



HAVOC

SNAKES HENCHMEN MC

Alivia Grayson

HAVOC

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ALIVIA GRAYSON

Havoc

Snakes Henchmen MC Next Generation

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About the Author

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Snakes Henchmen MC, here's where you'll meet the Motorcycle God's in leather and denim that have plagued my mind for over ten years.

They're strong and powerful, dangerous beyonds words sometimes, but vigilantes who fight for the rights of the innocent. Nothing is too much for these men. You need help, they'll give it to you. You cross them, you die. That's all there is too it.

Beware of the panty-melting, ovary exploding bikers with big hearts and even bigger... ;)

As we move forward with the next generation, we welcome one or two young ladies with big attitudes, and incredibly strong wills. Some women are more dangerous than men, and one in particular is not to be messed with. I look forward to the day you meet one very special young lady :)

I hope you enjoy the next generation of bikers, and I hope you take them into your hearts the way you did their parents.

Chapter One

WYNTER

“Do you need anything else?” Havoc smirks at me, and even though I want to tell him to *get lost*, I don’t. I don’t know why he can’t take *no* for an answer, but he’s starting to wear me down.

Havoc and I have a history that can’t be denied. When I walked away from him all those months ago, I thought that would be the last I saw of him. Once I told him who my father was, and I saw the look of disgust on his face, I knew we were over.

It wasn’t Havoc’s fault. Everyone gives me the same look once they find out who my father is. That is the reason I try to keep what he did to myself; no one wants to be friends with the daughter of a serial rapist slash murderer.

When I met Havoc, I had no idea what would transpire between us. I thought it would be one night, one hot night of passionate sex, and that would be it. However, one night turned into two, two turned into seven, and I slowly fell in love with him. When he told me that he loved me in return, that my feelings for him weren’t one-sided, I thought, ‘This is it, I’m finally going to mean something to someone. Havoc won’t look at me like I’m filth on his shoe once he finds out who I really am.’ However, that’s precisely how he looked at me, and it broke me.

I don’t know why he’s in Nookridge when he should be in Bardsville doing whatever the hell it is bikers do, but he’s been coming into the diner I work at every day for the past three days. He’s always with another guy, whom I’ve heard Havoc refer to as Corma-

ck. I've been polite to the man, but I've never engaged in conversation with him.

"For you to come home?" That both seemed like a question and an order. Havoc smirks and raises his eyebrow cockily.

I swallow hard and shake my head. I'm not going anywhere with him. I made it clear months ago that Havoc and I were over. He left me alone all that time, respecting my wishes, so why turn up now and demand that I go with him? How did he even find me?

Havoc doesn't really want me, but he's trying to stake his claim, nonetheless. It's a cliché that he doesn't want me, but he doesn't want anyone else to have me either. Why on this earth he'd think I'd be running around with every Tom, Dick, and Harry is beyond me. I don't have the time or the energy to sleep around.

"We need to get out of here, brother," Cormack states. "I've got a wedding to organize."

"Wait." Havoc doesn't take his eyes off me, even though he's addressing his friend. "Wynter, I'm not leaving here without you."

"I'm not going anywhere with you, Havoc." He grabs my hand. I look down and sigh. I want to wrap my fingers around his, but where would that get me? That's why I pull my hand from his.

"What the hell is going on?" I'm not surprised that Cormack is confused, I doubt Havoc has told anyone about me.

Havoc is saying something to his friend, but my eyes lock on the two men getting out of their car. I swallow hard because they're here for me. It didn't take them long to find me this time.

I hadn't realized that I was backing away, but I notice Havoc looking at me as he gets out of his seat. He narrows his eyes, looks out of the window, then watches me run from the room. I need to get out of here before those men catch up with me.

Luckily for me, I keep a packed bag wherever I go. It became a habit after my father was arrested. As soon as people find out who he is, they tend not to want me around.

I grab the bag from my locker, take off my apron, and pull on my jacket. I don't have time to let my boss know that I need to leave. I won't even be able to collect my pay, but I can't think about that right now. Money is just money, but my life is something I cannot mess around with.

I turn to leave and startle to see Havoc standing there, staring at me. "What's going on, Wynter?"

"I have to get out of here." I try to move past him, but he blocks my path. "Please, Havoc, I have to go."

"Those men out there were asking for you, who are they?"

"I don't have time for this. If they find me, they'll..." I swallow hard.

"They'll what?" I shake my head; I don't have time for this! Havoc sighs. "What have you gotten yourself into?"

"Nothing. Please, just let me out." If I don't get out of here right now, those men will find me! They're not going to wait for me to get back to work, they'll come back here and do God only knows what to me.

Havoc takes my face between his hands, his eyes searching mine. I know he can see the fear I'm feeling swimming in my eyes. He looks behind him to make sure no one is coming, then he takes my hand, and I have no choice but to follow him.

Havoc leads me out of the back entrance. How he even knew which way to go is a mystery to me, one I'm not about to ask. I'm not a weak woman, but I'd be a liar if I said that I didn't feel sick right now. I'm scared we're being followed, and I'm scared those men are going to kill Havoc for daring to touch me. I don't know why I feel like that, but I can't help it.

"Put this on," Havoc hands me a helmet from his motorcycle. I take it, wondering why he parked so close to the back entrance. He takes my bag, lifts the bike seat, and drops the bag inside. "Put it on, Wynter, and get on the back of the bike."

"You don't need to do this, Havoc. I can take care of myself."

"Get on the bike, Wynter." I want to tell him to go fuck himself, but I can't afford to right now. I'm not about to turn down help when I need it. I'm not that stupid.

I look behind me to make sure those men aren't following us. They aren't, so I put the helmet on and climb on the back of Havoc's motorcycle. I watch him make a phone call, telling his friend to get his ass here now.

It's not a minute before Cormack walks around the corner and mounts his motorcycle.

Havoc climbs on in front of me and starts the engine. "Hold tight, darlin'." I swallow back the nervous lump in my throat and wrap my arms around Havoc's waist. I sense his smile when his hand covers both of mine.

I'm so nervous that my whole body is shaking. I can't seem to calm myself down. Havoc rides on in front of Cormack, who appears to be staying behind us to make sure no one is following. I look back, but I don't see anyone, thank God.

The further away from the diner we get, the more I relax. I can't completely relax, however, and I don't think I ever will. Maybe I should have asked Havoc for help weeks ago. We may have parted because of my insecurities, but I know Havoc is a good man, he would have helped me without question.

Why didn't I go to him?

I didn't think dumping my problems on my ex was fair. I feel so stupid for trying to avoid those people and not asking for help. It's not easy to admit you were wrong, but I was wrong.

Being this close to Havoc has my emotions running wild. I'd be a liar if I said I hadn't missed him, missed what we had. We weren't together for very long, but those few weeks that we were meant everything to me.

I met Havoc through my best friend, Cassie. Her father is a member of Snakes Henchmen MC. Cassie didn't grow up with her Dad, and he knew nothing about her until last year. However, I helped her find him, and she's been living with him ever since. Cassie's mom was a nightmare, and my best friend's childhood was not good. All Cassie ever wanted was to know her Dad. Cassie means the world to me, and I would have done anything to help her find that man.

I miss her so much right now. Since Havoc and I parted, I've stayed away from him, thus meaning I haven't been able to see Cassie. She loves being with her father, and now she's fallen in love, she doesn't have much time to meet up with me. Though we may not see each other as often as we'd like, we each know that should we need one another, we'll always be there when it counts.

I met Havoc on the day he came to a diner in Bardsville to collect Cassie. Her father had asked him to collect her because he couldn't get out of something. I felt my heart beat faster; the second my eyes locked with his. Havoc asked me if I needed a ride home. I told him that I lived elsewhere, and he told me that he'd take me. He dropped Cassie with her father and came right back for me.

I had no idea Havoc would come to mean anything to me. I understood that it was one night, but that one night... I can't think

about what once was, that time is gone. I've thought about our first meeting and where life took us after that too many times. The past is gone, but I can't deny that I miss him, and that's why I lay my cheek against his back and close my eyes.

There was a time that I'd lie in Havoc's arms for hours. I was safe there, and I loved him so much. Havoc didn't love me in return as he'd stated; if he had, he would have understood about my past. Instead, it seemed to me that he tarnished me because of what my father did to those women.

We ride for a while before turning into the street Havoc lives on. He stops the motorcycle outside the small house we shared for a short time. This was going to be my home. Havoc promised that we'd always be happy here. He told me that he'd tell everyone about us and that he would take me to meet his family. He'd even take me to his clubhouse to meet his biker family and to show everyone what I meant to him. Evidently, that never happened, and I'd begun to doubt it ever would.

Havoc climbs off his motorcycle, then helps me down. He doesn't say anything as he leads me inside the house. I'm nervous about being here. Though I know he wants to help me; I'm not sure that he can.

Havoc closes the front door and then leads me into the den. I used to love sitting by the fire with Havoc. We even made love there once or twice. The memories of being here and the sweet way this man would tell me that he loved me, brings tears to my eyes.

Havoc offers me a seat in the armchair next to the unlit open fire. I take it because my legs are shaking from the vibrations of the bike ride over here. He leaves the room for a moment, then comes back with a glass of water. I take it because my mouth is dry. I take a sip then sit the glass on the coffee table.

"Wanna tell me what the was all about?" Havoc asks as he sits on the couch, staring at me.

It's none of Havoc's business what those men wanted with me. However, he just saved me from them, so I owe him an explanation, but I'm not sure I have the energy to get into it right now. Not that I have anything in the way of information because I honestly don't know what those men want with me. I never waited around long enough to find out.

"I don't want to get into it, Havoc. It's a long story, and it's not really any of your business. However, I owe you some kind of explanation."

He raises his eyebrow at me, and I try not to swoon. Havoc still has that effect on me.

"Last month, those men came into the bar I was working at. I served them, but they seemed to know me by name. I didn't think that was anything unusual at the time because everyone knew my name there. I did, however, tell them that they'd made a mistake and that I wasn't whom they thought I was, but they didn't believe me. They said I needed to go with them because their boss would like to speak with me. Obviously, I didn't. I made excuses to use the restroom, then I ran. I moved towns because I didn't want to stay around in case they came back. However, they found me again, and I don't know how." I shrug.

"There's more to it than that, Wynter."

Of course, there is. However, I don't know what that is. I was too scared to hear those men out, and I don't know many who would have. They looked and dressed like spies, and they terrified me. They were huge in every way a man can be. Shit, they even carried guns! I saw the tallest ones when he opened his jacket to pull something from his pocket.

If I tell Havoc everything I do know, he'll insist on helping me further, and I don't want him invading my life. It's taken me months to convince myself that we're done. If I let him back in now, I'll lose my heart to him all over again. I'm not strong enough to deal with that.

Havoc broke me when he reacted the way he did. I won't allow him to hurt me again. I know that it was my doing; I was the one who ended things, but he never fought for us. If Havoc loved me the way he said he did, then why didn't he fight?

"Wynter, those men terrified you. If I'm to keep you safe, then you need to tell me the truth. Tell me everything, and I can help you."

"No," I shake my head and get out of my seat. "You're not going to do anything, Havoc. Thanks for what you did today, but I don't want your help." I turn to leave, but Havoc grabs my arm. "Let go of me, Havoc."

"Don't pretend you can handle those men on your own because you're angry with me. You left me, Wynter, not the other way around."

I yank my arm out his grasp. "You know why I left, Havoc. Don't stand there and act like you did nothing wrong."

"I didn't do anything wrong, Wynter. You told me who your father was, and I didn't answer you right away. Did it never cross your mind that I was shocked by what you'd told me?" I swallow the lump in my throat. I hadn't thought about that. "You walked away from me without giving me the chance to say anything. Jesus Christ, Wynter, you ran from me without a word. I had no idea where you were or even if you were okay."

I fold my arms around my chest and sigh. He's not saying anything that isn't true. However, at the time, I felt like I had no choice but to walk away. The look on his face, the look of shock and disgust, still haunts me to this day.

Maybe I overreacted, but I'd been down that road before. I confided in someone who couldn't handle the truth of where I came from. Shit, and they didn't even know the whole story of what my father had done. Havoc knew everything. I told him every detail of what happened in my past because you don't keep those kinds of things from the person you love.

Deep down, I know that I was a coward. The one person I should have trusted with my life was Havoc, and I didn't fully. I didn't give the man the chance to reply to what I said. He was in shock, and I walked away. I hurt both of us without even meaning to. It was easy to blame Havoc, but it wasn't his fault.

"I'm sorry, Havoc."

"For what, Wynter? For running from me, or for not trusting me?"

"Both." I shrug. I don't know what else to say. I'm tired, and I just want to go home. Then it hits me that going home is not an option. Those men may not have found out where I live yet, but it will only be a matter of time. Maybe they've known all along and were just biding their time. I don't know, all I do know is that I'm not safe anywhere, and I don't have a clue why.

"We have a lot to talk about, Wynter."

"There's nothing to talk about, Havoc. I just want to leave the past where it is." I push a strand of my hair behind my ear.

"We can't do that, Wynter. I looked for you for weeks before I finally told myself it was pointless. Then for me to find you in the place, where we first said 'I love you'? I couldn't even get my head around that." He takes my hand in his. "I'm not gonna let you walk out on me again."

"It's not your choice, Havoc."

"You think?" He raises his eyebrow. "You're my wife, Wynter!"
Ah, that.

Chapter Two

HAVOC

Wynter looks at me while biting her lower lip. “Whatever is going on right now, I want to help you, Wynter. I love you, and I want you safe.”

Tears first cloud her eyes then fall from them. “No, you don’t.” She shakes her head, but I nod mine.

I cup her face. “You know, deep down that, I do. I asked you to marry me because I loved you. You said *yes* because you loved me, and I never doubted that, Wynter. You told me your most painful memories, and you took my moment’s silence as pushing you away. You thought that I was judging you for your father’s sins and that I’d instantly fallen out of love with you, didn’t you?”

She nods her head in honesty. It crushes me to know that’s how she felt.

When Wynter walked away from me that day, I thought she’d go for a walk and clear her head, and then she’d come back to me. We’d only been married a couple of weeks, and yes, we did it in secret. However, I was about to show my whole family how proud I was of my beautiful wife.

But Wynter never came back, and I thought something terrible had happened to her. The first couple of days after she left, I was angry with her. I thought Wynter was trying to punish me. Then the anger turned to fear, and I searched everywhere for her, but my search was fruitless.

A few days after Wynter left me, I came clean to my parents and told them about Wynter and I. Strangely; they understood why we got married the way we did. Mom even found the whole thing ro-

mantic. However, she didn't find my struggle to cope without Wynter anything but heartbreaking.

I had no choice but to move on with my life without Wynter, but here we are five months later, and I still can't seem to make my eyes believe what I'm seeing. Having her in front of me right now is so surreal. My gut always told me that she was alive out there, but it never stopped me wondering if she could be dead.

After feeling so much for all these months, wishing she'd come back to me, and I finally have her. If she thinks for one second that I'm going to let her walk away from me again without a fight, then Wynter is sadly mistaken.

I tuck her white-blond hair behind her ear. "I know why you find it hard to trust, but you can trust me, Wynter. Of every person in the world, you know, trust me, beautiful."

"I want to," She sucks back her emotions. "I want to trust you so badly, Havoc, but I'm scared."

I pull Wynter into my arms. She doesn't protest, and I hold her against me, kissing her head and telling her that everything will be okay. I don't have a damn clue at this point if it really will be, but I'll do my damndest to make sure it is.

I am many things; I didn't get the name Havoc from nowhere. However, I was raised to know that a man should never hurt a woman. My dad taught me to protect those who need protecting, but to never underestimate a woman, she's stronger than a man realizes. I don't underestimate Wynter, far from it. However, she is my wife, and I'll do anything I can to protect her from harm.

Wynter is partially deaf in one ear, and entirely deaf in the other. She wears a hearing aid in her left ear, but you wouldn't know she had any problems looking at her. There's certainly nothing wrong with her lungs, the girl sure can yell with the best of them. I realized Wynter was deaf right away; she didn't respond to anything that I said to her. Of course, at first, I thought she was just being ignorant. However, as soon as I caught her attention, I knew.

It didn't put me off asking her out, and it didn't stop me falling in love with her. Why the hell would it?

Wynter told me how she was born with limited hearing, and she knew no different. Though she worked hard to learn to speak like everyone else around her, it was no picnic. She expressed to me how difficult it had been growing up, unable to hear the way others had.

Her father was particularly cruel, and he often called Wynter defective. Son of a bitch!

Wynter told me how her mother spent all of her free time teaching Wynter how to speak. She wanted to prove to Wynter's father that their daughter was just like everyone else and that she wasn't a mistake as he'd believed. Even though Wynter worked very hard to prove herself to the one man she should never have to, it was never good enough.

I can't believe any father would be so damn cruel to his own child.

I remember leaning in and cupping Wynter's cheek. I told her how perfect she was, and even if she could neither hear nor speak, I'd still want her the way I did. The smile she gave me will be etched into my brain all my life.

I may have lost Wynter there for a while, but I'm never letting her go again. I don't care what I have to do; I'll do it. I need to find those assholes chasing her. I want to know what the hell they want with my wife, and soon.

I put in a call to Jett, and I told him everything that happened today. He said that he'd send VJ and a couple of the others over to my place to talk to Wynter. Christ knows why he thinks that would be a good idea. VJ isn't the most compassionate of people at the best of times.

I don't know what good Jett thinks this is going to do. I didn't call him so that he could send anyone over to talk to my wife; I called him for advice. However, beggars can't be choosers, as they say.

Wynter walks into the den with her lower lip between her teeth. She's nervous, and I can't blame her for that. She doesn't fully trust me yet, but she will. If it's the last thing I do, I'll have my wife trusting every damn thing I say.

Wynter asked me if she could take a shower. She shouldn't feel the need to ask her husband if it's okay to use the shower; this house is her home too. She's changed into a clean pair of black leggings and a long-sleeved, forest green shirt. She's washed her hair and braided it down her back. I can smell Wynter's perfume from here, and I have to force my eyes to stay open. That smell is one I'll never forget because it's the scent that first ensnared me.

I have missed you so much, baby girl. Now that you're home with me, I won't stop until you stay this time.

"I don't know if you're hungry, sweetheart, but I made you a sandwich." I motion to the coffee table and the sandwich I made for Wynter.

"That was really nice of you, Havoc, but I'm not hungry. I'm sorry, I know you hate wasting food." Wynter is right; I do hate wasting food. There are so many hungry people out there, and too many who waste what others need. However, I'm not going to lose my shit over an uneaten sandwich. "Maybe we could put it in the fridge for later?"

I smile and nod. She's always so thoughtful.

"I know this is a stupid question, but are you all right?" Wynter stares at me for a moment, and I can see that she's trying to be brave. That's Wynter all over, a strong woman who can't bear for anyone to think she's weak.

I don't think she's weak; I think she's scared. Wynter has every right to be afraid right now; she has two huge ass men after her. I just wish she'd tell me what they want with her. Yes, Wynter fed me a story, but I don't think that was half of it. I need her to tell me everything, only then will I be able to figure out what the hell is going on, and what they want with my wife.

"You don't have to pretend with me, Wynter. I know you better than that."

"I just feel lost and confused, Havoc. I ran away from you because I thought you were disgusted with what I told you. Those men keep coming after me, and you turn up out of the blue and bring me here. My head is swimming, and I don't know what to do." She drops her ass onto the couch and clasps her face with her hands.

I sigh and make my way over to her. "Everything will be okay, Wynter." She looks up at me. I can see the frustration and sadness written all over her face. "I know things don't make sense to you right now, but we can fix this. Some of my buddies are coming over to speak with you,"

"What?" She all but whispers in shock.

"Wynter, there's nothing to worry about, they're only coming to see if they can help." I hold my hand up when she opens her mouth to speak. "Something more is going on than what you've told me, isn't it?"

Wynter looks down at her hands and whispers, "I don't know."

I can't resist the urge to touch her any longer. I reach out and cup her cheek, and Wynter's eyes instantly close for a moment. "Whatever is going on, let me help you, Wynter. I won't lose you again." I turn in my seat, taking her hand in mine. "I'm sorry that I hurt you, but it was unintentional. I wouldn't hurt you for the world."

"I hurt you, too." A tear falls from her eye, and it makes my heart ache. "I'm so sorry, Havoc. I'm sorry that I didn't trust you enough to know that you'd never look at me the way others do. I loved you so much."

"You don't love me any longer?" Wynter doesn't get the chance to answer my question because the door knocks. "It's okay." I kiss her hand. "It'll just be VJ and some of the others. I'll go let them in. Try not to worry, Wynter, they're not here to hurt you." She nods her head and turns away from me.

I leave the room to let VJ, Bones, Wrench, and Cormack in. "She said anything?" I shake my head at VJ. He grunts, but I can't tell him what I don't know. "Since when do you drag strays off the street?"

"She's not a stray!" I snap at him.

"She's a waitress; he took a shine to."

I grind my teeth to stop myself from smashing Cormack in the face. "She's my wife, you sons of bitches!"

All four of them stare at me open-mouthed, but it's Wrench who speaks first. "When the hell did that happen?"

I rub the stubble on my chin and sigh. "Months ago. Look, I'm not getting into why she left me, or why I never told you all about us getting married. I lost her, and after months of searching, I found my wife. Now I need to keep her safe because someone is after her. There's something she's not telling me, and Jett thought she might tell you." I point to VJ.

"Fine," He shrugs. "Lead the way."

I lead them all into the den. Wynter is facing away from us, sitting back straight, humming to herself while fiddling with her hearing aid. I have no idea why she's taken it out, but it means she won't be able to hear anything that's said to her right now.

"What did you say her name was, again?"

"Wynter," I tell VJ.

"Wynter?" She doesn't answer VJ. "Is she deaf?" He asks me.

I nod. "Completely in one ear, partially in the other,"

"She never had a cochlear implant?"

I shake my head. "She was born this way. Wynter once told me that her father wouldn't allow her to be tested to see if she as a candidate. She's never been tested as an adult, and that was her choice." I shrug my shoulders. Wynter did explain the reasons she didn't want the cochlear implant, but I don't have time to go through all of that right now. "She wears a hearing aid, but she's taken it out." I point to Wynter and the fact she's now reattaching it to her ear.

"Try not to lose your temper with her, VJ."

"Drop dead, Bones."

A small yelp and the sound of Wynter knocking into the coffee table, has us all turning our heads. She's noticed us, and she looks scared to death. "Havoc," She whispers my name while holding her hand out to me.

I move towards her, but VJ holds his hand up, stopping me. I clench my fists. I don't want to fight this man, but I will if it comes to it. Wynter is the most important thing to me right now, and I won't have VJ taking over.

Bones grabs my arm. "Let him talk to the girl, Havoc. That's what Jett sent him here for."

I snatch my arm out his grasp. "Don't expect me to stand here and do nothing when she needs me." Though I do just that.

VJ makes his way over to Wynter. He raises his hand to his chin, but Wynter shrinks. Is she scared he's going to hit her? It's true that VJ is a huge motherfucker, an insane, psychopathic son of a bitch, anyone would be scared of him. However, VJ would never raise his hand to a woman.

If I find out anyone hurt Wynter in the time we've been apart, I'll kill them! Though I have to admit that her behavior is a learned trait. Her father was hardly the kind of father to hug his children. Wynter confided in me how violent the man was to his wife and children.

"You don't need to be afraid, no one here is going to hurt you," VJ tells her.

"As if my husband would let you." Wynter snaps back, and I have to stifle a laugh behind my hand. She may not have trusted me when it came to her past, but she trusts me enough to know I'd kill anyone who harmed her.

"My name is VJ."

"Your name is what?" Wynter asks curiously. "I'm sorry, it's hard to hear what you said. I can read lips, but you're a little far away." She means that he's not directly in front of her.

"Yes," VJ both speaks and signs, making Wynter smile shyly at the fact he knows how. Jett's smarter than I gave him credit for. I realize now why he sent VJ; it's because of his ability to use sign language. When I told Jett about Wynter's hearing, he knew VJ was the man for the job. "My name is VJ. Can you tell me your name?"

"Nice to meet you, VJ." Bones sniggers behind me, making me chuckle. No one says it's nice to meet VJ because everyone knows he's basically a bastard. "My name is Wynter, with a Y."

"Well, Wynter with a Y, why don't you tell me what's going on? Tell me about the men chasing you."

"I don't know much about them." Wynter scrubs her hands over her face. "They've been following me for about a month. I don't know what they want with me because I've never waited around long enough to find out. I haven't kept in contact enough with my best friend because of this. I didn't want those men to find out about her. If they had hurt her because of me..." Wynter shakes her head. "I was supposed to move here with her, but Havoc and I..." Wynter stops talking and lowers her head.

"What's your best friend's name?" VJ asks as soon as Wynter lifts her head.

"Cassie. We grew up together. Her mother was a waste of space, and my mom died when I was fourteen. My dad," She swallows hard and looks at me.

I nod my head to let her know that it's okay. It's better if Wynter tells VJ now about her father; he'll only find out some other way if she doesn't.

"My father was a serial rapist, and he killed my mother and sister. I wasn't home at the time; I was out with Cassie. I lost everyone I ever loved that day. Cassie and I swore, after that day, to always protect each other, and we always have. We've always been together because we're like sisters. Cassie managed to track her father down after her mom finally gave up his name, Trent Kirkwood, a member of Snakes Henchmen MC. He was a gunner in the military, and he goes by the name Gunner."

VJ nods his head in understanding. He knows who Wynter is talking about; we all do.

"Cassie was so excited to meet him, but she went alone because I needed to see my father."

"Where is your father?"

Wynter breathes deeply, still looking at VJ. "In prison. He'll be there until he dies. I only went to see him because I needed to know if I had any other family in the world, or is it really just me. He laughed at me and said that I should be grateful to be alive, not out there looking for..."

"For what, Wynter?"

"In his words, 'Nigger loving bastards' I couldn't believe what he was saying, he was so vile and racist. I asked him whom he meant, and he told me that his little brother married a half-breed and had a bunch of ape kids. I didn't wait to hear any more; I just ran out of there."

"That can't have been easy to hear."

"It wasn't." Wynter wipes a tear from her cheek. "I called Cassie and told her what happened. She was spitting mad, as she always is. Then she told me about her dad and how he welcomed her into his family with open arms. She has a step-mom and seven siblings. She also told me how she'd met someone, and she felt like she was falling for him."

"That would be me." Cormack smiles. He looks right at Wynter, enabling her to read his lips. "Cassie is about to become my wife."

"Oh, my God," Wynter smiles. "So that was her news?" I'm not sure that was a question directed at anyone. Wynter seemed to be talking to herself. "I'm so happy for her, for you both. Cassie deserves to be happy. I envy her so much, you know?" She looks at me, and I get the feeling she's not just talking about Cassie's up and coming wedding.

Wynter longs for a family of her own. I know she'd hoped to have that with me – a home, a child. Wynter wants nothing more than to be loved and to give love to those around her. I can still give her all of that, and I won't stop until she's happy and content.

"I met Cassie's family, but I hadn't met any of you. Thanks to Cassie, I met and fell in love with Havoc. It wasn't long before we got married, and I thought we'd be happy."

"But, you weren't?" Where the fuck is this shit getting us? Why the hell is VJ asking these dumb, pointless questions?

"We were. It was my own insecurities that ruined things. Anyway, I did some digging into my father's past. I knew my grandparents, but they never mentioned another son. I found out that they indeed did have another son. However, he'd been estranged from the family for many years. I found out that my uncle had married the love of his life and joined a motorcycle club. Your club."

I narrow my eyes. Wynter never mentioned this to me, and I have to wonder why that is. All these months she's kept the secret that she has family within my club. Why on this earth wouldn't she want to get to know them?

Something hits me upside the head. It's like a lightbulb went off inside my brain.

"What's your uncle's name?" VJ asks.

I answer before Wynter gets the chance. "Jack." All eyes turn to me, but mine are firmly on Wynter. "It never occurred to me before because I had no reason to think about it. Just now, when you said that your uncle is a member of Snakes Henchmen, I realized who you are. Before we were married, your surname was Anderson,"

"Jack Anderson." Wrench mumbles. "Your uncle's name is Jack Anderson?" He speaks loud enough for Wynter to hear him this time.

"Yes. My father said that his brother goes by the name BlackJack. I've wanted to meet him since I found out about him, but the right time never seemed to come. When I left Havoc, I was so hurt that the last thing on my mind was finding Jack. Then when those men came," She sighs.

"What did they want with you, Wynter?"

She shrugs her shoulders at VJ. "I have no idea. What is it that *you* want from me? I can't give you names because I don't know any."

"You need to give us something, Wynter. It's the only way we can help you." Wrench pushes past me and makes his way over to Wynter. She flinches when he lays his hand on her shoulder. "You don't know who I am, but I know who you are now, Wynter."

"Who are you?" She asks quietly.

"They call me Wrench. My real name is Dominic Anderson. Jack is my father, and you are my cousin, Wynter." I watch Wynter blink twice, a tear rolling down her cheek. "We're family, Wynter, and family sticks together. Not one of us will let anything happen to you,

especially not Havoc. You might know this already, but he's a little on the crazy side." He's not wrong.

Wynter laughs while nodding her head. She looks at me. "But he's the best kind of crazy." She still loves me; I can see it in her eyes. The Lord knows I love her.

"Any information you can give us, no matter how small it may seem, could help us to find those men."

"I don't know anything, Wrench." Wynter closes her eyes for a second and breathes deeply. "They knew my name and kept saying that I had to go with them. I asked who they were and why they would think I'd go anywhere with them, but they wouldn't listen."

Wynter's eyes flick to me again. I can see that she genuinely doesn't know what those men want from her, and that worries me. She's also had enough for one day. Wynter doesn't even know these men in front of her. She must feel uncomfortable with them all staring at her like this.

"I think that's enough for now."

"It's enough when I say it is."

I stare VJ down and make my way over to Wynter. "It's enough because I say it is!" I take Wynter's arm in my hand, pulling her away from Wrench, and into my arms. I wondered if she'd pull away from me, but Wynter lays her head on my shoulder and wraps her arms around my waist. "She's told you all she knows, VJ. Pushing her isn't going to make her remember anything that could help. Wynter needs to rest. If she thinks of anything that could help find those men, I'll let you know."

VJ rolls his eyes at me. "Fine. I've got places to be. Make sure you check in with Jett." With that, he leaves, Bones following him.

"Wynter?" She looks at Wrench without lifting her head from my shoulder. "If you need anything at all, Havoc knows how to get ahold of me."

"Thank you."

"Take care of her." I nod my head at Wrench, then tip it at Cormack as they leave.

I stroke the back of Wynter's hair and kiss her head. "Everything will be all right. I promise."

Don't make promises you're not sure you can keep, Havoc.

Oh, I'll keep it. I'd burn the world to ash for this woman. Wynter is everything to me. We may have gotten lost along the way, but

she's back where she belongs, in my arms. This time, I'll make her stay.

Chapter Three

WYNTER

“Do you think Jack will want to see me?” I ask as I snuggle into Havoc. Since he wrapped his arms around me earlier, I haven’t wanted Havoc to let go. I’ve missed the way he holds me, and being in his arms is the only place I’ve ever felt safe.

Havoc pulls me closer. “I have no doubt that he’ll want to see you, Wynter. As soon as Wrench tells BlackJack about you, he’ll find you. Why didn’t you tell me that you were related to BlackJack when we first met?”

I lift off of Havoc so that I can look at him. “I don’t know, Havoc.” I shrug. “I was going to tell you the day I told you who my father was. It just didn’t work out the way I planned.” I watch him staring at me, and I feel so guilty about what happened. I wish more than anything that I’d had more faith in my husband.

I still wonder why Havoc kept me a secret from his family. My insecurities at not being good enough suddenly come rushing back to me.

“What are you thinking, Wynter?”

I bite the inside of my cheek. I need to be honest with Havoc. There’s no room for secrets any longer. “It’s just that I wonder why you never told anyone about me. I know our wedding was a spur of the moment thing, and I loved that it was. But in the short time, we were together; you never told your family about me.”

“I was selfish in wanting to keep you to myself for a short while, Wynter. I planned a surprise for you, and I’d invited my family to come over because I wanted them to know you. When you left, you

broke my heart." I blink, and a tear falls from my eye, which Havoc wipes away with his thumb. "I told my parents and my siblings about you, Wynter. Even though you were gone, you were still in my heart." I was never his secret. I know that now.

Havoc tucks a strand of my hair behind my ear. "We can't change the past, Wynter. There will always be regret, but we don't have to hold onto the pain. I'll always regret letting you walk away from me that day,"

"I'll always regret walking away."

He smiles at me, and it makes my heart beat faster. "Let's forget what happened for a moment, Wynter." I nod because the past doesn't matter any longer. Talking about it, again and again, isn't going to change what happened. "I still love you, baby." I blink and smile. "I've been lost without you, Wynter. We had something special, you know it, and I know it. It's why we clicked the second we met, and it's why we got married so soon."

He cups my face, and I clutch his wrist in my hand. "I can't have you going back out there, Wynter. I won't let you leave me again because I need you here with me." Havoc presses his forehead against mine. "Please, Wynter. I'll keep you safe, no matter what it takes. I promise."

"I know you will." I didn't trust him before, and that was my mistake, but I trust him now. I take his face in my hands and kiss him softly. "I'm so sorry," I whisper. I can feel the pain I caused him flowing from him to me, and it hurts. "I love you so much."

Havoc kisses me hungrily, and I moan into his mouth. He pulls out of the kiss, forehead against mine, and a smile on his lips. "I've wanted to do that for days."

I open my mouth to reply, but a loud banging on the front door stops me. "Oh, god," I grab at Havoc's cut. "What if it's those men? What if they've found me here?"

Havoc grabs my face in his hands just at there's another bang on the door. "Everything is okay, Wynter. I know you're afraid of those men, but I won't let anything happen to you."

"Don't answer it," I tell him in a panic. However, Havoc kisses my head and tells me to wait here.

Wait here?

To do what?

Shit myself in fear?

I get out of my seat and pace the floor. So many things rush through my head all at once.

What if Havoc opens that door and those men are standing on the other side?

What if they shoot him dead before he has the chance to say anything?

What if those men walk over Havoc's body, walk into this room and kill me?

Or worse, drag me off with them and do God only knows what to me?

They could sell me in a sex trafficking ring to a monster that would share me with his friends. I could be locked in a dark place for months until I learn to behave the way they want me to. Those men themselves could take turns raping me until I break.

Christ, I wish I knew what they wanted from me.

"Wynter?" I startle where I stand and look up at Havoc, standing in front of me. He cups my cheek and smiles. "It's okay, beautiful."

"Was it them?" I'm guessing not as Havoc is smiling at me, but I need to know for sure.

"No," He shakes his head slightly. "It wasn't them." I let go of the breath held within me, my stomach unclenching with relief. "There is someone here that would like to speak with you, however."

I shake my head. "I don't want to speak with anyone, Havoc. I've had enough for one day." I'm exhausted, and I just want to sleep. There are things Havoc, and I need to talk about, but that can wait until tomorrow. Whomever this person is, can come back tomorrow.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart, but," Havoc turns his head, and I spot the man standing behind him. There's no need for me to ask his name. I know who he is. He hasn't changed much from the photograph my father showed me. He's older, of course, bigger, but no less handsome. Havoc looks at me. "He just wants to talk to you."

What choice do I have? The man is here now.

I nod my head and take a deep breath.

"Can get either of you anything?" Both Jack and I shake our heads. "Okay, I'll leave the two of you to talk." Havoc kisses my lips. "I'll be in the kitchen. If you need me, just yell."

"You don't have to go."

"You need privacy right now, beautiful." He kisses me again. "I won't be far away." I nod and watch him leave the room.

I stare at my uncle for a second and swallow hard. I have nothing to fear, but I'm nervous. I want to know him, but he may not want to know me. I could be a horrible reminder of the racist family Jack left behind.

I tuck my hair behind my ear, and nervously, I smile at him. "Hi," "Hello, Wynter," He smiles at me. I don't know why, but that smile makes me feel emotional. I know that he's genuinely happy to meet me, and there is no animosity because of who my father is. I see in Jack's eyes that he really is the kind man, Havoc assured me he is.

"Would you like to take a seat?"

Jack nods his head and sits down in the armchair next to the fire. Nervously, I sit down on the edge of the couch and swallow hard.

I would never have guessed this man was related to my father. Jack, for a man of his age, is devastatingly handsome. He's well-built, tall, has eyes as blue as Wrench, and a kind smile. It's uncanny how much Wrench looks like his father. I know from what my father told me that Jack is in his early sixties now, but he doesn't look anywhere near that age. It's very obvious that he takes care of himself, not like my father. John Anderson is in his late sixties and looks at least fifteen years older. The years have not been kind to him, or maybe it was all the drugs he took in his life that aged him so badly.

Jack says something while scratching his jaw with his thumbnail. I feel stupid that I didn't catch half of what he said. "I'm sorry," I shake my head, and Jack looks at me. "I didn't hear what you said. I'm..."

"Deaf, or almost," He cuts me off with a kind smile. "Wrench did explain. I'm sorry, sweetheart,"

When he called me *sweetheart*, I felt really emotional. I can't explain why, but I get such a safe vibe from this man. I also get a *not to be messed with*, vibe from him.

"That's okay," I smile. "I can hear to a degree. It's just that sometimes I need to see a person's mouth move so that I can read their lips."

"Of course," Jack smiles and turns in his seat slightly. I realize that he did this so that I can better see his face. "So, Wrench tells me that you're John's daughter."

I swallow hard and nod my head.

"I didn't even know John had kids. But then I wouldn't because I haven't seen or heard from him since I was seventeen."

Strange when my father knew so much about Jack. Then again, a narcissist like him would keep tabs on people, especially his brother.

"He told me that you left home and never came back."

"Did he tell you why?"

I nod my head. "Because he nor your parents agreed with your choice to want to marry a black woman."

"That's right," He nods. "One thing you'll come to learn about me, Wynter, is that nothing and no one means more to me than my wife. My kids and grandkids are a close second," He winks, and I can't help laughing. "From the moment I met Taylor, she was everything to me. People don't always believe in fate, but I became a believer the day she bumped into me. Family is very important to me, Wynter, but sometimes you have to cut them out in order to be who you really are."

"I understand. I knew your parents a little, but not that they were racist. My mom couldn't stand them. I never understood why, but I guess it's because she didn't believe in their views. She didn't like my sister and me visiting with them, but John didn't give her a choice."

"Will you tell me about your mother and sister?"

I take a deep breath in through my nose. "It's hard. I lost them so long ago now, but it still feels like yesterday. I still have nightmares," I swallow hard and try and fight the tears that are threatening to spill. Cassie and Havoc are the only people I've ever really spoken to about my mom and sister. It was always too hard to talk to anyone else. Of course, I spoke to a counselor, and it helped a little. However, talking about them makes the memory of how they died, rush back to me tenfold. The fact I lived, and they died, hurts so much.

"You don't have to tell me anything if it's too painful, Wynter."

I nod my head in thanks, but I need to do this. "Mom was beautiful," I admit. "She had stunning blue eyes, and long white hair, though she rarely smiled. When she did, it was only ever aimed at my sister and me. You see," I push my hands between my knees. "My mom didn't meet John and fall in love with him; he kidnapped her off the street."

