



Kane

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Category: Erotic, Romance, New Adult, Mc

Description: Kane Beckett built his billion-dollar empire from the asphalt up, ruling the underground racing circuit with a ruthless grip. Finding the traitor leaking intel to dirty cops should've been easy...until the suspect's sister rolled into town asking questions.

Savannah Quincy came to Crossbend for answers. Getting kidnapped by the Redline Kings MC president wouldn't stop her. Neither would falling for Kane—the man who might destroy her brother.

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SAVANNAH

My back ached, and my hair smelled like espresso, but at least I drank more than my fair share of coffee during my shift. Even better, the tips were actually decent today. A double win, as far as I was concerned.

“You probably should’ve skipped that last triple-shot latte,” Dory murmured as she flipped the Closed sign on the front door of Bean There Brewed That.

Our shift ended forty minutes ago, but we’d stayed late scrubbing the milk steamer because the new hire left a trail of destruction in her wake.

I shook my head. “Nah, I need the caffeine if I’m going to get any studying done tonight.”

“I don’t know how you manage to get anything done after a day like today.” Dory patted me on the back. “But I have no doubt you’ll ace that exam. You’re too determined for anything else.”

“I hope you’re right,” I mumbled as she locked the door behind us.

Summer was already halfway over, and I still didn’t feel even remotely prepared for my paralegal certification exam. Working full-time at the café ate up too much of my time, but bills didn’t pay themselves. And my parents were firm believers that their job was done once their children graduated from high school, so I was on my own.

Just like my older brother had been when he joined the police academy more than a decade ago.

Except Devon had been lucky enough to live in our childhood home until he could afford a small house. Unfortunately for me, our parents were antsy to get away once I turned eighteen. With the twelve-year gap between my brother and me, they could barely wait to be empty nesters. So they sold the house a few months after my high school graduation and used that money to purchase a cabin on a fifteen-year, residential cruise to just about every port in the world. Which meant that I needed to earn enough to pay for somewhere to live while studying as much as I could.

I waved goodbye to Dory, trudged across the lot to my beat-up sedan, and slumped into the driver's seat. I'd parked under a tree and left the windows cracked, but it still felt like an oven. Cranking the AC, I pulled my hair into a messy bun and drove home.

My apartment was only five minutes away, a tiny upstairs unit above a florist shop on the main road in downtown Wedgewood, my hometown. The walk up the narrow outdoor staircase wasn't fun after a long shift, but the second I got inside, I kicked off my shoes, chugged a glass of water, and collapsed onto the couch. All I wanted to do was stretch out and take a nap, but I couldn't afford to skip my studying.

Snagging my study guide, I flipped to the civil procedures section and grabbed a highlighter. Quickly getting lost in the intricacies of the service of pleadings, motions, and discovery, it was almost midnight before I got up again.

I decided to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and I couldn't help but think about my brother as I took the first bite because he used to make them for me as an afternoon snack when I was in middle school.

I swallowed hard, my throat tight. We hadn't talked much lately, and I hated how that

gnawed at me. Devon used to be the first person I called when things got tough. But he'd been distant lately, and I had no idea why.

A knock on the door made me jump, peanut butter smearing across my cheek as I fumbled with the sandwich.

It was almost midnight. Nobody ever visited this late...unless something was wrong. My pulse leaped as I considered all the things that could've happened to Devon as a patrol officer. Dropping my plate on the counter, I raced over to the front window, trying to peer through the blinds. Relief flooded me when I saw the figure standing under the porch light.

I yanked the door open. "What the heck, Dev? You scared the crap out of me."

"Sorry, Sis." My brother raked his fingers through his hair. "Can I come in?"

"Of course." I stepped aside to let him in, noticing how bad he looked. His eyes were red-rimmed and bloodshot, as if he'd gotten even less sleep than me. His uniform was wrinkled instead of perfectly pressed like usual. And his shoes looked as though they hadn't been polished in weeks.

"You look like hell," I muttered.

His mouth curved into a tired smile. "Gee, thanks."

He perched on the arm of the couch.

"Okay." I shut the door and leaned against it. "You wanna tell me what's going on, or should I start guessing?"

"I'm fine. Just realized it's been a while and wanted to check in."

I crossed my arms over my chest. “Try again.”

Devon dragged a hand down his face and let out a rough sigh. “I’m under internal review.”

My eyes widened, my brows drawing together over them. “For what?”

He shrugged one shoulder. “Procedural misstep.”

“That doesn’t tell me anything at all.”

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“It’s not a big deal.” He didn’t look me in the eye as he added, “Just IA poking around because they don’t have anything better to do.”

“Dev—”

“I’m serious,” he cut in. “There’s nothing to worry about.”

I might’ve bought that, except he was clearly worried. Devon had always been cool under pressure. But tonight, his bouncing leg told a different story. “You really expect me to believe that?”

“I’m telling you what I can.” He stood suddenly, pacing to the window to peek through the blinds. “I just wanted to let you know I’ll be off the grid for a bit.”

“Off the grid?” I echoed. “What does that even mean?”

“I need a break.”

My pulse leaped for real now. “Is someone after you?”

“It’s safer if you don’t know.”

“You’re scaring me,” I whispered. “Talk to me, Dev. Please.”

He hesitated before shaking his head. “I’m handling it. I promise.”

I didn’t believe him—not for a second. But I also knew the look in his eyes. He

wasn't going to tell me more, no matter how hard I pushed.

So I didn't. "Is there anything you need? I haven't shopped in a while, but I have a box of those chocolate-dipped granola bars that you love in the pantry."

"That'd be great." As I headed toward the kitchen area, he asked, "Can I use your bathroom before I head out?"

"Sure."

After I grabbed the granola bars and a few other things he liked, I noticed he set his jacket on the couch. A rolled-up folder stuck out from the inside pocket, and my curiosity got the better of me. Setting the bag of supplies down next to it, I shifted the folder enough to see a name on the tab—Bayfront Logistics.

It wasn't a company I'd ever heard of before, but the bathroom door opened before I could see what was inside. I didn't ask about it as he gave me a hug, but the second the door shut behind him, I grabbed my laptop and typed "Bayfront Logistics" into the search bar, hoping for something that would tell me what the heck my brother had gotten himself into.

The first result that popped up was the company website, but that didn't give me much to go on. The site was generic, with stock images and vague promises about freight efficiency. There were no executive bios or press releases. Just a Contact Us form in place of a phone number or address.

Frustrated by how little information their site provided, I ran a business search through the state's registry. The company was based in Crossbend, which wasn't far from here, but there were zero employee names listed. Just a registered agent and a holding corporation that led to another shell company.

I refined my search by adding “Crossbend” and finally found something buried two pages down in the results. A brief mention in the city’s zoning board minutes of someone named Kane Beckett in connection with the company.

I clicked faster, fingers flying over the keyboard as results started popping up left and right when I did a search on him. The guy was a billionaire who dominated just about every car racing report. It wasn’t until I dug through racing forums that I found whispers of an underground circuit. Every thread that mentioned Kane had the same tone—vague but respectful. And fearful, especially the posts that talked about how he formed the Redline Kings MC. Which didn’t bode well for my brother.

I grabbed my phone and called him.

He answered on the second ring. “Savannah?”

The sound of his voice made my chest ache. “What is Bayfront Logistics?”

Silence.

“You left a folder in your jacket. I saw the name,” I explained. “And I looked it up. It’s based in Crossbend, and there’s barely anything on it, except maybe a link to someone named Kane Beckett. Who is he? What’s going on?”

“Dammit,” he muttered, low and sharp. “I told you there was nothing to worry about.”

I shot to my feet. “Then tell me why you’re looking into a company whose online footprint is suspicious.”

“I can’t explain it, not right now. But you need to stay out of this. Do you hear me?” His voice rose with urgency. “You don’t know who these people are. They’re not

regular bad guys. If you poke the wrong way, they'll come for you."

My hands shook. "Devon?—"

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“I’m serious. Stay away from Crossbend. Stay away from Beckett. I’ll contact you when it’s safe.”

The line went dead, and I stared at my phone in stunned silence.

There was no mistaking it after that call—my brother was in trouble. And with the IA investigation, there probably wasn't a lot he could do to get himself out of this mess without risking more questions. But nobody was watching my every step.

Crossbend was only a few towns over.

If Devon wouldn't tell me the truth, I'd find it myself.

And if Kane Beckett was the key to clearing my brother's name, then I'd just have to find him too.

2

KANE

The bastard we were hunting had vanished.

It was silent in my office, except for the low hum of the vents blowing in cold air. I stared out the window on my left and watched the Florida heat ripple across the sunbaked asphalt.

When I leaned back in my chair, it groaned beneath me, the leather worn smooth

from years of decisions that built empires and buried enemies. My boots were planted wide on the floor, and my hands were fisted on top of my custom, hand-carved, solid walnut desk. The piece suited me, expensive but understated and strong. Heavy enough that you could slam a man's face into the surface and it wouldn't so much as leave a splinter. Something I knew from experience.

As the president of the Redline Kings Motorcycle Club, I was the face of the brotherhood. The image that told people not to fuck with us unless they had a damn death wish.

Edge sat across from me, one boot kicked up on the edge of my desk like he owned the place. He didn't, but he was the only bastard I let act like he did. My younger brother by eighteen months, vice president of the club, and the only man on this planet who could read me without needing words.

He was sprawled in his chair with one hand lazily turning a switchblade between his fingers like a drummer twirling a stick. To most, he looked like he didn't give a damn. He did, of course—more than most—but he hid it better. That laid-back grin of his always threw people off. They didn't see the blade underneath until they were already bleeding. His road name fit. Edge had always been just this side of unhinged, walking that fine fucking line between charming and psychotic.

Nitro, our sergeant at arms, stood with his arms crossed near the door. He didn't like sitting. Said it made him feel caged. His frame blocked most of the entrance, like a wall of ink and muscle daring anyone dumb enough to interrupt. The man looked carved from stone, athletic, but built to fight and made to endure. He had a temper that made people rethink breathing wrong around him, but it took a lot to light his fuse.

Jax perched on the leather arm of the couch across the room, tapping in a steady rhythm on the keyboard of his laptop. His blond hair was shoved under a backward

ball cap, and his black-rimmed glasses somehow made him look more dangerous, not less. That was Jax for you—genius brain, twitchy fingers, always ten steps ahead of the digital world and three steps ahead of ours.

People underestimated Jax because he was younger. Quieter. Smarter. The man could hack into a Pentagon satellite before you blinked and still have time to reroute your bank account and reprogram your car stereo to play Taylor Swift on loop. He'd done it once, just to prove a point.

“Tell me,” I said, voice low and dark. “How the hell does a nobody traffic cop outsmart all of us?”

Edge chuckled. “You’re not pissed he slipped through. You’re pissed you didn’t see it sooner.”

Fair enough, I thought, tilting my head.

“Who is this guy?” Nitro asked. He’d been out on a run for a couple of months and wasn’t caught up on the shit going down.

“Devon Quincy,” Jax muttered, dragging the name like it left a bitter taste. “Thirty-two. Works traffic in Wedgewood. Lived in the same rented house for six years. Used to be clean—boring as shit. Past several months, the pattern started to change. The asshole decided to get his hands dirty and has the balls to try and go up against us.”

“Maybe he got a sugar mama,” Nitro grunted, scratching at the edge of his chin. “Those small-town women get real generous when a man fills out the uniform.”

“He didn’t get paid in blow jobs and casseroles,” I said flatly.

Edge grinned. “Shame. That’d be easier to trace.”

I didn't smile. Not because it wasn't funny, but because this wasn't just another dirty cop with a padded wallet. Someone out there was trying to buy their way into my world. My tracks. My races. My territory.

And they were using a fucking traffic cop to do it. He might be low on the totem pole, but he had access.

Jax's fingers flew across his tablet. "We set traps across every payment channel. Dummy shell accounts, fake vendor contracts. Every time we get close, the money evaporates. Every account Devon touched scrubbed. No IPs. No traceable vendors. All offshore. Shells inside shells. And the trail's cold again."

I exhaled through my nose. "You said the same thing last week."

Jax's mouth twitched. "Yeah, well. The bastard's consistent. He's smart. Or scared. Probably both."

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Edge's blade clicked open and shut, the glint catching the light as he spun it between his fingers. "We sure he's smart? Maybe he's just lucky."

"Lucky doesn't explain how he keeps slipping through," I grunted. "Three months of tracking. Three setups. And everytime we get close, the money ghosts? If he's not the brains, then whoever he's working with is playing him like a puppet."

"Might explain why he's also gone," Edge mused. "Didn't show up for work three days ago. No phone. No cards. No traffic cams since last week."

"Think he ran?" Nitro asked.

"Maybe," Edge drawled. "But rats don't run unless the ship's burning. Which means whoever he's working with is getting nervous. Or could be that's the boss, and he's cleaning house."

My jaw ticked. I hated maybes. I built my world on facts. Precision. Control.

People thought racing was chaos—fast cars, loud engines, sharp turns. It wasn't. Racing was math, physics, breath, and timing. It was knowing the track down to every crack in the asphalt and knowing when to hit the gas and when to let someone else destroy themselves trying to keep up.

Nitro's voice rumbled low. "Cops don't usually play this clean."

"He's not clean," I muttered. "He's trained."

“Military?” Edge raised his brow and glanced at Jax.

Jax shook his head. “No record. Just another traffic cop in a no-name town west of here. Well, it’s called Wedgewood, but you know what I mean.”

“Which makes it worse,” I said, rising from the chair and wandering over to the window. “He’s a nobody. A uniform with a radar gun. Yet somehow, someone taught him to cover his fucking tracks.”

“Reminds me of that kid we used to run against,” Edge said behind me. “Back in Knoxville. Remember? That scrawny little asshole with the Civic and the muffler that sounded like a pissed-off lawnmower?”

I smirked. “He blew his transmission halfway through a two-lap sprint and still tried to claim he won.”

Edge chuckled. “Because you ‘cheated.’ By driving better.”

“Little shit did have balls, I’ll give him that. Couldn’t seem to stop beggin’ for another race, swearin’ this time he’d win.” I chuckled. “And one of us kicked his ass every single time.”

“Yeah,” Edge snorted. “Right up until Dad caught us watching race replays in the barn and saw his plates on the tape. Thought he was gonna tan our hides.”

My lips curved into a smile at the memory. “He let us keep racing, though.”

“He fucking helped us keep racing. Built that deathtrap of a car from the bones of an old Chevy and told us we could use it. If we waited until we turned sixteen to drive it off the property.”

“Still let us run it on the back field before that.”

In the reflection of the window, I watched my brother grin. “He knew it was either that or find us sneaking out again.”

We’d been born trouble. Raised on twenty acres of Tennessee dirt and backroads, sons of a man who scolded with one hand and handed us a wrench with the other. Edge and I cut our teeth on busted engines and quarter-mile drag runs through the trees.

Racing was all we ever wanted. All we ever needed.

And now I stood at the top of a fucking empire. Legal tracks. Underground circuits. Racing teams, vendor contracts, a professional roster that pulled in national headlines. What I built went deeper than blacktop and prize money. This was control. Territory. A precise network I ran with the same cold focus.

My name meant something. Not just in Crossbend. Not just in Florida. Everywhere from Miami to Memphis, Houston to fucking Atlanta, when people said Kane, they said it with respect. Or fear. Preferably both.

I didn’t take bribes. I didn’t throw races. And I sure as hell didn’t let outsiders grease the wheels behind my back.

Nothing happened without my knowledge. No one got in unless I let them.

So when some outside group thought they could bribe or muscle their way in through my vendors, they weren’t just stupid.

They were suicidal.

The last man who tried to muscle his way into my empire was currently buried under the foundations of a warehouse I owned.

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“You think this guy’s the endgame?” Nitro queried. “Or just the delivery boy?”

“Delivery boy,” I said with a shake of my head. “My gut says someone’s feeding him. Coaching him.”

Edge dropped his boot from my desk, leaning forward, all lazy charm gone. “So what’s the play?”

“I want him found,” I ordered, voice flat, final. “Yesterday.”

“You want him questioned or disappeared?” Edge questioned as he stood and stretched, spine cracking.

I turned and met my brother’s gaze. Calm. Even. That stillness was often mistook for passivity. But Edge knew better.

“We flush him out.”

“And if we can’t?” Nitro asked.

I didn’t answer, and a heavy silence settled. They knew what that meant. This wasn’t about payback. It was about principle. No one crossed the Redline Kings and walked away whole.

“Pull the bank records again,” I told Jax. “I don’t care how deep you have to dig. If someone’s paying him, there’s a trail.”

Jax nodded, already typing. “I’ll double the traps. Encrypt the vendor shell again, throw some bait into the payout stream. If someone’s still pulling his strings, they’ll tug.” Then he paused and looked up at me. “You think this ties to the offers you’ve been getting? The ones trying to ‘partner’ on Redline Speedway?”

“They’ve been getting bolder,” Edge mentioned casually. “The subtle threats aren’t so subtle anymore. Idiots think they can scare Kane into selling. Much to my amusement.”

I grunted, not a trace of humor in my tone.

Edge pushed his hands into his pockets, lips twitching into a crooked grin. “You know...for someone who’s got a billion-dollar racing empire, you’re awfully cranky when someone tries to break the rules.”

My eyes narrowed. “It’s not the rules getting broken that I mind so much.”

Edge lifted a brow. “No?”

“I mind when they think I won’t notice.”

Nitro smirked, dragging his fingers through his hair. “You wanna put out feelers? Shake the trees? Got snitches who owe me favors.”

I chewed on the options for a moment, then shook my head. “Not yet. Let’s not show our hand. Let ’em get comfortable. And stupid. Think we’re chasing shadows.”

Edge tilted his head. “And then?”

I met his eyes.

“Then we light ’em up and burn them to the fucking ground.”

3

SAVANNAH

The bells over the door jingled as I stepped into the only local coffee shop in Crossbend, Throttle and Pour. I let the scent of freshly ground beans calm my nerves.

The place wasn’t homey like Bean There Brewed That but had its own charm. There were chalkboard menus, mismatched mugs on display, and a plant wall near the front counter that looked lovingly maintained.

