



Grease's Guide (Reckless Omens MC #7)

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Category: Action&Adventure

Description: Becky:

I've kept a secret from everyone for the last couple of years. One that could destroy the stable ground I've so carefully built here with the Reckless Omens Motorcycle Club. They brought me in, trusted me, loved me, and made me a part of their lives, all while they didn't even know my real name. The worst part? I fell for the club bad boy who has ignored me the whole time. Now that I've been found and my location has been compromised, he says he wants me to stay. He says I'm his, but how can I give myself to him when he doesn't even know... me?

Grease:

I've spent the last three years fighting my feelings for the girl who shot me down and broke my heart. I've tried ignoring them, ignoring her, but with each month and each Club Brother finding their soul mate, it's leaving me thinking. How did I give up on her so easily? I've fought for everything in my life. Why didn't I fight for her? Was I so stubborn, so prideful, I was willing to let her go over a possible misunderstanding? Just as I decide I'm done pushing her away, she drops a bomb on the club. She's been running for her life and hiding behind our club. She thinks that will change things for us, that we won't trust or love her. She doesn't realize that once you are claimed by a Reckless Omen, your fate is sealed.

Note: Previously published as Knock on Wood by Jaycee Wolfe. This is a second edition of that title, and has undergone significant edits while the content/plot remains largely the same.

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Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Grease

Three years earlier:

“Yo Grease, the new sitter is supposed to be here any minute. Can you head to the gate and show her in?” Swift asks, running his hands through his hair while holding his son Knox in his arms. It feels like just yesterday that Piper was coming into our lives. Now, our Prez not only has a wife but a child as well. Not to mention our VP and his wife and daughter.

“Of course, Prez. What's the bird's name?” I ask, already turning and heading to the door.

“Becky Dawson. A cab was bringing her by. I will call Piper and have her come up here to meet her as well. I was trying to let her nap,” he says, turning and heading back to his office.

Stepping outside, I pull the pack of cigarettes from the inside pocket of my club vest. As I walk up the gravel driveway to the gate, I take a hard pull and watch the smoke fade into the air. I can't shake the restless feelings weighing me down lately. There's this feeling inside me like I'm missing something, and nothing I do seems to make it better.

I tired of the bar scene over a year ago. Meaningless sex has never really been my thing. As much as I joke and play around, I've always been a commitment type of guy. Right out of high school, I went through a wild phase, trying to get over a long relationship.

My story isn't much different from many others. We had been together since freshman year. I was the bad boy; she was the good girl rebelling against Daddy. At first, we were happy, and I thought I was in love. Looking back, I know it was more of friendship and puppy love. She was the only one in that town to give me a chance before I found my brothers and the club. I didn't have a great home life, but she made me feel special. Then, she went to college. I went to surprise her one weekend only to find her with some other guy. I wasn't heartbroken over the relationship; it was more of our friendship and trust. I realize that now, back then, I went to anger. The fucker wanted to taunt me over 'stealing my girl,' so I whooped his ass.

I landed in jail for assault, but when Carrie, my ex, came to visit me and asked for some time, I just washed my hands of it. She begged me to wait for her. She wanted to live her college life but come home to me and settle down like we had planned. She wanted me to wait in this town for her. To sit here and twiddle my fucking thumbs while she went and lived her best life. The problem was, I wanted her to live her life and be happy. I just didn't want the future we had planned out anymore. After catching her with someone else, I realized we were never truly meant to be together. So I told her I was done. I didn't want that life anymore.

I was working in an old garage when I first met Swift. He saw my bike, the one I custom built myself, out in front of the shop and wanted to know where I got it. When I told him I restored it from the ground up, he told me about the club he had just started. He told me I should prospect. I could be a part of a close family. I thought it over and went to find him three days later. I've never looked back. That first year, I ran wild, thinking I was hot shit for being in a club. I wanted to forget the betrayal and just live. It only took a year to get over that bullshit and realize I wasn't meant for meaningless sex.

I've dated here and there, but nothing has stuck. After seeing my brothers find true happiness and partnership, I realized that's what I want. The problem is, I'm your typical good-time guy. At least those are the vibes women say I give off. Someone to

rock their fucking world, but not someone to spend their life with.

Call me a pussy, but I want the one woman made for me. I want to build her a dream house, have kids, and grow old together. Growing up without a stable household, it's something I've secretly craved most of my life. I want a woman to come home to, someone who wants to be involved with the school and the PTA, and someone I can grope, play with, and annoy for the rest of our days. Yeah, that's the dream.

I hear a car pulling up and sigh. It's hard enough to trust people around the club, especially women. They're only here for one thing. To get on one of our dicks, get pregnant, and have the title of Old Lady. They come to me for a good time, but I mostly ignore them. They go after my brothers for the forever. So, no, I'm not excited to have a woman coming around and looking after the kids. I want to ensure the children are protected and cared for and not used to get closer to the guys.

Turning, I watch as the tall, sexy as fuck dark-haired woman steps out of the cab, a small duffle bag in hand. I stand there, dumbfounded, just staring for what seems like forever. She's absolutely gorgeous, and I can't seem to take my eyes off her. I nod to the prospect at the gate, and it slowly opens.

"You must be Becky. I'm Grease," I say as she looks around, not nervously, more like calculating. This woman has been through something; I just don't know what that is... yet. You can be for-fucking-sure I will find out, though. As Becky passes through the gate, I try to grab her bags to help. She pulls them from me with a soft smile. I ignore it, shrug, and turn to walk back toward the compound.

"So, what brings you to our neck of the woods?"

"Oh, you know, ready to live on the wild side. Let my hair down. Ride some... motorcycles." She chuckles, but just like that, I shut down. I knew it was too good to be true. She's here to try to dig her claws into one of the brothers.

Well, she can try, but one thing is for sure... It will never be me.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Grease

Present Day:

“How the fuck did I end up here?” I practically yell at the room as I sit on the old, ratted, but comfy-as-hell sofa in the common area of the clubhouse.

“Language! There are children in the room!” Sunny yells, and I look at her incredulously. I notice Rome snickering from the chair beside me. He’s the only child in the room at the moment, and a demon at that.

“What are you talking about, woman? He has a bigger curse vocabulary than I do!” I scowl while running my hands down the dress — yes, you heard that right — that is now bunched up from how I'm sitting.

Again, I ask myself how I got into this situation. Then the fucker who is responsible for this and every other lousy bet gone wrong walks into the room.

Gray “Grim” motherfucking Adams. It's because of him and these stupid damn bets that I have a fully pierced dick. A Jacob's ladder complete with the crown some would like to call a Prince Albert. That mother fucker. I ended up losing so many bets that I had to replace piercings with tattoos. Seeing as I have gauged ears, two black rings in one eyebrow, my lip, and nipples pierced unless I wanted to pierce my damn belly button (no fucking way), tattoos were next. Though I am nearly covered head to toe, I only have a few special places left untatted after all the losses. So I had to go with something else for losing this one.

How the hell was I supposed to predict it would be sweet little Sunny who started the latest round of chicken and upped the stakes? We started out on the kids' three-wheeled trike. Then went to the kids' little motorized jeep and Harley toys when that got boring. From there, it went to go-karts, then four-wheelers. The last stunt we pulled, Sunny decided enough was enough.

So because I put my trust in Sunny, and lost, I am stuck in a fucking Elsa costume for Jett's birthday party... and I'm not happy at all about it. Mainly because Prez wouldn't let me rent a reindeer and snow machine to really get into character. We are in Georgia, and there is never the possibility of snow, and I'm supposed to be Elsa! I can't pull this Elsa shit off without the snow. What a fucking disappointment. I mean, come on, Jett would have loved the full experience.

The other reason I'm pissed is because I'm stuck in a fucking dress... for a whole day. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those pussies that believe men should never be seen in a dress. Personally, I could give two fucks what you wear as long as you don't fuck my day up. No, what I have a problem with is the fact that this fucker thinks I'm going to get underneath a car with this damn thing on. I can't do my job in this shit.

I tap my foot and cross my arms, staring daggers at the fucker heading for his woman. Jade is trying not to laugh at my current state, and Grim turns to look at what she finds so funny. When his eyes meet mine, I reach down for my gun to aim it at his boisterous, loud, laughing ass-face. Just to realize I can't get to my gun. Want to take a guess about why? Yup! You guessed it! THIS FUCKING ELSA DRESS!!!

“Oh, it's so much better than I imagined,” he barely gets out through his laughter.

“You better just be happy I love my nieces and nephews. If not, I would stab you straight through the fucking eye socket,” I say, growling at him.

“With what? Your icicles? Or you gonna have Olaf do it for you with that big carrot nose he’s got,” Rome interjects.

With that, the entire room erupts into laughter. The women are crossing their legs, which I’ve been told is so they don’t pee themselves since they’ve all had kids, and Grim, Trip, and even Alex are nearly in tears. The fuckers. I’ll have to put a bunny rabbit in his car again before he goes to work. I get up to walk out, flipping my white braid and my middle finger at the room. All I can say is payback is a bitch.

Four hours and a million pictures later, I’m standing on the platform where the pool tables are usually moved for the party. I clear my throat, getting ready for my performance. With my club brothers, their old ladies, and all their children as witnesses, I belt out ‘Let it go.’

I’m right on key, the beat is strong, and I’m just getting into my routine when I hear a small voice from the crowd.

“You’re singing it wrong,” Paisley says from the front row. I continue as if I wasn’t interrupted during my debut, but another voice is louder this time.

“Yo Unk Grease. My girl said you’re singing it wrong. That means start over and do it right!” Rome hollers, and with that, I stomp my motorcycle boot and dress-wearing ass over to my club President, bend down from my stage, and throw my hands in the air,

“I can’t work under these conditions!”

I yelled at my president, upset Paisley, and nearly ran after, and strangled, Rome after his “Well, at least you’ve got the Queen role down perfectly. Drama Queen, that is,”

comment. So, I was banished to the garage and forced to slave away here for the rest of the day.

Well, that works for me because I have two cars, one truck, and two motorcycles to work on, and not one damn person criticizing my work.

I pull up my fucking skirts and lay flat on the roll cart, tinkering around under the car, replacing the drive shaft, then rolling back out. I move around the car, sit in the driver's seat, and give it a go. Just when I think I've got this thing fixed, the fucker backfires. Loudly. So loud my ears are ringing.

"Fuck, I need to check the spark plugs," I say aloud, working my jaw and trying to relieve some of the ringing in my ears. I really wanted to be done with this piece of junk. Doesn't help that I'm in this fucking dress... still. So, the spark plugs might be faulty. If it's not that, then it could be the fuel. Just add another thing to the list of shit going wrong around here. I hate this shit. I usually love my job. I can spend all day and night at the shop. But not in this fucking dress.

As my hearing returns, I lower my brows when I think I hear a whimper coming from somewhere nearby. I stick my finger in my ears and wiggle them around, thinking I must be hearing things. I get out of the driver's seat, and when I do, my eyes lock on the figure standing in the doorway. Not just any figure. Becky, and she looks absolutely terrified. I see the signs a moment before she goes down and lunge for her, knowing there's no way in hell I can get to her in time.

I watch in horror as she hits the hard ground before curling into a ball.

"NO!"

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Becky

I smile again as I come out of the bathroom, thinking about the ‘performance’ Grease couldn’t complete. A chuckle breaks through my lips at the antics that man can get himself into. What really makes me smile is that he goes with the flow of it all. Yes, he is a big badass biker, and I know from eyewitness accounts he is a very dangerous man... but then there's this side of him. This side of that infuriating man that I love.

Well, love might be a bit much. It's more of a fine line between love and hate between the two of us. I love to give him a hard time, and he gives it right back. I wipe the smile off my face as I return to the common room. As far as anyone knows, Grease and I loathe each other and can barely tolerate being in the same room. I can't have them seeing the amusement he brings me as well.

As for the real reason we can't be in the same room, well, my side of it is chemistry. I fall more head over heels in love with him the longer I’m with him. It doesn't help he is the sexiest fucking man alive, and all I want to do is explore all those piercings and tattoos that are speculated around the clubhouse. So this might sound like one of the other love stories I’ve heard coming out of this place. The issue? Yeah, Hi, that's me. I’m the issue.

My past is still chasing me with the fire of thirty death hounds nipping at my heels. I’m marked for death, and these people have saved me for the past two years, and they don't even know it. They gave me a chance and shelter when I needed it most. The last thing I want to do is form too much of a connection and get them involved in any of my shit. I’ve held myself away from these people as much as I can. I should have left over a year ago. Hell, I shouldn't have stayed longer than six months, but

they made me feel special and safe. I needed to feel safe. But trying a relationship, even just a sexual one, is out of the question. It's too close to home. I know without a doubt if I were to go there, if I had a taste of that life, I wouldn't survive leaving it. I might as well let the past catch up.

“He rushed out of here so fast he forgot his phone,” Piper chuckles, grabbing it from the table. She spots me coming back into the room and smiles.

“Becky! Hey love! We were just talking about taking all the kids back to the house and getting a nap after all the excitement of the party. Why don't you take the rest of the day off?” she offers, smiling so warmly it causes a pain in my chest.

“If you're sure?” Truth is, I hate my days off. They are spent alone in my tiny apartment or at the bookstore in town. Every day except on Saturdays. I teach a class at the gym in the next county over Saturday mornings, but no one here knows that. I'd rather be here with the amazing kids I've come to love so much.

“Yeah, of course! Do you mind taking Grease's phone on your way out? He should be in the garage.” She hands me the phone before pulling me into a hug and whispering: “You could give it a chance, you know. We already see you as part of the club family. An old lady cut would just make it official.”

I give her a tight smile as I pull away. She just doesn't understand how badly I want that, too. Unfortunately, it's just out of reach, and that's assuming Grease would even want me in that way. Don't get me wrong, I know the man is attracted to me; he doesn't try very hard to hide it. Still, he pushes me away as much as I do him. Our relationship, if you can call it that, is... confusing to everyone, including us.

I sigh as I turn and make my way to the garage. I smile as I inhale the scent of grease and oil. It reminds me so much of him. The smile falls from my face the next instant as I walk through the bay doors.

The noise is loud. A big bang that seems to bounce off the walls as soon as I walk through the door. Because of the quiet and private life I've lived, I haven't had a panic attack in the last couple of years, but this one noise... This loud bang brings the past all back.

"Lyra, I told you it wasn't smart to report it. You know who his father is, right?" my best friend and fellow teacher, Cara, says, helping me throw clothes into a bag as fast as possible.

"I knew he was the kingpin, but Cara, I couldn't stand by when he was coming in with more bruises, more black eyes, more broken bones." I seethe at the turn my life has taken in the past three days.

"I get that, and I don't blame you, I just. I can't believe this is happening. It's like an old movie, fake and unrealistic. What am I supposed to tell people when they ask where you went? Oh, she's just running from the mob?"

"You tell them nothing. From this point on, you barely knew me. Never bring up my name again. Just... stay safe." With those parting words, I grab the backpack, squeeze her as tightly as possible into a hug, and rush out of the house. As I reach my car, I look back at her. "Leave the house as quickly as you can. Don't ever come back. I won't be. If you can, just please..." I pause at the first falter in my voice at the biggest favor I'm about to ask for.

"I'll watch over your Mama, Lyra. I promise nothing will happen to her on my watch."

At her words, I nod, sucking back the tears in my eyes, and fall into the driver's seat of my car. I back out of my driveway and head out of town, not knowing where I'm going, just knowing I can no longer stay here if I want to live. I don't regret it, though.

Yes, I knew the leader of the Irish Mafia in the area was the father abusing my third-grade student. Did that stop me from turning him in? Reporting him over and over? Even as the threats rolled in? Hell no. I couldn't sit by and watch that scared little boy flinch at another sound. It killed something inside me every time.

I shake off those feelings now. After the attack in my office barely two hours ago, an attack I barely escaped, I knew my time was up. They had come to silence me for good. I was going to die.

I know I have to leave, and I wipe the tears off my cheek as I see the Exiting Mississippi sign. As I pass it, though, I hear a screech of tires before loud banging. I'm being freaking shot at. What the hell? How will I escape this time?

"Fuck! Becky? Answer me, Dammit!" I hear as I feel a soft tap on my cheek.

"Please, come back. Please come back to me." The tortured voice is so familiar, so devastated. I want to reach out and touch him to reassure him, but the darkness is hard to shake. It's clawing at my throat, wanting to pull me back to that time.

"Fuck this! I'm taking you to Grim. I don't care if he knocks you the fuck out. Anything is better than watching you in this pain. Fuck! Becky! Tootsie, please." I crinkle my brows.

Tootsie? Why is that so familiar? There's a niggle in my brain. Tootsie? Toots? That's it, Toots! Only one person calls me Toots, but they've never spoken the word Tootsie before. Never with the soft caress, the almost loving touch of those words on his lips. And right now, he sounds just that... loving.

That snaps me out of the darkness. I gasp, taking a deep breath as I look at my surroundings. I hadn't even realized Grease had picked me up, but now we are marching fast down the halls toward Grim's medical room.

“Wait, wait, wait. Put me down, Grease,” I say sternly, pushing on his chest and kicking my legs. I absolutely refuse to acknowledge the hard chest just underneath my palms.

“Put you down? Are you crazy? You were almost catatonic! You're getting checked out,” he declares.

“Put. Me. Down,” I state in the strongest voice I can muster. I know he is struggling with giving me what he wants to take care of me, but also not wanting to force me. Finally, my consent wins out. He clenches his jaw, but slowly lowers me to the ground.

“Thank you so much for your concern, but I just need some rest. I was given the rest of the day off, and frankly, I want to go home and sleep,” I tell him, not meeting his eye.

He opens his mouth to speak, but I don't give him a chance to respond. I walk away quickly and make my exit.

Yeah, don't stay in one place too long, don't make any personal connections... don't fall in love. I've failed on every account. I just hope it doesn't cost me my life.

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Tizzy (Becky's Mom)

At this exact same moment... in a Mama's southern kitchen not too far away:

"Sing it louder, June! Back her up, Johnny!" I yell out into the kitchen as I belt out Ring of Fire.

I shake and shimmy, stirring a pot of homemade sausage gravy, then bending and shaking my tush as I look in the oven, checking my buttermilk biscuits.

"Rise and shine, babies. Mamas gettin' hunnnngry!"

It's just getting to the good part when I hear a knock at the door.

"Don't do this to me, lord! I need to finish my dancing before I lose the rhythm." Yes, I am in a kitchen by myself. Yes, I might be talking to myself, but who else am I supposed to converse with? I've been so lonely since my daughter left town a few years back.

"Oh, what if that's her coming back home?" Even as I get my hopes up, I know it's a lost cause. She left town for a very good reason, one that's kept her away for so long that I feel like I'm dying inside. Even as I make my way to the door, I know it ain't her. No baby girl of mine is going to knock on my door. Mama's door is always open for her. I check through the peephole and see two men with dark, slicked-back hair, but not in that oily way. No, these guys are fineeee!!!

"I didn't even put my face on today," I complain, looking at the mirror beside my

door and trying not to freak out that I don't have a lick of makeup on. These dark circles aren't doing Mama a lick of good. Quickly opening up my clutch purse on the hallway table, I slick on some red lipstick, smacking my lips together, giving a little pinch to my cheeks and one more glance.

“Well, it ain't perfect, but it's better than what I was working with. You ain't too bad for a woman closing in on forty babygirl.” I blow myself a kiss before turning back to the door. Oh, almost forgot. Pushing up my boobs and pulling down my shirt to let the girls out a bit just as another knock comes from the door.

“Well, hold your horses, hunny. I'm coming as fast as I can,” I yell as I fluff up my blonde curls one last time before swinging the door open. I smile big at the two men on the other side. One is about a foot taller than me in my heels. I would put him at about six-two, with more of a runner's body but still packing some major muscle work. The other looks like a Mac truck and has to be at least six-five. He has huge, wide shoulders and a scowl.

That's alright, doll, I like a challenge.

“Now, what did I do in this life for God to bless me with two huge hunka hunka burning loves like you at my doorstep? It's not my birthday, but I won't tell anyone if you guys want to treat a girl to a little striptease.” I do a little shimmy at the front door and.... Crickets. Well, this is no fun.

“Ma'am, would it be okay if we stepped inside for a minute?” the smaller of the two asks, making me raise my brow. There's a slight accent. You wouldn't even know it was there without looking for it. After what my baby girl went through, though, I'm always looking for it.

“Well, of course, pumpkin. Wanting some privacy?” I smile saucily at them, but turn and lead them to the kitchen. I pull out a chair for each of them.

“Please sit, sit.” I wave to the chairs. “I was just finishin’ up breakfast. You two can join this lonely lady for a bite, can't you?” I ask, moving the cast iron pan with my famous buttermilk biscuits closer to the edge of the counter. I look behind me subtly and notice gun holsters under their suit jackets.

“So, you live here alone, yes? No children?” Mac truck asks, not so subtly. Are these guys amateurs or somthin’? I might be a tiny little ol’ country girl, but one thing we learned young: Women have to be ready to protect themselves at all times, just in case.

“Aww.. you telling me I don't look old enough to have children?” I ask, placing my biscuits onto a plate and covering them with a napkin.

“Of course not. We just thought there used to be a woman that lived here. Dark hair. Maybe twenty-three?” swimmer says. Are these guys serious? No wonder they need a gun for one little ol’ lady like me.

“In fact, I do have a daughter,” I say, turning swiftly and banging the cast iron on the top of Mac truck’s head before quickly swinging it at swimmers as he turns, eyes wide, and reaches for his gun. He doesn't make it, though. I catch him in the side of the head, and they both go down. One is on the floor, and one is face down on the table.

“Sorry, boys. I would have loved to chat you up, but no one comes into my house and threatens my baby,” I say, turning and picking up the plate with my biscuits. Turning and stepping over Swimmer, still lying on the floor, I make it to the kitchen door before turning with a big smile.

“Lock up before you leave... Tootles.”

Time to go get my baby girl. Mama ain't letting anyone get to her cub.

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Becky

“Ahhh, but Miss. Becky, We’re not ready to leave yet! We just got here,” Jett pleads, sticking out her lower lip and pouting. That face is one that could bring you to your knees. The problem is, I’ve been with these guys long enough to know behind those big, blue, innocent eyes is a stealthy, mischievous side. The girl really is as sweet as she can be, just like her mama, Izzy. The problems lie with her daddy's side. Like Hitter, that quiet, calculating thinking is always going on behind the scenes.

It's one of the main reasons I have to watch out for her and Bronx, Piper and Swift's son, more than the other kids. You would think Rome would be my biggest worry, but that boy wouldn't do anything to put his sister or Paisley in harm's way. He’s usually the one watching over them with eagle eyes. That boy might not be Loki’s biological son, but one glance at his crossed arms, smirk, and narrow eyes constantly keeping watch of his surroundings, and you know who that child’s dad is.

“Bigger eyes, add some tears,” Bronx says, trying and failing to cover his words with a sarcastic cough from behind her.