Jack keeps his eyes on me as he listens to my story. My mother was out with some friends, celebrating her fifteenth birthday. Her father was a wealthy businessman, and he'd allowed her to go shopping for a party dress. Each year, he threw my mother a huge birth-

day party, and nothing was too much for her where he was concerned. She never told me her father's name, nor the business he owned. I knew what happened because she one day sat my sister and I down and told us everything. Mom had finally had enough and wanted out.

John took my mother, Julianne, to his home, and kept her locked in his basement for months. Of course, he kept her locked up because he wanted to wait until the hype had died down, and the case into searching for her had gone cold before moving her upstairs as his wife.

John repeatedly raped Julianne, beat her, and made her believe that she'd never escape him. He screwed with her mind until he broke her spirit.

John kept Julianne a prisoner in his basement for almost a year before he felt she was ready to move into the big house. By then, she was pregnant with his baby, and she was terrified.

For fifteen years, John kept my mother a prisoner. He never let her out of the house without him. He told her the reason he'd taken her, in the first place, was because bad men were after her and that they'd killed her parents and siblings.

When Mom sat my sister, Spring, and I down and explained all of this to us, she told us how she'd seen her brother. Of course, we were confused because she'd just gotten through telling us how he'd died. On her trip, the previous day to the supermarket with John, Julianne had seen her brother in the parking lot. She knew it was him because, even after fifteen years, he knew who she was. He'd called her name, and she'd recognized him and yelled his name in return. John dragged her back to his car and drove away. All the while, she was banging on the windows to get to her brother.

My mother told us how the bruises she sported that day were from the beating John had given her because of her betrayal. In his mind, he'd been good to her all those years. In truth, he was nothing more than a monster in every way. My sister and I weren't blind to the animal John was because he was our father. True, he wasn't much of one, but we were just little girls.

Mom explained to Spring and me how she planned to leave John and take us with her, but that we'd have to keep it our secret. Mom was scared. I could see it in her eyes. All those years, she'd been beaten down, but now she was finally ready to fight back.

Spring and I had all these dreams about meeting our uncle, and how he would protect us from harm. That never happened. No matter how secret we kept things, how careful we were not to let anything slip, John found out. I believe that he planned to kill us all the moment my mother's brother spotted her in that parking lot.

I'll never know why he killed my mom and sister while I was out of the house. I've asked him, but he won't give me the answer. John just smirks as if there's a reason I'm still here.

The cops asked me how my sister and I were allowed out of the house if my mother never was. There's an easy answer to that. John wasn't afraid of Spring and me going to school; he knew we'd never tell anyone what went on at home. We were too scared of him to do that. Besides, he'd given my mother a new name, and made out to the outside world that he was the perfect husband, with a beautiful little family.

We weren't allowed friends as such, but Cassie was special. Meeting up with her that day saved my life. Would I have snuck out of the house to meet her if I'd known my family would be gone by the time I got back? Of course not. However, if I hadn't, I wouldn't be here today.

"They never found my sister's body," Jack breathes deeply through his nose, and shifts in his seat. "John had shot my mom three times, but she didn't die right away. She died later in the hospital from her injuries. I don't know what John did to Spring, nor where he hid her body. All I know is that she's out there somewhere, her body rotted away, and her spirit is wandering, never finding peace."

I wipe the tears from my cheeks. "John went to prison for the rest of his life. He escaped the death sentence because he was certified insane." Even if the judge had given him the death sentence, it's doubtful they would have executed him.

I sigh dramatically and roll away the tension from my neck. "I was taken to a group home, and it wasn't long before my best friend ended up there too. We looked out for each other in there, but I always wondered if I had more family out there somewhere. Cassie always wanted to find her father. Her mother was useless, and that's why she ended up in the system. My grandparents didn't give a damn that I was there, and I don't even know if they're alive or dead."

Jack gives me a look that tells me that his parents are both dead. Somehow, I can't find it in me to care, and that is just not like me.

I startle when Jack crouches down in front of me and takes my hands in his. "I'm so sorry for what you've been through, Wynter. Nothing I or anyone else says can ever take away your pain. You've been alone these twelve years, but you're not alone any longer. You have a big family, one who loves you."

I blink rapidly. I wasn't expecting him to say something like that to me. Sure, I'm his niece, but he doesn't know me at all. Yet here he is, telling me that he loves me.

"That man in there," Jack tips his head toward the door. "You could have picked a worse husband."

"I lost him there for a while," I admit. "My insecurities because of my father..." I shake my head, shaking away the thought. "I'll never make that mistake again."

Jack puts his hand to my face and smiles. "We all make mistakes, Wynter. But if something is worth fighting for, we never give up."

I like this man so much. I don't understand how two siblings could be so different. My father was evil, yet this man isn't. I don't doubt that Jack does terrible things, but nothing like my father.

"You have a family now, sweetheart, and there is nothing we won't do for you. My sons and I..."

"Wrench, Hawk, and Stryker?" I didn't mean to interrupt him, but he laughs and nods his head.

"Wrench, Hawk, and Stryker. We'll protect you with our lives, Wynter." I blink and swallow the emotional lump in my throat. "Now, my daughter, Phoenix, is eighteen, but she's as strong and fierce as any man I know. I know you'll be really good friends." I like the idea of that.

Havoc told me about my cousins earlier. Wrench already told me that his Christian name is Dominic. Havoc told me that Stryker's real name is Mark, Hawk's name is Dante, and Phoenix's name is Dana. Havoc also told me a lot about Jack and Taylor, and it seems everyone thinks a lot of them.

I can't deny that I've fallen in love with my new family and I don't even know all of them yet.

"My wife is probably going to try and mother you," He laughs. "It's in Taylor's nature to love, and she will love you endlessly."

I can't help smiling nervously. I really want to meet Taylor now.

“I will never let anything happen to you, Wynter. If you believe nothing else, believe that, and the fact you are loved.”

I suck back my emotions when Jack gently pulls me into his arms. I hesitate for a second before wrapping my arms around his back, and he kisses my head.

I pull away from him and smile. “So, when do I get to meet the rest of my family?”

Chapter Four

HAVOC

“Can I have a quick word?”

I look up at BlackJack and nod my head while placing my beer on the kitchen counter. “What’s up?”

He walks closer. “Wynter would like to meet the rest of the family. I hadn’t told her that they were all outside, at first. When she asked me when she’d be able to meet them, I blurted it out.”

I raise my eyebrow, while BlackJack rubs the back of his neck. “Why the hell are they all outside?” I get why Taylor would have come along, but all of them?

Great, sixteen people in my house, for Christ knows how long.

“We were having a family dinner, waiting for Wrench, as always. When he arrived, he told us all about Wynter, and Phoenix wanted to come right over.”

I refrain from rolling my eye. Typical fucking Phoenix. “So, you all decided to come over?”

BlackJack shrugs his shoulders. “It is what it is. Wynter would like to meet them, but if you’d rather she come over to our place, that’s no problem.”

He knows full well that I’m not going to agree with that. Son of a bitch. “It’s fine, bring them in.”

BlackJack nods his head and leaves the room, passing Wynter on his way out.

Wynter smiles at me shyly. “Havoc, I’m sorry about this, I wasn’t thinking. When I asked when I’d be able to meet the others, I didn’t think Jack would say right now.” She nervously tucks a strand of her hair behind her ear.

I walk towards her and wrap my arm around her waist. "You have nothing to be sorry for, Wynter. You have every right to want to meet your family." I cup her cheek, and she leans into my touch. "Just be warned, the Anderson's are a loud bunch. It can be a little overwhelming having them all in one place."

Wynter giggles. "I'll be okay as long as you're with me." Her hand clasps the side of my neck. "I've really missed you, Havoc."

"I've missed you, too, darlin'. More than you'll ever know."

Both hands come to my face, and I look into Wynter's eyes. This woman is everything to me. She has been since the day I met her, I love her, and I won't lose her again.

I rest my forehead against Wynter's for a moment and breathe in the scent of her skin. She kisses me, and I'm lost for a moment. "I love you," She whispers against my lips. "I love you so much."

"I love you, too." I slide my hand to her face again. "I have never and will never love anyone the way I love you. Come home, baby. Tell me you'll stay."

Wynter smiles at me, and she's about to say something when someone else butts in. "For the love of God put the man out of his misery so that we can meet already."

I roll my eyes but can't help smirking. Wynter looks at me with wide eyes, and I can see that she's embarrassed. "That would be Phoenix," I tell Wynter. "She has no tact, but you'll get used to her. Come on, let's go see your family." The family that is disappearing one by one into the den.

"Wait," Wynter yanks on my hand, stopping me from moving.

"What is it?"

"Before we go in there, I just wanted you to know that..." She swallows hard. "That I want to come home, Havoc. I love you, and I don't want to be without you any longer."

Instantly, I pull Wynter into my arms and kiss the shit out of her. "I love you. Now, let's get in there before Phoenix sends out a search party." Wynter nods and takes a deep breath. "Don't be nervous, everything will be all right, you'll see." I wink, and she laughs.

I lead Wynter to the den, and I can feel her shaking with nerves beside me. I squeeze her hand. She looks up at me, and I shoot her a wink.

"There she is," BlackJack smiles. "Everyone, this is Wynter." He comes closer and wraps his arm around Wynter's shoulders, gently

tugging her away from me. Wynter shoots me an apologetic smile my way, but I just smile while shaking my head.

"Now, I'm going to introduce you one by one, so bear with me. It'll take a while." BlackJack chuckles. I haven't seen him this giddy about anything in a long time. "This beautiful angel is my wife."

"It's nice to meet you," Wynter holds her hand out to Taylor, but Taylor is out of her seat and hugging the shit out of Wynter. Taylor never changes, nor should she. She's kind and loving, and everyone's favorite person, and if anyone can show Wynter what a family looks like, it's Taylor.

"I'm so happy to meet you, sweetheart." Taylor pulls away from Wynter but keeps one hand on her face. "I don't want you to worry about anything, Wynter. You have a big family here, and we're going to take such good care of you."

From the moment I met Wynter, all she's ever wanted was a family of her own. Now she has one; I don't think she knows how to process it all. I'm not opposed to Wynter getting to know the Anderson's, but I do believe this was pushed on her too soon. She looks so out of her depth. Sure, they wanted to meet her right now, but she hadn't had time to settle in before they descended on her like this.

"This is Stryker and Coral. Stryker is our eldest,"

"Adopted son?" Wynter asks.

"That's right," Stryker smiles while shaking Wynter's hand. "Coral is my wife."

"Hi, nice to meet you." Coral smiles.

"This is Axel, and this is Knox, Stryker, and Coral's sons. Over here, we have Elie, Stryker, and Coral's daughter and eldest child." I can see Wynter trying to remember names as BlackJack points them out. "Now, Elie is married to Wrench. That might sound a little strange to you, but Stryker and Wrench aren't blood-related, and we never adopted Stryker through the courts, so it's all legal and above board."

That shit is a lot for anyone to get their head around, though I can see Wynter is taking it all in her stride. The crap my wife has been through means nothing surprises her these days.

"Here we have Kaleb, Dominic, and Cindy, Wrench and Elie's children." They each say hello to Wynter before BlackJack moves on to Hawk. "This is Hawk and his wife Brooke and their children, Gabe and DJ."

"Welcome to the family." Wynter smiles at DJ while shaking his hand.

"Anything you need, you let us know." Gabe winks.

"Thank you."

I'm not sure anyone has noticed Phoenix yet. She's standing in front of the open fire with her eyebrow raised, tapping her foot in annoyance. I smirk behind my hand because she's such a brat sometimes.

"Why am I always last?"

"Aww, my princess," BlackJack kisses Phoenix's cheek, making her smile. "I always save the best for last." He winks. "Wynter, I'd like you to meet my baby girl. This is Phoenix. Phoenix, this is Wynter."

"Nice to meet you, cousin," Phoenix winks. The girl isn't big on hugging, especially the last few months. Phoenix has changed a lot since her boyfriend left for the military. I don't know what happened between them; I only know it hardened that girl's heart.

I stand at the back of the room, looking in on them all talking and laughing. It's nice to see Wynter laughing the way she is. I don't think I've ever seen her smile this much.

I listen to the stories each person tells, stories of BlackJack's kid when they were small. Wynter laughs along with the embarrassing things Taylor let's slip. Then it's the younger generations turn to be embarrassed by stories their parents tell about them.

When asked about her past, Wynter is reluctant to speak about it. BlackJack points out that she doesn't have to talk about anything she doesn't want to. I think everyone understands that he'll fill them in on what he and Wynter spoke about.

"Apart from being embarrassed every five seconds," Axel says. "It's not so bad being an Anderson."

"I can see that," Wynter laughs. By blood, she's an Anderson, but by name, Wynter is a Caldwell. Something these people seem to have bypassed.

"You'll love being an Anderson," I rub the back of my neck in frustration as Phoenix bangs on about Wynter being one of them.

It shouldn't irk me the way it is doing, but I can't seem to stop the annoyance creeping in. Why is it so hard for them to understand that Wynter is a Caldwell? Yeah, she's got Anderson blood, but that's as far as it goes now.

"I'm sure I'm going to like being part of your family. However," Wynter looks over at me, and I can tell she can see how annoyed I am. "I'm not an Anderson any longer. I'm a Caldwell, the same as my husband."

I can't help the smile of pride creeping across my face. I wink at Wynter, and she smiles shyly.

"Of course, you are. Sweetheart, we meant no offense, we're just so happy that you're part of our family."

"Thank you, aunt Taylor. I'm happy to be part of your family."

* * *

IT'S BEEN a long fucking day, and I'm relieved when BlackJack decides it's time to leave. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad Wynter had this time with her family, but we haven't had enough time alone since I brought her back.

I lean my forehead against the front door as soon as it's closed. I close my eyes and take a deep breath. The sound of motorcycles pulling away soothes me, as it always does.

"Havoc," Wynter strokes her hand down my back. "Are you okay?"

I lift my head, turn on the spot, grab Wynter, and pin her to the wall beside me. She looks at me, eyes wide, and swallows hard. I press my mouth to hers, and she slides her hands into my hair, holding me against her hot body.

"You have no idea how much I want you right now."

"Havoc," Wynter groans against my mouth. "I need you. Fuck me, please."

I growl like a damn dog and pull her top over her head. She's not wearing a bra, and my mouth latches on to her tits one at a time. I've missed the taste of her skin. I want my mouth on every inch of her body, but I'm too wound up for that.

I yank her leggings and panties down her thighs while she attacks my belt and then my zipper. My eyes roll to the back of my head when she pulls my cock out and stroke the length. I unbuckle my jeans and push them past my ass. I don't have time to undress either of us; we're both too frantic and wanting each other.

I push Wynter's thighs apart a little, line my cock up with her cunt, and drive home. Wynter screams at the invasion, and I grunt at the feeling of her pussy, crushing my cock. Damn, she's still tight, and I'm fighting not to blow my load already.

Wynter wraps one arm around my neck and holds onto my forearm with the other. She moves her hips in time with my thrusts, and we fuck, savagely, where we stand. Neither of us is going to last long. It's been months without each other, months where I haven't touched another woman. I didn't because all I wanted was Wynter.

Am I worried that Wynter slept with someone else in the time we've been apart? No. I know her better than that. Besides, if she had, Wynter would have told me the moment we got here.

Wynter hooks the fingers of her right hand into my hair and clutches my neck with her left. I grab her ass in my hands and fuck into her as hard and fast as I can. She screams as she comes, her head dropped back, and her body convulsing.

Seeing her come like that has me coming so hard, I have to slam a hand against the wall to stop myself falling. "Jesus Christ, Wynter,"

She giggles cheekily then kisses the breath from within me. "I love you. Thank you for giving me another chance."

I pull out of her body and put my dick away, while Wynter kicks off her leggings and picks them up from the floor. She stands against the wall, naked as the day she was born.

I lick my lips and touch my hand to her face. "Thank you for giving *me* another chance." I counter back. "And for the record, I love you, too. Now get up those stairs, I'm gonna fuck the shit out of you."

Wynter squeals, ducks under my arm, and runs up the stairs. I shake my head and chuckle. Fuck sleep, who needs it?

Chapter Five

WYNTER

“Don’t be nervous; everything will be just fine.” He says that, but I am beyond nervous. I shouldn’t be nervous; I’m about to see Cassie again after all this time. I’ll finally be able to see for myself that she’s okay.

“Do I look okay?” I ask while smoothing down my white shirt front, and then my hair.

Havoc smiles while climbing off his bike. “You look beautiful.” I smile despite myself. He always makes me feel beautiful.

The magnet pull between us is suddenly so strong that I forgot to breathe for a moment. Our eyes are locked, and I know Havoc feels this too. It’s been there since the moment we met.

Heres the biker cliché. Havoc is tall, handsome, blue-eyed, collar-length hair, scruff on his jaw, and muscles that go on for days, but don’t overshadow his body in any way. There’s just no denying how good-looking the man is, and he’s all mine. Nothing is going to go wrong this time because I’m not letting the doubt creep in.

Havoc’s good looks aren’t the only thing that draws me to him. Any man can be good-looking, but there is something about Havoc that has me wanting him and needing to be near him. I know he feels the same – the way he’s looking at me right now tells me that he does.

“We should get inside.” I nod my head in agreement, yet I haven’t moved. Havoc has moved closer to me, and one hand slides around my waist, the other cups my cheek, and I lean into his touch with my eyes closed. “What are you doing to me?” He whispers against my lips.

"Havoc," I whisper his name like a plea while holding onto his hips to steady myself. You'd think after fucking all night long that I'd be too sore to want him again so soon. But the fact is, I want him so badly my body aches.

"I want to kiss you so badly, Wynter. God knows I want to kiss you every moment of every day. Losing you never nulled the need I have for you, Wynter." Both hands now frame my face, and I can't help smiling.

I slide my right hand around the back of his head, bringing his forehead to mine. "Ditto, husband of mine." The smile he throws my way sets off a spark in me. I'll never love anyone the way I love Havoc. I know I lost my way a little in the beginning, but I know that I can trust him now. "Kiss me, Havoc. Please."

"This is a bad idea."

"I know."

"If I kiss you now, I'm not sure we'll make it inside."

I raise my eyebrow and smirk at him. "We could always slip away for a few minutes."

Havoc chuckles. "Baby, you don't think much of me if you think it'll only take a few minutes." I run a hand down his thick chest while biting my lip. "No," He laughs.

"Fine," I sigh dramatically. "But I'm not going in there until you kiss me."

He chuckles right before he steals my very breath with the most intense, passionate, and heart-stopping kiss I have ever and am likely to ever have in my life.

You say that every time Havoc kisses you, Wynter.

Finally, Havoc pulls out of the kiss, even though I can tell he would have kissed me for days and not stopped if we were at home. God knows I would have gladly let him.

He rests his forehead against mine. "You've wrecked my head."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry. You're my wife, and it's your job to wreck me for all other women."

I playfully slap his chest. "I should hope so!"

Havoc laughs again. "Let's get inside before they send out a search party."

I nod and take my husband's hand when offered. I like holding his hand. I feel safe when I do. I got the same feeling when Jack held

me and told me that he and his sons would always protect me. I have a family now. I'm not alone in the world any longer; I have an uncle, an aunt, cousins, cousins-in-law, and even second cousins. I have people I'll see at Christmastime, Thanksgiving, and New Year. I won't be alone any longer.

I smile to myself because I'll never be alone as long as I've got Havoc. I squeeze Havoc's hand a little tighter, and I smile when he winks at me.

Havoc leads me over to a table near an unlit open fire where a huge lumberjack looking biker is sitting. There's also a younger biker with blond hair, a kid around fifteen or sixteen; he could be a little older, I'm not sure. There's also a woman with auburn hair and a pretty smile. She's the older bikers wife; it's easy to tell by the way he leans over and lovingly kisses her.

Shit, I'm so nervous. Any idiot with eyes can see that the biker and his wife are Havoc's parents. I knew they'd be here, but I didn't think I'd crave their approval as much as I do.

"Mom, Dad, I'd like you to meet Wynter. Officially." Havoc smiles and winks at me. "Wynter, this is my Mom, Tammy,"

"Nice to meet you." I smile.

"Nice to meet you, too, Wynter." Definitely pretty, her smile lights up her whole face.

"This is my Dad, Red." I smile at Red, and he tips his head at me. "This is Trey," I smile at Trey, who winks at me. "And this is Cullen, both my little brothers."

"Hey, gorgeous."

"Cullen!" I laugh at how cheeky Havoc's youngest brother is, and how his father yelled his name. He's a charming young man. "Havoc's told us all about you, of course," I swallow hard because I can already see that Red doesn't like me. "Jack's told everyone else about you. He's very proud of you." That makes me smile. "Now," Red turns to Havoc. "Wanna tell me what this is?" He looks down at our entwined hands, as do Havoc and I.

Havoc looks at his father without letting go of my hand. "She's my wife, as well, you know. Since when was it yours or anyone else's business what I do and with whom?"

I swallow hard as Red raises his eyebrow. "Don't get smart with me, Havoc. I know who she is, and what you did," What Havoc did?

"But do you even know anything about her? What good is a marriage if you don't even know the woman you're married to?"

I startle at Red's booming voice. I clutch Havoc's hand tighter in mine. My stomach is turning over, and I just want to leave. I can sense how angry Havoc is right now; I can feel it radiating off of him. I knew his family wouldn't like me, but he wouldn't listen.

"Enough, Red," Tammy snaps. "Not in front of Cullen. Wynter is Havoc's wife. She wouldn't be if they didn't know each other. Time means nothing when you love someone, and she does love Havoc, Red; it's very obvious from the way she looks at him."

I watch as Tammy reaches over and takes Red's hand in her own. "Baby, you know what it's like to fall in love, right?" He nods slightly. "And you know what it's like to be impulsive. Our son fell in love, and he couldn't wait to marry the woman who stole his heart. We have to accept that and welcome Wynter into our family."

"And the men chasing her? The trouble she'll bring to this family? What about our son, Tammy? What happens when those men kill our son to get to her?" He points at me angrily. "What about Cullen and Trey, hmm? What happens if they get hurt because of these men?"

I swallow hard when Red looks right at me. "If anything happens to either one of my sons, my wife, my grandchildren, or any fucker, belonging to this club, and I'll kill you myself!" I jump when he slams his fist down on the table.

I want to leave. I feel sick to my stomach. I understand that he's scared and he wants to protect his family, but I need Havoc. I'd leave if I thought he'd let me, but he won't. Havoc has made it clear that if I so much as try, he'll stop me. If I did manage to get away, he wouldn't stop until he found me again.

I trust my husband, and I know he spoke the truth when he said he'd protect me. Havoc will find out who those men are and what they want. Jack told me the same thing. Red might hate me right now, but I have a family here too. My husband, my uncle and aunt, my cousins, brothers-in-law, mother-in-law, and whether he likes it or not, a father-in-law.

Of course, I've thought about leaving so that Havoc will be safe. I know how strong he is, and I know with the Snakes behind him, he's powerful. However, Red is right; the men chasing me could get to

any member of Havoc's family, even mine, to get to me. I don't want anyone to get hurt because of me.

God, I'm so torn. I don't know what to do.

"I'm sorry," Is all I can whisper. Nothing else will come out, even though I'm trying. I want to tell Red that I'll go, that nothing will happen to his family, but something is stopping me.

I place my free hand on Havoc's bicep. He's breathing harshly, angered by what his father said. "Don't you dare speak to my wife that way!" Everyone is staring at us, and I feel the heat of embarrassment creeping along my spine.

"Havoc, that's enough," I swallow hard as Havoc's brother gets out of his seat. He's really tall, and his voice is as deep as his father's. "This man," He points to Red. "Is the reason you're alive. Show him some damn respect."

"Respect works both ways, Trey." Havoc snaps. "I don't give a damn what anyone thinks of me, but Wynter is my wife! I won't have you," He points to his father. "Or anyone else, threatening her. Wynter has no control over what's happening. She doesn't know those men or what they want with her. You're my family, and I thought I could count on you to help me protect my wife. I guess I was wrong."

"You *can* count on us, Havoc," Trey tells him.

"Just be careful," Red warns.

Havoc rolls his eyes and leads me away from his family without another word. He leads me down a corridor, lets go of my hand, and slams his fist against the wall. My eyes widen as I stare at my husband.

"Havoc, it's okay." I reach out to touch his arm, but he moves away from me. I sigh and wrap my arms around myself. "They're just worried about you."

"I get that, Wynter, but they have no right to speak to you that way!"

I understand why Havoc is angry, but I won't have him going off like this. Fighting with family should never happen. Of course, everyone has disagreements, even with family members. But that doesn't mean you have to hold on to anger. I won't let Havoc do that.

I wish more than anything that my family was here. If they were, my mom and sister, I would never walk away from them in anger. I

wouldn't because you never know if this is the last time you'll even see them.

My mother always said, 'Never leave the house angry, and always say *I love you*.' That's why Cassie and I always say those words to each other, even if we're angry.

I take Havoc's arm in my right hand, and his cheek in his left, forcing him to look at me. "They're only words, Havoc. Your father loves you, and he's worried about you. Don't fall out with your family, Cole," He raises an eyebrow and smirks at me. I've used his given name less than a handful of times since we met. Whenever I do, it always makes him smile.

I rub my thumb over his cheek. "So many people love you, Havoc. That's beyond obvious to anyone with eyes. I love you so much," I lean up and kiss his lips softly. "Now, why don't you introduce me to everyone?"

Havoc wraps his arms around me. "I love you," He mumbles against my hair. "Let's start with Ghost," I nod my head and chuckle.

Havoc leads me to a table filled with people. I take a deep breath because I'm nervous. All of the men here are huge, and these men aren't as big as Havoc's father. However, they are big in their own right.

"Ghost," Havoc shakes Ghost's hand, and he looks at me and winks. "Razor, Vinny, Eagle, Storm." Havoc tips his head at the other men.

I remember Havoc telling me that Razor and Vinny are Ghost's sons. Eagle is Tank's son, and Storm is Hammer's son.

"Avery," Havoc acknowledges with a kiss to her cheek. Ghost's wife if memory serves. "I'd like you all to meet Wynter."

"It's nice to meet you all." I smile genuinely.

"Nice to finally meet you, Wynter." I shake Ghost's hand when he offers it.

Each person shakes my hand and welcomes me to the family. I have to admit that I like them all. Ghost makes me laugh, and he seems to be the joker of the club.

Havoc and I sit with Ghost and the others for a while. Ghost tells me stories about Havoc when he was a child, and Havoc threatens to shoot him if he doesn't stop, making me laugh.

Razor points out that Fallon and her family have arrived. Havoc then tells me it's time to meet her, and I don't think I've ever been more nervous about meeting anyone in my life.

"Don't be nervous, baby. Fallon doesn't bite." Havoc chuckles, but I simply smile. "Hey, sis," He leans into the beautiful woman smiling widely at him.

"Hey. Sorry, we're late, Ava was having a dress crisis." She rolls her eyes and nods at her daughter. Ava is beautiful and looks just like her mother. She's talking to Phoenix, whom I can tell is Ava's best friend. They give off that vibe. "You must be Wynter."

I nod while shaking her hand. "I'm happy to be meeting you finally. Havoc has told me a lot about you."

"All bad, I hope." Fallon jokes. "He's told us all about you, too, of course," I smile at Havoc. It's nice to hear someone say that. "This is my husband, Trace."

"Nice to meet you." He tips his head at me but says no more.

It's evident that Trace, like Red, is at least a decade older than his wife. He's handsome, nonetheless.

"This is Scotty," I shake hands with Fallon's eldest son, fourteen years of age, so Havoc told me, yet Scotty looks at least eighteen. What the hell does he eat? He's so tall! "And this is Reed, my youngest." Another kid who looks older than he is. I shake his hand too and watch both boys rush off to find people their own age.

"You'll have to excuse our kids," Trace tells me. "They're always the same when we bring them here. They're not usually this rude, though."

"It's no problem," I laugh.

Trace wraps his arm around his wife's waist, and she leans back against him. "You did well for yourself with this one, Havoc."

Havoc audibly growls and yanks me to his side, his arm around my waist. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Oh, he's hooked on you, gurl." Fallon laughs. I'm guessing it's an inside joke, but I don't get it.

"Fuck the both of you!" Havoc takes my hand and drags me away from Fallon and Trace, who are now falling over themselves laughing.

I look up at Havoc to find he's smirking to himself. "What was that about?"

"They were just pointing out that you've claimed my heart." He winks at me, and I can't help the smile of pride spreading across my face. "Come on, beautiful. There are more people to meet yet."

I'm enjoying meeting everyone, even if some of these bikers look as scary as a demon from hell. Today has been made 'family day' according to Havoc, which means the kids are allowed to be here longer than they usually would be. Meaning I get to meet them also.

I like everyone, and I can't say that I don't. Meeting my cousins and their children has been amazing. I feel a little overwhelmed with it all; I won't lie. Knowing that I'm no longer alone in the world has me feeling emotional.

I adore Phoenix; she's such an amazing young lady. I can see just how strong she is and that she'll one day soon be a woman to be reckoned with. Phoenix is a prospect with the club, and she told me how she'd one day soon be a patched in member.

I have to wonder if that will happen. As terrible as it sounds, this place seems to be male-only members. However, if any woman could make it into the MC as a member, it's Phoenix. I've only known her a short while, and I know that.

"Wynter?"

I spin on the spot. My best friend is now right in front of me. She has tears in her eyes, and shock written all over her face. She looks so healthy, and she's put a little weight on, even her curves are noticeable. Cassie's hair is no longer limp; it's shiny and full. Her eyes are bright, and she no longer looks ill. Being here with her family has done her a world of good, just as I knew it would. Cassie is home, she's safe, and she's loved.

"Wynter!" Cassie screams my name and runs into my arms. I catch her, both of us crying, and I hold her so tightly. I don't want to let go.

"I can't believe you're here." She sobs loud enough that I can hear. She kisses my cheek and finally pulls away, but only enough to look at me while cupping my cheek. "I never thought I'd see you here. How have you been?"

"I've been okay, Cassie."

"What have you been up to?"

"I'll tell you about it soon, I promise. I know about your wedding,"

Cassie turns her head and smiles at Cormack. "He stole my heart the moment I met him, Wynter."

"Are you happy, Cassie?"

She nods her head. "I have my Dad and a Mom who loves me, and even lets me call her that. I have brothers and sisters, friends, and a man I would die for. He takes such good care of me, Wynter. I know it probably seems too soon for us to be getting married, but when you know, you know. Right?"

I cup her beautiful cheek and nod my head. "Right. As long as you're happy, then I'm happy for you. That's all I ever wanted for you, Cass."

"Thank you." She smiles. "Cormack told me what's been going on. Are you okay?"

"I'm okay, Cass. Havoc saved me." She looks over my shoulder and smiles. "I never got to tell you what my dad said."

"Oh, shit, that's right." She takes my hand in hers, and I smile. "What did he tell you?"

"He told me that I have an uncle and where to find him." Her eyes widen with glee. "Cassie, BlackJack is my uncle."

"No," She's shocked, and why wouldn't she be? The world is a small place. "Oh, my. You're one of us. Oh my God, you get to stay with me!" She wraps her arms around me, and I close my eyes and breathe deeply.

I also chuckle a little. I get to stay because Havoc is my husband, but knowing Cassie is here too means there really is no place I'd rather be.

Chapter Six

HAVOC

I'm falling deeper in love with my wife as the hour's tick by. I've watched her flourish over the past few days. Whenever Wynter smiles, it melts my heart. It does because I know those smiles are for me. Wynter feels safe with me, and she's letting go of what drove her away from me.

I've never known a woman more beautiful than Wynter. She's around five-seven, curvy hips, toned thighs, small breasts that fit perfectly in my big hands. Her wavy hair always smells like a summer evening, and those blue-grey eyes sparkle when she laughs.

Watching Wynter with her newfound family, seeing the way she smiles, has been the highlight of my day. I always want to see Wynter happy. Knowing she isn't alone in the world seems to have settled something in my wife.

Over the past few days, Wynter has brought me back to life. Those months without her were hard, I'll admit. Though I didn't sit and wallow for long, I got on with my life, and I won't pretend anything else. I'm a biker for fuck sakes, and I've always been a hardened bastard. Ever since my big brother died, I hid my feelings well. Some would say that I have no heart when it comes to matters of love. They'd be right to a degree, and I'm hard on my brothers because I don't want to lose them as I did Scott.

Trey hates that I still tell him what to do, and I still fight his battles. I only do so because it's a force of habit. Before Scott died, he told me to look out for Trey, and to make sure he didn't get himself into something he couldn't get out of. Cullen wasn't born until after Scott died, but I know he would have told me the same about him.

I don't think my parents had any plans to have another child, but Cullen was a much-wanted baby. Cullen came along at a time when I thought the woman my mother once was had all but disappeared.

My mother was raped by a member of this club, years ago, when I was a teenager. I knew nothing about what had happened to her until the day I heard my father talking with Roman in our kitchen. Dad was upset, and Roman was trying to calm him down.

I shouldn't have been listening from the hallway to their conversation, but I couldn't stop myself. Something about what Dad had said grabbed my attention. Mom hadn't been herself for a while, and this particular day, he'd found out why.

When I heard Dad say those words, 'He raped my girl, Roman. He hurt the woman I would die for, and she kept it from me because she was ashamed and thought I'd hate her,' my heart sank to my feet. I was thirteen, and I knew what rape meant and the effects it could have on a person. Dad had told me from an early age just what would happen to me if he ever found out I'd done such a thing. I would never hurt a woman like that, but he wanted to make sure I knew the consequences of such actions.

I couldn't get the images of what that man did to my mother out of my head, and my gut churned. All I wanted to do was kill the motherfucker who'd dared put his hands on my mom. Then I heard Roman say, 'He's dead, Red. You took him out, and now he can never hurt another woman. But don't you realize what you've done? You killed him in front of Tammy, and she's devastated and frightened.'

A smile crept across my young face, and the respect I had for my dad right then was out of this world. I didn't fully understand what murder meant at that point, but I was proud of my father for what he'd done.

'I know what I've done, Roman. You don't need to tell me. I don't know how to make this better for her,' Dad gulped back an audible sob. I wanted to comfort him, but I left Roman to that.

I made my way to my parent's bedroom. I had to see for myself how Mom was doing. Trey was fast asleep, and I was grateful that he was. He wouldn't have been able to deal with seeing Mom in the state I found her in that day.

I heard her sobbing quietly as I opened the bedroom door. She didn't turn to see who'd entered; she just rocked herself back and

forth slowly.

I sat on the bed beside her, and I wrapped my arm around her shoulder. 'It's okay, Mom,' I told her softly. She didn't say anything, though she laid her head on my shoulder. 'No one will ever hurt you again, I promise.' I kissed her head as she sobbed harder. I meant it when I told Mom that no one would hurt her again. I'd make damn sure she was safe, no matter what it took. I swore to myself that day to become the man I am today.

It took my mother many months after the rape and her subsequent breakdown to recover. But it was the birth of Cullen that brought her back to us. Trey and I always felt our mother's love, even when she was too ill to speak. However, I saw her coming back to life little by little after finding out she was pregnant. Then when Cullen was born, Mom came back to us.

My mother is everything to me. She's stronger than any woman I've ever met. She went through hell, but she came back from it stronger. Though I know if anything ever happened to Cullen, it would destroy her. The boy has a cold, and she freaks out. He's fifteen and still mommy's little boy. I always imagine how that would make Scott laugh.

Dad and Roman have something in common; they both slept with the same woman and had a kid with her. Scott's mom slept with Roman and had Fallon. She's not my sister, but I know Scott would have wanted me to take care of her also. Dad loves Fallon's kids, and they call him grandpa, even though they're Roman's grandkids by blood. Red and Roman are best friends, and I don't remember a time when they weren't.

Ava, Scotty, named after my brother, and Reed are family, even if they aren't blood. Same goes for Ghost, he's not my brother by blood, but my parents all but adopted him when I was a kid. His kids, Danny and Vinny, are my nephews. We're a big family, and Wynter has all of us as well as the Anderson's now.

I'm going to make sure that girl knows that she'll never be alone again. No matter what's going on or why those men are looking for her, I'll never let anything happen to the woman I love more than life itself.

I look over at Wynter as she stands with Phoenix and Cassie, laughing, without a trace of fear in her eyes. That's the look I want to

see on Wynter's face every day for the rest of our lives. I know it's not that easy, in any case. At least, not until I sort those men out.

I set my beer on the bar as BlackJack stands in front of me and stares me down. "Something I can do for you, BlackJack?"

"You've done a good job taking care of Wynter, Havoc, but she needs to be with her family. Taylor and I have plenty of room for Wynter, and Phoenix will love having her cousin living with us."

I fold my arms across my chest. "What makes you think that's gonna happen? She's my wife, BlackJack, and she belongs with me."

He scratches his chin with his thumbnail. "I get that, Havoc, really I do. I wouldn't expect you to think it's a good idea..."

"It's a terrible idea," He nods his head at me. There's no way on this earth I'm going to agree to Wynter moving in with BlackJack. He must be insane even to think I'd be okay with what he's suggesting. "I know you want to get to know Wynter, and that's fine with me, BlackJack." I don't have a problem with Wynter getting to know her family. "But she's staying with me where she belongs."

"And you're sure you can keep her safe?"

I grit my teeth behind my lips. "Careful, old man," BlackJack raises his eyebrow at me. "You've known me my whole life. You know damn well that I can keep my wife safe, as much as you've always kept yours safe."

I shake my head in annoyance when BlackJack chuckles. "You're so much like your dad; it's scary. I sometimes forget that you're no longer a little boy."

"I haven't been one of those for a very long time, BlackJack. I'm a thirty-two-year-old man, and that beautiful twenty-six-year-old woman over there," I tip my head toward Wynter. "Is my wife, and she means everything to me. I spent months without her because she didn't trust me enough to understand her past. Wynter is finally back in my life, and I'm not letting her go again."

I watch BlackJack looking at Wynter. I understand why he feels the need to protect her. I've heard the stories about his brother and the vile cunt he was – still would be if he was out there. I heard Wynter's side of things, and the hell she lived through because of that man. BlackJack had nothing to do with his family, but I can tell he wishes he had for Wynter's sake.

Nothing can change the past, but we can make sure Wynter's future is a bright one.

"Her life hasn't been an easy one, Havoc. She has people after her, and..."

"I know that, BlackJack," I stop him from rambling. He's a worried uncle, with a lot of regret in his heart. "Wynter has a big family now, and we'll all look out for her and protect her with our lives. We have church later, and Jett will let us know if he's come up with a plausible plan to find those men. Trust me, BlackJack, I'm not going to let anything happen to Wynter."

BlackJack clasps my shoulder. "I trust you with my life, Havoc, and I know Wynter feels the same way. But if you need anything at all, I want you to come to me. No matter how small..."

"I'll come to you," I chuckle. "Don't worry, old man; everything will be just fine."

"Less of the *old man*, you little shit." We both laugh. BlackJack gives me one last look before nodding his head and walking away.

I turn my eyes back to Wynter. She's with Cassie and Gunner across the room, smiling and laughing as they talk. She's so happy to be back with her friend. However, I have to wonder if she would be better off with BlackJack and Taylor. I don't doubt my ability to protect Wynter, but I have to give her the choice whether she stays or goes.