A woman in her forties stood behind the counter, wiping the top down with a practiced hand. She wore a band tee under a faded flannel and had a streak of silver in her otherwise dark hair. Glancing up as I approached, she offered a guarded smile. “Looking for something in particular?”

“Actually, yeah.” I pulled a copy of my résumé from my backpack. “I saw the Now Hiring sign in the window and wanted to apply. I have lots of barista experience.”

She set the rag down and took the paper, scanning it quickly. “Savannah Quincy?”

“That’s me.”

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“You’re from Wedgewood but want to drive to Crossbend to work?” She glanced at my résumé again, and her brow furrowed. “Why’re you leaving Bean There Brewed That?”

I blinked, wanting to kick myself for not thinking up an answer to this obvious question at some point over the past three days. It had seemed safer to do my digging in person during the day instead of at night, so I’d had to wait until I wasn’t working. “You know how it is in a small town, no real chance to spread your wings when everyone’s known you since before you could walk. I figured this was about as far away as I could get without having to move out of my apartment because that’s such a pain.”

“Can’t argue with that logic.” She skimmed the details of my job experience and nodded. “You’re qualified, I’ll give you that.”

“I’ve spent plenty of time at the espresso machine, grinder, and frother.” I offered a confident smile. “I practiced my skills on my brother, Devon Quincy, for years.” I looked for a spark of recognition in her eyes, but when I didn’t see one, I continued. “And I’ve dealt with all sorts of clientele, so you don’t need to worry about me getting flustered if Kane Beckett or any of the guys in his MC come in for coffee.”

“We get all kinds of customers.”

Her answer didn’t tell me anything at all, unfortunately. “So they come in here often?”

Something behind her eyes sharpened. “If you’re planning to ask questions about the

Redline Kings, you're wasting your time."

The shift in her tone wasn't hostile, but it was final.

I blinked. "I'm sorry?"

"I'm not sure how much y'all know about the club over in Wedgewood, but here in Crossbend, we don't gossip about the Redline Kings. Especially not with outsiders."

"Oh, I, um...didn't mean anything by it." I tried to look as innocent as possible when I added, "I just figured you might be worried how I'd react if bikers came into your shop."

She pursed her lips. "If you want to work here, you'll learn fast to treat the Redline Kings like VIPs."

"I can do that."

"Good."

I forced a smile, thanked her for her time, and promised to follow up about the job later in the week. Then I stepped back into the hot Florida sun and swallowed hard. Apparently, just mentioning Kane Beckett's club was enough to make people nervous.

Next, I went into the bakery just a block from the coffee shop. With a whitewashed brick front, hanging flower baskets lining the awning, and a hand-painted sign over the door that read Sugar & Spice, it looked like something out of a romcom. The sweet smell alone was enough to make me forget how awkward my last conversation had been.

The display case was stocked with cupcakes, fruit tarts, and perfectly glazed donuts. The place was busy but not chaotic, with a steady stream of customers weaving between tables and chatting softly in the bright, cozy space.

A girl about my age stood behind the counter, her hair in a low ponytail and flour dusted on her apron. She looked up and smiled as I approached. “What can I get you?”

I scanned the case, then pointed at a chocolate croissant. “That one looks dangerously good.”

She grinned. “It’s my favorite. Want it warmed up?”

“Yes, please.” I leaned against the counter. “I’m glad I decided to do some exploring today. A place like this makes me wish I had a better metabolism.”

She laughed and popped the pastry in the small oven behind her. “You’re not from Crossbend?”

“Nope. Wedgewood. Just a few towns over.”

“You picked a good time to stop in, then. We had some out-of-towners who wiped us out of just about everything early yesterday. Those guys could eat like you wouldn’t believe, which I guess makes sense with how many hours they spend behind the wheel in the blazing sun. That’s gotta burn a ton of calories.”

Bingo.

I tilted my head casually and did my best to sound like I knew what I was talking about. “Oh, do they race for Kane Beckett?”

The effect was instant. Her body tensed just slightly as she turned away to check the oven, and the two older women seated nearby went quiet mid-conversation. The man behind me shifted his weight, clearly listening now.

The girl turned back toward me and slid the croissant onto a plate, her smile dimmed. “I wouldn’t ask too many questions about that, if I were you.”

My brow furrowed. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to pry. Just heard about them from my brother, Devon, and got curious because it sounded so interesting.”

“Best to stay un-curious around here,” she replied, gentle but firm. “Maybe it works differently in Wedgewood, but people like their business kept private in Crossbend.”

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I nodded, taking the plate. “Got it. Thanks.”

I carried my food to an empty table by the window, my appetite fading. Around me, conversations had picked back up, but quieter now. The relaxed, easy vibe from earlier had been replaced by something heavier. As though everyone was pretending not to look at me while watching me all the same.

One thing was painfully clear.

Kane Beckett wasn’t just any man in this town.

He owned Crossbend.

My appetite dried up the second everyone inside the bakery had gone quiet. I tossed the half-eaten croissant in the trash on my way out.

The sidewalk outside felt hotter than before, or maybe that was just the burn of adrenaline still prickling under my skin. I wrapped my arms around myself as I wandered toward the small park near the end of the block, trying to gather my thoughts. I didn’t expect people to welcome my questions, but I didn’t think they’d shut me out completely either.

I was halfway to the park when I felt the eerie prickle on the back of my neck that told me I was being watched.

I slowed instinctively, like my brother taught me. My eyes scanned the street, the cars, the storefronts.

That's when I saw him.

A man stood near the edge of the parking lot, leaning casually against a matte black motorcycle. He was tall and broad-shouldered, all muscle and menace. The leather vest he was wearing marked him as one of the Redline Kings. When he pushed off the bike and started walking toward me, I felt every hair on my arms rise.

He didn't smile.

Didn't even speak until he was close enough that I could see the faint scar that split his right eyebrow.

"You Savannah Quincy?"

I blinked. "Who's asking?"

His eyes narrowed slightly. "That's not a smart question."

"I figured if people are gonna stalk me around town, I should at least get a name." My gaze dropped to his leather vest. "I guess I'll just have to go with calling you Tail Gunner in my head instead."

He didn't rise to the bait, just took a step closer. "Word travels fast in Crossbend. So let me make this simple. You need to stop asking questions about Kane Beckett and the Redline Kings."

I stiffened. "I haven't done anything wrong."

"Pokin' around in our business sure as fuck isn't right."

My stomach dropped, but I kept my chin high. "Are you threatening me?"

“I’m warning you.” His tone stayed calm, almost casual. “You’re new around here. Maybe you don’t understand how things work. Questions like yours get noticed. And not in a good way.”

He turned and walked off without another word, swinging a leg over the bike and firing up the engine with a growl that I felt in my bones.

I stood frozen on the sidewalk long after he was gone.

He hadn’t raised his voice or laid a hand on me.

But it was the clearest threat I’d ever received in my life.

I sat on a bench near the edge of the park, staring at the cracked pavement under my feet while the sound of that motorcycle faded into the distance.

I wasn’t stupid. I knew it would be safer to go back home to Wedgewood and never come back.

My hands were still shaking. My stomach was in knots.

It didn’t change anything, though.

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Devon was in trouble. Whatever he'd gotten tangled up in had something to do with Kane Beckett.

My brother might be the one who joined the police academy and wore the badge, but I could out-stubborn him any day of the week. And I would do just about anything to protect the only real family I had left, even if it meant stepping into the lion's den.

4

KANE

The moon hung heavy overhead, spilling pale light across the cracked asphalt and dented metal bleachers. It was just past midnight, but the heat hadn't broken. The scent of scorched rubber and hot exhaust hung in the air, clinging to the humidity that wrapped itself around me like a second skin.

Even the other lifelong Floridians looked uncomfortable as they shifted in their seats and fanned their red faces. But still, there was high energy buzzing through the crowd.

Engines screamed across the track, low and vicious, the kind of sound that vibrated in your chest and straight down to your toes. My boots crunched over the gravel as I stepped into the pit lane, the roar of modified motorcycles cutting through the rest of the noise like thunder.

This wasn't some sanctioned event with prize banners and safety barriers. No, this track—tucked into an abandoned airstrip miles off the grid—was the kind of place

that bred legends and buried the rest.

Illegal. Unforgiving. And mine.

My road captain had a new ride. She was purring like a beast, her black frame sleek as sin under the pit lights. Axle was crouched beside it, fine-tuning the clutch with a small hex wrench, his jaw tight with focus. Grease stained the ends of his fingers, and his cut hung open over a sweat-dampened shirt, but it was obvious he was in love with his new lady.

“That bike better fuck you like she loves you,” I muttered with a grin as I stopped beside him.

Axle didn’t look up. “She’s the only thing I’ve ridden lately that didn’t disappoint.”

I scoffed. “Like you’ve been riding anything else.” I couldn’t remember the last time I’d seen Axle with a woman besides his sister. Definitely before he’d been in a coma after a bad wreck during a race. Not that I had any room to judge.

Axle chuckled. “I have the perfect woman, right here.”

“She’s twitchy in the back end,” I noted, studying the curve of the tires. “Shifts her weight mid-sprint.”

“She likes to be teased,” he said with a smirk. “If you know how to touch her.”

“I’d rather not get into your kinks.”

Axle snorted, tightening the final bolt before standing. “Something on your mind, Prez?”

My gaze tracked the next rider speeding past, one of the two semi-pros I sponsored through a back-door team. Not club members, but good enough to keep the heat on our competitors. “I want eyes on the prize tonight. Smoke ’em clean, but don’t make it look easy. I want ’em just cocky enough to bet bigger next time.”

Axle rolled his shoulders and jerked his chin up. “You got it.”

The speakers crackled, announcing the final heat. He swung his leg over the bike and fired it up, the engine snarling with anticipation.

Before I could take a step back, Jax slid up beside me like a shadow in motion.

“Prez,” he said quietly.

I didn’t look at him. Whatever it was could wait. “This about the proxy team? I already know. We’ll debrief after the race.”

“It’s not the race,” Jax said, voice low but deliberate. “We need to talk.”

Frowning, I followed when he walked to a quieter, more isolated spot. “It’s a woman.”

I turned my head, slow and sharp. “What woman?”

“One who’s been asking around Crossbend. About you.”

My jaw flexed. “You pulled me out of a heat because some bored tourist got curious?”

Jax shot me a frown as he adjusted his ball cap with our team logo on it. “She’s not just asking about you. She mentioned Devon Quincy, too.”

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That gave me pause, but I still failed to see the urgency.

“Tried the coffee shop and the bakery before Drift caught wind and made contact,” Jax continued, gaze sharp behind his glasses.

“Contact,” I echoed with a smirk. “You mean he scared the shit out of her.”

“That was the intent.”

I squinted at him through the dim lighting in the pit lane. “So? You think people in this town are gonna crack just because some out-of-towner plays Nancy Drew? The ones who don’t keep their mouths shut out of loyalty will do it out of fear. Crossbend doesn’t talk.”

Jax lifted a brow. “I didn’t bring it to you because it’s a problem, Prez. I brought it to you because it’s an opportunity.”

That got my attention. I turned fully. “What kind of opportunity?”

Jax handed me his phone. A picture of a woman filled the screen—blond waves pulled back in a ponytail, blue eyes wide, and her jaw hardened in stubborn determination as she stood outside the bakery. But there was a softness about her that made me wonder if she was as confident as she wanted people to believe.

“Says her name is Savannah Quincy,” Jax said.

My pulse thudded once, hard. “Quincy?”

“Yup. She’s Devon’s sister.”

Damn straight, it was a fucking golden opportunity.

I stared at the photo again, closer this time. She was younger than I expected. Early twenties. Short. Curvy. Pretty in a way that felt too clean for this world. Too honest.

She had no idea what the hell she was walking into. Me.

“Bait,” I growled.

Jax adjusted his hat, turning it backward as he considered what I’d said.

“To draw out the rat,” he concluded.

“We take her,” I declared, already reaching for my cell.

Jax nodded once, his mind already several steps ahead. “She lives in Wedgewood. Small apartment above a flower shop. Quiet street. Minimal security. Should be able to snatch her without notice.”

“No,” I muttered, dialing my brother. “We don’t make this subtle.”

The line clicked.

“Yeah?”

“I need you and a few of the boys to meet me at the garage. Half an hour.”

Edge didn’t ask questions. “Done.”

I hung up and shoved my cell back into my pocket, my mind already shifting gears.

They wanted to use a rat to get inside my world? Fine. I'd use bait to drag the bastard out.

Eight hours later, the van rolled to a stop in front of a narrow building tucked behind a row of old businesses.

Wedgewood was a small, quiet town. The kind of place where everyone knew each other's business. So we'd chosen to grab her in the morning when she left, knowing a lot of people would be up for work.

I stepped out of the van and casually leaned against the passenger door. Several people entered and exited the florist shop, all throwing us curious covert looks. When their eyes landed on me, if they didn't recognize my face, then it was my cut that had them dropping their gazes as they hurried to their cars. They knew they weren't in danger from us unless they'd crossed us, but we were scary motherfuckers nonetheless.

Not everyone outside Crossbend knew who we were, but they were the minority. Even if they weren't involved in the world of racing.

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Finally, after an hour, Savannah stepped out of the side stairwell in jeans and a white tank top that had a ruffle around the hem and a little bow just beneath her full tits. Her white-blond hair fell in loose waves down her back, and the locks floated around her as she hefted a tote bag onto her shoulder.

She seemed lost in her thoughts as she walked down the stairs and into the lot. We'd deliberately parked beside her car, and just before she reached it, she saw me, her steps faltering as her eyes zeroed in on my cut.

Her lips parted, but she didn't even get the scream out.

Edge and Nitro moved fast—clean and efficient. She got in one hard shove of resistance before Edge carefully collared her neck so he could insert the needle that would knock her out. Her body jerked, eyes flaring wide with shock and panic.

And then she slumped.

I caught her before she hit the ground.

Fuck.

She was warm and soft in my arms. Tiny compared to me, barely reaching my chest. Her breathing was shallow, lashes dark against her cheeks, and her plush pink lips were parted slightly.

I swallowed hard. My cock surged behind my zipper like it'd just remembered what blood flow felt like.

Fucking hell. Get a grip, Beckett!

She smelled like lavender and something sweet. Maybe vanilla. Her curves were mouthwatering, from the generous swell of her tits to the flare of her hips and those long legs that I could already imagine locked tight around my neck.

I had never reacted this violently to a woman. Hell, I hadn't reacted at all in a long fucking time. My libido had gone dormant—like the switch had been flipped off by boredom and responsibility.

But Savannah flipped it back on. Just like that.

I gritted my teeth as I settled her into the back bench of the van, her hair sliding across the leather like a silk ribbon.

Her ocean-blue eyes had burned into me right before she passed out. I couldn't stop wondering what they'd look like when she came—writhing underneath me, full of need and pleasure, begging for more while I buried myself deep inside her.

Fuck me.

I hissed out a breath and adjusted myself, pressing the heel of my hand to the bulge in my jeans.

“Stand down,” I muttered under my breath. “You don't fuck bait.”

My cock didn't care.

When we arrived at the compound, the brother on security jerked his chin up in greeting as he opened the gate and waved us through.

After parking in the lot around the corner from the clubhouse entrance, I lifted Savannah into my arms and stepped out of the van. No one batted an eye when they saw me. Loyalty wasn't something I asked for. It was something I earned. And even if they were curious, my guys knew better than to ask why we'd brought back an unconscious woman.

The plan was to stash her in the spare room off the main floor. It was used sometimes for recovery or isolation. Had a bed, a private bath, and not much else.

But when I carried her inside and crossed the lounge, I didn't turn left toward the hallways that would lead us to that room.

I turned right.

Went up the stairs.

Down the hall.

Straight to the end.

Right to my fucking room.

It wasn't a conscious decision. My legs had already made it before my brain caught the fuck up.

This space was different from the other rooms in the clubhouse. As president, I had more of an apartment-type setup. An open layout with a living room area that had two overstuffed couches, a coffee table, and a sixty-inch television. There was also a kitchenette with a small table and a separate bedroom that had an en suite bathroom.

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I carried her into the bedroom and laid her gently on the mattress, brushing her hair away from her face.

Damn, she was gorgeous. Her skin was warm. Her breath still and even.

“You’re fucking dangerous,” I told her quietly.

She didn’t move.

I balled my hands into fists and trudged back into the living room. After taking a few steadying breaths, I grabbed a screwdriver from the closet and quietly reversed the door handles so I could lock her in. She’d be out for hours, but I still tried not to make too much noise.

Then I went down to the clubhouse kitchen, ignoring the curious stare from Edge, the only one who was safe from a bullet if he asked why the fuck I’d just put our prisoner in my room. It wasn’t like he’d followed me up there. I could have put her anywhere on the second floor. But my damn brother had always been able to read me when no one else could.

Still, he took in my glare and wisely kept his mouth shut. For now.

After grabbing some food, I headed to my office and buried myself in work. There would be no progress made until she woke up.

I checked on her twice, just to make sure she hadn’t woken up and needed food, then holed up in my office again each time. It was after midnight when I finally decided to

get some sleep. I regretted my impulsive decision to put her in my room because it meant I'd have to crash in one of the available rooms down the hall, so I resolved to move her in the morning.

She was still sleeping peacefully when I looked in on her, and my gaze roamed from her silvery hair spilling over my pillow to her structured cheekbones. When it drifted to her lips, I had to remind myself not to picture them around my cock.

I stood there too long, staring at her mouth. At the way her chest rose and fell, pushing her tits against her tank, like they were trying to burst free. At the soft line of her thighs where her jeans hugged her just right.

Yeah, my cock was back to full attention, straining against the denim with zero shame.

"I said stand down," I growled under my breath, dragging a hand over my face.

After taking a deep breath, I stalked into the living room and shut and locked the bedroom door once more.

That should have been the end of it.

I should've walked out.

Should've turned, locked the door behind me, and let one of the prospects post up for security.

I took a step toward the door. Then another. Reached for the handle and opened it.

But when I went to step into the hallway, something in my chest tightened.

I looked back at the closed bedroom door. Pictured her out cold. Completely still.

And for some reason, I couldn't stand the thought of leaving her alone in that room.