“Not this time, guys. We need to get back. Tonight's family night at the club. Vice and Drift are coming back into town,” I tell them excitedly. They don't take the bait. While they can somewhat remember the nomads of the club, Vice and Drift apparently don't make it back home as much as they used to. Something about bad memories of the place and losing someone close to them before I arrived. I’ve never been brave enough to ask for the entire story.

The kids complain a bit more but still climb into the backseat. I give the prospect

chaperoning our outing today a nod, and he puts the SUV in drive and heads for the compound. It used to make me crazy having a babysitter around all the time. I think it was the thought of the ladies not trusting me with their kids, which I could understand if I were a stranger, but after a while, I was worried it was me. Though what reason had I given them to trust me? I was lying. I was in trouble, and being around them potentially brought that danger to their doorstep. I warred with those feelings. Hell, I still do, but I also know in my heart I will protect all these babies with my life.

I don't know if Piper could sense it, but she sat me down one day and told me the real reason. The club and its members have a lot of enemies. Those enemies wouldn't hesitate to kidnap or hurt the kids or women. Actually, it's happened quite a bit. After that conversation and then actually witnessing some of the danger that comes with the club, let's just say it no longer bothers me to have someone around all the time.

The kids fall asleep not too far into the drive, and I don't even realize I zone out until the prospect mutters from beside me.

“What the hell is going on now?”

I look up as we pull into the driveway to the compound, and an unfamiliar car is parked at the gate. He pulls up next to the vehicle and puts it in park. He turns to me.

“Stay in the vehicle,” he demands before opening the door and getting out. I can hear yelling but cannot tell what they are saying. I hear a woman's voice, though, so I don't think there's any danger. I've never been great at following orders, especially when they come from a man. So I take one more look at the kids before opening my door and getting out.

I round the vehicle, and my eyes, as usual, automatically find the piercing blue eyes that haunt my dreams. I glare, just because, then turn my head toward the commotion.

I can feel my eyes get huge at the person standing in front of the gate.

“I told you not to get out of the car. Get back in with the kids. I’ll remove the lady from the gate. You drive on through.” I place my hand on his arm, stopping him.

“No, don't touch her. I promise you that's the last thing you want to do,” I warn.

“You know the crazy lady?” he asks.

“Yeah, that's my mama.” We hear a growl coming from the direction of the gate. The prospect pulls his arm from my touch like I burned him, but I don't have time to care at the moment.

“Mom?” I question, running to her. “What are you doing here?”

“Oh, sweet baby, I came right away, but I think it's time for us to go,” she tells me, and my legs nearly give out. All the blood drains down to my toes, and I feel like I might pass out. No, I can't lose it now.

“Now hold the fuck on. What the fuck is going on, and why the hell are you even entertaining the idea of leaving?” Grease asks, fuming. I don't think I’ve ever seen him this furious before.

“They found you?” I ask, not bothering to even look in his direction. My life here, with these people, in this town, is done. It has to be.

“Toots, what's going on?” he asks, moving closer to the gate. That nickname with that nearly panicked tone has tears rushing to my eyes.

“They found me. Which means it's only a matter of seconds before they find you,” Mama says, sadness and sympathy pouring out of her. “I know you loved it here.

Loved these people.” She looks back at the people I’ve so quickly fallen in love with... she scans her eyes over the crowd but stops on Grease, and I know my cheeks are probably heated.

I can't think of that. Turning to Swift, the man who gave me a chance, I speak:

“I didn't mean to bring danger to you or your family. I was caught up in an incident with some really powerful people. The best place to go unnoticed was with an MC. I appreciate the protection and the home here. I love these children and all of you, but it's time for me to go. Please tell the children I love them.” I choke on that last sentence but clear my throat, needing to get it out. “Tell them I love them. That I wouldn't leave if I had a choice.”

I want to tell them so much more. Tell Bronx to keep him and Jett out of trouble, not get them into it. To tell Jett to keep up with ballet, she'll be able to do the prettiest pliés just like Rae and Paisley real soon. I want to tell Rome to not hold back his emotions and love. To tell Rae she is stronger than she knows, and even if she doesn't know where she fits so much right now, she always has her family with her. I want to tell Paisley all my ideas for her Marvel birthday party. I want to watch Zara and the triplets grow. There's so much I want to do and say, but I've simply, or not so simply.... Ran out of time. With any luck they will find the letter I left in the room I use when I stay here in case this ever happened. I would be okay if it took them years to find it. I just want them to know, eventually.

I turn and rush to Mama's apparently new or possibly stolen car. With my mama, you can never tell. A voice rings out and clutches my heart and soul.

“Tootsie, you stop right the fuck there. Open this mother fuckin' gate. NOW!” Grease yells as he pounds and punches the metal.

I open the passenger door and look back at him with tears in my eyes, and for the first

time ever, I give him something I know he's wanted for years, but was always too proud and cocky to ask for. I give him a real, genuine smile. One that hopefully conveys every emotion I feel for the man. One that is from deep within my soul. I've shocked him so much that he freezes, and that moment of hesitation gives me just enough time to escape. Leaping in the car, I turn away from him.

“Drive, mama. Hurry! Before they can catch up to us, too.”

And with that, she takes off, and I leave my heart, soul, life, and love in the rearview mirror of a stolen 93' Ford Bronco.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Grease

Earlier that day:

This morning starts out so shitty. Drowning my sorrows and loneliness with a bottle of Jack did me no favors this morning. So basically... Normal, like any other. I'm getting ready to go into the garage, showing my little protégé Rome how to work on cars. The kid really looks up to me, and I always hate it when I disappoint him. So, even with a hangover, I crawl my ass out of bed and head to work.

I keep my head down, my plain black tee in my back pocket, reminding me to grab my cut from the garage when I leave. I have a habit of leaving it in my office since I don't want it messed up with all the grease and shit. Yawning, knowing I need a cigarette before I can string two sentences together, I head through the back door. Unfortunately, I run dead into someone leaving the kitchen, and just like that, scalding hot coffee is running down my chest like red, hot lava.

“Mother fucker!” I yell, looking down into the startled eyes of our little babysitter.

“Toots, you have the worst fucking timing,” I tell her, but notice she isn't hearing anything I say because her focus is on my bare chest. Her gaze is slowly crawling lower to the open top button of my jeans.

“You going to lift that coffee cup so it stops spilling all over me, or is your plan to get my jeans soaked so I'm forced to take them off? If you want a show, you only have to ask.” I know the smirk and smartass remark will snap her back to the present. Hopefully, before she burns my dick off.

As I suspected, it brings her back to me, and she gives me those hard, steaming, mad eyes. There's my toots in all her heated glory.

"The day I willingly ask to see your infested rod is the day I join the circus," she says before turning and walking away. With that wake-up call, I decide to head into the shop. I'll shower and change there, hoping Rome won't be waiting too long.

"Don't forget to make sure the nut's tight, Romeo. Don't want it popping off." I grin at my scowling nephew, knowing he knows exactly what he's doing out here but still needing to give him a hard time.

"Keep your dress on, old man, I'm getting to it." His remark has me scowling. He's not just becoming a pro in the art of motor vehicles, but apparently in smart-ass fucking remarks as well. I open my mouth to retort but see Prez, Hitter, and Loki heading to the gate. Some faint yelling is coming from the front, and I decide to check it out.

"Rome, stay here and keep working. I'm going to talk to your dad real quick," I tell him before heading out the door.

Rome calls after me, "If he's in the same mood he was this morning, be careful. Ma tried bringing a baby squirrel into the house since she wanted her own Rocket, like Auntie Izzy. The problem was, this wasn't a baby squirrel. It was a baby fox, and it went ballistic."

I laugh at that news, and don't feel one ounce of sympathy for Loki. That fucker deserves everything that tiny, crazy ass woman puts him through. I'm still chuckling as I make my way to the gate.

I didn't realize that my life was about to change forever. A fact that slammed into my gut with one crazy little woman and a getaway car. The next thing I know, I'm screaming and fighting against the hold my brothers have on me, keeping me from going after her.

"Grease, you need to calm down!" someone says, holding my arms back, but I'm in a blind rage. I don't know what to do or say. I just have to get to her.

"Calm down? She's leaving! Didn't you hear her? She said her goodbyes. She told us to tell the kids bye. She wouldn't say that if she was coming back!" I scream.

"Dammit, Grease, we need to get the kids inside the gate and safe behind compound walls. You don't even have your bike. What the fuck are you going to do, chase her down on foot?" Hitter yells over the buzzing in my ears. Does it drain the fight out of me? Fuck no.

"If that's what it fucking takes to get her back." By the time they let me go, I'm seething. I can't look one of them in the eye. My supposed brothers, my family, my club. They just let her go. I run for my bike. Not bothering with a helmet, goodbye, or fuck you. I race off out of the gate in the direction my toots went.

I speed, just keeping straight, I keep going. My breathing coming out in pants. I don't stop, though; I won't until I find her, or it kills me. I ride until my lungs can't take the lack of oxygen anymore. As I make it to Devil's Cross, I nearly pass out and feel my back tire slide. I have just enough straight to lean with the bike, slow, and place my foot down before I lay my bike on the pavement. I breathe deeply, the adrenaline from the almost crash forcing waves and waves of air through my lungs.

I look up at the four-way stop sign. Straight ahead and to the right is absolutely nothing. To the left is the club bar, Devil's Cross. The first place I met my beautiful, strong, stubborn-ass tootsie. I remember not being able to take my eyes off of her.

The way she took in her surroundings. The way she wanted to hide, but there was no way to hide her beauty.

“Which way did you go, Tootsie?” I ask, knowing it's a hopeless endeavor. She's gone, and I have no way to know where.

I don't have a clue how long I wait there, hoping and praying for a sign. Any kind of hint about which way she went.

I hear them before I see their headlights coming this way fast in the distance. There seem to be three of them. I don't know who the fuck is heading to our town, but I would know the sound of a hog anywhere. I wait, knowing I've been sitting here too long. I won't make it back to the clubhouse, and I have never been a big fan of running.

One hand on my gun and the other on my cell, I wait. The closer they get, the more tension coils through my body. Don't ask me how, but it's like my body can sense something or someone deadly or dangerous. Then they are in sight. I don't recognize the two in the back, but I definitely recognize the other one leading the ride even before he pulls up beside me.

Devin, Piper's dad. I take my hand off my gun and phone, but I still feel the edge of danger that just comes from being in this man's presence. Most people can't look him in the eye without flinching and nearly pissing themselves. The man's a legend. One I hope to be like in my old age. Don't tell him I called him old.

He's barely pulled to a stop before removing his sunglasses from his face, taking one look at my face, then letting his head hang.

“I can tell by your face, boy. We're too late, ain't we? She's already gone?” he asks. I give him a solemn nod before looking back out into the distance. Then his words hit

me.

“What do you mean, too late? How do you know she left? Hell, how do you know my woman at all?” I ask, knowing they might have passed each other in the club but probably never even talked. He gives an exhausted sigh before kicking up his kickstand.

“Let’s head back to the clubhouse. We need to tell your prez to call church.”

“First, tell men how you know about Becky!” I demand.

“Who do you think sent her to you, boy?” He smiles before revving the engine and taking off.

What the absolute fuck is going on?

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Becky

“Alright, sugar. You have been moping around for three days now. I understand you left your whole life back at that nice, rustic, metal building place, but time doesn't stop turning, and those maniacs ain't gonna stop looking. Time to get that patooty up and get moving!” my mom says, smacking my butt as I lay face down on the mattress in some sleepy motel room.

Yes, I understand that sounds disgusting. Ask me if I care. I only care about whether the kids got their schoolwork done. Did I put too much on Piper and Swift, leaving them high and dry? Did Rome's test get rescheduled, or was the teacher too scared to be in the room alone with him again? I bet the principal refused to chaperone, too. I let a tear slip down my cheek, remembering all the kids.

Then I get a flash of blue eyes and know I have to get up and out of bed. If I think about those blue eyes, I won't want to move indefinitely.

“I bought you some clothes and hair dye,” Mama says, tossing out frilly clothes, boxes, and boxes of god knows what...

“Are those edible panties?!” I screech! Though, after all these years, how am I surprised? I guess it's because I haven't seen my mama in a few years. I've missed her dearly. Still, what the hell is up with those?

“Yes, darlin', they are! I figured if we run into any more alley cats...”

“Mobsters, mom. Not alley cats.” I rub my tired eyes as she continues, not even

glancing at me.

“Yeah, yeah, monsters. Anyway, I figured I could distract them with some good old cherry pie. If you know what I mean,” she says, shaking her butt at me. I roll my eyes and can’t help but smile. Then her words hit me, and the smile fades.

“Mama. I need you to promise me something, okay?” I ask her quietly.

“Of course, sugarplum. Anything.” She’s still rifling through bags as she answers me.

“I need you to swear that you’ll run if they find us again. This is my fault, mama. I can’t put you right in their hands.” At that plea, her hands still. She doesn’t look at me, but she responds in a harder voice than I have ever heard from her.

“No.”

“Mama...” Before I can finish, she turns, and for the first time, I think in my whole life, I see fury on her face.

“I will tell you this once, Lyra Loretta Lynn Leman.” Yes, that is my full real name. Tongue twister, ain’t it? My mama saw her moment to use Loretta Lynn when the doctor said girl, and she took it.

“Don’t you ever... ever say nothing like that jibber jabber you just juggled right out of your lips again, ya hear me? If those meatballs show up again, and there is nothing standing in the way of you and their pistols, I’ll put myself there. I won’t walk; I’ll run, baby. If they come for you, I will take on the entire army to make sure you get away. I will throw my whole body in front of their car just to buy you seconds as a speed bump. Don’t you know I would give my life for you in a heartbeat, baby girl?” she asks, all the anger leaving her body and a look of devastation taking over.

“Of course, I know that, mama. You already did. Your whole life was about me. You were a child raising a child and doing one hell of a job, if I do say so myself.” I puff my chest out proudly, wanting her to feel like she didn't fail. Then I look around and quickly deflate.

“Well, I mean, if you don't count the whole running from the mob part. Yet I took away your chance to be free to have your own life by bringing you into this mess. You shouldn't still be giving up your life for me, mama. You deserve to be happy,” I tell her, now on the verge of tears.

“First, you stood up for a baby who was being beaten. That is not failure; that is grit! You made me so darn proud that day. Second, don't you know you are my life, baby? Have been since the moment I saw that test. You are what gave me a purpose. You are what saved me from the pits I was raised in. You have been the only shiny spot in my life, honey bear. I would have stayed in that...” She pauses, not wanting to face the thoughts, or more accurately, not wanting me to face the thoughts of what her stepdad did to her. She finally continues, “...abusive home until someone killed me or I broke down and took the first thing offered to me. That was my life... my future before you, baby girl.”

“You changed everything in the best way possible. These last few years without you... I might have kept up an act on the phone when we had our little secret meetin's, but honey sugar bear, Mama wasn't doing good. I had sunk so low...” She pauses, looking around like someone else is in the seedy motel room to hear her confession, “I didn't fluff my hair for a year,” she whispers that last part, and I gasp.

Not to be dramatic, but out of pure shock. My mama has never not fluffed her hair. I have never seen it unfluffed. Like, in my whole life. I swear, even waking up in the middle of the night and running to her with nightmares. Most people have a rat's nest, a cowlick, or something, but my mama's hair? Nope, her hair was perfectly fluffed.

“Mama, I’m so sorry,” I tell her, letting the tears finally fall.

“It’s alright, baby girl. We are together again, and that is all that matters. Just...” she pauses and waits until I make eye contact with her this time. “Never ask me to make that promise again. What you don’t seem to realize, even with all that good book smartin’ you got at that fancy college I helped pay for. If your life ended, baby... so would mine. I couldn’t be in this place, on this earth, in this existence, without you.” She smiles, and I sob before leaning into her comforting arms and letting her hold me.

She is the best mom ever. If there is one thing about my mama I wish I could change, it’s how she always puts herself down. She purposely acts dumber when she gets emotional; it’s her defense mechanism, and I recognize it. If you play dumb, people can’t really see when their words hit or when they’ve really affected you. They underestimate you when you play down your smarts as well, but in my mom’s case, she does it because it’s what she’s been told her whole life by that little town we grew up in. She was just the ditzzy, dumb, trailer trash whore from the wrong side of town.

No one ever cared that she was my world. That she never spoke to or of a man my whole life. That she worked doubles and slept three hours a night to make sure I had everything the other kids at school had. That she tried everything to protect me from the truth, but word gets around in a small town.

Did it change how I saw my mama? Nope. Not in the least. She was and is the strongest woman I’ve ever known. She raised me all on her own when her mom kicked her out. She had to quit high school, and she was a waitress at the sleaziest strip club on the outskirts of town, only getting paid in tips because she couldn’t legally ‘work.’

She was there. She made cookies for every school occasion. It wasn’t until I was older that I noticed the other moms throw them away when my mom turned her back.

They also made sure to exclude her, gossip about her right in front of her, hold tight to their husbands whenever she was near, and purposely tell her wrong information to make her seem like a horrible mom.

I hated them. All of them. My mom never once uttered a bad word, but I could hear her crying at night when she thought I was asleep. All she wanted was friends, but they were so mean to her it was unreal. So.. I became her best friend. It was kind of natural, seeing as we had to grow up together and we only had each other. I still remember the tiny one-bedroom, single-wide trailer we lived in. I would give anything to go back in time to those days, just me, mama, and that trailer.

Throughout the years, she's never strayed from the woman I've always known and loved. The kind-hearted, crazy, and maybe a little bit dizzy mama that's been my rock. Willing to help anyone, anytime, no matter who. The woman who held her head high for over fifteen years in a town that painted that scarlet letter on her.

She was, and is quite simply... my hero.

I take in another big whiff of her signature Bombshell perfume, remembering all the good times, feeling at home in her arms, and only wishing I could have introduced her to the family and that man I love with all my heart. They would have loved her, Halle especially, and she's already fallen in love with them from our rare conversations I was able to sneak in.

"Now that all the emotional woes are out of the way. Rambunctious Red or Precocious Periwinkle?" Mom asks, pulling back and grabbing two boxes of hair dye. I roll my eyes at her.

"I know you've already chosen which one you want, so just give me whatever you weren't thinking." I smile when she ducks her head but passes me the periwinkle. I lift a brow at her choice.

“Oh, come on, sugarplum, you know I’m the rambunctious one with the good ra ra,” my mama says, all five foot nothing of her bouncing up and down in her six-inch heels and shaking her ‘ra ra’.

Yup... my hero.

“So, Mom. What’s the plan from here?” I yell just as she peaks her head back out the bathroom door.

“Oh, it’s a good one. You’re going to love it!” She smiles widely as I raise a brow.

“Well, you going to tell me, or is it a surprise?”

“Hold on to your bouncing bobbles, baby. We’re joining the circus!”

What the fu....

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Grease

Getting back to the clubhouse, I feel it's all been a dream. Like this isn't real, it can't be happening. I let my body take over, and to a point, it's like I'm just walking through the motions. I'm in a haze or a dream and don't want to wake up. Right now, my thoughts are monopolized on a single loop: she's gone, I must get her back. If I let my brain fully comprehend the situation, I'm scared I might try to kill this entire state for getting between me and my woman. I know I would want to hunt down the fuckers who put that look of terror in her eyes.

I climb off my bike and hear Ghost and his men talking, but I can't focus on the words.

"Swift, this is Taz and Mania...." Ghost says, and I just now realize we've walked into the compound. When did I get off my bike? Hell, when did I drive through the gates?

"The two who saved me," Comp says, coming from the side and clasping the hands of the two men. They give each other weird shoulder-pat-hug type shit, but I can't even on that. I can't laugh. I can't make a joke. Hell, I can't even make my mouth form words. I hear Ghost mention something about church, but I don't stop to listen when they actually plan to call it. I walk through the compound toward the meeting room.

I try everything not to, but I can't make my feet continue as I stop in front of the door Becky used when she stayed overnight at the club. I take a deep breath, place my hand on the nob, and swing it open. I smell the air, and there's a faint scent of her. It

calls to me, and I step into the room, wanting more. Making my way to the bed, I sit on the edge. A small silk pajama set is still lying crumpled on the bed, and I can't help running my hand over the material. Just needing to feel closer to her.

I notice Mr. Trig, the stuffed bear the kids got Becky for her first birthday here, sitting against the pillows. She let the kids pick out the name, and they (really Rome) came up with Trigger. Becky wanted to keep her promise, so she compromised with Trig. I heard her tell Piper her favorite class was always trigonometry, so it worked out. When the memories, the room, and the smell become so overwhelming that I feel the panic rising again, I hop up from the bed and reach for the door. I stop just before stepping into the hall; not giving myself a chance to think, I head back for the bear, snatching it up in my arms. I stomp out of the room, then down to mine. I place that damn bear on my bed before turning and heading back to my original destination.

Chuch.

“Grease, you with us, brother?” Prez, well, my Prez, Swift asks, and I realize I’ve been staring at the scarred table. Everyone is here and seated in their designated places. The new additions sitting in the chairs against the wall. Swift and Devin stand at the head of the table.

“Yeah, sorry. I'm good.” I give a nod. Swift looks at me for a second longer before nodding and turning back to Devin.

“Listen, brothers. All of you know Devon, Piper’s dad. He has some information to share with us about Becky and her situation. I’m going to let him run this one today. Respect,” he demands, and we all nod in agreement. Though that part brings my head up. My focus is hyper-aware. I'm running back the horrible day in my mind on a loop, and something Devin said earlier hits me.

“Wait, wait, wait. You barely knew Becky. I never even really remember you two

speaking. How the fuck do you know her? And how the fuck did you know Becky was missing?"

"Lyra," he states calmly.

"What?" I ask, confused.

"Her name. It's not Becky. It's Lyra."

"Oooooohhhh.... She didn't tell them, Prez," the one I think is Taz says.

"Such a bad girl," Mania cuts in, causing me to growl.

"Shut it, you two. She's still claimed by this club," Devin snaps.

"You're right, Prez! You're the boss man," Taz says, holding his hands in the air for a moment before giving him two shooter fingers.

"Yeah, you make the rules, Prez," Mania says, fist-bumping the air. Devin speaks.

"Show them who runs this shit."

"Yeah, don't forget to mention our heroic antics, too. We like the glory too."

"No woman around, brother, and none of these guys are available. Taken men," Taz says, shaking his head in disappointment.

"Yeah, but I hear the one with the cowboy hat swings both ways. Plus, he has one of each." They both turn to look at Rodeo, who stares back wide-eyed.

"You wouldn't be willing to let two more join, would you?" he smirks.

“Mine,” Rodeo growls, snapping out of his surprise, glaring at one before turning to the other. “Both of them.”

“Gahhh, this place is so boring!!” Mania whines.

“If you would shut the fuck up, we could get on with this meeting and be out of here, you two fuckers,” Devin growls.

“You right, Prez.”

“My bad Prez. Please continue.”

“Like I was saying....” Ghost starts.

“Don't forget to tell them about...”