I make my way over to Wynter and gently take her arm in my hand. She turns to look at me with a smile on her beautiful face. "You guys mind if I steal Wynter for a moment?"

"Sure." Gunner smirks. *Prick!*

Wynter hugs Cassie quickly before chasing after me as I make my way outside. I inwardly groan when she catches up with me and slips her hand into mine. She has no idea what it does to me when she simply takes my hand. I want to ravage her, shove my face between her legs, and never come up for air.

I lead Wynter to the side of the building, and she leans back against the wall, breathing in the evening air with a smile on her face. "I never thought I'd feel this happy, Havoc. My best friend found her family and a man who loves her endlessly. I have a family now, and you and I are going to try again." She looks right at me, still smiling. "I am so in love with you, Havoc."

"I'm so in love with you, too, beautiful," I smile when she comes closer, arms wrapping around my neck and lips against mine. I wrap my arms around her, pulling her body flush against mine, and she

moans into my mouth. Fuck, I can feel my dick hardening behind my zipper.

Our tongues battle, sucking, entwining. Her hands fist my hair, and she's practically dry humping me where we stand. It fucking hurts that I want her this badly. So badly, my heart feels like it's about to burst out of my chest and kill me.

Wynter finally pulls out of the kiss with a groan and rests her forehead against mine. "I know what you dragged me out here for. I heard BlackJack talking to Taylor and what they want. I heard BlackJack say he'd talk to you, and then I saw him approach you." She pulls away from me slightly but grabs my hands in hers tightly. "Do you want me to go, Havoc? Please just tell me if you do."

I reach out and touch Wynter's soft cheek. I couldn't stop myself. I run my knuckles down her cheek, and she closes her eyes for a second. "BlackJack just wants to take care of you, Wynter. He's your uncle, and he loves you." I watch her smile at that. "BlackJack and Taylor are two of the nicest people I know, and I've known them all my life."

"They are nice people, Havoc, and it's kind of them to want to take care of me." She smiles again while cupping my cheek. "But I belong with my husband; with you. Right?"

"Right, but are you sure that's what you want?"

Wynter sighs. "I thought..."

"What did you think?" She looks away from me. I take her face in my hands and force her to look at me. "Please don't turn away from me. Do you really think I want to be standing here telling you to move in with BlackJack and Taylor? Because I don't, Wynter. I really don't. However, this isn't about me and what I want. This is about what's best for you. I can't make you stay with me if being with your family is where you really want to be."

I watch that beautiful throat of hers move up and down as she swallows. "If you think for one second that I am going anywhere without you, Cole Caldwell, then you're insane."

I chuckle loudly, and Wynter smiles.

"I know we've been apart for months, but I'm home now, and I'm never leaving you again. I don't feel safe when I'm not with you, Havoc. I'm not saying that I need a protector, you know that I can take care of myself," That I do. Wynter is a strong woman. It's what first attracted me to her. "I love you, Havoc. I really love you. I know

that I made a mistake when I left the way I did, but it didn't mean that I didn't love you."

"I know that, sweetheart," I gently take her face in my hands. "I want you to listen to me, Wynter. Everything I do is what's best for you. You know that, don't you?"

"Of course, I do. But moving in with my uncle is not what's best, Havoc. It doesn't even make any sense to me."

I chuckle. "Me either. If you want to stay with me, then that's the end of the conversation."

Wynter smiles wide. "Well, I'm glad that's settled. What are we going to do about those guys, Havoc?"

I tuck her hair behind her ear. "I have a meeting with Jett and the others in a little while. Between us, we'll figure something out. I know telling you not to worry is stupid, but try not to. No matter what, I won't let anything happen to you."

"I know you won't." Wynter leans in and kisses me softly. "It was nice meeting your siblings. I like them all very much."

"They liked you, too. We're an odd mix, huh?"

"I don't think so," She smiles. "Families come in all shapes and sizes, Havoc. Blood or otherwise, you're still a family."

I stroke her face with the back of my hand. "You're part of that family now, Wynter."

"Thank you," She has nothing to thank me for.

Wynter leans in and kisses me, and it takes all that I am not to pin her against the wall and take her right where we stand. But it'll have to wait until we get home.

I pull her into my arms and hold her close to me. It's been a hard few months without her, and it's not going to be easygoing for a while, but she's here now, right where she belongs. Wynter lays her head on my shoulder as I hold her, and hums happily to herself. "Havoc?"

"Yeah?"

"When can we go home?"

I nudge her off my shoulder, and she looks at me. "Anytime you like. Why? You wanna ravage me?" I laugh.

"More like, I want you to punish me," She licks her lips, and I raise my eyebrow. Wynter smirks while biting her lower lip.

"Oh, yeah?" She nods her head. "And what have you done that would mean I'd have to punish you?"

"Well," She licks her lips again. "A guy back there was looking at me. He winked, and I smiled."

I grit my teeth. Even though I know she's only saying this stuff for effect, to get me where she wants me, it angers me. I don't want other men looking at what's mine, even if she is the most beautiful creature to walk the planet. "You're mine, Wynter. Mine, and mine alone. Any man so much as looks at you for more than twenty seconds, and I'll gouge out his eyes!"

She laughs cheekily. "Twenty seconds was very specific."

I take her face in my hands and yank her closer to me. "You shouldn't play these games, little girl. You know how they always end."

Wynter groans with her eyes closed. "Yeah, I do," She opens her eyes to look at me. "With me across Daddy's knee while he spanks me hard."

Damn girl is asking for trouble.

"What's going on here?"

Wynter's eyes widen, scared that my father could have heard what she just said. I don't give a shit if he did.

I pull Wynter into my arms, and she lays her head on my shoulder, not facing Red. "We were talking. What's up?"

"Wynter, are you okay?"

I grit my teeth. What the fuck does he think I've done to her?

My dad is a big bastard of a man and always has been — six-two years of age, ten years my mother's senior, and my damn hero. Always has been, always will be. However, today he seems to have it in for me. He doesn't want me with Wynter, and he can't deny it because it was written all over his face earlier.

Wynter lifts her head, arm around my waist, mine around her shoulder, and a smile on her face. "I'm great, thank you."

"Your uncle is looking for you, and I'd like a word with my son in private."

Great, here comes the damn lecture.

"Okay." Wynter smiles at my dad and then turns to me. She wraps her arms around my neck and whispers in my ear. "Your dad doesn't like me. Please don't let him turn you against me, Havoc."

"No one could turn me against you, Wynter," I whisper loudly enough for her to hear me. "You're my wife, and I love you."

"I love you, too." She pulls away and kisses me right in front of my dad, not caring that he's watching with a raised eyebrow. I can see him behind her. "I'll see you in a few, handsome. Bye, Red."

I watch Wynter walking away, and I'm mentally counting to ten before my dad rounds on me. "What the hell do you think you're doing, Havoc?"

Arms folded across my chest, I tell him, "What business is that of yours?"

"Don't get smart with me, Cole!" I grit my teeth. I hate it when he talks down to me like this. I'm not a kid anymore; I'm thirty years old! "This whole thing is beyond fucked up. You get married in secret, then spend months wondering what you did to chase her away. Now she's back here, and I have to wonder if she's only here because she needs help. Do you honestly believe she'd be back here for any other reason?"

I roll my shoulders and crack my neck. If Red were anybody else right now, I'd have broken his neck for saying that shit. But I don't want an argument with my father. I know he's concerned about both Wynter and me, but he won't convince me that Wynter is here for any other reason than she loves me.

"She came back here because I dragged her back with me. I doubt she would have come here even to ask for help. She's my wife, Dad. Do you really expect me to have turned her away, even if she did only come here for help? It's my damn job to protect my wife!"

"You don't think she should be with her family where she's safe?"

"You don't think Wynter is safe with me?"

"That's not what I meant, and you know it!" I run my tongue over my top teeth. I'm so annoyed right now that I'm fast losing patience. "I'm not asking you to send Wynter to live with BlackJack, Havoc. She's your wife, and any man worth his salt would keep his wife with him. I'm just worried about what could happen to you having her here."

I understand as my father, why Red would be so worried. I don't have kids, but I imagine I'd be just as scared for my son if I were in Red's shoes. But the fact remains that Wynter is going nowhere. I am going to keep her safe, no matter what it takes.

I don't believe that my father dislikes Wynter; he just doesn't like the situation. I know once Red gets to know Wynter, he'll love her as

much as I do.

"I love you, Dad, and I know you want what's best for me. I also know you want what's best for Wynter. I want what's best for her too. I know you're worried about what's coming, so am I if I'm honest. But there's no getting away from it, Dad. Whoever those men are will find Wynter, unless we find them first."

I roll my neck and let it crack again. Pity, it doesn't ease the tension I'm feeling.

"Is that the only reason you don't like her? Or is it something else?"

Red narrows his eyes at me, then shakes his head. "I can see why you'd ask me that. It's not like I've been very nice to the girl with what I said." He scratches his beard with his thumbnail. "I don't dislike your wife, Havoc."

He could have fooled me.

"I reacted badly, and I had no right to say what I said to Wynter. I can admit that, Havoc, and I'm sorry. What you're doing for your wife is what any decent husband would do, and no one has the right to tell you otherwise."

I nod my head slightly while pushing my hands into the pockets of my jeans. "No, they don't. To be honest, I'm not sure why Wynter has been given the reception that she has. No matter the person who joined this club, their old ladies, their kids, I've welcomed them all the way you and Mom taught me to. I bring my wife here after months of wondering why she left, and she's treated like a damn leper by my own family!"

I fold my arms around my chest. "I didn't expect you to roll out the banners and throw a party, but being civil would have been nice, Dad. It hasn't been easy for her, you know. Wynter has nightmares about those men, and what they might do to her, she even jumps now and again at certain noises. She doesn't deserve to be afraid of her own shadow."

Red nods his head in thought. "You're right; she doesn't. Wynter has no idea at all what those men want from her?" I shake my head. "And she can't think of any reason they'd be looking for her?"

"No," I shake my head.

"So she doesn't actually know they mean to harm her?"

I stare at my father for a second. I hadn't thought about that. Wynter never sticks around long enough to find out what those men

want. It's not entirely crazy to think they're not out to hurt her. I can't for the life of me think what else they could want, but I can't rule anything out.

"I guess there's only one way to find out. I'm gonna have to draw them out."

"What we do is speak with Jett. If he thinks it's a good idea, then we'll find a way to sort this, I promise." He clasps my shoulder in his big hand. "Do you honestly love this girl, Havoc?"

"I wouldn't have married her if I didn't. Did I realize how much until she walked away from me? No. When I found out where she was, I knew I had to bring her home. Wynter is everything to me, Dad, and I have to keep her safe."

"You're sure that she loves you?"

I sigh. "I don't doubt that Wynter loves me, Dad. No one will ever understand what she and I have. Maybe you do because I believe you have it with Mom." I watch a smirk creep across his face. Red knows exactly what I'm saying.

My dad looks at me for a moment, just looking at me. "Just be careful with your heart, Havoc. I'd hate to see her break it again."

I nod at my dad and let him hug me. He's not completely happy about this, but he doesn't have to be. I'm happy, and I'm going to make Wynter so happy she'll never want to leave me again.

After making my way back inside, I stand watching my girl as she talks to BlackJack and Taylor. All three of them are laughing. Seeing Wynter smiling the way she is, right now, warms my heart. I helped put that smile on her face, and it makes me damn proud.

Wynter notices me watching her, and she winks seductively in my direction. I'm going to ravage that girl before the night is out. She's in trouble, and she doesn't even know it.

Chapter Seven

WYNTER

“*W*hat made you want to be a biker?” I ask Phoenix while placing my wine glass on the table in front of me.

Phoenix asked me to join her for a drink while Havoc talks with Jett and the others. For someone of her age, Phoenix is very headstrong - not in a naïve way, but a tremendously grown-up way. I’ve never met an eighteen-year-old, so sure about themselves in my life. I sure as hell know I wasn’t like that at eighteen.

Phoenix sure as shit doesn’t let these men treat her like a damsel in distress. She’s not a patched-in member yet, but Phoenix told me that it wouldn’t be much longer before Jett tells her that it’s time.

“I was born into this life, Wynter. It’s all I know. My Dad is my hero,” She smiles. “Not to mention Wrench. I love Hawk and Stryker, don’t get me wrong, but Wrench and I have a different bond. I knew by the age of two that I wanted to be just like Daddy and Wrench.” Phoenix laughs, and I laugh with her.

It must be nice to have a father you love so much he’d be your hero. I can only imagine how amazing Jack is for Phoenix to think of him that way.

I still wonder how Jack turned out so differently from John. I didn’t even know two siblings could be so different.

My sister and I weren’t different at all. Okay, we had the odd differences, but we believed the same things, had the same emotions. I guess we were just like our mother, and I thank God, neither of us turned out like John Anderson.

"When I was three, I begged my mother for a leather jacket. She surprised me with one, but I was gutted."

"Why?" I smile.

"Because in my innocent mind, I thought Mom would have realized that I wanted a jacket with the clubs emblem stitched on the back. Not only that, but my road name and rank stitched on the front. Dad said, with a laugh, 'You don't get patches stitched on a jacket, Dana. Patches are for cuts.' Naturally, I wasn't impressed with what he said. I slammed my hands onto my hips and narrowed my eyes. I told him, 'I am going to be the first female member of Snakes Henchmen. I won't wear a stupid cut because that's for sweaty men. I'm going to wear a leather jacket because I am one of a kind! Got it?' My Dad laughed so loudly and promised that he'd have the emblem stitched into the back of the jacket for me."

"I envy you," I whisper, wistfully. I hadn't meant to, but it just came out.

"Why?" Phoenix asks around a swig of her bottled beer. I chuckle and shake my head. The girl is eighteen and shouldn't be drinking alcohol, but she doesn't seem to care what anyone says.

"Because you have a wonderful, loving father who would do anything for you and your siblings."

"And you got landed with the rotten apple?" I nod while trying not to laugh. Phoenix is so outspoken, and she has no filter at all, but I don't mind one bit. "I get that life can't have been easy with that man. What he did to your Mom when she was a child doesn't bear thinking about. But didn't something good come out of it all?"

I narrow my eyes and shake my head.

Phoenix rolls her eyes and laughs. "You, you cockhead!" She reaches over and slaps my arm. I have to bite my tongue so as not to yell how that slap hurt. God, she's got strong hands. "But seriously, you're a good person, Wynter."

"If she likes you, you must be."

I look up at the man now standing beside our table. He's a prospect. I remember Havoc pointing them all four of them out when we arrived. I can't recall his name, though I know my husband isn't too keen on the man.

"Fuck off, Tex." Phoenix snarls at him.

Tex raises an eyebrow and smirks. "What's got your panties in a twist?"

"None of your damn business!" Phoenix snaps, venomously.

Tex looks at me and smirks again. "Ignore her; she's always this moody. Tell me, what's a woman like you," He shamelessly looks me up and down. "Doing with a man like Havoc?"

"Are you for real?" I narrow my eyes and shake my head.

Tex can't be more than nineteen, but I can see just what a cocky bastard he is. That might turn most women on, but it won't work on me. Not when it comes to this kid, at least.

I'm about to say something but startle when Phoenix jumps out of her seat and punches Tex so hard in the mouth; he falls to the floor. I'm shocked, and so is Tex from the way he's looking at Phoenix.

Casually, she crouches down in front of him, resting her arms on her thighs, and entwining her fingers. The power this eighteen-year-old woman emits is something I've never known before.

Phoenix moves her head to the side, a smirk on her face as she stares Tex down. The room is now full of men, all staring at Phoenix, not one of them attempting to stop her from what she's doing.

My eyes lock with Havoc's, his narrow, and I swallow hard. I want to go and tell him what the hell just happened. I want to ask who fetched them all out of their meeting. Maybe they'd finished and just walked in on this. However, I can't seem to move, and my eyes have strayed back to my cousin.

"Now, tell me, why would you say such a thing to my cousin?"

"I didn't say nothin' bad. Jesus, you didn't have to hit me!" Tex wipes the blood from his lip, and I'm here wondering how the hell Phoenix didn't break her hand or his jaw. She hit him so hard his damn head span!

"The next time you so much as look at Wynter for more than three seconds, I'll do more than hit you. Don't push me, Tex. You should know better than that."

Who the hell is this woman?

Don't get me wrong, I think Phoenix is fantastic, but she's crazy. I've never met anyone like her before, and I have to admit that she scares me a little.

"Apologize to my cousin." Tex looks at me as Phoenix gets to her feet. He doesn't say anything right away, and Phoenix snaps her boot into his crown jewels. Tex howls in pain, and Phoenix stares down at him. "Now, Tex,"

"I'm sorry!" He yells like a child. Phoenix grinds her boot into him once more before letting him go. Tex rolls on the floor for a moment. God, that must have hurt!

I look up at the laughter coming from people in the room. I'm stumped that they let this happen. Okay, it's great that Phoenix is so strong, and that she's not scared of anyone or anything. But surely these men don't think what she just did was right? Yes, Tex was a little arrogant, but I wouldn't have said he needed punching out then humiliating.

"One thing you should know about me, Wynter," I look at Phoenix. "Is that I have no tolerance for male stupidity." She leans over and kisses my cheek before walking away.

Havoc winks at me, then walks away, following the men back into the room he just existed. Great, now I'm all alone in a room full of people I barely know.

I feel a bit shaky. I'm not sure why, but maybe seeing Phoenix act the way she just did, shook me up a little.

I sink into my seat and stare at my hands. I'm not used to people like these bikers. I know I'll get used to them and their ways, it's just going to take a while.

"Are you okay, sweetheart?"

I look up at Taylor as she takes a seat in front of me, and I smile while nodding my head. "Fine, just a little shook up. Is she always like that?" I nod my head towards Phoenix. She's at the bar with Ava, laughing about something.

"Phoenix? Yeah, she's always like that. Phoenix might come off harsh, but she's a good girl. She means well, Wynter. Phoenix was looking out for you. You mean a lot to my daughter already, and that is something special where Phoenix is concerned."

I smile at that. I love my cousin, and it makes me proud that she loves me in return. "She won't get in trouble, will she?"

Taylor rolls her eyes with a smile on her face. "No, darlin', Phoenix won't be in trouble. Even if she were, she'd talk her way right out of it again."

Taylor and I talk for a while. We talk about how I met Havoc and how she met and fell in love with Jack. It makes my heart burst with love for my uncle. Knowing how he fought to love this beautiful woman makes me love him so much more.

When I'm talking with my aunt, I forget the bad things in life. Taylor has such a sunny outlook on life, and it would be criminal to wonder about the bad.

"Aunt Taylor?" I smile at the gorgeous young woman addressing Taylor. "I'm so sorry to interrupt," She smiles at me. "I'm Ember."

She holds her hand out to me, and I take it, shaking it graciously. "Wynter," I tell her.

"It's so nice to finally meet you."

"Is there something you wanted, sweetheart?" Taylor asks.

"Yes. I just wondered if you'd had time to order the banners for Eagle's birthday. I know it's not for a couple months yet, but I want to get ahead of things."

Taylor chuckles. "Ember is Eagle's big sister," She tells me, and I smile because that's why the girl looks so familiar. "He's turning twenty-one soon, and Ember is throwing him a surprise party."

"He'll hit the roof if he finds out, but you're only twenty-one once." Ember laughs. She doesn't have to say anything else for me to know that her brother means everything to her.

"I've put the order in, sweetheart. They should be with us by the end of next week."

"Thank you!" Ember hugs Taylor tightly. "So," She says as she takes a seat beside Taylor. "What do you do for a living?"

That's the first time anyone has asked me that question. "Well, at the moment nothing. I used to work as a waitress wherever I could get a job. Though I always had a dream about being a therapist of some sort. Helping battered women or the homeless to find shelter, work, etc."

I know what it's like to be hungry, not to have a roof over my head, and to wish someone out there would help. Cassie and I lived on the streets for a while. We'd been kicked out of our care home for bad behavior. Those in charge didn't give a damn what happened to us. They didn't care just as long as we were out of their hair.

While we were on the streets, it was terrifying. Cassie wasn't as strong as me, and I took care of her as best I could, though she cried that first night, all night long as I held her to keep her warm.

Cassie and I were fifteen, and we were scared that we'd be attacked. I told Cassie that I wouldn't let that happen, I'd protect us, and she believed me to a degree. However, I knew should we be at-

tacked, I wouldn't be able to stop it, but I'd take everything to protect Cassie.

I realized how badly people look down on those less fortunate early on. Begging for food would have people sneering at us. The odd person would drop a dollar here and there, but no one ever conversed with us. We were shit on their shoes, and no one wanted to help us.

There were days where I didn't eat because I couldn't find enough food for two, or I didn't earn enough money begging that day to buy what we needed. But I always made sure Cassie ate something, even if it was a half-eaten sandwich from the trash. The thought of that makes me shiver. It makes me shiver even more to think of what I had to do to keep Cassie healthy.

It had been eight days on the street, and Cassie began to get ill from the cold at night. I was terrified because I couldn't help her feel better. I couldn't take her to the hospital because I knew they'd call the authorities, and we'd be dumped back in a care home. God only knew how much trouble we would have been in for running away. Those in charge of the home we'd left wouldn't have stuck up for us. They would have lied and said we'd run away. Why would they take the blame for kicking us out, and who'd believe us if we told the truth? That's right, no one. In the eyes of those in charge, Cassie and I were unruly kids with big attitudes.

I did what I could for Cassie while she was ill. I'd managed to steal a blanket and a cushion from an old woman. She'd been setting up a picnic in her garden and had gone inside to get something. I saw my chance, and I took it, I had to for Cassie.

Once I'd lay cardboard boxes down on the ground, in the corner of the alley we'd been staying, I covered Cassie and went in search of medicine. I thought I could beg and get enough money to buy something that would help. When that didn't work, I thought about stealing from the pharmacy. I made a plan inside my head and made myself believe I could pull it off. The only trouble was, I couldn't pull it off because there were just too many CCTV cameras around. I knew I'd be caught and taken away. What would happen to Cassie then?

Instead, I met a man outside the pharmacy who offered me a way to help Cassie get everything she needed to make her better. I didn't

want to do it, but he made a good point. Could I risk one more night on the street with Cassie as sick as she was?

I explained that I was fifteen, and did he want to be known as a pervert? He told me that I looked older than fifteen, and he didn't care that I wasn't. As long as I did what he asked of me, he'd give me everything I needed.

I was so scared, yet I couldn't turn down his offer, so I went with him, hoping he didn't kill me, and that he'd help the way he promised. He took me to a motel, told me to shower the dirt from my body, and put on the sexy underwear he gave me. I'd never been with a man before that moment, but I felt I had no other choice.

Rob, so he told me, was his name, was kind to me, and he didn't hurt me. By that, I mean, he didn't beat me, and he wasn't rough with my body. Rob was gentle, and he said that we'd made love because I was special. He treated me like a princess, though I felt sad after we'd had sex. I gave my virginity to a stranger to help my friend. I did what I had to because Cassie was all I had, and she meant everything to me.

Rob told me to shower with him, he wouldn't touch me again, but he wanted to look at me. I was uncomfortable, but I didn't feel like I could say no after what we'd done.

Rob dried my body, gently before helping me dress in fresh underwear and a night slip. He lifted me into his strong arms and lay me down on the bed. I have to admit that Rob was handsome for a man of his age. I figured he was in his early forties, but it was evident that he took good care of himself. He had muscle, and his powerful chest was something I couldn't help staring at in that moment.

Rob kissed my head, told me that he'd be right there to protect me while I slept, and not to worry about anything. I'd nodded my head and soon fell asleep. I did because I believed what he said.

There's no excuse for a man sleeping with a child, even if they are kind to the girl. However, in my childish mind, Rob was a good man, and he just wanted to help me.

If I heard a young girl say such a thing today, I'd know better than to say it was okay. It's never okay, but I was young and frightened, and Rob was the only person willing to help me when I needed help.

When I woke up that night, Cassie was sleeping beside me. I narrowed my eyes because she was freshly showered and wearing

clean clothes. She was curled up in a ball, and she had a contented smile on her face. I was afraid, at first, that Rob had made her do the things he had me do.

My heart hammered as I sat up in bed. I prayed that it wasn't true and that my best friend hadn't had sex with the man who promised he wouldn't touch her.

I gasped to see Rob sitting at the small dining table. He smiled and told me that a promise was a promise, and he hadn't laid a finger on Cassie - not in the way I thought he might have. While I slept, he'd gone and picked Cassie up. He brought her here and had her shower and change. After that, he took her to a doctor friend of his who said Cassie had flu, but she'd be fine in a few days. Rob had even bought medication to help Cassie get better, faster. He'd fed her and then lay her down to sleep off the effect of her illness.

Rob told me that Cassie and I could stay in the motel room for the rest of the week. I thought that meant he wanted to sleep with me again as payment. That wasn't the case. He thanked me for what I'd given him, handed me a hundred dollars, and then he left.

Three days later, the authorities came knocking. I had no choice but to answer the door. Though the room had been paid for until the end of the week, the owner had realized we were alone, and she'd called the police. Cassie and I were taken back to the care home and made an example of to show others what happens when you run away.

After that, I always swore I'd do more to help people who needed it. Putting aside the men who are after me, I don't want to give up that dream.

"You know," Ember says. "My mother runs a shelter for battered women, abuse victims, people on the streets. You name it; Second Chance House has it. I'm sure she could find a place for you there."

My heart hammers with hope, and a smile spreads across my face. "Really?"

"It's a wonderful place," Taylor points out. "Nova has done amazing things there."

"Mom!" Ember yells, and my eyes search the room for Nova.

I giggle to myself when she seems to appear out of nowhere, next to the table. "Yes, Ember?" Nova laughs.

"Wynter was just telling me how she'd like to work for you."

I open my mouth to say something, but nothing will come out. I didn't say that; Ember did!

"Is that right? And does Wynter have any experience?" Nova is addressing me.

I feel uncomfortable. I don't want to tell these people about my past, but I have to tell Nova something. "Personal experience." Is all I offer up.

Nova gives me a knowing look and smiles. "I find sometimes that's all a person needs. Can you tell me why you want to work with the homeless and abused?"

I swallow hard. I don't want to give too much away in front of Taylor and Ember. I can explain everything to Nova when we're alone if that's what she needs. "Well, I've always had a compassionate nature. I also feel that the homeless are overlooked a lot. Most people walk past them in the street because they think the beggar on the street will attack them. It's their own personal ignorance that makes them act that way."

I take a sip of my drink to cool my dry throat.

"If just one person looked past the fact those less fortunate are unwashed, and a little scared to trust, they'd find someone who just needs a little kindness in their lives. I'm not saying every homeless person is innocent and won't attack another. However, I find most of the time; all they want is help. The selfishness of some is abhorrent. The unwillingness to look past the outside and deep within is something I'll never understand. If I can help just one person find their feet, then I'll be happy." I smile at Nova.

She's looking at me with a curious smile on her face.

"Well said," Taylor takes my hand across the table and squeezes, making me blush and smile.

"How can you say *no* to that, Mom?"

"I can't," Nova smiles again. "You're exactly the type of person I'd hire any day of the week. I'm pretty staff full at the moment, however."

My heart sinks a little, though it's not the end of the world. "I understand. Could you keep me in mind for the future?"

"I can do better than that, Wynter." My ears prick up. "If you're willing to get your hands dirty, I could find you something in our homeless department, as that seems to be where your passion lies."

I don't care what job Nova gives me; I'll do anything.

"We have a young woman and child staying at the shelter. They've been with us two days, and I need someone to help Zena and her daughter Claire get back on their feet. From the way you spoke just now, I think you're up to the task."

"Yes," I shift excitedly in my seat. "Anything they need, I'm more than willing to help."

"Well, Zena needs a friend right now. That's what we offer at the shelter, friendship. Sure, we give them a room, a place to sleep, and food in their bellies. But there's a lot that goes into helping a person. Some are mistaken, thinking their work is done once those in our care find a job and a home. That is not the case. There are follow-ups, and support offered once they leave us."

"I can do that!" Shit, I can do that and more if it's needed.

"Great! Come and see me tomorrow at Second Chance House, and we'll go through everything that will be expected of you. You'll need to read over the contract I hand you, get it looked at by a lawyer if need be. Once you're happy with it, and the salary I offer you, then sign it, and I'll put you right to work."

"Oh, my God! Thank you!" I screech with happiness, so loudly, everyone is looking at me. I don't care if they are; I'm so happy! "I could just hug you right now."

Nova holds her hand up to me. "Please don't." She shakes her head.

"Mom's not a hugger," Ember informs me. "But I am!" She jumps out of her seat, pulls me from mine, and hugs me tightly. Taylor gets out of hers and joins us, and I could just cry with happiness right now!

My life is looking up!

Chapter Eight

HAVOC

“*T*hat girl has a screw loose.” I nod at Razor. There is definitely something wrong in Phoenix’s head. She seems to have gotten worse this past month.

Phoenix went from happy, to murderous in the space of a couple of weeks. We all think it has something to do with her now ex-boyfriend joining the military. She won’t admit to it, but it’s pretty obvious.

In the past, what Tex did earlier would have had her giving him a mouthful. Today, she almost took his jaw, clean off with one punch. A woman like Phoenix is not to be messed with on a good day. A day like today? The rest of us know to steer well clear.

Tex should have learned his lesson by now. Phoenix already threatened to cut his balls off a couple of days ago for asking if she’d gotten her period. Every man on the planet should know never to ask a woman such a question. It only leads to them flipping out and wanting to castrate you.

“What did you just say?” Wrench rounds on Razor. No one says anything about Phoenix without Wrench losing his shit.

“Don’t start, Wrench,” Jett tells him, causing Wrench to grit his teeth. “Sit down, all of you. We ain’t here to talk about Phoenix, not just yet.”

We each take a seat around the ever-growing table. I lean forward with my arms on the table and stretch out my back. I laugh when my spine pops, and half the men in the room grumble how disgusting that is. Fuck them all; it is what it is.

We'd been sorting things to help Wynter before we heard the commotion outside. Jett had pointed out that he could get Trace on to it. He'll check out Wynter's past and see if there's a link to her and those men.

As Hawk pointed out that John Anderson was a serial rapist, and any one of his victims or their families could want to hurt Wynter as payback. The thought hadn't occurred to me before that moment in time.

John Anderson not only kidnapped Julianne, but he also raped over thirty women. Sure, John went to prison for the things he'd done, and it's well documented that Julianne and Spring died. However, Wynter was left behind, and any of John's enemies could want her dead because of his sins.

Though Trace told me that it was also documented that Wynter had died along with her family, but if that's the case, then how would any of John's victims know Wynter was alive?

Gunner said it would be easier if we drew those men out, bring them to us. If we do this on our terms, take the element of surprise from them, then we'll have the upper hand.

We hadn't quite worked out the logistics when Lorraine came knocking, telling us that Phoenix was torturing Tex. A bit of an over-exaggeration, but you never know with Phoenix how far she'll take things.

Of course, we all laughed when she crushed his balls. Apparently, Tex had said something to Wynter that Phoenix didn't like, and she forced him to apologize publicly.

My eyes caught Wynter's, and hers were wide with shock. She needs to get used to the way we do things here, especially when it comes to Phoenix. The girl is not to be messed with because she'll rip your throat out with her bare hands.

"As we were saying before we were interrupted," Tank points out. "We need to draw those men out into the open. Whatever they want with Wynter, we'll find out soon enough."

"How exactly do you suggest we draw them out?"

Jett shifts in his seat and looks at BlackJack. "I'll put the word out that Wynter's here with us. With any luck, it won't be long before someone comes looking."

"Wait," It's my turn to shift in my seat. "Are you suggesting we offer my wife up as bait?"

"If you want this shit sorted," Jett hits me with a hard stare. "Then we do this my way, Havoc. Wynter will never be in any danger. We'll make sure someone is with her at all times."

I roll my neck. This doesn't sit well with me, but Jett has a point. Besides, how else are we meant to find out who those pricks are?

"I know what it's like to want nothing more than to protect my wife, Havoc," I look directly at Hammer as he speaks. "Every man in this room with a wife or girlfriend wants the same things. Half of us has had the women we loved taken from us, hurt or worse when we've found them."

I shudder to think what Hammer along with Hawk and some of the others have been through. I remember ninety percent of the incidents involving the women of this club. Each time, I prayed that I'd never be in that situation.

What's happening with Wynter is nothing like what happened to Willow, or Brooke, or anyone else. But the fear that something terrible could happen to Wynter is still in the back of my mind.

"After Brooke was taken," I note the shift in Hawk's mood. The man hates talking about Brooke's racist father. Though I know Hammer is only using Brooke as an example. "Shepard swore that no woman would put in danger as long as we have breath left in our bodies. Wynter is part of this club now, Havoc, and that means she's under our protection."

I nod my head in thanks. If I know nothing, I know my brothers will help me with whatever I need to keep Wynter safe.

"I know it's easy for us to say, 'Don't worry,' but everything will be all right, Havoc." I nod at Ghost. "You're my brother in every way that matters, and I would never lie to you."

"I know. I just don't want to lose her, Ghost."

"You're not going to lose her, Havoc." Red draws my eyes to his. "I'm your Dad, and I would stop the world turnin' for you, you know that." I chuckle under my breath. The man still speaks to me as if I were a scared five-year-old boy. "If each one of us has to shadow your wife every damn day of her life, we'll do it, Havoc."

"You can trust us, Havoc." Hawk picks up. "There's no one on this earth you could trust more than your family."

I take a deep breath and let their words sink in. I look at each person around the table and nod my head. "Thank you," Is all I offer up, which gets me a few nods, and a wink from my Dad.

"You never have to thank us, Havoc." BlackJack looks at me while he speaks. "Wynter is as much my family as she is yours. If we stick together on this, she'll be just fine."

"BlackJack is right," Jett slaps his hand on the table. Fuck knows why he does that, but I often wonder how he doesn't break his damn hand. "I want to get this shit cleared up as quickly as possible. I don't want no messin' and no excuses. Wynter is not to be left alone, even when she thinks she is."

"All of y'all with women know how they fight us on being shadowed." The older members all laugh and nod their heads at Tank. "They want privacy, don't want us treating them as though they were weak. Ain't no woman belonging to us weak, especially having being trained in self-defense by Nova. But the sad fact of the matter is, they are women, and easily attacked. They ain't built like men, and any man could easily come along and take them by surprise."

I hate to admit it, but Tank is right. Women aren't as physically strong as men. Mentally? Eighty percent of women are much stronger than any man alive. I would never take away anything these women here have achieved over the years. But just like anyone else, bad things can happen that are out of their control.

Whatever was as men can do to stop those things from happening, we'll do it. I've lived through too many situations where women have gotten hurt, Cindy, Willow, Brooke, Elie, my mother, just to mention a few. Each time, it was hard, but I couldn't imagine how hard it was for the men who loved those women.

I never want to go through something so awful it might mean I lose Wynter. Every man and his dog can profess to love his woman more than any man on earth. But the fact remains, each person feels the same about the one they love.

Through all the shit that's happened, each man had one thing in common, the support of this club. Hawk's right, all I need to do is put my trust in them, and Wynter will be fine. There's nothing the Snakes can't do when we're on the same page.

"I have jobs for all of you, and I'll hand them out at the end of the meeting. You know the rules when it comes to our women. Wynter is one of us in more ways than one. Just one of you falters when it comes to her safety, and I will personally gut you like a damn fish. Is that understood?"

"Prez," Everyone says in unison.

"Now," Jett cracks his knuckles. "Phoenix,"

"What about her?" Stryker asks.

"Tank and I have been talking, and we think it's time for Phoenix to take the initiation test."

I wince where I sit. Initiations into this club range from taking a beating and getting up and walking away, theft, and even disposing of perverts, and there are worse things Jett and Tank put you through. Jett likes to push you to the limits to make sure you're right for the Snakes.

I don't have a clue what Phoenix will have to endure, but I remember my initiation very well. Jett had me torch a drug dealer's house while he slept. I killed someone on my president's orders just to join Snakes Henchmen. Not my finest hour, but I got through it the way I knew my president expected.

"You really believe she's ready, Prez?"

"If anybody was born ready, it's Phoenix, BlackJack."

A lot of muttering goes on, people agreeing with Jett.

"You're not gonna hurt her, though, right?"

Jett raises an eyebrow in BlackJack's direction. "She'll be treated the same as everyone else. You know as well as everyone else in this room that Phoenix wouldn't want to be shown special treatment."

"He's right, Dad," Wrench points out. "Phoenix came into this world fighting, and she's lived every day the same way. She works hard every day to prove she's just as good as the rest of us. If we start treating her with kid gloves, she'll slaughter the lot of us."

Wrench isn't wrong. Phoenix already thinks we're too easy on her because she's a woman. God knows what she'll do if she thinks Jett has handed out an easy initiation. If I know anything about Phoenix, it's that she'll be expecting the worst and hoping for it.

"When do you plan on putting her through whatever it is you've chosen?"

"None of your business, Gunner. But if you must know, Tank and I have decided within the next couple of days." Gunner nods his head at Jett in thought.

"You aren't gonna have her kill anybody, are you?"

Jett raises his eyebrow in annoyance at BlackJack. "What did I say about treating Phoenix the same as everybody else, BlackJack?"

"That's all well and good, Jett," Stryker butts in. "But murder changes a person in ways we all know very well."

Red's eyes lock with mine. He remembers what I had to do to become a member, and it still irks him to this day.

"Whatever test I set for Phoenix, she has the choice, just as the rest of you did to say *no*."

"Christ," Wrench mumbles. "You know full well that girl will never say *no* to anything you ask her. Phoenix wants to be a member so badly that she'd do anything, and you know it."

"Be that as it may," Tank turns in his chair, resting his arm on the table. "The fact remains that Phoenix will take whatever damn test we set her, and she'll do it the same as the rest of you did. If she can't or won't, we'll finally know, one way or another, if she's Snake's Henchmen material."

Men mumble amongst themselves, some agreeing with Tank, other's thinking Jett has lost his mind. Personally, I agree with them. If Phoenix wants to be a full patched member of this club, then she needs to be treated the same as the rest of us. There should be no exceptions made just because she's a woman. The girl can hold her own with the best of them, and we all know it.

I also agree that having her take someone out to prove she's capable and worthy is not the right thing. It took me weeks to come to terms with what I'd done. Burning someone alive was no fun, though I doubt shoot someone in the head would have been much better.

"Whatever you throw at Phoenix, she'll handle it because she's her father's daughter." BlackJack looks at Red appreciatively. "She's also her mother's daughter and has more sass than ten women."

"You got that right. I remember when Phoenix was three," Roman chuckles. "And she walked into this room like she owned the place, nose to see who was here. She pretty much told Shepard to mind his own business, and she'd do what she wanted."

"She always did have a mouth on her." Gunner laughs, causing others to follow suit.

I have to admit that Phoenix has always been the one woman everyone knew would become a member. We don't have female members as a rule. When this club first started, it was stated that women wouldn't be allowed to join. Sexist, I know, but that's how men thought back in the day.

That rule held steady until Phoenix came to Jett last year and demanded to be allowed to join. Hell, she'd been saying from the mo-

ment she could talk that she'd be a member one day. Shepard used to laugh because he thought it was cute, just the words of a small girl, wanting to be like her Daddy and brothers. Everyone thought she'd grown out of it, but she didn't.