With a muttered curse, I kicked off my boots, yanked my shirt over my head, and shoved my jeans down to my boxers. Then I stalked over to the couch and dropped onto it with a grunt.

I didn't know what the fuck was happening to me. This girl felt...dangerous to me somehow. Yet the thought of setting her free turned my stomach. But she was bait. I'd have to let her go eventually.

Right?

5

SAVANNAH

I woke up groggy and disoriented, my limbs sluggish and my tongue thick behind my teeth. It took me a second to realize I wasn't in my bed. Or anywhere familiar.

The ceiling above me was painted white, and the bedding beneath me smelled like laundry detergent and something masculine. Maybe cologne.

My heart thudded hard as I sat up too quickly, and a wave of dizziness hit me hard.

I braced a hand against the mattress and forced myself to breathe. Slowly. In and out until I didn't feel as though I was going to pass out.

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The last thing I remembered was walking to my car. A man in a leather vest with piercing green eyes. Hands grabbing me. Then nothing.

Panic flared, and I scrambled off the bed, my legs unsteady as I scanned the room. It seemed normal. Stark and spare, but clean. Just a dresser, bed, nightstand, closet, and two closed doors. The first led to a bathroom that I realized I badly needed as soon as I saw the toilet. But the second didn't budge when I tried the handle.

It was locked from the outside.

Trying to stay calm, I yanked open the dresser drawers in search of clues to where I'd been taken. All I found were folded T-shirts, socks, boxer briefs, and belts. Nothing personal. No photos, no clutter, not even a stray sock or receipt.

I padded into the closet next, finding more men's clothes. Mostly jeans and more tees but also a decent number of bespoke suits.

Motorcycle boots lined the floor, along with expensive dress shoes.

The mixture of biker and wealthy businessman left me with one very plausible answer—Kane Beckett was behind my kidnapping.

My hands curled into fists as I walked away from the closet, my stomach roiling with anger and fear. I'd watched enough true crime documentaries to know that being taken to a secondary location was never a good thing.

I only had myself to blame. If I'd listened to my brother's warning, I never would've

come to Crossbend. I hadn't even taken the threat from the Redline Kings tail gunner seriously yesterday. Not really since I'd still planned to come back today. Just not to wherever the Redline Kings MC had brought me.

I took small comfort in the fact that they'd had plenty of time to hurt me but had left me alone instead. I wasn't even tied up. Yet aside from the locked door, the room didn't feel like a prison.

The click of the lock had me backing up instinctively. My knees hit the edge of the bed and almost buckled beneath me. My pulse pounded as the door creaked open, and he stepped inside.

Kane Beckett.

The man with the green eyes that were burned into my brain when I could remember nothing else.

He'd been attractive in the photos I'd found of him online, but he was beyond gorgeous in person. With thick red hair and a neatly trimmed beard to go with it. He was a good foot taller than me, around six foot five. His jaw was sharp, his mouth hard, and his right arm had a full sleeve of black ink, which only emphasized how muscular he was.

Kane was imposing enough to scare the heck out of me, but I still had the ridiculous urge to climb him like a tree.

He looked exactly how I remembered from the blurry flashes before I passed out. Only now, I wasn't disoriented. And he was even more dangerous without the haze of fear.

He walked into the room with deliberate calm. "You're awake."

“What the hell am I doing here?” I snapped, straightening my spine.

He didn’t answer right away. Just stood there, gaze roaming over me in a way that made my skin heat in a completely inappropriate reaction under the circumstances.

Crossing his arms over his broad chest, he finally murmured, “You’re bait. To draw out your brother.”

I blinked, shaking my head. “What?”

“You heard me, Savannah.”

I bit my bottom lip. “You know my name.”

“Know a fuck of a lot more than that.” His lips curved into the slightest smirk. “Never woulda taken you, otherwise.”

Something was seriously wrong with me. I was twenty years old and had never truly been interested in a guy before. Just some small crushes that hadn’t led to anything. Kane had jump-started my dormant libido...right after drugging and abducting me. Unfortunately, it was too soon to blame my attraction to him on Stockholm syndrome.

Lacing my fingers together to hide how badly my hands were shaking, I asked, “Because of my brother?”

“Yup,” he confirmed with a sharp nod. “Ten days. Your brother gives me what I want, or I keep you.”

I studied him, searching for any hint that he was joking. But his expression remained hard. “It’s not going to work.”

His jaw flexed. “You saying Devon’s the kind of guy who’d let his sister swing in the wind for his mistakes?”

“No,” I bit out, pressing my lips into a firm line. “My brother is the best. He’d go to the ends of the earth to protect me, but he has no idea I’m in trouble. He’s completely off the grid. Giving him ten days to give you whatever you want isn’t going to do any good when he doesn’t have a clue that you kidnapped me.”

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“You better hope you’re just as wrong about that as you are about him being the best.” He shook his head. “If not, you’re in a fuck ton of trouble.”

I narrowed my eyes and glared at him. “I’m not the one who’s completely off base here.”

He stepped closer.

I didn’t move. Not because I wasn’t tempted—every self-preservation instinct I had was waving red flags. But I refused to flinch in front of him.

Kane stopped just inches away, close enough that I could see the way his pupils dilated as his gaze dropped to my mouth.

That small smirk reappeared. “You have a smart mouth for someone in your position.”

“Maybe you should’ve kidnapped someone more agreeable,” I quipped, refusing to back down.

His jaw ticked, and something almost like amusement flickered across his face. “Nah, this is much more interesting.”

My breath hitched.

He reached out and grabbed my arm—just firmly enough to haul me forward until our bodies brushed. His chest was solid as stone, radiating heat, and I hated the way

my body responded. My skin tingled with awareness.

His head dipped slightly, and my heart stopped.

I should've been terrified by the idea of him kissing me. Or disgusted.

But all I could think about was how good he smelled. How soft his beard looked. How badly I wanted to know what kissing him felt like.

Kane didn't give me what I wanted, though. Instead, he huffed out a breath and stepped back, releasing me just as abruptly as he'd grabbed me.

The air between us was thick with tension.

"Ten days," he repeated, turning toward the door.

I stood frozen, humiliated and furious in equal measure. Because I'd expected the kiss.

Even worse, I'd really wanted it.

Just like I'd thought earlier—something was definitely wrong with me.

I jerked my gaze away from the door as it shut behind him and pressed the heels of my hands to my temples. My heart was still pounding, my whole body on edge.

Kane was my kidnapper.

Not some book boyfriend from one of the dark romances I'd read.

Too bad my body hadn't gotten the message.

KANE

I left my room with a smile I couldn't quite shake. The kind that lingered like the taste of good whiskey—warm, sharp, and entirely unexpected. I didn't smile without a damn reason. Especially not after kidnapping someone. But hell if Savannah Quincy hadn't lit a fuse in me I hadn't realized was dry.

I hadn't expected her to fight. I thought she'd scream, cry, plead. But Savannah Quincy had looked me in the eye and gone toe-to-toe with me as though I wasn't the monster who'd had her drugged and kidnapped less than twenty-four hours ago.

Hell, I was still half hard just thinking about the way her voice had cracked with fury when she told me I was completely off base. She'd been trembling, but she hadn't backed down. There was fire in her. And my cock, the bastard, had taken it as an invitation.

I couldn't get her out of my head. The rise and fall of her chest when she got worked up, how pink her mouth was when she snapped back at me. And the way her body had fit against mine when I'd pulled her in.

Fucking hell. My cock had been trying to pick a fight with my jeans the whole damn time.

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I headed downstairs, rubbing the back of my neck and muttering curses under my breath.

Get a grip, Beckett.

She was my prisoner. Leverage. Bait.

I had no business wondering what those ocean-blue eyes would look like when she was coming apart under my mouth.

I tried to work all day. I really fucking did. Emails, contract negotiations, team schedules, vendor payments—none of it stuck. I kept thinking about her curled up in that bed, breathing slowly and evenly, skin soft and untouched by this world. And I kept hearing her voice, full of fight and heat.

At night, I told myself I was going to sleep in one of the spare rooms. That was the plan. The smart choice. That was sane.

But by midnight, I'd convinced myself I needed to check on her. Just for security. To make sure she hadn't tried to climb out the window or shove a fork in a wall socket.

Security, I told myself again. That was all.

I unlocked the bedroom door quietly, stepped into the dim room, and stood there for a long minute.

Moonlight spilled through the blinds in long silver lines, falling across the bed where

she lay curled on her side, her hands tucked beneath her cheek, hair fanned out across my pillow like liquid silk.

My breath caught. Fuck, she was beautiful.

I stood there like a fuckin' fool. Just staring at her. Then I peeled off my shirt, shoved down my jeans, and stood in nothing but boxer briefs while calling myself twenty kinds of idiot. I shouldn't get in that bed. I knew it. But my body moved before my brain could argue.

The mattress dipped beneath my weight as I lay down, staying on the edge, facing her back, rigid with restraint.

Then she moved. As if she felt the heat of my body and instinctively curled toward it. She made a soft sound in her sleep and pressed her face against my chest like she'd been doing it forever.

I froze. And then—I broke.

My arm came around her without conscious thought, dragging her close. Her body molded to mine, and she fit perfectly. Soft. Warm. My hand spread over her back, holding her tight and her round, juicy ass tucked against my hip, a temptation almost too difficult to resist.

I told myself I wouldn't touch her.

But holding her didn't count.

I fell asleep with Savannah tucked against me, breathing her in like a man starved of oxygen.

Awake before dawn, I slipped out of bed and locked the door behind me. No one saw. No one knew.

Except me.

The next night, I did the same damn thing.

And the one after that.

By the fourth morning, I'd stopped pretending I was going to stay away. I was fully aware I was fucked.

Bookshell Cove was an old corner store that sat tucked between a hair salon and a little deli, all weathered brick and sun-faded blue trim, dusty windows, and enough paperbacks packed inside to sink a boat.

Wind chimes jingled above the door as I stepped inside. It was one of those places that smelled like it had soaked up years of stories and the comfort they brought.

"Well, well," came a familiar voice. "If it isn't my favorite pain in the ass."

Gloria Landry stood behind the register. Her dark hair, with a few streaks of gray, was twisted into a knot on top of her head. Her smile was wide enough to light the place without electricity. She wore a loose cotton dress and sandals, and despite being half my size and five times less intimidating, she looked at me like she'd raised me herself.

"Morning," I said gruffly.

She put her hands on her hips.

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“You’re two days late,” she teased. “Missed your weekly. Thought I was gonna have to call Edge and ask if you fell off your bike.”

“I’ve been busy.”

“Mm-hmm,” she said knowingly as she walked around the counter. “Too busy to stop in and say hello? I might start taking it personally.” As she stared up at my face, her eyes narrowed, and she tilted her head to the side. “You sleeping enough? You look tired.”

I snorted. “I always look tired.”

“No, you usually look broody. Now you look tiredandbroody. That’s worse.”

I walked past the stack of new releases. “Got a list.”

Taking the paper I held out, she squinted at the names. “These aren’t your usual authors.”

I said nothing.

Her lips twitched. “They’re also all romance.”

Still said nothing.

She grinned. “Must be for someone special.”

“Just get the books, Gloria,” I muttered.

Her lips twitched like she was biting back a thousand jokes. But she just winked and patted my hand. “Give me five minutes.”

While she searched the shelves, I wandered the store. My boots thudded dully on the old wood floors. The ceiling fan turned slowly overhead, doing more to move the scent of paper around than actually cool the place down.

I’d been here enough times to know every section. I liked to read—always had. My dad had handed me an engine manual when I was seven and told me not to ask for help until I finished it cover to cover.

I read it twice in one day.

Gloria came back with a stack. “New releases by four of the authors on your list. Fifth one’s a reprint, but it’s got a bonus epilogue. You want ’em all?”

I nodded once.

“You want me to wrap these?”

“Appreciate it,” I muttered.

She laughed and pulled out kraft paper and twine. “So no one gives you shit?”

“So no one opens their mouth.”

She wrapped the books fast, bagged them up, and leaned on the counter with a smirk. “Tell your mystery girl she’s got excellent taste in fiction. These are spicy.”

“Of course they are,” I grunted.

Her smile turned softer than her sarcasm. “Whoever she is...she’s lucky.”

I didn’t answer.

But she didn’t expect me to.

As I stepped outside, the sun beat down hard, and the salty air off the gulf tangled in my beard. I was halfway to my bike when a voice called out from across the street.

“Yo, Kane!”

I turned to see Dale Rourke, owner of the beach shop across from Bookshell Cove, lifting a hand in greeting.

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“Heard you have a new driver for the pro team,” he said. “Can’t wait to see him run at Redline Speedway next week.”

I smirked. “You’ll see him.”

He gave me a thumbs-up, then turned back to unlock his store.

I swung a leg over my Harley, dropped the bag into the saddle compartment, and fired up the engine. The roar echoed off the walls as I peeled out, headed back to the compound.

When I pulled through the gates, brothers were moving between the main building and the garage where we kept our bikes to protect them and do small repairs. The hum of an engine being tuned bled into the air like background music.

I parked, cut the engine, and stalked inside.

Axle, Jax, and Nitro were already waiting in my office when I got back. Jax was perched on the edge of the desk, fingers tapping his phone, his glasses sitting on the top of his head. Axle was stretched out in one of the leather chairs, feet crossed, calm as always. Nitro leaned against the wall, arms crossed and expression dark.

I set the bag down behind my desk and dropped onto the chair.

“Update?” I asked Jax.

“I’ve been doing a deeper dive into the companies we do business with and found one

that I don't recognize, but they have shown up a fuck of a lot in the past six months. Bayfront Logistics. I went digging into their finances. They show unfiled invoices and private transfers. I traced it back to a secure account owned by an LLC called CR Enterprises. Their fingerprints are on multiple transfers, and they signed off on a few equipment shipments that were never real—dummy invoices designed to shift money.”

“The name on the LLC?” I asked.

Jax didn't look up. “Henry Allen. He's a manager of operations for one of your legitimate racing subsidiaries—specifically the vendor logistics and sponsorship coordination arm for multiple events and track supply contracts.” Jax paused, dropping his glasses onto his nose as his eyes scanned the screen once more before narrowing. “He handled the vendor contracts for your Tallahassee tracks. The ones you've been getting the offers on.”

My blood cooled. I knew Allen. Trusted him, even. Slick talker with a clean record. Had a way of making sponsors open their wallets and bureaucrats back off. He'd been with me since I started expanding the legal circuit. Helped secure permits, file LLCs, and coordinate regional vendors. He'd handled major sponsor contacts and payouts without issue—I never had a reason to doubt him.

Honestly, I'd never really liked him much as a person, but I respected Allen as a “necessary evil” who kept the above-ground side smooth.

Now, though...

“You sure?” I asked even though I already knew the answer.

Jax turned the screen toward me. “Positive. He didn't use his real name on the registration. But the IP address that filed the paperwork came from his home office.

Sloppy.”

Edge whistled low. “And here I thought that smug bastard was just good at schmoozing sponsors.”

I stared at the name for a long second. Henry Allen. The motherfucker had been sitting at my table. Eating off my plate. Smiling while he stabbed me in the back.

“I want him watched,” I said. “Don’t spook him. Don’t make contact. Just keep eyes on him. If he twitches, I want to know.”

“Will do,” Jax confirmed.

“Hear anything on Devon?”

He shook his head, frustration tightening his mouth. “Still nothing. No movement. No chatter. No burner pings. If Quincy knows we have her, he’s not showing it.”

“Maybe he doesn’t know yet,” Nitro offered.

“Could be,” Jax muttered. “Drift made sure the message got out. We were seen. Someone had to pass the word. Could be he’s just that good at hiding.”

“Unless he’s dead,” Axle offered, not unkindly. Just practical.

I didn’t like that thought.

Not because I gave a shit about Devon Quincy.

But because of how it would affect Savannah.

Axle leaned forward, elbows on his knees. “So what happens if ten days come and go? What do we do then? You keeping her?”

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I thought about Savannah. Her mouth. Her eyes. Her fire. The way she curled into me each night like she belonged there.

I thought about the books in the bag. The fact that I knew her favorite authors.

And how I wasn't sure I'd ever met a woman I wanted more.

I didn't want to give her back.

Not sure I could.

But I didn't say that.

Instead, I looked up at my brothers and said, "We cross that bridge when we come to it."

They nodded, trusting me like they always did.

But for the first time in a long time, I wasn't sure what the fuck I was going to do next.

Even as we moved on to other things—new shipment logistics, race scheduling, intel on a crew sniffing around the Tallahassee circuit—I couldn't stop thinking about her.

The woman upstairs in my bed.

And the growing part of me that wanted to keep her there.

Forever.

7

SAVANNAH

The scent that had already become familiar was the first thing I registered when I woke up. Hints of cedar and clove, with an undercurrent of leather, lingered—warm and undeniably masculine. It clung to the pillow and sheets, along with the edge of my sleep-fogged brain.

Somehow, it was stronger than when I fell asleep last night. Same as it had been the past four mornings. At first, I thought maybe it was just lingering cologne left behind from Kane. But the smell never faded. Instead, it grew sharper and more impossible to ignore each time I woke up.

I breathed in slowly, my eyes still closed as I tried to shake off the haze. My limbs were heavy with sleep, and the bed was too comfortable to leave.

I'd gotten more rest being a Redline Kings hostage than I had in months. Maybe years.

I had no responsibilities in this room, except for the studying I had gotten done since Kane brought my study guide and notes. No laptop, though. He hadn't given in to that request, no matter how often I asked. Even without the Wi-Fi password, giving me a computer was apparently a risk he wasn't willing to take.

With no work obligations—or electronics to distract me, aside from the television he brought in the second day—I'd worked through the entire study guide and finally felt prepared for my exam. If I got out of here in time. Or ever.

Something I was beginning to doubt as the days ticked past.

I didn't even know if Kane had been able to get in touch with my brother. He wouldn't tell me anything, and he was the only person I'd seen since I was brought here.

He brought me all of my meals and stayed to eat breakfast with me three times. Not yesterday, though. I didn't want to admit it—not even to myself—but I had missed that time with him. And not just because he wouldn't let anyone else around me.

Whatever game he was playing, I didn't understand the rules. Only that the stakes felt higher each day.