“OUT! Both of you. Get your asses out of those chairs and get the fuck out of church before I shoot you both,” Ghost bellows as Loki pulls a gun out of his shoulder holsters and slams it into Ghost's hands. Thinking better of it, he picks it up, un-clicks the safety, then places it back in Ghost's hands.

It's all unnecessary, though. At Ghost's tone and face, Taz and Mania rise and walk out, softly shutting the doors behind them. Not uttering another word. Ghost sighs.

“They are still young, and I’ve learned to trust that they will listen as soon as I activate what I like to call their ‘Battle Mode.’ The problem is, no one has ever had enough patience with those two to see what they can accomplish. They might not listen when there are distractions and other, more shiny things happening, but get them in the zone, focused in, and there is no one better.” He shakes his head, staring at the closed door. Then he turns back our way.

“Where was I? Oh yeah, Lyra’s start in life. She grew up with her mama, Talula Leman, in a one-bedroom trailer in a trailer park. Nasty fucking place. Her mom worked constantly to keep them both taken care of, even at fifteen, when she had Lyra. Lyra excelled at school, had no issues. She was the model student and, from all accounts, the perfect daughter. Got a scholarship to the university one town over. She graduated early and was immediately offered a job, teaching the third grade. She had been teaching for three years when a certain boy was assigned to her class. Almost immediately, Lyra noticed the bruising. Daily bruising.”

Devin cuts off as we all mutter cuss words at the thought.

“Lyra reported them. Unfortunately, the child's father is head of one of the biggest Irish mob families in the southeastern states. He was untouchable. Lyra didn't care.”

“And did not quit,” I finish for him. I might not know the story, but I know my Tootsie. No way in fuck would she sit by and watch anyone being abused, much less a child.

“They threatened her, and over and over, she fought for that child.”

“What made her finally realize she had to run?” I ask, almost too scared to listen to the answer.

“Judging by the look on your face, I will spare the details for now, but she was cornered in her classroom by two men after hours one day, and they roughed her up a bit. Nothing terrible, but enough to send her running scarred,” Devon explains, holding eye contact with me, urging me to keep hold of the rising tide of rage I barely contain with each new word that falls out of his mouth.

“Fuck, we need to find her.” I slam my hand on the table.

“What can I do? Where do I need to start? I know your team is already ahead, so any routes I don't have to run through you all already have; just let me know where to start,” Comp asks, flexing his fingers over his keyboard.

“From what Swift has told me, it was her mama who came for her. We have a few leads as to where they might be headed, but from what I could find, her mama is unpredictable and very much.... Impulsive,” Devin says as his brows lower over his eyes. I wonder what that look is for.

“Which means it could get complicated?” Grim asks.

“More like impossible. Trying to track someone impulsive is very tricky.” We all, as one, turn our heads to look at Loki, who is too busy picking his teeth with his Bowie Knife. He looks up when he catches us staring.

“Is it my turn to let my skills free?” he asks, smiling so wide his face looks like it's about to break.

“Maybe... Let's see what Comp can do first,” Swift says nervously, then he turns back to the room. “We have all we are going to get for the day. As you all know, we were preparing for a party tonight. Vice and Drift should be coming in any minute. I say we cancel the party for tonight, but let's vote on it.”

The vote is unanimous; no one is in the mood to party.

“Alright, settled. Devin, you and your men are more than welcome to stay as long as you need,” Prez says, turning back to him and shaking his hand.

“Would love to, son, but other pressing matters, as always. If you need me, you know how to reach me,” he says before giving us all a nod and heading out the door.

As it shuts behind him, Rodeo finally asks the question we've all been wondering about.

“How the fuck did Piper's dad know all that shit about Becky... Fuck, Lyra? And why were those two dumbasses calling him Boss?”

Swift and Comp share a look before something settles between them, and Swift turns to us. Shocking the fuck out of the entire room.

“Well, guys, I guess it's time to let the cat out of the bag. You all know my contact? The one who has certain... specialties. Someone dangerous, like smoke. No one even knows he exists... almost like he's a...”

We all gasp as the realization hits us, but I blur it out.

“Devin, Piper's dad is.... Ghost?”

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Becky

Three Months Later:

“Oh, sweet baby cakes, that's just terrible. You should prop it up. Just rest, darling. Mama Tizzy will take care of everything,” Mama coo’s to Sphera, The Globe of Death girl.

She’s the one who stands in the middle of a tight spherical cage as three dirt bikes ride circles all around and above her. Out of every single performance at this circus, that has to be my biggest fuck no job. Now, don't take that the wrong way. I won't be trying the tightrope or hoop, but if I had to choose the most dangerous and appalling stunt, it's the one this girl does. Who dreams of getting run over by dirt bikes?

“I have to get out there, Mama Tizzy. I have a show, and it's getting ready to start,” Sphera frets as she tries again to get up and off the couch she's been resting on. It’s her trailer, which she and her husband share. He’s one of those crazy bike riders. Unfortunately for her, Sphera ain’t going anywhere. Shit, my mama's accent is starting to take over my head again.

“Baby cakes, you broke your ankle. Ain’t no one out there expect’n you to get in the Sphere of fire,” Mama says.

“There’s no fire,” I remind her once again, even though I know she intends to ignore me.

“Now, if anyone has a problem with you taking just a little break, they can come talk

to Mama Bear here.” We may have only known these people for three months, but they are already scared of mad mama bear. No one will question this decision. “In the meantime, I want you to drink that tea up and get some rest. Heal baby cakes.”

Mama throws a blanket over Sphera’s lap, laces a hand over her forehead, and then turns and pulls me out of the small trailer.

“What are we gonna do, mama? We have no one for this part of the show. Someone’s gotta get in that sphere,” I tell her, panicking as I follow her.

I try to pull up the red glitter corset so my nipples don't pop out while simultaneously pulling down the black leather shorts that might as well classify as boy-short panties with big gold buttons running up the sides. It does nothing, though; the top is too tight to budge up, and the shorts are a lost cause since they are leather and stick. The only saving grace is that I have black stockings on, though those make my feet slip in the too big high heel leather boots.

I look like a ridiculous giraffe. Just as I think it, I turn my head as a face comes into my peripheral view and, wouldn't you know, right there is a giraffe. I look at my mom in the same outfit as mine, just a smaller size, and can't help my insecurity. My mom might be just shy of forty, but she could easily pass for my younger and hotter sister. She makes every outfit look like it was created for her.

“Why the circus? Out of everywhere we could have ended up, why did it have to be the circus?” I ask myself more than anyone, but my mom answers anyway.

“Adventure baby. It’s time we have our adventure! And don't fret. We have someone for the cage,” she says, grabbing my hand and pulling me through the tent flap behind the current show at the back. We are basically the floaters, watching the show and ensuring nothing gets dropped or in the way; we run around a bit and keep things clean. My mom, though, hasn't been happy with that. Hell, I think she would try to

take over as Ringmaster if you gave her the cane, a can of hairspray, a comb, and an alibi. To be fair, the Ringmaster is an ass.

“Who?” I ask, following her as we make our way behind the animals, then across a few hay bales, over some clown props, and finally stopping at the cage. She walks closer, and I already know.

“No! Mama! No, nuh uh. You are not getting in that cage! I won't allow it,” I say, this time taking her wrist.

“Oh, come on, baby, just one show. This is my chance! I've been wanting a real act for months! Ever since they took away my throwing knives,” she grumbles, trying to pull from my grip.

“You stabbed the fortune teller,” I yell.

“That was an accident!” she says, not meeting my eye.

“You sure? Or are you sure it wasn't because she told you that you needed one of her hats to cover that ‘mess of a hair?’. Her words, not mine!” I screech before she turns her claws on me.

“That old bitty,” she grumbles.

“She was younger than you.”

“Synomitry,” she states.

“You mean semantics, and I know you knew that one,” I say, pulling one last time.

“It's finally my chance, baby girl. The spotlight is on me, and everyone is watching

and clapping. How's my hair? Hmm? What about the fluff?" she asks, messing with her hair and fluffing it more.

"I will not watch my mother die by a dirt bike in a metal cage. Nope!" I tell her.

"Sugar plum, the show is about to start, and I want to be in that cage, so just let g..." I start to turn her just as she yanks, making us fall in opposite directions. I somehow end up close to the cage. As I'm getting up, I feel a hand on my shoulder.

"Come on, we can't wait for Sphera anymore. Shows starting. Time for the cage float," someone says, grabbing my hand and shoving me into the cage. There are already three bikes with their three riders on their bikes. It all happens so fast I don't even have time to figure out who shoved me in here.

"Ready, girl? Just remember, stand in the middle and" he trails off.

"Don't move? Don't die?" I wonder why he isn't finishing his sentence. I'm looking all around me, but when my eyes meet his, he gives me a big, menacing smile.

"Put on a show," he says, then revs his dirt bike and takes off before I can reply.

Oh my gosh, I can't breathe; I start to panic as one bike passes by me on one side while the other two cover me as well. They are everywhere. I can't tell which is which or even how many bikes are here at this point. My breath is coming out faster. I feel the wind from the bikes whipping around me, making me dizzy. They are everywhere, and I can't place them. Then I feel a touch on my shoulder, then my hand. I stay as still as I possibly can.

"You're doing great, Sugarplum! Put your hands in the air!" Mama says from behind me, and if I wasn't so scared, I would turn and glare at her. Instead, I find something in the crowd to stare at until this hell is over. Automatically, my eyes go to a

disturbance in the crown.

I look up from three sets of motorcycle boots. My eyes follow a set of familiar legs, three almost identical vests with a patch I spent years drooling over. Muscles are popping out of three sets of arms, and still, it feels like a lifetime before my eyes reach shoulders. I recognize Grim on one side, Hitter on the other, and then my eyes slowly make their way to the baby blues I know so well.

However, at the moment, they are filled with red-hot rage as he tries to break out of the grips of his brothers. My eyes widen as I make contact with his, and my pulse spikes. I don't need his words. I can tell exactly what he is trying to convey by that eye contact.

I'm in a shit ton of trouble. Fuck. Time to disappear.

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Grease

BOOM BOOM BOOM

... Is that pounding in my head or the door? I moan as I try to move or breathe without the searing pain flowing through my temples.

“Grease, get the fuck up. Church in twenty!” I hear I think Comp say through the door.

“Fuck you! Leave me alone,” I try to yell back, but end in a soft tone as I press my hands against my eye sockets. It doesn’t help in the least.

“If I have to come back and drag your ass to church, just know your face will look even worse than mine,” he threatens, and I hear the sounds of retreating footsteps.

Blinking my eyes open so I can take stock of my appearance. Still dressed in boots, jeans, and the same white shirt as yesterday and probably the day before that. Shit, when was I sober last? Probably the last time they gave me false hope of where Beck... I mean, Lyra might be. We had been following closely behind them for a couple weeks, then suddenly, they dropped off the map. No way to find them, no way to track them. I don't pretend to know all the tools and tricks Comp uses to find people, but I know that if Comp can't find them, I have no hope.

The only good thing about that is that the fucks chasing her won't be able to find her either. I did everything I could, but Swift and Comp told me I had to leave it to them in the end. I had to trust them. Problem is... I do trust them. But that doesn’t change

the way my chest hurts beyond belief. It feels like every minute I don't know where she is or if she's safe feels like my soul is ripping into shreds piece by an agonizing piece. Knowing Comp will make good on his threat, I decide I should get up and shower.

Turning my head to the side, I notice Mr. Trig sitting on the pillow. Crushing loneliness hits me right in the chest and with it, undeniable rage. Picking up the bear, I throw it across the room. Just the sight of it causing me to lose it. If I don't go to anger, I go to sadness, and I handle anger way better. Jumping up from the bed, I turn and punch the wall, my hand going straight through the drywall.

Before even trying to disengage my hand from the wall, I lean my forehead against it. I can't keep going on like this. If this is only three months and the agony of her loss only gets worse with each passing day, how can I possibly survive longer? Taking a deep breath and deciding to man the fuck up, I straighten my shoulders, remove my hand from the wall, and turn to pick up the fucking bear. I go to the other side of the room and bend down, grabbing him by the stupid-ass leather cut granting him "Property of Becks" I notice something white sticking out of the bottom of the vest. I pull, my eyes widening when I realize it's a note.... And it's addressed to me.

Grease,

If you're reading this, then I'm probably gone. Hopefully, I just left the club and not the earth... okay, that might not have been the best joke. Scratch that out (I would, but I've had to rewrite this letter a hundred times, so here it goes). I don't know what to say if you want to know the truth. There's so much, but so little, at the same time. So much I want the kids to know, the club, the beautiful old ladies.

I wish I had the words to express the safety and compassion I felt radiated from everyone there. I've never belonged anywhere. Until I moved there. With you and your family, Grease, I understand the meaning of family for the first time. I always

had my mama, but we were the outcasts; we didn't belong, and everyone ensured we knew it.

I need to tell you how I feel. That's what this letter is about. I need to get it all out, especially if I was never brave enough to do it in person. First, please tell the ladies how much it killed me to turn down their friendships and invites over and over. I felt it necessary to keep a distance for my sanity and all your safety. It was hard growing close at all, knowing I would never get to stay.

The kids were impossible not to fall for. Each with their own different purpose and personality. I wish I could see them grow. To be there to help through the scary times, through the tears, and laughs... all of it. It kills me knowing they won't remember me. Maybe I'll get lucky, and Rome, Rae, and maybe Mabel will fondly think of me in passing, but the younger kids... won't even know me anymore. That breaks my heart.

But never telling you how I truly felt breaks my heart the most. I'm not even sure if you will ever find this letter, but I need to get it off my chest. The first night I met you, I remember thinking I would follow this guy to the ends of the earth. I've never had that reaction, and to tell you the truth, it scared the shit out of me. I didn't believe in love at first sight, especially when I saw the town of men I grew up with. Then there you were, proving me wrong. I wanted to smile, and just as I did... you opened that infuriating mouth of yours. You might be a charmer, a fuck boy, and all around asshole, but I loved you all the same.

Fighting with you and sparring with our glares and words gave me life, something to look forward to. I always felt so special that I could get a dig at you that made that cocky smirk falter. I loved that I was the only one that could truly get under your skin. That you were vulnerable only to me. I loved it because the truth is you are the only person to ever get the real vulnerable me as well.

I'm sure by now you've heard why I'm running and who I'm running from. I need you to understand I hate myself for the thought of bringing this danger to your family, but I knew I was safe with you. I knew I should have left after a month of being there, but I loved you all too much. I did this to myself. I put myself in this position and had to leave to protect you all. I couldn't sit by and watch that little boy be hit and abused every single day. I couldn't sleep on the weekends, just wondering what torture they were doing to him while he was at home. Knowing he was safe at school was the only reason I got out of bed some days. He was the sweetest little boy. Had big blue eyes, a shade darker than yours. He was so soft-spoken, but gentle and kind. There is no way he could have done anything to deserve the abuse, the hits, the kicks, the burns.... I couldn't handle it. You would have loved him, though. Anyway, it's all in the past now, and hopefully, out there somewhere, he's safe...

I don't know where I am or what I might be doing at the moment, but there are a few things I wanted you to know...

One, just know that my time with y'all was the best time of my life.

Two, no matter where I am, I'm thinking about you. Please know I'm always thinking about you.

And Three, I love you with every fiber of my being. I always have. Since day one Grease, and I will love you for the rest of my life.

XOXO Yours,

Lyra "Becky"

I drop the letter, and it falls to the floor from my fingertips. I feel wetness drip down my face. I don't realize what it is until I wipe my eyes.

“FUCK!!!!” I roar. The woman I love with everything in me loved me back? For years, she loved me back, and I just sat there throwing jabs and jokes her way constantly. I should have told her. I should have said it with a straight face, so she knew I meant it. I should have done so many things, but.... Would it have mattered? If I had said it, would she still have been distant? So much new information overflowing my brain. I need a fucking cigarette. I sit holding the note in one hand and the bear in the other. Sitting here, I go over the words again and again in my head. I do the same thing as I shower and then again as I walk the halls, heading outside for a smoke.

I'm just about to throw the bud into the trash can when a thought occurs. Thinking back on all those times with Lyra, I realize... she was always giving. She was never selfish. She asked nothing of us. She wanted nothing from us. Only a job and to watch the kids. On multiple occasions, she put herself in harm's way to save those children. After learning about her mom, I see where she got it from. It seems Lyra and Tizzy have no one but each other. They have given so much to people who never deserved it, which ends now. I will find my woman and give her the life she deserves.

With that new resolution set in place I swing open the door and head down the hall toward Church. I just enter the door to realize everyone is already there, and I'm the last one. I'm about to take my seat when the next words fill the room and my stomach with unbelievable tension.

“We've got her!”

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Becky

“Faster, mama, faster!!” I yell as I turn to look out of the back window, seeing how much of a head start we might have gotten.

“I’m going as fast as I can, sweet cheeks! This thing only goes fifty miles per hour downhill, and that’s with the wind blowing up my tailpipe!” she screeches, bouncing in her seat, trying to make the car go faster.

“Well, it might have helped if you grabbed something other than the clown car!” I yell, wondering how she got put in charge of the getaway car.

“There were no other cars near us! And especially none with the keys already in the dang thing. We were just lucky the show was getting ready for this skit! Otherwise, we would have had to try to charm those polka dots, and you know how touchy they can get,” she mumbles again, looking in the rearview. Just as I’m about to reply, headlights flash behind, not just one set either... a lot of headlights.

“They’re gaining mama!” I cry, hitting the dash like that might help.

“Well, you screeching like a well-tuned rooster ain’t doing no good.”

“What does that even mean?!” Again, I screech.

“IT MEANS STOP SCREECHING AT ME!”

“I CAN’T SEEM TO MAKE IT STOP!” I truly can’t. I’m hyperventilating. I’m filled

with excitement. I got to see him. He was looking for me. He was coming for me. Also, though, what the heck are they doing? It's been three months! I figure they would have found out what I did by now and just write me off.

“We are almost to the interstate. I might be able to lose them in the traffic,” Mama says, but I'm doubtful. I've seen these men ride and watched them constantly being aware of their surroundings. I have a strong feeling we ain't losing them.

Mama pushes the pedal to the metal, but it does no good. We are on a long stretch of road, at least several minutes from the interstate. These are country roads, so they are nearly always empty anyway, but it's also after nine on a weekday, so no hope of help. I look at Mama again, see her staring at the motorcycles, and then notice it.

“Why are you slowing down?” At this point, I think I'm screeching on purpose.

“I-I'm not!” she stutters, then pushes down on the pedal again, but definitely not to the floorboards.

“Yes, you are! You are slowing down! What is going on, Mama?” I narrow my eyes.

“Umm, like you said, there's no way to outrun them.” She winces, and I can't believe it. I put my hands in my hair, pulling at the roots, trying to think through the shock and confusion.

“You're letting them catch up? Aren't you? Oh my lanta! I can't be...” A thought hits me, and I pause the assault on my poor, lavender-colored hair. I turn back to her and once again narrow my eyes.

“Mother...” I pause.

“Oh no, not that tone. You always mean business when you use that tone. Lord help

me,” she whispers, shrinking into herself while still trying to see over the steering wheel.

“Did you pick this car on purpose because you knew it wouldn't be as fast?” I ask, narrowing my eyes even further. Much more, and I won't be able to see.

“Of course not! Honestly, I saw the keys. The fact that it was slow was a bonus,” she whispers in that last part, but I still hear it.

“Mama! How could you?” I ask, the sense of betrayal strong. My mamas never, ever betrayed or lied to me. She might have withheld information, but she's never lied or hurt me before... until now.

“Baby girl, I need you to listen to me, and you listen to me good,” she says, finally turning to look me in the eyes. I've only ever seen my mama cry a handful of times, so when I notice the wetness in her eyes and the tears coursing down her face, I know it's time to listen, “No one, and I mean no one, has ever fought for me the way that Demi-God of fire and ice did for you back there. They came for you, baby. Don't you get what that means?”

“I can't bring danger to them, Mama. I can't keep putting everyone I love at risk,” I squeeze out through my rapidly closing throat.

“I didn't raise you to be a runner, baby. Runnin' from that town would have been the easy way out, but I knew what the worst situations could be waiting for me and my innocent baby girl. I also knew that if I ran... I would have never stopped running,” she says, looking deep within my soul. The wall I've been trying to keep building around me, around this situation, crumbles, and I let out a sob.

Her words ring so true. If I don't face this now, I'll run till the day I die. That's not the life I've ever wanted or would ever want. I want love, I want family, I want babies,

the white picket fence...

I want roots.

Mama smiles at me as she finally slows to a stop in the middle of the road, and we are surrounded immediately.

“Lord, look at what a sight.” Mama fans herself as we watch, waiting for the shoe to drop. None of them look happy.

I watch Halle hop off the bike, followed by Loki. Loki walks to the front of his bike, and I watch him reach around to the back of his waistband. When his arms come around, I realize he’s holding a gun.

“Oh no. Oh, no.” I start to panic. This can't be happening. Suddenly, a motion from his side catches my attention and I see Halle smack Loki upside the head before taking the gun from his hand. She yells at him, waving the gun in his face. I have no clue what she is saying, but he’s looking at her and the gun with adoration. Then he licks the barrel of the gun, and Halle stops yelling immediately. The smile she shows him has me rolling my eyes. I can't handle the roller coaster that is those two.

“Well, isn't she just the cutest? That has to be Halle! That must make...” Before Mama can finish, my door is ripped open, and I’m pulled into the very strong and very angry arms of Grease.

“I-I...” I start to stutter, but he interrupts me.

“Don't!” he snaps before he growls, looks down at my lips, and mutters, “fuck it,” and the next thing I know, his lips are on mine. I moan into his mouth. His tongue forcing its way into my mouth and demanding my submission. Well, the man kisses like he talks. Bossy and cocky. I smile and return the kiss passionately. All too soon,

he pulls back, though. Then he's staring at me with so much pain it crushes something inside me.

"Alright, men. Back to the compound. The women can ride in the cage. Leave the clown car," Swift orders.

"Aww... but I wanted to take the clown car! The kids would love it!" Sunny says as she and all the other old ladies file out of the black van I hadn't noticed. I gape at all of them.

"What are all you doing here?" I ask in surprise as I see Jade help Izzy out, then wink and smile my way.

"You're family, girl. We always come for family," she says, making tears rush to my eyes.

"We came to bring you home," Izzy says softly.

"Both of you," Piper smiles at me softly.

Home. Looking around, my brows draw down. "Where's Ophelia?" I ask.

"She's still having a rough time with morning sickness." Rodeo smirks my way proudly. I'm so happy for them. "Her, Trip, and Adam volunteered to stay back with the kids."

"Do you think we have time to go back for a funnel cake?" Grim asks, his eyes looking back down the road.

"Is that really a good idea? It's all going to go to your fat ass and stomach," Loki smirks, sticking a match between his teeth to chew on.

“Take that back right the fuck now! I’m in the best shape of my life!” Grim complains.

“Oh, dad bod is the new healthiest shape? Is that your medical opinion?” Hitter smirks, his arms winding around Izzy.

“To hell with all of you! I’ve got an eight-pack. Count them!” Grim pulls his shirt up, pointing to his abs. “See? Eight. Tell them I’m still sexy as fuck, Clover!” he says, turning to Jade.