It wasn't just the ramblings of a little girl, and Phoenix did want to be a member. Phoenix pointed out to Jett that Shepard had promised that one day, it would happen. When Jett became president, he also held that promise. What could Jett say other than *yes*?

I have to admit that Phoenix has been loyal, and she's held her own just like every other person that joins. Her nephews, Gabe and Axel, are members, Gabe having been patched in just a couple of months ago. This didn't please Phoenix, and she wanted to know why he'd been patched before her. After all, she'd done just as much work as Gabe. Jett pointed out it was merely to do with age and the fact Gabe was able to become a prospect months before Phoenix.

We're never going to find a more loyal and fierce woman than Phoenix. She was born into this club, like many of the others. Phoenix knows the rules inside and out and would put her life on the line for any of us. At the age of eighteen, she has more guts than most men twice her age.

Yes, it's time she became a full patched member.

"She came in this room," Jett laughs. "And told a complete stranger at the time, all about her big brothers, her cousins, and her Daddy. Do you remember her asking Grinder his real name?" Grinder is Roman's father-in-law, president of the Wild Wolves of Texas.

BlackJack laughs loudly while slamming his hand down on the table. "I do! He told her, and I couldn't believe it. She swore to keep it a secret, and to this day, she's never told anyone."

There's some chatter about Phoenix and the things she used to get up to. We each laugh in places, and some of us are shocked to learn things we didn't know. However, I need to get back to Wynter, she's been alone long enough, and these men need to set about finding the fuckers looking for my wife.

"Right! Get out and await further instructions. Gabe, send Tex in,"

"Prez,"

I have a feeling poor Tex is in for a hard day.

Chapter Nine

WYNTER

I slept so peacefully last night. By the time Havoc was ready to leave, I was exhausted. It had been a long day, and all I wanted was a shower and some sleep. Though Havoc wouldn't allow me to go to bed until I'd eaten something, I could only manage half a sandwich before I was falling asleep where I sat.

I vaguely remember Havoc carrying me to bed, but I was knocked out the second my head hit the pillow. It had been such a long time since I slept well, and my dreams had me waking up smiling.

I've been watching Havoc sleep for the past ten minutes. My body aches for him right now. Every inch of me is tingling, and all I want is for Havoc to open his eyes and take me.

I slide the sheet down Havoc's body, and I groan at the sight of his muscles. I'll admit that Havoc is vain in the way he takes care of himself. There's not one hair on his body, apart from his head, eyebrows, and sometimes scruff on his jaw, of course. The smoothness of his skin makes me wet, and I am so turned on right now that I don't know what to do with myself.

The way Havoc is lying on his back, one hand above his head, the other on his perfect chest, has me biting my lower lip. He's so beautiful that it makes my heart beat faster, just looking at him.

I slide the sheet lower. I want to look at him. I bite my lower lip harder at the sight of Havoc naked. Of course, I knew he was naked; he always sleeps that way. I don't sleep nude, but I stripped off my pj's after using the bathroom this morning. I climbed into bed, next

to my husband, and fantasized about all the things I want him to do to me.

Knowing Havoc is naked while I'm hot and horny has me wanting to ride him until I'm screaming his name in ecstasy.

I slide my hand down Havoc's body, feeling the bumps of his muscles as I go. I reach his cock, and I stroke the length of him gently. "Sssh..." I breathe softly down his ear when he groans and stirs. I don't know why I'm shushing him when I want him to ravage me right now.

I rub my naked breasts against Havoc's chest while kissing his neck, still stroking his cock. I suck my lower lip between my teeth as I try to stop the smile creeping across my face when I feel Havoc harden in my hand.

My heart is hammering in my throat, feeling how thick and long his cock is. I've had this man inside me more times than I can remember, but it amazes me each time seeing and feeling how big he is down there.

I feel Havoc getting harder and harder, the head of his cock is bulging, and all the time the throbbing between my legs is getting stronger.

Quicker than lighting, without the chance to even breathe, Havoc grabs my arms and pushes me down onto the mattress. I have to wonder just how long he's been awake. "What are you up to, little girl?"

I giggle as he raises his eyebrow while pinning my hands above my head. "I didn't do anything!" I protest, innocently while shaking my head at Havoc.

"Really?" He asks while looking down at his now very erect cock. "And this happened how, exactly?"

I giggle again. "You must have been having a naughty dream, *Daddy*." I gasp loudly and groan even louder when Havoc takes my nipple between his fingers and pinches sharply.

"I can assure you that I wasn't, but I do recall your hand on my cock as I slept."

"I'm sorry. I woke up from a good dream, and you were lying here, naked and looking so sexy. It made me so hot, and I couldn't help touching you."

"Is that so?" I nod my head, and my hips move of their own accord. "You know what happens when you touch things without per-

mission, don't you?"

I nod my head. I can play this game all day long if that's what Havoc wants. In the bedroom, he's my Daddy, and I'm his little girl, and he punishes me in so many ways. I love everything he does to me, even though some would say I have daddy issues and shouldn't act this way with Havoc. I'd tell them to go fuck themselves. I don't have daddy issues, but I get off on role play, what's so wrong with that?

"You want me to punish you, baby?"

"Yes, please. Everywhere aches for you, Havoc. I want to feel you deep inside of me, and I don't want you to be nice about it."

Havoc smirks at me before pressing his hungry lips to mine and kissing me savagely. I groan deep into his mouth, and all I want to do is wrap my arms and legs around him and have him fuck me stupid. But he won't let go of my arms for me to do that.

Havoc pulls out of the kiss and smirks while pushing his hand between my legs, forcefully cupping my sex. He groans deep in his throat. "You're soaking."

My eyes close on me when his knuckle slides along my pussy to that sweet, hot, wet point that sends every nerve ending in my body, arms, legs, back, stomach, neck, even my lips, tight.

I lift my head and smash my lips against Havoc's when he slides two fingers inside of me. He hasn't even got them inside before I come hard around them. My head falls back against the pillow, my chest heaving, and my legs shaking.

"Couldn't wait, baby?" I shake my head with my eyes closed. "Tell me what you want right now." He whispers as he leans into me. "Anything you want, I'll give it to you."

I groan because my body is still shaking from my orgasm. I turn my face into the palm of Havoc's hand when he cups my cheek. His other hand strokes my erect nipple, and I'm squirming again because my pussy is throbbing. God, I need him inside of me right now.

"Don't tell me you've suddenly gone shy?" He breathes against my neck. "Tell me." He whispers in my ear, sending goosebumps throughout my body.

"I don't care what you do to me; I just want you inside of me."

"Where?"

"Anywhere, everywhere," I gasp the word, and Havoc sucks my left nipple into his warm mouth, and the suction drives me wild with want for him. "Havoc, please,"

He shakes his head against me, his tongue still working its magic on my body, circling, twisting, his teeth grazing my nipple, sending me into a frenzied orgasm so powerful that I squirt a little.

I feel Havoc's chuckle against my stomach. He kisses his way down even further until his tongue is right against my clit. He licks me once before getting to his knees, and I can't even protest when he grabs me and flips me over onto my front.

"I know what you want." Havoc grabs my hips, guiding me onto my knees, my ass in the air as he pushes my shoulders downwards so that my face is resting on the pillow below me. I groan as he bends down and licks me from behind. I grind my pussy against his face, and I'm so frantic that I'm practically screaming into the pillow.

His tongue slides inside of me, my pussy walls clench, and I know that I'm going to come again. "Oh, fuck, yes." I sob the words because I'm so high that I'm scared to crash down. However, I can't stop myself from coming.

I hadn't realized that I was holding my breath until I feel Havoc's big hand slap my ass cheek. He hits me again and again, and I'm clawing at the sheet beneath me. "Insatiable little slut! Count for me, Wynter." He hisses with another slap to my ass.

I count each slap Havoc gives me, each one harder than the one before. My ass is on fire, but I'm losing all sense of the here and now. This is what I've missed. This is what Havoc does to me. He takes me out of my head so that I don't have to think for myself.

"Twenty," I mumble the number because I'm so blissed out that I can barely speak. I can't focus, and my whole body is relaxed. I can't open my eyes, my mouth is dry, and my heart is beating too fast.

I don't make a noise as Havoc yanks me up and back against him by my arms. My ass rests against his thighs, and Havoc wraps one arm around my stomach and the other around my throat. My head falls against his shoulder. I couldn't hold it up if I tried.

"What are you, Wynter?"

"I'm yours," I mumble.

"My what?"

I whimper at the feeling of his short fingernails racking over my nipple. "I'm Daddy's little girl."

"That's right," Havoc whispers with a kiss to my temple. "You were a bad girl yesterday, weren't you?"

It takes me a second to recall what Havoc means. Then it hits me that he's talking about what I said outside the clubhouse yesterday. I told him that a man had winked at me. It never happened, I said it for effect because I wanted him to bring me home and fuck me. I forgot all about it until he just mentioned it.

"I'm sorry, Daddy, I didn't mean to be a bad girl."

You're such a freak, Wynter!

Don't. Fucking. Care.

"I'm gonna give you exactly what you want." Havoc breathes heavily while forcing my legs apart with his knees. "You belong to me, Wynter. Every fuckin' inch of you is mine. You know that, don't you?" I nod my head slowly against his shoulder. My heart is pounding so forcefully it feels like it's trying to push its way out of my mouth.

Havoc rubs his fingertip over my engorged clit, and he chuckles when I gasp. I'm so wet, and it burns at my opening. I'm anxious and excited, and I need him right now!

"Lift your pretty little ass for me, baby girl." I lift as best I can, and my eyes roll, feeling the tip of cock at my opening is everything. Havoc takes my hips and pulls me down onto the length of him, and he's balls deep in one thrust. I scream, and Havoc chuckles. "That's it, baby,"

"Oh, God," My eyes roll again as Havoc thrusts in and out, deeper and deeper. He fucks me hard, he fucks me fast, and he fucks me wild.

"You love this, don't you?" Havoc whispers in my ear. "Tell me you love it, Wynter."

"I love it. God, I love it!" I yell.

"Do you know what I love?" I groan because I can feel another orgasm creeping up on me. "I love the way your cunt takes my cock so fuckin' deep. I love the way your body contorts with every thrust, and I fuckin' love you!"

"I love you," I sob as Havoc pushes me face down into the pillow.

He slams his cock into me harder than before. "Come for me, Wynter. Come on my fuckin' cock. Now!" He slaps my ass, and I come so hard that I can see stars behind my eyes.

I'm not sure my body can take much more. It's been months since I was taken like this, given this many orgasms, that I can't keep up. However, I know that Havoc won't stop until he's satisfied. Hell, the man can go all night, and once upon a time, so could I.

Breathe, Wynter. Your body will adjust in time. Remember who this man is and that you want to please him, and everything will be fine.

Havoc pulls out of me, and my body sags. However, he doesn't let me rest, he rubs his cock against my asshole, and I gasp. I turn my head so that I can see his face. His eyes are wide, and a look of pure pleasure is spread across his face.

Havoc has fucked my ass before, and each time I've come like a damn freight train. I'd let this man do anything he wanted to me, no matter what that was.

He catches me watching him, and he smirks. "I'm gonna fuck your ass like it's never been fucked before."

I moan and wind my hips. "I want you to fuck me hard, Daddy," I say as I grab his cock in my hand from behind and push it against my ass.

"You're a dirty, dirty, little slut!"

"Oh, fuck!" I lose my breath as he begins to push the tip of his cock inside of me, in and out slowly, gently stretching me, allowing my body to accommodate the size of him. With every tiny, slow thrust he gives me, I push myself back against him, urging him deeper. "More!" I gasp.

"More?" I nod my head against the pillow and scream when Havoc pushes himself deeper into me, his fingers leaving their mark on my ass cheeks as he spreads them.

Havoc slams into me, and I can hear the air rushing between his teeth. He grips my waist so hard that I know he'll leave bruises behind, though I can't seem to mind.

I slam my ass back against him harder and harder. "Fuck, it feels so good!"

"Filthy, girl!" He hisses before forcing his cock deeper into me.

Every part of my body becomes tight; every thrust he gives me both has me gasping and moaning in both pain and pleasure. I've never felt anything like this in my life. But then I've never been fucked in the ass this savagely before.

I feel like I'm walking on air, with too much of it in my lungs, restricting each breath I take, taking an age it seems to catch in my

throat.

I claw at the pillow, biting down into the material between my teeth as Havoc holds my upper right arm tightly in his hand, pounding away deep inside of me, fucking me with such force that I have no mind of what I'm doing. My hips meet Havoc's thrusts just as forcefully, just as powerfully.

"Havoc," I whine his name. God, I can't take much more.

"That's it, baby girl, fuck me back."

"Fuck, yes! Oh, god!" I can't believe how fucking good this man is making me feel!

"It burns, doesn't it? It burns when you're so close?"

"Yees," I groan as my eyes roll to the back of my head. "Havoc, please..." I push myself back against him harder and harder. "Oh my god, I have to come! I have to come now! Oh, God, fuck!"

"Come!" He orders, and I scream as I come so hard that every muscle is tight to the point of tearing. I'm not totally sure which part of my body I'm coming from, the sensation of it all is too much.

"Shit, Wynter, I'm gonna come inside your tight ass."

"Come inside me, Havoc. Give it to me!" He slams into me once, twice, then stills himself as he comes inside of me, gasping and groaning.

I don't know how long it is before he slowly pulls out of me. All I do know is that I'm asleep before I can blink.

* * *

"YOU'RE REALLY GOING to help us?"

"Yes," I smile at Zena.

After Havoc fucked the breath out of me, I slept for an hour. Which meant I was in a rush to make it, to meet with Nova. I barely had time to shower, though I did. I didn't make breakfast. Havoc was not pleased about that, but I didn't have time to stay.

Luckily, I wasn't late to meet Nova, and I thanked God for that. I didn't want to make a wrong impression, not after the speech I'd

given her yesterday.

We spoke in her Nova's office for half an hour, going over the contract she wanted me to sign. I read through it and found that everything seemed in order. The salary isn't great, as Nova previously told me, but I didn't care. She told me that if my work were good, she'd reevaluate my pay in three months.

The job Nova gave me is within the homeless department of Second Chance House – the job I wanted. I'm to work with Zena and her child until they have a home of their own, and Zena has a job so that she's able to support herself and Claire.

Anything they need in the meantime, I'm to help with. Things such as food and clothing, counseling for what they've been through, and just someone to talk to if Zena needs it. Nova also wants me to help Zena get Claire into school, and to make sure she goes every day.

I signed the contract because I want nothing more than to help whomever I can, whenever I can. I didn't need a lawyer to look over the contract because I'm not stupid, and I read the damn thing front to back twice.

Once I'd signed, Nova took me to meet Zena and Claire. Zena is a slight woman of thirty, pretty in her own right, and so obviously beaten down by life. Little Claire is five and a happy soul, even though she has nothing to call her own.

Nova introduced me to the two of them, and I've been sitting with Zena ever since. She hasn't said much, and I can see that she's shy. Though she's willing to talk to me, and that's a good thing. You have no idea how many people in Zena's situation won't so much as utter a word. Trust doesn't come easy, but I'm willing to earn it anyway I can.

"Whatever you need, I'm here to help, Zena."

She smiles and then looks over at her little girl as she plays on the floor with a toy tea set. Nova set us up in the lounge room. It's comfortable, a soft couch, a TV, toys for kids to play with, things like that. "I just want to give Claire a better life."

"I understand that. Anything is possible if you really want it, Zena. I'm not here to tell you what to do, or what you've done is wrong. I've been where you are." Zena looks at me, not blinking. "The situation was probably very different, but I've been on the streets just the same."

"Was it hard?"

I nod my head in honesty. I won't lie to the woman, that's not what I'm about. "It was tough. I was fifteen and trying to take care of my best friend. I did things I never thought I'd do so that we'd be okay."

Zena blinks, and a tear falls from her eye. I know that tear isn't for me; it's for what she's been through. "I know how that is," I don't need to go into detail with this woman, she knows what I'm saying without using words. She's more than likely had to do the same thing just to feed herself and her child.

I reach out and take her hand in mine. Zena doesn't pull away, though she looks down at our hands before her eyes meet mine. "I would never take away from what you've been through, Zena," Tears are falling from her eyes, unashamedly. "But it's over now, sweetheart. You are not broken, and you will come through this on the other side. I'll be with you every step of the way that I promise you."

"No one has ever wanted to help me before." I hand Zena a tissue from the box on the table, and she wipes her nose. "My husband died six months ago. I don't have any family of my own, and Rory's family abandoned us after his funeral. I lost my job because I couldn't function, and that meant I couldn't pay the mortgage. Everything just seemed to go downhill so fast that I couldn't keep up."

I watch as she wipes her eyes and sniffs hard. I look over at Claire as she watches her mother closely. I dread to think of the things this little girl has seen during her time on the streets. No child should ever have to live like that, but unfortunately, it's not always avoidable.

"We lost the house and ended up living in the car for a while. But then I ran out of what little money I did have, and I had no way to feed my baby girl. I met a woman who pointed me in the direction of this place. She told me to ask for Nova, and that she'd help us. I'm not the type of person who asks anyone for anything, but I couldn't afford to be proud."

I rub my thumb over her knuckles. "You did the right thing coming here, Zena."

"I just want to feel safe. I want my daughter to feel safe. I can't go back out there, Wynter, but I know that Claire and I can't stay here

for long."

"Listen to me," I shift in my seat, moving a little closer to Zena. "The both of you can stay here for as long as you need. You're safe here, and I promise you, no one is going to ask you to leave. You and I will start from the bottom up. Give it a little time, and you'll have a new home, a job, and Claire will have her own room with everything she needs."

"Really?!" The little squeal of excitement has both Zena and I smiling.

"Really." I wink at Claire, who then sits clapping her hands with a big smile on her face.

"Thank you, Wynter. Thank you." Zena sobs. I wrap my arms around her and let her cry. Crying is good for the soul, and this woman needs to purge.

Tomorrow, the real work begins.

Chapter Ten

HAVOC

The whole crew is at the clubhouse this afternoon. No family members are allowed here today due to the fact it's time for Phoenix's initiation. Family members are barred from these things with good reason. They can be a little over-dramatic when they see a loved one being put through hell.

"We know why we're all here." Jett stands with his arms folded around his chest, standing proud. He looks around the vast circle of men and one woman. "Today, we find out if Phoenix is true Snakes material. There will be no special treatment and no exceptions."

I note the smirk on Phoenix's face. She doesn't want special treatment because she knows she's as good as any of us here.

"Are you serious, Prez?" Every man looks at Tex. The little prick seems to think it's okay to question our president. It's not like Jett to stand there and allow someone to question him, especially not a prospect. Something more is going on here.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Phoenix turns in Tex's direction, arms folded around herself, and her eyebrow raised.

Jett shakes his head slightly, enough for every man to know we're not to get involved. I have to wonder why when he, himself, would usually stop something like this.

"It means you're crazy, and this club could do without someone like you." Tex fires back.

This is not going to be good. If Phoenix retaliates, Jett will deem her unfit to join the Snakes. No man here will let Tex live if he fucks this up for the one woman who has worked her whole life to be one of us.

"Yet, you think this club needs a scrawny little cunt like you?"

"You know," Tex laughs. There's nothing funny about this, and if someone doesn't shut him up, then I will. "You were a much nicer person when Gage was around. I don't know how the poor guy put up with you. It's no wonder he fucked off to the military; any man would want to get away from a bitch like you."

The air in the room is tense. Wrench is an inch away from breaking Tex's neck, and even the hairs on the back of my neck are standing up.

Phoenix looks around the room, and the hurt in her eyes is evident to anyone who cares to look closely enough. She swallows hard before turning and walking away.

Wrench rounds on Tex. "What the fuck was that, you little bastard?!"

"Stand down, Wrench." Wrench stares at Jett, wide-eyed. "You know how these things work."

"You told him to bring up Gage?"

"Yes, Havoc, I did,"

That's low, even for Jett, and that man can sink low when needed. Gage is a sore subject with Phoenix. The girl was deeply in love, and the man she gave her heart to walked away from her. Sure, we don't know the ins and outs, but having Tex bring him up in a fabricated argument is terrible.

Jett doesn't give a damn how much this has hurt Phoenix. All he's thinking about is pushing the girl to the limits. We all know that Phoenix can handle herself in a fight, even against a man twice her size. She can argue with the best of them, and her savage words would have a grown man crying.

What Phoenix can't handle as much as she tries is people bringing Gage into arguments. She warned every single person belonging to the club what she'd do if they ever used Gage against her. God help Tex because this is going to blow up in his face big time. Not that Jett will care about that.

"Prez, you got any idea what you've done?"

Jett opens his mouth to answer Red when one almighty bang shakes the building. "What the fuck was that?" I don't think Jett was asking anyone a question, and his eyes are locked on the window outside.

Gabe looks out of the window. "There's black smoke coming from the dune pit."

The dune pit is a twenty-foot deep and fifty-foot wide hole that Shepard, Titus, and BlackJack dug back in the day. The pit itself is right at the edge of the clubhouse property. Nothing that happens there can be seen from anywhere on land, nor would it cause any damage to the building. So, it's a great place to do what Apollo had intended.

The man was crazy, and he wanted the pit dug to drop enemies in, his way of frightening them into thinking he'd leave them there to die. Punishment for whatever they'd done, or information they wouldn't hand over. I won't lie; it's still used for that reason, but not often. Tank was talking about filling it in, but nothing ever came of that.

"Phoenix is out there!" Hawk yells.

"No, I'm not," Phoenix walks in, laughing to herself.

"Jesus, I thought something had happened to you."

"I'm fine, Hawk. Chill out."

Jett narrows his eyes at Phoenix. "What have you been up to?"

"Well," Phoenix stands next to Wrench and folds her arms around her chest. "I'm not gonna lie; the dune pit is gonna need cleaning out. I had no idea blowing up a motorcycle would make so much mess."

My eyes widen, people mumble amongst themselves, and it seems to have dawned on Tex that Phoenix means his bike. "What the fuck have you done to my bike?!"

"Are you deaf, all of a sudden? I blew it up."

Tex rushes outside, followed by most of the others. I stay behind with Hammer and Phoenix. Phoenix stands chuckling to herself. I shake my head at her, but she laughs louder.

"I've known some crazy women in my time, but you might just be the craziest." Hammer stares at Phoenix with a raised eyebrow.

She returns his stare. "If you assholes think for one second, you can get one over on me, then you're sadly mistaken."

"It's not about getting one over on you, Phoenix." She looks at me. "It about knowing where to draw the line. You know as well as anyone that you never touch another man's motorcycle. It's beyond disrespectful."

"I didn't touch a *man's* motorcycle..." She's cut off by Tex storming through the door.

"You stupid bitch! You torched my bike!"

"You're damn right I did." Phoenix hisses between her teeth as she turns to face Tex. "I gave every man here a warning. Never mention that asshole's name in front of me, or you won't like the consequences. What warning did I give, Hammer?" She asks without looking at Hammer.

Hammer chuckles. "If anyone mentions the asshole's name in your presence, you'd torch their bike."

"And, there is it!" Phoenix laughs sarcastically. "You were warned, you didn't listen, so I taught you a damn lesson. Don't fuck with me, Tex, because next time, I'll castrate you."

"I'm gonna kill you, you stupid slut!" If I'd have blinked, I would have missed it. Tex taking a swing at Phoenix, I mean.

Things seemed to go in slow motion for a moment. Phoenix moves her head to the side, avoiding Tex's fist. She retaliates by grabbing his wrist and twisting it behind his back. Tex screams, and Phoenix kicks him in the back, knocking him to the floor. Tex rolls onto his back. Like lightning, Phoenix jumps on top of him and slams a knife against his throat.

"Jesus Christ," BlackJack mumbles. The man has seen women act like this a few times in his life, but I'm guessing it's very different when your young daughter is the one fighting.

"If you're going to threaten to kill someone, make sure you can come through." She leans into him. "I should cut your throat right now..."

"That's enough, Phoenix!" Jett yells, and Phoenix groans. She climbs off Tex and slips her knife back into the holster on her ankle. "Take this."

"What is it?"

"Instruction on what to do next. You have one hour, Phoenix, to get the job done. Come back with proof, and we'll put you out of your misery."

Phoenix looks down at the note, then back to Jett. "If I do this, you'll patch me?"

"Get it done, and you'll find out. One hour, Phoenix."

Phoenix doesn't say a word to anyone; she just walks out of the building and leaves. Christ knows what Jett has her doing, but I

doubt it's anything good.

"What do we do about the mess outside?"

Tank rolls his neck before answering Gunner. "You three," He points to DJ, Cain, and Saxon. "Get out there and clean up the mess. You," This time, he points to Tex. "Get in the office, Jett, and I need a word."

"A word? That bitch trashed my bike!"

"And you'll be compensated. Now get in the fuckin' office before I break your neck with my bare hands!" Tex's shoulders slump, but he does as Tanks ordered and makes his way to the office.

"Was that part of your plan?" Wrench is more pissed off than I thought he was. "Have my sister set fire to Tex's motorcycle? What kind of initiation is that?"

"No, Wrench, that wasn't part of her initiation. Having her smack him in the mouth was. Which, I might add, is all I thought she'd do when Tex mentioned Gage."

"Come on, Prez, you had to know it wouldn't end well."

Jett nods his head at Gabe. "I suppose I did. However, I didn't think for one second she'd go out there and make good on her promise. Gotta admit the girl's got some fuckin' balls." He laughs, and most of us laugh with him.

"What have you got her out there doin'?"

"That you'll find out when Phoenix returns. For now, Tank and I have a prospect to calm down."

* * *

RED, Stryker, and I are all outside talking when Phoenix ride through the gates. Stryker raises his eyebrow when he sees Ava on the back of Phoenix's bike. I dread to think what the two of them have been up to. I do know that Trace won't like it.

"What have you two been up to?" Stryker stamps out his cigarette and watches Phoenix remove her helmet while climbing off her bike. Ava follows suit.

"What Jett told me to do."

"And Ava's with you, why?"

Phoenix rolls her eyes, but it's Ava who answers Red. "I was just giving Phoenix a hand with something." Red's eyes narrow angrily. Jett is not going to like this. Initiations are meant to be carried out alone unless Jett says otherwise. "Grandpa, please don't be mad at me,"

I roll my eyes at Ava's childish ways. She knows how to wrap my Dad, Roman, and Trace's father right around her little finger. "Cut it out, Ava," I didn't mean to snap at her, but this shit pisses me off.

"For Christ's sake! Can you all just shut up? I've got shit to do." This time, I raise my eyebrow and Phoenix. Who does she think she's talking to, all of a sudden? "What I did or didn't do is nothing to do with any of you. Just as what Ava was doing with me is none of your business. Come on, Ava."

Ava hugs Red quickly before running after Ava, like a loyal pet. I shake my head at how ridiculous that seems.

"We best get in there," I nod at Stryker.

We follow the girls inside, where everyone is waiting for Phoenix. I stand next to Trace, who looks like he's about to commit murder. I knew he wouldn't be please about his daughter being with Phoenix.

I watch Phoenix hand Jett her phone. "What's this for?" He asks.

"It's your proof, along with this."

Jett raises his eyebrow while holding his hand out for Phoenix to drop something in his palm. He smirks before turning to face us all. "When I sent Phoenix out of here earlier, it was to fetch me the one thing I never thought she'd be able to bring back."

"And what was that?" BlackJack asks.

"Set this up." Jett hands Phoenix her phone, and she leaves the room for a moment. Jett turns back to us. "I gave Phoenix the task of retrieving Billy Ryan's gold tooth."

"Are you fuckin' serious?!" Wrench is so red in the face; it looks like he's about to burst the blood vessels in his eyes.

"Shut the fuck up!" Tank snaps. "You were told that there would be no exceptions where Phoenix is concerned. She wants to be one of us; then she needed to prove she could do something most women wouldn't."

"I get that, Tank," Wrench scratches his head. "But that fucker is insane. He could have killed her!"

Billy Ryan is a drug-dealing piece of shit from the next town over. He's a vile cunt that has no problem slapping women around, nor does he have a problem taking what he wants. He's a violent cunt, and, as Wrench said, could have killed Phoenix.

"Killed her?" Ava butts in. I forgot she was here for a moment, as did everyone else by the way they're looking at her. "You don't have a clue just how cunning and smart Phoenix is. She was amazing, and he didn't stand a chance against her."

"What the hell were you doing go along with her?"

Ava bites the inside of her cheek while looking at Trace. "She asked me for a favor."

"If you assisted Phoenix with her task, she would have failed, Ava."

"I didn't help her, Jett. Phoenix would never ask for help, especially not with something as important as today. As soon as she read the note and knew what you wanted her to do, she knew how she would execute it. Phoenix called me *only* because she needed someone to hold her phone and record what she was about to do. She couldn't carry out the act and film it."

Jett nods his head, and I swear I see a slight smirk on his face. "I can let that slide, as long as what you filmed is good."

"Why don't you be the judge of that?" I didn't see Phoenix there. She places Jett's laptop on the table in front of us all. I'm guessing she's uploaded whatever Ava filmed to the computer. "Daddy, I'm sorry for what you're about to see."

BlackJack looks at his young daughter, and Red nudges my shoulder. I look at him for a moment, and we share a look that says, *BlackJack is not going to like this.*

Everyone gathers around Jett, while Phoenix and Ava move to the back of the room. I watch them taking for a second. They're laughing about something, not that I care what.

The screen comes to life, and we see Phoenix circling Billy Ryan as he sits in a chair. His eyes watch her appreciatively, even more so when she stands in front of him and removes her leather jacket.

Now, it's not unusual for all of us to see Phoenix in her wet look pants and a leather bra. The girl always dresses that way, along with her biker boots and leather jacket. However, it's very different seeing

her dressed that way on the screen. She's moving her body seductively, pushing her fingers into her hair as she dances.

Razor looks at me with a smirk and a raised eyebrow. He's thinking the same thing most men in the room are. Little Dana Anderson grew up. There's no denying how beautiful Phoenix is, but seeing her on that screen, we all see the sexy woman she's grown into. You don't see many women with a body shape like Phoenix's.

Not that I find Phoenix sexually attractive. I mean, she's gorgeous and owns her sexuality, but I have my Wynter, and no one else will ever come close.

We watch the scene unfold in front of us, and I have to hand it to Phoenix, she's got some skills. I watch as she allows Billy Ryan to believe she's about to make all his Christmases come at once. Phoenix straddles his lap, giggling as he grabs her waist.

I know Phoenix didn't sleep with the man, she'd never allow her father, brothers, and nephews to watch if she had. Though I can tell watching this is bothering BlackJack.

'Gotta admit,' Billy Ryan's voice comes loud and proud through the speakers. 'You grew up to be a fine lookin' woman, little girl.' I roll my eyes at the contradiction of his words—fucking idiot.

'I did grow up,' Phoenix replies. 'I've learned many things. Wanna see a special trick?'

'Does it include you losing those clothes?'

'You never know.'

'We gonna do this in front of your little friend over there?'

Phoenix chuckles. 'It's more fun with an audience.' We all watch as Phoenix slides her hands down Billy Ryan's arms, all the time laughing to herself. I note Phoenix's left-hand slide over her hip and around her back. Something flies through the air, and Phoenix catches the handcuffs and slaps them around the arm of the chair and Billy Ryan's wrist.

'What the fuck is this?'

Phoenix climbs off his lap, turns to the camera, and catches another set of handcuffs. Ava obviously threw them to her. 'This is nothing but fun, Billy.' She handcuffs his other hand to the chair. 'Now, are you going to be a good boy and give me what I want, or am I going to castrate you where you sit?'

Billy yanks on the handcuffs. 'What do you want from me?'

‘Well,’ Phoenix folds her arms around her chest. ‘First of all, I want to know why the hell you thought you had a chance with someone like me? Secondly, what real man meets a Snakes Henchmen woman in a bar and leaves with them inside a minute? That’s right, dumb ass druggies.’ Phoenix slaps her forehead with her palm in mock stupidity.

Phoenix, on-screen, asks Ava to hand her the extraction forceps, and both Gabe and I wince. Neither of us needs to see it to know Phoenix pulled teeth today.

Nevertheless, we all watch as Phoenix walks behind Billy, grabs the back of his head, and yanks it back. She mocks him repeatedly while pulling a gold tooth from his head. All the while, Billy is screaming in agony, yet Phoenix laughs.

“I tell you what,” Gunner shifts on his feet. “If that girl ain’t earned her patch, I’ll eat my jacket.”

He’s right. Phoenix did things her way, but she did complete the task Jett handed her. It would be a dick move for him to deny Phoenix’s patch.

“What do you think, BlackJack?”

BlackJack looks at Jett, arms folded, feet shoulder-width apart, and he rolls his neck. “I think sending my daughter to retrieve a drug dealer’s gold tooth was low. He could have turned on her and killed her, Jett.”

“You really don’t think much of my ability if you believe that, Dad.”

BlackJack sighs before walking over to his daughter and taking her shoulders in his hands. “I have every faith that you can take care of yourself, Phoenix. I don’t for one second think you’re any less than anyone else here. I know you think I treat you differently because you’re a woman, but it’s not the case. Just ask Wrench how wrong you are.”

Wrench laughs. “He treated me the same way until you were born. You’re his baby girl, Phoenix, of course, he’s going to worry about you.”

Phoenix nods and hugs her father. She still doesn’t like what he said, I can tell by the look on her face. Phoenix is a tough cookie, and I don’t think she’ll ever accept that her father is just doing what every father does where his daughter is concerned.

“Phoenix?”

"Yes, Prez?" She pulls away from BlackJack, who himself moves to the left.

"Today, you did well. Apart from your actions concerning Tex's bike, I'm impressed."

"Thank you."

Jett nods his head slightly. "I'm going to ask for a show of hands. You're going to stand here and find out if your fellow club members have as much faith in you as your father does."

Phoenix looks around the room at each man and swallows hard. She has to know that ninety-nine percent of us are on her side? Sure, there's one or two that have reservations about allowing Phoenix to join. Nothing to do with the fact she's a woman, and everything to do with how out of control she can be. But who the fuck isn't?

"Raise your hand if you think Phoenix has done enough to earn her patch?"

I can only imagine how tight Phoenix's stomach is right now. All her life, she's longed for this day. Right here, and right now, she'll either be given her patch or she won't, but she'll finally know, one way or another.

Our opinion doesn't mean shit. Jett only asks for a show of hands to keep whichever prospect in suspense. Jett has the last say, and ultimately it's his decision. Hell, we all know that he's going to hand her that damn patch.

One by one, every member raises his hand. Tank does a quick count, then turns to Jett and nods.

"Looks like it's unanimous, Phoenix," Jett takes the leather jacket that Tank hands him. I smile because that jacket will have 'Member' stitched into it, meaning, the world and his dog will know Phoenix is one of us.

Phoenix takes the jacket from Jett, opens it wide, and stares at it for a moment. She runs her hand over the stitching of each word and smiles. She then takes off the jacket she's wearing and hands it to Ava, who herself is smiling excitedly.

Phoenix slips her new jacket on and takes a deep breath. "I did it," She mumbles to herself. She looks at BlackJack. "I really did it, Daddy. I'm the first official female member of Snakes Henchmen MC."

"And we're all damn proud of you!" He yells.

"Drinks all round!"

I can't turn my president down when he offers alcohol. It's only right that we celebrate with Phoenix, though I wonder how Wynter is getting on, wedding dress shopping with Cassie and Tonya. I only hope they're done soon. I need a little Wynter time.

Chapter Eleven

WYNTER

“*I* can’t believe my dress is ready!” Cassie screeches, happily while placing her coffee cup on the table in front of us.

I’m so glad I got to be here with Cassie for her final dress fitting. I’ve missed out on so much when it comes to helping Cassie with wedding plans. I got a little emotional this morning, and Havoc thought something was terribly wrong with me. I laughed and threw my arms around him tightly. When I told Havoc what was wrong, he smiled and told me not to be upset. He kissed me before saying that I haven’t missed the wedding, and there are still plenty of things to help with before the big day. It made me feel a lot better about things.

“You looked absolutely beautiful in that dress, Cassie.” I take Cassie’s hand from my seat next to her and squeeze it. “I’m sorry I wasn’t here for you before now.”

Cassie smiles sweetly, and I have to wonder how she’s such a warm and kind woman after everything she’s been through. “You don’t need to be sorry, Wynter. You’ve always been there for me. Since the day we met, I knew I could count on you. I know things haven’t been easy these past few months, but I never doubted that you’d be here for my wedding.”

A tear slips from my eye, and I laugh when Cassie wipes it away with her thumb. I’m an emotional mess today. It has a lot to do with Cassie and my guilt at not being here when I should have been. But if I’m honest with myself, seeing Cassie with her sister makes me

miss mine. I miss Spring so much today that my stomach is tight with grief.

I never got to say goodbye to Spring. The last thing we said to each other was, 'I love you.' I'll never know what her final thoughts were, but I know she would have been scared. How could she not have been?

What I'll never understand is why John killed my sister. Yes, John was a monster, but he loved Spring. He'd tell us often that Spring was the best thing he'd done in life. She was perfect in every way, not like me. I was my mother's failing, and he couldn't stand me. He once told me that the only reason he kept me around was for Spring. John knew it would hurt my sister if he sent me away, and by that, he meant he'd kill me, and he would never hurt Spring like that.

So why did he kill her?

He was evil, and no one was safe around him, not even his pride and joy.

I often wonder if Spring is up in heaven with our mother, looking down and me. I hope they know that I'm proud of them. I'm proud of my mother and the way she fought to get me the help I needed with my hearing. I still, to this day, don't know what Julianne had to do to get John to agree. Whatever it was, I'll be forever grateful to her for all that she did.

God, my mother was so young, yet she was an amazing mother. All those fears that must have plagued her were pushed away because she'd never want us to feel the same way. She taught me how to speak like everyone else, and she taught herself sign language from books that she convinced John to pick up from the library. She then taught Spring and me, and we learned quickly.

I'll never forget my mother and sister, but I have to move forward. If I don't, I'll only be living a half-life, and I know they wouldn't want that. They'd want me to enjoy life and live it to the fullest. Until the mess with whomever those men are is dealt with, I can't really enjoy my life. I'm too scared to hope everything will be okay. Though I can put my family to rest, and live the way they'd want me to.

"I wouldn't miss your wedding for anything." I bring Cassie's hand to my mouth and kiss her knuckles. She smiles at me. "You were my sister the moment I met you. I know you have three sisters of your own now,"

"You will always be my sister, Wynter," Cassie cut me off. "Nothing will ever change that. My family knows about everything you've done for me. They know how you took care of me at school, in the care home, and even on the streets."

I look at Tonya and Chelsea, Cassie's sister, and swallow hard. Cassie swore she'd never tell anybody what happened out there on the streets. I can tell that she's told them everything, and I feel my gut clench.

"You don't need to be embarrassed, Wynter." I stare at Tonya. "And you most certainly shouldn't feel ashamed of what you did. Only a true friend would have done whatever it took to help someone the way you did. You saved Cassie, and her father and I will be forever grateful for that."

I don't say anything in response because there's nothing for me to say. I did what any decent person would do, and I don't need thanks for it, though I do smile.