One thing was clear. Kane wasn't treating me like just leverage.

I just didn't know whether that made things better...or worse.

The lock on the door clicked, and my eyes popped open as I sat up. Kane stepped inside, broad-shouldered and imposing as ever, a tray laden with food balanced easily in one hand and carrying a bag with words "Bookshell Cove" on it. My stupid heart gave a little kick, and I hated that my body reacted this way every time I saw him. Which was much more often than I expected.

"Morning." He set the tray next to me on the mattress, then set the bag on the nightstand on my other side.

There were two plates and a bowl with heaping servings of eggs, bacon, toast, and fruit. It was way more than I could finish, so I assumed he was going to join me until he turned toward the dresser.

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“Trying to fatten me up?” I asked, tugging the tray closer.

“You’d know if I wanted to add to your curves.” He snorted. “Eat.”

Bossy caveman.

Of course my stomach picked that exact moment to rumble. Lifting my fork, I asked, “You want any?”

“Not this morning.” He opened the top drawer and pulled out a folded black T-shirt. “Gotta change before a meeting. Leave whatever you don’t want. I’ll grab the tray later.”

I took a bite of eggs to buy myself a second to study him without being obvious. “Can I ask you something?”

“Go ahead. We both know you’re gonna ask whatever you want anyway.” After slipping his leather vest off, he tugged the shirt he was wearing over his head in one smooth motion, muscles flexing as he exposed his bare chest to my hungry gaze.

I forced my eyes back to my plate. “Why’d you put me in your room? It must make things inconvenient for you when you need something since I’m always here.”

“Not really. I can come and go whenever I want.”

His reply was muffled, so I figured it was safe to look up again. The clean shirt was on, and I caught the corner of his mouth kicking up.

Irritated by how smug he was while basically rubbing my hostage status in my face, I mumbled, “Unlike me.”

He flat-out grinned. “Unlike you.”

I chomped a bite of toast with a glare. “In case you forgot, I’m not here voluntarily.”

“Didn’t forget.” He took a step closer, thumbs hooking in the belt loops of his jeans. “Your ten days aren’t up.”

“Almost halfway.” I set the fork down, my appetite diminishing at the reminder. “How’s the bait plan working out for you? Ready to concede that kidnapping me was a bad idea when you can’t even let my brother know that you have me?”

His gaze didn’t waver. “We’ll see.”

“That’s not an answer.”

“It’s the only one you’re getting.”

“Then give me a real answer to the one I originally asked.” I set the fork down and met his gaze straight on. “Why this room? I’m sure there are plenty of others in this compound you could’ve shoved me into.”

He gave me what I demanded, but I was in no way prepared for his response.

“Because you’re mine.”

He said it with a certainty that I didn’t understand. My pulse tripped. I scrambled for an explanation that would make even a little bit of sense. “You mean I’m your problem. Your responsibility. Your pawn in this game you’re playing with my

brother.”

His eyes stayed on mine, unreadable. “If thinking that helps you sleep, go ahead.”

“It helps me not throw this plate at your head,” I shot back.

That almost smile tugged at the corner of his mouth again, there and gone in a flash. He reached for his cut and slid it on, the broken-in leather settling across his broad shoulders.

“Like I said before, eat.” Then he glanced at the bag he’d left on the little table. “Thought you might want somethin’ to read.”

The door shut behind him with a quiet click, but the tension in the air didn’t go with him. I stared at the spot where he just stood, my heart thudding against my ribs.

The bickering wasn’t anything new. We’d been doing this back-and-forth thing for days. It seemed to be more about the pent-up chemistry between us than actually arguing.

But this time had been different.

Because you’re mine.

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Three little words, spoken like a statement of fact. As though Kane had no doubts—while I had nothing but them. Especially after hearing that. And being told to think what I wanted, as if my guesses about what he meant were totally off the mark when they were the only things that made sense.

I suddenly remembered the bag he'd brought and picked it up, then dumped the contents onto the mattress in front of me. Five paper-wrapped books tumbled out. Huh. I opened the first one and was shocked when I saw it was a reprint that included a bonus epilogue from one of my favorite romance authors. Quickly, I tore open the rest and found four new releases by authors I loved.

Dumbfounded, I stared at the pretty paperbacks and tried to figure out what they meant. He'd gone to a bookstore and bought me romance novels? The big, scary biker? The image made me giggle, but then I scolded myself not to let this soften me toward him. Too late.

"Ugh!" I dragged in a deep breath and flopped backward onto the bed, careful not to bump the tray while I glared at the ceiling like it might offer answers. Unfortunately, it didn't.

Instead, all I got was a deeper whiff of that scent of cedar, clove, and leather.

Suddenly, the reason it kept deepening every morning hit me.

It wasn't because the sheets hadn't been washed or because Kane was sitting on the bed during the day. The scent was too fresh for that. It always intensified overnight because he'd been sleeping here with me.

And I slept so soundly in his bed that I'd had no idea.

I bolted upright again, clutching the comforter like it might steady me.

I tried to tell myself I was imagining things. That maybe the scent clung to the pillows just because he spent time in here with me sometimes. But this wasn't some faint, leftover trace. It was steeped into the fabric. Into the mattress. Into the air itself.

I squeezed my eyes shut.

He'd been in this bed. While I slept.

Next to me.

A flood of conflicting feelings surged all at once. Shock, confusion, fear...and something else I wasn't ready to name.

This was a massive violation of boundaries. I should have been furious. Yet I had felt safe enough to sleep through the night with him beside me. Better than I had in years.

My stomach twisted. I didn't want that to mean anything. To attach a feeling of safety to a man who'd abducted me and was trying to use me as leverage against my brother.

But there was no denying the facts.

The implication of what this could mean made my appetite disappear, so I set the tray on the bedside table before flopping back again and burying my face in the pillow. The one that smelled like him.

"Get it together, Savannah," I muttered.

Because whatever this was couldn't be real. Not under these circumstances. And I couldn't afford to start wishing it was.

If I did, I might not want Kane to let me go.

8

KANE

Savannah was wrapped around me like a siren holding me in her clutches.

When I'd brought her clothes from her apartment, I'd deliberately left out pajamas, giving her my shirts to wear to bed instead.

Now, one bare leg was tangled over mine, her soft thigh pressed against my hip. Her arm rested across my stomach, fingers curled into my side like she was afraid to let me go. And her head—fuck me—her head was tucked under my chin, her breath warm where it feathered against my collarbone.

I'd woken up to worse.

But never anything this fucking dangerous.

It was early, and pale streaks of dawn were just barely filtering through the blinds. The AC hummed quietly above us, and for a few seconds, I let myself lie there, breathing her in like the addict I was becoming. Every inhale brought her scent—warm vanilla, soft citrus, and something uniquely her that clung to my sheets and was now embedded in my skin.

This had been a mistake. One I kept repeating every night. Over and over, until slipping into this room and climbing intobed with Savannah became the only thing

that quieted the chaos in my head.

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I needed to get up. Untangle myself from her tempting arms and leave before she woke up and realized I'd slept with her.

Then she moved restlessly, and her soft, even breathing stalled.

Shit. She was waking up.

Sure enough, her lashes fluttered against my chest. A small breath escaped her lips, followed by a sleepy, disoriented hum that somehow managed to shoot straight to my cock. She shifted, not fully aware yet, dragging that delicious body of hers against mine in a way that made restraint feel like a fucking joke.

Her eyes opened slowly. Still heavy with sleep. Glazed. Confused.

Then focused directly on me.

For a second, we just stared at each other, breathing the same air, her lips parted, her body pressed flush to mine.

“What...” Her raspy voice was rough with sleep, and I wanted to hear it like that again—but in a different context entirely. “What are you doing in here?”

My mind raced to find an answer, but the way she looked right then—hair messy from sleep, cheeks flushed, her body warm and pliant against mine—wrecked me. She was all soft curves, the bare skin of her legs hot against mine. And those lips had been driving me insane since the moment she opened her smart mouth.

I lost sight of anything else. Suddenly ruled by my base, primal instincts.

Shifting quickly, I rolled Savannah beneath me in one smooth, slow motion. Her breath caught as my body settled over hers, caging her in. One of her legs bent instinctively, cradling my hips so my giant, swollen cock was pressed into the heat between her thighs. Her hands flew to my chest, and her fingers curled into my shirt.

Her pupils blew wide as her chest rose and fell in shallow bursts. Although her luscious lips trembled just slightly, she didn't look scared.

She looked...needy. Desperate.

And fuck me if I wasn't already gone.

"You look like sin, baby," I rasped, my voice rougher than I'd meant it to be. "And I'm in no shape to fight the devil this morning."

Her mouth parted, and my lips crashed against hers.

It was like lighting a fuse with a fucking blowtorch.

Savannah moaned this deep, helpless little sound that vibrated against my tongue. Then she kissed me back like she'd been waiting for it, starved for me. Her fingers curled in my hair, her hips shifting beneath me in a slow grind that made every blood cell in my body scream.

I kissed her like I'd been waiting a lifetime. As if I'd earned it. Like I'd fuckin' earned her. It was the furthest thing from the truth, but I didn't care.

Our mouths tangled, rough and messy and so damn good I nearly forgot every reason

this was a terrible fucking idea.

Her nails scraped lightly down my back, leaving trails of fire in their wake. My hips jerked against hers before I could stop them, and the friction nearly broke me. I shifted, grinding against her sex, and the heat radiating from her practically singed me right through the thin layers of clothing between us.

I kissed down her jaw and across her neck. She arched into me, head falling back, lips parted on a gasp as I licked at the spot beneath her ear.

“Kane...” she whispered, and the wrecked way she said my name fucking shattered me.

I slid a hand under the hem of her shirt, fingers brushing the warm skin of her waist. Her stomach trembled beneath my palm. She wasn’t stopping me. She wasn’t protesting. She was clinging. Silently begging for more.

“Fuck,” I growled against her skin, forcing myself to slow down, even as my cock throbbed with every beat of my pulse.

I pulled back just enough to look her in the eye. Her lips were swollen, eyes glassy with want.

“You don’t get to pretend this didn’t happen,” I demanded, my voice a low rasp. “Not after this.”

She blinked, dazed. Her hand fisted in the front of my shirt.

“But when I’m deep inside you—which will happen, sugar—it won’t be because I made that choice for you.” Every word was edged with restraint that felt like it’d been welded to my bones. “You want me, you’ll have to admit it. Out loud. Because once I

have you, there's no walking that shit back."

Her breath caught again, her thighs squeezing around me.

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But she didn't say anything.

Damn, I wanted her to. But she wasn't ready.

For the moment, the way she looked at me—like she wanted to taste every dark, dangerous part of me—was enough.

I cursed under my breath and rolled off her before I said fuck it and ruined everything.

The loss of heat between us was immediate. She let out a soft, involuntary noise that was somewhere between a whimper and a moan and nearly dragged me right back in.

I sat on the edge of the bed, running both hands through my hair, sucking in air like it might cool the furnace she'd lit in my blood.

Savannah stayed quiet behind me. I could feel her watching me. Could feel the questions simmering behind those sharp ocean-blue eyes.

I wasn't ready to answer them, so I stood, walked to the dresser, and grabbed a fresh shirt and jeans. My hands weren't steady. My head wasn't clear. I needed air and a fucking ice-cold shower. I also needed distance to reclaim my grip on life. To remember my priorities because I could feel them shifting.

The room was quiet as I pulled on my clothes. Then I shoved my cut on, grabbed my phone off the nightstand, and glanced down at her.

She was sitting up in bed now, the blanket clutched to her chest, her hair a tangled mess around her flushed face. Blue eyes wide and still hazy with remnants of desire.

Fucking hell. She looked so damn beautiful it hurt.

Without another word, I left the room.

And told myself I wasn't going back tonight.

Even though we both knew I would.

Two fucking days.

Two days of bringing her meals, watching her mouth wrap around a damn spoon, and trying not to let my dick do the thinking. Two days of pretending I wasn't counting the seconds till I could climb into bed next to her like an addict getting his fix.

I wasn't used to denying myself. Not that I'd had any desire for a woman in a long time, but generally, when I wanted something, I fucking took it. It was how I'd built an empire and had a reputation for being a ruthless son of a bitch who inspired fear and respect.

Yet one tiny woman was pushing my buttons and driving me up the wall.

I'd stopped making her stay in the bedroom. It didn't make a difference. She stuck close to the couch or curled into the chair by the window with a book from the stack I bought her, and those soft little sounds she made while reading turned my brain into sludge.

I was fucking losing it.

She wasn't breaking. No panic, no bargaining, no sudden slips of information. Just Savannah, with that stubborn mouth and sharp eyes, meeting me head-on every time I tried to shake something loose. She didn't cower. Didn't run. She watched me—like she wanted to peel back my skin and get a good look at what was underneath. As though she wanted to understand me.

But I didn't fucking understand myself right now.

Which made me feel slightly unhinged. Not a good idea for someone as dangerous and ruthless as me.

I shoved the door open harder than necessary and stepped into the room. She was on the chair, legs tucked up under her, reading again. Her head snapped up. Blue eyes sharp as ever.

"Back for more?" she asked, tone light but daring.

I kicked the door shut behind me and stalked forward. "You tell me."

She marked her page and shut the book. "Let me guess. You're here to ask if I suddenly remembered some incriminating detail about my brother. A secret alias? A safety deposit box? The location of the Ark of the Covenant?"

"Don't play with me, Savannah." My voice came out low, rougher than I meant. "Tired of circling the same damn questions."

She huffed. "Then maybe stop asking them."

I leaned over the chair, bracing a hand on either side of her head. "You really don't give a fuck that I have you locked in my room?"

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She tilted her chin up, bold as ever. “Should I?”

“You should be begging to get out.”

“Then I guess you’ve made it too comfortable to get the reaction you want.”

A muscle ticked in my jaw. She was still in one of my shirts—even though she had her own clothes. That shouldn’t have made my gut tighten the way it did. But it fucking did. I liked how she looked in my clothes way too fucking much.

“You have a smart mouth,” I said, voice tight. “But you’re not saying anything useful.”

“Maybe I don’t know anything useful.” She leaned in, eyes burning into mine. “Or maybe I don’t feel like helping my kidnapper. Maybe I want you to leave me alone!”

I growled. “Then why do you keep looking at me like that?”

“Like what?” Her eyes were full of sass, making me as hard as a rock.

“As though you want me to kiss you again.”

She sucked in a sharp breath, then silence fell thick and hot between us. Her eyes flicked to my mouth, just for a second—but it was enough.

I growled low in my throat and yanked her up out of the chair, one arm banded around her waist as I crushed my mouth to hers.

There was no patience. No finesse. Just fire, need, and two days of wanting her so badly that I could barely think straight. She gasped against my lips, her fingers curling into my shirt. When I licked into her mouth, she opened for me like I fucking owned her.

And fuck, I wanted to.

My free hand buried in her hair, tilting her head back so I could devour her properly. Her body arched into mine as though she couldn't get close enough. Her mouth was hot, wet, and so damn perfect.

She moaned—soft, high-pitched, helpless. It nearly snapped the frayed rope hanging onto my control.

I jerked back with a groan, and every muscle in my body coiled tight with restraint. Her lips were swollen, her breath came in ragged little pants, and her eyes—fuck, her eyes—were pure fire.

She made a little mewl of protest, and I firmly shook my head. “Told you, sugar,” I rasped, “not making that choice for you. When we fuck, it'll be because you're beggin' for it. So you can't pretend in the morning that I made you do something you didn't want.”

She stared at me, chest heaving. And I knew—knew—if I stayed another second, I'd throw that shit out the window and take her right there.

So I tore myself away. Stalked to the door with every nerve in my body on fire. I slammed it behind me, locked it, and barreled down the hall, boots heavy on the hardwood, jaw clenched so tight it ached.

I couldn't breathe. Could barely fucking think. She had me twisted up in knots. Me.

Son of a fucking bitch!

When I stormed into my office, Edge was there, booted feet up on my desk like he owned the fuckin' place. Jackass.

He raised a brow. "Well, look who decided to stop brooding in his tower."

"Fuck off. And feet off my desk before I rip 'em off and you have nothing to push a fucking gas pedal with."

He grinned and dropped his boots to the floor. "You've been a moody bastard lately. Been wondering if someone keyed your bike. Or if you're all twisted up over a blonde with a smart mouth."

I threw myself into the chair behind my desk and dragged both hands down my face. "Not in the mood."

"That's the problem." Edge leaned forward, propping his elbows on his knees. "You're all wound up. You're gonna snap and put a hole in the wall. Or someone's face."

I didn't respond. Just stared at the grain in the wood like it had answers. He wasn't wrong, but I wasn't gonna tell my brother that. He was already smug enough.

He let the silence hang for a minute before adding, "You either need to fuck her or you need to race."

My head snapped up, eyes narrowed. "Don't talk about her like that."

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Edge blinked. “What, fuck her?”

I pushed out of the chair so fast that it scraped across the floor. Then I leaned across the desk, grabbing him by the shirt, and yanking him forward until I was right in his face. “You wanna keep your teeth, don’t ever talk about Savannah like that again.”

“For fuck’s sake, man,” he muttered, eyes wide now but not scared. “I was joking.”

“Am I fucking laughing, asshole?”

He held up his hands. “Alright, alright. Message received. She’s off-limits for locker room humor. Didn’t realize you were that far gone.”

I shoved off him, breathing hard as I braced my hands on the edge of the desk. I didn’t know what the fuck was the matter with me.

Edge straightened his shirt and let out a long breath. “So, this is a thing now.”

“Shut up.” I dropped my head forward and tried to find my usual calm. I’d never been one to react with emotion.

“She in your bed?”

“Don’t.”

“She’s obviously in your damn head.”

I raised my head to look at him, voice like gravel, full of menace. “I said shut the fuck up, brother.”

Edge stared for a beat, then gave a small nod. “Okay.”

I expected another quip. Another jab. But he just walked to the door and paused with his hand on the knob.

“Whatever this is,” he said quietly, “you better get a fucking handle on it. You’re not the only one it’ll take down.”

Then he was gone.

I dropped onto the chair again and scrubbed my hands over my face. My pulse was still hammering, my blood still hot. I could feel the ghost of her mouth on mine like it had been branded there.

