itself is nothing fancy, all black with row units from the ground to the

ceiling.

If I hold out my arms, I could reach both ends, but it's what is on the shelves that catches my attention.

Dust. A light layer that covers all but a small section of about six thick books.

Reaching up, I pull on one of the books but it doesn't budge.

They are connected. Pulling harder, I finally hear a soft click release and the books move as one, revealing a small safe.

"Ah ha!!!" I almost do a happy dance until I realize it's a combo lock and I don't know the code. "Well, that was short lived."

Deciding I need a break from my horrible detective skills I move to the kitchen to make some sort of snack.

I'm barely pulling out a bunch of precut fruit to snack on when I hear a muffled male scream.

Seems our guest is finally awake. I debate if I should send a text to the guys, letting them know, but instead check the time.

It's been an hour since the guys left, which means they shouldn't be gone much longer.

I shouldn't bother them with this. Plus, it's not like the asshole can escape.

All three of the guys checked the bindings multiple times.

No, I'll just let him scream, sweat it out. Build the anticipation.

I go about making myself a fruit salad as Ethan continues to scream at the top of his lungs.

I bet he would try to curse the house down if he could.

I sit at the counter enjoying the sweet, delicious taste of my snack when a loud thump comes from the direction of the basement.

I freeze. There's no way he could get free.

It's not possible. But what if... The part of me that is still reliving what that bastard did to us rages up.

Abandoning my snack, I make my way to the basement door.

Just like years ago, I place my ear against the cold wood surface and listen.

I might be the one on this side of the door now, but my heart still does a weird flutter.

When I don't hear any pounding footsteps coming my way, I twist the lock and slowly open the door.

It's barely a crack, but I take the time to listen. No more screaming. No cursing. No sound at all. With the guys' warning to not go down there until they get back in my mind, I take a single deep inhale before opening the door wider and taking a step down.

This is my tormentor. This is my history. This is my revenge to take. I repeat the statements over and over with each step further down I take. I need this. This is for

me. I will not let this asshole, or this family, take any more from me than they already have.

It takes my eyes a second to adjust to the light I flip on at the bottom of the steps, but what I see brings me a small piece of happiness.

A smile tilts my lips up as I spot Ethan lying haphazardly on the floor.

His body is at an odd angle due to his legs and arms still being tied to the metal chair.

The gag that was around his mouth earlier has shifted to around his neck, which explains all the screaming I heard.

He lets out a low groan as his eyes flutter open once more, he's going wide in fear before turning to glare.

My grin only gets wider as I begin to circle him.

"I bet you never expected to end up down here like this, did you?"

"I ask casually. When I reach the front of him, I kneel down to get a better look.

"Riot sure did a number on you. I think he would have killed you if we didn't stop him.

Honestly, I don't think he likes you very much.

Not after what you left on me." Ethan lets out a snarl in my direction, but the way his face is digging into the ground, it's not as effective as he would like.

I let out a chuckle as I really look Ethan over.

I'm sure he is in a lot of pain, Riot wasn't throwing any punches when he took him down earlier.

He's currently fully clothed, so I can't see the full damage, but his face is sporting a pretty black eye.

"Just wait until I get out of here. The things I'm going to do to you.

You are going to pay for all of this with that pretty little cunt of yours.

" His words are muffled, but I hear them loud and clear.

"I bet your little fuck toy boyfriends haven't looked at you the same since I gave you back to them.

" His words cut through my chest, the breath wrenching from my lungs like he reached down my throat and stole it himself.

"You're ruined to them. Dirty. A broken little girl who will never be loved.

" I don't think, just act. My fist swings out, striking him across the cheek, making his head bounce off the ground before his eyes roll back into his head and he passes out again.

I'm fuming now. What the fuck is wrong with me?

Letting him once again get under my skin like a fucking parasite.

He has no hold over me, and his words...

His words were just that. Words. I know the truth, the guys, my men care for me.

The last few weeks have proven that. He might have permanently scarred me, but it's just skin.

Flesh that can be altered. Shit, I've been itching for some new ink anyways.

I didn't realize I had started pacing the floor.

Five steps forward, spin, five steps back, spin.

"You know what? Fuck you, Ethan!" I yell, then for good measure, I spit on him.

"Fuck your father, fuck your mother. Fuck the whole Black family.

" I continue pacing until my reflection in an old mirror shoved in the corner of the room catches my attention.

The red, angry MINE stares back at me, and an emotion beyond rage filters through my system.

Then it's not me I'm seeing in the reflection, at least not the me now.

No, it's the sixteen-year-old version looking back at me.

The one who couldn't fight back, so she ran.

It's like a lock being undone, a quiet clicking sound in my head that has an idea popping to life.

One that I know Riot and my men will certainly approve of.

What was it that they said they wanted from their fathers, an eye for an eye?

Well, I suppose for me it will be a pound of flesh for a pound of flesh.

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Turning back to Ethan, I debate the best way to go about my new grand plan.

First things first, I need to drag his dead ass weight up and sitting again.

Moving into position behind Ethan, I grab the back of the chair, brace my feet on the ground, and pull.

The chair barely shifts before I'm letting go and moving to the side to try this angle. Once again I brace my feet into the ground, grab the chair while trying to avoid having to touch Ethan and pull. This time the chair wobbles up, teetering on two legs before I give it another hard yank. That works, as the chair crashes back on all fours, causing Ethan's body to fling with it, his head flying forward and landing against his chest. "Huh, still passed out. We can't have that."

Quickly I run back upstairs and to a supply closet to grab an empty cleaning bucket.

Moving to the bathroom next, I fill the bucket with cold water before heading back to the basement.

I set the bucket beside Ethan's chair and head to the table.

I had seen a brief glimpse of what was laid out on the table when we originally brought Ethan down, but I wasn't in the right mindset to fully understand what I was seeing.

All sorts of tools and surgical instruments are laid out; some still covered in dry blood.

I bet my left ass cheek that the blood belonged to me.

Seeing everything he used on me only solidifies my decision moving forward.

Moving back to the bucket, I lift it and dump the entire thing over Ethan's passed out self.

The moment the cold water hits him, his body jerks, spluttering at the sudden shock to his system.

I grin as his wide eyes go wild, searching the room before landing on me near the table again.

I run my fingers across the cold metal of each tool before landing on and choosing a six-inch hunting knife.

"This will do," I tell him, turning and showing him my proud choice.

"Don't you think?" I ask, not that I think he will answer.

Slowly I move towards him, circling him, showing him that he is now the prey in this situation.

He tenses as I slide the edge of the knife along his back, over his arms, and come to a stop at the center of his chest. "I remember when these roles were switched.

" I use the tip of the knife to point back and forth between us.

"But you had my clothes cut away, so let's make that even now.

" I give him a wicked grin as I reach forward, grip the center opening to his button-

up, and yank.

Buttons fly out as I let go of the fabric and it falls around his arms. "I can work with this. "

"Fuck you, bitch. You think you're all big and bad right now, all because you have those bastards hanging around you.

" He lets out a cold chuckle. "One way or another their father will see them dead.

They don't have enough power in this city to go up against them.

" It was my turn to let out a chuckle, but Ethan has the nerve to spit at me a moment later.

Narrowing my eyes, I ask myself, what would Riot do?

Then I act... slamming the knife down into Ethan's leg.

"Oops. It slipped." I shrug as he lets out a stream of curses.

I had enough after the third bitch directed at me, so I decided to gag him again.

"It's not exactly how I planned this. I prefer to hear you scream like how you heard me, but honestly.

.." I let out a sigh. "Your voice is getting on my nerves.

" He glares daggers at me still attempting to speak.

"Sooooo..." I start tilting my head to get a better angle of Ethan's bare chest. "Where

should I start?

" I wave my hand in the air. "Never mind.

You didn't give me a choice, so let's just dive right in. "

And that's where Riot and Arsen find me.

Covered in blood, a barely conscious Ethan seated in a chair with the words SICK FUCK carved into his chest. Well, I knew it said that, but you couldn't really tell with all the blood coating his skin.

A sick sort of pride overtakes me when Riot sees my handiwork and begins to clap.

"Damn, baby. Your lettering needs a little work, but that is a masterpiece if I've ever seen one." I beam at his words as I step back to stand beside them and take in the full picture. Honestly, it's not too bad.

"One second," Arsen calls, grabbing the bucket and jogging upstairs to what I assume is to refill it.

I keep my eyes glued to Ethan's chest. The slow rise and fall as he struggles to keep his eyes open. "How does it feel?" Riot asks, a soft whisper against my ear.

"Honestly?" He nods. "I feel free." And I do.

Something about returning the favor, cutting out a piece of him that he had no right to take from me, is freeing.

Like I can breathe again. Arsen returns moments later with a filled bucket and, without any fanfare, tosses the water onto Ethan.

Once again, his body jolts from the shock, the water clearing away the blood mess and giving me an even cleaner view of my work.

I'm not even sure it was possible, but my grin grows even wider, my cheeks aching at this point.

This time Ethan doesn't bother trying to speak past the gag, going straight to glaring at the three of us.

Turning my back on him, another stroke of genius strikes.

I eye Riot from head to toe first before moving my gaze to Arsen.

Biting my lip, the idea takes form. "I need you both to fuck me.

Help me show this asshole what was never and will never be his.

" Slowly I reach for the edge of my shirt and slide it up and over my head, letting it fall to the floor before moving to the button of my jean shorts.

The whole time keeping my eyes trained on my men.

I wish Cash was here, but I can make it up to him later.

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twenty

RIOT

The look in Ali's bright green eyes as she whips her shirt up over her head has my dick going from half mast to fully cocked and ready to go in point five seconds.

I don't even care that she is splattered in another man's blood as she reaches down to undo her shorts.

I hadn't even comprehended her words until she cocked a brow at us like we were idiots just standing there staring at her.

"I need you both to fuck me. Help me show this asshole what was never and will never be his. "

Like a shock of lightning through my body, I'm jolted into action, not needing to be told twice.

Arsen must have the same idea because he moves with me.

Like we have done this hundreds of times we sandwich Ali between us.

Our hands making connect with her warm, smooth skin as we explore her body together.

Her flesh goosebumps as I run my lips down her neck until I reach her collarbone,

sucking on it as a lustful low moan escapes her throat.

A pitiful, pain-filled groan comes from behind us and I almost snarl at the man.

I was getting so lost in my wife's body that I almost forgot why we were down here in the first place.

Ethan Black. The bastard that thought our girl belonged to him.

I don't bother turning around as I trace my fingers down Ali's flat stomach and to the hemline of her lace panties.

Unfortunately, Arsen can't ignore the asshole as he glares over Ali's head, a look of disgust on his face.

"Why don't we continue this upstairs? This asshole doesn't deserve to see you like this.

Not when we plan to have you blissed out and full of our seed.

"I agree with my brother on this one, but then again, if Ethan gets to watch us fuck Ali's brains out, then I'll just dig out his eyeballs with rusty spoons after. That's fair, right?

Ali's back is to my front and we are turned away from Ethan, but still, no one makes a move to leave the basement.

Arsen has even slid Ali's lace bra to the side exposing her rosy, pink nibbles to the cool air.

Another moan leaves our woman's throat as Arsen leans in and swirls his tongue

around her peak nipple before gently biting down and causing her to arch away from my chest.

“No. I want him to watch. He needs to see this. See that I was never his and how real men fuck their woman. Pleaseeee.” Her words stir a possessiveness within me.

Do I want this fucker to watch her throw her head back in pleasure as we bring her to ecstasy? Fuck no. I’d sooner rip off his dick before that.

Would I ever deny my wife of anything? Again, fuck no. Mostly because I know this could help her heal and move on from what he did to her. So, I can beat down my urge to throw her over my shoulder, stomp up the stairs, and ravage her like an animal in heat. Then I can rip off his dick.

I eye Arsen from above Ali's shoulder, and without speaking a single word, I can tell he is in agreement. What Ali wants... Ali is getting.

“Well, if this is what you want, you better hang on tight, baby. We are going to fuck you so hard you won’t walk right for days.