The girls and I order lunch, and talk about Cassie's up and coming wedding for a while longer. Cassie can't contain herself and tells us all about her love for Cormack, and how he first asked her out.

I find it so sweet how Cormack wooed Cassie with music and flowers. Even when she told the man that she didn't want to date him, he didn't give up until she agreed. Cassie tells me how secretly, she didn't want Cormack to give up. She wanted him to prove that he wanted to be with her, and not just for one night.

I wish I'd been around to watch their love grow and flourish, and I'll always regret that I wasn't. However, I'm here now, and I'm happy that I get to see my best friend marry the man she claims she can't live without.

It's funny, but she sounds like me and the way I talk about Havoc. Chelsea wants to know everything about how I met and married Havoc. So, the next twenty minutes is spent with me telling our story.

It's so damn good to talk with my best friend, not to mention her stepmom and sister. I feel so comfortable right now that I could just hug myself!

Jesus, Wynter!

"Sorry, guys," I hold a finger up to Cassie, cutting her off from what she was saying. I know that's rude as hell, but Zena is calling,

and I promised to answer her calls. I shift in my seat and answer my cell. "Zena, is everything okay?"

"Oh, my god, Wynter! I need to see you; it can't wait. Oh, god, it's so important!"

"Whoa," My stomach is in my ass. Zena sounds so panicked, and my heart is in my throat. "Calm down. What's wrong?"

Zena stumbles over her words, and I can't understand what she's saying. I'm starting to panic. I promised to be there for Zena whenever she needed me, and I've let her down.

Christ, I'm the worst friend in the world!

"I need to see you, can you come over to the shelter? I have so much to tell you, and it can't wait!" Zena spoke so quickly it took a minute to register.

"I'll be right there." I end the call and grab my purse. "I'm sorry, guys, but I need to go."

"Is everything okay?"

"I don't know, Cass." I kiss her cheek. "I'll call you later and let you know." I take some money from my purse and drop it on the table.

"No, sweetheart," Tonya shakes her head while grabbing the money. She gets out of her seat and places the twenty dollars in my hand, closing my fingers around it. "This is on me," She smiles.

I'm not used other people paying my way. However, I'm not ungrateful, and I really don't have the time to argue the point. "Thank you. See you all later." I blow everyone a kiss and race to the shelter.

* * *

I RUSH into Second Chance House as if my ass were on fire. I rush past Carol and Jake, and straight to Zena's room. God knows what Carol and Jake think of me, but I don't stop to explain.

Zena's door is open, and I rush through without knocking. "Are you okay? Did somebody hurt you?" I didn't mean to yell, and I certainly didn't mean to scare little Claire.

Zena's eyes widen for a second. Then she shakes her hand and her head. "Oh, my God, I'm so sorry. Wynter, I didn't mean to make you think I'd been harmed."

I close my eyes and breathe deeply. My stomach finally unclenches, but I'm still shaking. I was so scared there for a moment. "Zena," I open my eyes. "I was terrified when you called. I couldn't make out half of what you were saying."

"Oh, honey, I'm sorry." Zena wraps her arms around me, and I hug her back tightly. We haven't known each other long, but Zena has come to mean a lot to me, and I'd hate if anything happened to her.

"You sounded panicked on the phone," I huff out around, trying to catch my breath. I only ran from the car, but I now realize how unfit I am.

How the hell am I meant to attend Nova's self-defense classes if I can't even run a short distance without gasping for air?

Zena pulls away from me and smiles. "I'm sorry. I was excited, but I can see why it would seem different to you."

"Excited?" I'm confused. Zena did not sound excited to me. An excited person blurts out what they want to tell you because they can't stop themselves. They also laugh and squeal, and you can hear the happiness in their voices. I didn't hear any such thing.

Claire suddenly jumps up and down in front of me. "We got a new house!"

My eyes shoot to Zena. "You did?"

"Yes!" Zena yells as she grabs her daughter and swings her around. Claire laughs happily and hugs her mother.

I think I'm in shock. I lined up an interview for Zena at the dental surgery in town. There's more than one, but this one is huge, and the job comes with many perks. Not only does Dr. Clive Van Drew give his staff and their children and spouses free dental care, but he also makes sure his team is covered when it comes to full medical insurance. That means if Zena were offered the job, she and Claire would be secure when it comes to medical care.

I came across the job vacancy by chance. I was in town with Cassie, and I'd mentioned needing to look for job vacancies for Zena. Cassie told me how she had a friend who worked at Dr. Van Drew's surgery as a dental nurse. Cassie met the woman a few months ago when they literally bumped into each other at the supermarket.

Cassie asked me if Zena had any qualifications when it came to reception work. I explained that Zena was a qualified dental surgeon, but hadn't had any joy finding a job because she had nowhere to live. Not to mention everything else that had gone wrong in her life since her husband died.

Cassie dragged me into Dr. Van Drew's surgery, and we spoke to him personally. He told us that he has a vacancy for a dental surgeon, and if Zena came in, he'd interview her for the job. I was both excited and nervous, but I sat and told him about Zena's situation. Dr. Van Drew is a kind man and told me that everyone deserves a chance and to bring Zena in to see him.

I felt terrible that I couldn't go with Zena today. I couldn't because I couldn't let Cassie down. I've done enough of that over the past months.

Oh, my God, did Zena get the job?

"Zena, back up," She stops bouncing around with Claire and looks at me. "I'm a little confused. How do you have a new home? Did you get the job?"

"Oh, Wynter," Zena kisses her daughters cheek and set her on her feet. Claire runs off to play, and Zena offers me a seat on her bed. "First off, thank you for loaning me these clothes."

I chuckle. "You're welcome."

Zena had been worried that she didn't have the right clothes for an interview. I brought over a white blouse, a black pencil skirt with a matching blazer, and a pair of black, low heels. I'm a size bigger than Zena in clothes, but we made it work.

She looks great in that outfit. The French braid in her hair and light makeup on her face make her glow.

"I met with Dr. Van Drew, and he was very kind. The interview went well, and I thought he'd say that he'd let me know in a few days. He didn't; he told me then and there that I got the job!" She squeals, and I do the same while hugging her tightly.

I am so proud of Zena right now! She worked hard for this, and I couldn't be happier.

Zena pulls away from me. "I get all the medical benefits for both myself and Claire. God, you have no idea how big of a weight has been lifted off my shoulders by that alone. That's not the best part though, Wynter,"

I can't help smiling at how happy Zena is right now. "What's the best part?"

"Dr. Van Drew owns a three-story apartment block. He rents most of the units out to his staff. He told me that you'd explained my situation," It wasn't my story to tell, but I didn't feel I had a choice. "Then he said that he has a two-bedroom apartment available that he's willing to rent out to me,"

My eyes widen, and I think the smile on my face is stuck.

"Dr. Van Drew said that the apartment is fully furnished. All I would need to do is get new mattresses for the beds, my own bedding, and a few personal bits and pieces. Nova said she'd help with all of that."

Nova told me before I started this job that anyone who leaves here for their new home will leave with a grant. Second Chance House gives it's leavers money to buy furniture, clothes, food, etc. It's not a great deal of money, but enough to get people started.

I take Zena's hand in mine. "I am so proud of you, Zena."

"I couldn't have done this without you, Wynter."

I smile because she has no idea how wrong she is. I'll admit that having a friend rooting for you always gives you more confidence. However, I know that Zena would have pulled herself out of the hole she found herself in eventually. "When do you move in?"

Zena routes through her purse and pulls out a set of keys. She holds them up for me to see. "Right now. As soon as I signed the contracts for work, I signed a housing agreement. I couldn't say no because I won't even have to worry about paying rent,"

I narrow my eyes. "You don't have to pay rent?" That sounds a little too good to be true. Havoc always says that if it seems too good to be true, then it is.

Zena laughs. "The apartment comes with the job. As long as I work my hours, I get to keep my new home."

"I can't believe how lucky you are right now."

"I know!" Zena squeals again and hugs me tightly. I can't help laughing. Zena has every right to be happy right now. It's about time something good came along for this woman.

"Now, all we need to do is get Claire into a good school."

Zena nods in agreement. "I have three days before my job starts to find a school for Claire. I'm going to pack my things now. Once

I'm packed, Nova will call someone to take Claire and me over to the apartment."

"I can take you,"

"No," She shakes her head. "You've done so much for us already. I know you'd gladly take us over there, but you get back to your husband."

I would have liked to take them over to their new home. However, if Zena would rather someone else do that, then I can't argue with her.

"You will keep in touch, won't you?" I feel like we've become close in the short time we've known each other. I'd hate for her to walk away today, and I never see her again.

"You bet I will. We'll meet for coffee, and lunch sometimes. Plus, you have to come see our new place!"

"I'd love that,"

"Friends for life, you and I,"

"You bet we are." I laugh, and we hug again. This time, Claire rushes toward us, and we all dance around, having fun and laughing.

In those moments with Zena and Claire, I forget everything. There is no horrible past flooding my mind, and there are no thoughts of men chasing me. The only thing on my mind is that my new friend has a bright future ahead of her. Nothing is going to spoil that.

Chapter Twelve

HAVOC

“*I*’m telling you, Havoc, it was Wynter. I saw them with my own eyes.”

I fold my arms around my chest and stare at Jethro. I’m fighting the urge to smash his teeth down his throat. Jethro came to me ten minutes ago and told me how he’d seen Wynter in Mirror Creek, thirty-five minutes away from Bardsville. I told Jethro that he was mistaken, Wynter would have told me if she planned to go anywhere as far as Mirror Creek. Wynter doesn’t go anywhere where alone.

Jethro told me that Wynter wasn’t alone. In fact, she was in the arms of another man, smiling right before he kissed her. Again, I didn’t believe this because Wynter can’t stand for anyone but me touching her – other men, anyway.

That’s when Jethro got out his phone and showed me the pictures he’d taken of Wynter and this mystery man. I argued that the woman in the photo wasn’t Wynter, that Jethro had gotten it all wrong. The woman in the picture had longer hair, it was straight, plus she was dressed like a millionaire. However, there is no denying that the woman in the image of my girl. It was easy to see from the picture of the woman looking straight at the camera.

It doesn’t make sense, none of it does. There are so many questions swimming through my mind.

Why on this earth would Wynter do this to me?

Where did she meet this guy?

When has she had time to contact him, never mind meet with him?

Was Wynter really using me all this time?

If so, what the hell for?

It's evident from the picture that she's living a double life. She's also a convincing liar, and I don't know what the hell to do about it.

"I'm sorry, Havoc, but I couldn't keep this from you."

"It's fine." I'm not angry with Jethro for bringing this to me; he knew I'd want to know. No one wants the person they love to cheat on them, and then to find out their friends knew all along and said nothing.

"Austin and I followed them back to an address in Claxton. Something didn't make sense, though, Havoc."

"How do you mean?"

"Well," Austin picks up. "When they got there, an older woman stood at the door, and a kid around two came running at Wynter and calling her *Mommy*."

I feel the blood from my head rush to my feet. Wynter has a child? Why the fuck wouldn't she tell me about something so huge? My God, the woman, married me, has been sleeping with me, pretending she has no family when all the time she had a kid and a home somewhere else!

Why on this earth would she do that?

I feel like I'm going to throw up. What reason would Wynter have for deceiving me like that? Not just me but Cassie. How in the hell has she been keeping this lie going?

Surely whoever that guy is to Wynter would want to know where the hell she is all of the time? Shit, she's hardly ever out of my sight!

What about the child? How could Wynter bear to be away from her child?

She wouldn't; I know she wouldn't. This can't be true. I don't know who that woman is, but she's not Wynter. The girl doesn't go anywhere alone, and she never makes secret phone calls. This other woman must be a doppelgänger, that's the only thing I can think of.

"You have to confront her with this, Havoc. Don't let her get away with it."

"What if it's not her?" I throw-back at Austin.

"It was her, Havoc. No two people could possibly be that identical. You can tell yourself a thousand times that Wynter wouldn't do

this to you," I stare at Jethro, unblinking. "But the fact is, that was Wynter."

Okay, I'll admit that it's crazy how much the girl in the picture looks like Wynter. I should believe what I'm seeing, but I don't. Wynter would never do this to me. I know she wouldn't.

"Oh, my god," Austin laughs sardonically. He looks at Jethro. "He's convinced himself that this is bullshit. What the fuck is wrong with you, Havoc? The fuckin' proof is right in front of your eyes!"

I roll my neck, cracking away the tension. I know what Austin is saying, and I know you can't argue with proof. However, there's something inside that keeps nagging at me, and telling me this isn't true.

"I gotta go." I start the engine on my motorcycle.

"Havoc?" Jethro looks at me and sighs. "We're your friends, and the last thing either of us wants is to hurt you. But, man, you have to speak to Wynter about this, don't let it go."

I stare at Jethro for a moment. Then I look at Austin. "Both of you keep your mouths shut about what you know. I need to speak with Wynter, and I don't want the world and his wife to know about this. I will tell you both this much. I don't believe that the woman in the picture is Wynter."

"Jesus Christ!" Jethro hisses.

He can throw a childish tantrum for all I care. I know my wife and that woman isn't her. I don't understand why the girl in the picture looks like Wynter, but there has to be an explanation. I don't have a clue what that could be, but I'll find out.

"I'm grateful to both of you for lookin' out for me, but that woman isn't Wynter. Let that be the end of it." With that, I pull away.

* * *

I CAN HEAR Wynter singing at the top of her lungs as soon as I open the front door. The smell of fresh cooking hits my nostrils, and my stomach rumbles. It smells like pasta and garlic sauce, Wynter's specialty.

I make my way to the kitchen, and I stand, watching Wynter as she moves her body to the sound of dance music. As I watch her

dance and listen to her singing, I can't picture Wynter deceiving me the way Jethro believes she has.

Wynter wouldn't lie to me about something so massive. She wouldn't and couldn't be sneaking off every so often to meet with some other man. Wynter is always shadowed wherever she goes. Surely someone would have noticed something out of the ordinary.

Though I don't believe Wynter is living a double life, something doesn't feel right. Jethro was right when he said, 'No two people can possibly be that identical.' The picture was crystal clear, so I can't even say Jethro was seeing things.

Maybe I should seek the woman in the picture out. Perhaps I could go to the house Jethro and Austin saw her at and speak to her. I'd know one hundred percent if I were looking at Wynter. If I confront the woman, and she isn't Wynter, then I'd have to work my ass off to find out why she looks so much like my wife.

I know it's said that everyone has a doppelgänger out there somewhere, but I never believed it, although I'm not opposed to admitting when I'm wrong.

What if you are wrong, Havoc?

What if that woman is Wynter?

It might be hard for Wynter to get away as much as she should to see her child, but it's not impossible. She could be telling the other guy that she works away most days. There's the reason why she's here more than there.

Don't forget that she left you for a while there. Wynter could have been making happy families with that guy and her child. The excuse about working away could have come once she saw you again. Sure, she worked in a diner, but waitresses find good jobs too.

Never rule anything out, and don't be a fool, Havoc.

If it is true, if that woman is Wynter, what the hell will I do? I just got her back, and I don't want to lose her again. Shit, I'm just a man, and I have a damn heart like everyone else. How the hell would I cope with losing her a second time? If her child is a toddler, I'm the other man, and that fucking stings because she was never really mine.

She's also a damn bigamist, and if found out, she'll end up in jail. Although, the other guy might not be her husband, which is a thought that's crossed my mind. If he isn't, then don't I have just as much claim to Wynter as he does? She might have his kid, but she's my wife.

"Havoc? Is something wrong?"

"Huh?" I snap out of thought and look at Wynter.

Her hand comes to my cheek, and she smiles sweetly. "You seemed so lost in thought then. I spoke to you three times, but you didn't answer me."

My heart feels like it's cracking inside my chest, but I won't let my emotions get the better of me right now. I cup Wynter's cheek and rub it with my thumb. She smiles and leans into my touch.

When I look into Wynter's eyes, I don't see a deceitful liar. I don't see a woman who's hiding something massive, all I see is the woman I love. I know Wynter loves me; I can feel it every time she's near me, and even when she isn't. I hear it in her words, and I see it in her actions.

The woman in the picture isn't Wynter, and I have to prove it.

I pull Wynter into my arms and cling to her tightly. "Havoc, is everything okay?" Wynter asks while rubbing her hand up and down my back.

I hold her close for a second before pulling away. "What did you get up to today?"

Wynter gives me a funny look. "You know that I went with Cassie for her final dress fitting." I nod my head. "After that we had coffee, then Zena called me, so I went to the shelter. I was there for a while. As you have me followed, Havoc, you should already know this." Wynter pulls away from me, angrily.

"Why are you so angry?" I narrow my eyes.

"Because your tone was accusatory, Havoc."

I raise my eyebrow. Okay, maybe my tone was a little accusatory, but that wasn't my intention. "I wasn't accusing you of anything, Wynter, I was merely interested in your day."

Wynter looks at me for a moment. I smile and wink at her, and she laughs while shaking her head. "I'm sorry. It's been a long day. Sit down. I'll serve dinner and tell you all about it."

We sit down to eat the food Wynter made. As we eat, she tells me what happened today while she was out. Wynter talks excitedly about Zena's new job, and the apartment that comes with it, and how she can't wait to see it.

I can't help smiling as she talks. Wynter helped someone put their life back together in a short space of time. I'm so proud of her right now.

As Wynter talks, I realize there's no way she could have gone anywhere outside of Bardsville today. There aren't enough hours in the damn day for her to have fit all she did today and run off to meet some other family.

Once we've eaten, Wynter refuses to let me help clear things away, so I make an excuse to shower. I'm also going to call Clay as he's been shadowing her today. Not the best job in the world for a prospect, but it's their duty. They do it because they'll do anything to earn their patch.

I shouldn't have to check up on my wife, and my friends shouldn't feel the need to have me doubt her. However, if Clay tells me that Wynter has been where she says she has until the moment she walked through the door, I'll let it go.

That woman could have been anyone. I'll thank my friends for caring, but that will be the end of it once and for all.

"Clay, I need to know where Wynter was today?" I ask before he even says hello.

"Why?"

"Don't ask questions, you little fuck! Just tell me what I want to know." Who the hell is he to question me?

Clay sighs down the line, but answers without more questions. "She met Cassie, Tonya, and Chelsea at the dress shop. They were in there for over an hour and came out smiling. They then went to a coffee shop and had lunch. I watched them for another hour or so before Wynter got a phone call. She left shortly after."

My heart is hammering in my chest. My mouth is suddenly dry, and I'd be a liar if I said I didn't feel as sick as a dog.

"I followed her to the shelter. She took off inside and didn't come out again for over two hours. You got any idea how boring that was?" I don't answer him, so he carries on. "Wynter seemed on top of the world, and she practically skipped back to her car. From there, she went to the store, spent a half-hour or so there, then went home."

"And she went nowhere else? Out of town, for instance?" I believe Clay; I just need to be one hundred percent sure he hasn't missed anything.

"Unless she knows Harry Potter and he gave her a time turner, there's no way she'd have had time to give me the slip. She didn't leave town at all, Havoc. What's all this about?"

"None of your business. Thanks for letting me know." I end the call but don't put my phone down. I call Jethro. He needs to know that I want this dropped. We have bigger things going on right now, like finding the men who are looking for Wynter.

Jett put the word out that Wynter is with me, but so far, no bites. Not one person has come looking. I have to wonder if Wynter got things wrong. But then, how can I think that when she's been so scared? That and I saw those men with my own eyes, heard them with my own ears asking for Wynter by name.

Christ knows when we're going to get this shit cleaned up, but we will. In the meantime, I can't have Jethro out there making accusations about my wife. I no longer give a shit who this other woman is, nor why she looks like Wynter. I only know she isn't my wife, just a doppelgänger, and Jethro needs to let it go.

"Have you spoken to her?"

I nod my head, even though I know Jethro can't see me. "I've spoken to Wynter, yes."

"And?"

"I didn't ask her about what you told me, but I asked where she'd been today, and I believe her."

He huffs loudly. "Havoc, I know what I saw. You've seen the damn proof. What more do you want?"

"You've got it wrong," I cut him off before he can reply. "After I spoke with Wynter about what she got up to today, I called Clay. He informed me that Wynter didn't leave town today. He'd know because he followed her all damn day. That woman isn't Wynter, and I need you to drop this."

"This is crazy!" He yells, causing me to move the phone from my ear for a second. "You're crazy. That woman is Wynter, and I'll prove it!"

"You'll do no such thing!" I hiss, not wanting to get too angry. "She's my wife, Jethro. Does that mean nothing to you?"

"It means everything to me, and so does our friendship. That's why I won't drop this. I won't have her making a fool out of you."

I rub my forehead with my fingertips in frustration. "Are you willing to lose our friendship over this? Because I promise you, if you don't drop this, you and I are no longer friends!"

The line goes dead, and I groan. Fuck it all to hell!

I turn my head and notice Wynter's nightdress lying next to me. I smile and pick it up. I bring it to my nose and breathe in her scent with my eyes closed.

God, why did you make me fall in love this deeply?

Why am I so obsessed with Wynter?

Why did I feel my heart crack when Jethro showed me that photo?

Wynter is everything to me, God, and I don't want to lose her. Give me the strength to protect her, and the knowledge to keep her safe.

Oh, and one last thing. Please help Jethro to move past what he thinks he knows. Wynter is the love of my life, and even though the woman in the picture is a dead ringer for Wynter, I know it isn't her. Help him see that.

"Hey," I look at Wynter as she strokes the back of my head. She smiles at me, and I fall even deeper in love with my wife. "What's going on, Havoc? I know something's bothering you. Please don't keep things from me. Is it those men? Have they found out where I am?"

I shake my head and cup her face in my hand. "No, baby. Though I wish they would so all of this mess could be sorted and put behind us. It's just been a long day, that's all."

Wynter smiles at me. "I know what you mean." She toys with my cut, running her fingertips over my name. She looks up at me. "I love you, Havoc, more than anything in this world. You know that, don't you?"

I clasp the side of her neck and nod my head. I may have faltered there for a short while, but I know that Wynter loves me. "I love you, too, and nothing will ever change that, Wynter."

I lose all train of thought when she grabs the back of my head, pulling me down so that our mouths crash against each other. Our tongues entwine as I lay Wynter down on the bed. I slip my hand under her skirt and grab the waistband of her panties.

"I want to taste you." I don't give Wynter the chance to say anything; I'm too lost in my need for her.

I climb off the bed and drop to my knees. Wynter watches me as I drag her silk panties down her legs and over her feet. I spread her legs, and they drop wide open on the bed.

Wynter bites her lips, seductively, and slides her fingers into my hair, guiding me where she wants me. I lick one long stroke from her opening to her clit. Fuck, she's soaking, and she tastes so damn good!

"Havoc," She groans, her hips tipping into me. "Oh, god, yes!"

I moan my appreciation around her clit, the sensation sending rumbles through her pussy, and I can feel everything. Her ass shoots off the bed the instant I shove two fingers inside of her tight cunt.

I make love to her clit with my mouth, and my whole body is on fire with want. Nothing and no one will ever turn me against this woman. She's no liar, and she is most certainly no cheat. Wynter loves me, and I will never doubt that again.

"Shi-it!" Wynter screams and comes hard, her legs locking around my head. I chuckle at the fact she's pretty much suffocating me with her thighs.

I take her thighs in my hands and push her legs wide apart. I get to my feet and remove my cut. "Strip," I order, and Wynter scrambles to do just that. Christ, that body drives me insane!

Wynter watches me discard the rest of my clothes, and she gets to her feet in front of me. She slides her hand down my chest, right down to my cock, which she strokes slowly. "Do you have any idea what it does to me seeing you naked like this?"

I smirk while grabbing Wynter's tits in my big hands and squeezing. "I'm thinking the same thing it does to me seeing you naked."

She smiles shyly. Wynter has never been very good at taking compliments. "Do you know what I want right now?"

"Tell me," I whisper with a kiss to her lips.

"I want to suck your big cock, and I want to choke on it."

Fuck!

"Get on your knees," I demand, and Wynter complies. I take my cock in my hand and tap the tip against Wynter's lips. She smirks, snakes out her tongue, and licks me. "Suck it." Wynter opens her mouth, and I slide my cock along her silky tongue.

I hiss through his teeth, and I feel Wynter smile around a mouthful of my dick. She pulls me out of her mouth and licks the underside, teasing the sensitive skin. Wynter groans, and she's driving me fucking crazy!

I slide my fingers into the sides of her hair, guiding her around me. "That feels so good..." I groan, and Wynter looks up at me through her lashes. I can't stand it, and my head falls back, with my eyes closed.

I rut her mouth harder, and Wynter gags on my cock, just as she wanted. I bite my lip and smirk. It turns me on like crazy watching

Wynter like this, at my mercy, but she doesn't stop sucking my dick as if her life depended on it. She's insatiable, and I fucking love her!

I can't get enough of this feeling, and as Wynter sucks me harder and deeper, I know I'm not going to last. I could come right now and rub my hand down Wynter's throat as she swallows my seed. But I don't want that; I want to come inside of her rocking body.

"Wynter, shit, let go," I pull out of her mouth and drag her to her feet. "You're so amazing." I smash my mouth against hers, kissing her with such ferocity that I can barely control myself.

"Havoc," She groans loudly. "I want you inside of me. Please."

"Do you have any idea how much I love you?" I ask while hoisting her up.

Wynter wraps her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck. "Maybe as much as I love you? And I really do love you, Havoc."

I grab her face between my hands, my mouth attacking hers, and my cock pushing its way into her hot body. She moves her hips in time with mine, pulling me deeper, harder, faster into her. Neither of us is going to last long. I can feel Wynter's core tightening around me.

"Oh my god, I'm coming!"

"Come, baby. I'm right there with you."

"Havoc!" She screams my name and comes so hard that I can't stop myself from coming with her. Wynter's muscles clamp down on me, milking me for everything she can get.

Fuck, I needed that!

I hold her tightly against me, circling my hips a little, bringing us both down from our orgasmic high.

I pull out of Wynter and set her on her feet. Though I don't let her go, I hold her close to me and kiss her head. I sense Wynter smiling against my chest as I rock her gently from side to side. "You're my world, Wynter. Hell, you're my whole universe, and I will never let you go again."

"Ditto, man of mine."

I smile because, for right now, at this moment, all is right in my world.

For now.

Chapter Thirteen

JETHRO

“This was a bad idea.”
“Shut the fuck up, Austin!” I snap at my brother.
“We’re here to do a damn job, and we ain’t leaving till we’ve got what we came for.”

“Why don’t you both shut the fuck up?” I turn my eyes to Eagle. He’s not looking at me; he’s looking out of the window, hands on the steering wheel. “There she is. You two, do your damn job, and hurry up!”

I’d roll my eyes if I had the time. Austin and I jump out of the back of the van and make our way over to Wynter.

Havoc will lose his shit when he finds out what we’ve done to his precious Wynter. He told me to drop this, and to think about our friendship. I am thinking about our friendship, that’s the only reason I’m doing this.

Havoc also warned me last night that he’d kill me if I didn’t leave things alone. I couldn’t give a shit about that, he can do what he wants, but this bitch is not getting away with what she’s done to my friend.

I don’t care who cheats on their husband or wife; it’s their business. But when you do it to a member of our club, you need to be taught a lesson. It churns at my fucking gut, knowing Havoc hasn’t said one damn word to Wynter about what he knows. When did he become such a pussy?

When he fell in love, Jethro, that’s when. Just like all men, when it comes to the woman he loves, he’s weak.

Fuck love, it makes a man stupid. It's made Havoc stupid, and I never thought I'd say that. I'm not saying he should have gone home and beaten the truth out of his wife, but he should have asked her about what he knew.

Not Havoc, though, he went home and acted like nothing was wrong. Every time I've seen him with Wynter since I brought that photo to his attention, they've been all over each other. I've wanted to confront her myself, but I don't know how to without Havoc blowing my brains out.

I've got to admit, this double life crap Wynter is pulling sure doesn't make any sense to anyone, even me. I may have photographic proof, but when I see her in one place, somebody else sees her in another. I don't know how that's possible, but I will find out.

I can admit that Wynter's a hot little thing, but the way she dresses away from Havoc is something else. She looks like she belongs on the cover of a magazine. She must put extensions in her hair because it's at least four inches longer. Maybe it just seems longer because it's as straight as a dye – not like back home.

I have to wonder where Havoc thinks Wynter is right now. It's getting late, and it will soon be dark. This woman should be home with her husband, but here she is, walking toward a fancy house, in an elegant neighborhood. The man inside, waiting for her with their small child, is the poor fool I feel sorry for. Wynter is cheating on him as much as she is Havoc.

I have to wonder if Cassie knew. That girl is like a sister to me, fuck, she's marrying my brother next week. Cassie doesn't strike me as the type to lie about something this massive. Nor do I believe that Cassie would have stood back and watched as Wynter married Havoc if she knew the girl was already married.

Which again is why none of this makes sense. Cassie and Wynter are as close as sisters. Shit, they're as thick as thieves most days. Surely Cassie would know about this?

If I find out that Cassie did know about Wynter's other life, then shit will hit the fan.

I tip my head at Austin. He moves to the left of Wynter, and I take the right. This bitch is not getting away from us. I notice her turn her head to the left, then the right, ever so slightly. To the untrained eye, it wouldn't have been caught, but I was plenty trained for this shit in the military.

I didn't expect her to turn on the spot with a gun in her hand, however. Shit. Serves me right for not clocking it sooner.

"Wanna tell me why you assholes are following me."

"I think you know the answer to that."

She chuckles and shakes her head at me. "If I knew the answer, I wouldn't have asked the question. Now, who the fuck are you, and what do you want?"

"Are you for real?" Austin asks with narrow eyes. "Who the fuck are we? You know damn well who we are, Wynter."

This time, her eyes narrow. She opens her mouth to speak. However, out of nowhere, a hand holding a rag slams over her mouth from behind. Wynter struggles in Eagle's arms for no more than five seconds before she's out cold.

Austin grabs her gun before it hits the ground. The damn thing could have gone off if the safety wasn't locked. The gun might not even be real or loaded, but you never know. Women are evil creatures, and most will kill you without a second thought.

"I told you two to hurry the fuck up. That did not include chatting with her while she's got a damn gun pointed to your heads!"

I roll my eyes. Not even twenty-one years old yet, and Eagle thinks he's the cock of the walk. All right, I'll admit, Eagle is as crazy as his father, with just a hint of his mother's insanity. It doesn't make for a good mix.

Eagle throws a passed out Wynter over his shoulder. He has her in the back of the van before Austin, and I have even moved.

"Do you fuckers wanna get in the cunting van? We need to get out of here."

I shake my head at my little brother, and we both get in the back of the van. I search Wynter for any weapons she might have stashed anywhere else, while Eagle pulls away. A knife in her boot is all I find, along with her cell phone. I hand it to Austin, and he shoves it in his jacket pocket. Havoc will want to see that.

"Havoc's not gonna like this, you know? And Tank ain't gonna be happy that we dragged prince charming with us."

"What the fuck did you just say about my dad?"

I shake my head. Fucking kids! "He didn't say nothin', Eagle. Look, I'm gonna call Havoc and tell him to meet us at the warehouse. I don't think taking Wynter back to the clubhouse where everyone can hear Havoc's business is the best idea."

Eagle nods while looking at me through the rearview mirror. "Do what you gotta do."

I look down at Wynter, lying on the dirty floor, and I feel like shit that Eagle knocked her out. Though I shouldn't think like that, it was nothing more than the cheating bitch deserved.

"What do you think he'll do to her, Jethro?"

I sigh while taking my cell from my pocket. "I don't know, Austin. Whatever he does is no more than she deserves."

"But she's got a kid, man. He wouldn't kill her, would he?"

I can't answer that because I don't have a damn clue what Havoc will do Wynter. "All I do know is that he's gonna be pissed to the max that we've done this."

"He may well kill us,"

I chuckle at Austin's eye roll. "Little brother, Havoc will be angry with us, but he'll understand why we did this. When he sees with his own eyes how she's dressed, and we force her to tell the truth, he'll understand."

Austin nods his head as I bring my phone to my ear and wait for Havoc to answer.

"What do you want?"

"Nice, Havoc." I chuckle and roll my eyes. Prick hasn't changed since he was a kid. "I found something that belongs to you, in a place she shouldn't have been." Havoc doesn't say anything, so I continue. "She looks like she just walked off a catwalk, and she pulled a gun on me."

"I see." Is all he says.

"I'm taking her to the warehouse. Meet me there in half an hour." The line goes dead, but I know he'll be there.

Chapter Fourteen

HAVOC

Jethro meets me outside the warehouse. On the ride over here, I've been seething. I didn't ask Jethro to do this. He should have listened to me and left things well alone.

Wynter and I have been closer than ever over the past few days. Although I haven't spoken to her about what Jethro told me, I know that I should have. Maybe if I had, Jethro wouldn't have done this. Perhaps if I had, Wynter could have explained why Jethro had gotten things so wrong.

Wynter had hardly left my side in days. The only time she did was to meet Zena at her new place, and even then, I dropped Wynter off and collected her not long after.

Of course, I explained everything to my President, and VP. Jett explained why Jethro would believe that woman is Wynter, and that he's just being a good friend. I don't doubt that, but when you're told to leave things, you should.

Tank said that he'd have words with Jethro about his actions, but I asked both Tank and Jett to leave it to me. I thought I'd gotten through to Jethro because he hasn't mentioned anything over the past two days. I should have known he was plotting something. I didn't because I've been too wrapped up in my wife.

I locked us in our house for over twenty-four hours. We made love the whole damn time, only coming up for air to eat, drink, and use the bathroom. We fucked until we were too sore to fuck anymore.

Wynter and I even spoke about starting a family. She brought the subject up, and I was blindsided. I hadn't expected her to bring up

the subject of children any time soon.

I thought about the woman in the picture and her family. The girl looked happy. If her smiling face in that photo was anything to go by, she has a great life. I know she isn't Wynter, but it made me wonder if my wife would smile the same way upon seeing our firstborn.

I can't deny that the thought of becoming a father makes my heart beat faster. The idea of my wife bringing life in the world? I can't wait.

Though Wynter and I have agreed that no isn't the right time to think about children, I have to get this crap with those men sorted before we start a family.

I came here tonight because I need to put an end to this mess, once and for all. I won't have Jethro or anyone tarnishing my wife's name. That and I need to see the woman in that warehouse for myself. I don't fully believe she's real, but I think I've figured out who she is.

"Who's that?" Jethro points to the guy on the back of my bike.

I don't answer him. I turn to the person on my bike and tell them, "Wait here." They nod their helmeted head and stay put.

Jethro shakes his head, annoyed, and leads me inside the warehouse.

I notice Austin and Eagle right away. I don't even have the energy to be pissed at Jethro for dragging them into this. Austin is Jethro's younger brother, and he can pull the kid into whatever he likes. However, Eagle is Tank's son, and Tank would not be happy about this. If Tank does find out his precious son was here, Jethro will get his neck snapped.

The girl in the lone chair looks even more like Wynter in the flesh. Her white hair is longer than Wynter's, she wears more make-up, and she dresses like a supermodel, but she's not Wynter.

The likeness between them is uncanny. Looking at this woman is like looking at a supermodel version of my wife. I'm still struggling to make my eyes believe what I'm seeing.

"Did you really need to tie her up and gag her?"

"She's dangerous and damn mouthy," Jethro tells me. "You didn't see her, Havoc. Wynter is a very different person when she's not with you."

More than you know, Jethro.

I can't say as I know how dangerous this girl is, I don't know her at all. I'm not pleased that they've taped her wrists to the armrests and her ankles to the legs of the chair. They've also gagged her, and from how wide her eyes are, I'd say she was beyond pissed. She's not scared; she's angry—crazy girl. Anybody else in this situation would be peeing themselves in fear.

This girl doesn't have a clue who we are. She can see our patches very clearly, but for all she knows, we're going to kill her here tonight. Still, she struggles against her binds, and curses at us behind the gag.

I stare at the girl for a long moment, wondering how two people *can* look so alike. The similarities are surreal. If this woman is who I think she is, many questions will need answering.

"Remove the gag." I tip my head at Eagle, who does as I've asked.

The girl stretches out her mouth before growling at Eagle. "You didn't have to knock me out, you little bastard!" Eagle chuckles to himself and walks away. "When my uncle finds out what you've done, he'll kill you all! What the fuck do you assholes even want with me?" She screeches while yanking on the restraints again.

"BlackJack won't do shit once he knows the truth about you!"

"Who the fuck is BlackJack!?" She screams at Jethro. "I don't know you people, or anybody named BackJack!"

Jethro turns to me, shaking his head. "What the fuck is this girl on?" He turns back to the girl. "How the fuck can you sit there and act like you don't know your own husband?" The girl's eyes narrow in confusion. "This double life bullshit you're leading, Wynter..."

"Wait!" She yells and cuts him off. "Wynter? I'm not Wynter,"

"You lying little *bitch*!"

I grab Jethro's arm and yank him back. He looked like he was about to throttle the girl. "That's enough, Jethro. If you honestly believe this woman is Wynter, and you dared to make a move toward her..."

Jethro growls at me, cutting off my words. "How the fuck are you standing here so calm, Havoc? Your wife is lying to your fuckin' face!"

The girl laughs loudly from the gut, and each of us turns to look at her. "Jethro, is it? Were you born this stupid, or did you have to take a class?"

I notice Jethro's eyes widen in anger, and I have to stifle a laugh. He was right about one thing; this girl is mouthy.

"I can see why you'd think I was Wynter. But come on!"

"What the fuck is going on?" I don't know if Austin was asking a question or not, but he mumbled the words to no one in particular.

I fold my arms around myself and stare at the girl in front of me. She's looking right at me, and it's beyond evident that I haven't got this wrong. I know who this woman is. What I don't understand is how she's here in front of me when she's supposed to be dead.

"Either she's a damn good actress, or she's banged her head and lost her memory, Havoc," Eagle tells me.

"I'm not an actress, and I haven't lost my memory. Have I, *Havoc*?"

"What's she talking about?"

I turn to Jethro. I don't know whether to laugh or scream. I understand why Jethro did all of this, and in a way, I have to thank him. But surely he can't believe that I'd be standing here like this, saying nothing, not beating the crap out of him if I thought this woman was my wife?

A strange sort of calm falls over me. I don't understand why when there's still so much to sort, but my head is suddenly clear for the first time in weeks.

"This isn't Wynter."

"What?" I know he's confused, anybody would be.

"He said I'm *not* Wynter. What, are you deaf?"

Jethro charges toward the girl, but I grab his arm, stopping him again. "Don't do it, brother."

"I know she's your wife, but she's driving me crazy! No woman has ever pushed my buttons like this, Havoc."

I run my fingers through my hair in frustration. "You really believe she's Wynter?" He nods. "Then, I should rip your fuckin' spine out for daring to charge her like that!" I breathe deeply and shake my head. I can't lose my temper here.

"Why don't you rip his spine out anyway? The man's an ass!"

I keep my hand on Jethro's arm, holding tightly to the spot. I can feel his anger like hot lava slapping me across the face. "Let it go, Jethro. I know she's a mouthy bitch, but she isn't Wynter."

"Of course, she is! Look at her!"

"I am looking at her, Jethro. Do you honestly think I don't know my own wife inside and out? This woman isn't my wife. If she were and you moved towards her like that, I'd have killed you where you stood for thinking about it, and you know it." Without a fucking doubt, no matter what she'd done.