This wasn’t just about leverage anymore.

Hadn’t been for a while.

9

SAVANNAH

I stretched out on the bed with one of the books Kane brought me two days ago resting on my stomach. I was normally a fast reader, but I had only finished the first chapter so far. I’d tried to read the same paragraph four times already, but nothing was sinking in. My mind was too full, my body too restless, and the walls were starting to close in on me.

Cabin fever was real, and I had it bad.

I couldn't blame it on being uncomfortable, though. The bed was ridiculously soft, the bathroom was now fully stocked with my preferred toiletries, and Kane kept bringing me delicious food. I'd even been given clean clothes from my apartment.

Even worse, I'd started to look forward to the stolen moments with the man who'd taken me. I'd gotten used to the low rumble of Kane's voice filling the small space when he stayed longer than a few minutes.

That was the thing that had changed the most since he kissed me a few days ago.

Instead of just asking me questions about my brother, he had started to share things about himself with me. Nothing that helped me figure out what his club wanted from Devon. Just personal stuff.

I knew about the car his dad had given to him and his brother to race when they were teenagers. The fights he used to get into at school. The trouble he'd caused growing up.

He didn't sugarcoat anything as he gave me a clearer picture of the man behind the reputation. It wasn't at all what I'd expected from the guy who kidnapped me. I was learning that Kane Beckett wasn't just some cold, ruthless MC president.

There was depth beneath the danger. A solid, unshakable kind of loyalty. And something magnetic that pulled at me in a way I didn't want to analyze too closely. Because every time he walked into this room, my body reacted.

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My skin flushed. My pulse jumped like it had been waiting for him. And butterflies swirled in my stomach. Especially after that kiss.

I didn't even know what to call this thing between us. It was too primal to be just an attraction.

I'd never felt anything like it before. Not even close.

I wasn't supposed to crave the presence of the man who'd drugged and kidnapped me. To want his stories, his company, or his attention. And I definitely shouldn't be dreaming about what would've happened if he hadn't pulled away after kissing me the other morning.

But I did.

I couldn't stop thinking about the feel of his mouth on mine. The scrape of his beard. The way his arms caged me in like he didn't plan to let go.

I rubbed a hand over my face with a groan, wondering what was wrong with me.

Everything about this situation was messed up. But no matter how hard I tried to hold on to my anger, it slipped through my fingers every time Kane walked through that door and looked at me like I mattered.

In a way that made me question, again and again, what he'd really meant when he said I was his.

The door swung open and startled me from my thoughts. Kane stepped into the bedroom, wearing that same unreadable expression that never failed to make my pulse spike. His hair was still damp, which made me wonder where he'd been showering since I hadn't seen him use the one in here.

He was dressed in worn jeans and a black tee that stretched across his chest in a way that should've been illegal. His club cut was over it, and he had black motorcycle boots on his feet.

"Figured it's time you got a little freedom."

I blinked. "Seriously?"

He nodded. "Don't make me regret it."

I sat up straighter, suspicious but intrigued. "Other than the obvious of not trying to get away, what does that mean?"

His eyes narrowed. "No flirting with my men to try to get information."

"No worries there." I shook my head with a snort. "It wouldn't be worth the effort when it has no chance of working."

"Not sure why you think that," he murmured, his gaze sweeping over me.

Heat crept into my cheeks, but I ignored it as I slid off the bed. "What exactly does 'a little freedom' mean?"

"You can come out to the common room," he said, holding the door open as he waited for me to pass. "Stick close to me."

I followed him down a short hall and through a wide doorway into an open space. Pool tables lined one side, a dartboard hung on the other, and a bar—clearly hand-built from reclaimed lumber—stood straight ahead. Brown leather couches and chairs filled the space, while several flat screens played some kind of car race.

Three men were hanging out at the bar. Two were seated on stools, while the other leaned against the end of the counter with a beer in hand.

They all looked up when I walked in and went still.

Kane didn't say a word, but I felt the shift in the air as their gaze flicked from me to him and back again.

The one who was standing grinned first. He had a beard a few shades darker than Kane's and sharp eyes filled with a hint of mischief. "Nice to see my brother finally decided to share."

"Edge," Kane warned.

I laughed at their byplay, and the tension eased instantly. The other two—Axle and Nitro—introduced themselves.

"Want a beer?" Axle asked, nudging an open stool out with his foot.

"She's twenty," Kane cut in before I could answer.

Nitro snorted. "Since when do we play by the rules?"

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Edge gave him a look. “Since Kane got all twisted up over?—”

“Enough,” Kane cut him off, leaving me to wonder if his brother had been about to say that he was being twisted up over me.

Nitro eyed Kane with a smirk. “Worried about what the pretty barista will say about you if she has a drink or two?”

“I’m good with soda if you have any,” I said quickly, sitting on the edge of the stool. “Or water.”

The guys chuckled, and the conversation turned casual. Somehow, I found myself joking with them, asking questions but steering clear of club business or my brother. I answered a few and even found myself actually relaxing. They gave off a rough-around-the-edges found-family vibe that felt more like a team than a gang.

The whole thing felt shockingly normal.

But while I soaked it in after being confined for so long, I was hyperaware of Kane’s focus on me.

He didn’t sit. Didn’t drink. Didn’t even talk much.

Just lingered a few inches to my left, arms crossed and jaw ticking as he watched over me. When I laughed at something Axle said, I felt Kane’s gaze burn hotter.

The possibility that he wasn’t just being protective grew. Maybe he was jealous.

And I hated how much the thought made my pulse race.

The easy rhythm of conversation lulled me into forgetting why I was here. It felt like I was hanging out in a bar. Or at least what I imagined since I'd never spent much time in one before.

Axle smirked at me. "You're a barista, huh? That mean you can make one of those leaf pattern things in foam?"

"Latte art," I corrected with a grin. "And yeah, I can do all kinds of shapes. Never tried a motorcycle, but I bet I could pull it off."

Nitro let out a low whistle. "Marry me."

I laughed, rolling my eyes as I sipped my soda. "Sorry, Nitro. I'm holding out for someone with a better appreciation for properly pulled espresso."

He clutched his chest like I'd wounded him, then looked at Kane. "You hear that, Prez? Your girl's got standards."

Your girl.

Kane didn't say anything, but I could feel the heat of his stare singe the side of my face. My pulse kicked up another notch.

Before I could pivot the conversation, Axle bumped my arm lightly with the back of his knuckles. "Next time you're behind a machine, I expect a flaming skull in my latte."

The touch was light. Casual. Not even remotely suggestive.

But the second his skin brushed mine, a low growl rumbled from Kane.

Everything stilled.

Even Edge, who'd been chuckling at Nitro's antics, went quiet.

"Axle." Kane's voice was tight with warning. Enough for the one word to carry weight.

Axle's hands lifted in mock surrender. "Shit, sorry, Prez. Was just playin' around."

"I know." It was impossible to miss the tension rolling off him in waves. "Next time, don't touch what's mine."

A dozen things rushed through my head at once. The possessive way he said it. The fact that the guys didn't bat an eye. The ridiculous flutter in my stomach that told me I liked his possessive words way too much.

Kane stepped in closer, his hand sliding around my waist like he was staking a claim. His breath hit my ear a second later.

"Keep testing me, sugar." His rough tone sent a full-body shiver down my spine. "And after I put my club brother through a wall, you're gonna find yourself being fucked up against it."

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I sucked in a sharp breath, my thighs clenching reflexively as heat flooded my system. And frustrated by how badly I wanted to find out if he meant it.

10

KANE

I planned on waiting longer to let Savannah have a little freedom. To keep her isolated—pressed between four walls during the day and the heat of my body at night—until she or her brother cracked. But she'd looked so restless, so fucking tightly wound from pacing and sitting and thinking too much that I caved yesterday. Let her into the common room for a few hours, thinking I'd be in control.

I was wrong.

So far, my new tactic for gaining information had backfired. It was supposed to earn me goodwill so she'd talk. Instead, it was testing my patience to the fucking limit.

Now, she was sitting at the long, dark granite island in the clubhouse kitchen, legs swinging under the stool like she didn't have a care in the damn world. She wore one of her own shirts this time—a pale blue thing that hugged her curves and made her eyes look even bluer. But she was still barefoot, hair slightly mussed from sleep, lips a little swollen from the way I'd kissed her last night and then left before I did something we couldn't come back from.

She shouldn't have been smiling. Not when I was barely keeping it together.

I turned the burner down, flipping the eggs in the cast iron skillet as though it hadn't become a morning routine I secretly looked forward to. She'd commented on missing real breakfast last week, so now I cooked for her when I could. Not that I explained. I just dropped plates in front of her like it didn't mean anything.

It seemed she knew better now, though. I could see it in the way her lips curved when I wasn't looking directly at her. My malfunctioning brain hadn't connected that by making her breakfast this morning, with both of us in the kitchen, she'd realize that I'd been doing this for her all along.

Fuck. I was so far past the ledge, I didn't even recognize it anymore.

The screen door groaned open behind me, and heavy boots crossed the tile floor. I glanced up to see Drift wander in.

"Smells like someone's gettin' spoiled," he drawled, grinning as he came into view and tipped his chin at Savannah. "Mornin', sunshine."

She arched a brow, lifting her fork and letting her tone drip with mock sarcasm. "That's suspiciously friendly for the guy who threatened me the first day I stepped foot in town."

Drift barked out a laugh and dropped onto the chair across from her like they were old friends instead of hostage and enforcer. "Fair. I was bein' a dick. Club orders were to warn off anyone sniffin' too close. Didn't know you were gonna be shackled up in the Prez's fuckin' quarters."

I dropped another plate on the counter a little harder than necessary.

Savannah's grin sharpened as she took another bite of eggs. After swallowing, she said, "So, what you're saying is you wererude to a stranger, got proven wrong, and

now you're pretending you have manners."

He let out a low whistle, shaking his head like he was impressed. "She's spicy. I get the appeal."

"Don't," I warned, my voice low and flat.

Drift just chuckled and leaned back in his chair, boots crossed at the ankle like he had no plans of leaving. "Relax, Prez. Just talkin'. Though if you're still comin' up empty on intel, maybe you should let me take a swing. Get her loosened up. Maybe she'll talk to someone who doesn't look like he chews nails."

Savannah tilted her head, eyes dancing. "You could try. But you wouldn't be successful."

Her tone was playful, not flirty. But it didn't matter.

The second Drift grinned at her like they were co-conspirators, I saw red.

I rounded the island, caught her arm gently but firmly, and hauled her from the stool before she knew what was happening. "We're done here."

She blinked, surprised, but didn't resist. "You know, for someone who claims I'm not a prisoner, you sure manhandle me like one."

"I warned you what would happen if you kept testing me, sugar," I growled, voice low in her ear.

She didn't fight me, but her steps weren't exactly cooperative either. Every stomp of her bare feet was another jab at my temper. By the time we reached the door to my quarters, I had to count to ten to keep from ripping it off the fucking hinges.

I shoved the door open, pulled her inside, and closed it behind us.

“You done?” I asked, voice rough with everything I couldn’t say.

She spun on me, arms crossed under her breasts. “With breakfast? Apparently.”

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I stalked toward her, blood burning under my skin. “You think this is funny?”

“I think it’s ridiculous.” Her chin tilted defiantly. “You brought me downstairs. You fed me. Then got pissed because I had a conversation with someone who doesn’t treat me like a live grenade.”

“I treat you like something dangerous because you are.”

She snickered with narrowed eyes. “To you? Or your carefully laid plans?”

“Both,” I growled, stepping in close and letting my shadow fall over hers. “You’ve been here for nine days, and every damn day you look at me like you want something. But you don’t fucking ask for what we both know you want.”

Her eyes flicked to my mouth, just for a second. “If you don’t want me looking at you like that, maybe you should stop kissing me.”

“I never said I wanted you to stop.”

She blinked, then swallowed hard.

The air went tight between us. Charged, like lightning coiled in the sky, waiting to strike.

Her lips parted slightly, and her breath caught.

Fuck. I was so damn fucked.

I stepped in the rest of the way, one hand sliding around her waist, the other bracing beside her head against the door. “I warned you, Savannah.”

Her lashes fluttered, but she held her ground. “Warned me about what?”

My hand fisted the front of her shirt, dragging her against me. “That if you kept testing me, I’d stop giving a fuck about restraint.”

Then I kissed her.

She didn’t even finish inhaling before I had her back against the door, mouth crushed beneath mine, hands grabbing her hips like I could mold her to my fucking body and erase the past half hour from existence. Her breath hitched in surprise, but the second I bit her bottom lip and sucked it between my teeth, she moaned. Loud and needy, like she’d been waiting for this.

Hell, maybe she had.

Her fingers curled in the front of my cut, yanking me even closer, and I lost whatever thin thread of restraint I had left. I lifted her straight off the floor, and her legs wrapped around my waist, her body arching into mine, soft curves against the hard planes of my chest. My back hit the door, the old wood shuddering as I slammed her against me, letting her feel the full extent of how hard she’d made me.

“You think this is a game, sugar?” I growled against her mouth, my voice frayed. “Think you can smile at my brothers and test how far I’ll go before I snap?”

She gasped when I ground my cock into her core. “Kane...”

“Yeah, baby,” I bit out, nipping at her jaw and tasting the salt of her skin. “Say my fucking name.”

Her fingers threaded in my hair as I kissed down her neck, open-mouthed and punishing, marking her like I had every right to. Because I fucking did. She was mine.

Mine.

I walked her to the bed like that, bodies locked together, her breath coming in ragged little pants against my throat. When I dropped her on the mattress, she bounced once, her blond hair spilling wild around her shoulders, blue eyes dazed and dark with want.

I peeled off my cut, then my shirt, tossing them aside without looking away from Savannah. Her gaze tracked every inch of me, and when her teeth sank into that plush lower lip, I almost came in my jeans like a damn teenager.

“Take off your clothes,” I rasped.

She hesitated, flushed and breathing shakily.

“Now, Savannah.” It was an order this time. One I expected to be obeyed.

She sat up slowly, tugging her shirt over her head and dropping it to the floor.

Fucking hell. No bra. Just smooth, bare skin and perfect fucking tits.

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“You walked downstairs like this?” I snarled.

She froze, eyes wide, her fingers no longer fumbling at the waistband of her shorts.

My voice turned to gravel. “You do not ever walk out of this room without a bra unless you know for sure that it’s just you and me.”

“Um...”

I leaned over her, bracing my hands on either side of her hip. “No one. No one sees what’s for my eyes only. I don’t fucking share, Savannah.”

Stepping forward, I dropped to my knees in front of her and slid her shorts down her legs, dragging my fingers over every inch of newly bared skin. She trembled when I looked up at her from between her thighs. The scent of her arousal hit me like a punch to the gut as my fingers slipped through her slick folds.

“Fuck, you’re soaked,” I growled.

She whimpered when I teased her clit, biting her lip as her back arched again.

I slid one finger inside her, and she cried out—more in surprise than pain—and I stilled, watching her.

I dragged my knuckles along her inner thigh, then paused, registering the tension in her muscles. The hesitation in her breathing.

“Tell me,” I said, voice low and dark. “You ever done this before?”

She gulped, then shook her head. “No.”

I sat back on my heels and stared up at her, blood roaring in my ears.

“You’re a fucking virgin?” The words came out hoarser than I intended. There was reverence in them. Hunger. And something darker. More primal.

She didn’t answer. Didn’t even need to. I saw the truth in the way she froze, in the sudden tension in her thighs.

“Fuck,” I breathed, reverence and possession twisting inside me. “No one’s touched you?”

She shook her head. Silent. Breathing hard. Pink spread across her cheeks and chest, but her eyes stayed locked on mine.

“Say it,” I demanded.

“No one’s touched me,” she whispered.

Possessiveness gripped me like a chain, dark and twisted, and I reveled in the feeling.

I let out a harsh breath. “Fucking hell. You’re gonna be the death of me.”

She didn’t flinch. Didn’t look scared. Damn, she was amazing.

I stood, leaning down until I was right in her face. “Then I’m gonna be your first, sugar. And your last. You hear me? You give this to me—there’s no going back. I’m the only man to ever get between these pretty thighs. No one else gets to fucking

touch you.”

“I don’t want anyone else.”

The words ripped through me like a lit fuse.

I kissed her again—rougher this time. Hot and hungry. She arched against me, moaning when I moved down to take one tight pink nipple into my mouth. My hand moved to her hip, then lower, and when it slid between her thighs again, my fingers were slick with her arousal before I even got past her seam.

“You’re so fucking wet for me,” I groaned, switching to her other nipple and dragging my finger through her slit, circling her clit just enough to make her cry out. “You want this, don’t you, sugar?”

“Yes,” she gasped, eyes fluttering closed, her hips lifting into my touch.

I pulled my hand back and sat on the edge of the bed, dragging her onto my lap, positioning her right where I needed her. Then I sucked my finger clean, enjoying her pretty blush as she watched.

Her thighs were spread across mine, her pussy bare and glistening against my abs, my cock thick and hard between us, still straining behind my jeans.

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I cupped her jaw, thumb brushing her lips. “I’m not making this choice for you, Savannah.” My voice was hard and clipped, my gaze burning into hers. “You want me inside you, you say it. You fucking beg.”

Her breath hitched. “You’ve lost it.”

“Probably,” I agreed. “But I’m not moving until you say it.”

She squirmed, her expression frustrated and needy. Her eyes flicked up to mine, pupils blown wide.

“Please,” she finally said, voice barely a whisper.

I grunted. “Not good enough.”

She shifted in my lap, pressing down against me, her breath hitching. “Kane—please. I...I want this.”

“Still not enough, baby. You want this? You say it. Loud. So I know you’re not gonna wake up tomorrow and tell me you didn’t know what you were doing.”

Her nails dug into my shoulders as she stared at me, eyes burning, lips swollen. Then her expression cracked, all pride falling away. “I want to feel you. Please, Kane. I want you inside me.”

The last thread snapped.

I flipped her beneath me so she was spread out on the mattress, shoved my jeans down, and fisted my cock, lining it up to her entrance. I dragged the thick, leaking tip through her folds, groaning as I felt her heat. My body trembled from holding back, from the knowledge that this was it—there'd never be anyone else for either of us.