Now let’s get you better suited for this ride.

” Arsen and I reach for her at the same time.

Me gripping her lace bra while Arsen grabs her panties, yanking the material shreds off her, leaving her now completely bare to us.

I lick my lips at the sight. Unfortunately, Arsen, the asshole, beats me to the punch as he drops to his knees and yanks open her thighs, and shoves his face into her pussy.

The move causes her to lose balance, tumbling her back into me as I catch her.

My hands go to her breasts and I begin pinching her nipples.

Arsen groans, pulling back to smirk up at me. "Fuck, she tastes divine, and our girl is so responsive." He reaches up, usually his fingers to swipe through her folds, holding out his now wet fingers to show me exactly what he means.

Bringing my lips to her ears, I nip at her tender flesh.

"You like this, don't you, wife?" Her eyes are closed, head thrown back against my shoulder, a look of utter enjoyment consuming her features as she nods in answer.

"Do you want more? Do you want us to fuck you raw, to show you who you really belong to?" Her entire body shudders at my words.

"She likes that idea, Ri. Fuck, she is practically gushing at the thought of us claiming her.

" I smirk at that, jealous that Arsen gets to taste the evidence of how her body reacts to us, but it's oddly even more arousing seeing one of my brothers enjoy my woman as well.

I never minded sharing before, but I thought I would be a jealous bastard when I found the one.

Boy, was I wrong. Fate would have it that the perfect woman for me would also be perfect for my brothers.

At least I know if I'm not around, she will always have someone to take care of her.

"Please, stop teasing me and fuck me already." We both let out chuckles at how impatient Ali is.

"So needy, wife. Relax, let us take care of you.

" Another gagged snarl sounds from behind us, making me grin in sick satisfaction.

"Let's really give our guest a show, shall we?

" Slowly I shuffle the three of us to give Ethan a better view as I continue to hold Ali against me, Arsen refusing to let up on her pussy.

One of my hands moves from her breast to her throat, exposing the long length as I grip it in my palm.

Turning her head to the side, I make her look towards Ethan, who is glaring daggers at us, trying to thrash in his seat but can't seem to move much.

Blood continues to run down his chest, making my grin beam wider at seeing Ali's art.

"Look at him. How pathetic he is. He wants to kill us still; you can tell it from his eyes.

" I stroke her pulse point as her body tenses, no doubt from the assault Arsen's tongue is giving her.

"Too bad you were never his. You are mine. "

"And mine," Arsen snaps before shoving his face back between our girls' thighs. Her legs begin to shake, and I know she's close.

"Yes. Yours. All three of yours," she adds before she lets out a scream of pleasure so strong my dick weeps at the sound. She all but collapses against me.

"Good girl. That's it, ride it out. Let A lick you clean.

" It takes her a moment before her breathing normalizes.

Arsen pulls back to stand, licking his own lips like a dog savoring his treat as he sends me a smug smirk.

Ali turns in my hold before staring up at me, pupils blown with lust and eyelids heavy lidded.

"More," is all she says before she is pulling at my clothes like a woman on a mission.

A mission I can get behind. Arsen begins to remove his as well, and within seconds the two of us are as naked as Ali.

It's her turn to explore our bodies, her hands running up and down every inch of skin.

My muscle flex under her touch, my cock already standing at salute and ready for battle.

She does the same to Arsen before gripping our dicks with her hands and giving us a few tugs.

Fuckkkking Hellll...

"If you don't let me inside of you in the next few seconds, babe, I'm going to embarrass myself and come all over your hand like a fucking teenage boy," I growl out, but I don't wait for her answer before I'm gripping her hips, tossing her up, and slamming her down on my cock in one swift motion.

Honestly, that move was so smooth, I almost wish I had it on tape.

We both moan as I fill her soaked core, her warmth seeping into me.

I hold her there for a long second, just embracing how tight she is before pulling her back and sliding her up and down on my shaft a few times.

I hadn't even realized I closed my own eyes until I open them and see Arsen, watching us, his own dick in hand pumping.

"Don't be shy, brother. Our girl can take another one.

Can't you, wife?" She nods her head, moaning out a long, low yes, as I continue to slide her up and down on my cock. The friction is orgasmic, but I'm no two pump chump.

Arsen approaches, placing his hands on Ali's side before kissing along the side of her neck.

She arches her neck into his touch as he begins to move into position.

Instead of going to her ass and prepping, I feel the tip of his dick nudge mine.

I freeze all movements, not put off by the idea but curious on where he is taking this.

He cocks a brow at me, challenging me to back down, but hell no. If Ali is game, so am I.

"Can you take both of us in one hole?" he asks. "We can stop if it becomes too much." But she is already shaking her head.

"No. I can take it. I want to feel both of you.

" And just like that I knew I would march into the front lines of a battlefield for this woman.

With neither of us wanting her to change her mind, I place my arms under Ali's thighs and lift her. pushing her thighs wider and giving Arsen more space to line himself up better. Everything else in the room fades to the background as Ali's eyes pop open to meet mine just as Arsen pushes his tip beside mine.

"Breath. Focus on us. Feel us," I tell her as Arsen slowly breaches Ali channel, making her tense and tighten.

She is damn near strangling the life from our cocks as Arsen finally settles fully sheathed inside her pussy.

I thought the friction of Ali's walls felt good, but God damn, adding in another dick making her tighter and adding to the movement is top-notch.

We give her a second to adjust to this new type of fullness before she growls out for us to move.

So, we do. It takes another minute to find a good rhythm, but once we do, something beyond euphoria builds at the base of my spine.

It's like when you're at the tip-top of a roller coaster, and you have a moment to see the horizon and there is an odd sense of peace, but then you inch closer to the edge.

The closer you get, the more your heart rate builds, knowing you're about to have a rush of endorphins and adrenaline. It's like a high without the drugs.

Our movements become jerky as we pump our hips in time.

Sweat drips off our bodies and I know we will need a serious bath after this.

If not for all the blood that was covering Ali before.

Just the thought of Ali being covered in blood after she took her own revenge has my cock jerking before all my muscles tense and I'm falling over the edge of a cliff into the strongest orgasm I've ever had in my life. My breath seizes in my chest, but I'm not alone, because both Ali and Arsen are following me over the edge.

We're huffing and puffing as Ali's pussy milks us of everything we have before she finally slumps against me. Arsen is the first to pull out, stumbling back and hitting the staircase. Slowly, I pull out next, allowing Ali's body to slide down against mine until she is steady on her feet.

Like a needle to a bubble, my surroundings pop back into view, the room and where we are coming back into focus.

I turn and face Ethan, gently pushing Ali into Arsen's arms. "Enjoy the show?"

"I ask, smirking. I glance down at my cock, now dripping with the evidence of what we've just done.

Leaning in closer to the man, I speak in a soft tone.

"You were never going to have her. I should carve out your eyes right now for simply getting to see her like this, but we have bigger plans for you.

"I glance over at a now-sated Ali, leaning against Arsen's chest. A door above us slams shut before Cash is heard calling for us.

"Well, it looks like Daddy Cash is home.

Better not keep him waiting." Turning back to Ethan, I pat his cheek. "Be a good boy and stay here."

Arsen scoops Ali up into his arms, and I get the perfect view of Ali's pussy, dripping with cum pussy that has me wanting to shove it all back in.

The thought is crazy, but what if we stuff her full enough that one of our swimmers stuck?

The idea has my spent cock twitching with excitement.

Ali having one of our babies...I think I like that idea.

twenty-one

ARSEN

Cash recaps his meeting, letting us know that his father had sent one of his men, but he didn't stick around for long. We had finally set all the pieces in motion. Casted the line into the ocean and now we just had to wait for a little fishy to come along and bite. Cash's plan for his father was simple, James prided himself as a businessman.

For years he made smart business deals that put the Hellfire empire on the map.

But a man full of pride and greed makes for an unstable lifestyle.

So, we just need to hit him where he will feel it the most, his business deals.

With Cash gaining the support and allies with the men that are the backbone of this empire, we are putting James in a predicament.

We are cutting off his access to his greed monster, the one that has been cutting corners and slimming these hard-working businessmen of their cut of the pie.

Now it's just waiting for him to notice his men no longer respect or follow him.

We've started bets on how long it will take James to notice how many of his "loyal" men have turned their backs on him and his business. I give it a week, two tops.

Riot's dad, on the other hand, will be a bit trickier. Henry is not like James in the

sense that he seeks more of everything: money, business, women. Henry cares more about his image. He always wants to be the richest man in the room or at least look it. Oh, you have a Rolex.. Well, I have a gold and diamond encrusted Rolex custom made. Anything that had ever come out of the man's mouth was an attempt to one up someone else in the room.

Riot's meeting with Marco was a success. Marco understands how this business works, and in some cases, someone might need to be forcefully removed from his position. Like now, with our fathers. Riot is pretty sure his father will show up somehow on his own. He says Henry would feel like him hiding from his own son would be embarrassing. I think he is right, but I'm not sure how long we can wait.

The fact that my father is already taken care of makes this situation a bit easier, though, it's been a while since I've checked in with any of the clubs.

We have been a bit preoccupied, but I know I need to show face and lay down some new rules.

Maybe make a list of people I will need to clean house of.

Our fathers have ruled for many years, so we know walking in and demanding everyone fall in line won't exactly go smoothly.

No, we need to take care of loose ends before we can fully gain the respect we are owed.

It's been a few days since arriving at the Black's estate.

We've all just been hanging around trying to figure out who is going to make the next move.

We're all seated around the kitchen eating breakfast when I decide now is as good a time as ever to bring up the clubs.

Especially since I think we are all going a bit stir crazy just waiting for the next ball to drop.

"I'm thinking about heading to the clubs tonight.

Checking in, showing face. I think we need to start making a list of who will be loyal to us and those who might still be stuck in the old ways," I say aloud, taking another bit of eggs before glancing up at everyone's reactions.

Ali is smiling wide, nodding her head enthusiastically like an excited pup.

Riot watches her for a second before nodding at me like he approves of how the idea makes our girl happy.

Cash is quiet for a minute, probably weighing out the pros and cons before finally thinking.

"I think that's a good idea. We can also see if anyone else knows anything on the whereabouts of James and Henry." He takes a sip of his coffee. "Let's all go, make it a show of power for those who have heard the rumors." I snort. The rumors that some or all of us are dead.

"Do I get to dress up?" Ali is practically bouncing in her seat as she glances in each of our directions.

I smile, throwing her a wink. Ever since our little basement therapy session, the old Ali from before the "incident" has been back.

Her sassy mouth and crazy attitude have been a delight because she likes to push our buttons until we are bending her over our lap or knee and turning her plump little ass red.

Not that she complains, the little minx has blossomed beside us.

We haven't told her yet, but we plan to make her our fourth when this is all said and done.

We've talked about starting fight rings and our girl would be the perfect boss bitch for the job.

Our father's will be turning in their graves when they find out a woman will be in charge of a piece of Hellfire's empire, and I can't wait.

Riot clears his throat, giving Ali a once over.

"Yes but be mindful that I will have to carve out the eyes or cut off the hands of any man or woman that looks at you or even thinks about touching you.

So, dress accordingly." The wicked gleam that enters Ali's emerald greens tells me all I need to know. Tonight is going to end bloody.

Later that night, me and the guys are in the living room waiting for Ali to finish getting ready.

She made a huge deal over not wanting to be seen until it was time to go.

The guys and I all went with our usual looks.

Cash and I in our nice, pressed suits, his is customary dark gray and mine a lighter

gray sans the vest. Riot dons a pair of dark jeans, a black T shirt, and a leather jacket with black combat boots.

All black to hide the blood, his words, not mine.

Checking my watch again, I'm about to call out to Ali when I hear the bedroom door down the hall open.

Leaning to the side, my jaw all but hits the ground when I spot her.

"Holy shit," I whisper, but in the quiet of the room I might as well be yelling. My words draw the attention of the other two, who move to where I'm standing to see what caught my attention.

Just like me, Cash and Riot's jaws drop.

I'm pretty sure we're all drooling at this point.