"If she ain't Wynter, who the hell is she?"

I open my mouth to answer Eagle, but the girl cuts me off.

"Where is she?" I look at the girl. "Wynter. Where is she? I didn't believe my uncle when he told me that Wynter was out there. I thought he'd lost his mind when he said he'd seen her, but he hasn't, has he?" I shake my head, and she closes her eyes. We all see the tear that rolls down her cheek.

I can't even imagine how this feels for her right now. All these years, believing you were the only survivor. All I know is that's how Wynter has felt all these years.

"Obviously, you're Wynter's husband." I nod, even though I didn't need to. "She always did say that she'd one day marry an incredibly handsome man." I raise my eyebrow and try not to smirk. "I never imagined she'd marry a biker. Wynter always struck me as the type to marry a computer nerd." The girl laughs to herself. "Is she okay?" Again, I nod my head. "Can I see her?"

I sigh and push my hands into my jeans pockets. "I need you to answer a few things for me first. How did your uncle know Wynter was alive?"

"By chance," I watch her flex her fingers. Those bonds must be hurting, but I won't remove them until she's told me what I want to know. "Uncle Julian and two of his men went to a diner. They were in a small town on business. Julian told me that Wynter walked over to his table to take his order. Julian was shocked; the men with him believed she was me. They wondered what I was doing working in a diner when usually, I'm at the office." I don't need to know what she does for a living. I don't much care to. "But Julian knew better,"

Every man in the room stands listening to this girl speak. Not one of us says anything, we just listen.

"As Wynter walked away from the table with their order, Julian said her name. He told me that she turned around and asked how he knew who she was. Of course, he told her that he'd read her name tag. She wasn't wearing one, and naturally, she was spooked. She ended up running from the diner. I'm guessing because she thought

my uncle and his men might hurt her. After that day, each time Julian's men managed to track Wynter, she ran. Not once did they get close enough to tell her what they knew and why they wanted to speak with her."

"So, there are no men out there who want to hurt, Wynter?" The girl shakes her head at Jethro. "If you're not Wynter, who are you?"

"This is Spring," Each man looks at me. "Wynter's sister."

"What?" I look at Eagle. "Bullshit. Wynter's sister died along with her mother. You know that, Havoc."

I roll my neck and let it crack. He's right, and this doesn't make any sense right now, but it will.

"Is that what Wynter was told?" I nod my head at Spring. "We were told the same about Wynter. You haven't got a damn clue what it was like for us the day John lost his shit and shot us."

Now, we all know that John Anderson shot Spring and Julianne. However, from the way this girl is talking, I don't think anyone died. So what the fuck is going on?

"What happened, Spring?"

She looks at me and sighs. "I don't want to relive this shit again, but I will if it means I get to see my sister. I'm assuming that Wynter told you what she knows about that day and how it came about?"

I nod. "She explained that John had taken your mother to the store. While there, her older brother saw her and yelled her name. Julianne fought to get to him, but John dragged her away before they could be reunited."

"That's right," Spring smiles. "John knew that Julian would have killed him had he caught him. God knows how many times I've wished we could go back to that moment so that Julian could destroy that monster." She shifts a little in her seat.

"The day John shot us, Mom had planned our escape. John was supposed to be at work, and she'd have plenty of time to take us and run. It didn't work out that way."

I watch Spring turn her face to her shoulder and wipe away a tear.

She turns to look at me again. "Mom realized that Wynter had snuck out to meet her friend, and I had no choice but to tell her where Wynter had gone. We were about to go and find her so that we could leave when John walked through the door. He laughed and asked where Mom thought she was going with his daughter. For the

first time in her life, Julianne really stood up to him. She was so strong until the moment he told us that he'd shot Wynter and buried her somewhere no one would find her.

"I watched my mother crumble to the ground, sobbing and begging John to tell her that it wasn't true. John laughed and told Mom that he was smarter than she ever was and that he knew what she'd been planning. Then he turned the gun on me and shot me."

Spring shrugs, and Austin sucks in a breath. What it must have been like to be shot by her own father is something we'll never understand.

"I remember my mother's screams and her hand on my face. Then she was dragged away from me, and I must have lost consciousness. I woke up in the hospital, confused and frightened. I remember turning my head to the right. My mother was in a bed next to me, hooked up to machines, and her eyes closed. There were strange people beside her, three men and two women. I was afraid because I didn't know who they were. They were all dressed so fancy, and I could smell the older woman's perfume; it was so strong."

Spring stares into space for a moment. "Are you okay, Spring?" She looks at me and nods her head. "You don't have to carry on if it's too difficult."

I can be a bastard at the best of time, but I'm not heartless. It's blatantly obvious that retelling this story is effecting Spring more than she'd let on.

"I'm okay, thank you." I nod my head. If she says she's okay, then I'll leave it at that. "As I was saying, the younger woman noticed me watching them, and she tapped the older man's shoulder. He smiled at me and told me that his name was Jeremy and that he was my grandfather. He introduced the older lady as May, my grandmother. The two men, Julian and Justin, were his sons, and the younger woman's name was Ashley, Justin's wife.

"Jeremy told me that John had shot me in the shoulder and then left me to die. He'd then dragged my mother to the bedroom. She tried to run from him, but he shot her three times in places that would mean she'd die slowly. A neighbor called the police when they heard the first shot. The cops arrived quickly and arrested John. Miraculously, Mom and I were still alive when the paramedics arrived."

"Is your mother still alive?" I ask.

Spring nods. "Yeah, she's still alive. Though after she woke from her four-day coma, to be told one of her kids was dead, I thought she'd die from grief. Julianne may have hated John and what he did to her for those fifteen years, but she loved Wynter and me because we were hers."

"What happened after your mother woke up?" Austin asks.

"Well, she was shocked to see her family. She'd spent fifteen years believing they were dead, and there they were, right by her side. According to Justin, after Julian had reported seeing Julianne to the police, they worked out pretty quickly who we were. As soon as Mom and I were bundled into ambulances, a detective called my uncle and told him that he believed he'd finally found Julianne. The detective had been looking for Julianne for fifteen long years."

I shift on my feet and force myself not to keep asking questions, though I want to.

"My grandparents," Spring continues. "Took Julianne and me to live with them. I'd never seen a house so big in my whole life. My grandparents were very wealthy, and we wanted for nothing. Julian still lived at home, and my mother needed him more than anyone else. I learned from my uncle Justin that Mom and Julian had always been close. Julian and Justin are twins and have a close bond, but Julianne had always been Julian's shadow. Their mother even named Julianne after Julian in a fashion."

Spring chuckles to herself. Everyone else in the room looks at each other, and I shake my head slightly. Christ knows what's funny right now.

"Julianne and I went through a lot of therapy, which helped us come to terms with many things. However, Mom still suffers from flashbacks sometimes, and the nightmares about losing Wynter won't seem to go away. Somethings are just too hard to get over. John was told that we'd died to protect us. My grandfather is a powerful man, and he brought a court order against the tabloids,"

"Why?" Jethro asks, even though that was possibly the most stupid question he's ever asked.

"Because of who he is and the fact when my mother first went missing, the story was everywhere. For years, Julianne's parents searched for their daughter to no avail. Of course, once the news report was out that we'd been found, the whole world would know we were still alive, and we'd never get any peace. My mother need-

ed time to recover without people following her around. It was fine for me, I wasn't abused, though I got hit a couple of times, and my life in that house seemed normal. My grandfather couldn't have his daughter worrying that John, even from prison, would never leave us alone."

Spring shifts in her seat. "It was fine for a while, but someone eventually leaked the story that Mom and I were alive, but no pictures were ever taken of us because of the court order. Mom freaked out, scared out of her mind that John would somehow escape prison and find us. It set her back so far; I thought I'd lose her for real."

Another tear escapes Spring's eye, and I realize this girl has suffered far more than Wynter has. That will destroy Wynter, but I'll be there to put her back together again.

"Mom fought hard through more therapy to get better, and she did well. Hell, she did better than most would in her situation. Though she never went anywhere without two people with her, and it took years before she'd go shopping with anyone, even her mother. Bad memories and fear." She shrugs.

"It had been three years after Mom and I were freed before I found a letter in uncle Julian's desk. It was from John, sent around the time he'd found out that Mom and I were alive. He'd written to Julianne because he wanted to see us. I read his words, and with every word, I felt the sickening fear creeping in because I was terrified that he'd get out and find me, just as Julianne had feared."

Spring runs her tongue over her teeth. "Julian found me reading the letter. He saw how afraid I was, shit my hands were shaking. Julian sat me down and explained how John would never get out of prison. I had nothing to worry about because I was safe. John was just a sick old man who had nothing left in his life, but the hell he'd go through in that place. I cried to my uncle, asking why John thought Julianne and I would ever visit him after what he'd done.

"It was John's words about how much he loved and missed me that seemed to get to me the most. John stated that the best thing he'd ever done in his life was me; I was his pride and joy. I told my uncle that maybe if I visited John, he'd tell me where Wynter's body was, and we could finally find peace. Julian said to me that John would never give up the information, even to me. That monster would sit there and feed me lies about finding Wynter, just so that I'd keep visiting.

"I tried to argue the point with Julian, but he told me that I needed to get the idea out of my head and quick because he'd never allow it. John had kidnapped my mother, raped and beat her, left her with child, and kept her a prisoner for fifteen years, so why would I want to see a man who was capable of that?"

Good question.

"As much as I wanted to find Wynter, when I looked inside myself, I knew that John would never tell me. He hurt my sister almost every day of her life because she wasn't perfect in his eyes, and he got off on it. John blamed my mother for Wynter's deafness, but praised her for the fact, in his eyes, I was perfect."

I close my eyes and shake the awful thoughts from my head. It killed me, hearing Wynter tell her story. I couldn't bear to hear how John Anderson tormented Wynter from someone else's lips.

"I don't understand something," I grit my teeth at Jethro. He doesn't need to understand anything! "If you were all John's prisoners, why were you and Wynter allowed out of the house? Wasn't he worried that you'd tell somebody what he'd done?"

Spring rolls her eyes, annoyed. "Of course, he wasn't worried. Wynter and I didn't know what he'd done to Julianne until much later. John made us believe that we were like any other family. Mom never left the house without John, but we didn't think anything of it because we knew no different. Like any other child who lives in a violent household, we knew never to say anything about what went on at home. John warned Wynter and me how evil people are, and what would happen to us if we ever said anything." She sighs.

"Every person close to John, his parents, his friends, not one of them every thought anything was wrong. Shit, he lied about Julianne's age so that no one would know she was a child. I've often wondered how no one realized who Julianne was. Her face had been everywhere for months. Though when I think about it, I'm pretty sure his parents knew. They knew and did nothing to help my mother or ease her family's pain."

Typical.

"It was John's mother who told John that he needed to send Wynter and me to school, to make sure people saw him as a good family man. I guess so that if anyone ever did come looking, they'd think Julianne was with him willingly.

"No one ever did come looking, though, and John carried on his front of a wonderful husband, and amazing father. Everyone thought he was brilliant, though we rarely saw people that mattered. Inside the house, John was a monster of the worst kind. Julianne and Wynter took the brunt of his anger because, for some reason, he favored me."

I watch Spring physically shudder. I can't tell if it's guilt at not being beaten by John every day, or something else.

"I had friends at school, and I can't say as I didn't. I had fun while I was there, and that pleased John because my teachers believed I had a happy home life. Wynter made one friend, a scruffy little girl who followed Wynter around. The only time Wynter smiled was when she was with... I think her name was Cassie?"

"That's right," I tell Spring. "Cassie. Wynter and Cassie are still together," Her eyes bug out and she smiles. "When Wynter was informed her mother had died, and they couldn't find your body, she was put into the system. While in a group home, Cassie arrived because her mother was useless and couldn't care for her correctly. They've looked out for each other ever since."

I'm taken aback when Spring lets out a sob. Shit, I didn't mean to make the girl cry.

"I'm so happy they have each other, but did Wynter ever find a family?"

I shake my head. "Not until she met and married me. Not long ago, she found John's younger brother,"

"Jack?" She cuts me off.

"Yes. But he goes by the road name BlackJack. Before you say anything, BlackJack is nothing like John or their parents. Jack is a good man with a big family, and they love Wynter."

Spring nods her head. "I'm so happy that she found him. Julian told me about Jack, but I never wanted to find him. I was scared that I'd see nothing but John, and that I wouldn't be able to separate the two. Even though Julian told me that Jack had nothing to do with his family since he was seventeen, I still couldn't force myself to believe he was the man Julian told me about. Julian also told me about your club, and that my uncle belonged there. Though he never pushed me to find Jack, Julian just wanted me to know that I had more family out there should I ever wish to know them."

I shift on my feet and straighten my back. "If John knew you were alive, and you had visited him, it's possible that he would have told you Wynter was still out there."

Spring chuckles. "You really believe he would have told us that little fact?"

"Maybe not,"

"Did Wynter ever visit him?"

I nod my head. "She did, and she asked him where he'd hidden your body." I laugh sardonically. "Sick bastard laughed in her face."

Spring nods her head in thought. "That doesn't surprise me. I had to face the fact that my father was a monster along time ago and put him to rest. I no longer think about that man if I can help it, and Wynter should do the same."

"Wait," I roll my eyes at Austin. What the fuck now? "How the hell did Wynter not know Spring and Julianne were alive? I mean, given the fact Spring has just told us someone leaked the story to the press. Surely, she would have heard something."

I shrug my shoulders. "I don't know, Austin. All I can think is the fact that Wynter avoids the news like the plague. Not to mention the fact she and Cassie spent years fighting to survive in that care home."

For as long as I've known her, Wynter has never watched the news, nor read a newspaper. She always told me that life was too short to read about the bad things.

There are many reasons why its possible Wynter never found out her mother and sister were alive. Many reasons why she wouldn't have known. But what the hell does it matter now?

"We didn't know Wynter was alive either," Spring interrupts. "I don't yet understand why she was sent to a care home when the cops knew Julianne and I had survived."

She has a point.

"The officer in charge of our case never once mentioned Wynter other than in past tense. Surely he had to know something? I guess my uncle will get to the bottom of it in time."

I'll get to the bottom of it if it kills me. I won't let this go. Someone fucked up in a big way, and my wife has lives twelve years without her mother and sister because somebody didn't do their job correctly.

There has to be a reason for it; it can't just be an accident. Somebody out there deliberately kept this family apart, and I have to find out why.

"I'm still struggling to believe that Wynter is alive. All these years I have grieved my twin sister,"

"Twins?" I don't know why Eagle is so shocked by this little fact. I thought it would have been obvious.

"You took me from outside my home, away from my husband and child, because you thought I was Wynter. Havoc told you that I am not Wynter, and it didn't occur to you that she's my identical twin?"

Eagle shakes his head. "Makes me a stupid fuck, but no, it didn't even cross my mind. Whenever Wynter spoke about you, she never said you were her twin. Nor did you through this whole conversation until now."

"It is what it is," Spring shrugs. "My mother is going to have a heart attack when she finds out Wynter is alive. She's spent the past twelve years searching for Wynter's burial place so that we can finally put her to rest, but never finding anything."

And Wynter has done the same with when it comes to Spring. All that pain for nothing.

"Mom will never really be free of the horrors she suffered at the hands of that man, but she moved forward as much as she could. Knowing Wynter is alive, I believe, will fix something that is still broken within Julianne. Our family will be complete as it always should have been.

"There is so much Wynter needs to know. I want to tell her about my husband and my son. Mom will want to tell Wynter about our step-father. He's a good man who loves Julianne more than life itself."

Spring smiles dreamily. I get the feeling the man Julianne married is a good one.

"Julianne knew Neil when they were in school. When he found out that Julianne was alive, he came to the house to see her. Of course, she was scared and nervous, and it took weeks before she agreed to see Neil. He came by every day after work, and even though Julianne was scared to be friends with him, he never gave up trying. It took three years, but Julianne realized that Neil was never

going to hurt her the way John had. She was safe with the man she'd fallen in love with." She smiles fondly.

"Mom and Neil have been married for eight years, and they have a child together. Brody is five years old, and he is everything to Mom and Dad. Brody knows all about Wynter, and every night before bed, he sends a prayer to the angels to take care of his big sister. He's going to be so shocked to know Wynter is still here with us."

Wynter will be shocked to know she has a little brother. She may also pass out when she realizes her sister and her mother are still alive, that they have been all these years.

John knew - he knew, and he said nothing to Wynter about it. How could he be so fucking cruel? All this time, he could have let Wynter know that she wasn't alone. I suppose it was just one more way of punishing his imperfect daughter, another way to keep control.

"Why weren't we told that Wynter was alive? How did we never know?" Spring repeats the same questions she's already asked, but this time she looks to me for the answers.

"I can't answer that," I tell her honestly. "But we will find out, Spring. I know it's hard to get your head around all that happened, but it will get easier. There are so many questions that may never be answered, Spring. I can't even imagine what you and your mother went through all those years; I only know what it was like for Wynter."

Spring nods her head. "I let go of the need to know why a long time ago. But now I know my sister is still alive, that my uncle didn't imagine it, the questions are back. I just want to know that she's happy. I don't think I could believe she's really alive until I see her. Is she happy?"

I nod my head. "I think so. Though there's only one person who can give you that answer." I turn to Eagle. "Untie her. I'll be back in a moment."

Chapter Fifteen

WYNTER

“Hey.” I smile at Havoc. “Finished?” He asked me to wait outside the warehouse while he sorted something. Havoc didn’t tell me what that was, and I didn’t ask because it wasn’t my business. However, I’ve been sitting out here for almost an hour, and I’m bored out of my mind.

“Almost,” Havoc takes my hands in his. “There’s something I need to tell you, Wynter. I need you to listen to me and try not to freak out.”

“Freak out about what?” I’m confused. To be honest, I was confused as to why he wanted me to tag along for this, whatever it is. Havoc said he didn’t want to leave me home alone, so I came. But why ask me to come along just to leave me outside for an hour?

Havoc stares at me for a moment. He looks both guilty and sad about something. Then an awful thought hits me. “Havoc, are you seeing someone else?” I swallow hard, scared of the answer my husband might give me.

Why on this earth would Havoc bring you to a warehouse in the middle of nowhere, leave you for an hour, then come out and tell you he’s having an affair?

I don’t know, and I know it sounds stupid, but it’s the first thing that came into my head. It’s a terrible thing to think about my husband because I know he’d never do that to me.

“No,” Comes his short but firm answer. “I would never cheat on you, Wynter.”

“I know that deep down. I just don’t know what to think right now, Havoc.”

Havoc's hand comes to my cheek, and he leans in and kisses me softly. "I love you, Wynter, and there's no chance I'd ever step out on you."

I smile and nod my head. "I love you, too."

"The reason we're here is that a few days ago, Jethro came to me with some information that shocked me." I don't know why, but I feel my stomach turning over. I feel like he's going to give me some bad news. "Jethro informed me that he'd seen you a couple towns over, with another man."

My jaw literally drops. I haven't been anywhere, but this town since Havoc brought me back here. I most certainly haven't been with another man.

"What the fuck? I haven't been anywhere with any other man. Why the hell would Jethro lie about me like that?" I'm not yelling, yet, but I am pissed that Jethro would say something like that about me. I thought we were friends!

"Listen to me, Wynter," I close my mouth and nod for Havoc to continue. "Of course, I didn't believe what Jethro was saying. How could I when I know you don't go anywhere alone? When would you even have the time to see someone else?"

I raise my eyebrow in sarcasm. I don't have time to run off with another man. I keep myself busy for a reason, and I don't leave town because of the men looking for me.

"But then Jethro showed me a photograph he'd taken. The girl in the picture may have had longer hair, been dressed like a high-class businesswoman, but she looked just like you."

Now I'm even more confused. "And you believed it was me?"

"For a moment or two, I did. I won't lie to you, Wynter, it killed me. Then Jethro told me about the kid who came running out of the house, shouting *Mommy*. I all but fuckin' died when Austin confirmed what Jethro was saying. I mean, how could I not believe for a moment when it was staring me in the face, Wynter?"

I pull my hands from Havoc's and wrap my arms around myself. I feel like I've been punched in the gut. Okay, he saw a picture of a woman who looks like me, and anyone would have doubts after that. However, he should have come to me and asked for the truth, not sat on the information for days!

"Baby, don't pull away from me."

"I don't know what to say to you, Havoc. Whoever that woman was, she wasn't me. I would never cheat," It hurts that Havoc thought for a second that I would do something like that.

Did you just think the same thing about him?

I guess I did.

"I know that," Havoc leans his ass back against his bike. "When I thought about it, I realized I was stupid, even contemplating it."

Something clicks in my head. "That's why you were asking me where I'd been the other day, wasn't it?" He nods his head, and I sigh. I knew something was wrong that day, but I didn't push for answers because he told me it was nothing.

We made love that day. Surely if he really believed I'd cheated, he wouldn't have touched me? Not only that, but we've been closer than ever the past couple of days.

"I told Jethro to drop it because I knew that woman wasn't you. Today, however, he called me because he'd done something stupid."

My gut churns again. "What had he done?"

"He'd kidnapped whom he believed to be you."

My eyes bug out of my head so far they sting. "What the fuck, Havoc?"

"I know," He rubs his stubbled jaw with his fingers. "I brought you with me today to show Jethro what a massive mistake he'd made. I asked you to wait out here because I needed to calm the situation inside first. When I walked in there and found they'd tied the girl to a chair, I wasn't pleased."

"What the hell is going on, Havoc?" I rub the back of my neck. I can't believe what I'm hearing. "You're telling me that your so-called friend, the man who'll soon be my best friend's brother-in-law, kidnapped a woman? Kidnapped her because he believes she's me? Is he insane?"

Jethro has lost his damn mind! Who the hell told him that it's okay to go around kidnapping women?

If he thought that woman was me, that means he planned to make me pay for cheating on Havoc. I dread to think what that entailed.

God, that poor woman in there must be so scared and confused. What if Jethro has hurt her, all the time yelling at her and accusing her of cheating on Havoc? All the while, the woman doesn't have a clue why she's there, nor what she's done.

Okay, I understand Jethro was looking out for Havoc. He thought that woman was me and that I'd hurt his friend. If Jethro has hurt that woman, believing she's me, then that means he intended to hurt me. The thought makes me shiver.

I'm going to kill the prick. How dare he do this?

Havoc takes my arms in his hands. "Calm down! I know how bad this is, Wynter, but there's a reason for it. As wrong as it was for Jethro to do what he did, he did it for me because he thought you were cheating. I know that you weren't, I knew it almost instantly. But, baby, you'll soon understand why we thought the girl was you."

I shrug Havoc off me and fold my arms around myself. "I'm waiting, and this better, be good, Havoc."

"I don't have time to start from the damn beginning. The girl inside the warehouse, the reason she was mistaken for you is because," Havoc stops talking and takes a deep breath. "She's your sister, Wynter."

I can't help it; I burst out laughing. It's not that I find what he's saying funny, it's the fact it's so damn ridiculous. My sister died twelve years ago. "What the fuck, Havoc?"

"This isn't a joke, Wynter! Do you really think I'd be saying this for kicks?" I'm no longer laughing. I can see that Havoc is serious, and that leaves me even more confused. "Spring is right in there," He points to the warehouse, and I instinctively look in that direction.

"How the hell can that be, Havoc? Spring died. John killed her, along with my mother."

"No," He shakes his head, and I swallow hard. "I know what you were told, and I don't have a clue why yet, but neither of them died, Wynter. Your sister and your mother are still alive."

There's a blackness in front of my eyes, and I can feel myself falling. I don't know what's happening! How can my family still be alive when I was told they were dead?

Wouldn't somebody have informed me that I wasn't the only survivor?

Why weren't my family told that I was alive?

How the *fuck* can someone have fucked up this massively?

Why would anybody keep from me that my mother and sister were alive?

I sat in that kid's home for years, wondering why I was so alone in the world. All the damn time, my family was out there, alive and moving on from what they'd been through.

Why weren't they told about me?

Why couldn't we have been together all of this time?

I won't stop until I have the answers to all of my questions. Someone is going to pay for this, for all the years I spent wondering why. Somebody fucked up royally, and I want to know why!

"Wynter? Baby, it's okay."

I feel Havoc's hand stroking my back, but I don't turn my head to look at him. He's close enough that I can hear him. "How did this happen, Havoc? Why was I never told they were alive? All these years, I've wondered why, and not once did anyone tell me!"

"I know you must have a thousand questions rushing through your mind right now," That's an understatement. "But we'll find the answer to each one in time. The men who were looking for you,"

"What about them?" My heart starts banging in my chest. What if those men are in that warehouse?

"Don't panic," Havoc shakes his head. "Those men work for your uncle," I narrow my eyes in confusion. "Your mother's brother. The reason they started following you, in the first place, was because your uncle saw you working at a diner. You waited on him, and of course, he knew right away who you were. He sent those men after you only to tell you that your mother and sister were alive. He wanted you to know you had a family out there."

My eyeballs seem to be darting everywhere. So, those men aren't out to kidnap and kill me. My uncle sent them to find me so that I could be reunited with my mother and sister. I don't have a clue what to think.

"I'm so confused, Havoc."

"I know you are, but right now, there's a young woman in that warehouse dying to see you again."

I rub my hands over my face and sigh. I want to believe that my sister is inside that building, but something inside won't let me. I'm terrified to the point I'm scared I'll vomit. God, I want this to be true so badly that I can taste it. From the moment I was told Spring and Julianne had died, I prayed for it to be untrue. I prayed every night that someone out there had made a mistake.

If I walk into that warehouse and my sister really is there, I don't think I'll be on my feet for more than a second. I know Havoc would never lie to me, but people are evil. The woman could be lying. She could have found out about me and my past, and now she's using it to get what she wants.

What the fuck that would be, I don't know. I don't have anything worth taking other than Havoc, and he'd never leave me, I know that. So what the hell could she want?

You know deep down that Havoc is right, Wynter. The woman in the warehouse is Spring. You're just scared to hope.

I turn to face Havoc. "What if this is all bullshit, Havoc? What if that woman in there is a con-artist? She could just look like me, or she could have had plastic surgery. John could have hired her to kill me. He always was angry that I lived."

"Wynter," Havoc sighs. "Do you really think I'm so stupid that I wouldn't know the difference?" I stare at him, not saying anything. Anyone can be fooled by another who's good at the job they were hired for. "She knows too much, Wynter. Things no one else could know. Whether you believe it or not, your sister is right through that door. Just look at her, Wynter – look at her, and you will know the truth."

I suppose meeting her can't hurt. If she is my sister, I'll know. If she isn't, I'll break her neck. Simple.

With shaking hands, I take Havoc's in mine. "I'm terrified, Havoc. I'm scared that woman is Spring, and what it will mean. But worse than that, I'm scared that she isn't. If she isn't, why is she doing this?"

"Wynter, listen to me," Havoc takes my face in his hands. "Spring didn't come to us, claiming to be your sister. Jethro found Spring and dragged her here. She didn't have a clue who any of us was until someone said your name. It was obvious to me whom I was looking at, and I think it dawned on her just as quickly. Baby, she has no reason to lie."

I nod my head and let go of a sob. Deep down, I knew the truth; it was just hard to admit. "Everything's going to change now, isn't it?"

Havoc nods with a smile. He tucks a strand of my hair behind my ear. "It's a good change, beautiful. I know it's hard to digest. The last thing you thought when you woke up this morning was that

you'd be seeing your sister again. However, you are about to see her, and things will be just fine, I promise."

I nod my head. "I suppose we best get in there. Oh, and before we do, I can't promise I won't kill Jethro."

Havoc laughs loudly and tells me, "Can't say as I'd blame you." He leans in and kisses me. "Let's get in there."

Havoc leads me inside, and I'm shaking cold. How can I be cold and burning up at the same time?

Deep breaths, Wynter, everything will be okay.

The first thing I see when Havoc leads me through a metal door is Jethro. My blood boils, and the anger becomes too much, too soon. I yank my hand from Havoc's and run toward Jethro. I hear Havoc yell for me to stop, but I've slapped Jethro across the face before Havoc could reach me.

The only problem is, I slap Jethro again and again. "You stupid bastard!" I yell loudly, angrily. "How dare you tell Havoc that I cheated on him? How dare you kidnap my sister!" I scream.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?!" Jethro yells.

Arms encircle my waist, lifting me off the floor and pulling me away from Jethro. "Calm down!"

"Get off me!" I scream louder. "Put me down, Havoc!"

He does, reluctantly though he grabs my arm and turns me to face him. "I know you're angry, but this isn't going to help, Wynter."

My eyes clock someone over Havoc's shoulder. I blink rapidly, my mind telling me that this is all an illusion. But I know that it isn't. I know everything Havoc told me outside is the truth. My sister is alive, and she's standing behind my husband, looking at me with tears in her eyes.

I push past Havoc, my eyes are wide and my mouth agape. "Spring?"

"Wynter," She sobs my name before clasping her hands over her mouth. I watch her for a second as she sobs, and I realized she's been feeling the same way I have. Whatever Havoc told Spring about me, it didn't seem real until she saw me standing here.

There's no denying that she's Spring, my heart tells me it's true. I reach out my hand to my sister, and she takes it in her own. I pull her into my arms, and we hold each other as we sob. Twelve years of wondering, hoping, praying, and finally, my wish has come true.

I'm not stupid, and I never believed in fairytales, but when you're alone in the world, all you want is your family back. I wished for that every night for years after they were gone. Now my sister is here in my arms, and I'm silently thanking God for bringing her back to me. Even if technically it was Jethro and his kidnapping ass that brought Spring here.

If what Havoc said is true, my Mom is still alive and out there somewhere. My beautiful Mommy is still alive, and all I want is to see her and have her hold me the way she did when I was a little girl.

My sister pulls away from me and cups my cheek with her hand. I laugh and wipe a tear from her eye. "I can't believe you're really in front of me. Uncle Julian said you were alive, but I found it hard to believe. God, I've missed you, Wynter."

"I've missed you too. I don't understand how you're here. John told me that he'd killed you. He said that he'd buried you somewhere no one would find you."

Spring nods her head in understanding. "He told Mom and me the same about you. The day he shot us," She physically shudders, and I feel her pain in my heart. "He said that he'd killed you, then he turned his gun on me."

"How did I not know you were alive, Spring? Nothing makes sense."

My sister takes my hand in hers. "It doesn't to me either, Wynter. We've spent twelve years searching for your resting place, only to find out you're alive. Obviously, there was a communication breakdown somewhere. We've been parted for far too long, and we will find the answers soon," She touches my face again and smiles. "But for right now, let's not wonder why and just be happy that we're together again."

She's right; there's no point asking why. The answers will come eventually, and whoever did this will be held accountable. I can leave those questions for now, but there is something I need to know. "Is Mom really alive?"

Springs nods, another tear falling from her eye. I gulp back a sob. "If whoever took my phone," I watch Spring look from Eagle to Jethro, to Austin. "Gives it back; I can prove it to you."

I watch Havoc nod at Austin, who then takes Spring's cell phone from his pocket and hands it to her. She snatches it with a roll of her

eyes, and I have to stifle a laugh. Spring has always been strong-minded, even when we were kids. John loved Spring and allowed her to speak her mind to a degree. Age hasn't changed that, though I feel it made her stronger, more determined.

She taps away at something on the screen, and then she turns it so that I can see. I swallow hard and blink, trying to force the tear not to fall. The picture of the woman staring back at me is an older version of Spring and me. My beautiful mother, smiling for the camera. She looks just as I remember her, and my heart aches for the time we've lost.

I touch my fingertip to the screen and let go of a sob. "She's really alive," I mumble to myself.

"She's really alive," Spring parrots back. "But she was never the same after losing you." I look at my sister as she speaks. "It took many years of therapy for Julianne to move on from what John did to her. I'm not sure either of us would have survived without her parents and brothers."

My heart beats faster. "She found them," It wasn't a question, more a statement.

"They found us. When I woke up in the hospital, they were by Mom's side. They're amazing, Wynter. They took us home and loved us endlessly. I'll tell you everything soon enough, but I want you to know that we never forgot you. Not a day has gone by where we haven't thought of you."

I nod, and more tears fall. I feel so overwhelmed that I don't know what to do. Everything feels so surreal right now. I know Spring is right in front of me, but somehow, it doesn't feel real.

"Mom got married," I blink and smile. "He's a wonderful man, Wynter. They knew each other from their school days. It was years after Mom returned home before they went on a date. Mom never liked going anywhere alone, and she found it hard to trust."

I can understand that because I still find it hard to trust anyone. Mom was kidnapped as a child and held captive for years. Though Spring and I were prisoners, we didn't suffer anywhere near as much as Julianne did.

"Through all of Mom's struggles, and there were a lot, Neil never left her side. He showed her that she could trust him, and Neil showed Mom all the joys in life. Mom sat me down one day and asked me what I thought of Neil."

My sister smiles dreamily, and I can't help smiling too. "I told Mom how much I loved Neil, and I did because he'd been there for me from the moment he met me. He's kind and compassionate, understanding, patient, and caring. All the things a man should be."

Neil sounds wonderful, and I'm so glad my mother has someone like that in her life.

"They were married eight years ago, and it was the best day of all of our lives. I'd never seen Mom smile the way she did that day. That day, not only did Mom take Neil's name, but I also did. I did because he became my father. I've called him; *Dad* ever since."

I swallow the happy sob. "I'm so glad that Mom's happy, Spring. She deserves it more than anyone else."

Spring laughs and takes her phone and shows me another picture. I stare down at my mother and whom I'm assuming is Neil. He's handsome, blue eyes, chiseled jaw. My Mom picked a handsome man, but she's just as beautiful. They make a cute couple.

Spring shows me another picture, a picture of a little boy. He's smiling wide, blue eyes sparkling. He has light brown hair, falling in choppy waves around his ears, and I can't help laughing at how cute he is. "This is Brody," Spring tells me. "He's our baby brother."

My head shoots up, eyes wide with shock. I didn't expect that. I thought the little boy was Spring's, not my mother's. "Brother?"

"Yes," Spring nods. "He's five, and he's amazing, Wynter. He knows all about you because Mom, Dad, and I have told him about you. He loves you and prays for you every night."

"Oh," I giggle-sob. "I can't wait to meet him." I have a little brother! My head is spinning, trying to take all this new information in. My mother is married to a wonderful man, and I have a brother. "What about you?" I ask. I know she's married. I saw the wedding ring.

"Well," Spring smiles. "I've been married to James for three years, and we have an eighteen-month-old son called Matthew. I'm supposed to be putting him to bed right now," Spring throws daggers at Jethro, and I have to stifle a laugh. "My husband has called me over fifty times."

"He must be wondering where you are."

Spring nods. "He knows everything about my past, and he must be going out of his mind with worry. I best call him."

I nod my head and watch my sister walk across the room. I listen to her one-sided conversation, and I realize how scared James must have been from how Spring is trying to reassure him that she's okay.

I smile at Havoc when he wraps his arm around my waist. "Everything's gonna be okay, Wynter."

I nod my head. "I know. It's just a lot to take in, Havoc. This morning, I thought my mother and sister were dead. Now I have both of them back, along with a brother, step-father, brother-in-law, grandparents, uncles, and God only knows how many others."

Havoc kisses my head. "I know it's a lot to take in, but I'm here for you, baby."

I wrap myself in Havoc's arms, laying my head on his shoulder, I close my eyes. I'm overwhelmed, but I am beyond happy. Maybe everything will be perfect now, but somehow, I don't think it will be.

Chapter Sixteen

HAVOC

“*I*’m scared, Havoc, and I don’t know why.”
I run my fingertips up and down Wynter’s bare arm. It’s been a long day, and we’re finally in bed. “Today was a lot for you to take in, Wynter. Twelve years is a long time to grieve someone, let alone two people. Then to find out they were alive all this time? I can’t even imagine what you’re feeling right now.”

“Confused, mainly.” She sighs.

Wynter didn’t get to spend nearly enough time with her sister tonight. She wanted to, of course, but Spring’s husband was seconds away from sending out a search party.

Spring promised to call tomorrow after she’d spoken with her mother. Now Wynter is lying in my arms, both scared and nervous about seeing her mother again.

“I’d be surprised if you weren’t confused, Wynter. I’m confused, so I know you much be.”

Wynter wraps her arm tighter around my waist and snuggles into me. I hear her sniff while trying not to. I take her chin between my thumb and forefinger, lifting her head so that I can look at her. I stroke my thumb over her cheek, wiping away a tear.

“I’m sorry.”

“Sweetheart, you have nothing to be sorry for. I know all of this has been overwhelming, and I know you’re thinking about all the time you’ve lost. Aren’t you?” Wynter nods her head. “There are so many unanswered questions swimming through your mind, so

many things that don't make sense. Baby, we will get to the bottom of it."

She holds my hand against her cheek with her eyes closed, and she nods her head. More tears fall from her eyes.

"Don't keep it inside, Wynter. It's okay to cry." She opens her eyes and looks at me. "You don't need to hide your pain from me, Wynter. I'm your husband, and I'm here for you. Let it out, beautiful."

Wynter is strong and brave, but keeping that kind of pain inside will only destroy her in the end.

"Havoc," She sobs my name, and I hold her close to me while she sobs her heart out.

My heart breaks for the pain Wynter is in right now, but I know it won't last. Wynter will purge her soul tonight, and tomorrow, she'll look forward to the future.

Wynter sobs for so long that I'm worried she'll become dehydrated. However, Wynter shakes her head when I offer her the glass of water from the dresser next to me.

A short while later, the sobs subside, and Wynter falls asleep. It's a good hour before I follow her, however. There was too much on my mind and no way of shutting down.

* * *

I DIDN'T SLEEP much last night. Wynter woke during the night, thanks to a nightmare about her mother and sister dying. I managed to soothe her back to sleep, but then I woke up again two hours later. That was a little after 4: AM. I couldn't get back to sleep, so I decided to get up and shower. After that, I sat thinking about things, trying to put the puzzle pieces together. I hoped I could make some sense out of this mess, but I couldn't.

It was way too early to call my brother when I did, but Ghost answered on the fourth ring. I'd woken him from his sleep, and he was pissed for a second there. 'Why the fuck are you calling me at 6: AM, Havoc?' He snapped. 'Jesus Christ, it's still the middle of the night!'

I rolled my eyes at his over-exaggeration. 'I didn't mean to wake you,'

‘What’s wrong?’ There was concern in his tone as I heard him sit up.

‘You know I’d never ask anyone for anything, Ghost, but you’re my brother, and I need you.’

I sensed Ghost raise his eyebrows in shock. I never ask anybody for anything because I don’t have a reason to. However, at that moment, I needed my brother to tell me what to do. I need guidance in order to help my wife through this.

Ghost arrived twenty minutes later, and now we’re sitting at my dining table, drinking coffee. I’ve just explained everything that’s been going on and brought Ghost up to speed.

“First off, Jethro went about things all wrong,” Ghost doesn’t need to tell me that. “But he did it for you.”

I nod my head. “I know that.”

“Now that he knows the truth, Jethro will apologize to Wynter. I can’t even begin to imagine what Wynter is feeling right now, Havoc. That poor girl must be all sorts of confused.”

“She is, and I imagine Spring is too. Christ knows how their mother will feel when she finds out.”