I met her gaze, reluctant to cause her pain but determined to have her. “This is gonna hurt, sugar. But only for a second. Then you'll forget everything but how fucking good it feels.”

She nodded, her bottom lip caught between her teeth.

I pushed in slow, inch by inch, feeling her tight heat stretch around me, hot and slick and fucking perfect. She gasped, her eyes flying wide and her hands clutching my arms.

“Breathe, Savannah,” I gritted out, one hand braced by her head and the other on her hip to hold her steady. “Just breathe for me, baby. I've got you.”

Her fingers clutched the sheets when I reached her barrier, her thighs trembling, her breath stuttering. But she didn't pull away.

With a short punch of my hips, I popped her cherry.

“Fuck,” I grunted. “Mine.”

I was a big guy—everywhere. So I wasn't completely sure her little pussy would be able to take all of my long, thick cock. But fuck, I shoulda known better. She was made for me.

“Almost there,” I murmured, kissing the corner of her mouth. “You're doing so fucking good, baby.”

Finally, I bottomed out with a groan, burying myself from root to tip. Her gasp hitched into a broken moan as her body clenched around me, tight and fluttering.

She was so damn perfect.

I stayed there, letting her adjust even though every muscle in my body screamed at me to move. My control hung on by a thread, but I wasn't gonna hurt her any more than I already had. Although, with the way I was stretching her tight sheath, there was bound to be a pinch of pain. But that little bit would add to her pleasure soon.

"You okay?" I rasped.

She nodded, breathless. "Yeah. Just...full."

"Damn right, you are."

I started to move—slow at first, deep, grinding thrusts that had her gasping with every slide. Her legs wrapped around my waist, arms around my neck, body arching into my every stroke.

"Feel that, sugar?" I growled in her ear. "I'm so fucking deep. That's me claiming what's mine."

Her moans turned needy, almost mindless. She whispered my name over and over, her nails raking down my back, and I lost myself in her. In the heat and slickness and fucking rightness of being inside her.

"You feel so fucking good," I rasped. "Tight little pussy made just for me. No one else gets to feel you wrapped around their cock. Squeezing so damn tight I can barely get back out. Fuck! No one else ever touches you."

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“No one else,” she echoed, dazed.

“That’s right. You belong to me now. You’re fucking mine,” I growled, thrusting harder, deeper. “Say it, Savannah.”

“I’m yours.”

“Louder.”

“I’m yours, Kane,” she cried out.

That sent me into a frenzy. I slammed into her, fucking her like I owned every inch of her body—because I damn well did. Her cries were louder now, desperate, pleading.

“Kane! Yes! Oh yes! Harder!”

“Again, Savannah,” I barked as I pounded her into the mattress. “Who do you belong to? Who owns this pussy, baby?”

“You!” she shouted right before her body clenched around me, pulsing with her climax, as she screamed my name.

“Fuck!” I slammed in deep—and then everything stopped.

Shit! I hadn’t put on a condom.

I was buried to the hilt in her tight, trembling pussy, about to come, and she was bare

beneath me.

“Birth control?” I grunted, unable to form more words than that.

Savannah froze for a moment, then shook her head, and the thought of pulling out flickered, then disappeared.

Because the image hit me like a wrecking ball—Savannah, pregnant, round with my baby, wearing my ring, sleeping in my bed. Tied to me in every way that mattered.

The possessive beast inside me roared.

“Fuck!” I bellowed, slamming in one last time as I emptied inside her, grinding deep as her channel throbbed and milked every drop. “Take it, sugar. Take all of it. Want my seed dripping from this virgin pussy.”

Savannah shuddered, then tossed her head back and cried out as another orgasm washed over her. I fucked her through her second climax, drawing it out as long as possible and shooting load after load of my come into her unprotected womb. Pushing it up against her cervix like I could will it to take root.

When I finally stilled, our bodies were locked together, my come dripping out around my cock. She whimpered, her body twitching from the aftershocks, and her arms tightening around my neck.

I looked down at her and couldn’t help feeling a little smug. She was wrecked. Glassy eyes, kiss-swollen mouth, and breathing like she’d run a damn marathon.

Beautiful. So. Fucking. Beautiful.

She blinked slowly, then smiled as she let her head fall to the side, her cheek resting

against my chest. Her breathing evened out, and within seconds, she was asleep.

Just like that.

Completely undone, relaxed and open, curled into me like I was her safe place. As though I hadn't just claimed her in the most brutal, possessive way a man could.

I brushed her hair back from her face and stared down at her, a knot tightening in my gut.

Maybe I should've said something before I took her raw. Should've told her when I didn't pull out. Should've confessed that she'd never been a temporary thing to me. That I'd decided to keep her the moment she walked into my world and flipped it on its fucking head.

But I didn't.

Because now, she had me inside her, filling her. Hopefully, leaving a piece of me to grow.

Because if she ended up pregnant, she'd never leave.

Not that she had any other choice. I'd never let her go.

11

SAVANNAH

I woke up warm and sore, tucked against the solid heat of Kane's chest. His arm was slung over my waist, and his steady breath stirred my hair with every exhale.

For a moment, I didn't move. Just listened to the rhythmic sound of his heartbeat and tried to figure out how the heck I was supposed to keep my head straight when he made me feel like I belonged here with him.

Like I was his.

And maybe I was. In every way that counted. Especially after giving him my virginity. He'd certainly demanded I say it enough...but it might've just been in the heat of the moment.

But I couldn't forget why I was really here. No matter how possessive his touch was. Or how raw and consuming last night had been. And how easily I melted under the weight of his body or the heat of his stare. Not to mention the fact that he hadn't used a condom when we had sex.

Today was day ten.

That was how long Kane had said he was giving my brother to give him what he wanted. Or he'd keep me—which felt like it meant something completely different now. At least I hoped it did.

I swallowed hard, bracing myself as I gently shifted out from under his arm. His brows furrowed, and he made a soft sound of protest in his sleep, but he didn't wake. I snagged his tee from the floor, tugged it over my head, and padded into the bathroom to splash water on my face.

When I came back into the room, Kane was awake and sitting up, the sheet barely covering his hips. My pulse tripped over itself at the sight of his bare chest and messy hair, but I forced myself to focus.

"We need to talk."

His eyes narrowed slightly, instantly on alert. "About what?"

I walked to the foot of the bed and wrapped my arms around myself, heart racing. "Today's the tenth day."

He didn't flinch. "It is."

"I know that you think my brother is a dirty cop who's done something to cross you." I licked my lips. "But I need you to look deeper. Please."

He didn't answer right away. Just stared at me like he was waiting for more.

So I gave it to him.

"I'm sure you have reasons. Some kind of proof. But you don't know my brother like I do. He's always followed the rules. There's no way he's dirty."

"There's a fuck ton of evidence that says you're wrong." Kane's jaw flexed. "Maybe you don't know your brother as well as you think, and he's exactly who I think he is."

I refused to believe that. “What if someone set him up to make it look like he was involved in something he wasn’t?”

Kane shook his head, an apologetic gleam in his green eyes. “We haven’t found a damn thing to make us think that’s what’s going on here.”

“Then let me prove it.” I stepped closer. “Please.”

He rubbed a hand down his face and swung his legs over the edge of the bed. “You’re asking a lot, Savannah.”

“I know.” I moved to the space between his knees and looked him in the eye. “But you’re not the kind of man who’d let an innocent person take the fall for something they didn’t do.”

His hands settled on my hips. His grip was firm, and for a second, I thought he might push me away. Instead, he pulled me in.

“I’ll consider it,” he finally offered, his voice low and reluctant.

I sagged in relief. “Thank you.”

“Not promisin’ anything, baby,” he warned.

“I know.” I threw my arms around his neck without thinking, hugging him tightly. “Whatever you find, I want to be part of it. I need to know the truth too.”

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He didn't say anything else, but I felt the shift in him. His hand curled around the nape of my neck. For the first time since Kane kidnapped me, I felt hope.

I took the physical comfort he offered, leaning into his embrace and enjoying the feel of his strong arms around me.

Finally, I pulled back just enough to meet his gaze. "All the studying I've done has made me really good at catching details other people miss."

His fingers traced down my spine. "You're not gonna let this go, are you?"

"Now that you've said you'll actually think about it?" I shook my head with a grin. "Nope."

Kane studied me for a long, tense moment. I waited, my heart pounding.

He sighed and captured my mouth in a deep kiss. I thought for sure that he'd done it to distract me, which definitely worked. So I was surprised when he lifted his head and murmured, "Come on. We'll see if Jax could use help with anything."

"Jax?" I echoed as I straightened.

"He's our tech guy."

He stood, and the sheet dropped to the mattress, giving me an eyeful of his big dick. I totally lost the ability to think. All I could do was stare at his erection and wonder if it'd be better to climb back into bed with him instead of going downstairs. Even

though Kane was giving me exactly what I'd literally begged for, the memory of what he could do with his thick shaft had me second-guessing if it could wait. That was how much I'd enjoyed myself in bed with him last night.

After tugging on a pair of boxer briefs, Kane wiped his thumb against the corner of my mouth and teased, "Think you have a little drool there."

"Whatever." I playfully swatted his chest before grabbing some clothes and heading into the bathroom to get ready.

When I came back out and he saw that I'd kept his discarded shirt on, his eyes gleamed with approval. "Ready?"

I nodded. "Yeah."

Kane grabbed his cut off the back of the chair and headed for the door. I rushed to follow him, suddenly feeling a little nervous.

A few guys nodded as we passed, and I caught snippets of conversation and laughter from one of the open rooms. Kane finally stopped in front of a closed door and rapped his knuckles against the hard surface.

A voice barked, "It's open!"

He interlaced our fingers, then pushed the door open.

The man seated at the desk swiveled his chair toward us, his gaze curious as it landed on me. "Hey, Prez. Need something?"

"You got anything Savannah can help with?"

Jax blinked. “What kinda help?”

Kane stepped into the room, tugging me with him. “She’s smart. Detail-oriented. And highly motivated since she wants to prove us wrong about her brother.”

“You serious?” Jax adjusted his glasses, then gave me a long once-over. “No offense, sweetheart, but I’m not sure I want you anywhere near my machines.”

Kane’s voice dropped into something dangerous. “You done?”

Jax held up his hands in mock surrender. “All right, all right. You’re the boss. Just don’t blame me if this turns into a dumpster fire.”

I stepped closer to one of the screens, where several files were open. Arrest records. Internal memos. I spotted my brother’s name in the header of one.

Luck was on my side because the date jumped out at me.

“Something is off about this report,” I murmured, pointing at it. “Devon’s shift was over at seven, but this says the suspect was booked almost a full hour later.”

“Maybe he got stuck on a call that put him into overtime,” Jax suggested as he ran a hand through his short hair before grabbing a baseball cap from his desk and putting it on backward.

I shook my head. “No, he had dinner at my apartment that night. We were eating spaghetti and meatballs when this arrest happened.”

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Jax frowned and clicked through a few more files. “Shit. That’s a good catch.”

Kane stepped in closer behind me, reading over my shoulder. His hand brushed the small of my back, grounding me. Or maybe branding me.

“She’s right,” Jax muttered, tapping his keyboard faster. “And look here—this signature line is blank. Whoever filed it forgot to finish the paperwork.”

“That happen often?” I asked.

“Never. Not with this guy.”

Kane’s hand tightened slightly on my lower back. “Keep going.”

Jax glanced at me, this time with something closer to respect. “You might actually be able to help.”

A swell of pride rose in my chest. “Guess all those late nights of studying are finally worth something. Especially since I don’t even know if you’re going to let me leave to take my exam.”

Kane didn’t respond right away. His eyes were on the screen, but I felt the shift in the air between us.

“We’ll figure it out,” he finally said. “But you’re not leaving this compound until I know you won’t get hurt.”

I nodded slowly, heart thudding. It wasn't a promise but felt like the closest thing to one.

Now all we had to do was find out the truth—and hope it proved me right about Devon.

12

KANE

It was barely past ten in the morning, but I already wanted to break something. Preferably the nose of the smug prick—Edge—who thought it was a good idea to schedule a “meeting” for today, of all fucking days.

The job couldn't wait—he had made that clear. It wasn't a favor or a check-in. It was an enforcement call. Someone with a foot in our territory was late on a payment tied to a private security contract we ran behind the scenes. Not a huge deal on its own. But the motherfucker had dragged his feet twice before, and last week his name came up in whispers at one of our speedways. This wasn't a coincidence. It was a problem.

And problems in our world had a way of festering if you didn't handle them fast and loud. We had to shut shit down and make a statement doing it.

So yeah, the call was legit. But it didn't mean I was happy about it. Not when it meant leaving Savannah.

When I came into the tech room this morning, dressed and scowling, ready to head out, she'd looked up from Jax's monitor with wide eyes. She didn't say anything but didn't need to. Her bottom lip tugged between her teeth said enough. She didn't want me to go, and I didn't want to leave. Not right now. Not with all the bullshit tainting our relationship at the moment. But that wasn't how this life worked.

I'd tossed her my extra cut and told her to wear it if she left the room or she'd be wearing my handprint on her ass. Then I kissed her hard and left before I gave in to the temptation to drag her back to our room.

Now, I stood in the middle of a dusty auto yard about an hour north of Crossbend, arms crossed, boots planted, and staring down a man who thought "I forgot" was a good enough excuse for stiffing the Redline Kings MC.

Wrench, one of our enforcers, had already cracked two of the guy's fingers. Rev, the Redline King's captain, stood watch near the front gate with Drift. Edge leaned back against a stack of rusting metal, flipping his knife end over end like he was bored out of his mind. Nitro was pacing near the gate to the office trailer, his arms crossed and expression tight.

"We're generous men," I said flatly, ignoring the asshole's whimpers. "We offer protection. We keep your fucking doors from getting blown off. We don't ask for much in return. Just a little respect. A little follow-through. But you thought maybe we were bluffing."

"I-I didn't think. I—" the man tried, clutching his broken fingers and sagging to his knees.

"You didn't think," I cut in coldly. "That's your only accurate statement today."

Wrench hauled him up by the collar and tossed him against the side of the trailer. The impact left a dent. The man crumpled again, wheezing.

"You have seventy-two hours to pay what you owe," I growled. "You miss the deadline again, it won't be my brothers you'll deal with. It'll be me. And you won't walk away with just a couple of busted fingers. Now get outta my sight."

The bastard stumbled to his feet and took off as fast as he could manage, limping toward the gate.

Edge finally pushed off the stack of scrap and slipped his knife into the sheath he wore beneath his cut. “That coulda gone worse.”

“Felt like a waste of a fuckin’ morning,” I muttered.

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I shot him a look, and he grinned as he fell into step beside me while we walked toward our bikes. “Just saying. At least we got to knock something loose.”

Drift snorted behind us. “Prez is just pissed he had to be away from his little blonde.”

Wrench chuckled low under his breath. “She’s got claws. I like her.”

“She’s not for you,” I snapped.

“No shit,” Wrench said, grinning. “Didn’t say she was. Just sayin’ I get it.”

Rev was already on his bike but turned to glance over. “She got you all twisted up, Prez?”

“Fuck off.”

Edge’s grin went wider. “You order a vest yet?”

I didn’t answer. Just swung a leg over my bike and pulled on my gloves.

“Holy shit,” Nitro said, whistling. “He did. He fucking did.”

I’d ordered the damn thing four nights ago. She didn’t know it yet, but her name was already on a leather cut hanging in the back of the supply closet. When I gave it to her, it’d be more than a promise. It’d be a fucking claim.

She was mine now. Completely.

“You boys done gossiping like little old ladies?” I growled, flicking the ignition and letting the rumble of the engine drown out their laughter. “Let’s ride.”

The trip back was fast and silent, the miles disappearing under our wheels. A few minutes from the compound gates, myphone buzzed. I thumbed it open at a red light, and my pulse kicked up at the message.

Jax

Got something. Big.

I didn’t respond. Just hit the throttle harder, eating up the pavement until the clubhouse gates came into view. The second I parked, I stalked straight to Jax’s office.

The door was cracked, so I shoved it open—and stopped dead in my tracks.

Savannah was perched on the corner of Jax’s desk, bent forward in one of his oversized chairs, laughing so hard her eyes were watering. Her cheeks were pink, her head tilted back, and the sound of her giggle cracked straight through my chest.

Jax grinned at her, clearly proud of whatever the fuck he’d said.

My blood pressure spiked, and a growl rumbled in my chest.

“Prez,” Jax said, looking up.

Savannah turned, still breathless from laughing, her eyes bright and smiling wide. And all of it was for another man. Before I could control it, red filtered into the corners of my vision.

I reminded myself that we needed Jax, and he hadn't technically done anything wrong. And he wasn't after Savannah. So I couldn't fucking kill him.

Rather than lose my shit, I didn't say a word. Just stalked across the room, wrapped a hand around Savannah's upper arm, and yanked her up off that desk—though I was careful not to hurt her.

Her brows lifted in surprise. "Kane?—"

"Quiet," I barked as I led her from the room.

In the hallway, she opened her mouth again, no doubt to say something that would piss me off.

I pushed her back against the wall.

"You so much as smile at another man like that again," I said low, voice raspy like I'd been swallowing nails, "I'll put you over my knee until your ass is cherry red. You hear me?"

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She blinked, stunned—and then, slow as sin, her pupils widened. Her thighs shifted and lips parted as she caught her breath, and she flushed.

Not with embarrassment.

With...interest.

Son of a bitch.

I fucking snapped.

Hauling her over my shoulder in one fast move, I ignored her yelp and the sound of Jax's laughter.

“What are you—hey!” she protested, squirming. “You can’t just—Kane!”

My hand came down hard on her ass. Sharp enough to make her gasp.

“I can do whatever the fuck I want,” I said, voice thick with fury and need. “You’re mine. And just to be clear, that wasn’t a spanking, it was a warning.”

Her voice was breathless, stunned. “I wasn’t smiling at him as an invitation, Kane! It was a joke. He said someone labeled the server’s backup ‘deep penetration protocol,’ and he’s been terrified to open the folder ever since.”