Ali is grinning ear to ear as she saunters towards us looking like sin itself.

I mean, the devil could be a woman, right? I have no idea where she got these clothes, but Riot's statement from this morning is going to be ringing true with the way she is dressed.

Every man and woman is going to have their eyes glued to our woman.

Ali is wearing a short, tight leather mini skirt, her scar on full display, but somehow, only makes her that much more sexy.

The skirt ends right beneath her ass cheeks, and I know if she bends over even a small amount, her pussy will be on display, because I have a feeling she's not wearing any

panties.

The top she is wearing is a hot pink halter that climbs up her chest and wraps around her neck but leaves her upper back on display.

Lastly, her feet are covered in low thigh-high leather boots that stop right under her scar.

To top off the sexy as fuck, badass look, her hair is left in loose, soft waves, and light makeup splatters her face with a bright pink lip to make it all pop.

"Nope. We aren't going." Riot throws his hands in the air.

"I don't have enough bullets for every man that will see you and then fantasize about you.

You aren't going." Ali sticks out her lip in a pout while crossing her arms over her chest. Which honestly doesn't help her case as it just makes our eyes drop to her perky breasts.

"Don't make that face," Riot whines, turning to us like we are going to back him on this decision but I have no desire to upset that woman. Not when I bet she has a knife on her right this minute. I shake my head, taking a step back to show I'm not a part of this, as does Cash.

Ali smirks before approaching Riot, lifting on her tiptoes and whispering something too low for us to hear into his ear.

His whole demeanor changes in a second, and I have to hold back my laugh and comment that the fucker is whipped hard.

But I don't blame him. After a quiet second, he steps back, reaching down to readjust himself before nodding.

"Deal." Then he turns to us. "Ready?" I want to ask what she said to him, but I'm sure I'll find out later.

I nod to the garage, and we all file out into the SUV, ready to get our night started.

I have a list of about ten different clubs I want to hit tonight.

The majority of them I know have no issue switching to new management, but I have concerns about a few that my father used to favor.

We start with the easier ones, spending a bit of time in the VIP section of each while discussing with the new house manager some of the concerns they have as well as some of the changes I would like to make moving forward.

Most are optimistic about the changes I want to see, some even adding in their own suggestions.

Overall, it's proving to be a good night, even with Riot threatening men left and right.

It's actually kind of comical because it's obvious that Ali is purposely catching other men's attention just to get a rise out of him. He either doesn't see it or doesn't care. It's almost foreplay for them.

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It's not until we are at club number five, taking a break from business, that Ali is out on the dance floor, wrapped up in Riot's arms, when one of the waitresses approaches me and Cash.

A brunette with long, tan legs, big blue eyes, and clothes that hide nothing waltzed up to ask us if we needed a refill.

I don't recognize the girl, so she must be newer, but when I wave her away, my eyes trained on a now glaring Ali, I pray this woman doesn't have a death wish.

She has a death wish. The woman, not taking the hint, leans into my space, placing a hand on my arms, bats her lashes, and says one of the dumbest things she could say with Ali now standing behind her.

"Can I get you anything else? A private room perhaps?"

" So many things happened so fast. First, Riot starts to laugh, a manic laugh, because he knows exactly what is about to happen.

Second, Cash scoots down a seat, taking a sip of his drink, ready to enjoy the show about to go down.

And third, Ali reaches out with a snarl, grabs the woman by the back of the head, and yanks.

The woman lets out a startled scream that's drowned out by the bass of the music.

In no time Ali has the woman thrown to the floor as she straddles her waist and punches her square in the face.

"You need to learn to keep your nasty paws off what doesn't belong to you. So I'm going to teach you a lesson." Punch to the boob. Ali's face is lit up with amusement, like she finds this all just a bit of fun.

"You crazy bitch, get off of me!" the woman screams, thrashing beneath Ali, but no one makes a move to help her.

"You want crazy? I'll show you fucking crazy!"

" Ali spits back, delivering another shot to her boob.

I'm no chick, but if the boobs are anything like balls, that has to hurt.

Clubgoers have now stopped to watch the commotion, but I can't find it in me to stop this yet.

I mean, she's doing this all because another woman touched me.

Propositioned me. I had no desire to take the woman up on it, but Ali makes it a point to claim me, and some manly part of me is so fucking turned on by that.

At some point during the little fight, if you could call it that, Riot answered his phone, stepping to the side to speak to whoever but still keeping Ali in his line of sight.

When he ends the call, he comes right over, leaning into the booth to be heard better.

Cash leans over as well after seeing the serious look on Ri's face.

Then he drops a bomb in our lap, letting us know we just got a tip about Riot's father.

I knew word was bound to spread that the sons were out and about and that we were hitting clubs. But to get as lucky as this? Rare.

Knowing this would be the perfect opportunity and that we might not get another chance, we need to move.

Cash heads out to grab the SUV while Riot simply smirks down at Ali, who is now smearing the woman's makeup while writing "Hands off" in red lipstick across the woman's chest. Where did she even get lipstick from?

Seeing that Riot has no intention to break this up, I reach down, grip Ali by her hips, and pull her flush to me.

She's panting, fighting to get back to the chick until she hears me.

"Calm down, little flame, or you might burn the club down with your temper. "

"She touched what didn't belong to her," she growls, turning in my hold.

Riot steps behind her, fixing her skirt, but Ali pays him no mind.

"You, Riot, and Cash are mine. I will kill anyone who tries to get in the way.

" Fuck, I'm hard as stone now. Then, as if to prove a point to everyone watching, she reaches down, grips my cock in a tight hold, and slams her lips down onto mine in a punishing kiss. "Mine!"

"Yours, baby," is all I can say before she spins again, pulling the same move on Riot.

Turning to the manager, who is staring wide eyed at me, I bark out orders, "Fire her.

She should have known better." The man simply nods as I grab Ali by the elbow and lead her out to the front where Cash is standing by the curb.

Without fail, the moment she spots him, she rushes into his arms, grips his cock then claims his lips like a woman starved.

He is a bit more shocked by the move but no less unaffected than we were.

The moment she is done claiming Cash, she turns to the three of us. "So where are we going next?" she asks, all bubbly like. Not like she just tittie punched a chick multiple times in the middle of a club.

"Henry is at Club Velvet. He just couldn't stay away.

He called a meeting with Marco, that's who called.

Says he wanted to prove where his favor stands, so he is loading him up on drugs and alcohol until we can get there.

" The gleeful look in Riot's eyes says it all.

He knew it would come down to this, and he is ready for it.

"Well, let's not keep them waiting," Cash says opening the back door and helping Ali in. Then we are off, heading across town to Club Velvet. The drive doesn't take long with it being close to midnight already, most of the city is either out at clubs or in bed asleep.

Pulling up to the curb, Marco is already outside waiting for us.

"I let him in a room with one of the girls.

I figure that would preoccupy him. I hope you don't mind, but I must get home to my wife.

I also look forward to future business ventures, yes?

" He addresses all three of us, showing respect by not letting his eyes linger on Ali in the center of us.

All three of us nod our heads in answer, understanding his words clearly.

This is a favor to us, so he might ask for a favor in return later as a show of good faith.

It's fair when you look at the bigger picture.

In order for us to take full control of Hellfire, we need our fathers out of the picture, and this is him lending a helping hand.

Without another word, he gives us a small bow then excuses himself.

"Let's go say hi to Henry," Riot calls out, cracking his knuckles before moving forward and leading the charge to the private back rooms. I'm not sure how he knows where to go, but he heads straight back to the last door on the left.

Ali skipping up behind him as he goes. Stopping at the door, Riot places his finger against his lips in a shushing gesture before slowly turning the knob and opening the door.

The sight in front of us, I could have lived without.

Henry's naked, hairy, white ass is on full display with his back turned to us as he yells down at a woman who's butt naked and cowering on the floor.

"You stupid cunt. You must have done something to me.

Get your ass over here and suck me off before I tell your manager you're a worthless slut that can't pleasure her clients.

" From the woman's position, she spots the door open, her eyes darting to us and begging for help.

She has a split lip, and her clothes are torn to shreds on the floor beside her as she huddles in on herself.

Anger rises within me at the sight. This is what we refuse to allow anymore.

"Clients" taking advantage of the women that work for the club.

If they want to make the extra money, we won't stop them, but this girl is obviously in a position she doesn't want to be in.

I half expected Riot to jump in and start destroying his father where he stands, but he surprises me when he starts to laugh.

Not a chuckle or small laugh, but a full-on belly laugh.

The sound catches Henry's attention, making him spin around, limp dick in hand and then I get it.

"Oh Henry, can't get your limp stick up, can you?

" Henry's eyes go wide in fear when he finally realizes who stands before him.

"You know, I think they make some pills that help with your little problem.

" Riot mocks the man, pinching his thumb and forefinger together to show him how small he thinks he is.

"I mean, I don't know who I got my dick size from, but I know for sure it wasn't you," he taunts again, making Ali giggle as she nods.

Suddenly she covers her eyes with her hands before mock whispering, "It looks like a little bait worm, gross.

" Apparently being mocked by his own son was one thing, but by a woman.

..Henry jerks forward like he is about to strike Ali, but Riot moves first. One punch to the face and Henry goes down, the move hadn't even made Ali flinch.

Ignoring the man now crumbled on the floor, Ali moves to the woman, who flinches away.

"We aren't going to hurt you. I promise.

" She reaches behind her, asking for something by making grabby hands, but it's Cash who removes his jacket first, handing it over.

Ali drapes the dark gray jacket over the girl, helping her up and leads her out of the room, but not before side kicking Henry in the ribs.

Riot stares down at his father with a frown on his face. "Huh, I thought he would put up more of a fight. What a shame." I shake my head at him before turning to check on

Ali and the girl, but not before I hear Cash speak.

"You can have your fun with him later, now get him to the trunk so we can get him to the basement."

twenty-two

CASH

“F uck, Bunny,” I moan, my head dropping back against the chair.

“That mouth of yours is magic.” I tell Ali as she bobs her head up and down on my cock.

Her sexy little ass is seated between my legs on her knees, and I’ve never seen a more beautiful sight in my life.

She lets out her own moan in response to my praise, her pink tipped hair falling forward to cover her face.

We can’t have that. Reaching up, I take a handful of hair and hold it to the nape of her neck, stretching it back and making her stare up at me.

Her green eyes water as I thrust her down further until my tip is nestled at the back of her throat.

I stay there for a few seconds before letting her slide her mouth back to breathe.

“That’s it, baby. You take me so well.” She attempts to mumble something around my cock, but I don’t let her, not when I’m riding the edge of my climax.

As if knowing what I need or maybe just to fuck with me, Ali reaches with one hand

and cups my balls, squeezing ever so gently, while scraping her teeth along my shaft.

Just like a dam breaking, I explode. I expect Ali to swallow some, then maybe pull back, but this woman is always surprising me.

As if taking it as a challenge, Ali slams her throat further down my cock and drinks up every ounce I give her.

Waves of my juices pour out of me, and Ali takes it all like a champ until I have nothing left to give her.

She damn near sucked the soul from my body by the time she pulled back, a shit eating satisfied grin on her face as she pulls herself up and sits on the desk.

Ever so slowly, blood returns to the rest of my body and I take in the sexy minx. “You are perfect. You know that?” I tell her. She nods her head then bats her lashes at me.

“Why do you show me how perfect I am?” Then she’s spreading her thighs and baring her pretty, wet, pink pussy to me. I’ve died and gone to heaven, or maybe this is hell and she’s the devil.

“Don’t mind if I...” My words are cut off by the sound of my phone ringing.

I want to ignore it; the look in Ali’s eyes says I should too, but with so much going on outside of this little bubble, this could be important.

I make the quick decision to split my time.

With one hand I grab my phone, and with the other I run my finger up Ali’s slit.

“What?” I growl, keeping my eyes trained on Ali’s core as she widens her legs, leaning back to give me better access.

The person calling speaks, and I freeze, a smile tilting my lips at the tone they’re using.

“What the fuck did you do, you little bastard!” The hand playing with Ali stills.