“Oh, heavenly gates of gold. Take me away to paradise, sweet angel.” Ah, hell, here we go. “Umm, excuse me... Whoever is in charge? My sugarplum called you President Swiftly,” Mama says from behind me, and I wince at the chuckles.

“You, Ma’am, can call me Swift. I am the Prez of this here biker club.” Swift tips an imaginary hat at her and winks.

“Oh, you’ve gone and done it now,” I mumble, placing my hand on my forehead, waiting for the inevitable. Mama doesn't disappoint.

“Oh, I like a man in charge. Well, Swift, since you're in charge, then Imma just need to let you know. First, Imma need you to drop the Ma’am. I ain’t old enough for all that yet. I’m still in my prime. It’s Tizzy or Mama. Second, we’re going to need to make a pit stop before you take us home. All you peacocks showing me your feathers made me done melt my edible panties off.”

“I claim her!” Halle says, throwing her hand in the air and jumping up and down.

“I claimed you, Pet. You can not claim another,” Loki says, grabbing Halle by the throat, tilting her head to the side, and biting her neck.

“Well, slap my behind and call me Ethel. I need me one of those.” Mama points at Loki. I quickly pull her finger down and cautiously step in front of my mom, putting my body in front of hers. Halle’s a bit... eccentric. I’m not sure how she would handle the thought of my mama wanting someone compared to her man. I can't let her kill my mama.

“Ain't he such a peach! No one else seems to get that! They think he’s just crazy.”

“You can't have no fun in your life without a little crazy,” Mama says, shimmying. I see Halles' eyes light up!

“That's what I say!!! Also, your tits are glorious in that top! I’m going to need to borrow that outfit. Though you might not want it back after I make Loki shoot his load out of his cannon,” Halle says, thinking. Oh hell.

“OHHH girly pop! I can make you your very own! I can even put tassels on the nips for you to swing around,” Mama says.... Demonstrating by swirling her tassel-less tits around.

“Yup, I’m in love. She’s mine,” Halle smirks, waving wildly at my mom. I sigh in relief. Bullet dodged, figuratively and most likely literally.

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Grease

“Prez, can you load my bike onto the trailer? I’m riding back with my woman,” I say, slinging my arm over Lyra.

“Wait, who said I’m going back? I can...” She starts to argue, but I sigh, roll my eyes, and throw her over my shoulder.

“We’ve got your bike, brother,” Swift says with a smirk.

“Bout time the last of us fell. Ain't that right, brother?” Hitter smirks.

“Still got Cutter to think about,” Swift muses as Lyra kicks and screams. Pounding my back.

“Tootsie, I’m warning you right now. Grab my ass again, and I will be returning the favor,” I say through a growl as I give a chin lift to the guys, then turn and head for the van.

“Grease, please. You have to let me go,” Lyra keeps protesting.

“Prez, I think we might have to take the small car after all. We don't have room for everyone in the cage,” Comp says, looking around the group. I nod and then turn and stalk back toward the fucking clown car.

“Shotgun!!” Lyra’s mom yells out. Then she looks around. “That is unless one of you double, dark, dangerous devils wants to let me ride piggyback.” She wiggles her

eyebrows, and I can't help the chuckle that escapes at the groan Lyra lets loose.

Lyra, fuck, her name is so beautiful. Becky was beautiful as well, but I want to be comfortable with both. She will have to pick one, and I want to make it as easy as possible for her. I want her to know I accept both, and either of those names and who they represent her being.

“Miss Tizzy,” I start but readdress her when she narrows her eyes on me. Well, shit, that’s a scary look. “Tizzy, do you mind driving? Me and my woman need to have a long conversation, and Imma need the backseat for it.”

“Oh, you overbearing, bossy, son of a bit...” Lyra starts.

“Sugarplum, watch that language, and after that young man just offered you the sweetest, most romantic ride of your life. Hop on in sugar; I’ll hitch this ride!” Tizzy says, jumping in the driver's side.

I climb into the back seat with Lyra on my lap as she continues to struggle.

“Tootsie, if you don't want your mama seeing a show, you might want to stop with the wiggling of that sweet ass. Only so much control I got left,” I whisper in her ear. Her struggles stop immediately, but she still turns her head to glare at me. There's my girl. Tizzy turns the car on and pulls out behind Swift at my direction.

“Just follow where they lead,” I tell her, then turn and give my full attention to my Toots.

“I’ve missed you so much, baby,” I say, not realizing my voice cracks. Her eyes widen further, but I don't let her respond. I take her mouth in a hard kiss. I don't give a fuck who might be watching. This is what I’ve wanted for fucking years! Not seeing her every day created a monster only she can contain. As she wiggles against

me again, I decide now's the time to pull back. She protests, but I just smirk, causing her eyes to narrow. Fuck, I love her fire.

“You need to behave. This is no way for me to meet the in-laws. Your mama's gonna think I'm trying to take advantage of you.” I wink.

“Lord howdy, take advantage. My little Lyra Lynn needs some advantages in her life. Take control, too. She might think she wants to be in control, but she's lying to herself.”

“MAMA!” Lyra gasps.

“Baby sugarplum, I would tell you to tame that wild stallion you got back there, but darlin', you already have him by the cobbles! Boys whipped and whipped good.” Just as I'm about to reply, Tizzy screeches, “Oh! This is my jam. We're going to jam out on this road trip! YEE-HAW!!”

“Sure you want to take us back to the clubhouse? She'll have it wrecked by hour three,” Lyra says, smiling softly. As her eyes meet mine, her smile drops, and she sighs. “Grease, on a serious note, I can't go back. I can't put all of you in danger.”

“We can take care of ourselves,” I growl, then louder when she starts to deny it.

“No! Lyra, you are coming home. That is the end of it. We will protect you. There is nothing more in this life that I want to do. I want to fight with you, I want to protect you, I want to build a life with you! I want you to let me love you! Stop running and just....” I pause, waiting for her to look at me again, needing her to feel the strength and truth in my words. “Just let me love you with everything in me. I'm already there, tootsie. I just need you on board.

“What if someone gets hurt because of me? What if one of the kids gets hurt? I

couldn't live with that.” She crumbles as tears stream down her face.

“My brothers and their wives are well aware of the risk and what might come for us. Believe me, it wouldn't be the first time someone has come after the club. We have measures in place to make sure the kids are well protected. You should know. You've been in that panic room before,” he tells me.

“You all do that for family. For old ladies!”

“Woman! When are you going to learn? You. Are. Mine,” I tell her forcefully and then plant my mouth firmly over hers when she protests. She moans, then pulls back quickly.

“Stop doing that! It's distracting!” she says, but I can see she's trying to hide her smile.

“You are mine, Lyra. And I will fight any war brought to our doorstep to keep you safe, my brothers at my back. Just like I was at their back every time they needed me,” I tell her, cupping the side of her throat. I give it a quick squeeze and watch her lips part, her tongue poking out to wet them. Glistening in the moonlight shining throughout the car.

“You called me Lyra, not Becky.” She smiles. “Why?”

“I just want you to know it's your choice. Whether you want to come back to the compound as Becky or want to start fresh as Lyra, I guess, fresh by going back to the past. I mean, not going back. Fuck, that's confusing as fuck, ain't it?” I ask her and smile at the shake of her shoulders. I love getting to see that laughter, finally. I don't notice the music turned down until Tizzy speaks.

“Sugarplum. It wouldn't hurt my feelings if you wanted to keep your new name and

new identity. It's not like we came from much, baby. You can go back to Becky and dream up castles and ponies with rainbow birthday cakes your dad made. I would have loved to give you that childhood. At least Becky could have had that,” Tizzy says, and though I can tell she's trying to make her voice sound chipper, the pain laces the statement.

“Mama, I’ve never been ashamed of my childhood. I wouldn't trade my life with you for all the ponies or the biggest castle on earth. My childhood and my life with you have made me who I am. I’ve never been ashamed of you, mama. You gave me everything I needed growing up, and you're still doing it now,” Lyra says to her mama over the front seats, then she turns back to me.

“I want to come home... but I’m coming home Lyra Loretta Lynn Leman,” she says, raising her chin. Sitting in the back seat of a clown car, I ride back home with my woman, my queen, sitting on my lap.

Now, if I could just get her home, I could finally sit her in her rightful spot upon her throne.

Also known as my mouth.

Page 13

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Lyra

I'm leaning my head on Grease's shoulder when we finally pull up to the gates of the Reckless Omens Compound. I look back and watch as the gates close behind us. I want to keep fighting and protesting that I don't belong here. I need to save them all, but if I am being honest with myself, I'm tired and scared to death.

Grease helps me out of the car, and we head in through the front door. As the door closes, Swift turns to me.

"Sweetheart?" Swift asks, bending to catch my eyes. "Are we sticking with Becky or going with Lyra here? Your call."

I look at Mama, who smiles, then Grease, who smirks. I turn back to the group now surrounding me. All the people I love, missing a few other people and the kids. I know they will accept me. All of me.

"I'm going back to my roots. So, hello everybody. I'm Lyra Loretta Lynn Leman, and I've missed you all so much." I start to tear up. I swear I've never cried so much in my life as I have with these people... my family.

"Alright, well Lyra, I think it's time we gather everyone into church, and you can finally tell us the full story of what's going..." Before Swift can finish, I hear a squeal coming from the back hallways.

"She's back! They brought her back to us!" Rae yells.

“I knew they would!” Paisley says as all the kids file into the room and swarm me. They are all talking at once as they nearly tackle me to the ground.

“We missed you!”

“Please don't leave us again!”

“We'll keep you safe!”

“I'll put a cap in anyone's ass that thinks they can come take you from us!” A growled-out response tells me that was Rome...of course.

“Alright, alright, you all! Come on now, she just got home. Give her room to breathe,” Trip says to the kids before turning a smile my way and pulling Ophelia into his side.

“We missed you so much!” Ophelia cries, wanting to reach for me, but a billion kids claim her spot. I couldn't ask for a better homecoming.

“Like I was saying, we are going to head to church. We need the full story to know where to go from here,” Swift continues.

I nod, smiling down at the kids.

“I'm not going anywhere again. Promise. Kay?” I wait for them to nod before I follow Swift and the other guys down the hall toward the meeting room. I've actually never been in that room. It always seems so foreboding, but I know now that I'm safe with these people. I've always felt safe with these people. But this room was always different. I should have known to just come to these guys first. Why did I run, and why should I keep fighting it if they know all the details and still want me around? But it's finally time to tell them every detail of my story.

I start to take a seat in a chair Swift points out. Instead, I feel Grease's arm around my waist, then feel him tug me down onto his lap. Swift raises his eyebrows.

“No disrespect, Prez, but I’ve been without my old lady for three months. I’m keeping her close,” he says. Swift just smirks and nods. I gape at the fact he called me his old lady. That’s a huge claim. I know he said I was his, but damn.

“Lyra, whenever you want to start, hun,” Hitter says in a soft voice. Looking around the table, I take a deep breath before letting it all out.

“You’ve all been made aware of my life before college, I’m guessing? You didn't seem too surprised by my mama, and that's a feat in itself, so I’ll skip to after college. I started teaching at a private school right out of college. I might not have grown up with money, but I was smart. I also got lucky with the offer. I never had any issues and loved the school and everyone I worked with until Connor. He was the brightest kid in my whole third-grade class. He wasn't only smart, though; he had a heart of gold. After I gave him that compliment, he told me it was unacceptable. His father said it was a weakness, and he would beat out of him. That was the first time I turned him into the resource officer.” I pause to gather my thoughts, trying to keep a distance from the memories so I can get through the whole story before I break.

“I loved Connor with all of my heart. I would have taken him in a second, but there was no way they would have let me. It wasn't long, not even a day after I reported the incident, before Connor came back to school with bruises covering most of his body. It was reported as a hiking accident. His family went to the countryside home for a nice family outing. He lost his footing and fell. No one questioned it. Over and over it happened and explained away. It was killing me slowly... I was threatened to let it go, scared, and attacked while grocery shopping. My breaks were cut, tires slashed. I was ‘robbed’ coming home from work one night. The cops forgot to mention in the report I was threatened that if I didn't shut my mouth, the next time they broke in, it would be to burn the place down with me, my mom, my best friend, and Connor

inside.”

“Mother fucker Tootsie. You're the bravest woman I've ever known,” Grease says, but it causes me to snort. He pinches my ass, and I elbow him in the stomach.

“Anyway, I tried every avenue possible, but the boys' family was too well connected. That brings me to who his father is.”

“Cillian Sullivan,” Swift answers for me.

“The one and only,” I say.

“Have to be really brave or really stupid to go against the Sullivan family.”

“The really stupid part. I even went to the house to try to talk some sense into them. If they didn't want him, I would have taken him,” I cry. “But the old man was cruel, just plain evil. I could see it in his eyes. Connor's mom was some blonde bimbo, only worried about the chip in her perfect nail polish. He threatened me, surprise, surprise.”

“Damn woman, you went through all that and still stayed in that town? I'm almost scared to know the final straw that made you leave,” Grim says, rubbing his chin.

“I got a call in the middle of the night. It was the principle. He told me Connor was in the hospital. He wasn't doing well, and they didn't know if he would make it through the night. I asked what happened, but he said he would tell me once I arrived. I didn't even question it. I raced over to the hospital, only when I got there....” I trail off.

“Let me guess, they were waiting for you in the parking lot?” Comp chimes in. I just nod and shiver at the memory. I nod, trying to swallow back the tears and panic that always come with the memory.

“I barely even got out of the car before being grabbed. I was yanked around a good bit until they slammed me against the back door of my car. They pressed my stomach to the cold door and whispered in my ear. They told me I should have left it alone, that now they weren't just going to kill me, they were going to put me in one of their whore houses, get me good and used up, make some quick cash, then put a bullet through my skull.” I didn't even realize I was shaking until I felt Grease pull me back into his arms and rub his hands up and down my arms. I'm exhausted from the day, the show, the drive, and now reliving the past. I'm ready to get this out and over with. I wipe the tears from my eyes, take a deep breath, and let the rest out.

“I was able to get away using a self-defense keychain I had in my hand and another dose of luck. After that, I packed up all my stuff, made quite the scene before leaving town, and then ran like the hounds of hell were nipping at my heels. They found me twice before I landed here. Since starting over with you guys, I've been.... Safe,” I finish simply.

“There's one thing I don't understand,” Swift says, looking at me with drawn eyebrows. “If all they wanted was for you to leave them alone and shut the fuck up, why would they still be looking for you after all these years?”

I wince as I know I will have a fight on my hands with this next part.

“Well... that's the difficult part, I might have made sure Connor got away as well.”

“You kidnapped their kid?” someone whisper-yells.

“I saved their kids and got him out. Now, he's somewhere safe and loved,” I say, holding my head up high. I might feel guilty for bringing trouble their way, but I feel no guilt or remorse about taking that child.

“Okay.... So the real question is, where's the boy?” Swift asks. This time, I try to

hide the wince. They really aren't going to like this...

“Umm... I don't know.”

Grease

Lord, have fucking mercy on my soul. This woman can't seem to make anything easy on me. I rub my temples before opening my eyes, squeezing her hip, and glaring when she turns her eyes to meet mine.

“What the hell is that supposed to mean, Tootsie? Where the fuck is the boy at?” I ask, ready to get all of this shit out in the open. I have plans for my little runner.

“Watch the tone, big guy! You ain't gonna get nothing from me talking like that.” And just like that, her guards are back up. We haven't been in the same room for thirty minutes, and it's like we can't help but heat up the area around us.

“Tootsie, keep up with that attitude, and I can promise you, I will throw your ass on this table and...”

“Prez, can you please dismiss us so these two can finally fuck it all out? While it's been entertaining watching you two dorks dance around each other and throw barbs, we all know where this will lead. Please, for the love of mother earth, lock yourselves in a room and fuck it out,” Hitter says, letting his head fall back on his shoulders.

“If throwing your woman on the table and fucking her brains out is the new idea of normal, just let me get Halle in here real quick.” Loki starts to stand.

“Sit down,” Swift says, rubbing his temples now.

“Oh, come on, Prez. You know how many times I've imagined pressing her delicious

body onto the table so hard it would brand out insignia right on her....”

“For fucks sake, how the hell do we get shit done when this is all we think about?” Rodeo asks, rolling his eyes.

“These are the super secret, super important meetings you all have? I have to say I’m a bit disappointed. I definitely thought it was more take over the world type stuff,” Lyra says, looking crestfallen.

“Can we get back on topic, please? Lyra, I need you to tell us where the boy is. We need to make sure he’s safe as well,” Swift says, looking at Lyra. Her shoulders hunch for just a minute as we all stare back at her. Then she pulls her shoulders back and lifts her chin before speaking. There’s my firecracker.

“I really can’t tell you where he is because I don’t know. That was part of the plan. I made a distraction while leaving town. Giving another teacher friend of mine a chance to get Connor and get him out safely. I got one phone call before coming here with a codeword to tell me they were safe. I knew I would only endanger them if we kept in touch. So I kept moving, kept letting those fuckers follow me around until their trail went cold. I wanted them to think he was with me, and, as far as I know, they still believe I have him somewhere.”

“That’s actually... Genius,” Comp says, looking impressed.

“You’ll give us your friend’s name and any other information you’ve got. Sooner or later, they will realize you don’t have him, and if they can get their hands on you, they’ll torture the information from you,” Swift says but turns his head to me when I growl. “We will make sure that never happens. We won’t let them get to you, but I will know every piece of info we can get before they find out. We need the advantage of a head start.”

Lyra nods solemnly, but without much more prodding, she gives him the information he wants. She doesn't believe we can find them based on how she looks at him. What she doesn't realize is we don't just have Comp. We have Ghost and his team. One way or another, we will find the trail. Once that's done, we are all dismissed. Without another word, I stand, throwing my woman over my shoulder and heading straight to my room, even at the laughter following me from my brothers.

“For Heaven's sake, I can damn well walk, you big brute,” Lyra says, but this time she doesn't struggle.

“Holding on by a thread, Toots. I suggest you go with the flow before I lose fucking control,” I tell her, muttering in almost a whisper. “Fuck, how did I become Loki? Now I know why I catch him and Halle fucking in the most random places.”

I take off down the hallways, each step followed by some jeer or joke from the Brothers still in the common room. Lyra simply laughs and smacks my ass as we walk away, and I can't help but bounce her on my shoulder a bit more than is strictly necessary. She cackles in response and attempts to work her hand under the waistband of my jeans to squeeze my ass as I reach our door.

“None of that. We've serious business to attend to!” I scold, giving her ass a firm slap before reaching to push open the door.

“Oh, yes, so very important that it required that little show of ridiculousness back there?” she teases.

“As I said, we have serious matters to address that will require my full attention and none of them are allowed to distract me,” I say, forcing as much seriousness into my tone as possible through the blinding smile I can't seem to keep off my face as I step into the room and kick the door closed behind us.

“You know, I really should be pissed at you for cave-manning me like that. I didn’t even get a chance to say hi to any of the women after church let out before you carried me off to have your wicked way with me,” she teases after I drop her onto the center of my bed.

“You gonna punish a man for being eager?” I ask, goading her with a smirk as she stands and saunters toward me.

She hums thoughtfully as she presses her palms against my chest, turning me and guiding me back toward the edge of the bed. I stare at her intently, following her lead without hesitation and sitting when the back of my knees connect with the mattress. Without a word, she drops to her knees in front of me, and I can’t hold back the growl of an inhale at the sight.

To my utter disappointment, she bypasses the button of my jeans, dragging her hands lightly over my thighs and knees, and stops at my boots, working them off and tossing them aside. Once she has them off, she sits back on her heels and looks up at me, gently gliding her hands up my calves. “As much as I love being back and can’t wait to settle in again, I think I like your little punishment idea,” she says with an evil smirk.

“Oh really? Whatcha have in mind, Toots?” I goad.

“Something to shut that ridiculous mouth of yours for a bit,” she snarks, trailing her hands up over my thighs, stopping just before reaching my groin. The bulge in my jeans is getting painful at this point, and only millimeters from where her fingers rest, betraying the calm exterior I am trying to hold on to. I haven’t seen this teasing side of her before, and fuck if I don’t love it.

“Shut me up, huh? Might I offer a suggestion?” I ask, sinking my hand into her hair and using my hold to tip her face up to mine fully.

“Whatcha have in mind?” she parrots my words back to me, her words breathless. I flex my fingers in my hold and watch as she bites back a groan and a smile.

Letting the heat and desire burning inside me bubble to the surface, I feel my eyes darken as I lean into her, pausing with my lips just hovering above hers and say in a voice that is pure liquid fire, “Get that perfect ass up here, and sit on my fucking face, Toots.”

I swear her eyes roll back in her head, and she whimpers at my words. I can’t hold back the chuckle that rumbles in my throat at her reaction. I watch, not even attempting to hold back my laugh as I watch her scramble to her feet and rip every last stitch of clothing from her body in record time. Another time, I want to draw it out, and enjoy each new inch of skin she reveals for me, but I am not going to complain about her being just as frantic and eager for it as I am this time around.

Lyra flops onto the bed next to me in a slightly tangled heap as she kicks the last of her jeans and panties off, and looks up at me, pupils blown wide with desire. “Off,” she all but growls as she gestures to the admittedly ridiculous amount of clothing I am still wearing. I strip off in record time and am laid out next to her in the span of only a few breaths.

My gorgeous girl wastes no time crawling to her knees next to me, and the weight of her gaze as she takes in my entire body laid out like a feast for her is a physical weight that sets my cock pulsing and twitching where it stands straight up, begging for her attention. The quirk of her lips tells me the little wave my dick just gave her didn’t go unnoticed, and she goes to lean down and say hello. While I want nothing more than to feel those sweet lips around my length, I believe I was promised something else. I give her ass a firm slap to draw her attention back to me. She shoots me a questioning brow, wondering why the hell I would stop her.

“I believe I’m waiting for a punishment there, toots,” I taunt, an evil smirk tugging at

my lips. Lyra whimpers, licking her lips again, clearly torn between what to do next. Wanting to help her decision along, I land another resounding smack on her ass and hold her challenging gaze. “I said, come sit on my fuckin’ face, woman, and smother me with that perfect little pussy.”

I watch with smug satisfaction as her resolve melts and she all but scrambles up the bed, crawling over me and settles a knee on each side of my head, her feet resting over my shoulders. She holds onto the headboard in front of her before looking down her body and catching my eyes. Her pupils are completely blown and she is sucking in deep breaths that match my own. I take another deep, long inhale through my nose, arching my neck and straining to make contact as she hovers over me. My fingers sink into her ass, and I growl, tugging at her to sink down for me.

When she doesn’t move, I go all but feral. “Lyra,” I growl, deeper and more menacing than I have ever used with her. That one word, combined with the look in my eyes, must do the trick because she lowers herself slightly, clearly intending to keep most of her weight off me. Like fuckin’ hell she will. As soon as she moves, I pounce, lifting my head to make contact with her sweet pussy and wrap my arms around her hips to drag her down. She may be on top, but there is no mistaking who is in control. The instant my lips connect with her center, I devour her. My tongue sweeps out and laps at her before closing my lips around her clit, worrying the little bead between them until my Tootsie is screaming my name.