I didn’t slow down or stop walking, just carried her past a few curious looks and stunned expressions, upstairs, and down the hall to our room. Then I kicked the door

shut behind us and finally let her slide down my body, landing her on her feet but keeping her trapped between me and the wall.

“You don’t get it yet, do you?” I grunted, gripping her jaw and tilting her face up. “I want all of it. Your smiles. Your smartmouth. Your sass. Every sound that comes out of you. I want it for me. Only me.”

13

SAVANNAH

I never thought the threat of being spanked would turn me on, but I hadn’t expected to fall for the man who drugged and kidnapped me either. My reactions to Kane defied logic in the most thrilling ways.

My stomach flipped when he tossed me onto the bed, the energy between us intensifying now that we were in the privacy of his suite.

A deep blush heated my skin, anticipating building for what was about to happen.

“Would you really spank me? As more than just a warning?”

He pressed his palms into the mattress on either side of me, and his eyes heated even more. “Smile like that at another man again, and I sure as fuck will.”

I pressed my lips together to keep from smiling, but he didn’t miss my reaction.

Gliding a palm down my side and then around to cup my butt cheek, he grinned. “Could do it now if the idea turns you on.”

I considered the offer, my cheeks heating. A spark of curiosity burned deep inside

me, so I nodded.

“Want to hear the words, sugar.” His smile widened. “Tell me, and I’ll give you what you need.”

“Ugh,” I huffed, knowing damn well that he wouldn’t cave until I did as he asked since I learned that lesson when he took my virginity. “Please spank me. But maybe not to the point of my butt being cherry red.”

Goose bumps popped up on my arms at his deep chuckle. “Since you didn’t know the rule about smiling like that at other guys yet, I’ll just give you a taste this time.”

Shifting so he was sitting at the edge of the bed, he wrapped his fingers around my wrist and tugged me over his lap. Then he slowly pulled my shorts over my butt, taking my panties with them. He stroked over one side, but that was all the warning I got before his palm swatted the curve of my butt.

I gasped, twisting in his hold to gawk up at him.

Quirking his brow, he asked, “Too hard?”

“No, but a little bit of warning might’ve been nice,” I muttered.

“Trust me, sugar. It’s better this way.” He smoothed his palm over the spot where he spanked me. “No chance to tense up because you were expecting it.”

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Narrowing my eyes, I glared at him as I wondered if he was speaking from experience.

Once again, Kane proved how in tune he was with my emotions. “I’ve gotten into enough wrecks to know the ones that hurt most were when I was braced for impact.”

“Oh.” I liked that explanation a whole heck of a lot, except for the part where he got injured.

“Lie back down, baby,” he instructed. “Wanna give the other side the same treatment before I bury my face in your pussy to see how wet you got from me spankin’ you.”

I probably should’ve been embarrassed by how quickly I moved, but I didn’t get the chance to think about it before his hand landed on my butt again. Then he whipped my shirt over my head and unhooked my bra in record time. When he spread me out on the mattress, I kicked off my shorts and panties while he stripped out of his clothes.

Every inch of his tanned, tattooed skin was gorgeous, but I was too desperate to appreciate the view. “Kane, please.”

“Need somethin’ sugar?” he growled, positioning himself between my legs.

“Yes,” I panted, bunching the comforter in my hands. “Your mouth on me.”

He settled my thighs over his shoulders and murmured, “That’s my good girl, telling me what she wants.”

“Only because you make me.”

His big hands gripped my hips, lifting me toward his face as he looked up and asked, “You complainin’?”

“Not if it gets me what I want.”

And it really did.

Kane licked up my drenched center, then flicked my clit with his tongue. I arched under him with a moan, heat surging low in my belly.

“So fucking wet for me, sugar.” He slid his tongue through my folds again. “Spankin’ you isn’t gonna be any kind of punishment. Not when you enjoy it so damn much. Unless I smack your ass until it’s so cherry red, you’ll feel it for days.”

“That’d ruin sexy spanking for me,” I complained.

His beard scraped against my inner thighs as he tilted his head back to flash me a devilish grin. “Then don’t do anything to earn it.”

After that warning, he proceeded to eat me like a starving man. He used his tongue, teeth, and lips to quickly drive me to the brink. Then he pinched my clit, and I flew over the edge. “Yes, oh yes! Kane!”

“That’s it, sugar. Give me another one before I sink my cock into your sweet pussy.”

This time, he worked a finger inside me while he ate me. I pressed my head against the pillows, whipping it back and forth while he built my pleasure like he knew my body better than I did. Touching me exactly where it felt the best and using the perfect amount of pressure to drive me wild.

When he added another finger, my pussy clenched around it, and I gasped, “I’m so close.”

“Come for me, Savannah. Now,” he demanded. Then he sucked my clit hard before gently biting down on the sensitive bundle of nerves.

“Yes,” I hissed. “I’m...I’m coming. Oh my gosh! Yes!”

My hips jerked up again, and I rode his face until the last of my orgasm passed. When the last shudder subsided, he rose to his knees. Staring down at me with heated eyes, he growled, “I’m gonna fuck you so full, you’ll never forget who you belong to. Tell me, sugar. Who do you belong to?”

I had no doubt he was going to follow through on that sensual promise. Just like he had last night.

“You,” I whispered. “I belong to you.”

“Damn straight,” he rasped, desire blazing from his green orbs.

Notching the head of his dick at my entrance, he palmed one of my breasts in his large hand. “You look so fucking gorgeous, naked and needy beneath me. All your sexy curves begging to be touched.”

I stroked my hands up his broad chest. “The same could be said for your muscles.”

“You’ll have plenty of chances to touch me as much as you want, sugar,” he promised, inching his thick shaft inside my tight heat. “Just not today. Need you too fucking bad after seeing you smiling at another man and then how you took being spanked.”

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“Then take me. Now,” I urged, digging my nails into his shoulders.

His hips surged forward with a powerful thrust, and he filled me completely. It took me a moment to adjust to his size, my inner walls clenching around him without anything between us.

I probably should’ve asked him about using a condom since I wasn’t on birth control because I’d never needed it before. A big part of me was happy about that. If I got pregnant, I wouldn’t need to leave him. And any child would be lucky to have someone like Kane as a father. Just like any woman would hit the jackpot if he made them his old lady.

It was too easy to picture spending my life with him. Being surrounded by the Redline Kings—the found family Kane had built for himself.

So I didn’t mention condoms. I just held on while he started to move, his thick shaft dragging against my inner walls as he thrust in and out of me. Hard and fast, over and over again until I wasn’t sure where I ended and he began.

“You take me so good, baby,” he grunted with a swivel of his hips that had me seeing stars. “You gonna give me another one so I can fill you with my come?”

“Uh-huh,” I gasped. “So close.”

“Thank fuck ’cause watching you fly apart for me twice has me at the end of my rope.”

His rhythm sped up, and he hammered me into the mattress until my pussy clamped hard around his dick. Stars burst behind my eyelids, and I heard him groan while intense pleasure coursed through my veins.

He planted himself deep inside me before shuddering. Then I felt the hot splash of his come coating my inner walls, filling me until our shared release dripped down my thighs.

While we worked to catch our breath, he rolled onto his back, taking me with him. I cuddled against his chest, my fingers tracing over the black ink on his arm. “One of these times, I want the chance to explore your body. Maybe give you a massage and trace my tongue over the motorcycle tattoo on your back.”

“Gimme a few minutes, and you’ll get your chance.”

I did, but even though he’d just come, I only had my mouth and hands on him for maybe fifteen minutes before I found myself flat on my back with him pounding into me again. But I was too busy screaming his name in ecstasy to complain.

14

KANE

The quiet hum of the compound outside filtered in through the cracked window in my office. The occasional rumble of bikes, low voices, and doors opening and shutting as the clubhouse woke up.

The morning sun filtered through the blinds, casting long stripes across my desk piled with files and a half-drunk mug of coffee. My boots were kicked up on the corner, and a cigar burned low between my fingers as I scrolled through a report Jax had sent the night before. Paperwork was a bitch, but there was no avoiding it. Especially

since it had all been piling up because I'd been spending most of my time with Savannah.

My focus was razor sharp, the numbers in front of me a puzzle I was determined to solve, until the door swung open without warning.

Savannah strode in like she owned the place, hips swaying in those tiny denim shorts I fucking loved—and hated—because they reminded me that I wasn't the only one who could appreciate how good she looked in them. Her shirt was one of mine again, knotted at the waist, her blond hair falling over her shoulders in waves, blue eyes sparkling with something smug.

Her smile was aimed right at me, making my cock thicken.

"I was right," she declared, striding straight around the desk with her hands on her hips like she was about to give me hell.

I couldn't help the grin that pulled at my mouth as I set the report aside. "I'm sure you were, sugar. But if you want to gloat, you gotta pay the toll first."

Her brows furrowed. "What toll?"

I leaned back in my chair and patted my lap. "Kiss first. Then you tell me what I should've already known."

She rolled her eyes, but her smile didn't fade as she stepped into my space, sliding into my lap like it was made just for her—and maybe it was. My arms wrapped around her waist, pulling her tight against my chest. Her breath hitched as I brushed my lips over hers.

"You drive me wild," she whispered.

“I know,” I teased with a wink. Then I kissed her.

Her lips parted instantly, her hands curling around my neck as I deepened the kiss, tasting the coffee on her tongue and the faint sweetness of her lip balm. She made a soft little sound that went straight to my cock, and I slid one hand up her spine, cupping the back of her head, holding her exactly where I wanted her.

When I finally pulled back, she was breathless, lips swollen and eyes dazed. I fucking loved putting that look on her face.

“Now,” I murmured, brushing a strand of hair behind her ear, “what were you right about?”

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She blinked, then shook herself like she needed to remember why she'd come in. "Oh. Right. Jax hacked into the Wedgewood PD and got into Devon's case files. We found inconsistencies. Pay slips, officer reviews, stuff that didn't add up."

My brows lifted. "Go on."

"He pulled the metadata—all the digital time stamps, IP logs, everything. The chain of custody on the documents was a mess. Then he found it. The audit log showed that the forged documents were uploaded from a private server hosted on a mobile hot spot right here in Crossbend. And the digital signature on the reports doesn't match Devon's."

She sat back a little, eyes shining with triumph as she added, "He was framed, Kane. I told you."

I stared at her, pride burning in my chest like wildfire. Stubborn, loyal, brilliant, and mine. I fucking adored this woman. Loved her. And the thought didn't scare me one bit.

Cupping her jaw, my thumb brushed over her cheekbone. "You were right. I should've trusted you from the beginning."

She shrugged, a soft smile playing on her lips. "I get why you didn't. But I'm glad you listened anyway."

I kissed her forehead, breathing her in. "From now on, I trust your instincts, sugar."

She smirked. “Good. Because I’m usually right.”

I chuckled, then caught her lips again in a slow, lingering kiss. Just as her body melted into mine, the door banged open.

“What the fuck, Jax! Knock,” I snapped.

He grinned like the smug bastard he was and adjusted his glasses. “Didn’t think I had to knock in the middle of the damn day.”

Savannah slid off my lap, cheeks flushed, and I glared at Jax. “This better be good.”

He sobered immediately. “It is. I traced the mobile server. Allen’s involved with the Broken Skulls. They’re the ones trying to get into your underground circuits. They couldn’t buy their way in, so they used him to go around you. Fake paperwork, dirty money, the whole fucking playbook.”

Son of a bitch. The Broken Skulls were a cancer. A rival MC with no code, no rules, just greed and violence. We’d crossed paths before, and I’d shut them down every time. But so far, we hadn’t had enough of a reason to demolish the club.

“There’s a meeting tonight,” Jax continued. “Cash handoff. Allen’s delivering it. We don’t know who he’s giving it to, but it’s happening at one of your old rail yards. The one off Kingman Street.”

I stood, every muscle in my body coiled tight. “We’ll be there.”

Later that night, we were at an underground race just outside Crossbend. The cars were fast, and the crowd was full of energy, but I spent most of it watching the intrigue and excitement on Savannah’s face. When it was winding down, with engines cooling and money exchanging hands in the shadows, Savannah stood beside

me, her hand curled around mine.

Edge approached, nodding once. “Time.”

I turned to Savannah. Her eyes were wide, full of worry.

“You going?” she asked.

“Have to.”

She hesitated. “Be careful. If you get yourself killed, I swear I’ll drag your ass back and beat you to death.”

I cupped her face, kissed her hard, and growled against her lips. “Not getting killed. Just handling business. Go back to the compound with Edge.”

She didn’t argue. Just kissed me again, fierce and fast, and whispered, “Come back to me.”

“Always.”

15

KANE

The van's engine rumbled low, blending with the creak of old suspension and the faint clink of the tools Wrench had stashed in the back. I sat near the sliding door, boots planted wide, arms crossed over my chest as we bounced down the forgotten road leading toward the old railyard.

Night cloaked everything in shades of steel and charcoal, the moon thin and cold

overhead. Crossbend's humidity wrapped around us like a second skin, heavy with the stench of rust, oil, and salt air. My cut clung to my shoulders, the leather still warm from the earlier race and the heat, despite the late hour.

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Axle drove with steady hands, his eyes locked on the road, tension simmering under his calm exterior. Nitro sat beside him, tapping his fingers on his thigh like he was waiting for permission to crack skulls. Wrench was across from me. He was silent, but I could tell he was wound tight. He lived for this shit. Just like the rest of us.

The Redline Kings weren't fucking saints. We never pretended to be. We were outlaws. Built for the shadows, forged in violence, but loyal to a fault. The world saw us as criminals or saviors depending on the day, but the truth was messier.

We didn't play by society's rules. We had our own. A code rooted in loyalty, respect, and blood. Some brothers walked closer to the edge than others, but there were always lines we didn't cross. And when someone broke those lines—when they came after what was ours—we didn't just respond. We had our own brand of justice, and we executed it. Even if it meant spilling blood.

Edge and Jax had called minutes ago, telling us to hold the fuck up before we walked into something that was potentially a trap.

“We need eyes first,” Jax had said. “Cops are moving like they got fire ants in their pants. Too much chatter, Kane. Savannah thinks it's a setup.”

I didn't ask how she knew. My woman had instincts. She'd gone through Allen's files, found the railyard listed on one of his fake invoices, and knew something didn't smell right. The second she told Jax, he'd checked police comms and found a shitstorm brewing.

Edge's voice came on the line next. “We're in the alley, watching. Broken Skulls are

getting into position.” He snickered. “Looks like they’re expecting company.”

I stretched my neck and rolled my shoulders. “I guess we oughta take ’em up on their invitation.”

Axle pulled the van into the shadows and killed the engine. We slipped out silently, weapons drawn. I gripped the cold metal of my sidearm, the weight familiar grounding me. Nitro was at my left, Wrench on my right, and we moved fast, sticking to the cover of rusted shipping containers and piles of scrap metal.

Up ahead, low voices murmured, harsh and cocky, from behind a dilapidated shipping container. I motioned for Nitro to take the flank and for Wrench to get up high on another container. Then I crouched low and crept forward until I spotted the pricks.

Five Broken Skulls, vests gleaming dully in the moonlight, were loading weapons and counting cash in the back of a beat-up SUV. And in the middle of it all, Henry Allen stood with his thumb hooked in his pocket, looking like the arrogant fuck I now knew he was.

Edge slipped up behind me with Jax at his side.

“We catch these fuckers before the cops get here, we end this tonight,” Edge murmured, eyes hard.

I nodded once. “On my signal.”

The second Allen turned his back, I moved. Fast and silent, I crossed the gravel and slammed the butt of my gun into the nearest Skull's head. He went down like a sack of shit. Then Nitro burst from the cover of darkness, taking down another. Wrench dropped from above, eliminating another two with brutal efficiency. Necks broken,

they fell to the ground with a thud. Shouts rang out, echoing through the railyard as a few more Broken Skulls rushed in and were put down with bullets in their foreheads.

Allen froze, eyes wide with shock as I stepped into the light, gun leveled at his chest.

My smile was sinister. “Hello, Henry. I heard you were expecting me.”

He stammered, stumbling back into the arms of Edge, who caught him by the collar and yanked him off his feet.

“You fucking idiots!” the Broken Skulls prez roared. “This wasn’t the deal!”

Jax pressed a blade to his throat. “Deals change.”

“Handle the mess,” I ordered Nitro and Wrench, who nodded before walking away.

We dragged Allen and the Skulls’ president, Slash, to the van, securing them with zip ties, then tossing them in the back like the trash they were. Axle gunned the engine, wheels spinning as we tore away from the railyard, the wail of distant sirens just starting to cut through the night.

Back at the garage, we hauled them downstairs into the concrete bunker two levels below the work bays. The temperature dropped as we descended, but it was still humid, causing the walls to sweat. The faint scent of bleach and the tang of copper hung in the air.

The walls of the rooms were thick, soundproofed, and stained with rust and blood from those who’d crossed us before. Fluorescent lights flickered over the two bastards in the center of the room, hanging from chains attached to the ceiling. And a metal table stood at the back, with tools lined up in neat rows.

Allen was already sweating, his face pale. Slash just glared, spitting on the floor.

Edge pulled his knife from his belt and, as usual, turned between his fingers like a drummer twirling a stick. “Start talking.”

Allen whimpered. “I can explain.”

“Don’t care,” I growled, grabbing him by the throat. “Who else is involved?”

“No one! It was just—just me and?—”

Slash snarled. “Don’t say a fucking word, you rat bastard. You break, and I’ll carve your face off myself.”

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Allen trembled, eyes darting from me to Edge to the tools and back. “Please. Please, I didn’t mean for it to get this far. They promised money, power. I thought I could manage it without?—”

I pressed the barrel of my gun to his forehead. “You thought you could fuck with me and live, asshole?”

That was all it took for him to break. “It was the Broken Skulls! They offered me a cut to get into your network. I never meant for anyone to get hurt. They just wanted me to set you up. Said if I got you arrested, they’d take over. I just had to lead you into a trap. I didn’t think?—”

“You didn’t think,” I echoed with a snarl. “You’re right about that.”

I pulled the trigger. One shot to the head. Quick, clean, and better than he deserved. But I wanted this fucking over with, I had somewhere to be.