I nod to the door and mouth Arsen. She must understand what I’m asking because she jumps down with no questions and scurries to grab him.

I have to bite my fist when my eyes stray to her plump, naked ass swaying as she walks away.

The second she is gone, I focus back on the cursing heard through the line.

“Hello, James,” I say casually, sitting back in the chair without a care in the world.

I know once Arsen is here, he can start the trace that we have set up and hopefully we can end this little cat-and-mouse game once and for all.

“How have you been?” I couldn’t hide the smile in my words if I tried.

“I don’t know what you were thinking, but you’ve crossed the line, Cash,” he states.

“All you had to do was die in the trials and everything would go according to plan. But no, you boys had to push back.” I snort.

Does he really think we were just going to roll over and die because they wanted us to?

They never taught us to just take a hit; no, we were told we better hit back ten times harder.

Arsen and Ali rush back into the room moments later.

I nod to the phone in my hand then mouth James to Arsen before he moves to the desk and grabs the laptop and begins setting up the program to trace the call.

It's a pretty straight forward program; in that it will ping his device's signal and give us a radius of roughly a mile of where we can find him.

But that's only if I can keep him on the phone long enough.

When I see the program finally scanning, I answer my father.

"I was thinking that it's time for you to retire.

" He scoffs, but I push on, ignoring him.

"Did you know that we already have Henry?" I ask, and there is a small gasp.

"You didn't know, did you? We found him at one of the clubs, partying it up without a care in the world.

Well, until he couldn't get it up for one of the club girls.

Looks like old age does that to men." I chuckle.

"Fuck you, you little shit. When I get my hands on you, you will be sorry for the shit you've fucked up," he curses again, but his threat falls flat.

Glancing up at Arsen, he rolls his hands in a motion to keep him on the line and when I see the screen, I can see the map slowly zooming in.

My bet is we can get close on the map before comparing some of the files and properties we have and seeing if any match.

“I’ve been wondering why. Why did you all go to such lengths to attempt to get rid of us?

You knew your term was coming to an end, just like your fathers before, that is the way of Hellfire.

Were you truly that greedy that the wealth you had already gained wasn’t enough?

” This question had been on my mind since the trials.

I had an idea that yes, they were truly this greedy, that killing off their only heirs sounded better than handing over the reins, but I still wonder if I’m missing something.

A deranged laugh comes through the phone, so loud that it causes me to pull back at the sudden static.

"You stupid boy. You were never going to replace us.

The trials had only been one of the most recent times we've tried to dispose of you.

Somehow you three always managed to slip past our plans.

We had to start spreading out the attempts because we didn't need you three to figure it out and retaliate.

You've been a thorn in my side since the day you were born.

" He lets out another snort. "I even tried to get your mother to abort you, but your grandfather had to step in and remind me that I couldn't claim my spot without an heir.

" To anyone else, James's words might be crushing, hurtful, but I had accepted a long time ago that the man I called my father was a bastard of a man.

"I see." The map has shifted again, zeroing in over the north side of the city. Arsen and Ali have already started pulling lists of properties in that area. "Well, I suppose it's your move next. How's business anyways?" I ask and grin in satisfaction when I get called every name in the book.

"You think you're so clever, boy. Going after my business, my livelihood, but you're wrong.

I have my hands in more pies than you can imagine.

You might have taken down Henry and William, but they were going soft.

I built this empire to make it what it is.

You might think talking with the cartel and going to clubs is giving you a step up, but it's not.

I have men and women who are loyal to me everywhere.

I've known every move you thought you were going to make before you even thought it.

" He lets out another crazy sounding laugh.

I'm starting to think James Grant has lost his marbles.

The laptop dings, causing all three of us to snap our eyes to the screen.

A red circle flashes around what looks like a small residential area.

Ali's eyes light up before she starts rustling through a stack of papers, stopping midway.

She scans the piece she stopped on before holding it up and pointing to a single address. Checkmate.

"Well, James. This has been an eye-opening conversation.

I mean, I had always known you were a bastard, but this little chat of ours has only made it that much clearer.

" I let out a sigh as Riot enters the room, looking around confused before seeing the laptop screen.

He's covered in specks of blood, no doubt from spending quality time with his own father.

I doubt he went far enough to kill him; maim, probably, but we had all agreed to keep them alive until we could really repay them for their sins.

You know that golden rule... Treat others the way they treat you. Or something like that.

Standing, I tuck my cock back into my pants.

I hadn't even realized I was still exposed.

"You can't hide forever. Hellfire is only big enough for one Grant, so I'll give you twenty-four hours to run.

To get out of this city, hell this country really, because when I find you, you are going to wish you really had killed me.

" Before he can get another word out, I hang up.

Ali frowns in my direction. "Are you really giving him twenty-four hours to run?" I shake my head, leaning in and kissing the top of her head.

"No, baby. Riot and I are going to go out for a little hunt.

Why don't you go take a shower, then order us all some takeout.

We shouldn't be too long." She narrows her eyes on me, but I just turn her towards the door before smacking her bare ass cheek.

She lets out a squeak before moving, stopping to kiss Arsen, then Riot.

Once she leaves the room, I turn to the address before pulling it up on the web.

133 East Lake Street is a medium-sized modern family home in a regular old suburban area.

Any other time this would be beneath James, but I suppose he doesn't want to risk us finding him, so he is attempting to hide in plain sight.

Too bad for him, Richard Black kept decent records of the properties he was in charge of.

Source Creation Date: July 31, 2025, 4:04 am

"A, stay here with Ali. I don't want to risk one of the other two escaping, not when we are so close to the finish line.

" Riot snorts like I just told a joke, but I ignore him. I know why he thinks it's funny, there is no way Ethan or Henry is escaping the basement, not in their condition.

"Ri, gear up. I doubt it will have an army, not if he is trying to blend in, but let's be ready.

A man like James can be unpredictable when cornered.

" Both men nod before heading out and leaving me to get ready as well.

This has been a long time coming, and to say I'm a bit excited for the hunt is an understatement.

Ready or not, here we come.

Riot and I left with in minutes of ending the call with James. I told James I was giving him twenty-four hours to tuck tail and run, but I know he won't. His pride won't let him. Plus, now that we have his whereabouts, we don't plan to sit around and wait for his next move.

Pulling up to the neighborhood, we do a slow drive-by.

We decided to take one of the Black's smaller vehicles so that it would blend in better and we wouldn't have to park so far away to keep out of sight.

It's dark out, with only a few street lights lighting the area.

Most people are tucked away in their homes for the night, so the street is quiet as well.

When we pass the house, I spot a light on on the upper floor, but the bottom floor is dark.

Which could mean he doesn't have any guard dogs patrolling.

We park a few houses down and wait for another thirty minutes, watching for any movements. When nothing happens that whole time, not even a shadow crossing a window, it's now or never. As quickly and quietly as we can, we exit the car and move to the shadows to creep closer to the house.

Luckily, after William was killed, all three of our mothers took off.

Some sort of resort vacation in Sweden or something.

Which worked out for us because, yeah, they were not blind to the way our fathers were, but they never spoke up.

They were just as much pawns in their games as they tried to make us.

I'm sure once the money runs out, they will come back, but that is a concern for another day.

We dart in and out of yards until we get to the house in question.

Moving up to the side of the house, I give Riot the hand signal to split up.

I'll take the back and he will enter from the front.

Readying our weapons, I nod and we move.

Riot slinks into the shadows while I move to the back of the house where a sliding glass door is set.

When I get to the door frame, I peek around the edge and into the kitchen.

Just like everything else, it's dark, a single stovetop light illuminating the small space.

Reaching for the door, I nudge it, but it doesn't move.

Bending, I pull out the locking tools and make quick work of the simple lock. James is making this all too easy.

Once in, I stay low and move my way around the lower floor until I meet Ri on the staircase.

Tapping his ear twice, he points up, letting me know he heard movement.

Giving him a nod, we move up one step at a time.

We keep our steps gentle but firm, making sure we don't make any noise and alert anyone above.

The landing on the second-floor splits in two directions, but when I spot the light under one of the doors to the left I move in that direction.

Riot taking my cue, moves to the left. He will circle back once he clears the two doors in his direction.

Creeping up to the door I've set my eyes on, I pause to listen against the wood.

I can hear the murmurs of what sounds like a television but nothing else.

I wait for Riot to return, tapping me on the back to let me know it's clear and I can proceed. For half a second, I think we might be wrong. That somehow James got the upper hand and outsmarted us, but then I remember how cocky and sure he sounded over the phone. No, he is here and this ends now.

Slowly I reach for the door; it's unlocked so I turn the knob and ease the door open as quietly as I can. I'm standing to the side in case anyone opens fire, but the sight that greets me when the door opens fully is nothing short of a Christmas miracle.

There on the bed lies James Grant. A bottle of whiskey in his hands, but completely passed out. It couldn't have worked out better than this as I make my approach, keeping my steps light. But when I shove at the man with the tip of my Glock he doesn't budge.

"Damn it, I wanted to get my hands dirty," Riot grumbles, moving to check the closet and ensuite bathroom.

Ignoring him, I tuck my gun away, raise my fist, and thrust it into James's stomach.

The man jerks, splutters, and then tumbles off the bed in a daze.

His eyes are wild as he searches the room before they land on me.

I'm already grinning as his face completely shatters at the realization. "I told you I would find you."

twenty-three

ALI

I 'm getting a little worried when two hours pass and we haven't heard from Cash or Riot.

Arsen keeps telling me they are fine and not to worry, but what kind of wife, girlfriend, fuckbuddy, would I be if I didn't. The last of the takeout that I ordered arrived twenty minutes ago.

I didn't know what everyone was in the mood for so I went with a little of everything.

Chinese, Mexican, American and even something Greek that was nearby.

Honestly, the kitchen smells amazing with all the scents flooding it, but my stomach is too tied up in knots to even think about food until I know my men are safe.

So here I am, sitting at the kitchen counter staring aimlessly at takeout boxes, my mouth watering, my stomach growling while simultaneously twisting all while I wait.

But I can't help my wayward thoughts and how they zero in on the worst possible things that could happen.

What if they get ambushed? Or something stupid, like pulled over?

What if James saw them coming and killed them first?

What if one of them gets hurt? It's never ending as my mind spirals out of control.

"Ali. Allllliiii....Hello, earth to Ali.

" Hands on my shoulder startle me before I'm looking up into Arsen's handsome face.

"Where did you just go?" I frown at his question but then immediately wince when I remember what I was so hyper focused on.

He must read my expression because he just chuckles.

"Oh, little flame, I promise they are fine.

They would have contacted us if something went wrong.

I will say that they will be delighted to know how much you worried for them.

" He bops me on my nose making me scowl at him.

"Oh, don't make that face, it's just as cute.

" My scowl turns to a glare before I just roll my eyes.

I know what he's doing and I hate to admit it, but it's working. Ugh.

"What if.." My words are cut off when the sound of the garage door opening echoes through the kitchen. As if my ass was zapped by lightning, I'm up and out of my chair rushing to the garage, needing to lay my eyes on my other two men.

The small car they took pulls to a park, its headlights blinding before they shut off.

I'm bouncing on my toes waiting to lay eyes on my men, when the front driver side and passenger doors open. I quickly inspect both men, looking for injuries or any new marks that were there before they left. When both look perfectly okay, I race into Riot's arms, since he is the closest. He lets out an umph when my body slams into his, but his arms wrap around me in a tight embrace before laying a soft kiss on my temple.

After another tight squeeze, he releases me, placing me back on my feet, which I'm then promptly spun around and wrapped into another firm chest.

"I can get used to these types of hellos," Cash murmurs into my hair, before he too is pulling back.

Looking up at him, I see he is looking towards the back of the car.

Curious, I spin in his hold in time to see Riot and Arsen drag out a large man's body from the trunk before unceremoniously dropping him on the concert floor.

The man, James, lets out a low, pain filled moan, but the sound is muffled by duct taped wrapped around his mouth.

Then I see it's also wrapped around his wrists and ankles.

Then the fact he is only in a pair of boxers catches my attention making me want to gag. Gross, hairy old man chest.