Time ceases as I work her over, reducing her to a writhing, screaming mass above me. My lips and tongue work her expertly, driving her up before backing off just enough to keep her riding that razor’s edge for an eternity. There is no holding back the grunts and groans and satisfied moans her taste and the feel of her against me are dragging from me, and if the almost constant gush of sweetness from her is any indication, she appreciates my vocalness.

I have no idea how long I have her riding the edge like that, but I can tell I have her

close to where I want her. Her entire body is shaking, I can feel beads of sweat tracing down her spine, and I am pretty sure she is no longer saying actual words as she begs and pleads with me to let her come. She makes the mistake of looking back down at me at one point, and all I do is wink as I suck her clit into my mouth again, driving her that much higher. Before she can process the move, my fingers sink further into the curve of her hips, pulling her more firmly against me as I redouble my efforts on her clit, sucking it and flicking it rapidly with my tongue. I see her eyes actually roll back as she convulses above me. Her orgasm rockets through her, and to my surprise and absolute delight, a wave of wetness gushes out of her to meet me, and I drink every last drop down, lapping at the sweetness of her orgasm as she collapses against the headboard, boneless and wrung out.

When the last of her orgasm fades, I gently slide out from under her and guide her down against the pillows, letting her relax back and sink into the mattress as she rides out the high. Her glazed-over gaze meets mine as I settle over her, my hips slotting perfectly into the space between her thighs as she automatically wraps her legs around me.

Leaning down, I claim her lips in a devastating kiss as I finally push into her, sinking myself to the hilt and simply holding her there. Our kiss melts into something deeper, less urgent, and more profound as our bodies entwine fully. For the first time in the months since she has been gone, hell, maybe for the first time ever, I feel a soul-deep peace wash over me with Lyra wrapped around me so completely. We fit. This is how it should be, how it always should be.

Lyra

I can't believe I got the chance to sleep in his arms. Waking with my head on my chest, I almost couldn't believe it. After the best sexual experience of my life, it seems almost too unreal. I try to keep my mind from straying to the what-ifs. What if he changes his mind now that the challenge is gone? What if he gets bored with monogamy? I don't realize my breathing has increased until I hear his sleepy voice.

“Tootsie, don't ruin this moment with your overthinking. It's too early to start a war.” I can hear the laughter in his voice, and it puts me somewhat at ease. I close my eyes and try not to think of the past, only the here and now.

“Can I ask you something, Toots?” he asks me seriously.

“Of course,” I say, even as I tense. I'll answer whatever questions he has, no matter how uncomfortable.

“What made you hate me so much? There have been so many times I thought I could break through those walls, then I would see you, talk to you, and it was like your barbs came out,” he asks, and at that, I scoff.

“I'm not the only prickly one. Anytime I walked into the room, it was like you had to make some sarcastic comment.” I roll my eyes.

“I'd say just about anything to have your full attention on me, even if it was your anger. It didn't feel so... alone,” he says, sadness lacing his words.

“I didn’t want to get hurt,” I tell him softly. So softly, I’m not even sure he can hear me.

“What made you think I would hurt you?” he asks, appalled. I roll my eyes.

“You mean besides the tattoos, piercings, bike, and all-around bad boy stamp you wear? The first night we met, it was made clear that you are a guy who wants one thing. I didn’t want to just be another in a long line of conquests for you. Then, when you were always leaving at night, it confirmed what I already thought I knew. You didn’t want anything serious. Add in the fact that I always knew I would have to leave; it was like the universe working against us.” I don’t notice he has gone still until I finish, and he’s as rigid under me as a rock.

“What do you mean, just another? That’s really what you think I’ve been doing all this time? Leaving every night of the week to find another bed to sleep in, another hole to dip my dick into?” I wince at his tone and the images his words bring to mind.

“Please stop,” I say, not caring that he was with others, just never wanting to know the details.

“I need you to look at me, toots.” When I don’t, he barks, “Now!”

I’ve never heard his tone so harsh. When I meet his eyes, though, it’s not anger that I see; it’s hurt.

“Tootsie, I need you to believe me when I tell you from the moment my eyes connected to that sweet ass of yours, you owned me. Heart, dick, and soul, baby girl, you owned every part of me, and I have shared none of that or myself with anyone since that night. I promise you, sweet girl, it’s been you since day one.”

Tears fill my eyes at his words. I truly meant what I said. It wouldn’t have mattered if

he hadn't waited, but knowing he was in the same pain as me... knowing we were in it together all along, it had my chest cracking open and exposing my very being to this man.

"I love you, Cooper. Since that first time and lifetimes before, I've been yours," I tell him, using his real name to prove just how serious I am about this, about him. With a shy smile, I lean down and kiss the tattoos covering his chest. I suck the barbell of his nipple ring into my mouth before releasing it and continuing down, licking and biting his abs.

Fuck, his body is a work of art. I pull the sheet down, eager to see and feel all those piercings again. I'd never tell him this, but thank the good lord for his absolutely horrendous instincts. If he had better ones, he'd still be handsome as hell, but with all the piercings, all the ink, he's simply... hot as fuck. I follow the V, placing small kisses and tiny licks across his side, and just as I'm about to go lower, his groans filling the room...

"Oh sugarplum, wakey wakey, put up snakey and come eat some eggs and bacey!" I groan as my mother's voice carries through the door. If there was one thing almost guaranteed to dry up my lady lips, it was the sound of my mother's voice.

"When we build our house, she's more than welcome to have an apartment above the garage, but she ain't living in the house. I barely know your mama, and I can tell the only thing keeping her from busting in here is the lock on the door."

As if to prove his words true, we hear and watch as the door handle shakes.

"Y'all decent? If not, I don't mind a little show!"

"MOM! BOUNDARIES!" I scream!

“You’re right! You’re right! I’ll just wait right out here...”

“MOTHER!”

“Fine! I’m going!” She huffs, and I hear her platform heels clicking down the hall. I groan, burying my face in Cooper’s chest again. I immediately notice his chest shaking with laughter.

“Oh, you think it’s funny, do you? Just remember, we’re a package deal! As long as you got me, you get her as well.” I smirk. He just smiles back.

“It will be the most chaotic, hair-pulling, wild ride, and I absolutely can’t wait,” he says, smiling down at me. He kisses my forehead before rolling to the side.

“I need a shower. Want to share?” he asks, wagging his eyebrows and making me scoff. He’s been inside me ninety percent of the night. How can he still want more?

“I, unlike you, need a bit of a break from the... stretch.” I try not to blush, but by his smirk, I know I’ve failed. I roll my eyes and climb out of bed, throwing on a clean t-shirt and a pair of boxers from one of his drawers.

“I need coffee. I’ll bring one back for you.” I smile as I make my way to the door. Then giggle, yes fucking giggle, as Grease wraps both arms around my waist and blows a raspberry into my neck. Squealing, I try to break his hold, but I can’t help smiling at him, laughing, and then moaning as he kisses down my neck.

“Okay, get in the shower, big guy. I’m going for nourishment,” I tell him, pulling away reluctantly.

“I take my coffee...” he starts, but I cut him off.

“One packet of sugar and a splash of cream,” I say, turning and winking over my shoulder before skipping out of the room.

I’m just finishing adding the sugar to my coffee as I grab the handle for both cups and turn to head back to Grease and stop dead in my tracks. Standing in front of me with his arms crossed and a scowl on his face is none other than Rome. I’ve missed him so much, but I can tell this isn’t a happy chat by the look on his hard face.

“Rome. How are you doing, bud?” I ask, smiling. I see the softness in his eyes before he steels himself again.

“Miss. Becky or whatever your name is. Can I have a word?” he asks, so much like a grown man, even if he is only twelve. He doesn’t even wait for me to answer. He just turns and walks out of the dining room, down the hall, and out the back door before finally sitting at the picnic tables. I follow the entire way silently. I have a feeling he’s been taking this hard, but trying to be strong. He needs to get this out, and I will sit here for however long it takes him.

“I need to get a few things off my chest before I can forgive you for what you did. Is that alright with you?” he asks, trying to meet my eyes with a hard stare. Still, I see the vulnerability that always lingers behind his eyes. I give him a nod and a small smile, and he continues.

“You’ve been with us a long time. You helped me transition here when Rae and I first came. You’ve always been someone I could trust and rely on... until recently. I don’t say that to hurt you. I understand how people have things happen and feel they are doing the right thing by leaving. It’s happened over and over again. First, with my parents, and when mom and pop found us at that skating rink, I thought we might finally have something stable to hold on to. Then Aunt Sunny came into our lives and, just like our parents... she left. The old ladies got her back, but still, she left. Then Aunt Jade got here, and just like my parents, she left, even if it wasn’t her

choice. Again, we got her back. Aunt Ophelia was next, and you saw what happened there. See the pattern? People always leavin'. What made it worse when you left, though, is you let us get close to you for years. You let us trust you. You let me believe you were always going to be here. Then you left, and I had to watch one of the funniest, toughest, badass men I've ever known wither away... for months."

His words are breaking my heart. The steel in his voice is tearing me to shreds. He should have never had to deal with what we've all put him through, what I put him through. I stay quiet as silent tears roll down my cheeks. He needs to get this out, and no matter how hard it is, I know I need to hear every word.

"I know this talk is usually for the man in the relationship, but I was here when you left. I watched my favorite uncle deteriorate in front of me. You remember that word Miss. Be- I mean Lyra? You taught it to me. From the start, Unk Grease has been the only one who's ever treated me as more than a kid. He understood I grew up quick and let me work through my shit and my issues with a wrench in my hand and under the hood of a car. And every time I looked up... he was there. He didn't pry into my past or talk about my feelings and shit. He made jokes, taught me the ins and outs of the shop, and listened when I needed him to. He is my best friend, and I had to watch him die every single day for the months that you were gone. I was so angry at you for what you were doing to him," he grits out as he lets his head bow and uncrosses his arms. I give him time, and when he lifts his head again, I see tears coursing down his face.

"I'm still angry at you. I want to be happy that you're back and here. I missed you so much, but I'm still so angry. I've never seen Unk like that. He lost so much weight, and he barely brushed his hair or got up out of bed. He drank so much some days that I would find him passed out in one of the cars in the shop. I can't let you hurt him like that again." This time, when he lifts his head, his chin rises in the hair, and he gives me that hard stare.

“So, this is your warning. If you plan to leave again, do it now because if you cause him any more pain, I’ll... I’ll....” He looks off to the side like he's trying to come up with something horrible, but I know this kid. He never struggles with torture. He is the product of Loki and Halle. He basically has a degree in it. I then realize he doesn't want to hurt me, either. This is when I need to cut in and take that burden from his shoulders. I stand from my seat and walk around the picnic table. I pull Rome into my arms and hold him tight, letting the tears fall.

“I won't be going anywhere from now on. I am so sorry for every hurt and heartbreak I caused you and this family. I will work my whole life to find that forgiveness from this club. As for your uncle, I love that man and his smart-ass mouth more than life itself. I thought I was protecting you all by leaving, but I won't make that mistake again. I love you, Rome, and thank you for having this talk with me. I know it took a lot.” I squeeze him tighter and let him work through his emotions. Then we hear the door bang open. We pull away and look to see Grease walking through the door, cigarette hanging from his lip.

“There you are, woman! What happened to my coffee?” He smirks, which causes the bud to bounce on his lips. I roll my eyes, walk his way, pull the nasty thing from his lip, and kiss his cheek.

“Talk to him, then come meet me back inside. Also, let's work on quitting this habit.” I wiggle the cigarette in front of him. His eyes are on Rome, though, and they are soft. I walk inside, giving them privacy and wondering how the hell I’m going to make it up to all these people for what I’ve done.

Grease

Walking out back and seeing both Rome and Lyra in tears and hugging, I couldn't have imagined what the conversation could have been about. However, with Rome, I shouldn't be surprised. Since coming here, he's taken over and is trying to be the club's guardian. He's going to make a fantastic brother one day, but it worries me how fast he wants to grow up, but all we can do is let him work through shit in his own time.

But hearing what he said, man, it fuckin hit me in the chest. I knew he loved hanging out and working with me in the shop, but I didn't realize how much of a liking the kid had taken to me. If he only knew how much he meant to me. Still, his words eat at something inside me. No matter what I was going through, I should have never let him see me in that fucked up state.

I'm still pondering over that shit as I walk through the common room and into a fucking zoo. Mother fucking son of a bitch! How did I forget today was the club party?

"Forget to tell me something?" Lyra asks from behind me, and I turn and pull her to my chest.

"Yeah, this little shindig might have slipped my mind. In my defense, you've had me, Zeus, and his lightning bolts busy erupting Mount Olympus," I say, waiting for her reaction. She doesn't disappoint.

"For the love of all Greek mythology, please tell me you didn't name your junk after

the God of Lightning,” she groans.

“You don’t like that one? I guess we could try out Poseidon and his big waves, or Hades and his hellhounds. Oh oh oh if it’s a gender thing, what about Aphrodite? I can almost guarantee my apples are fertile and full of love and passion.” I wink at that one and she can’t help but burst into laughter.

“I was thinking more along the lines of Charon and his Obols,” she snickers. My brows draw low as I run through all my knowledge on this subject.

“Wait, is Charon the ferryman in that boat thing?” I ask in outrage. “You wouldn’t even give me Demi-God status?”

She throws her head back and laughs loudly. I’m just about to throw her over my shoulder and show her what a god is.... Well, maybe. Before I can, Swift steps up to me.

“Hey brother, got something for you in church,” Swift says, clapping a hand on my shoulder. I have a feeling of what it might be, but I don’t want to get my hopes up. I never asked or told anyone about Lyra becoming my old lady, but that shit doesn’t mean fuck all to the other women of the club. We walk in, and I stop dead in my tracks. On the center of the table is a vest... and right there in big, bold letters, it says “PROPERTY OF GREASE”

Fuck just seeing her cut, marked... yeah, lightning a coming; can you hear the thunder? But this isn’t the time to get a hard-on, not with my Prez in the room.

“You sure you’re all good with this? I know the brothers are, but what about the old ladies? Rome’s already voiced his concerns.” I smirk and shake my head at the memory.

“The women have always known your connection to her. You two were the only ones that needed to catch up. They love Lyra, well, Becky, then, I guess, but they completely understand where she was coming from. Hell, half of them did the same thing she did. They have no ill will toward her, brother. None of us do. She’s helped raise the next generation, man. She was family, whether you took your head out of your ass or not.” With that, he squeezes my shoulder again and turns to leave.

“I think it’s time to get this show on the road and claim my woman,” I say, picking up the cut reverently.

“It’s about fucking time,” Swift says, turning and walking out. I take a minute, just wanting to get my wits about me.

This is one of the most important moments of my life. This is the day I claim my woman in front of my family and my club. This is everything and our world; the only thing I can do is think... will she accept? We’ve talked about being together forever, but I just got her back after she ran away from my club and me. I know I can't keep thinking like this. I can't let this doubt cloud my life and love for Lyra. So I will march out there, claim my woman, and let whatever happened before this moment die right here on this table.

I smile and walk out. Heading down the hall. I make my way to the common room. If I’m going to do this, I’m going to make it big. It is kind of my deal. I don't stop walking until I reach the bar. I place my hands on the bar top and use it as leverage to hop on top.

“Yo, listen up everybody, I got something I want to say!” I yell, making everyone turn to look my way. When everyone is looking, I continue.

“First, I want to say thank you all for the help getting my woman back. It's great to see all of you guys back home. Vice, Drift... it’s been too long, brothers. Cutter, I

know you have some people lined up for property tattoos. Well, I'm hoping here in a minute to have you another client. You know I ain't one of the romantic types, especially when it comes to my toots standing back there." I smirked as I made eye contact with Lyra, who, until now, had been surrounded by all the old ladies and her mama. When her eyes meet mine, though, I've got all her attention.

"I promise, tootsie, I'm going to try my best, but you got to be honest; our love is fueled by the romantic barbs we like to exchange, am I right?"

Like I intended, she and everyone else in the room chuckles. Then, I soften my tone.

"I really need you to understand my deep, all-consuming love for you. That love is so loud and bright that I can't help but playfully keep you on your toes. But you are my world. Have been from the beginning. And now, Lyra Loretta Lynn Leman, I need to ask you the most important question of my life."

"YES YES YES!" she screams.

"Sugarplum, let that man earn this answer. He's waited patiently for you to get your head out of your rear. You can wait patiently for him to ask his question," Tizzy speaks out.

"Yes, Mama," I smirk at that, which has Lyra narrowing her eyes at me.

"Like I was trying to get out before someone tried to steal the spotlight." I sigh and can hear Lyra's scoff from here. "You and this club are the best things to ever happen to me, and it would be the best fucking honor on this planet if you would be my old lady and combines my two loves into one... a three-way sort of deal if you will."

I wait for her answer... again, but all she does is smirk and run from across the room. I jump off the bar top and open my arms as she throws herself into me.

“It would be the biggest honor of my life to join you and this club for as long as I breathe... but I draw the line at sharing that Prince Albert Kronos is sporting down below,” she announces.

“Selfish Bitch!” We hear Halle yell, followed by a growl and slap. Lyra throws her head back, laughing, and the sight overtakes me. I need her.

I grab the back of her neck, bringing her head forward and crushing my mouth down on hers. I let go, not caring who is around me. I tangle my tongue with hers, shoving it down her throat, fighting for control. I nip at her lip when she growls into my mouth and takes control of the moment.

“Alright, get a room,” someone yells.

“Perfect idea,” I whisper against her lips. Surprising her, I pull back and set her down before bending and throwing her over my shoulder.

“This really has to stop becoming a thing,” she chuckles as I race from the room.

“Only one way that's gonna happen, Tootsie,” I reply, rubbing the apple of her ass. Fuck, this trident is about to burst my damn zipper.

“When I finally plant my seeds in you, baby. When it takes root, and we’ve created a whole ass life together. That, Toots, is when I will stop with the chariot rides.”

“Did you really just call them chariot ri.... Oh!” Yup, she caught one to that. “You want to get me pregnant?”

“From the moment you told me to fuck off and every day since... and you know what Lyra?” I ask, pushing into our room.

“What?” she asks breathlessly.

“My wait is finally fucking over.”

Page 17

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Lyra

I walk out of the hallway after Grease fulfills his promise of filling me up. I pat down my hair as Grease grabs my waist and pulls me back into him. He's kissing my neck, and I laugh before swatting at him.

"Stop it! You got a small taste. Now let's enjoy the party until we can re-visit...."

"Alright, alright, alright. We gave you your claiming time. Now she's ours," Halle says as we enter the common room.

"Yeah, Shoo," Sunny says, and I want to laugh at her attempt at being stern.

I smile as Grease growls, and the girls pull me away to the back of the room. They are all standing in a circle, and the minute I'm pulled into that circle, I want the ground to swallow me whole. Every single eye is on me. Pipers, Sunny, Jade, Ophelia, and even Izzy's eyes are focused on me, even if she can't see me clearly. I take a deep breath and try to get this part over with.

"I'm so sorry I left and didn't tell anyone. I'm sorry I didn't tell you what was happening. I'm most sorry I may have brought danger to your front doors. I..."

"Stop, stop, stop," Piper says, walking up and throwing her arms around me. I burst into tears at the warmth of her arms, the emotions riding high, and her simple acceptance of my apology. The other old ladies instantly surround me, and I feel like I'm in a mosh pit of love, and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

“We were never mad at you for leaving or lying about your situation,” Piper says softly, pulling back.

“We were mad you didn't invite us to join the fucking circus,” Halle grumbles.

“That's not true either,” Izzy says in a soft, almost panicky voice.

“Is so! I'm pissed as fuck I didn't get the invite! Do you know how famous I could be for my knife-throwing skills? Just picture it,” Halle throws her hands in front of her, spreading them wide. Like she's presenting the biggest show of her life.

“Halle's Hat Tricks! I can make Loki stand on a platform. Shirtless, of course.”

“Of course,” Jade mutters, rolling her eyes and shaking her head. I try not to laugh.

“There's a spotlight on me the whole time, but Loki is standing on his platform. He could even have a rope around his neck. Then, when the spotlights hit him, the floor drops out, and he falls; the stage goes dark. Spotlight only on me. Then.... Bum bum bummm.... Spotlight shows Loki, cut rope hanging down his neck and chest, smiling so adoringly at me, my knife stuck to the backboard behind him. The crowd would cheer at my marvelous skill at slicing the rope mid-fall and saving the Damned in Distress.”

“I think you mean damsel in distress,” Ophelia says.

“There are no damsels in the reckless omens,” Halle scoffs. “Even Izzy kicked ass when she had to!”

“Hey!” Izzy protests indignantly.

“All I mean by that is that you're a lover, not a fighter, babes. We all have our roles to

play and our strengths to fulfill. Do you think I'm any damn good at the compassion shit? Fuck no! Do I want to be better? Hell yes! I want to be a nurturer for my kids. But it's just not my strong suit."

"Your kids love you, Halle," Sunny says softly.

"I never said they didn't doll. The problem is, I don't have the compassion Izzy has. I wish like hell I had her compassion, or Ophelia's quiet strength, and I mean more than taking on two men at a time... but I mean kudos, girl, kudos. I wish I had Sunny's outlook on the world. After all she's been dealt, she still sees the beauty. Piper's badassness is always something to admire, but her faith in this world and all of us... that's what I wish for most. I wish I had more faith in myself. I wish I had Jade's control. She makes sure everyone knows where she stands and she stands tall and unmoving for the things she believes in, but she also knows when to give. I don't. I can't just stop. And Beck- I mean Lyra, you were born to be a teacher. A person people use to look up to, to guide them. An amazing human being we can trust with our kids, the most important part of this family. That's so rare. I'm not pointing this all out for you all to tell me what you love about me or to get all mushy and shit. I'm telling you all so you realize we make this family whole. We all play a part, and we all need to be on the same page so that we can function to the best of our abilities."

"Damn, Halle getting all fucking philosophical and shit," Jade says, but I see her discreetly wipe a tear from her cheek as I do the same.

"See, should have let me stick with my circus performance. So Lyra, where's Mama at with the progress to my costume? I promised my man a show, and I can't fucking wait to deliver," Halle says, bouncing up and down.

I smile and look over her shoulder as Mom peeks out from the hallway. I might not have known about the party, but I knew Mama planned to surprise Halle with their matching circus outfits tonight. She's been nervous about this whole thing. Her major

concern, though, was, of course, about me. She didn't want this new relationship with Halle to come off as replacing me or anything like that. We both needed the talk earlier today about how to proceed.

“Sugar bear?” I look up from my coffee to see Mama standing in front of me, twisting her hands.

“Hey, mama, want to sit with me? I can get you a cup of tea,” I say, placing my book on the table and giving her my attention.