“You ready to talk?” Edge asked as he stepped up to the Slash.

He didn’t flinch. Instead, he sneered, “Fuck you.”

Brave, but extremely stupid.

My brother smiled, slow and cold. “Wrong choice, motherfucker. Guess you shoulda kept your little bitch on a tighter leash. Lucky for me, that means slow and painful rather than a bullet between the eyes.”

Slash growled, “I’ll see you in hell.”

“Probably,” Edge drawled, gliding the tip of his blade along Slash’s neck just enough to draw a little blood.

“Handle it,” I ordered Edge and Wrench. “Going home.”

Edge went to work as I left the room. There was no need to stay, if Slash had anything else to give, Edge would dig it out of him.

Wrench gave a sharp nod. “Got it.”

I climbed the stairs two at a time, leaving that shit behind, my head already full of Savannah. Her smile, her fire, the way she’d fought for her brother...and for me.

She’d saved my ass tonight.

And I planned to thank her. Thoroughly.

After I officially branded her as mine.

16

SAVANNAH

I paced the common room like a caged animal.

Back and forth. Over and over. My feet barely made a sound against the floor, but inside my head, everything was loud. The hum of the television. The pounding of my heart. And the worst-case scenarios spiraling so fast that I felt dizzy.

I'd helped put all the pieces together, but Kane had refused to let me leave the compound. It was too dangerous. Yet he was out there in the thick of things, while I was stuck here wondering if he was going to make it out of all this in one piece. If he was even going to come back to me at all.

Hours had already gone by, and I was barely holding it together.

I crossed my arms, then uncrossed them. Fidgeted with the hem of my shirt—another of Kane's that I'd borrowed—then shoved my hands into my hair. I couldn't sit still. Couldn't breathe right. Couldn't stop imagining what might be happening out there.

For days, I'd been consumed with worry over my brother. But now it was Kane I was agonizing over. Devon was safely off the grid, hidden from danger, and no longer in the Redline Kings' scope. While the man I'd fallen for had stepped straight into it.

I jerked my gaze to the front door again, willing it to open. Still nothing. And I couldn't help but think about the fact that I knew where they'd gone.

Just as I took a shaky step toward the exit, a low voice drawled behind me, "Don't."

I spun around. Drift was propped against the wall like he'd been watching me spiral this whole time. His arms were crossed, his expression casual, but his eyes were sharp.

"You walk out that door," he continued, "he'll skin us all alive."

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I blinked. “I wasn’t?—”

Drift arched a brow, clearly aware that I was lying. “Then chain you to the damn bed for a month. Minimum.”

My breath caught.

He shrugged. “Trust your man. He has everything under control. He’ll be back before you know it.”

I swallowed hard and nodded, though I wasn’t sure if I believed him.

Drift didn’t say anything else. Just tipped his head toward the couch, silently ordering me to sit my butt down before I gave the rest of them heart attacks.

I did, but only because pacing wasn’t helping. If I stood at that door a second longer, I might actually go through it. Even though Kane would be furious if I did. And I probably wouldn’t be able to sit for a week after he was done with me.

So I curled up in the corner of the couch, pulled a pillow to my chest, and kept my eyes on the door. Waiting. Praying. And counting every tick of the clock like it might be the last one before I saw him again.

Luckily, Drift turned out to be right. It wasn’t too much longer before the door finally opened.

I shot to my feet, the pillow tumbling to the floor, my heart leaping so fast I could

barely catch my breath.

And then I saw him.

Kane.

His hair was slightly damp, and his jaw was tight. He looked like he was pulsing with barely restrained adrenaline.

But he was here.

He was safe.

And the moment his eyes found mine, something inside me unlocked.

“Kane.” I whispered his name like a prayer.

He crossed the room in a few long strides, pulling me against him with a force that sent all the air rushing from my lungs. I clung to him, breathing him in as I buried my face against his chest.

“You’re okay,” I mumbled.

“I told you I would be.” His fingers dug into my hips. “Nothing’s taking me from you. Ever.”

I pulled back just enough to look up at him, searching his face. “What happened?”

“Handled it.” Then his voice softened as he added, “It’s over.”

“That’s not an answer.”

He cupped the back of my neck, brushing his thumb along my skin. “I let you help with the research on this because your brother was involved, but there are things I’ll never be able to tell you, Savannah. What happened today was club business. That makes it off-limits. Not because I don’t trust you...some things are meant to stay in the dark while you belong in the light.”

I nodded slowly. To be with Kane, I could live with that. “Okay.”

His expression slightly softened, but the fire in his eyes shifted. “One thing you can count on, I’ll never lie to my old lady. You’ll always know where you stand with me.”

I blinked, my pulse leaping. “Wait...did you just say your old lady?”

“Yeah, sugar.” He captured my mouth in a kiss that left me breathless. “Did you think I was gonna fuck my kid into you without making it official?”

I made a strangled sound, halfway between a gasp and a laugh. “Oh my gosh.”

“You’re mine.”

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“Here ya go, Prez,” Jax called before something black came sailing toward us.

Kane snatched it from the air, and I realized he was holding a vest that was smaller than his. Only this one had a tag sewn across the back that said PROPERTY OF KANE.

I stared at it, my chest tight with something that felt too big to name, then let him help me slip the leather over my shoulders. He stepped back just enough to take in the sight of me wearing his property patch. His jaw clenched. His nostrils flared.

Then he pulled a small box from the inner pocket of his cut.

My heart stuttered as he opened it, and a laugh bubbled up my chest when he slipped the sparkling diamond solitaire onto my finger without another word.

“You didn’t even ask me to marry you,” I whispered, breathless.

“Not giving you a choice, sugar. You’re marrying me.” There wasn’t a hint of doubt in his voice. “You’re mine, and I’m not letting you go.”

I swallowed hard. “Good. Because I don’t want you to.”

“I love you so fucking much,” he growled.

“And I love you too,” I whispered.

A sharp whistle pierced the air, loud enough to jolt me out of my emotional haze.

I turned toward the sound just as Edge walked through the door and strode over to us with a smirk.

“Well, well, look at that.” He clapped Kane on the back and turned to the rest of the crew gathered nearby. “Listen up, assholes! Our prez finally claimed himself an old lady.”

A chorus of cheers, whistles, and a few whoops echoed around the common room.

Kane just kept his hand on my lower back like he owned me—because, well, he kinda did.

“Dammit.” I turned to see Axle leaning in the doorway with a grin. “This better not mean we’re all headed for the altar. That’s exactly how it started with the Iron Rogues.”

Edge snorted. “Relax, Romeo. One old lady doesn’t mean you’re next.”

Axle quirked a brow. “That’s what you say now, but their VP and prez were the first to fall, so you may want to avoid women until you know I’m just being superstitious.”

“As if that’s a problem,” Nitro snorted. “Haven’t seen him so much as talk to one in forever, except for Savannah.”

Kane growled low in his throat. “Anyone who so much as looks at her sideways will be limping for a week.”

“Didn’t mean it like that. Fuck,” Nitro muttered.

“Yeah, bro,” Edge drawled. “She’s literally a sister to me.”

I blinked, caught between a laugh and a blush.

Edge winked at me. “Welcome to the family, Savannah. You ever need backup, you come to me.”

“Thanks,” I said softly, my voice thick with emotion.

Then Kane turned back to me, his hand tightening at my waist, and it felt like we were the only two people in the world. I threw my arms around his neck, and Kane held me. One hand on the small of my back. The other tangled in my hair. His heartbeat thundered against my chest. Everything else—the worry, the waiting, the fear—faded into silence.

When he finally spoke, his lips brushed the shell of my ear. “You’re it for me, Savannah. You understand?”

I nodded, unable to speak past the lump in my throat.

“You’re the only woman I’ve ever looked at and thought—fuck, I need to build a life around her.”

My breath caught.

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He leaned back just enough to look into my eyes, his voice rough with emotion. “You belong here. With me. Wearing that vest and my ring. Carrying my name.”

“And maybe more,” I whispered, sliding my palm down to rest over my stomach. It was too soon to tell, but he’d certainly done his best to try to get me pregnant.

Kane’s entire body went still. Then his mouth crashed down on mine—hot, possessive, and wild. He gave me a kiss that promised everything.

When he pulled away, he rasped, “Mine, and now the whole damn world knows it.”

There was no question. I was Kane’s. And I’d never stop choosing him.

EPILOGUE

KANE

One week later

The roar of engines vibrated through the packed stands, the sound of power and speed thundering in my bones, a familiar rhythm I’d never get tired of. The scent of gasoline, burnt rubber, and sweat hung heavy in the summer air, thick and gritty as hell under the midday sun.

We were at Redline Speedway. My professional team was ridin’ today, but still—my track, my race, my rules.

Yet I couldn't focus worth a damn on the cars roaring down the track.

Not when Savannah stood beside me, looking like every man's wet dream.

She leaned against the railing of the owner's box, sipping an ice-cold soda with a smirk playing on her lips, her tank top stretched tight across her chest and showing off the logo for my pro racing team. Her old lady vest hugged her curves perfectly, and low-slung jeans wrapped around her hips like a fucking invitation.

I wasn't the only one who noticed. Every time we moved through the damn crowd, I saw eyes lingering. Heads turning. Some motherfuckers didn't even try to hide it.

"I hate those jeans," I muttered, wrapping an arm around her waist and pulling her flush against me.

Savannah looked up, blinking those innocent blue eyes at me like she didn't know exactly what she was doing. "What? These?"

I growled, letting my hand slide down to cup her ass over the tight denim. "Every man in this arena wants you in those jeans."

She laughed, soft and teasing, leaning her head back against my shoulder. "You're being ridiculous. No one's even looking."

I let out a snort and nipped her ear. "They look, sugar. And if you so much as take a step away from me, I'll put you over my knee right here in front of every asshole in this building. You won't be able to sit for a week."

Her breath hitched, and her smile curved slow and wicked. "Uh-huh."

I stiffened behind her, heat coiling low in my gut. "You think I'm joking?"

Savannah turned in my arms, rising on her toes to press a soft kiss to my jaw. “I think you talk a lot, Kane Beckett.”

My eyes narrowed.

Challenge accepted.

Without another word, I took her hand and dragged her toward the back of the box. Her surprised laughter followed me as I shoved open the supply closet door and pulled her inside. The door slammed shut behind us, and I backed her against the wall, crowding into her space, my hands already gripping her hips.

“Kane!” she gasped.

“You know better than to poke the beast, sugar,” I rasped, capturing her mouth in a bruising kiss.

She moaned, fingers tangling in my cut as I lifted her, hooking her legs around my waist. My cock was already hard, already straining against my leather pants.

I shoved up her tank top and groaned at the sight of her nipples pebbling as the air hit them. I sucked one into my mouth, loving the way her body arched into me, desperate and needy.

“We can’t?—”

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“Fuck yes, we can,” I growled, fumbling with the button on her jeans and dragging them down just far enough. She was soaked already, her slick heat coating my fingers as I stroked her.

“Fuck, baby. You know you love it when I lose control.” I ripped at my fly, taking out my thick, fat cock.

Savannah gasped, her breath ragged. “I love you.”

I froze for half a second, just long enough for the words to hit me like a gut punch. “Never gonna get tired of hearing you say that, sugar.”

Then I kissed her again, harder, deeper, and drove into her in one powerful thrust. She cried out, the sound muffled against my mouth, and her nails dug into my shoulders.

It was fast, wild, and hot as hell. My hips slammed into hers, every stroke a claim, every groan a vow. I owned her body and heart. Soon, everyone in the damn world would know it.

“Come for me, sugar. Just like that.”

Her release hit hard and fast, her thighs trembling as she moaned my name, her pussy gripping me so tight I nearly lost it.

“That’s it, baby. Milk my cock. Fuck!”

I followed seconds later, burying myself deep and groaning against her throat as I emptied inside her.

Afterward, she sagged against me, boneless and flushed, her breath warm on my neck. I held her there, not ready to let go.

“That's what every fucker out there is fantasizing about when they see you in those fucking jeans.”

She giggled, then whispered, “I guess it's lucky for you that I won't be able to wear outfits like this much longer anyway.”

I pulled back, brows furrowed. “What?”

She gave me a coy smile, brushing a hand over her still-flat belly.

Realization slammed into me.

My grin turned downright smug. “Fuck yes. Everyone will know for sure you're taken. Round and swollen with my baby.”

Savannah laughed as I set her down and helped her straighten her clothes, before tucking myself back in. “As if the property patch and giant diamond ring weren't enough?”

I smoothed my hands over her hips, letting my thumbs rest low on her stomach. “Nothing will ever be enough. But you carrying our baby? That's probably the only thing that will keep me from killing every bastard who looks at you.”

She huffed, rolling her eyes. “I can't be pregnant all the time.”

I leaned in, voice low and deep. “Wanna bet?”

She flushed, laughing as I took her hand and led her out of the closet. We walked back to the front of the owner’s box, the crowd roaring below us.

The next heat was starting when the noise shifted—shouts, gasps, and then a scream of tires.

My gaze snapped to the track.

A motorcycle had skidded onto the field, crashing across the dirt, a duffel bag flying from the rider’s back.

Axle veered off in his race car, avoiding the wreck by inches. His door flew open, and he bolted out, racing toward the downed rider. From up here, we couldn’t hear what he was saying, but he was clearly yelling, his face a mask of fury.

When he reached the body, it didn't move, and he froze.

Axle scooped the limp rider into his arms, and I realized it was a woman. The second some guy ran over and tried to help, Axle snarled something fierce enough to send him stumbling back.

I snorted.

Savannah turned to me, eyes wide. “What’s so funny?”

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I shook my head, chuckling. “Axle just got hit.”

She blinked. “They didn’t crash.”

I turned to her, eyes gleaming. “Not that kind of hit, sugar. A hit to the heart. His fate just crashed into him.”

She stared at me for a second, then grinned slow and bright. “Oh boy.”

I nodded, wrapping my arm around her waist and pulling her against me as we looked out over the chaos.

“Yeah,” I murmured. “This is gonna be fun.”

EPILOGUE

SAVANNAH

“It really isn’t fair how hot you look holding a newborn,” I murmured, watching Kane cradle our daughter like she was made of glass.

He didn’t glance up—just kept gazing down at Eliana like the world had narrowed to a single perfect point. His thumb brushed across her impossibly tiny knuckles as she yawned and smacked her lips in sleep.

“She’s so damn small,” he muttered, voice rough. “Didn’t think it was possible to love something this much without my chest cracking open.”

“You said that last time,” I teased.

“Still true.” He looked at me, and the molten heat in his eyes had my heart doing cartwheels. “You gave me everything, sugar. A son. A daughter. A life I didn’t think was meant for a man like me.”

“Well,” I drawled with a tired grin, “then maybe you should hand Eliana over to me instead of hogging her.”

He sat on the edge of the bed, one arm still wrapped protectively around our newborn. “You’ll get your turn when she’s hungry. Until then, she’s mine.”

I huffed a laugh. “You’re seriously going to wrestle a hormonal, post-labor woman for baby cuddles?”

“You need your rest.”

I rolled my eyes at his lame excuse but didn’t get the chance to reply because there was a light knock on the door that made me glance up. A nurse entered with a polite smile on her face. “Just here to take the baby to the nursery for a bit so mama can get some rest.”

Kane’s expression iced over. “That won’t be necessary.”

The nurse faltered. “I...I understand you want to hold her, sir, but we typically?—”

“I said,” Kane growled, rising to his full intimidating height, “it won’t be necessary. I’ll make sure my wife gets anything she needs. My daughter stays with me.”

The poor woman backed toward the door, flustered. “Of course. If you need anything, ma’am, press the call button.”

“Will do,” I said with a wave, trying not to laugh until the door clicked shut behind her.

Then I lost it.

“You’re a menace,” I giggled.

“She wanted to take her,” Kane said flatly, eyes back on our daughter. “From this room. While you’re recovering. That’ll only happen over my dead body.”

“Fair point since I’ve literally seen you break someone’s nose for less.” I wagged my finger at him. “It’s lucky for you that Raze has the best paralegal in the state of Florida with how often I need to help him keep you guys out of trouble.”

He just smirked slightly and sank back onto the bed beside me, the baby curled perfectly in the crook of his arm. His gaze dipped to my chest, still full and sore from nursing, and the air between us thickened.

“You know,” he murmured, “watching you feed her might be the hottest damn thing I’ve ever seen.”

“You said that last time too,” I whispered.

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“Just as true now as it was then.”

Before I could melt into a puddle of hormonal goo, the door cracked open again. This time, our three-year-old barreled in like a pint-sized freight train.

“Mommy!” Kylan yelled, launching onto the bed.

Kane caught him mid-flight with his free arm and warned, “Easy, little man. Mommy’s tired, and your sister’s sleeping.”

Our son’s wide eyes landed on the baby.

“So tiny,” he whispered.

Kane adjusted his grip and crouched down so Kylan could get a better look. “She’s brand new. You were this small once too.”

Our boy wrinkled his nose. “No way.”

“Way,” I said with a smile, brushing a hand through his messy hair. “You even had the same nose.”

“She looks like you,” Kane murmured.

“Of course.” I smirked. “All the best people do.”

Kylan pointed at his chest. “Me the best.”

“You are,” Kane agreed. “But now you gotta protect your mommy and sister. They’re ours to keep safe.”

The little guy puffed up like we’d handed him a badge. “I will.”

“You better,” came a familiar grumble from the doorway.

Devon stood just inside the doorway, arms crossed and face set in its usual unimpressed lines. “Still can’t believe my baby sister ended up with the MC president who was hunting me down.”

I grinned. “Worked out, didn’t it? You’re not dead. I’m not single. And now you’re officially Uncle Grump.”

“I’m not that grumpy,” he muttered, walking over to the bed.

Our son tackled his legs anyway. “Unca Grump!”

“Traitor,” Devon said dryly, scooping him up. But he softened the moment he looked at the baby. “Damn. She’s really something, Sav.”

“She’s perfect,” I said softly.

He nodded, emotion flickering through his expression. “Yeah. She is.”

Kane looked over at me then, and the moment stretched, full of everything we didn’t need to say aloud. Love. Loyalty. Forever.

Find out what happens with the woman who crashed into the track in Axle!