"I see your hunt went well," I say, turning away from the man and focusing back on Cash as he nods, smiling down at me.

"Like taking candy from a baby." He winks, making me roll my eyes.

"Okay, big guy. I'm starving and ordered enough food to feed a small army.

Go put your toy away and wash up." Going up on my tiptoes, I peck him on the cheek before skipping back into the house, feeling the heavy weight from earlier disappearing as I move back to the kitchen.

It's crazy to think how much my life has changed since just a few weeks ago.

Now I just need to figure out what the guys have planned for our three guests down in the basement.

I do know that now that the guy's fathers are out of the picture, life for them is about to get hectic with gaining back the power of being heads of Hellfire.

My men, sons of the Hellfire Society are now the kings of the empire and anyone not loyal better watch out.

I let the guys all eat in peace until I can't take it any longer.

"So, what is the plan now?" I stuff another bite of beef and broccoli into my mouth and chew, letting my eyes jump from man to man.

None of them give anything away as they all continue to eat their own food.

I let out a frustrated sigh before leaning back in my chair and crossing my arms over my chest with a pout.

"Don't make that face," Riot whines, turning his own face up and looking at the ceiling to avoid my puppy dog eyes.

Fine. I turn to Arsen who chuckles and shakes his head, letting me know it's not

going to work on him either.

I turn my whole body this time to face Cash, who is now sitting back in his own chair smirking at me.

“We have something planned for tomorrow, but none of us are going to tell you what. So, you can stop with that face.” He points to the face in question that I’m making.

The face must work a little because he continues on.

“I will tell you that it will be fun, but in order for us to get ready for it, Arsen and Riot will need to leave tonight.” I frown, turning to both of them, a brow cocked in question, but of course they shrug and grin like it’s all fun and games.

Which apparently it will be, according to Cash.

“When do you guys leave?” My worry from earlier returns but not nearing as bad. Probably since I know the root of all our problems are currently tied up in the basement with no way to escape.

Arsen sets down his fork before checking his watch.

“Right after dinner. If we leave early enough we should be done by midday. You both will arrive just before nightfall.” I tilt my head to the side, studying him, but his words only add to the puzzle I don’t have enough pieces for.

So, they have to travel. Whatever is happening will be at night?

What kind of fun will we have at night? More questions pile up and I swear a headache starts to form as I try to piece together all the information I’ve collected.

Cash reaches over and rubs at my back. My body automatically relaxes into his touch.

“Don’t think too hard. Trust us to take care of everything.

” I give him a half ass committed hum before the overwhelming exhaustion from the day hits.

“Why don’t you go climb into bed, Bunny?

I’ll be right behind you.” I hum again moving on autopilot as I kiss my other two men on the lips, mumbling that I will see them soon, and make my way out of the kitchen.

The guys all begin to whisper, but I don’t have the strength to eavesdrop.

Plus, I do trust my men, I trust them with my life even with only knowing them for such a short time.

Fate is crazy like that. I don’t even bother changing my clothes as I climb into bed.

The moment my head hits the pillow, the sense of relief and something akin to happiness consumes me, luring me into the comfort of a restful sleep.

“ W here are we going?” I ask for what is like the millionth time.

We’ve been driving for what feels like hours and Cash continues to remain tight lipped on our destination.

I watch as the trees fly by us, and I get the idea we might be headed back to Shane’s cabin, but that doesn’t make any sense.

We were only there to hide out for a bit, which is no longer needed since all the

people that have been giving us trouble are no longer running free.

Cash lets out a low chuckle, the sound sending a zap to my pussy making me wiggle in my seat. “We’re almost there, bunny. Promise.”

A couple more minutes pass and, sure enough, we are turning down a dirt road surrounded by trees.

We head deeper into the thick of it but I keep my mouth shut, reminding myself good things come to those who wait.

But I will admit, being driven into the middle of nowhere where no one will be able to hear me scream—and if I run I’ll most likely be lost for days—isn’t all that reassuring of the good fun time I was promised.

Another twenty odd minutes pass before I spot a small clearing up head.

A familiar SUV parked in the center, headlight on high beams with Riot and Arsen standing outside.

My mood instantly lifts as we pull up, my men meeting me halfway with hugs and kisses.

You would think it’s been weeks since seeing each other, not less than twenty-four hours.

“You made it.” I nod to Arsen as Cash finally comes to our little secret meeting.

I can’t help my eyes wandering around the area trying to figure out why we are even here when a low groan sounds from somewhere in the dark.

I blink slowly into the darkness, then glance at the guys in question before then turning back to focus on the darkness again.

My eyes have yet to focus fully, so I can't see anything but shadowy trees with outstretched branches casted by the overhead moonlight.

"Is there a reason the trees are groaning?" I ask not to put off but more just curious if we are alone. Or if my earlier thought has any merit.

"Ah. That's your present wife." Riot beams before pulling out a flashlight and shining it toward the back of the SUV.

I take a second to consider what I'm seeing.

I think I was prepared for many things, but the sight in front of me is on a whole other level of what I want to call romance.

And I do mean romance because this has to be some type of declaration of love shit, right?

Because tied to a tree only a few feet away is a slumped-over, worse-than-death warmed up looking Ethan Black.

The only thing that I can get past my throat is an awkward, "Ummm.." Because why is Ethan here? Not just him, but I spot Henry and James, who don't look much better, tied to trees next to him as well.

"This is your present. Do you like it?" Riot asks, almost bouncing in anticipation of my answer. It's kind of cute the way he wants me to be happy about this. That's my psychopath husband.

I wave a hand in their direction. “Why are they here?” I finally ask, turning back to focus on my men, who are now watching me and my reaction.

Are they nervous that I might freak out or something?

I mean, my next best guess is that we are going to dig graves for fun to get rid of evidence.

I’ve never dug a grave, but I suppose it could be fun.

I could start singing Johnny Cash’s Burning Ring of Fire or maybe Bodies Hit the Floor by Drowning Pool to get in the mood.

“Well, we decided that because we met in the trials, we should celebrate in the same way.” I blink because I think I’m understanding now, but I can’t be too sure.

When I don’t jump for joy or say anything else, Cash continues his explanation.

He opens his arms to encompass the pitch black area surrounding us.

“The guys spent most of the day setting up traps or more all around this area. We're going to let them go to attempt to survive out here.” I open my mouth to tell him that’s not a great idea because what if they survive and get free...

someone made a fool of me once saying this exact reason, but he holds up a hand to stop me.

“With a twist of course...” he pauses for a major dramatic effect that has me on pins and needles before practically confirming their everlasting love to me with six simple words. “We are going to hunt them.”

twenty-four

ARSEN

C ash just dropped a bomb into Ali's lap like no other.

We have all discussed wanting to create a mini trial for our fathers and Ethan as a last fuck you to them.

It's only fair they made us go through one to attempt to survive, so why not return the favor.

I wasn't one hundred percent on board at first, thinking Ali might not want to relive that situation again, and after going through what Ethan did to her recently.

I didn't want to assume she wasn't strong enough, but it's a lot to go through in such a short amount of time.

That was all until we came back to the Black estate and found her carving up Ethan herself.

It was a magical sight, and I'm not even the psychopath of the group.

Ali, who has been silently blinking at us in confusion, slowly nods her head in understanding before the most beautiful smile I've ever seen on a woman brightens her face.

Even with the dark of the night swallowing us whole, she is shining right with excitement.

“Soooo... you like your present?” I ask hesitantly, wanting to make sure we aren’t crossing a line.

For all we know, she might want Ethan’s death quick and simple.

I think we’ve passed the point of thinking killing is something Ali is against. She killed her step-mother, without even thinking twice, and we’ve seen her in a ring fighting two grown ass men.

Ali is not like any other woman we’ve known, and thank God for that because she was pretty much made for our dark little hearts.

“Like it? I love it. Honestly, it’s the most romantic gesture I’ve ever seen.

” She’s beaming now, bouncing on her toes as she darts her eyes to each of us before finally jumping forward and wrapping Cash in a tight embrace.

She hangs onto him for a few long moments before turning and moving to Riot, doing the same before lastly coming to me.

I wrap my arms around her back and hold her tight to me, inhaling her fresh, sweet scent.

Ali nuzzles into my chest, mumbling a soft, “thank you”.

Riot claps his hand, breaking the moment and causing Ali to pull away.

“Let the games begin!” he announces. The four of us move to the back of the SUV, to

the tree line where the three men are tied up.

All three have seen better days, each covered in a variety of cuts and bruises, but we made sure they would be able to participate in tonight's festivities.

As we approach, James lifts his head, barely being able to manage it before spitting at our feet.

"Fuck youuu," he slurs before his head slumps back down to his chest.

"This is off to a good start," I snort, as me and the guys move to cut the men loose. They drop to the ground with heavy thumps, letting out pain filled groans in their weak states. Moving back to stand in front of them, I stare down at the lumps of flesh soon to be dead men.

"Alright, gentlemen, welcome to the new and improved Hellfire Trials!" Riot announces, taking on a spokesperson accent and doing a crazy hand gesture like he was really on TV introducing a TV show.

Ali lets out a giggle, which really only encourages the psycho to put on more of a show.

"The rules are rather simple, you see. First rule: you get a thirty minute head start before the hunt begins. Second rule: you are able to use any and all weapons placed about the game. Yes, we have stashed knives, guns, and more high and low. But be forewarned, there are also many traps, such as bear traps, holes in the ground, and spikes in various areas." He adds an uuuuhhhh and ahhhh, like sound effects are needed.

"Now, the last rule is simple and one I know you all know really well. Survive or die." He grins wide before leaning close to Ali to mock whisper, "My money is on

them dying.”

There is a long pause of silence as we let the men absorb the information. Ethan and Henry are still on their hands and knees, breathing rough. They were in our care longer than James and are in a bit rougher shape. James has gotten to his feet, swaying unsteadily but glaring at the four of us.

“You heard the rules. Ready?” Cash asks, taking a step back.

The rest of us follow suit, watching in fascination as the last two men climb to their feet.

“Set,” he adds. “Thirty minutes on the clock...Go!” he yells the last words making the men jump before turning and stumbling off into the woods.

We all watch as they fade into the darkness.

“What happens if we can’t find them in the dark?”

” Ali asks, moving to lean against me for warmth.

She’s in a pair of black spandex shorts and an old band T-shirt that I think belongs to me.

We told her to wear something comfy for tonight, so she wore what she would wear to the gym.

Including a pair of bright pink Converse, that somehow brings together her badass hunting look, she didn’t know she was going for.

Cash lets out a chuckle before pulling out his phone, hitting a few buttons, and then

showing her the screen of a map and three red dots moving about it.

“We’re tracking them like animals, but we only plan to use it if we have to.

The fun is in the hunt.” He throws her a wink, and I swear I see her blush even in the low light of the moon.

“Anyways...” I say, pulling her attention back to me.

“We got you one last present for the evening. Come here.” I tug her to the side of the SUV, opening the door, which turns on the interior light and pull out a duffle bag.

I hand it over wordlessly and wait for her to open it.

I’m not disappointed when she does. Somehow the smile she’s had on her face since she found out about this little game gets mega-watt huge as she reaches in and pulls out a hot pink bunny mask with studded sparkles covering it.

Shuffling a few other items aside, she also pulls out my bat, Riot’s “lucky” chain, and several hunting knives for her and Cash.

Her voice falters as she spins, facing the three of us with her bunny mask in hand. “You guys shouldn’t have.”

“Don’t cry, Bunny.” Cash reaches for her but pauses midway.

“Damn it, A, you made her cry,” Riot snaps, but Ali is already waving her hands and fanning her face.

“Happy tears, I promise.” She sniffs, this time wiping at her eyes.

“I just never thought I would find someone.. well, someones who just understood me. Accepted all my broken parts and still loved me for them.” She glances up, this time wearing a softer smile.

One that says it all. “Thank you guys. How will I ever repay you?”

“I’ll take a blow job,” Riot blurts out. I smack him on the chest but he just shrugs. “What? She asked.” Before I can tell him that’s not what she meant in any way, Ali beats me to it.