“Oh no, sugar, that's alright. I'm about to wrestle some of my ingredients together for Mama's famous buttermilk biscuits. But I wanted to talk to you about something first,” she says again, looking nervous. Seeing my mama like this is not normal, especially with me. I know she's worried about my reaction, but to what?

“You know we can always talk about anything, mama. That's what you always told me, and I've stuck by that to this day. Me and you, we've got each other. Always.” I give her a smile, but she has to force one out.

“I know, baby, and that will always be the case. You are my baby girl. You saved me. You will always be the bright little chubby-cheeked plum that saved my soul, but I think someone else might need me, too. You've found a life here, a family, a hunky man-meat that worships the ground you glide across. You don't need me so much but...” She hesitates, and I finish for her.

“Halle.” I declare.

She winces but nods before rushing out, “Sugar plum, it would never change our relationship. It doesn't replace everything we've been through or the fact that I would die a million deaths just to save you a broken nail, but you're also all grown up. Right before my eyes, my small, sweet, nerdy, lovable little Lyra isn't so little anymore.

She's found her path in life, and I couldn't be prouder. I know you will always need me, and come hell or high knickers, mamas gonna be there, sugar plum, but right now..."

"Right now, Halle needs you. Halle needs a mama in her life more than she's willing to admit, but she needs more than that. She needs the love, affection, and attention only a mother can give..." I finish watching her smile and wipe a tear off her cheek. I smile back before continuing, "And who better to give that other than the best mother on this whole damn planet?"

She throws herself across the table and hugs me, almost knocking my coffee over onto my book, but I can only hug her back.

"She's mentioned a sister, but it seems like they both had to grow up fast and don't get to see each other anymore. We know what that's like, don't we, baby?"

"Unfortunately, all too well. She has a sister, but Halle swears she is a secret spy with her high-risk job. They don't see each other much. Really, never, actually. She's always traveling and working, apparently," I tell her, giving her a sad smile.

"You know it doesn't change anything, sugarplum, and you'll let me know when you feel left out or neglected or..."

"Mom, I promise there is nothing and no one that could come between our relationship, but I've had you at my back and in my corner all my life. I think Halle needs you more right now. Maybe some of the others girls need you more than they realize, but you and Halle share a... bond." I want to laugh at her affronted face before we both burst out laughing.

"Which reminds me. I have an idea for your and Halles' first big bonding session."

And that leads us to now. I happily forfeited my circus outfit over to Mama. With a few adjustments, she was able to get it to as close to Halle's small stature as we could, all from eyeballing it.

It turned out perfect, and Mama decided tonight would be the perfect time to surprise her. I can't wait to see the happiness on her face, so without further ado, I wink and motion for Mama to bring it in.

Grease

“How are you feeling, brother? I see you're finally starting to breathe a bit easier,” Hitter asks, slapping a hand on my shoulder.

“You were starting to scare us there for a minute,” Grim says, placing a beer in my hand.

“We found her at the right time,” Prez says, raising his beer to mine. I look back at the woman and can't help but smile.

“I know I was lost for a while, but I swear it was like that tiny little woman ripped my heart from my chest and took it all over creation and wherever else she went missing. Finding her, bringing her home, I finally feel whole,” I tell them simply.

“There really is no greater feeling than having a woman by your side...” Rodeo says though Trip slaps his ass right in the middle of the group, and he's quick to add, “Alright, alright, maybe a woman and another fantastic third.”

“I'll leave that kinky shit to you two. Me and my lady will stick with the traditional shit,” Loki scoffs as he blows Halle a kiss, followed by grabbing his junk and thrusting it her way. Halle swoons at him, and I swear I see red fucking hearts in his eyes.

“Says the exhibitionist.” Comp rolls his eyes, taking a sip of his beer.

“Hey, fucker! You and your lady ain't so secretive either, or Halle and I wouldn't

have caught y'all in the armory with Sunny's legs..”

“Watch it!” Comp warns, but I tune them all out, just watching Lyra finally let go and join the women of the club.

Finally, she is getting to bond fully, with no holding back. I can see it in her smile and in the smiles of those around her. I don't know how long I watch her until I feel my feet moving on their own accord as they take me to the object of my obsession. The one I can finally touch, shower with attention, and hold on to for the rest of my life. The guys move in behind me, just as desperate to get to their women. I don't stop until I have my arms around her waist and my face shoved into the curve of her neck. I kiss the soft skin there and smile at her shiver.

“Mmm, you taste so good. When can we leave again?” I ask, wanting to show her the last surprise I have for her. Hopefully, the surprise leads to happier and more pleasurable times. Still, I'd be content to just show her the deed to the land I bought on the lake with the rest of the family. I have the contractor set to start building next month. All Lyra has to do is tell me what her dream home is, and I'm ready to give it to her. I've been saving for years to give my future family everything they could ever want, and I'm ready to start yesterday.

“One last surprise. Halle, this one's for you!” Lyra says, pointing over Halle's shoulder as Tizzy walks out in her circus outfit, holding a matching one with fishnet stockings and black leather knee-high-heeled boots.

“Mama Tizzy! Please tell me that's what I think it is?” Halle nearly screeches.

“Well, if you think it's your very own circus outfit to match Mama Tizzy's, then sugar britches, you would be right on the money! I even have a routine set out for us!” Tizzy shimmies and Halle screeches in delight as she runs straight at her and nearly tackles her. We all laugh.

“Hey, sugar plum, you should take us to that gym where you used to teach pole dancin’ classes last year. I know you hated it when you had to quit...”

“MOMMMM!!!!” Lyra yells, then winces when she sees everyone look her way. Mine included. What the fuck did she say?

“Secret pole dancing classes,” Tizzy whispers with a small wince.

“I’m sorry, I must have heard wrong. I could have sworn she said you were teaching pole dancing classes while living here, but that can’t be correct.” Piper crosses her arms and lifts a brow at Lyra.

Lyra’s eyes are huge and scared, and she probably thinks she’s in trouble for teaching a class like that while nannying for the kids.

“You fucking bitch! What kind of sister are you!” Halle nearly clutches her pearls in dramatics, but we all ignore her on that one, though Izzy is the one to mutter

“Pahleassee, we have all seen, or in my case heard, you and Loki screwing like bunnies all over this place.” We chuckle, but then attention turns right back to Lyra.

“So that’s how you stayed so damn fit. You told me it was healthy eating!” Sunny yells in an accusatory tone.

“That’s why your knees and thighs always looked bruised and beat up. I have to say, love, that one is a relief to know. I was just about to tear you a new one until you admitted what was happening, but then they just... disappeared,” Jade adds on.

“Thank the good lord Grease didn’t see those,” Ophelia mutters, and I growl because she’s not wrong. I would have probably hunted down and beat the shit out of every male that walked through those fucking gym doors if I would have found out.

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you all. I’m sorry I was teaching the class while watching your children.” Lyra winces.

“Why are you sorry? I’m impressed you slipped it by me. I knew you had a membership to that gym until last year, but I’m impressed I missed the fact that you were also employed there.” Swift smirks.

“It was actually a deal. I got free membership if I taught the class.”

“I’m fucking pissed. You stingy bitch! I could have been using new, fresh, stripper moves on my man years, YEARS ago!” Halle folds her arm.

“Forgive your sister, sugar britches; then we can convince her to teach us her ways!” Tizzy tries and fails to whisper.

“Fine! But only because we’re blood now!” Halle rolls her eyes.

“That’s not how that works.” I roll my eyes back and then get a slap to the stomach from my woman.

“Thanks, sis! I would love to teach you ladies some moves if you want to! Where can we set up, or do we need to book a room at the gym? I used the one in the town over, so it’s about a forty-minute drive.”

“Oh, I have the perfect place!” Piper starts, but Swift cuts her off.

“No!”

“But..”

“No! I love you with everything in me, darlin’, but you are not messing up our

interrogation room again!” Swift cuts her off.

“You are being stingy! I don't understand why we can't share the dungeon.” Piper stomps.

“First reason being that you call it a fucking dungeon. This is not a castle. We don't have a dragon. I am not a white fucking knight, and that is not a damn dungeon. I will not have you women messing it up and destroying it again!” he states.

“So what you're saying is, this is not a fairytale. I'm not your queen, and we don't share our secret dark rooms anymore?” Piper glares at Swift, raises an eyebrow, and walks away.

“Dude, you better fix it. I think she was talking about her puss...” I start, but Swift's eyes cut my words off.

“Don't fucking talk about my wife's pussy!” he roars, then stomps off after Piper.

“Bet the dungeons converted by the morning,” Grim mutters.

I was informed in the morning that the dungeon was, in fact, ready for Lyra's new pole dancing class.

Lyra

“Alrighty, all my sweet, sassy, spiiicy...” my mother calls, dragging out the last syllables with a horrifying shoulder wiggle and attempt at a body roll. Oh, this fun is just getting started. “Sugar britches! It’s time to get this party started! Halle, hit the lights, Lyra...” Mama starts, but I roll my eyes and clear my throat.

“Mama, this is kind of my show. Mind if I run this one? Promise I’ll leave all the circus acts to you and Halle,” I chuckle at her blush as she ducks her head.

“You’re right, you’re right. Do your thing, honey bear! Work it! Whoo!” I laugh again at her antics, but turn back to the room.

The way the guys have the “dungeon” setup is actually pretty similar to my studio at the gym. The only thing missing is the glass windows looking out into the gym on one side and the wall of mirrors on the other. Still, there are enough poles for each of us mounted down with heavy bolts. It’s not just pressure like your normal at-home poles; I’ve seen way too many YouTube videos of those coming down. No, thank you. Plus, it’s just as easy to lose your grip and fall on your own with the pole stable, much less having to fight with it.

That’s another lesson these women are going to be learning today. This is a big core workout that will come with bumps, bruises, and even, in some cases, blood. I smile at the workout headed our way and return to the eager faces in front of me.

“Alright, ladies, there are a few things I want to go over before we get started. First, we will play some music in the background, and I will turn the lights on a little lower

toward the end of class, but with you all being first-timers, we will take this slow so no one gets hurt. There is more to this than just being sexy, even though that is one of our main goals. We want you to find your sexy, find your groove, and find your comfort zone. We want you to feel like that strong, sexy goddess of a woman that you are, but we want you to do it safely. All that to say, we will go over the basic rules and movements, but this first half will not be a party. I want to have fun, but I want everyone to know your limits and what you are comfortable with. Do we all agree?" I ask and receive head nods from all the women around me. With that, I ran through all the safety measures and tips as we started our first class.

Damn, I didn't realize how easy it was to fall back into that teacher/instructor mode. I smile as the feeling of happiness takes over me. I love teaching secrets and tricks I've been fortunate enough to learn. Guiding people to the joys in life is what it's all about.

"I think I got it!" Halle says as she jumps, or tries to jump, high on the pole.

She doesn't make it very far, but she uses the toes of her hot pink high heels to climb higher. She makes it maybe three inches before we can hear her breathing pick up, and she wraps her small body around the even smaller pole.

Once she's caught a small semblance of breath, she tries to maneuver herself upside down. It doesn't work. She quickly slides a few inches down before she catches herself. She squeaks before huffing.

"Maybe we should wait for the second lesson...." I start, but she grunts and cuts me off.

"Nope, no! I got the hang of this," she says. Shimming her butt and humming Apple bottom jeans as she slowly... and I mean slowly turns around the pole until she's facing in our direction. When she notices us all staring at her, she places her foot on

the ground and starts doing some weird grinding motion.

“I don’t remember you teaching us that move in class,” Sunny says, trying to contain a giggle.

“Should we tell her she looks like a possessed, rabies-infected chicken?” Jade asks as we watch Halle flap her arms and then try to, I guess, step up the pole using her foot, but all she accomplishes is stubbing her toe as she kicks the metal pole. She winces, but to her credit, she still tries to play it off with another dance move.

“I look good, don’t I? I should choreograph a routine for us! We can surprise our men! I can imagine Lokis’s eyes on me as I grind my goodies all over this metal rod.” She smiles dreamily.

“So that does it. We all agree...” Piper trials off.

“Yup! We’ll leave it to Loki,” Jade says, and we all nod simultaneously.

We spend another hour having fun, dancing, laughing, and just having a fun time. By the time we’re done, we’ve realized Jade is the group’s best dancer, but Izzy seems to have everyone outmatched on the pole.

She said something about having the feel and control under her fingertips. Being able to move freely all over the pole, confident in her senses, and the reassurance of the pole made her let loose, and she excelled.

Ophelia fell on her butt twice and decided to sit out. Sunny started sweating, so she decided to join her. One by one, the ladies all trickled down but still had smiles all over their faces. I had Grease bring down a cooler full of water, and I passed them out and sat down with the ladies.

“I can't believe you know how to do all of that stuff. You're kind of amazing,” Piper says, smiling softly at me.

“After having all these kids running around, I love having a fun workout. I hate the idea of running, but dancing has always been my passion. The pole added an interesting challenge.” Jade smiles.

“I still can't believe this is my life. That all you amazing ladies are in my life.” Ophelia smiles shakily.

“I know what you mean. I never imagined having people who care and make me feel so welcome and loved,” Izzy says softly.

“Alright! Enough with the mushy gushy! All the girls' nights seem to end in tears. Let's end this one with a good adventure and some greasy food. I'm thinking waffle house,” Halle says, smiling and hopping to her feet.

I roll my eyes, as do most of the ladies, but we all know she will bug us until we give in. Plus, after that workout, I would die for some hash browns and waffles. The other ladies seem to share my thoughts because they smile, and we all file toward the stairs.

“I'm thinking we make this a secret mission. We have to be quiet. I want to see how far we can get out of here with no one knowing.” Piper gets a devious look on her face.

“Ohhh... you all like to keep your men on your toes. Is that the secret to keeping the spice alive?” Mama asks, following behind. She's smiling so big, and I have never seen her have so much fun before today. I'm not only happy I've found my place here, but these wonderful, amazing people have also opened their hearts and homes to my mama. No one deserves it more than her.

“We usually don't go far, but keeping them on their toes and giving them a bit of the chase makes bedtime all the more... spicy,” Izzy says, blushing. I’ve never heard her be so bold.

“Oh, yeah, girl! Say it like it is. It’s fucking HAWTTT!!! That spanking for being a bad girl. Oh, and then when he brings out the cuffs and ridi....”

“HALLE!!!” we all yell in unison.

“I was enjoying story time, Sugar Britches,” Mama consoles her.

“See what I’m dealing with here, mama? A bunch of prudes,” Halle pouts.

“Whenever you're done pouting, can we get back to the plan?” Piper asks, rolling her eyes. As she continues, she opens the dungeon door. “As I was saying, I think we should take the side door past... AHHHH!” She yelps as we all step in and are confronted with the men sitting at the table in front of us. Swift is watching Piper closely as he raises a brow and crosses his arms.

“Oh please, darlin’, continue with what you were saying.”

Grease

“You guys were waiting here the whole time, weren't you?” Sunny asks, looking cautiously at Comp.

“Yup,” Comp says, popping the P.

In all honesty, we're all trying not to laugh. We knew it was only a matter of time before they tried something, and we planned to catch them. We got the kids down for a movie and sleepover with Trip and Adam at the farm. Once they were settled, we headed back here to wait for the show. It actually took longer than we initially thought.

“Would it help if we showed you some of them moves that we lear...” Jade starts.

“No,” Grim cuts her off.

Lyra fidgets nervously, making sure to look anywhere but at me. I have to say she is doing a rather impressive job of not making eye contact with me. Unfortunately for her, I know she can feel my eyes boring holes into her because she fidgets harder and then finally loses the fight.

“I just have one question,” I say, raising a questioning eyebrow. This is the most important question of the night. I pause for effect. “Who's idea was it to sneak out?”

I see Lyra's face go from confusion to amusement in under a second.

“Halle wanted to get food,” Ophelia blurts, causing Halle to gasp and whirl on her.

“Tattletale,” she blames.

“Hey! I have two men to deal with, and I can take only so many slaps.” Ophelia blushes from head to toe at that admission.

“Dammit!” I mutter, not able to believe I’ve lost another fucking bet!

“Oh yeah! Time to pay up, big guy. What's it costing you this time?” Grim grins at me. Lyra raises her eyebrow at me, no doubt wondering what the bet was this time. I sigh, but meet her eyes and answer like any honorable man would.

“I really thought I was a shoo-in to win this one, Toots. The only rule was that as long as it wasn't Halle who made the plan, I would win. There are eight of you! The odds seemed good,” I rush it all out, chattering away and unable to stop. I try to defend myself, but I know there is no hope.

“Wait, wait, wait.” Jade holds her hands up. “So Halle had to make the plan to sneak out for Grease to lose, right? If anyone else made the escape plan, Grim loses, right?”

She has a devious look on her face, and I'm curious about what she has up her sleeve.

“Yup, that was the rules, and as my beautiful, amazing, and might I add, downright ravishing woman has pointed out. Halle was behind it, and you lost.” I want so badly to wipe that mother fucking smug ass smile off his face.

“Hate to break it to you, sweet love of my life, but you lost. Halle mentioned wanting food, but it was actually Piper's idea to spice up the night with a sneak out.” Jade smiles evilly. “Look’s like you’ll be getting that piercing I’ve been begging for after all.”

Grim groans, and I whoop as loudly as I can. All I can think is.... Oh, sweet victory.

The night ends with takeout we had already ordered and prepared. We eat together as a family, my woman, and my Tootsie in my lap. Laughing and cutting up with the people I call my family. Life couldn't be any better than this.

The only thing better is finishing off the night by stripping down my woman. She bares herself to me, and I can't resist trailing my fingers along the smooth expanse of skin she reveals.

"Don't stop, Cooper..." she moans, using my real name. That settles that.

My fingers slide over her abdomen and glide over her peaked nipple to cup her breast. She lets out a soft gasp as I gently squeeze her between two fingers. The soft but firm flesh making me want to take her fully into my arms and caress every inch of her.

"Cooper, I want you," she says, placing her hand over mine and squeezing it to herself.

"I want you " is all I can get out before her mouth meets mine in a fiery kiss. Her arms fly around my neck, one hand tangling in my hair and the other sliding underneath my shirt. Her passion sets me on fire with want, wanting her kiss, wanting her body, wanting release. I shift her to straddle me, and she becomes instantly aware of my raging hard-on as she rocks against it, driving me further and further insane. She slides her hand from behind my back and down my waistband between us, stroking me in ways that I could never achieve on my own, and it almost sends me over the edge.

"Mmmm, I think someone needs some attention," she says, sliding off of me and pulling me free of my pants. She begins to slowly kiss her way up my leg, pausing

with her cheek ever so slightly brushing my throbbing cock. With a devious smirk, she takes me into her mouth and slowly works me with her hand. The sensation overtakes me, and before I can distract myself, I release hard and quick into her mouth.

Shit. Just when I thought we would get somewhere. She catches her breath and looks up at me through her lashes, “Oh no, we’re not done yet, mister,” she says. The sight of her fully naked sends me right back to firm and ready for more. “Slide down, babe,” she says, helping me lay down. Once I’m settled, she puts a hand on my chest and leans forward, dragging her breasts across my chest as she positions herself. She gently tilts backward, and I feel her slowly slide down every inch of my cock. She gently rocks herself upright and works her hips to drive my full length deep inside of her as she shudders in pleasure. My hands go to her legs, hips, and waist, feeling the wonder of her body as her legs flex as she rides me up and down, up and down. Grabbing my hand, she pulls it up to her breast and begs to be squeezed and handled, which I am happy to oblige.

She picks up speed, and her need can be felt with every squeeze and twitch of muscle around my cock. I move my hand behind her back and pull her forward, dropping her nipple into my mouth for a lick and suck, which sends her gasping and writhing for more. Nipping at her, I thrust up into her, matching her rhythm, and feel the urgency rising between us. I pull her head down and kiss her, our tongues writhing in time with our bodies, when she suddenly pulls back and leans harder into every thrust, her body clamping down on me as I push into her. She lets out a scream as the orgasm takes her and sets me off once again, flexing and pulsing into her.

She collapses into my chest with a giddy giggle as we both bask in the high we just shared. I caress her back, drawing shapes in her sweat as we feel each other inside and out. I squeeze her into a tight hug, and she lets out a little squeak in protest.

I whisper into her ear, “Lyra, my fucking love.”

I lay in bed after the hottest fucking night of my life and just stare at the woman who came into my life, turned it upside down, and showed me the best parts of life by righting my shit. I push some hair out of her face as she sleeps in my arms. I would give everything I am to have this every single day to come home. To know that she would always be in my bed waiting for me. I can't help but smile at my luck. I don't deserve this feisty female, but I sure as hell ain't giving anyone else a chance.

My smile drops when there's a soft knock at my door. Untangling myself from Lyra, I pull on some boxers and slowly make my way to the other side of the room. I open the door, noticing Swift out in the hallway. I step out and gently close the door behind me.

“Hey, Prez, what's up?” I know this can't be good if he's coming to my door in the middle of the night.

“I'm calling church tomorrow, but I needed to give you a heads up before anyone else, seeing as it involves your old lady. I got a call,” he says, and my heart sinks. I have a feeling I know where this is going, but I had hoped it wouldn't come to this.

“Ghost left me a message, and Comp just confirmed it. Comp is doing all he can to get it taken down, but bids have already been taken. Ghost and his team are in the middle of a mission, but he's trying to close it up and get back to help but...” He's saying all this, but I need him to give it to me straight.

“Tell me, Prez,” I plead.

“There has been a kill order put out on your woman, and we have confirmed there have already been contractors in the area.”

My world shifts, and the darkness clouds my vision. They want my woman dead, and they are on their way to our front door.

Over my fucking dead body.

Page 21

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Lyra

“Church fifteen minutes,” Swift announces to the room before leveling his stare at me. “Lyra, Darlin’, you’re gonna need to sit in on this one.”

My heart picks up speed. There is only one reason I would need to sit in at church, and I’m not sure I’m ready to burst the happiness bubble I’ve been floating in the last few months. How can things be so good, and the minute I finally find my footing, something else pops up? It’s not fair.

Unfortunately, that’s life, and if I’ve learned anything, you can’t control it, so you got to roll with it. I take a deep breath, hoping to stay strong throughout this meeting. Whatever bad news is coming, I have to hold strong. These were my choices; now it’s time to live with them. I feel a presence at my back and hands wrapping around me. I smile at the familiar comfort of Grease's arms.

“No matter what happens, I will always protect you. I will never let anyone put their hands on you, tootsie. You are mine, and nobody threatens what is mine.” He kisses my neck, then holds me until my heart rate slows. Only then does he grab my hand, pull me down the hall, and through the double doors I’ve come to absolutely hate walking through.

We are the last to arrive, but no one comments as Grease takes his seat and pulls me onto his lap. I look around the room and notice everyone sitting but Drift and Vice, who are standing in the back and leaning against the wall. I haven't had the chance to get to know them much since they are mostly nomads and keep to themselves.

My attention is brought back to the front of the room as Swift stands and clears his throat, giving me a sympathetic smile.

I brace myself for what they are going to tell me. Have I been found? Did those fuckers find Conor? Please, lord, tell me that's not the case. I would rather they have found me. Swift starts before I can get too far into my own head.