That poor woman has lived twenty-seven years of hell in one way or another. Having Wynter back will ease some of that pain, however. Together, Julianne, Wynter, and Spring will come through this. I know they will.

What I need to do is find out why they’ve been apart all these years.

“Wynter and her family will be just fine, Havoc. They’ll just need a little time.”

I nod my head again. “I know.” I finish off my coffee and place the cup on the table. “I need to find out what happened, Ghost. What the hell happened and who kept them apart all these years.”

“Havoc, there’s a chance you may never find the answers you seek.”

I breathe deeply through my nose with my eyes closed. Ghost is right, of course, there’s a chance we’ll never find out the truth. That won’t stop me trying to find it, in any case.

“I have to try, Ghost. Wynter deserves to know why she ended up in a care home while believing her mom and sister to be dead. They deserve the same.”

Ghost nods his head with a smile on his face. We talk about where to start in the search for answers. Ghost suggests that we start with the cops. I need to speak with whichever detective was in charge of the case. Maybe that's where I'll find what I need.

"Give me a couple days, and I'll have a name for you."

"You mean, Trace will?" We both laugh.

Trace is good at his job. The man can find out anything if he puts his mind to it. If it's traceable, then Trace will find it.

"I could drop it," I rub the back of my neck with my hand. "But I think my wife deserves to know why she was tossed aside while her mother and sister lived happily ever after."

"I wouldn't go that far, Havoc." Ghost scoffs.

"Julianne and Spring were together, Ghost. They had each other while Wynter was alone in the world,"

"True." He nods. "But Wynter has you, Havoc, and she's happy and safe."

All of that is true, but it's not the same as waking up one day to find out your family is alive after spending years thinking they were dead.

Ghost has been there himself, though the situation was very different, he found out he had a sister he never knew about. I remember how hard that was for Ghost.

Cordelia grew up in England with a wealthy family, and she wanted for nothing. Ghost was pushed from care home to care home, never finding a loving family.

When Red and Roman found Ghost, he'd never known family life. He'd always taken care of himself, and counted on no one *but* himself. My Mom and Dad gave Ghost a family, but he didn't want Cordelia to be part of it.

Red eventually managed to persuade Ghost to meet with his twin sister. They talked, and Ghost opened his heart to Cordelia and her small daughter, Felicity, and they too became part of our family.

I class Cordelia as my big sister as well as Fallon. Fallon was part of Scotty, and Cordelia is part of Ghost. He's been my brother since I was three years old, and he's all I know when it comes to a big brother. Of course, Scotty was my biological big brother, but I didn't have nearly enough time with him before he left this world.

"What was it like finding out you had a twin sister?" We've spoken about this before, but not in detail. Ghost never was one to talk

about himself.

Ghost rolls his shoulders and sighs. "I'll be honest with you, Havoc, it was hard. I didn't believe Cordelia was who she said she was. I'd got Avery, Danny, Vinny, you and Trey, Mom and Dad, and didn't have room for anyone else."

I smirk because he's said that a few times over the years.

"Cordelia was persistent; I'll give her that. She went to Mom and Dad and spoke to them about the best way to talk to me."

"I remember," I laugh because I do remember how Cordelia came knocking one day, wanting information on Ghost.

"Red spoke to me and told me how stupid I was being. In the end, I realized I wasn't just angry and jealous; I was scared to let Cordelia in. However, once I did, I understood how stupid I'd been. I love my sister, Havoc," I know he does, he makes no secret of it. "Once Cordelia was in my life, I couldn't remember a time when she wasn't. It will be that way for Wynter and her family."

I scrub my hands over my face. I know Ghost is right, I just feel so sorry for them all. All that pain and suffering, thanks to a crazy bastard.

He was more than just crazy, Havoc.

"Speaking of Cordelia, are you coming next Friday?"

"Next Friday?" I haven't got a clue what Ghost is talking about.

"Cordelia and Mike's fifteenth wedding anniversary. Don't tell me, you forgot?"

Crap! I had forgotten.

Mike is a member of Snakes Henchmen MC. From the moment he met Cordelia, he was hooked. Ghost wasn't happy when Mike and Cordelia started dating, and he kicked up a fuss about their long-distance relationship.

Ghost even tried to convince Cordelia that Mike would never be faithful to her, and she deserved more. Cordelia politely told Ghost that she trusted Mike, and even though she loved Ghost for looking for her, she loved Mike and wanted Ghost to be happy for them.

Around that happening, Cordelia's adoptive parents handed her an ultimatum. Stay away from Mike, and cut contact with Ghost, or they wanted nothing more to do with her or Felicity.

I will never understand how any parent could say something like that to their child. All Cordelia wanted was to find her brother, and

finding out her parents hated him for his lifestyle must have been hard.

Snobs, the pair of them.

When Mike didn't hear from Cordelia for three days running, he panicked that something must have happened to her. Nothing anyone said calmed him down, he wanted the love of his life back, and nothing would stop him from making that happen.

Mike packed a bag and got the first plane to England. Four days later, Mike turned up at the clubhouse, Felicity in his arms, and hand in hand with Cordelia. Ghost was happy to hear that his sister planned to stay in Bardsville indefinitely. Mike adopted Felicity, and he and Cordelia were married six months later. They went on to have four more children, two girls, and two boys.

I can't believe they've been married for fifteen years already. Where do the years go?

"I'll be there."

"Good," Ghost nods his head. "I'll go and see Trace this morning and ask him to get started on this Wynter thing."

I open my mouth to thank him, but one almighty scream stops me. I'm out of my seat so fast; it falls to the floor with a bang. Another blood-curdling scream splits the air, and I can't climb the stairs fast enough!

"Wynter?" I yell her name when I don't find her where I left her. I hear a groan and a whimper coming from my wife. My heart is in my throat, wondering what the hell could be wrong.

"Bathroom, brother," Ghost points in that direction.

I rush to the bathroom and find Wynter hopping from one foot to the other with her hands against her mouth.

I grab her face in my hands. "Wynter, what's wrong?" Her eyes are wide as she looks at me. "Wynter, answer me!"

She points to the bathtub and whispers, "Spider."

I turn my head to look and laugh when I see the little guy rushing across the bottom of the tub.

"Jesus Christ," Ghost hisses. "You almost gave us a damn heart attack. We thought something was wrong!"

Wynter pulls away from me and wraps her arms around her chest. "Something is wrong, Ghost. Aragog is in my bathtub!"

"Ara, what?"

I laugh at Ghost's confusion. "It's a spider featured in a film – a spider the size of a small elephant." I chuckle.

I don't think Ghost has ever looked more confused as he looks down at the spider, then at Wynter. "It's tiny, Wynter. What the hell is wrong with you?"

My wife narrows her eyes angrily at Ghost. The spider moves again, and Wynter panic screams and rushes toward the wall, away from the tub.

"Wynter has arachnophobia, Ghost. Even a spider as small as this one will look like a woolly mammoth to Wynter."

"Never known anybody to react that badly to a mini spider."

"Stop chatting like old women and kill it before it eats me!" Wynter screams, making me laugh again.

Ghost rolls his eyes, scoops up the spider in his hands, and turns to leave. "I'll be in touch soon, little brother. Wynter," He tips his head in Wynter's direction. Wynter makes a face at his hands, and I shake my head and laugh again.

As soon as Ghost is out of sight, Wynter's shoulders slump, and she walks into my arms. "I thought that thing was going to kill me."

"Baby," I laugh loudly. I don't think her fear of spiders is funny; it's the over-exaggeration to seeing one that makes me laugh so much. "It's more afraid of you than you are of it."

Wynter shudders in my arms. "I know." She whispers.

"Are you okay, beautiful?"

Wynter looks up at me, her eyes on my mouth, and nods her head. She leans on her tiptoes and presses her lips to mine. She pushes her tongue into my mouth and kisses me savagely.

I smirk around the kiss because fucking her tight cunt is just what I need right now.

I grab Wynter's robe in my hands and tear it from her body. She gasps when I take her upper arms and spin her around. I slap her ass once, making her scream and wind her hips. "Havoc, I need you."

I pin Wynter to the wall with my hips while I tear my shirt over my head. I hold her by the back of the neck while unbuckling and unzipping my jeans. I pull my jeans down around my ass and line the tip of my cock with Wynter's opening. "Are you ready for me, baby girl?"

Wynter nods her head and tells me, "Yes, Daddy."

I bite on her shoulder and push myself deep inside of her on the first thrust. Wynter screams, and I hiss. My eyes roll at the sensations flowing through me right now. Nothing in this world feels as good as being inside my wife.

I wrap my left arm around her chest. I grab her right breast and squeeze hard, making her moan in pleasure. I wrap my other arm under Wynter's right leg and push it up towards her chest. We fuck hard against the wall, both of us grunting and sweating with the effort. God, I'm losing myself inside her incredible body.

Wynter wraps her arm around my neck, turning her head at the same time to capture my lips. "I love you," She gasps out.

I growl and fuck her harder. "I love you, too."

She pushes her ass back against me so hard and fast; that I can't stop myself from coming with a roar. I hear Wynter scream through the haze, and her body shudders against me. I hold her against the wall, my forehead against her temple, and I can't open my eyes. Shit, I'm out of breath!

I force myself to pull out of Wynter and gently peel her off the wall. She forces herself to turn and face me. Her hand touches my cheek, and she smiles. "I love you so much, Mr. Caldwell."

"I love you too, Mrs. Caldwell." Until the end of time and even longer.

As I hold Wynter in my arms, I pray she'll find the peace she longs for. All I want for Wynter is her happiness. I know she'll find that with her mother and sister. I just hope this new family is everything Spring promised.

Chapter Seventeen

WYNTER

I'm so nervous that I feel as though I'm going to throw up. My stomach is both tight and turning over. My heart is thumping out of my chest, my palms are sweaty, my mouth is dry, and I'm shaking all over.

I shouldn't feel like this, not about seeing my mom again, but I do. I'm scared that this is all a dream, and I'm absolutely terrified that someone is playing a trick on me. I know how irrational that sounds after seeing and speaking with Spring, but I can't help what I think.

Havoc and I have spoken about this at length today. He helped me through a lot of my fear, but this one stayed. I don't know how I would have dealt with all of this without my husband. He's been amazing, and I couldn't have asked for more.

After Ghost left this morning, and Havoc and I had finished fucking against the bathroom wall, I received a phone call from Spring. I wasn't expecting the call so soon, Havoc and I had only just finished breakfast.

Spring explained how she'd gone home and told James everything. He was not pleased that Spring had been kidnapped, but she managed to calm him down enough to make him understand why it happened.

Spring then told me how she couldn't settle until she'd spoken with Julianne. My heart was in my throat as she explained how the conversation went. Naturally, Julianne didn't believe what she was hearing and thought Spring was having some kind of breakdown.

Spring ended up having to call Julian to come and explain to Julianne that what Spring was saying was the truth. Julianne sobbed in her husband's arms as Spring explained everything to them. I couldn't help crying myself. I'm still so overwhelmed, anxious, and nervous about everything, so I can only imagine how Julianne feels.

Julianne begged Spring to bring her to see me right then and there. She didn't want to wait until morning. Spring explained to Julianne that it wouldn't be possible at that time of night and that I'd be talking things over. Julianne agreed to wait till morning, but once morning came, she refused to wait any longer.

I told Spring that I couldn't wait either, and I wanted her to bring Julianne over as soon as possible. My sister told me that she and Julianne wouldn't be alone because Mom still can't go anywhere without two people beside her. Strength in numbers and all that.

I can't say as I liked the idea, especially when Spring told me just how many people would be with them. Neil, James, Julian, Justin, our grandparents, Brody, and Matthew. Justin and Julian's wives and children wouldn't be with them, but I'll meet them soon.

I expressed my fear of meeting all of those people at once. I had thought it would be just Mom and Spring. My sister laughed and told me that it would be only the three of us, at first. Everyone else would wait outside until I'm ready to meet them. What else could I do but agree?

When the call came to an end, I ran to my room, rooting for something nice to wear. I think I tried on half of my wardrobe before Havoc told me to wear the white summer dress with a fitted cardigan. His tone was so demanding that it shocked me a little. However, when I looked up and caught his wink, I knew Havoc was simply trying to calm me.

I French braided my hair, the way my mother used to when I was a child, and applied light makeup to my face. I must have asked Havoc a hundred times if I look okay. The answer is always the same, 'You look beautiful, baby.'

Now, I'm standing in the den waiting for my mother to arrive. I only hope these nerves don't get the better of me and actually make me throw up.

I smile as Havoc pours me a glass of water from the jug he brought in five minutes ago. He's been quite the gentleman today.

He hands me the water, and I take a sip before placing the glass on the coffee table.

"Better?" I nod my head at Havoc while wiping my now freezing hands down my dress. "Calm down," He tells me with a kiss to my head. "Everything will be just fine, you'll see." I nod my head again and let Havoc hold me.

I snuggle into him just as the door knocks. I look up at Havoc and take a deep breath. "Ready?" I nod, still breathing deeply, even though I don't feel ready. Havoc kisses me swiftly and leaves to answer the door. Christ, my stomach feels like it's falling out of my ass!

I pace the floor, trying not to wring my hands together because I don't want to start sweating again.

"Wynter?" I turn to look at Havoc, and he smiles. He moves aside and lets my sister walk through the door. She smiles wide and rushes over to me, wrapping her arms around me and giggling. I close my eyes for a second and breathe her in.

When I open my eyes, I see my mother watching me over Spring's shoulder. I pull away from my sister and step to the side. I notice the door close behind her, and I realize Havoc has left us alone.

Neither Mom or I say anything for a moment; we just stare at each other. I can't believe she's really in front of me. Julianne looks so healthy and beautiful. She's wearing a pale pink skirt suit, with a white blouse, and her hair is French braided just like mine.

Nervously, I lift my hands and sign, without moving my lips, the way I used to so that John couldn't understand what I was saying. 'Where you go, I go.'

Julianne signs back, 'Where I go, you go.'

No one else on earth, aside from Spring, would know the reply to what I said. Those words are what Julianne would say to Spring and me all the time so that we'd know she'd never leave us.

Tears fall from my eyes and hers. "Mommy," I run into her arms, and she catches me, holding me close as we sob. We've lost so much time, and there is so much we have to talk about. But for right now, I need to hold her against me, and she's real.

Julianne pulls away from me and cups my cheek with her left hand. She holds her right hand out to Spring, and she takes it, coming to stand beside me. Julianne cups Spring's cheek, and smiles. "My babies," Her voice is exactly as I remember it, and it wraps

around me like a warm blanket. "I never thought I'd see this day. I thought you were gone," Julianne lets go of a sob.

"I thought the two of you were gone too," I tell her. "All these years, I believed that man had killed the two most important people in my life. John knew you were alive, and he kept it from me."

"I'm so sorry," Julianne whispers. "If I'd been braver and gone to see him, maybe he would have told me that you were out there."

I shake my head because I know John would never have told Julianne that I was alive. That man would have gotten off on hearing her beg, without ever giving her an answer.

"Mom," Spring draw's Julianne's eyes to her. "John would never have given up that information, and you know it. He lived to cause you pain and misery. He kidnapped you, tortured you, forced you to bear his children, and he then tried to kill you."

Julianne cups our cheeks again. "Yes, he did all of those things and more. But I wouldn't change what he did,"

Both Spring and I look at each other with raised eyes.

"I wouldn't because he gave the two of you to me. I could sit here all day, wishing things were different. Yes, I cried for my parents, and I wanted to go home every damn day I was locked in that house. But I survived it all because I had you both. If I didn't have you, I would have found a way to end things much sooner. John was a monster, but maybe seeing me again would have..."

"No," Spring cuts Julianne off. "John wouldn't have told you anything, and you know that. He was sick and twisted, and he would have told you anything if he thought he'd gain control of your mind again. We have spent long enough grieving each other, and wondering, what if, thanks to that man."

"Spring's right, Mom. John is where he belongs, and we're together again. He can't hurt us anymore."

Julianne nods her head and pulls Spring and me into her arms. The three of us hold each other, and everything inside of me mends.

When we eventually break apart, the three of us sit talking about what we've been up to in the time we've been apart. Spring tells me what it was like after leaving the hospital. Our grandfather did everything he could to help Julianne and Spring realize they were safe now. Spring tells me that she was kept at home for the first six months after the shooting. She was put through therapy and coun-

seling, and she tells me how much it helped her move past what happened.

Julianne didn't want Spring out of her sight for fear she'd never see her again. However, Julianne eventually agreed with her father that Spring should be in school. My sister did well there, and she made a few friends. She tells me how it wasn't always easy, especially when the story of what happened to her was leaked. All anybody wanted to know was what John had done, and was it true that he kidnapped her mother and kept her a prisoner.

Spring managed to get through school and then went to work for our grandfather's business. Spring is now a successful accountant, and she worked extremely hard to become so. My sister is headstrong, and won't let any man push her about. She reminds me of Phoenix in the way she takes no shit from any man.

Spring goes on to tell me how she met James and how they quickly fell in love. They have a wonderful life together, and they've even traveled halfway around the world in the years they've been together, at least until Spring found out that she was pregnant with Matthew.

I have to admit that I'm a little jealous of Spring traveling all over the place. I've never been out of state, never mind the country.

"Maybe you and I could take a little trip one day? Any country in the world, your choice." Spring smiles at me, hopefully.

"I'll have to speak with Havoc," Not that I need his permission for anything, but I can't go making promises without consulting him first.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to throw it at you like that. Of course, you'd need to speak with your husband first."

I laugh and squeeze her hand. "It's fine, Spring. I just meant that I need to talk to Havoc about it, but I'd love to go on vacation with you." Spring squeals happily and wraps her arms around my neck. I hug her tightly.

When Spring pulls away, I turn to Julianne. "Why don't you tell me about your man?"

Julianne giggles shyly. I listen to Julianne's story of how the boy, who was her friend in school, became the love of her life.

The more I hear about Neil, the more I like him, and I haven't even met him yet. The way Julianne talks about him, with that twinkle in her eye, I can see that he is everything to her. I can tell from the

way she's talking that Neil treats her like a queen. Shouldn't every man treat the woman he loves that way?

Julianne tells me all about her wedding day, and how she cried because I wasn't there beside her the way Spring was. That brings tears to my eyes because I felt the same way when I got married.

"It was a big shock to the system when I found out that I was pregnant."

"I'll say," Spring laughs.

I hold Julianne's hand in mine and stroke my thumb over her knuckles. Spring pours a glass of water from the jug and hands it to Julianne. She takes a huge gulp and then hands the glass back to Spring. "Thank you, darling."

"What did Neil say when you told him about the baby?"

Julianne takes a deep breath. "I'll be honest with you, Wynter, I was terrified. I had no reason to be," She smiles as if to reassure me of something. "The past got inside my head, and I couldn't shake the reaction John had when he found out about the two of you."

I don't have a clue how that man reacted, but I'm guessing it wasn't good. Hell, I don't remember one good thing about John Anderson. Why on this earth would he have been happy about knocking up his teenage prisoner? Unless that's what he wanted. Maybe John's reaction was that of elation, while Julianne was terrified out of her mind. I'll never know because I won't ask.

"I told my brother the news first. I know I shouldn't have, but I needed someone to talk some sense into me. Julian asked me why I hadn't told Neil about the baby, and I told him the truth. I told him how John had been over the moon and how he kept a tighter hold on me after that. Well," She smiles slightly. "You don't need the gory details."

I close my eyes and shake away the thoughts of John and what he might have done to my mother. I didn't want to know anything at all, but I guess Julianne needed to let it out.

Julianne smiles and carries on with her story. "Julian held me close, and he told me that he understood how I was feeling. However, he knew Neil would be happy about the baby. Then Julian asked if I was happy, and did I want the baby."

I squeeze her hand gently. "And did you?"

Julianne smiles while tucking a strand of hair behind my ear. "I can't even begin to explain how much I wanted the baby, Wynter.

When I left Julian's office, I called Neil and asked him to collect me from my parent's house. When he arrived, I opened the door, and the words just tumbled out of my mouth." She laughs and shakes her head.

I smile at Spring, and she winks at me. "How did he react?" I ask because I'm curious.

"Well, first of all, his eyes widened, and his mouth dropped open in shock. My heart was racing horribly, and my mouth was so dry. I thought Neil was angry, but he scooped me up and told me how much he loved me. I held onto Neil so tightly at that moment, because apart from you two," She looks at Spring and then back to me. "I realized he was the best thing to have ever happened to me."

Julianne smiles to herself, and I can't help smiling with her. "When Neil set me on my feet, he had tears in his eyes. He dropped to his knees and kissed my stomach. I ran my hands through his hair as he told our baby how much *Daddy* loved him or her."

I don't know why I feel so emotional right now, but I do. I'm not sad; these emotions are happy ones. Knowing my mother is loved the way she always should have been settles something within me.

"When Brody was born, it was one of the happiest days of my life. Neil and I were so happy, but when I looked at that little boy, all I could think about was never seeing you again." She sobs, and it hurts my heart.

"It's okay, Mom," Spring wraps her arm around Julianne's shoulders. "I never really understood the pain; Mom was going through until I had Matthew. I can't imagine ever losing him."

I don't know the pain of losing a child, and I never want to find out.

"Brody is a sweet boy," Julianne smiles. "He's his father's son through and through. Did Spring tell you that Neil and I are expecting another baby?"

"No," I shake my head with a shocked smile on my face. "How far along are you?"

Julianne laughs and lays her hand on her stomach. It's only now that I see the small baby bump. "Five months."

"It's another boy." Spring playfully rolls her eyes.

"I am so happy for you, Mom."

"Thank you, sweetheart. We're naming him *Brady*."

I have to hug my mother right now. I help her out of her seat and wrap my arms around her. I'm going to have another baby brother, and this time, I'll be there when he enters the world.

We retake our seats and talk a little more about Neil before Julianne asks me to tell them about my childhood. I don't really want to talk about it, but I owe them the truth.

Julianne cries to herself as I explain how I ended up in the system and what it was like for me in the care home. I tell them everything about Cassie and me, being on the street, and what I did to protect us. Spring's eyes widen when I tell them about the man who bought my virginity. It's not easy telling my mother and sister such a thing, but I don't want to keep anything from them.

I tell them how I met Havoc and about how we fell in love and got married. I even tell them how I left Havoc and why. Julianne and Spring listen when I explain how we reunited because of the men chasing me.

Spring then explains to me about how Julian sent two men who work for his security company to find me. So, I tell her just why I ran from them. Julianne tells me that she understands why I would have thought those men meant to harm me. Though she doesn't believe Julian would have wanted me to be so scared.

None of that matters now, it's all in the past, and it can't be changed. All that matters is that I have my family back.

"Do you have children?" Julianne asks, almost hopefully.

I smile and shake my head. "Havoc and I spoke about children recently. We want to start a family when the time is right."

"Talking of family, are you ready to meet yours?"

I look at my sister and swallow hard. The nerves are back, but I nod my head, regardless.

"I think maybe just Dad and Brody first."

"Good idea," Julianne takes out her cell and sends a text message. "Spring, could you let them in?"

"Of course,"

I follow my sister with my eyes as she leaves the room. I feel a little bit sick. I really want to meet Neil and Brody, but I'm so nervous I'm fighting the urge to vomit.

Julianne retakes my hand and smiles. "Don't be scared, Wynter. Neil loves you as much as he loves Spring and Brody. He cried with

me when Spring told us that you were alive." I smile when she cups my face. "I still can't believe you're here, my beautiful little Wynter."

I laugh because I haven't heard that in a long time. "I can't believe you're here either."

"Before Neil comes in, there's something you should know about Brody." Julianne looks toward the door, making sure we're still alone.

"Mom, is something wrong?"

"No," She shakes her head. "It's just that when we told him that you hadn't gone to heaven as we thought, he broke down. I've told Brody about you since the moment he was born. He loved listening to stories about you. Brody was sad that we didn't have many pictures of you. The few John took of you and Spring; the police gave to me after they cleared out his house."

I know there were very few photographs of my sister and me because John would take just one a year, on our birthday. He never felt the need for more.

"Brody maybe emotional when he sees you, but that's only because he loves you so much."

I open my mouth to say something, but I'm cut off when the door opens. Spring walks in with a smile on her face, followed by a tall, handsome man, and a small boy.

Julianne gets out of her seat and makes her way over to Neil and Brody. She kisses her husband and then turns to look at me. I get out of my seat because I feel rude sitting down while everyone else is standing. "Isn't she beautiful, Neil?"

Neil looks at me with tears in his eyes and nods his head while wrapping his arm around Julianne's waist. "I'm so happy to meet you, sweetheart."

"You too," I whisper because the words won't come out any louder.

"I can't believe how identical the two of you really are." Neil laughs while looking at Spring.

"I told you, Dad."

Neil looks at me again. "I know you don't know me at all, Wynter, but I want you to know something. I want you to know what I told Spring when I came into her life because it applies to you too."

I nod my head to show that I'm listening.

"I know you've not had the best life, but things can only get better. I love your mother more than anything in this world, and I extend that love to you. You are part of Julianne; therefore, you're part of me, Wynter."

This man seems to be too good to be true. However, I have no reason to disbelieve what Spring told about him. I haven't met many genuinely nice men in my life. However, I can see how much Neil loves Julianne, Spring, Brody, and even me, and that makes him very special.

I'm not saying that I'm going to call him *Dad* anytime soon, but one day, maybe. Neil took care of my family because he loves them, what more could I ask for?

"Thank you," Is all I offer up.

I watch as Brody wraps his arms around Julianne's waist and rests his head on her stomach. She strokes his hair. "It's okay, Brody." Julianne crouches down in front of him and takes his hands in her own. "Don't cry, baby."

Brody lets out a sob, and it breaks my heart. I don't want to frighten him, but I can't stop myself making my over to my little brother.

I crouch down and gently touch his back. He sniffs while turning around and looking at me. Julianne gets to her feet as Brody rubs his left eye while sniffing again. I smile at him, and he smiles back. "Hi,"

"Hi," His little voice is so sweet.

"I've been waiting to meet you."

"You have?" His smile widens when I nod my head. "I've been waiting to meet you, too. I didn't believe you were really alive, Wynter."

I reach out and touch his soft cheek with my fingertip. "Do you believe now?" Brody nods his head and wraps his arms around my neck. I don't hesitate to hold him against me while getting to my feet. My little brother has such a warm hug.

He lifts his head from my shoulder and sighs contently. "I love you."

I can't help smiling. "I love you, too." I loved him the moment Spring showed me his picture. Holding him against me has that love growing tenfold.

"Ready to meet everyone else?" Spring asks.

I am in no way ready, but I nod my head, regardless.

Chapter Eighteen

HAVOC

I had to get out of that house. There were way too many people and too much noise for me to handle.

It's crazy, isn't it? I spend almost every day in a packed out clubhouse and have since the day I was born. One house full of people, people I could count on both hands, and it's too noisy for me.

I brush my hand over the letters engraved on the headstone in front of me and smile. *Scott 'Thor' Caldwell*. There hasn't a day gone by in almost fifteen years where I haven't thought about Scott. I often wonder what he'd be like now. Scott would have been thirty-nine this year had he lived. I would have been ribbing him about almost being forty, and he would have laughed and told me to fuck myself. I imagine, anyway.

I often wonder what it would have been like to ride the wind with my big brother beside me. Maybe it would have been the same as having Trey beside me, who knows?

I don't know what I'd do if I lost Trey or Cullen. I remember how it felt to lose Scott, and I know I can't go through something like that again. It almost killed me, and I was so lost for a while there.

However, I got through it; we all did. I swore to Scott that I would always take care of Fallon for him, and I hope that I've done enough to keep that promise.

If I'm ever lucky enough to have a son, I'll make damn sure he knows all about his uncle Scott and what he meant to me.

Envy is a dreadful thing, but I envy Wynter. Twelve years of grieving, her mother and sister are over because they're back from

the dead.

I could wish and pray until I have nothing left inside of me, but Scott will never come back to me. He'll never sit with me and tell me about his day. He'll never meet my wife, just as he never met Cullen.

I'm happy for Wynter, of course, I am. Her heart is mended, and she no longer has anything to fear. She's not in danger, and she never was. I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders, knowing Wynter is finally safe.

"Fancy seeing you here."

I look up to see Trey standing beside me. I move my head slightly and see Fallon with him. I was so lost in thought that I didn't hear anyone approaching. "What are you two doing here?"

"Nice, Havoc," Fallon laughs while getting to her knees on the left of me.

"We thought," I watch Trey get to his knees on the right of me. "That we'd come check on you."

I narrow my eyes. How the hell did they know I'd be here? I told my family that I'd be at the house with Wynter due to her family visiting.

"Don't look at me like that," Trey laughs at my confusion.

"I called your cell," I look at Fallon. "You left it at home, and Wynter answered. She said you'd left without saying anything. I told her not to worry and that I'd find you."

"Where do you come into this?"

Trey raises his eyebrow. "I was over at Fallon's, planning Mom's birthday. Fallon called you for your input. When she said that she'd be going to look for you, I knew you'd be here, so I tagged along."

That answers that.

I turn to look at Scott's headstone of black marble, in the shape of a book and smile.

"Do you think he knows what's going on down here with us?"

I smile again without looking at my brother. I've thought the same thing once or twice before now.

"Of course, he does," I sense Fallon smiling beside me. "I tell Scott everything that's happening with us, and I know he hears me. Do you remember when Reed was five, and he was taken ill?"

How could any of us forget?

It was hog roast weekend, and everybody was at the clubhouse. It was a hot day, and the kids were all playing in the pool – all except

Reed.

Reed had refused to play with anyone, let alone go in the pool with the others. The kids sat by himself for ages before he walked up to Red and raised his arms. Of course, Red lifted Reed and held him until Reed spotted Roman. Once he had, he wanted his grandfather. Reed lay his head on Roman's shoulder and mumbled how he wanted his Daddy. Trace took Reed from Roman and instantly realized something was wrong with his youngest son.

Reed had fallen asleep, and Trace couldn't wake him. Fallon was having a breakdown, thinking her youngest child was at death's door, and Ava and Scotty were crying.

I remember the whole family rushed to the hospital with Reed, and how we waited with baited breaths for news.

It was over an hour before anyone came to talk to us. Fallon refused to leave her son, but Trace came to speak with us all and let us know that Reed had a viral infection. The infection wasn't good and had spread through his small body.

However, the infection would quickly be cleared up with antibiotics, but being out in the sun all day hit Reed with sunstroke. Reed went downhill so fast because of that fact.

Naturally, with some fluids, sleep, and medication, Reed was back to his cheeky little self in no time.

"I sat by my baby's bed, holding his hand, and I asked Scott to take care of him for me." I take Fallon's hand in mine and squeeze gently. "The next thing I knew, Reed opened his eyes and asked me where Scotty was." Fallon chuckles. "You know how close there are."

"Closer than brothers," Trey says with a smile in his voice. I nod my head without looking at him.

"What I'm saying is that Scott is always looking down on us. He knows what's going on, and he's keeping us all safe."

"I miss him," I couldn't stop the words from tumbling out of my mouth.

Trey wraps his arm around my shoulder, and Fallon entwines her fingers with mine. "We all miss him, Havoc."

I nod my head at Trey while trying to stop the tears from falling. The three of us will always miss Scott every day for the rest of our lives. Days like today, however, I wish more than anything Scott were here. It's not even a bad day, shit, I've had much worse.

Wynter has her family back in her life, and I should be happy about that. Hell, I am happy about it. Seeing Wynter smile is what I live for, so what the fuck is wrong with me?

Childishly feeling pushed aside, Havoc?

I'd laugh if I thought that was funny.

I press a kiss to my fingertips, and then to Scott's grave. "Love you always, brother."

* * *

I DROP a small package on Jett's desk, and he raises an eyebrow in confusion. "What's this?" He asks.

"What's it look like?"

Jett sits back in his seat and stares me down. "You weren't on collections today, Havoc."

I shrug my shoulders. "Had nothing better to do."

Jett leans forward with his arms on the desk. "You had nothing better to do?" I shake my head. "You don't think you should be at home, supporting your wife?"

"I couldn't get near her if I tried. Look," I fold my arms around my chest. "Wynter is fine with her family. I don't do too well when I have nothing to fill my time. You know that, Jett."

Jett nods while picking up the package. "Wanna tell me where you collected from?"

"Same place I always do at the end of the week." The local museum. They don't usually give me any problems with collections. However, today was a different story. Ralph, the man in charge, tried to tell me that Jett had given him an extra day to pay. I'm not the man to fuck with, so I had to show Ralph why you pay when I damn well say so!

Almost every business in town pays the Snakes for protection, that's common knowledge. Protection rackets are illegal, but the sheriff turns a blind eye for a small cut. No one in town would report what Snakes Henchmen do because nothing legal would be done about it, though we'd break your damn neck for going against us!

The Snakes have rules, and everyone else abides by them. You ignore the rules or try to change them; then, Snakes Henchmen will

make you pay.

Of course, Ralph promptly paid when I grabbed one of his display baseball bats and smashed a costly vase to pieces. That'll cost, but I was in no mind for games today.

I made sure to take the CCTV footage with me. Never leave without the CCTV, that an amateurs trick, and I am no amateur.

"I gave Ralph an extra day to pay as you wouldn't be around today, Havoc." It looks like Ralph was telling the truth. Pity, I don't give a shit. "Did Ralph give you any problems?"

"Nothing I couldn't handle." I nod toward the package. "Paid, didn't he?"

"As if he wouldn't, with you on his case." Jett chuckles under his breath. "Look, this aside," He nods to the chair in front of his desk. I take a seat. "Is everything okay with you, Havoc? You haven't been yourself since Wynter came back into your life."

I sit back in my seat and bite my tongue for a moment. I'll admit that things have been different since I brought Wynter home. I've pushed my club to the back in order to make Wynter feel safe with me enough so she'd stay.

It's not wrong of me to put my wife first. However, it was wrong of me to neglect my club the way I have.

"I'm sorry, Prez. I let things with Wynter take precedence over the club." I scrub my hands over my face. "She has her family back, and there are no men out there wanting to hurt her."

"And that's a good thing, Havoc,"

I nod my head in agreement. "It is, but it won't be over until I find out why Wynter and Spring were parted, Jett. Wynter, Spring, and Julianne have spent twelve years thinking each other was dead thanks to someone's fuck up!"

"You're not going to stop until you find out who fucked up, are you?"

I shake my head. "Someone out there knows something, Jett."

"Why can't you let this go, Havoc? What difference will finding out make?"

Good question.

I'm not stupid, and I know there's a real chance that I'll never find out what happened. I also know that nothing will change what's already been and gone. However, it will bring my wife closure.

How do you even know that's what Wynter wants, Havoc?

Have you spoken to her about it?

If you haven't, then you should. This isn't your choice to make, Havoc, and you know it.

Jett sighs and shakes his head when I fail to answer. "Do you what you gotta do, Havoc. The club will help you in any way we can. You know that."

I nod my head and get out of my seat. "Thanks." I'm done here.

"Just don't do anything stupid, Havoc. You bring trouble to the club, and you know what that will mean." Yeah, a shit ton of problems for me.

I nod my head to let Jett know that I heard him. I don't plan on killing anyone or getting myself killed, but a man can never be too careful.

I'm exhausted by the time I get home. I'm also annoyed to see my driveway is still full of cars. I thought Wynter's family would have left by now. Not that it's a problem, but they've been here all day.

I take a deep breath before making my way inside. The den door is open, and Wynter spots me the very second my eyes land on her. She shoots me a bright smile, and I can see just how happy she is right now.

I can't help smiling as Wynter makes her way over to me. She wraps her arms around my waist and leans up on her tiptoes to kiss me. I stroke her face with the back of my hand. She leans into my touch with a smile on her face. "Where have you been? You disappeared on me."

"Thought I'd give you some time alone with your family. I went to the cemetery."

Wynter smiles, understanding in her eyes. "Come meet everyone. I've told them all about you!" She giggles and takes my hand, leading me into the den. "Everyone, this is my husband, Havoc."

I tip my head at the hello's coming from everyone.

Wynter introduces me to her family one by one, telling me who they are to her, and I've forgotten half of their names before she's even finished.

Wynter lifts her little brother into her arms, and he looks at me shyly. "Don't be afraid, Brody. I know Havoc looks big and scary, but he's really a pussy cat."

I pull back the laughter, trying to escape me. I'm not a monster, but I've never been described as a pussy cat by anyone. I wrap my arm around Wynter's shoulder and wink at her brother.

"Do you have a motorcycle?" Brody asks in a small voice.

"I do. It's right outside. If it's okay with your Mom and Dad, we can go take a look."

Brody looks to his Mom and Dad, and they both look at me. Julianne seems nervous, and I can't say as I blame her for that. But she needs to learn to trust me. I'm her son-in-law, and I'm going to be in all of their lives from now on. "Please, Mommy?"

"Your Mommy can come with you," I tell Brody with another wink. Julianne smiles and nods her head.

I lead Wynter and Brody outside. He doesn't seem to want Wynter to put him down. Julianne and Neil follow.

"Oh, wow!" Brody yells the second he sees my bike. "It's so big!" I'm guessing he's never seen a Harley up close.

"He loves motorcycles." Julianne smiles.

"His bedroom is filled with everything motorcycle." Neil laughs.

Wynter sets Brody on his feet, and he walks toward my bike. The kid reminds me of myself when I was a small boy. The way Brody is awed by my motorcycle is the way I used to act whenever I saw my father's bike.

"Can I touch it, Havoc? Please?"

"We can do better than that," I lift him under the arms and sit him on my bike. Brody squeals happily.

I watch him pretending to ride, and I smile as Wynter wraps her arms around my waist from behind. I turn my head and smile. "You made him so happy, Havoc,"

"He's a sweet kid. I remember being his age and wanting to ride my Dad's motorcycle."

I chuckle as Brody makes *Broom Broom* noises while his mother and father watch with smiles on their faces.

Wynter kisses my cheek. "You're going to be a wonderful father one day, Havoc."

"You think so?"

She kisses my cheek again. "I know so."

I take Wynter's hand in mine and bring her around to face me. "Are you happy, baby?"

She turns her head to look at her brother, mother, and step-father. She looks at me again and smiles. "Yeah, I'm happy."

That's all I've ever wanted for Wynter, but I have to know if she wants to find out the truth. "Do you want to find out why all of this happened, Wynter?"

She sighs. "I don't know. Part of me longs to know why we were all lied to, and part of me doesn't."

"If you want the truth, I'll find it. If you don't, we can leave this well alone." I tuck her hair behind her ear. "Whatever you decide, I'll support you, Wynter."

She nods her head. "Thank you,"

Wynter never has to thank me for a damn thing as long as she lives.

Don't let finding out the truth become more your hang-up than Wynter's, Havoc. If she decides that she doesn't want to know, then drop it and move on.

Chapter Nineteen

WYNTER

“*I*’m so nervous. What if Cormack has changed his mind? What if he doesn’t turn up, Wynter?”

I chuckle and take Cassie’s hands in mine. “Sweet-heart, it’s normal to be nervous, it’s your wedding day.” Cassie sighs dramatically. “I think you know deep down that Cormack is out there right now, waiting for you.” I bring her hand to my lips and kiss her knuckles.

Cassie looks stunning. The dress, her hair, even her makeup is perfect. I’ve never seen a more beautiful bride.