“Well, first one to kill their mark and make it back to the car has to go down on the other.”

And like I knew from the start, this woman is perfect for us as a round of “Deal.” Goes up. I don’t even have a mark to hunt, but bet your damn ass I won’t be missing out on tonight’s celebrations.

“Gear up and let’s get hunting.”

twenty-five

RIOT

The amount of adrenaline pumping through my body at the moment could be enough to revive a dead man.

I know this is an unconventional present one would give to their wife, but I had a feeling Ali would appreciate it.

And from the way her face lit up when she realized what this was all for was the best reaction I could have asked for.

I'll have to thank Arsen later for his quick thinking by grabbing the same masks we were forced to wear in the beginning.

Honestly I think I might keep mine for when I have other jobs to do, you know, to make a statement and all that.

I pull my muzzle over my mouth, grinning wide in anticipation as the others do the same.

Arsen leaves his gas mask on the top of his head, while Cash and Ali pull theirs on completely.

We have already agreed that Arsen would follow Ali, not that we think she needs the help but to keep an eye on her.

He already got his revenge on the man who made his life hell weeks ago, and now it was ours.

Next we all load up on weapons, Ali and Cash grabbing blades.

Cash adding a 9mm to his back as well. Arsen sets his bat over his shoulder, while I wrap the since cleaned chain around my chest before tucking a couple throwing knives away.

I prefer hand-to-hand, but I'll bring the weapons just in case.

Though the thought of letting my father off easy is the furthest from my mind.

No, I plan to make him suffer just for shits and giggles.

Once we're all loaded up, I turn to the group.

"Like our girl said, first one to complete their kill and return gets first dibs and Ali's sweet, sweet pussy!

" Lunging forward, I slam my lips down on my wife's plump ones before laughing maniacally and racing off into the dark forest. Curses echo into the night air between the sweet gentle giggle of Ali is heard.

All too soon, I'm tuning out everything around me as I focus in on my hunt.

This isn't really about wanting to fuck my girl first, though I do plan to win this game.

It's about finally showing my father the monster he created.

This is about the little boy he broke, twisted, molded into the perfect little soldier that would follow all his commands until he was no longer useful.

Sadly, Henry Parker lost the reins on his little pet years ago, and I've just been biding my time until I could repay the favor.

I move through the brush in the direction I saw Henry jolt off into, keeping my steps as quiet as possible with all the dead debris littering about.

I can hear distant rustling to my right; probably the others well on their way to their hunts.

Henry doesn't realize it, but I added extra weapons along his side hoping he would find some and really give me a challenge.

Every so often I stop to listen for movement that isn't my own.

The couple times I stop, I can hear scurrying in the distance but nothing quite big enough to be my father so I keep moving.

Staying low, and close to trees to hide my own presence.

I've lost track of time a while ago, when I come across one of the stashes I've left out in the open.

Peeking inside the small plastic box, I see a half drunk water bottle but no knives.

So, Henry does want to play with me. Before tonight I made sure not to injure my father too badly.

Did I leave him a bloody mess and covered in black and blue bruises?

Absolutely, but he's a man. He can take a little pain, right?

That's what he told me when I was stabbed by one of his men in a training situation.

"Man up, it's a papercut." That's what he would tell me.

I just made sure to leave him a few extra "papercuts" to show him how tough he could be.

Knowing that my father is now armed and is willing to fight to survive, I decide it's time to really play.

"Oh Henryyyyyy.." I call. "Come out, come out wherever you are," I add, standing to survey the area.

There is a small trail that's parted between a pile of leaves leading away from the box.

Shrugging, I move in that direction willing to take the chance, until I see a footprint in the dirt.

It's faint, with only the moon above peeking through the trees to see, but it's enough to let me know I've headed in the right direction.

Needing to fill the silence and give Henry a small fraction of a chance to get one up on me I start talking aloud.

"You know Henry, I've waited for this day to come for a while now.

" I chuckle to myself. "Believe it or not, even before you tried to kill me in the trials." A snap to my left has me pausing for half a millisecond before pretending I didn't

hear anything and moving forward.

“Yeah, I’ve waited to take you out for years now, but unlike you, I respect the society's rules.” Another snap of a branch.

“See, before you became the spineless, greedy, asshole that you are now, you ingrained loyalty into me. Loyalty to Hellfire and the families that uphold it. Isn’t that why the three of you had kids at the same time, so that we would grow up together, be stronger than brothers.

” Another chuckle slips past my lips. “It worked. Shit, Henry, I should really be thanking you too. If it weren’t for you, James, and William, we would have never found the perfect woman for the three of us.

” After my great, albeit anticlimactic, monologue is finished, I pause in the middle of a small space.

The trees here have grown feet apart and will make a great little fight ring once my father grows a pair and makes his move.

He might think he is the cat in this situation right now, but I know he has moved in position behind me thinking he can get the upper hand that way.

He’s wrong. I’ve been tracking his movement since he broke the first branch.

Honestly, I’m surprised he was able to stay as quiet as he has.

Nevertheless, I keep my back to him, pretending to look around before bending and pulling some dramatic movie move where I grab a pile of dirt in my hand.

I let the loose soil fall from my fingers, inspecting it, like it can whisper to me all the

secrets of the earth, when really, it's just dirt.

That gets him moving. I keep hunched over as he makes his approach until he is practically on top of my back, before I throw myself to the side, rolling until I pop back up and face Henry Parker eye-to-eye.

"Hello, Father," I greet, resting my arms to my side to show I'm no threat to him. But I can tell he takes it as I don't take him as a threat to me. Which is also true.

"I tried giving you the world, boy, but you were always a rotten apple from the start. I think your mother was drinking and doing drugs when she carried you. You've never been right in the head.

" He sneers at me, but his words don't have much of an effect.

I've always known what my father thought of me, so him spewing it at me like it's poison doesn't do much now.

When he sees that his words don't make me flinch, he snarls at me again, holding out a knife between us like it's going to protect him.

I give him a solid once-over before letting out a sigh.

"It looks like you've seen better days, Dad.

Old age hasn't done you any favors, but because you are my sperm donor, I'll give you the first chance to strike.

Yeah?" I'm being honest too when I say he has seen better days.

Henry has always been a man who prided himself on his image.

Always need to be the one with the nicest clothes, most expensive cars, house, boat, you name it, and Henry Parker had something better than you.

I don't remember a time growing up that he wasn't in the nicest suits, or the name brand designer outfits but the Henry in front of me is in rough shape.

He is wearing the same clothes we picked him up in over a week ago.

Which was once a nice suit, but now is just a pair of slacks and torn-up dress shirt that's covered in blood, dirt, and God knows what else since you aren't really allowed bathroom breaks when being held captive.

Yeah, Henry Parker has seen better days.

Something I say, or maybe it's the disgusted face I make when I get a whiff of him that sets him off, but he lunges for me, letting out a war cry that sounds more like a screaming child, as he shoves his blade towards my chest. He misses, because of course I'm stronger and faster and wasn't planning on giving him an actual chance to hit me.

He stumbles forward, thrown off by me stepping out of the way too quickly and giving me the opportunity to grab my own blade to slice him across the back.

He screams out, falling to the forest floor in a painful cry.

Twirling the blade around my finger, I tuck it back in my pocket before shoving my hands in them as well.

"Good effort," I say as he turns to glare at me.

The amount of hate and venom in his gaze could turn Medusa herself to stone.

“Let’s do this like the good old days. Mano y mano.

What do you say?” My tone stays uncaring, casual as fuck, because I know my calm demeanor is only getting under his skin more.

I can tell by the tightening of his jaw and the crinkle in his brow every time I open my mouth.

I even go as far as to hold out my hand to help him up, but he swipes at my hand with his blade, like some type of feral cat.

When he slowly climbs to his feet to face me, I let out an overly dramatic sigh.

“Look, I don’t have all day to go back and forth.

You had already tucked tail and run, but my wife, Ali.

You’ve met her. She told us the first one back gets dibs on her body, so I need us to move this along.

” I twirl my fingers in a forward motion, letting him know to hurry up, but a smirk appears on his face.

It’s at this moment I knew my father was not a smart man.

With a taunting lilt to his voice, he speaks, “And what if I kill you first and make it back. Will I then get dibs on that sweet little pussy of hers?” All the excitement I felt for the hunt vanishes in an instant as my grin drops, but my father seems to want to meet the Grim Reaper at least sooner.

“I’m a little disappointed I never got a turn with her.

We were planning a little orgy before you three showed up and crashed the party.

Do you think she will moan for me like she does for you?

” The fucker laughs at his own words like this is all just a joke, but I’ve already made a vow to Ali.

She was my wife, maybe not in the most conventional ways; but it worked for us, and she accepted it now.

What kind of husband would I be if I allowed this weasel of a man to speak about my wife like that?

I tsk at him, letting him know he just fucked up.

“Now Henry, I’m going to need to take that tongue of yours.

No one is allowed to speak about my wife like that.

” The moment the words leave my mouth I’m lunging for him, tackling him to the ground as I throw my body into him.

He wasn’t expecting the move, his grip on his blade loosening and sending the metal flying out of reach.

Throwing my fist into his face a couple of times, I reach for my little knife again.

With one hand I grip his chin, pinching his mouth open while he is still in a daze from my sudden assault, then shove my blade into his mouth and slice at the muscle there.

It takes a couple of slices to get the chunk off, but after a moment I'm holding Henry Parker's tongue in my hand while he sputters and chokes on the blood filling his mouth.

He looks pathetic now, no longer the man I once knew.

"I wanted to play with you longer, but honestly you're not worth the effort anymore.

" Standing, I unwrap the chain around my chest and rewrap it around Henry's neck.

His panic skyrockets as he reaches for the chain, clawing at the metal with what little strength he has left.

All he can get out are gargled moans, as his skin becomes pale with blood loss.

His eyes, ones so much like mine, wide with fear of dying.

I wonder if he can feel the cold grasp of death nipping at his heels yet.

"Let's go for one last walk," I tell him before I yank the chain tight and begin my walk back to the SUV.

I'm still aiming on being the first one back.

I might even have time to put Henry's tongue in a gift box for Ali to show her how devoted I am to her.

Henry is a drag, literally, as he tries to fight, kick, and tear at the metal now choking him, but he only struggles for a few minutes before his body finally goes limp.

I drag him for a little extra before I finally check to make sure he is expired.

Sure enough, his eyes are a blank mask of fear and pain as they stare sightlessly up at the sky.

At least I was nice enough to give him something pretty to look at before he died.

A strange sense of relief hits me like a freight train when I realize that Henry Parker, a man I once feared as a child, is now dead.

Unwinding the chain, because this is now a stable piece for me, I leave Henry where he lies and make my way back to the clearing.

Cash was already planning to send in a cleaning crew once we were done here, so they will take care of his body.

I thought I would be more disappointed if he didn't put up more of a fight but I'm at ease with how things ended.

Now it was time to get home, rebuild our empire, and celebrate with my wife.

twenty-six

CASH

Holding back a few minutes, I wait for the other three to disappear into the darkness shrouding us before I start my own hunt.

I keep my pace slow and calm, not a care in the world, as I let the pitch black of the night swallow me into its embrace.

Out of all of our guests tonight, James Grant was the least injured and is more than capable of standing his ground if he so chooses.

A part of me hopes he does; I don't want an easy win, but James has always been a coward at heart.

The further I head into the forest, the darker it seems to get.

I can hear the distant scream of a man, but I ignore it to focus on my own hunt.

Animals scatter across the forest floor as we cross paths, but I have yet to cross paths with James.

That's fine, I have all night. A few more minutes of walking, listening, focusing and my ears pick up a loud splash of water to my left.

I turn and move quickly in that direction.

Within a second, the sound of running water is heard before I'm reaching a small, slow flowing stream.

I eye the area carefully, looking for anything that could have made the splashing sound when I spot the shoe print pressed into the mud just on the other side.

The stream is only two, maybe three feet wide and shallow enough to see rocks on the bottom.

I grin to myself, getting my first hint of prey.