"Alright, I won't waste your time with small talk. We got an update on Lyra's situation." He turns and looks at me. "It ain't good."

I see the sadness in his eyes, but it's quickly replaced by determination. I know these men are used to action, and my situation has been a bit more relaxed lately. The threat stayed, but the security of the club gave me a false sense of security for a while.

"Grease, I'll let you take over since it's your old lady's bounty."

Bounty? What bounty? My breath comes in harsher pants. This isn't good. It can't be good.

"Thanks for breaking ice, Prez," Grease groans before taking my shoulders and turning me to the side to face him. He holds eye contact with me, and I can see that whatever he says is nearly torture for him.

"Spit it out, Grease. You know I hate suspense," I sass at him, trying to loosen his and my panic at the situation, even if it's only a little bit. He smirks, so I guess it worked... for him, at least.

"For someone who hates suspense, you live a life full of it toots." He smiles softly before the troubling look comes back over his face, then he continues, and what he says next has my heart nearly stopping in my chest, "There is a hit out on your head, Tootsie. The mob isn't interested in capture and questions anymore. You've done too

good of a job hiding from them, and now they are just frustrated enough to be out for blood.”

I gasp as the reality of my situation takes over. Don't get me wrong, I knew I was dealing with some horrible people, and I knew them and their men were after me. What I am surprised about is the fact they have taken a hit on me, which means professional killers are after me. People born to kill, to massacre, to take people from their families no matter what. In most cases whoever gets in their path ends up dying as well. I've seen the movies and shows. I know how this works.

The one thing I can think at the moment is I did not kill John Wick's dog, so how is this my damn life now? How are there trained professionals after me for the crime of protecting an innocent little boy? I knew I needed to hide to protect him. I also know I promised not to leave Grease or this family again. Still, as I look around the room, how can I not consider it, seeing as these people and their families, their children, are in danger because of me?

“I can tell exactly what you're thinking, but the answer is no. You are not running again; don't even think about it. There is no way on God's green earth I would let you. You couldn't get out of my grip now if you tried. I've taken precautions,” he says unabashedly. I raise a brow at him.

“What's that supposed to mean? You have me tracked or something?” I scoff and chuckle, but at the seriousness in his face, I wonder if he indeed chipped me. I should be mad. I should demand that he remove all the little trackers he has placed on me, but I'm not stupid. Given the current situation I find myself in, I think being tracked might actually put me at ease a bit more. Grease doesn't answer me about the trackers, just continues explaining the situation.

“I don't want you to worry about anything, Toots. I'm going to protect you,” he says holding my cheek in his big palm and staring into my eyes until I see the truth of his

words. He won't let anyone hurt me, and I have to trust that.

“Back on track. We’ve made contact with the mob.” I gasp at Swift's words. If they’ve contacted them, that means they know where I am and who is keeping me safe. I didn’t realize how bad this really was.

“We’ve set up a meeting. Nothing to worry about, darlin’. We just told them we might have information from a contact we work with. They don’t know you’re here or that we’ve been hiding you for a couple years now.” Well, that does put me at ease a bit. “We are going to meet in a neutral location, but I still want all precautions taken. The clubhouse will be on full lockdown. All women and children here in one location, locked in the safe room. Drift and Vice have volunteered to stay back with the women and kids. Cutter will join them.”

I nod, understanding the situation and ready to get this whole part of my life over with, so I ask, “When do we leave?”

“You won’t be going,” Prez states.

“But-“ I start but immediately am cut off.

“No, not happening. You will stay here. No arguments,” Grease states firmly.

“And just a heads up, we have the confirmed meeting place. We leave in forty-five minutes. Just in case you were thinking of waiting until we were asleep or distracted to sneak out, meet up with them on your own to keep all of us safe, or some bullshit like that,” Hitter speaks up, and I stare at him with my mouth agape and eyes wide.

“You wouldn’t be the first.” Comp shrugs as he sees my expression.

“We're pretty much prepared for anything with you ladies at this point. We never

know what you all will do or say next, so we have to stay a few steps ahead.” Grim smirks, and I can’t help smiling his way.

“If that’s it, we’ll call this church to a close. Brothers, be ready to ride out.”

And just like that, these wonderful, protective, badass men show me how much I mean to this family. They could be walking into an ambush, a trap, anything.... All for me.

The only problem is that it doesn’t sit right with me, and according to them, there is nothing I can do about it.

Still, I have a feeling something big is about to happen.

Rome

“I need you to protect your mama, sister, and brothers. I’m leaving you in charge of them here, son. I know you can do this. Protect our family, my boy,” Dad whispers as he pulls back from the crushing hug.

I nod stoically, even if I feel nothing but nerves and shakes. I’d never let my dad see that, though. He’s the strongest, toughest man I’ve ever seen. I won’t show weaknesses to him. I just wish I was going with them. I can’t wait until I’m old enough to prospect. I want to be on this ride, having my uncles and dad's backs. I hate being stuck here, not knowing what’s happening. I know I’m only a kid, but I still wish I was there with them.

“I should be going on this one as well,” Mom growls at Dad as he pulls her into a kiss. I quickly roll my eyes but turn my head. As much as I hate watching it, I love seeing how much they love each other.

“One of us has to be here for our family, Pet.”

“Just promise me you’ll come home to us.” After he promises to come home, he kisses each of the triplets on the head before stepping over to Rae, who's not even trying to hold back the tears.

Mama calls her a daddy's girl, but I just call her a girl. If I were a girl, I could show how worried and upset I am, but I can’t. I’m the man when Dad's gone, so I have to stay strong.

“What’s the tears for my sweet girl? It’s just a little ride. I won’t even swerve. Swear it!” He smiles while wiping the tears from her face.

“I just don’t want you to go,” she cries before throwing herself into his arms.

I look around at my aunts, uncles, and cousins, all hugging and some crying harder than others. Not all of them know what’s going on, and I don’t even know all the details, but we know we are going into lockdown and don’t know for how long. That can’t be good.

As we watch all the club members load up and ride out, I can’t help but long for the day when it’s me riding out, watching my family's back. I look up at Uncle Cutter, who’s standing beside me. I know he wishes he could ride out with them too, but his shop needs him here too much.

“Alright, ladies, let's head to the safe room,” he announces, ushering everyone in the front door. I step through the door and hear Uncle Cutter, Drift, and Vice step in and lock it behind us. I don’t think anything about following my family through the room toward the basement doors where the safe room is located until I hear a grunt and thump on the floor behind me. As I turn, all the air in my body leaves me at the sight of Uncle Cutter on the floor.

“What the fuck is going on?” Aunt Piper yells, rushing back across the room.

“This is where all you bitches stop asking the questions and start fucking listening. There's been a change of plans.”

I can't believe what is happening right in front of my eyes.

“Vice, what's going on? Why are you holding a gun at us?” Aunt Sunny asks, but Mama speaks up as well.

“I knew you fuckers were up to something. You’ve both been slinking in here looking all fucking creepy and Dommer-like for weeks now. Should have fucking known.”

“Shut the fuck up! I’m so fucking sick of what this fucking club has come to. All about you fucking cunts and nothing to do with what we all started, what we built here,” Vice growls, waving the gun.

“You mean what Hayden and Hitter and every other member but you two fuckers built? Where have you guys been since the start of this club? I’ll tell you, on the road. Gone. Places to places. Bitches to bitches. Don’t sit there like you did fucking all for this club. Y’all never even came back when war was declared,” Aunt Piper yells.

“Declared because of you women and whatever fucking holy cunt you got in between those thighs. I will never understand how each of them fell. How my so-called brothers could take in the traitorous bitch that got OUR brOTHER KILLED!!!!” Drift screams at us, and I flinch. I’ve heard the story of what he’s referring to, though, and it’s bullshit. Uncle Dread saved Aunt Izzy. We all know that. It was her asshole of a brother, not her, that did it.

“I-I didn’t mean for that to...” Aunt Izzy starts but is cut off by a shot. The fucker shot a hole through the floor beside her foot.

“Only warning. I don’t want to hear from any of you, but especially not from you ,” Vice seethes.

I don’t know what to do or what’s going to happen. I want to ask what they plan to do with us, but I’m afraid if I speak up, he’ll shoot me or someone else, and I can’t risk that. It isn’t long before there’s a knock on the door. As Drift opens the door, I hear Beck- dang it, I mean Lyra gasp at the men walking through the clubhouse doors.

“Oh, no! I know you two! You were at my house... in my kitchen. Asking questions about my girl,” Tizzy gasps.

“Yours is coming. Took me weeks to get rid of that headache, bitch,” one of the newcomers says.

“You sold me out? Who are the guys meeting if you had this planned all along?” Lyra nearly screams.

“Oh, don't worry, they will get what's coming to them, but don't worry about them being hurt. We wanted to make sure they came back here unharmed to witness their little brats all alone and with no mommies,” one of the strange fucker mocks. My hands twitch to grab the knife hooked to my back. My favorite one my dad got me for my birthday last year.

“Please, just take me. I'll go easy. Just leave everyone else alone,” Lyra says with tears pouring down her face.

“You've made us hunt, and wait, and fail for **THREE FUCKING YEARS!** And you've been here all along. Now all your friends will pay the price for you. Just a little added suffering,” he finishes, laughing. “Now, women, outside now and in the van. Any sudden movements and the kids will lie in a pile of blood for their fathers to find.”

No one argues. I have to sit and watch as my mom and all my aunts are led outside the safety of our home, and there is absolutely nothing I can do about it. I want to yell, to scream, to kill all these stupid people who are trying to take my family. My mom must see it in my face because she makes eye contact with me before she's yanked away.

“Take care of them. You have to protect all of them now, my sweet baby boy. Call

and get Cutter help. Protect this home,” she says as the stupid tears roll down my face.

“Come on, bitch!” The fucker grabs her by the arm and yanks hard, making her stumble. They all chuckle, and that just makes me want to kill them more.

“Watch that bitch right there. She’s a deceiving little whore,” Vice tells the guys.

“This wee little thing here?” one of the fucker asks before sliding his hands down Mom's back and squeezing her ass. That mother fucker! I take a step forward, but stop when I hear Mom.

“I hope you got what you were looking for, big guy, because that's the last ass you’ll ever feel with that hand. I’ll be sure to saw it off later. You’ll have your own case on my trophy wall.”

“Ohh you will, will you? Then I might want to make it worth it.” He chuckles before grabbing her ass again and then moving up toward her top area.

No fucking way. I grab the knife and charge at him, not caring what happens to me. I get right next to him and slice the arm holding my mom. I hurry, trying to stab, but he twists just in time, and I only get a slice across his stomach. He growls and charges me. I feel a fist hit my face, and then I’m sliding across the floor.

“NO!!!! DON'T FUCKING TOUCH MY SON!” I hear my mom yell. I turn just in time to see her grab the gun from the guy beside her. She points at the one that hit me and fires. She hits him right between the eyes, and the minute his body hits the floor, the room erupts into chaos.

Mom is able to get a shot at Drift, catching him in the chest before the gun is pulled from her hand, and she is pistol-whipped over the head. She goes to the floor, and I

try to scramble to catch her. I'm not close enough, though, and the men start grabbing for the struggling women and hauling them out the door.

Vice walks out behind all the women, and I'm still trying to get to them. He turns back and looks at Drift's lifeless body before turning to look at me. He raises his gun, pointing it at my chest. I stop in my tracks.

"They've taken everything from me now. Drift was the only thing I had left. Now, I'm going to take someone important from her. Bet you're wishing those crazy fuckers never took your spoiled ass in, huh?" He gives me a sad smirk.

"Even if you kill me today, I would never regret coming here. I would never regret experiencing the unconditional love that my mom and dad have shown me. You've already fucked up. You can kill me or not. Either way, my dad, club's crazy ass Loki... he's coming for you. He won't stop until he's drained every drop of blood from your body. So shoot me, fucker, if you have the balls." I know I shouldn't taunt him, but I'm so mad. How could he do this to us? He smirks again, and I can see it in his eyes. He wants to pull it. Maybe the little bit of humanity he has left in him is what's causing him to hesitate.

Either way, I don't realize that Uncle Cutter has come back to, and taken that moment to pick up his own gun and fire. I hear Vice yell, and then another shot rings out. He got him in the arm and in the thigh. Vice goes down in the doorway. He turns to look at the van outside holding the men who took our moms.

"Get me out of here! You have to help me!"

"Our deal here is done. Good luck, traitor." I hear someone say before a door closes, and then the unmistakable sound of tires burning out.

"Fuck, Fuck, Fuck! Rome, I need you to tie that betraying mother fucker up! Get all

the kids into the safe room, and don't leave their side!" Uncle Cutter says, walking toward me as he rubs the back of his head. When he pulls his hand away, I notice a shit ton of blood.

"What are you going to do?" I ask, feeling lost, so lost. He sighs before replying.

"Call in the calvary."

Grease

“Where the fuck are these guys?” Rodeo asks as we wait in the meetup spot.

“Something doesn't feel right. Feels like a set-up. I think we should head out,” Hitter says, looking at the field around us with accessing eyes.

“I agree. One of Ghost's team members swept the area before we got here, but I still don't feel right. It's too quiet out here,” Swift says before sighing. “Alright, let's head out.”

Before we can start the bikes up, a black SUV heads down the dirt road. We wait until it passes by the front of our group. The window rolls down, but we all have our hands on our weapons.

“Don't be too hasty. No need for all the violence. I just came to deliver a message,” the slimy fucker in the back seat says, smiling.

“What's that?” Swift growls.

“Don't come into our house, our family, and our business... or we do the same.” With that statement and a wink, he rolls the window back up, and the vehicle takes off. We don't even get a chance to reply.

“What the fuck was that Cryptic shit?” Grim asks.

“I don't got a fucking clue.” Swift says, but he's interrupted when his phone rings.

“Yeah?”

“WHAT?”

“How long?”

“Fuck! We’re on the way back!”

“What’s going on, Prez?” I ask in a panic. Just listening to the one-sided conversation, I know nothing good has happened. And all I can think is, what’s happened to my girl?

“What? What happened?” I ask the minute he hangs up the phone.

“We need to get back to the clubhouse. Now! Comp the minute we get there, call all your contacts. Anyone you can think of. We’re going to need everyone we know. They’ve got all our women.”

The whole drive back was pure torture. There was no way to talk. No way to ask for more information. All I could think about was what happened? Where were our brothers, the ones we trusted to protect them? Probably the worst thought of all is what those fuckers are doing to them.

We pulled into the gate and noticed it was intact. That means someone let them in, but I don't see how that is possible. I’m even more confused when we pull up, race to the door, push it open, and see Cutter with a bag of ice to the back of his bleeding head, his face marred with outrage, and bodies littering the floor. My eyes stop on a familiar cut... one of our own.

“Grim!” I shout, hoping he can get to Drift in time.

“Don't fucking bother, and while I want to tell you not to waste your breath on the other traitor over there, you might want to slow the bleeding. If only to get some answers,” Cutter says, shooting daggers at Vice, who is currently tied up in the corner with a couple of new bullet holes.

“What the fuck is going on?” Swift growls.

“I don't know a whole lot, Prez. Right after you all rode out, I was walking through the door in front of those mother fucking trash rats, and the next second I felt a sharp pain and... nothing. I woke a while later to strange men hauling the women out, Halle in a gunfight, Rome in a knife fight, and the other women fighting against the fuckers. Halle dropped a couple, including Drift. I woke and was able to clip Vice before he got away. Luckily, they left the kids, and no one else was hurt. I sent the kids to the safe room and called you guys.” By the time he finishes, we are all stunned and in complete silence.

I don't understand how this could have happened. How could our brothers have betrayed us like this? It's not wanting to register with my brain. I could have never seen this outcome, seen this betrayal.

“Get him in the interrogation room. Now! No church, no waiting, I want answers, and I want them right fucking NOW!” Swift yells. “Our women are gone. The mother of our fucking children, my old lady. They took them from us, and now they will pay with their fucking lives.”

It doesn't take us long; we all want answers and need to know where our women could be. The guys take the time to reassure the kids, but send them back to the safe room. It takes Loki a little longer to get Rome back in the room.

“I want to be with you guys! I want to know where Mom is. I can't take being locked up,” he complains.

“I know that, and I also know one day it will be your day for this, but for now, you're needed somewhere else. You're needed in that room, protecting every single innocent kid in that room. You are needed there to protect the next generation. I need you there to know you all are safe. Your brothers and sister are safe. Paisley is safe,” Loki says, more quiet and serious than expected. I can tell he's really not doing well.

“I should have stopped them, Dad. I couldn't save them. I couldn't...” Rome's face crumbles as he throws himself into Loki's arms and sobs. I watch a tear roll down Lokis' face before he quickly wipes it away.

“I know you fought like hell, boy, and made me proud when he touched your mama. I failed to protect you all. I'm going to get her back, son, I swear it.” He holds Rome tight as I walk up to him. I pat him on the shoulder and lean in.

“You made this club damn proud today, Shank,” I smile, though my chest feels like it's caving in.

“Shank?” Rome pulls back and quickly dips his head, and wipes his eyes.

“We all saw you on the video cams. We say you go after them fuckers. Takes a brave man, Shank,” Hitter says, patting his shoulder as he passes by.

“Just know there will always be a vest waiting for you. When you're ready. But part of taking on that responsibility is taking orders and knowing where you are needed. Listen to your dad. We don't just trust anyone with the safety of the most important part of this club. Don't take that responsibility lightly,” Swift says before giving us a chin nod and heading to the interrogation room.

“I’ll protect them with my life,” Rome says, giving his own chin lift and heading to follow those orders. I watch Loki look on with nothing but pride in his eyes. As soon as he is out of sight, the shades fall into place, and he’s in killer mode. It’s time to get some information. We walk into the interrogation room just in time to see Grim hitting Vice right across the cheek.

“Prez, I don’t care who or how we get these answers, but I need them now. I’m about to go as crazy as Loki,” Rodeo says, shaking out his fist.

“I’m feeling completely sane at the moment, boys. That ain’t good...” Loki shakes his head. “Ain’t good at all. Where is my Pet?”

“I don’t know!” Vice says, and Hitter throws another punch, this time to the gut.

“Let’s start with an easier question. Why did you betray us?” Swift asks, crossing his arms.

“You really got to ask that question, brother ?” He says that word with such disgust I’m surprised to see it on his face. How have we missed it? Then he continues. “Not only did y’all let my best friend and brother die. Y’all took in the bitch whose family murdered him! What kind of brotherhood does that? Ya’ll forgot about him! Y’all let him die and then spat on his fucking grave!”

“Watch how you talk about my woman,” Hitter growls.

“And that’s exactly fucking why I did it,” he growls, hate clouding every inch of his dark eyes. I can’t believe this is what has become of one of my brothers. Someone I would have and did trust with my life.

“I would have never thought you were capable of this, and you’re not going to like the next outcome.” Just as Swift finishes, the door is yanked open... and none other than

mother fucking Dread walks in, followed closely behind him is Ghost, or Devin, whatever the fuck he's called.

Dread looks the same, and I almost rub my eyes to make sure it's him. I take him from head to toe and realize it's true. It's him. However, his cut is different. No longer does it say "Dread" or his reckless Omen patch. Instead, there is a new hybrid patch and the road name "Omen."

"This can't be real." Vice voices what we're all thinking.

"I thought this would have been a better reunion, old friend," Omen says in a hard voice, walking right up to the chair Vice is currently chained to.

"How is this possible? You were dead... I watched you die," he says in disbelief, his eyes shining.

"There were other things in play. Other people out to get me. I was actually saved that day, but traitors to this club and to my name don't get an explanation," he says harshly.

"I-I thought.."

"It doesn't fucking matter what you thought. You carried out a kidnapping of the women of this club. You should have never let those fuckers even lay their hands on the women. You pointed a weapon at a Rome, a fucking kid, and almost killed him in cold blood. Women and children are to be protected to the end. I don't know how you lost that, but maybe you just couldn't see it through the hate. Either way, it's unforgivable." He pauses for a minute, only long enough for Vice to make eye contact. When he does, he continues.

"And the worst part of it all... you did it in my name. For that alone, I could never

forgive you. I'm only going to ask this once, and as a prior member of this club, we deserve a straight answer. What all do you know?"

"WHERE IS MY DAUGHTER?" Devin screams as Hitter and Comp grab hold of his shoulders. He looks ready to kill.

All the fight seems to leave Vice's body as he bows his head and answers. "There is a compound up in the hills. Dug in deep. Full paramilitary doomsday prepper shit. That's where they took them. I didn't tell them about the trackers you have on the women. We planned to tell them when we got there, got paid, and got out. We wanted some insurance. They have a whole army, though. Be ready," he mutters.

Omen doesn't waste time. He steps up and rips the patch from Vice's vest, pulls out his gun, and takes the shot. Then turns back to the room.

"Can't wait for the reunion, boys, but let's save it until the women can join in. What do you say?" he asks, and I can't help but smile. We may have weeded out two traitors from our ranks, but we got a brother back from the dead... and now we have the location of our women.

Time to bring hell to earth and every mother fucker in my way.

Lyra

I close my eyes and picture Grease's crooked smirk and gray eyes full of love staring at me. I want to laugh at the thought that I could have ever believed he hated or didn't like me. All the teasing and cocky smiles sent my way. I see them now as adoration. I hope and pray he saw it through my masked stares or heated conversations as well. I know I've told him since getting together, but was it enough? It doesn't seem like it. I just got him. How can this be it?

My breathing speeds up when I feel the van turn off the main highway and down what I'm guessing is a long dirt road. I turn to Piper, who is on the floor beside me. She's staying so strong and so stoic I can't help but break. We've been hit, slapped, slung around this damn van, and it's all my fault.

"I'm so sorry. This is all my fault. I can't believe I put you all in this situation," I say, finally letting one tear fall from my cheek.

"Sweetheart, the men ain't dead, and the day ain't over. This isn't your fault, and we aren't damsels in distress." Jade gives me a strong smile, and I try to return it, pretty sure it falls flat.

"Shut the fuck up. Not another word from any of you or I'll start clipping you off one by one. We only need the fucking teacher," the one in the passenger seat throws back at us.

It's not much longer before we pull up to a huge mansion surrounded by a field, and in the distance, nothing but trees. We are completely secluded out here. I don't know

how the guys will find us or what the hell we will do, but the other women don't look worried. Maybe I need to have a little more faith.

We are dragged out of the van and around the enormous mansion to a door guarded by two huge men. There, we are taken through the door, down a set of stairs, and brought to a wooden door.

“Home sweet home. For as long as you are alive,” says the one they called Mac. I thought I heard the driver's name was Art. As the door is unlocked, a new guy comes down the dark hallway from the opposite end from which we were brought.

“What happened to them? Why is that one's nose bleeding?” asks the new guy.

“Let's just say they didn't come easy, and they are a mouthy bunch of bitches. Had to do what we had to fucking do, Garret,” Art growls.