Heading in that direction, I follow the few muddy prints until they disappear and only a slight water trail is left.

Once the water ends, I pause to listen again.

There. A faint huffing and puffing not too far from where I'm standing.

Seems James might be a bit out of shape these days.

"Oh Jamesssss..." I call adding in a taunting tone to his name.

I keep my feet planted where I stand and even place my hands in my pockets as I stare out into the darkness.

My eyes have adjusted to the dim moonlight above, so I can see the faint outlines of trees and branches surrounding me feet away.

When my father doesn't move or make another sound, I let out a low, deep chuckle.

"James, I can hear how out of shape you are. All that running has you huffing and

puffing for breath.” I can hear more shuffling of leaves until a shadow in the shape of a man is seen darting between trees.

Tsking, I move towards the movement as James darts in and out of trees.

“Why keep running, old man? I’m sure you’re exhausted.

Come on out and let’s get this over with.

” My voice echoes out into the night, sounding almost too loud in the silence around us as James once more darts behind a tree, this one only a few feet away.

I let out a deep sigh. This little hide-and-seek game of ours is getting boring.

I honestly thought James would be more of a man, fight back and do something more than hide like a scared child.

Minutes later, I’m still standing there, in the middle of the darkened forest surrounded by nothing but trees, waiting for my father to do something, when a gunshot in the distance catches my attention.

The sound is loud, as it echoes through the vast wildlife.

I frown for a second, trying to guess where the sound came from, because we had all agreed not to use guns unless needed.

I’m so lost in concentration that I’m blindsided by my father’s sudden attack as he tackles me to the ground.

We both go flying back, the momentum sliding us across the dirt as I try to get my bearings.

James is fumbling for one of my guns in my shoulder holster as I twist away from him.

I punch out, sending my fist flying and hitting him right in the jaw.

The hit knocked him back to allow me to roll away.

Jumping up, I immediately send my boot into his stomach, the impact followed by the sound of something cracking.

James screams out before curling in on himself with his arms across his body.

“Pathetic.” I spit, stretching out my neck from the fall.

“You’re a fucking coward.” I add, shaking my head in disgust. James sneers up at me before flinching in pain.

Seeing him in pain makes me smirk with excitement, but my smirk is short lived when James suddenly strikes out.

I didn’t notice it, but one of my blades came loose in the tackle, which James takes advantage of.

He lunges forward from his position and slams the blade down into my thigh.

I was standing too close to jump far enough away so the blade hits its mark.

The next thing I know, James is stumbling to his feet and hobbling away as my curses fill the cold night air.

Feeling more annoyed now than ever, I yank the blade out of my flesh and check the

wound.

It's bleeding, but it doesn't feel like he hit anything important, so I can tend to it later.

"You fucked up now," I call out as I give chase.

James didn't get much of a head start and he was already moving pretty slow, so I spot him soon enough weaseling his way around trees in less than a minute.

This time when I'm hunting him, I make sure my steps are loud and thundering so I know he can hear me coming.

Sure enough, James turns to look over his shoulder at my approach.

His eyes are so wide in fear they appear entirely white under the dim moonlight.

I grin as our eyes meet and he stumbles in his escape, trying to pick up his fumbling pace.

He makes a sudden pivot, dodging behind a tree to change direction when he suddenly screams out.

Something making a metal-on-metal clamping noise rings out before it sounds like an animal dying.

I pick up my own pace before rounding the same tree and coming to a complete stop at what I see.

James is on the ground writhing in pain with a bear trap attached to his leg.

Blood gushes from his wounds, where the teeth of the metal jaws connect with his

flesh.

The sight is nothing I expected, but everything I had wished for.

James grasps at his leg as if holding this skin together will stop him from bleeding out, but from what I can tell, he might have hit an artery.

His blood is seeping into the ground, turning the soil a dirty red color and I can't help but watch it.

Watch the life ever so slowly drain from the man who taught me how to be a man. I bet he is wishing he hadn't now.

James's skin is turning a pale color the longer I stand here watching him.

"H-help me," he hisses out. "I'm still your father," he adds as if that would somehow help his case.

If I'm being honest, it makes this all a bit more laughable.

It's like he forgot I'm the one that brought him out to the middle of nowhere and told him to run so I could give chase.

The side of my face tilts up in a crooked smirk before I lean down and poke at his leg.

He curses, attempting to flinch away, but can't go far due to the trap and pain.

"Now, why would I help you if I've been actively trying to kill you?"

"I ask. Somewhat fascinated that he is still breathing with how much blood has soaked the ground so far.

“You know I wasn’t expecting it to end like this.

” I nod to the trap, letting out a disappointed sigh.

“But I suppose I can’t be too picky when I get the same outcome either way. ”

“M-my men won’t s-stand for this.” My father starts to cough up blood as he glares up at me, trying and failing to spit his venom.

“T-t-they will revolt.” More blood spills from his lips as he stumbles over his words, his entire demeanor growing weaker.

“You-uu wil-I never be king like m-me.” His last words are more of a whisper, but I don’t care.

Quick as can be, I grip my knife and slide it across Jame’s throat.

He blinks up at me, stunned, before what’s left of his blood drains from his new hole.

No more words spill from his mouth as I watch the life finally drain from his shit brown eyes.

“You’re right, Father. I will never be the king you were,” I tell him, wiping my blade off on his dirty shirt.

I stand, keeping my eyes on my father for a second longer.

“I will be even better.” Then I’m walking away, shoving my hands in my pockets as I make the trek back to the cars.

I left my phone in the SUV, knowing I wouldn’t need it to track James.

Once I'm back, I'll wait for the others and call the cleanup crew in.

They are expecting a call from me and already know what to do with the bodies.

The further I get, the fresher the air feels in my lungs.

Like somehow that single moment has changed everything else.

I know that getting rid of our fathers was just the first step and that we will have a lot of work ahead of us, but I've never felt so at peace as I do right now.

All that is left is to make sure everyone else's hunts have gone as planned then the real work of rebuilding Hellfire starts.

twenty-seven

ALI

Nothing screams bad ass bitch more than wearing a hot pink bunny mask while skipping through the forest in the middle of the night singing out, “Here kitty kitty kitty.” And yes, I am that bad ass bitch.

“Can you not skip with a knife in your hand!” Arsen calls out a few feet behind me. I feel a little bad he doesn’t get to hunt like the rest of us, but he did get to kill his father himself. Though his father did get a lucky shot off before he expired, almost killing Arsen in the process.

“It’s fine,” I call back, right as I stumble over a root but catching myself at the last moment.

“Oops.” I giggle feeling like a schoolgirl flirting with her crush, as I peek over my shoulder to see if Arsen saw that.

He did, and he doesn’t look happy about it, but honestly, I don’t think anything right now could ruin my happy mood.

The guys just made the most romantic gesture ever by basically letting me hunt down my tormentor.

If that doesn’t scream, ‘We love you’, I don’t know what does.

Should I be worried that I've only known these guys for a few weeks and they are already making grand gestures of love, with a little murder?

Probably, but I already knew I had a few screws loose, so why not just go with the flow.

If the flow just so happens to take me along with the guys, so be it.

Ignoring Arsen's annoyed look at my almost tripping attempt, I continue on with my skipping journey.

I keep my eyes and ears open with each step, knowing Ethan could be anywhere.

Not that I think he will get too far. The guys and I roughed him up pretty good while he was in the basement, and the last I saw, I think the carving on his chest was a bit infected if the angry red and pus draining was anything to go by.

I'm a bit surprised he was able to take off in a run, but I suppose fear can do that to you.

I take a few more skips before stopping at a rustling sound coming from my right.

I turn in that direction, focusing my eyes into the darkness, but don't see much but trees.

Glancing over my shoulder, I see Arsen doing the same.

So, he heard it too. "Do you think he could have made it this far?"

"I ask, squinting my eyes now as if that will help me see at night.

"I'm surprised he even made it this far.

I doubt he could have made it much further, so let's check it out.

" He nods to the right where the noise came from and begins to head in that direction.

I skip ahead of him, my blade pointing down this time.

I'm about to open my mouth and ask if he thinks the others have already made their kills when I'm shoved to the side.

My body goes flying into a tree, the bark digging into my skin as Ethan himself pins me down.

He shakes me a few times, as if trying to slam my head against the tree, but it just makes me feel like a ragdoll.

Ethan doesn't have enough strength to actually do any damage like he is trying to inflict, it's almost laughable how painless this is.

After a few seconds, my annoyance flares, so I yank my knee up and slam it straight into his balls.

His entire body tenses up, all statue like, before I shove him back and he stumbles to the ground with a pained groan. His hands moving to cover his crouch.

I point my blade down at the douche. "Found him," I say, glaring over at Arsen who is leaning against a tree with his arms crossed. He just shrugs at me, like he wasn't just watching me get attacked.

"I would have stepped in, but this is your hunt. I figure you would be more mad if I

did step in." I narrow my eyes at him, but he's right, so I switch to just rolling my eyes instead.

Ethan is still on the ground looking like death warmed over.

He's covered in blood, dirt, grime, and who knows what else at this point.

He looks nothing like the Ethan I knew. No, he looks defeated, broken almost, and it makes me so happy.

He is still wearing the clothes we took him in: tan dress slacks and a pair of black dress shoes.

Both have seen better days. His shirt, on the other hand, is nothing more than torn fabric hanging off his arms. The pretty new addition to his chest stands out the most, even covered in dirt and leaves.

SICK FUCK. The longer I stare at it, the more I smile at my handiwork, plus I can tell it's definitely inflected at this point.

It looks disgusting in the most beautiful way.

"Now what should we do with him?" I ask, tilting my head to the side like that might give me inspiration.

"Now you kill him," Arsen states very unhelpfully.

"I know that, but how? It's almost like kicking a puppy.

Well, puppies are cuter, but I thought he would put up more of a fight.

This..." I wave up and down at Ethan, still on the ground groaning pitifully.

"This is just pathetic, you know." Arsen lets out a humming sound before coming to stand next to me.

"Then why don't you finish him off quickly so we can get back to the SUV and celebrate?" His words are a whispered tease against my earlobe as he nips at the flesh. A shiver of pleasure rushes through my body and zaps my core, making my panties wet.

Fuck. He's right. Who cares if it's an easy kill. The whole point is to kill our targets any way we see fit, and I already enjoyed carving up his flesh like he did mine.

The perfect kill suddenly comes to me. "I got it," I announce before trying to Arsen and smiling wide, which in turn makes him cock a brow in question.

"I need you to strip him," I tell him, keeping my smile bright and oh so sweet. Arsen's eyes narrow, but he doesn't say anything else as he leans down and yanks off Ethan's already torn shirt.

"And the pants," I add, making Arsen grunt in acknowledgment.

I wait patiently, rocking back and forth on my heels as Arsen yanks Ethan's pants down.

Ethan, to his credit, attempts to fight back, but he is already so close to death's door he doesn't get far.

Within minutes he is completely naked, and I'm almost regretting my decision because I could have gone a lifetime without seeing this asshole naked.

"Now what?" Arsen asks, looking more annoyed than he did moments ago.

Is he mad I wanted Ethan naked for the next part?

Well, he won't be for too long. Ignoring his question, I jump into action.

Moving forward, I straddle Ethan's thighs.

Without much strength left, he barely lifts his head to glare at me, but I see his cock twitch.

Gag. "Little Flame, what are you doing?" I continue to ignore him.

I keep my focus on Ethan as I speak. "Do you remember what we had planned for me?

How I would be tied to your bed for days, weeks, or even months?

However long you saw fit to fuck me. What was the word you used?

" I tap the blade against my lips but from the corner of my eye I see his cock getting hard at my words.

"That's right. You were gonna tame me. Make me your good little sex toy.

" I add a bit of a purr to my words as I bat my lashes down at Ethan.

Even this close to death, his eyes glaze over with a mix of pain and lust. Behind me, I can practically feel Arsen grinding his teeth at my words.

When I think Ethan's cock is hard enough, I grab it in a firm grip.

I have to force back the vomit that wants to expel from my stomach as I smile down at him.

"Too bad you were never going to tame me.

I am not tamable, nor will I ever be yours.

" Then I swipe my blade just beneath my fist. A smooth, clean cut, and then I have a severed dick in my hand. Blood sprays the entire length of my body, but that doesn't bother me much. I do gag at the limp dick in hand before tossing it away like a game of hot potato. It takes a second for Ethan to register what I just did, as Arsen makes his only gagging noise behind me, but then the screaming comes, and it's music to my ears. Standing, I move next to Arsen and watch as Ethan slowly bleeds out; the life draining from him is something akin to peaceful. Like I've rid the world of one more monster.

Arsen wraps an arm around my shoulder as I lean my head against his chest as we watch the last of Ethan's breath leave him.

"Well, that was... I'm proud of you, baby.

" I let out a giggle at his words. Of course, no guy wants to see a woman castrate another man, even if that man deserved it.

Something about your brain sees it happening to you and phantom pain, but my men are safe from that type of punishment as long as their cocks belong to me and only me.

"Let's head back. If we hurry, I bet you can beat the others.

" I perk up at that, remembering the bet we made right before we started.

I don't even know how long we've been out here, but it couldn't have been that long.

With one last look at my past, I say a silent goodbye before turning and heading towards a better future.

The walk back takes no time at all and we made it back before the others, which means I win.

Arsen tosses me a water bottle that I quickly chug before we open the back of the SUV and take a seat while we wait.

It's not long before Cash is returning, looking as sexy as ever.

I'm about to tell him just that when Riot comes running through the clearing, whooping like a madman before coming to an abrupt halt at seeing everyone making back before him.

The instant pout his lips do is probably the cutest thing I've ever seen.

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"But I wanted to win," he whines, and I can't keep my giggle quiet.

The sound catches his attention as he narrows his eyes on me.

Slowly he looks me up and down, his eyes turning to lust-filled pits the longer he takes his fill.

"Fuckkkkk, wife. Is that the asshole's blood covering you?"

"He bites his lip as I glance down at myself.

I didn't realize how much blood I was actually covered in. I nod.

"I should probably get cle-" I start.

"No!" Riot shouts before suddenly he is in front of me. "No. I need you just like this." He scoops me up in the next second, his hands cupping my ass and squeezing as he grinds my core against his already hard cock. Instantly I'm soaked.

"Nope," Cash says before pointing to the SUV.

"In the truck. We need to head out, so move it to the truck.

"Riot just shrugs before walking us to the back seat.

He puts me on my feet before yanking down my shorts and all but tossing me into the back to a waiting Arsen, who is just smirking.

Riot smacks my ass as I turn, but Arsen is already grabbing me and placing me his lap to straddle his legs.

He lifts my shirt up over my head and I can hear Cash cursing before the SUV starts up, but Arsen is already wrapping his mouth around my nipple.

I close my eyes in bliss as I feel more hands run along my skin.

There is a rustling of clothes before I'm shifted back and Arsen is pulling out his cock and placing it at my core.

I'm so wet at just the thought of my men, just a few swipes against my core and I have him wet enough to slide right in.

We both let out a moan of pleasure, but it's short lived when I feel the hands on my hips jerk me back before another cock is nudging my back door.

His dick coated with his own spit as he uses one hand to massage my tight hole.

"Tell me you want this. Want us?" Riot whispers against my ear.

I nod as he presses his tip in further, making me tense.

"Relax, baby. Let us take care of you. Let us worship you.

" I nod again and let my head fall back to the crook of his neck.

"That's it. Relax and let me in. Let us fuck you senseless right here, right now.

Just the way you need it." I nod again because, yeah, I'm a fucking bobblehead now, and all words have left me, replaced with moans of pleasure.

I do as he says and relax, letting him enter me from behind as Arsen slowly moves in and out of my core while sucking and nipping at my peaked nipples.

It all feels amazing and within minutes I'm lost to the feeling as both Riot and Arsen become fully sheathed within me.

They find their rhythm in no time and finally I let go.

I let go of it all and just embrace the feeling of them as they slide in and out of my body.

The truck soon becomes too hot as sweat drips from my body, and all I can do is hang on to the seat behind Arsen as they use me in the best way possible.

In no time, I'm cresting the edge of the cliff, ready to dive headfirst into bliss but not ready to go alone.

I tighten my core muscles around my men, making them both jerk and groan at the tightness.

It's Arsen who falls on me first, his groan low and sexual as his hands tighten on my rib cage and give me one last deep thrust, hitting all the right spots.

I almost see stars before I'm pulled back to reality.

"Fuck, your perfect, baby," he hisses finally, pulling out but Riot isn't done yet. He continues to thrust into me but I get a better idea. I pat his chest telling him to back off. He frowns, which is cute, but I simply shove him into the seat while I shift and try to get into position. Leaning between the seat I grin over at Cash who smirks back. Then I'm reaching for his pants and unzipping them, wiggling myself further between the seats until my head is directly in his lap and his hard, veiny length is at

my mouth.

I give it a long lick before the truck suddenly swerves.

"Warn a guy before you do that." I giggle, but then my head is being slammed down onto his cock and I'm relaxing my throat to swallow him whole.

I bob my head up and down as a smack is delivered to my ass.

The sting one of slight pain and a whole lot of pleasure.

"Fuck this is an even better sight." I can feel something teasing my entrance before sudden a thick cock is filling my core and I'm letting out a long low moan around Cash's cock.

If this isn't the perfect way to end the night I don't know what is.

The next bit of time that passes is one filled with absolute ecstasy as I fuck Cash with my mouth, I'm fuck in my core and someone fingers my ass.

The feeling is all too much yet not enough as I near the abyss of pure bliss.

My men start cussing as thrusts become irregular, frantic, Riot chasing his high.

I double down on Cash, bobbing my head faster as I scrap my teeth against his shaft.

He tenses before wrapping his hands in my hair and slamming me down on his length.

I swallow as much as I can before gagging but he doesn't let up.

I can't breathe but I also can't seem to care as I feel his release coat the back of my throat before finally releasing me.

I swallow all that I can before coming up for air, sucking it in like a gift before licking him clean once more.

Riot's movement behind me stutters before he slams into me like Arsen did.

Like that was all I needed, I explode again, waves of energy coursing through my body like electricity.

Zapping my nerves in the best way possible as I feel just slump forward exhausted and perfectly used.

I'm carefully lifted moments later and placed into someone's lap but I can't bring myself to open my eyes. I feel warm, loved, and safe for the first time in my life and I'm afraid I might wake up from this and it all be a dream.

“Sleep, Ali. We have a lot of work ahead of us,” one of my men whispers, kissing the top of my head.

“It’s time we take back our empire and destroy anyone else that might get in our way.” I think Cash says this from the front, but as I nuzzle into whoever is holding my chest, my brain starts to become foggy.

My last thought before I let sleep fully take me is, if my men are now the kings of the Hellfire Society and the city, does that make me the queen?

I think I like the sound of that.

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Epilogue

Cash

It's been a week since we took out the last of our fathers.

Rumors have spread throughout the city like we knew they would.

I'm not surprised how fast they spread since we made sure James, Henry, and Ethan were all found by men we knew were loyal to the old ways.

Most of them have run scared, while some of our men have been getting antsy with anticipation of our next move.

That is why we have called this meeting today, to flush out the last of the spineless weasels that we know of.

For the most part, our research has shown us that the majority of our empire aren't as dumb as they look.

They knew change was inevitable to happen, and they have fallen in line.

"How long do we have to be here for?" Ali asks, twisting her hair around her fingers. Leaning forward I kiss her temple.

"Not long. We have a few things to clear up then we can head out." She lets out a deep sigh, slumping down in her seat.

A chuckle escapes my throat as we pull up to the club.

We decided to call a meeting of a few of our “business” partners.

Riot invited Marco, Arsen invited the trusted club managers, and I invited the few business owners we’ve worked with the longest. Lastly we invited the few men we know we can’t trust, who think we are stupid enough to believe there are changed men.

“Why got a hot date or something?” I finally ask as Arsen throws the car into park.

“You know I have a fight tonight.” She rolls her eyes in my direction before Riot is opening her door and helping her out.

I also didn’t forget, because tonight is the night Ali takes her place among us at our first official fight night.

It’s also when we talk with Shane about working with us.

After everything he has done for us, for Ali, we plan to pay him back tenfold.

As I step out following behind Ali, I button my suit jacket and straighten my sleeves.

The valet gives us a small bow taking the keys from Arsen and immediately driving off to park our car.

Staff members greet us with nods of respect as we make our way into the club and around tables towards the back meeting room.

Riot throws open the door dramatically, greeting the room with a wicked grin.

I have no doubt half the men jumped or are shitting themselves at the sight of him.

At the sight of us all. All three of us are dressed in nice suits, Ali, in a stunning all black cocktail dress, but our outfits come with a twist. We've decided to make a statement donning our now preferred masks.

It gives us a crazy, unpredictable look now, which is why Riot and Ali must have suggested them.

I don't bother smiling, no one can see my face right now as I make my way around the table.

My pace is steady, uncaring as I head for the head of the table.

Riot, Arsen, and Ali move to stand opposite me, the men surrounding the table shifting with unease.

Once everyone is in place, I nod to the room before taking my seat, folding my hands under my chin as I eye each man.

"Gentlemen, welcome. Thank you for joining us tonight," I state.

"As rumors have stated, leadership has changed. The family businesses have been handed over to their rightful heirs. Most business will continue as usual, some with minor changes or new deals between partnerships." I glance at Marco, then at a few of the men I will be working with closely and nod.

"Moving forward we expect the utmost loyalty to us and Hellfire. If this is not something you can give, please leave now." I wave to the door and watch through my mask as all the men at the table glance at each other.

It's like they think they are being tested or something.

Partly true, but not in the way they think.

When no one moves or says a thing, I stand clapping my hands together.

“Good. One last matter to attend to.” Riot, Arsen, and Ali move then, moving to stand behind the three men we came here tonight for.

Everyone tenses, and the fear in the room skyrockets.

It’s almost a tangible object with how nervous everyone gets.

“Jared, Greg, Alan, thank you for all of your work, but you are no longer needed. We will not allow rats to infect our empire.” I wave my hand in the air as a signal and all three men jump up but are too slow.

Seconds later, each man has a slit throat, gagging sound fills the room, as everyone sits stunned or too afraid to move.

They’re shoved back into their seats, hands covering their throats as blood slowly coats the table pooling in a lake of red among the remaining men.

“Take this as a warning, you fuck with what is ours, you forfeit your life.” The men still breathing nod in understanding, my point being made.

A phone going off catching my attention, I’m about to go off on yet another person when I realize it’s Ali pulling out her phone.

She eyes me before shrugging. “My bad.” A frown paints her face when she looks at the screen before she answers on the fourth ring.

“Yes?” The frown shifts to one of confusion before ending on concern and anger.

“Lock the door. I’m on my way.” Then she ends the call.

“Who was that?” Riot asks, but before she can answer, I interrupt.

Turning to the room. “Meeting adjourned. Get the fuck out!” No one wants to find out what would happen if they didn’t move their asses fast enough as everyone scrabbles to exit the room with haste.

Marco is the last to leave, stopping to whisper something to Riot who nods in return.

I don’t bother demanding to know what, since that is Riot’s area of expertise.

Once everyone is out, the three of us turn to Ali expectantly.

“There’s a girl who needs my help.” She tucks her knife back into her thigh sheath.

“And I think it’s time we showed this city who the fuck Hellfire is.

” She doesn’t wait for us to answer, pivoting on her heel and heading back out to the front of the club.

I glance at the guys, as we watch her sway her hips away.

“If I wasn’t already in love, I would be now,.” Arsen says, immediately following suit.

“That’s my bad ass fucking wife!” Riot whoops, following next.

I shake my head at my brothers, but they aren’t wrong. Ali is a hell of a woman and is going to make the perfect queen to lead beside us. I catch up to the guys just as the valet is pulling up the car and handing the keys to Ali with a respectful nod. “Let’s go rebuild our empire.”