“Think we should teach them a lesson?” Mac grabs my boob in a painful grip, making me cry out. That's when Halle goes crazy. She tries to get away from the fucker holding her, but she's the most restrained. They realized pretty fast how unpredictable she was.

To my utter shock and surprise, though, Izzy throws herself into Mac. He's so surprised he goes to the ground with her on top of him. She scratches, hits, punches, and kicks with everything in her until Art has to pull her off. But as they pull her off of them, I see the damage she has inflicted. She damn near ripped his face off.

“That's my girl! You might not be able to admire your handiwork, but I can promise you he will have to see it every day for the rest of his miserable life Iz! Badass!” Halle cheers.

We are pulled and pushed into the room. Jade stomps on Mac's nuts as she walks by,

since he's still rolling around on the floor in pain. Art is at the door, glaring at us as we stand around the tiny room. There's one mattress in the corner and a bucket in the opposite corner close to the door.

"You all are going to pay for that shit," he threatens before closing the door.

He's not wrong either; we end up paying for that. All night, we are awoken by either banging on the door, men coming in and kicking us around, or loud music played throughout the room just when exhaustion wants to hit. Our hands were tied the last time they came in when Piper got the upper hand. It only got worse from there.

They won't let us sleep, and by the morning, my head is pounding, and my ears are ringing. The only good thing to come out of this is no one else has tried to force themselves on us... yet, but I can feel it's only a matter of time. I remember one attack where the one in charge caught the act. His voice was hard when he addressed his men.

"Leave them to stew in their own shit. The boss wants first dibs and first pick. That means hands off." We were safe from that attack, but the dread in my stomach at what was coming was causing me to panic.

For now, we are alone.

"Okay, I can get us out of the restraints, but we need a plan to get out of here," Piper says as she fiddles behind her back. It doesn't take her long until she is free of her hand ties.

I look up when I hear the scrape of the door, sucking in a breath as I see Mac and Art step into the room and close it behind them.

"Wakey, Wakey. Time for some payback. Who wants to volunteer to go first?" Mac

says, grabbing his dick and licking his lips.

There's no way we are going down without a fight. There are only two of them, and there are seven of us. Even exhausted, we can take them. Then I watch the door open again behind them, and my heart sinks. They didn't come alone. We won't be able to take on more than three would be my guess. I look at all the women.

Halle has a black eye and bloody nose, Jade's lip is busted, and Piper is limping but still holding up a sagging Izzy. Sunny has an arm wrapped around her middle and is having a hard time breathing; I'm worried it's a cracked rib. Mom has a scratch down her forehead and cheek, and Ophelia's blond hair is marred with blood from a head wound. I don't know how we are going to get out of this.

Mac takes a step closer, and I gasp when his eyes meet mine. The next minute, I watch his eyes roll to the back of his head, and he goes down to the floor. Art is next and goes to the ground just as quick. Standing behind them with a black baton is Garret. The man from when we first got here.

"I can only give you this one chance. You can take the stairs. Once at the top, go to the right, follow the hall to the back patio door, and make a run for it. There are snipers on the roof and men patrolling. This is the only help I can give you. Good luck." With that, he turns and leaves.

"What in the actual fuck was that?" Jade asks the room.

"I say it's a trap," Halle says, looking at the door with suspicion. "We should follow the directions."

"You just said it was a trap!" Ophelia screeches, but Halle only shrugs.

"I'm too pumped up to run. I want to fight." She actually bares her teeth.

“We are going to do exactly as he says. We are going to stay quiet, keep down, and slowly make our way outside. I’ll take the lead. Lyra, Sunny, check those two for any weapons or cell phones. Ophelia, I need you to help Izzy up the stairs. Halle, you're the only other one who specializes in hand-to-hand, so I need you to stay in the rear. Keep us safe. Jade, when we get outside, keep your eyes out. I want the locations of each sniper,” Piper directs us, and we all jump into action.

Sunny and I head to Mac and Art. I can't help taking another cheap shot. I want to break his arm or kneecap, but I can't risk him waking up. Instead, I stomp down on his head. Maybe it will keep him out longer. After that, I search him. I find a pistol at his back, one at his ankle, and a total of three knives. Halle automatically steals those.

Sunny found three guns on her guy. In the end, Piper, me, Jade, Sunny, and Halle all have a gun as we quietly make our way out of the door. At the top of the stairs, just as we are about to round the corner, we are stopped by one soldier.

“What the-”

Before he can finish, Piper thrusts her palm up, smashing it into his nose, whipping around behind him, and twisting his neck. He goes down without another word. A gasp sounds behind her, and we see another big fucker reach for his side holster. Still, Halle has her knife out and throws it past Piper's head and straight into the throat of the new fucker before he can get the shot off. He grabs for his neck, uselessly trying to stop the bleeding.

“We have to move, now!” Piper says, jumping into action. We run down but stop as we get to the door leading to outside. Piper slowly opens the door and peeks out before creeping out slowly. We follow her lead, keeping low and to the side of the building. She pauses when a shadow crosses above us on the roof, right over our heads.

“One above us, two more at ten and six. Total of three on the roof. That's all I see,” Jade whispers.

“We’re getting too good at this mission shit,” Sunny mutters.

“Grim has been preparing me for almost every scenario,” Jade says with a sad, faraway smile. I know she's thinking of her man. I’m thinking of mine, too.

“On the count of three, we need to take the shots. Anyone not of a fan of taking a life today?” Piper asks us.

“They stole us from our homes, threatened us in front of our babies. I want to blow this whole fucking place up,” Sunny says, surprising us all.

“Alrighty then. On three, Sunny, you shoot the fucker above us. Halle, you take the one at ten, and I’ll take the one at six. Everyone else, head for the trees!” We nod and get into position.

“One, two, three!” Shots ring out, and then we are up and running. We take off as one, but Piper and Halle stay toward the back. I fall behind as well, knowing this is my fault, and I won't let any of these women get shot today.

“RUN!” Piper screams just as shots ring out. I scream as I feel a sting against my calf, but I keep running. The trees are still half a football field away. There is no way we can all make it. I have to do something, and then it hits me. There’s only one thing left to do, only one thing that will work, that will make sure everyone else gets to the wood line.

With a deep breath, I stop dead in my tracks, turn around, raise the gun still in my shaking hands, and start returning fire.

I might be an easy target, but I won't go down easily. I'll make sure I'm the only one left here for these fuckers to grab, full of bullet holes and all.

Grease

We are currently on the east end of the compound where our women are being held. We've checked the GPS repeatedly, and they haven't been moved from this location in a few hours. If Ghost's intel is correct, and I know for a damn fact it is, there is nothing but this unmarked dirt road and woods for miles ahead and behind us. Meaning there are only woods separating us from our women, and I'm ready to burn this fucking forest down just for the chance to lock eyes with my Toots. How the fuck did I just get her back... all to lose her again? This won't be the end.

"Alright, we barely know the compound's layout, much less how many bodies they got in there, so I think it's best if my team takes point," Ghost starts. Swift opens his mouth, my guess to argue, but Devin continues.

"We are trained for far worse than this. I know it's your wife, the mother of your kids, but she's my daughter, and I taught her everything she knows. My guess is she's already found a way to escape, so in the case of not accidentally shooting one of the women. Please, son, I'm asking you to trust me and let my team take point," he pleads with Prez, something I've never seen either of these men do before, but they both have something to lose today. We all do. Finally, Swift nods, and Ghost turns back to his team.

"Ok, everyone understands their part, yeah?" Ghost directs toward us. I was so lost in my thoughts that I didn't hear what he said. I know I'm not in the right state of mind to be doing this, but ask me if I fucking care? No one on this planet could keep me from storming through these trees to get to her.

“Just remember, when we reach your women, you get them...” He stops as the world behind us explodes.

We hear gunshots ringing out, and we take off at a dead run through the trees, plan forgotten.

“Should have fucking known those damn women wouldn’t wait for backup! I’m going to spank Piper’s ass for this!” Swift yells.

As we make our way to the clearing, we are all not thinking rationally.

“Shouldn’t we assess the situation before running into the gunfire?” Omen calls out, but none of us stop, even at the opening of the tree line.

“Fuck yeah! We’re in a real-life shootout! Just like one of them old westerns, Taz!”

“Just call me Gunsmoke, Mania ‘cause I’ll be your huckleberry!” Taz ends his sentence with a howl, and we burst through the tree lines.

I first notice all the women running straight to us; the men are racing toward their women, and I’m still searching for mine. I see Piper look back and then stop. As she shifts to the side, I see why. It’s Lyra, and she’s holding a gun, shooting back toward the mansion. She’s not running our way, just firing the damn gun.

“LYRA!” I scream as I race toward her. All I can see are bullets hitting the ground all around her.

I see her step back and limp on her left leg. Looking down, I notice blood dripping from her calf. She’s already been hit, and yet she’s still not making a run for it. Instead, she’s giving the other woman enough time to get to safety. She’s going to get herself shot, and that can not fucking happen. I can’t let it happen.

My lungs burn as I push myself harder than I ever have before. I can't seem to get to her fast enough. I'm only five steps away from her when I hear her scream and watch her arm fly back. I catch her before she falls to the ground, covering her and using my body to block her from the bullets.

"Tootsie, it's okay, I'm here. I'm right here. You're safe!" I whisper to her, looking around me and trying to get my bearings.

I have to get her back to the tree line. I look up and see Ghost and his team moving fluidly through the field in a straight line. They have their weapons raised and are firing all in sync, taking shots, and I notice there is less and less return fire.

"I'm going to pick you up and get you back to the trees. Hold on tight," I tell Lyra as I pick her up in my arms. She whimpers in pain, and the sound kills me. I failed her and didn't protect her. This is on me.

"I'm not leaving her! Either she comes back with us, or I'm going in to get her!" I hear Piper yelling.

"I've got her. Come on, we need to get out of here!" I yell, racing past.

"Take the women, and you and your men get out of here. Get back to the chopper," Ghost yells, turning and firing another shot.

"What about your team?" Swift asks Ghost

But he gives us a chilling smile.

"It's time for my team to go to work. This is what we are good at. This is what we do."

“Be careful, Daddy. Please. I still need you,” Piper says with tears in her eyes as Swift tugs on her arm, trying to get her to safety.

“You are well taken care of, baby girl. You went out and found more in your life than I could have ever hoped for. Keep holding onto that and to them tight, baby. Death grip.”

“Death grip,” Piper repeats as Ghost turns back to face the property.

“Wait! Someone in there helped us! They shouldn't have to die after setting us free,” Lyra protests softly from my arms. She’s breathing hard, and I know I need to get her to Grim.

“I know who it was, and I can tell you they are no longer in that house. My guess is he’s already off the property. I watched him sneak through a side door as we started running.” Halle shrugs.

“One of my contacts mentioned a secret takeover might be going down in this organization, but the boss is in there now. We confirmed it with the drones Rasputin sent out earlier. He had the nerve to take my baby girl, my family. He won't live past the night. Time to clean up.”

I don't stick around to wait for what comes next. I race toward the trees and back toward the extraction point. I watch as every one of my brothers makes it to safety, holding their women in their arms, Swift being one step in front of me. I don't know who all is hurt. All I know is I feel warm blood sinking through my shirt, next to my heart, and down my arm.

As we make it through the clearing, I notice Grim checking over every inch of Jade. When he seems satisfied she wasn't hit, he turns back to the group.

“Who’s hurt? We need to access the wounded, get what we can bandaged up. Does anyone have fatal injuries?” He’s yelling to be heard around the chaos.

“Where are you hurt, Toots? Please, lord, be okay.” My voice breaks on the last sentence. Lyra raises her bloody hand to my cheek, cupping it and staring into my eyes. Then her eyes roll back in her head, and she promptly passes out.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 3:22 am

Lyra

“Fuck me, Grease. If I have to tell you one more fucking time she’s going to be fine. I’m kicking your ass out.” I hear Grim growl.

“Oh, I want to see you try it. I will weld both of our fucking asses inside this damn room until you find a way to wake her up!” I smile at the ridiculousness of those two.

“Even unconscious, you seem to have the ability to be a pain in my ass. Can you please stop threatening my doctor?” I push past my scratchy throat, then cough and try to chuckle.

“See, listen to your now awake woman. I know what I’m fucking talking about,” Grim grumbles as he steps up beside me.

“How you doing, darlin?” Grim asks, checking over my arm and leg.

“Pretty good. Feeling a bit tired. What happened?” I ask, trying to sit up but wincing as pain shoots through my arm.

“You lost a good amount of blood, but luckily, we were able to get you back to the clubhouse and patched up. You took a shot to the arm and calf. You're going to be sore for a bit, but nothing permanent. Keep it clean, don't pull at the stitches, and I'll see you for a check-up in two weeks. Now, although I love ya and glad you're okay, Lyra, I'm dying to return to my woman and baby girl,” he says before giving me a small smile and exiting the room.

Grease helps me up slowly, and I swing my legs over the side of the bed.

“Here, let me help you,” he says softly. Gently, he grabs me under my knees and behind my back, lifting me from the bed and carrying me out of the room. He heads down the hall and toward his room.

“Are you hungry? Thirsty? Need anything?” he asks nervously. I want to smile at this new, unsure Grease before me. Something about his nervousness puts me at ease and settles the leftover nerves and panic from the incident.

“No, I’m fine. Actually, I just want a shower and more sleep,” I tell him honestly.

“Your wish is my command.” He smiles softly down at me before kissing my forehead and opening the door to our room.

He carries me straight to the bathroom before setting me down on the countertop. Without saying a word, he slowly helps me out of my clothes, then pulls a roll of saran wrap from under the sink and gently wraps it around my bandages. When I raise my eyebrow in question, he chuckles.

“Not my first time experience with gunshots or stickers toots.”

“I’m not even going to ask.” I shake my head, clinging to him as he lifts me and carries me into the shower. He gently but efficiently washes me from head to toe and, to my utter disappointment, does absolutely nothing more.

I lean into his hands, but he doesn't linger, and I need him so much it's driving me insane. Given the situation, I know it might seem inappropriate, but I need to feel him. Need to know that I’m here with him and no one else. I need to feel safe in his arms and in his love. He carefully dries me off, pulls a clean shirt over my head, and pulls on a pair of boxers. I know he’s putting a barrier between us. We’ll see how

long that lasts. I smile as he picks me up and carries me to bed, placing gentle kisses across his neck.

“Tootsie, you need time and rest,” he says, placing me on the bed before turning off the lamp beside the bed, then climbing in with me. He pulls me into his chest, being careful with my arm and leg. As we lay there, I can’t help but snuggle into him, running my hand along his chest. I need to feel him. I need to feel that connection. I need a reminder that he is here, that we are safe. That I have him, and he has me. I need to get lost in him. It doesn’t take long for my efforts to yield a reaction and a reluctant groan from him.

“Please, baby, I need this more than anything. Please touch me.” I beg. I grind against his hard cock, not being able to help it. I’m careful to keep my calf high on his leg and move just my core. He feels so fucking good. His cock twitches as he groans again, then gently rolls me over and climbs on top of me.

“Fine, but we do this my fucking way. I won’t risk you hurting yourself. I need you still.” He whispers in my ear as he softly kisses under my ear before moving down my neck.

He slowly slides his hands up my thigh before grabbing my ass in a hard grip and grinding against my pussy. I can’t hold the moan in. His hands slide to my waist, and slowly, he pulls my shirt up, being careful with my arm and my leg before he leans down and takes my hard nipple into his mouth. He doesn’t spend much time there; instead, he moves up and kisses my neck before reaching my ear.

“I want to spend all the time in the world sucking every fucking inch of your perfect body.” I moan my agreement, then want to kick his ass when he chuckles and continues. “But, I won’t be doing any of that until you are fully healed, and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt I won’t hurt you.”

Tears threaten to fall as my heart overfills with love for this man. How did I go so long without him? I always knew I had to care for myself and look out for myself, and then I met him. The man who broke down my independence made me want to hand over the reins because I ultimately knew that everything he did was in my best interest.

“I love you so much,” I whisper as he carefully pulls my leg up his hip and slowly starts to enter me. “I was so scared when I thought I might never see you again,” I admit.

He stops when he’s fully inside me, and I can’t help it when my eyes roll to the back of my head or the groan that leaves my mouth as he squeezes my ass in a bruising grip. He doesn’t move or even twitch, he just waits until my eyes meet his before replying.

“You’re mine, and I’m never letting you go again. I’m so sorry I didn’t protect you, Tootsie. You are my everything, and I was so close to los..” He tries to choke out the last word, but I don’t let him finish.

I grab his face in my hands and kiss him with everything in me as he slowly moves inside me. I feel wetness slide down my cheeks and the feeling of my sensitive nipples rubbing against his chest, catching his piercing, making a chill run down my body in pleasure. I nip at the hoop hanging from his lip, and he groans, moving faster inside me. The feel of his piercings sliding inside my channel is unfathomable. I can feel each piercing both individually and all at once; it’s a complete out-of-body experience, and before long, it brings me to the biggest climax of my life.

I’m left exhausted. I’m barely able to keep my eyes open, but cannot remove the satisfied smile from my lips. I fall asleep to my man, my hero, my everything slowly pulling out of me while muttering,

“You’re mine, Toots. All. Fucking. Mine.”

Grease

The night after the incident, I woke to find Lyra gone and our bed empty. I couldn't stop the panic raging through my soul at not knowing where she was. I raced through the clubhouse until I got to the common room. There, I found every single one of my brothers sitting around a table in the middle of the common room.

"We woke to the same thing, brother. Beds empty, and a text telling me they were here. When I came back here to check, I found all the women and kids on pallets in the safe room. Come, take a seat," Swift says.

"Your Old Lady is safe and sound in there as well. I watched her go in myself," Hitter says.

I asked Lyra later that day if sleeping in that room would make her feel safer. I would be right there with her. She put my heart at ease. Seems the women just needed to feel that safety with them and their kids, the one day they were robbed of. They wanted to accomplish something by staying there all night. Our beautiful, stubborn, strong-willed women. That was the only night I woke alone.

Now, it's been three months since the incident with the Irish, and the women have pretty much acted like nothing ever happened since that night. We are all gathered around the backyard, food spread out, and music playing. Everyone's here, and life doesn't get much better than this.

"Well, I guess that's it... everyone's all matched up. What the hell are we supposed to do now without all the drama?" Jade jokes.

“I’ll tell you what we do. We take this show on the road! Reckless Motorcycle Match Makers!” Halle yells, and is met with silence. “Okay, I’m still working on the name. I’ll get back to you on that. Time to enjoy the show!” Halle yells again as she runs across the back, close to the clearing. We all look around, confused.

“What show?” I ask. I lift a brow at Lyra, but I can tell by her confused look she's not in on this one, either.

“What about one last bet there, Grease? If Halle kills someone with her little “show,” you have to get Club Slut tattooed as a tramp stamp,” Grim jokes.

“What happens if I win?” I smirk at him.

“Don't even think about it. You are not taking that bet!” Lyra growls. “As much as I love all your piercings and tattoos, it's time to retire before you both somehow figure out a way to up the ante.”

“Agreed.” Jade physically shivers.

“I got the fireworks out of the shed, and someone left some sparklers in the back of the truck. Grabbed those too. Let’s light the sky!” Halle says, looking back at her handy work.

“Uhh, Halle, where did you say you found the sparklers?” Rodeo asks with a nervous tilt to his voice.

“Back of the van. Why?”

“Fuck! Those weren’t sparklers, Halle! That was Dynamite! Everyone RUN!” Comp screams.

This will forever be my life, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

The En.... Oh wait, one more thing

I won the final bet! Now, please continue.

Hem hem... The End

Ghost

I watch Halle take on the entire fire department as they clean up after her. I really shouldn't find that crazy young lady so amusing, but I know she never means any harm. I'm just glad the kids were on the other side of the compound.

I scan the busy yard for the other tiny little woman sneaking around here. Her name says it all... Tizzy. She sure turned my life into one from the minute I saw her running from that mansion, bullets clipping at her small heels. Her beautiful, blond, bouncing hair whirling around like a halo. My life stopped for the second time in my life, the first being the day my baby girl Piper was born.

My heart has never stopped beating like that. I've also never hesitated on a mission or lost footing, all three of which happened as I caught sight of her. I let her walk away that night for two reasons. One was that I needed her as far away from that danger as possible, and two, I needed to get my ducks and my team in line. I was making plans and arrangements. I wanted her, and I was going to go full fucking throttle until I for her. Showing up today, ready to make my move, I never would have guessed — granted, I should have thought of it — Halle would blow the damn place up. How is she still unsupervised?

I'm still looking for my woman when my son-in-law and president of the Reckless Omens walks up to me.

“Got to know. What happened to the Irish?” he asks.

“Not going to get into all the details, but I will say our family is safe. No more

looking over your shoulder. My team took care of it.” I know he wants to argue. It’s in his nature as a protective husband and father to be involved in this. Unfortunately, I won’t sell out my team or our informant inside the mob family to cause more harm than good. Instead of arguing, he sticks his hand out for me to shake.

“Thank you, Devin. I’ll never be able to repay the debt I owe you,” he says.

“Just take care of my baby girl and that grandson of mine, and we’ll call it even.”

After that, he leaves to find my baby girl, wrapping her up in his arms. I’m so happy for my sweet girl. She’s got the life she’s always deserved. That thought has me looking around again for a big blonde bouncing... hair.

When I find her, I can’t help the low chuckle that falls from my lips. She’s got the keys to one of Grease’s extra shop cars and is sneaking around to the driver’s doors. I quickly but silently make my way up to the car. As she gets in and closes the door, I tap on the window. I want to smile as she winces, but then brings her beautiful baby blues to mine, slowly rolling down the window.

“Uh, high there, hot stuff! I was just headed down to the Piggly Wiggly and getting someone... uh, some more.. buns. Yeah, buns!” she stutters out. Again, I hold in my laughter.

“The Piggly Wiggly in town closed down ten years ago, and the other one ain’t for at least a hundred miles. Where ya really going, Buttercup?” I ask her. She sighs before answering.

“My girl is finally settled. It’s time for me to find some adventures. At least for a little while.”

“You weren’t going to say goodbye?” I know she thinks I’m talking about Lyra but I really mean me.

“If I had to do that, I’d never be able to leave,” she nearly whispers.

“Well, there’s one problem with your fleeing.”

“What’s that?” Her eyebrows draw down in confusion.

“How am I supposed to kidnap you and drag you back home with me if you run off on me?” I smile as she draws in a deep breath. Then she bursts out into the most beautiful laughter I’ve ever heard.

“Guess you’ll just have to give chase, Sugar Lips. I ain’t gonna be an easy catch.”

And with that, she steps on the peddle and hauls ass out of the compound, spinning gravel on the way and taking my heart right along with her.

I put a new toothpick in the side of my mouth, a nasty habit I picked up after quitting smoking. I walk slowly to my ride, throwing my leg over and kicking back the kickstand. I rev up my bike three times, knowing my team will hear and know I’m out. Then I take off after her.

I smile as I roll out to my next and probably most important (did I mention crazily unpredictable) mission of my life. What Tizzy doesn’t know is she has me, all of me...

Death Grip.

The end.... For now