Cassie and I are waiting in the priest’s private room for her cue to walk down the aisle. Everyone else here today is waiting inside the church for Cassie to arrive.

Cassie has always dreamed of a big white wedding. It’s all she spoke about when we were children: that and the perfect man she invented inside her head. I’m not sure Cormack is whom she envisioned when she talked about her dream man, but he’s perfect for Cassie in every way.

Cormack loves Cassie so much that he would give her anything, including a church wedding over the traditional biker ceremony most Snakes Henchmen have.

Cassie thinks Cormack is wearing his cut today, but she’s in for a big surprise. I can’t wait to see the look on her face when she sees her man in his gray wedding suit and tie. Hell, the whole MC is wearing suits on Cormack’s orders, including Havoc. My God, does he look handsome in a suit.

I have so much love for the man who loves and adores my best friend. Cormack has proven ten times over how much Cassie means to him with the things he's willing to do for her. What more could I have asked for?

"Everything is going to be perfect, Cassie. Trust me,"

"I trust you more than anyone, Wynter. I always have."

"I know that," I wink just as the door knocks.

It opens before either Cassie or I have the chance to yell for whomever it is to enter. Gunner pokes his head through and smiles widely. He opens the door and enters, closing it behind him. "Princess, you look beautiful."

"Daddy, you're in a suit!"

Gunner laughs and looks down at himself. "Scrub up pretty well, don't I?"

Cassie's mouth hangs open in shock. She wasn't told anyone would be wearing a suit today, not even her father. "You look great," She smiles out.

Gunner winks and then takes Cassie's hands in his own. "Are you ready, baby girl?"

"There's something I'd like to say first," I move to leave, but Cassie stops me. "Don't go anywhere," She snaps with a laugh. I really should leave them to talk, but Cassie doesn't want me to leave, so I won't.

I smile and move to the back of the room to give them some space.

"I know you weren't expecting me to come into your life," I watch Cassie lovingly stroking Gunner's thumbs with her own. "And I never believed that I would find you, but I did." She smiles. "The moment I first saw you, I never expected the reaction I got."

Gunner laughs. "Cassie, the moment I looked at you, I knew you were my daughter. You didn't have to tell me your mother's name, and I knew." Cassie nods. "You looked just like my sister when she was your age. I didn't need a DNA test to know you were mine."

He touches Cassie's face, and she smiles. "I'm so sorry that I missed so much of your life, Cassie. If I'd known about you from the moment you were born, I would have moved heaven and earth to bring you to live with me."

I feel emotional watching father and daughter exchanging words of love. I've never been happier for Cassie than I am at this moment.

"I know you would. You welcomed me into your family instantly. Your wife became a mother to me within days of meeting me." Cassie sighs again. "I guess what I'm trying to say is *thank you*. Thank you for loving me, for protecting me, for giving me a family, and for being everything I imagined my Dad to be. I love you, Daddy."

"I love you, too." I wipe a tear from my cheek as I watch Gunner holding his eldest child. All Cassie ever wanted was to find her Dad and have him love her the way Gunner does. Dreams do come true for some. "Come on, sweetheart; let's get you married."

Cassie nods her head in her father's direction. She then looks at me, takes a deep breath, and smiles excitedly.

"He best take care of you, or I'll break his neck." I hear Gunner mumble.

I clasp my hand over my mouth to stifle the laugh, trying to escape me. I imagine most fathers say something along those lines when their daughters get married. Not that I would have heard such words from John. If he were still around, I doubt I'd be anywhere but his basement.

Dead, Wynter, that's what you'd be if John were still around. Don't ever kid yourself otherwise.

I walk in front of Cassie and Gunner and find my seat next to Havoc. We're on the front row on the bride's side because it's what Cassie wanted.

Havoc wraps his arm around my shoulder and shoots me a wink. I run my hand down the lapel of his jacket, and I bite my lower lip to stifle a groan. Havoc looks devastatingly handsome in that suit, and he knows it from the way he's smirking at me.

Everyone looks fantastic; even Phoenix is without her leather today. Granted, she's not wearing a dress, but a silk pantsuit. The pants are tight; beneath her blazer, it looks as though she's not wearing anything. The jacket itself is fastened by one large button at the stomach. She's wearing two-inch, silk heels, her hair is thickly braided over her shoulder, meaning she's extended it some today, and her makeup is so perfectly applied, the girl looks like a supermodel. Almost every man in the room has his eyes on my cousin, some of the women too.

"Looks different, doesn't she?"

I drag my eyes away from Phoenix to look at Havoc. "How is it even possible for someone to be that beautiful?"

It's not that I'm jealous of my cousin; I'm genuinely curious. I've honestly never seen anyone as beautiful in my life. I know she's family, and I guess that makes me a little bias.

"I ask myself that every day about you." Havoc laughs when I slap his chest and roll my eyes playfully. "She has good genes. Phoenix is the perfect mix of BlackJack and Taylor. They're still a handsome couple even in their sixties, but you should have seen them when they were younger. Every time they walked through a damn door, all eyes would turn to them."

I can see that in my mind, my aunt and uncle are handsome. Their sons and grandchildren are too, so it's no wonder Phoenix is so beautiful.

"The way Lynette tells it," I don't know Lynette as well as everyone else, but I do know she's the previous president's wife. Jett, Nova, Willow, and VJ's mother. "BlackJack and Taylor had movie-star looks. Real classic stars of old, such as Tony Curtis and a black Grace Kelly." He laughs to himself, and I can't help laughing with him. I've never heard anyone refer to Taylor as a black version of anyone.

You learn something new every day, Wynter.

I clutch Havoc's knee as the wedding march picks up. We get to our feet, and I clutch my hands to my chest as Cassie walks down the aisle. Her eyes widen in surprise to see Cormack in his suit, and she smiles at him. Cormack's eyes are locked on his bride, and I swear I see tears in his eyes.

Gunner finally places Cassie's hand in Cormack's, and I can barely contain my excitement. I brush my hands down my blue dress and retake my seat next to my husband.

* * *

TODAY HAS BEEN AMAZING. The church ceremony went without a hitch, but there were a few happy tears. The sit-down dinner was delicious and provided by Don Draven Vidal's catering company. I can

see why they make so much money, the standard of food was out of this world!

Being here to witness my best friend marry the man she loves has been everything. Watching Cassie right now, dancing with her husband, and seeing how they look at each other brings happy tears to my eyes.

I no longer have to worry about Cassie, she's safe, and that eases my mind and soul.

I smile as Havoc slides his arms around me from behind. I lean back against him as he kisses my cheek, making me smile.

"You okay, beautiful," He says loudly enough for me to hear.

I nod my head, still looking out at the dance floor. "Never better, handsome." I turn my head and capture his lips.

The bride and groom's first dance, followed by the father-daughter dance passes, and the dance floor fills up, Havoc and I included. We hold each other close for the slow dance, and we have fun with the more upbeat songs. I don't think I've ever had so much fun in my life. I had no idea my husband would loosen up so much and have fun the way he is.

Dancing the way I am on a full stomach, and wearing a long, silk dress was not the best idea I've ever had. I don't mind, but now I've got a cramp. I clutch my side, breathing heavily. "I need to sit down!" I yell over the music, but Havoc doesn't hear me.

I tap his arm, and he stops dancing. He looks at me with concern, but I smile and shake my head. Nothing is wrong, and he doesn't need to worry. I lift my hands and sign. 'I need to sit down for a moment. I'll be right back.'

He signs back, 'Do you want me to come with you?'

I smile widely because Havoc is learning sign language so quickly. He already knew a few signs thanks to VJ's wife, but this means so much to me. 'No,' I shake my head and sign, 'Stay. I'll be right back.' I kiss Havoc's lips and leave him on the dance floor.

I find my table and sit down for a minute. My feet are killing me! The banquet hall in which Cassie and Cormack's reception is being held is decorated to the nines. This place must have cost Gunner a fortune. I know Gunner wanted to pay for his daughter's wedding, and by the look of things, he spared no expense.

I need to get to the bar for a drink, but there are so many people here that I don't know if I'll get through. I had no clue Cassie had so

much family. Snakes Henchmen MC and their families aside, Cassie has two sets of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and their partners and children, not to mention the friends she's made at work.

Then there's Cormack's family. I already knew Jethro and Austin thanks to the club, but I had no idea they had sisters also. Cormack's parents are here, and countless other members of their family and friends, and the place is packed out. Thank God for air conditioning, or I'd be melting right now.

I feel someone tap my arm. I look up and smile at Phoenix. She crooks her finger, beckoning me to follow her, which I do, and she leads me outside.

"Is everything okay, Phoenix?"

"Of course," She hands me a glass of champagne that I didn't know she had. I take the glass because I'm parched.

Phoenix clinks her glass with mine and winks. We both down the champagne in one. "Thanks, I needed that," I tell her.

She takes my glass and places both on the window ledge beside her. "So, how's it going with your family?"

"Good," I tell her with a smile. "I'm still not used to having them back in my life yet."

I wake up in the morning and shake myself because I can't believe my mother and sister are with me again.

"I'm happy for you, Wynter. I just wish Spring would meet with BlackJack. I get that she's afraid..." She sighs. "I'm being unfair, and I know I am. No one in their right mind would expect your sister to meet with John Anderson's brother." Phoenix shakes her head and laughs to herself.

I take her hand in mine. "I know how badly uncle Jack would like to get to know Spring. I know how much you want that for him, Phoenix. It's just hard for Spring right now. She's trying to come to terms with everything."

Phoenix nods her head. "I understand, and I'll get it if Spring never wants to meet any of us. I hope that doesn't happen; the family needs to stick together. I hope Spring knows that we love her as much as we love you."

"She knows." I run my hand up and down Phoenix's arm. I understand how Phoenix must be feeling right now, but Spring's loyalty is to Julianne. Maybe if I'd lived the past years with my Mom and sister, I wouldn't want to meet John's family either.

My sister feels as though she'd be betraying Julianne if she meets BlackJack and his family. Of course, Julianne has told Spring that she has no problem with her meeting John's family, but something is holding my sister back.

"You look beautiful, by the way."

Phoenix bows her head with a smirk on her face. "Why, thank you, dear cousin. You look gorgeous."

"Thanks." I laugh, she's too kind. "Are you even wearing a top under that jacket?" Not that I need to know, but I've been curious all day.

Phoenix smirks while looking behind her to check we're alone. She then takes the lapel of her jacket and pulls it over slightly, giving me a view of the X taped over her nipple. I shake my head and laugh at the confirmation that she's wearing nothing under her jacket. My cousin is in no way shy, and I love her for it.

"I best get back inside. There's a hot guy waiting for a dance. I promised him," She waggles her eyebrows, and I can't help laughing. Whomever the guy is better be good to my cousin, even if it is just for one night. "You coming?"

"You go ahead. I'll be in soon."

"Okay,"

I watch Phoenix until she's out of sight. I then turn toward the road and breathe in the fresh air with my eyes closed. It's starting to get dark, and I can feel the air getting colder. I'm so happy that nothing could ruin my mood today.

Why do you always have to speak too soon, Wynter?

A hand slams over my mouth from behind, and I feel a body press against mine. In normal circumstances, I'd think it was Havoc, but Havoc would never use such force. No, this is someone who means to harm me.

I struggle to get away, but it's no use when they lift me from the ground. I sense whomever it is saying something to me, I can feel the vibrations of it rumbling through my back. However, I can't hear what those words are. As he drags me away, I wonder if I'll ever see or hear anything again.

Chapter Twenty

HAVOC

*A*s wedding's go, Cormack's has been one of the best I've attended. I haven't had this much fun in a long time. However, I've lost sight of Wynter. She left the dance floor an hour ago, and I haven't seen her since.

It's not a crime for Wynter to have fun, and it's not like I noticed her missing until a few moments ago. But I thought I'd be able to spot her easily in that midnight blue dress and shocking white hair.

I've searched in the inside of the building twice, and she's nowhere. How can one woman disappear into thin air?

"Everything all right?"

I force my eyes away from the hall to look at Trey. "Just wondering where Wynter got to. I haven't seen her around for a while."

"She left with Phoenix a short while ago, but Phoenix came back fifteen minutes later. Wynter wasn't with her, though." Trey points toward the bar where Phoenix is standing with a relative of Cormack's, flirting shamelessly as always.

"Thanks." I slap my brother on the back and walk away. If Wynter left with Phoenix, she can't be far behind.

I tap Phoenix's shoulder. She reluctantly turns to look at me. "What can I do for you, Havoc?"

"I'm looking for Wynter. Trey said she was with you."

Phoenix nods before knocking back a drink. "I left her outside, but that was a while ago now. Are you sure she's not around?"

"I wouldn't be asking if she was!" I didn't mean to snap at Phoenix, but now I'm starting to worry. Wynter would never go off on her own, not without letting me know first.

I don't say anything else to Phoenix. I make my way outside to look for Wynter. Somehow I don't think she'll be there.

I was right, Wynter is not outside. I check front and back, and even along the street, but she's gone. I try calling her, but there's no answer. I also try calling Spring, but I get no response from her either.

Fuck it!

Calm down, Havoc, there could be a simple explanation for where Wynter is.

"Julian Bucannon,"

I roll my eyes at myself. Christ knows why I thought calling Julian would help, but I need to check with every damn person who might know something.

"It's Havoc. I wondered if you'd heard from Wynter?"

"Not since yesterday. I thought Wynter was attending her friend's wedding today?"

I run my hand through my hair and let go of a deep breath. "She did. She came out for some air, and I haven't seen her since."

"Havoc, this isn't good. Spring has been missing for almost two hours, and now you're saying you can't find Wynter?"

My gut drops to my feet. "This can't be a coincidence, Julian. Something must have happened to them."

Julian sighs down the line. "I've been afraid of this for twelve years."

"Afraid of what? If you know something, then tell me!"

"I will," He breathes deeply through his nose. "Meet me at your clubhouse, and I'll tell you everything. Julianne is not aware that Spring is missing. I have my men out looking for her, but I can't afford for my sister to find out about this. Not unless the worst comes to the worst."

I grit my teeth. I want to smash his fucking face in with an iron bar! "If you've been sitting on information that put my wife in danger, I'll gut you like a damn fish, and that's a promise!"

I end the call before he can answer me. Whatever Julian has to tell me better lead me to find Wynter safe, or no one else will be.

* * *

"CALM DOWN, HAVOC,"

Calm down? Jett is out of his fucking mind if he thinks I'll calm down. My wife is missing, and I have no idea where the hell she could be.

As soon as I ended the call with Julian, I rushed inside to find Jett and explain what had happened. He told me that he'd gather a few men, and we'd get back to the clubhouse. We did just that, but not before I explained to Cormack why a bunch of us were leaving so soon.

Cormack was understanding, and he told me that he'd come too. Of course, I was not going to let him abandon his wife on her wedding day. I also told him not to tell Cassie what was going on, not until I knew for sure what was happening with Wynter. Cassie would only panic, and I don't want her wedding day overshadowed with drama. Jethro shouldn't be here either, but the man wouldn't take *no* for an answer.

"Don't tell me to calm down, Jett. It's not your wife out there, and I don't wanna hear how it once was."

Jett raises his eyebrow and looks at Tank, who smirks. Pricks!

Red, Trey, Ghost, Wrench, Hawk, Stryker, BlackJack, Axel, Eagle, Razor, Gabe, and Phoenix are all here. My family and Wynter's all ready to get out there and find my wife. Jett thought they should be here for this. He has a few of the others on standby in case we need them.

I must say it took everyone no time at all to change back into their regular clothes. God forbid they're seen without their cuts. Be that as it may, who the fuck does that when someone could be in danger?

I'd roll my eyes if I had the energy. To be honest, I feel stupid still wearing this suit, but some of us have our priorities right!

"Where the hell is he?" I'm not asking a question, just putting it out there.

"Sit down, Havoc. Julian will be here."

"Don't tell me to sit down!" I slam my fists down on the oak table. Red raises his eyebrow at me. I have more respect for my father than to yell at him, but I'm not in the right frame of mind right now. I just to get out there and find Wynter. I need to know that she's okay. I feel like we're stalling!

The door opens, and VJ and Bones lead Julian inside. I'm guessing VJ and his shadow decided to get in on the action.

"I'm sorry. It took me longer than expected to get here. Julianne realized something was going on, and I had to calm her down. Anyway," Julian shakes his head and holds his hand out to me. I take it, and we shake. "I'm here now. Nice to meet you all." Julian tips his head at everyone in the room. "Jack," He acknowledges.

I narrow my eyes. "You two know each other?"

"Only recently," Jack tells me.

"Whatever. We don't have time for chit chat. Sit down and tell us what you know."

What the hell is going on?

BlackJack swore that he didn't know Wynter's family. Why would he lie to me?

Julian opens his long, expensive coat, showcasing his even more expensive suit and takes a seat. "I'll get straight to the point,"

"Would be a good idea," I snap while taking my position next to Trey.

"Before I start, I want you to know that I had no clue Wynter was alive until I saw her working at that diner." I nod for him to carry on. "It was down to me that no one knew Spring and Julianne were alive. I had to protect them from Riff."

"Riff?" Who the fuck is that?

As if reading my mind, Julian tells me, "Riff is John Anderson's eldest child."

"He has more kids?" BlackJack shifts in his seat, his attention piqued

"Including Wynter and Spring, John fathered nineteen children. Each child was born to one of his rape victims."

Nineteen rape babies?

What the fuck?

"John had a fetish for raping women and forcing them to carry his children. It's crazy to think he was able to get away with someone so heinous, but he stalked and threatened those women with things most wouldn't even dream of to keep them quiet. For years, John got away with the things he did without ever being reported to the police. Until he shot Spring and Julianne, anyway, it was only then; women started coming forward. By then, it was too late for many of John's children."

I don't think I've ever heard anything so disgusting in all my life. Wasn't it bad enough that John raped those women without him stalking them as well?

John raped women to make them pregnant; then he hung around to find out if they were with child. I dread to think of what he used as threats against them.

"Only two of those women managed to escape John Anderson. They gave their babies up for adoption and then skipped the country."

"They knew each other?" Phoenix questions.

Julian nods his head. "Twin sisters. Eighteen years of age," Christ on the cross! "It was reported that he kept them, prisoner, for three weeks, raping them, in turn, each night, until he found out they were both pregnant."

"What does this have to do with Wynter?" It's awful that those women had to suffer, but how is this helping me find Wynter?

"I'm getting there, Havoc." I grit my teeth. Trey shakes his head at me. I need to keep my cool, but when has that ever worked for anyone desperate to find a loved one? "Sixteen years ago, Riff Carter took it upon himself to find his half-siblings."

"And that's a bad thing?" Hawk asks.

Julian nods. "Riff didn't want a big family reunion; he wanted them all dead."

My eyes bug out, and my mouth hangs open in shock. I'm not an idiot, and I can put two and two together. "Are you saying this Riff has Wynter and intends to kill her?"

Again, Julian nods his head. "Riff picked his siblings off one by one in order of age. When he found out about Wynter and Spring, he wanted them gone too. It was public knowledge that John went to prison for not only raping more women than anyone could dream of but for killing two of his children. So, Riff moved on to the next child."

"He was never caught, I take it?"

Julian shakes his head at Jett. "Riff is his father's son, as much as he hates that fact."

"Why would he want to kill his own flesh and blood?" Red asks while rapping his fingers on the table.

"The man is crazy. He blames John for his mother's suicide. No one could blame Riff for that, but he got an insane idea to eradicate

John's children as payback."

Julian shrugs before going on to tell us that the police were never looking at Riff as a suspect because they didn't know about him, nor did they know about John's connection to the murdered people. It only came to light that the victims were related after John's arrest. When John was informed that a recent spate of murders with the same MO around the country were connected to him via his children, he went crazy.

Eventually, John gave up the names of his children, and it was confirmed each one older than Wynter and Spring apart from Riff had been killed. That left nine younger children and Riff alive.

Those nine children were put under police protection, while their attention was drawn to Riff. They couldn't pin anything on the man because he was too smart and never left any evidence behind. Spring was also put under protection once the story about her being alive had been leaked.

Julian tells us how Riff has made three attempts on Spring's life since finding out he'd been duped. His efforts failed because Spring is well protected, and Riff couldn't get near her. Spring is unaware of the attempts on her life, and I have to wonder if that was stupid on Julian's part.

Riff has never been caught, and may never be because he knows how to keep himself hidden. No man can hide forever, and I'll find him if it's the last thing I ever do.

Julian knew that once he'd seen Wynter, he needed to find her before Riff did, because if Julian could spot her easily, so could Riff.

"The only reason I can think as to why Wynter and Spring were separated and told the other was dead was to protect them. Detective Chang, the guy, working on John's case, knew all about Riff. Maybe he thought that he was doing what was right for the twins." He shrugs.

I don't buy that shit. Detective Chang could have reunited Wynter with her mother and sister if he really wanted to.

You weren't there, Havoc. You have no clue what went on and the real reasons the detective did what he did. Don't make judgments without all the facts.

"I believe Riff has the girls, and if he does, they won't be alive this time tomorrow."

"Then why the fuck are we still here!" I'm out of my seat, ready to leave, but I'm not that fucking lucky.

"Sit down!" Jett yells. "Don't go rushing off. You don't have a fuckin' clue where to look."

I growl loudly but tell myself that Jett is right, even if I don't think he is.

"Gabe, get Trace, we need to find anything and everything we can on Riff Carter." Gabe nods once and leaves to find Trace. "Now, we need a fuckin' airtight plan, brother, because we ain't losing one of our own."

"Jett's right, we do this properly." Tank's deep voice rumbles through me.

I shudder and close my eyes. Wynter must be so frightened right now. I wonder where Riff has taken Wynter and if she's hurt. I wonder if she even knows what's going on.

I don't know what I'll do if I lose Wynter, and there's a big chance of that becoming a reality. If what Julian told us is anything to go by, at least.

Riff Carter doesn't just kill his victims; he tortures them to death. Innocent people lose their lives because of one man's desire to punish a rapist. Doesn't that sick little freak understand how much pain John Anderson's rape victims have already suffered? Why put them through more hell?

None have survived Riff Carter, so why should I believe Wynter and Spring would be the exception? I don't know, but I can't give up until I find my wife.

Never give up, Havoc.

I don't intend to.

"There's something else,"

"What more could there be?" Wrench fires at Julian.

"John Anderson escaped from prison this morning."

The bottom just dropped out of my world.

Fuck!

Chapter Twenty-One

SPRING

I shudder from the cold breeze blowing through the dank room. I don't know who the fuck the idiot who kidnapped me is, but he's a real ugly fucker.

How is it right for a woman to be kidnapped twice in as many weeks?

The asshole promised to kill me, but he hasn't come through yet. Sure, I'm scared, how could I not be? But I won't show fear if I can help it.

He left me here an hour ago, and, of course, I tried to find a way out of here. However, the window is barred, and the door is locked from the outside. I kicked the shit out of it, but it got me nowhere.

He came back a while later and threw my sister at my feet. The piece of shit had kidnapped Wynter from her friend's wedding. I don't know how he managed to take us both in full view, but my uncle won't be pleased when he realizes the men he has watching me let this happen a second time.

I don't know what the nameless man did to Wynter, but she doesn't look right. She's pale, and I'm scared he's caused her some real damage.

"Wynter?" I crouch down in front of my sister and take her face in my hands. I lift her head, and she groans while trying to look at me. Wynter's eyes are glass, and I realize he must have hit her across the head. Bastard!

"Spring?"

"Yeah, it's me. Wynter, can you get up?" Wynter doesn't answer me. She can neither see me well enough to read my lips nor hear

what I'm saying.

I sit down on the filthy floor and wrap my arm around Wynter's shoulders. Her head falls against my shoulder with a groan. I kiss her head and tell her, "Everything will be okay," Even though she can't hear me, and I don't have a clue if it will be. "Somehow, it will be."

It isn't long before the guy comes back. He leans his ass back against the lone desk in this small room and smirks at me. My stomach turns over, and I can feel the urge to vomit. God, he's vile looking. He looks like he's not washed in weeks. His hair is greasy, his clothes are filthy, and he smells disgusting. I don't know how old he is, nor do I care, but he looks to be in his late forties.

He's probably much younger, Spring. All that filth is more than likely making him look older.

"Look what we have here, the bastard twins of John Anderson." I might have known it would have something to do with John.

"Let me guess," I shift where I sit. "John raped your mother years ago, and now you want us dead to punish him?"

The freak laughs while clapping his hands. "You really are the smart one!"

"You do realize that John won't care what you do to us. I'm his daughter, and he shot me and left me for dead."

The guy is silent for a few minutes. I shudder when he stares at me, not once looking away. The man doesn't even blink.

I do not want to die here. I want to go home to my little boy, my little miracle son. My pregnancy with Matthew was not easy, and I almost lost him twice. I fought hard to carry him until I gave birth at thirty weeks. I promised my son the day he was born that I would never leave him, and I don't intend to.

"What's your name?" Maybe I can keep him talking long enough for Julian to figure out where I am.

I have every faith in you, Uncle Julian. I know you'll find us because I know you won't stop until you do.

"Riff," He tells me reluctantly. "I'm your half-brother."

My mouth hangs open in shock. Brother? This moron cannot be related to me! I didn't even know John had another child. He never once mentioned anything, and I lived with the man for fourteen years.

Riff laughs at the shock written all over my face. "Yeah, little Miss Perfect, I'm the firstborn rape child of John Anderson. You and your sister here," He tips his head to Wynter, who looks at Riff through glassy eyes. "Will soon be joining our dearly departed siblings."

Siblings?

What the hell is going on?

Just how many children does John have?

Riff walks over to me, grabs my arm, and drags me to my feet. I'm trying so hard to pull away from him because my left hand is on Wynter's head. She's struggling to keep it up, and I don't want her to fall and hit her head.

"Please let me lay her down."

Riff huffs and continues dragging me, and I have no choice but to let Wynter slump to the ground. Riff pulls me over to the table where a bunch of headshots are laid out. I scan them, and I see Riff, myself, and Wynter amongst a handful of other people. I assume they're our siblings.

"Now, listen carefully, little sister, for I shall say this only once." He laughs at himself, and my stomach is churning. "I came first," He points to the picture of his much younger self. "Forty-three years ago, John Anderson raped my nineteen-year-old mother and forced her to lie about her pregnancy to anyone she knew. You see, John only raped women without families of their own. Girls fresh out of the system, girls living alone, etc. Those women had no one to turn to, no support, and it was easier for John to manipulate them." He shrugs.

I feel sick as I look at the photos of my half-siblings. Each one is dark-haired like John, apart from Wynter and I, who stick out like a sore thumb with white hair.

"My mother never made a secret of the fact that she hated me for who my father was. As if it was my fault, she was raped." He laughs sardonically. "She only kept me because John made damn sure she couldn't give me up. That and he threatened her with a fate worse than death. Why he cared, I'll never know when he couldn't be bothered to be a father. Fuckin' dumb bitch mother of mine was terrified of a man she'd never see again after I was born. That, dear sister, is some power."

I don't give two shits about this man's story. Yeah, it's sad that John caused him so much pain. However, the only thing I care about right now is getting to my sister and making sure she's okay.

"My mother eventually killed herself. Once she was out of the way, I decided to end John Anderson's entire bloodline."

"So you did your homework, found his kids, and what?"

My skin crawls when Riff leans into me and whispers in my ear. "I killed them." My heart is in my throat, and I'm scared to swallow.

Riff pulls away from me and points to the picture next to his. "This is Daliah, six months my junior, and this is Andrew, Anthony, Paul, Greg, Ricky, and Aaron. I found most of them quickly, though I'll admit, finding Ricky and Aaron took some time. Their mother's abandoned them and ran away. Ricky and Aaron were adopted by the same couple, which made things a lot easier."

I swallow hard. I don't want to know what Riff did to those poor people, and I hope he doesn't go into detail. I didn't even know they existed, but I feel their loss just the same.

"Do you know what fascinates me about you, Spring?"

"No, but I'm sure you're going to tell me." I might be scared of this man, but I will not be a victim. This bastard won't break me.

"You, out of nineteen kids, are the only one John ever gave a shit about." How the fuck does he even know that? "That poor bitch over there," He tips his head at Wynter without looking. I turn my eyes to look at her, but she's gone, and I'm confused. I look at Riff again because I don't want to draw attention to Wynter being gone. "Meant nothing to John Anderson. So, what's so special about you, Spring?"

I hold Riff's gaze. "There's nothing special about me, Riff. John shot me without a care in the world. He wanted me dead, and I have the scars to prove it."

I run my tongue over my teeth. "You think you had a hard life, Riff? You don't know the meaning of hardship. John raped your mother, but he kidnapped mine when she was fifteen years old. He kept her locked in his basement for a year, raping her every day. She gave birth to twins by herself because he wouldn't take her to the hospital.

"You think you know suffering? You don't know what suffering is! I lived for fourteen years with that man as a father. He beat and raped my mother non-stop. He treated my sister like shit because she was born deaf. That bastard told my mother and me that he'd

killed Wynter and buried her somewhere no one would find her, right before he shot us!"

My blood is boiling, and my eyes feel like they're about to pop out of my head. I'm so angry that I could strangle him with my bare hands!

Riff laughs and shakes his head. "I couldn't give a fuck about any of that." He grabs the back of my neck, and I whimper when he forces me to look at the headshots again. He points to my picture. "You and Wynter got away, thanks to the story put out there of your death. This one," He points to a young boy, clearly born after Wynter, as it seems these pictures are laid out in order of birth. "This is Joe. He was fun, fought back just as you're trying to do. Then we have George, Andre, Lloyd, Dean, Cain, Kade, David, and last but not least, little Sally."

I can't stop the tear from falling from my eye. Sally couldn't have been more than thirteen in the picture, and she was the image of John in his younger years. Was that reason enough for her to die?

"They should find her body any day now." I close my eyes and will myself to keep my emotions in check. "I thought I was almost done until I realized Wynter was still alive. All I needed was to find a way to get near you. Once you were dead, I'd take the evidence to John. Christ, I would have reveled in his misery!"

I scoff and roll my eyes. "You don't know John at all if you thought he'd care."

"Oh, he'd care, all right." Riff grabs my arm and yanks me against his sweaty body. I almost gag at the smell emanating from this man. "Don't you see? He impregnated all those women so the children would carry on his bloodline."

I cringe when Riff pulls me closer. Christ knows how I'm still on my feet, and I'm shaking so much, I feel sick.

"I will not rest until every damn person sharing John Anderson's blood is dead!"

My blood runs cold. Every person? "Riff, did any of our siblings have children?" I send a silent prayer to God that Riff didn't hurt more people.

"They did. I told you, not one member. Once I'm done with you and your sister, and when your family is lost in grief, I'll take your little boy and tear him apart."

"No," The word falls from my mouth in a shocked whisper. This monster killed young children, and now he's threatening to kill my Matthew!

Oh God, please help me to survive this man. Please keep my son safe. I'll do anything it takes to protect the last of my family if only you show me the way.

"I had no idea about John's brother and his family. Three sons, six grandson's, a granddaughter, and a beautiful teenage daughter. I'll enjoy playing with his daughter until I end her life."

I bite my tongue. I want to tell this man what I've heard about Phoenix. Sure, he could kill her the way he could kill any person. However, from what I've heard, she's not your average woman, and this man would have a fight on his hands.

Why is Riff really doing this?

Can one man really be this evil?

John was evil, but this man is something else. Riff can't possibly get away with killing all of those people. Someone must know who killed John Anderson's children and grandchildren. Surely the police are looking for him?

If they are, why haven't they caught him yet?

As for Jack and his family, Riff has no chance. I may have never met any of them, but I've heard enough. Plus, I've met my brother-in-law, and I know how dangerous Snakes Henchmen MC can be. They can all take care of themselves, and I wouldn't be surprised if some had killed.

"Where do you come into this?" I yank my arm out of Riff's grip. There is nothing I can do about what's already happened. However, I will fight to the death to protect my son. "Why do you, John Anderson's firstborn bastard son, get to live while the rest of us die?"

Riff smirks and reaches for me, his hands wrapping around my throat, squeezing. I'm fighting for breath, as I fight for my life, but he's too strong. He screams words that I can no longer hear. I'm losing the fight. I'm going to die here, and there's nothing I can do to stop it.

Just when I think I'm going to lose consciousness, Riff slumps against me, and my hearing zooms in so fast, my sister's screams of fury are deafening.

My whole body seems to be stuck to the wall, and I can't take my eyes off Wynter as she brings the metal chair down on Riff's body

again and again. I have to pull myself together and get us out of here.

I grab the chair midair and yank it from Wynter's hands. "It's okay," I drop the chair to the floor and force Wynter to look at me. "We need to get out of here." I swallow hard past the golf ball lump now stuck in my throat.

"He was going to kill you. I couldn't let him, Spring," Wynter gulp back a sob. "I won't lose you again."

"I know," I nod my head and grab Wynter's hand. We don't have time to dally right now; we need to go. "Keep up, Wynter, we need to get out of here now." I open the door and come face to face with the one man I never wanted to see again.

"Hello, girls."

I swallow hard. "Dad,"

Chapter Twenty-Two

WYNTER

Now there's a face I hoped I'd never see again - John Anderson, in the flesh. How in all of hell did he get out of prison? He went down for life. There's no way he got parol!

Spring and I are frozen to the spot, staring at the man who fathered us.

"My little girl's, together again," John smiles while opening his arms. He wraps them tightly around Spring and me, and I try not to cringe.

Spring clutches my hand tighter, silently telling me *everything will be okay*. It doesn't feel like it right now. I've never been so scared in all my life as I am right now.

"Have you missed Daddy?" From the corner of my eye, I see Spring nod her head, so I follow suit. John pulls away from us, laughing loudly. "You little liars!" He shakes his head. "You haven't missed me, but no matter."

"How did you get out?" I hope I sounded stronger than I feel.

John looks at me and smirks. The monster within this man is still there, still waiting to jump out and scare us to death. "With a little help from a friend." He looks past us as Riff begins to stir.

My stomach tightens. I thought I'd killed Riff and, I kind of wish I had, but I'm glad I didn't at the same time.

What the hell is going to happen now?

You're not getting out of this room alive, Wynter. Don't be fooled into thinking Spring will be making it out alive either.

Spring and I share a look – one that tells me to go along with whatever my sister is about to do. I don't like it, but I have no choice.

"Daddy," Spring touches John's arm. He looks at her hand, then her face. "Please don't let Riff kill us. If you ever loved us, even a tiny bit, then, please."

John looks from Spring to me, then back again. "You still haven't worked it out, have you?"

"Worked what out?" The question shot out of my mouth before I could stop it. I know better than that where John is concerned.

However, John simply smiles, and holds his finger up in a *wait there*, kind of way. John walks past Spring and me, and over to Riff. I watch him lean down and place his hand on Riff's back.

Spring and I could run out of the door right now and get help, yet neither of us moves from the spot we're standing.

John stands over Riff as he looks up to see our father. "You," Riff points while scrambling to his feet. "How the hell are you here?"

"A little birdie told me that you were up to your old tricks, Riff."

I'm shaking cold as I watch the two most evil men I have ever known, exchange words. I have to admit that I'm struggling to keep up with some of the words. My hearing isn't great from this distance.

I take a deep breath and step a little closer. Spring widens her eyes and shakes her head, but I have to do this, I need to know what they're saying. Reluctantly, Spring also steps closer.

"Did you really think that because you were locked up, I wouldn't finish what I started? Don't make me laugh, old man."

John scratches his jaw with his thumbnail. "You'll never get to finish what you started, Riff. It ends tonight along with your life."

"It ends when they're dead!"

Spring startles where we stand. I rub my hand up and down her arm, trying to soothe my sister. If Spring feels anything like me right now, her heart is banging so hard it's about to burst.

"Your little plan failed, John."

"What plan?" Spring pipes in. "What's he talking about, Dad?"

Riff laughs sarcastically. "You didn't tell your precious twins why they ended up separated? Cause I worked it out, John."

I don't think my legs can hold me much longer. I don't know what Riff did to me, but my whole body feels weak. Maybe it's fear rushing through me that's making me feel like this?

"The reason Spring is still alive is because you didn't want her dead. You knew I was the one eradicating your bastards, and you knew I was coming for those two next," Riff points to Spring and me again. "So you shot that one and her mother, knowing there was a damn good chance they'd live. All to make me believe they were gone, so I wouldn't come looking for them."

"You're right," John nods his head. "Seeing Julian was all part of the plan. I'd watched him for weeks, I knew his routine, and I knew where he'd be that day. That's why I took Julianne to the store when I did."

I think my mouth is hanging so far open; the flies are about to settle in!

"I know once Julianne saw her brother, she'd try to make a run for it with the girls. That's exactly what I wanted her to do. It was bad luck that Wynter snuck out of the house when she did. However, the plan had to go ahead that day, regardless. I knew I'd find another way to keep Wynter safe." I narrow my eyes. Keep me safe? What the hell? "Once the cops arrived, the plan was in full swing."

My eyes seem to be dancing in my head. I look at Spring, and her eyes are wide with shock.

"How the hell did you get the cops to go along with your plan?"

"Riff," John laughs loudly. "I thought you were smart?" Riff grinds his teeth in anger, but John doesn't even acknowledge Riff's annoyance.

"I agreed to hand myself in and plead guilty to all charges if they did what I asked of them. Of course, they were reluctant at first. Even when I agreed to give them details of every crime I'd committed, they were hesitant.

"Shooting my little girl was the last thing I wanted, but it worked. I had to make it look real, and that I wanted Julianne and the twins dead for trying to leave me. But do you really think they'd be standing over there if I wanted them dead?"

I wrap my arm around Spring, trying to hold her up. Her energy seems to be waning, and I know that she's as confused as I am right now. It can't be true that John fabricated things to save our lives from Riff.

"Do you honestly think I'd have stayed around for the police to find me if I didn't want to be caught? Give me some credit."

"Bullshit!" Riff screams.

"I handed myself in, in exchange for protection for Spring and Wynter. I had to come up with something plausible then and there about Wynter, but I've always been good at that shit. I knew reporters would be outside the house, and they'd know only two bodies were inside. So, the story was told that I'd killed Wynter and buried her in the mountains."

I swallow past the lump in my throat. That can't be true, can it?

"The girls were separated to keep them safe. The world was told Spring and Wynter were dead because I knew it would reach you, and you'd stop looking for them."

Everything Spring and I were ever told about that day was a lie. Why did John have to shoot my mother and sister when he could have pretended to kill the three of us? Christ, nothing makes sense anymore!

Why are you questioning things, Wynter? Whatever John's reasons for doing things the way he did, it all boils down to the one thing; he wanted to win.

"But you failed, John. All your efforts to keep them safe, and I still found them."

"You may have found them, but you are the one who failed, Riff."

"I didn't fail," Riff counters back, childishly.

Spring slumps against me while trying to hold herself up. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." She whispers with a slight smile. She's not okay, and we need to get out of here. I don't care what Riff and John are arguing about. I don't give a damn which one outsmarted the other and how. I just want to get my sister out of here.

From what I've gathered so far, John knew Riff was taking out his kids in order of age. He planned to shoot Spring, Mom, and me, and have the police fake our deaths. I snuck out and put a spoke in the works, but John didn't wait for me to come home, he carried out his plan regardless.

The cops arrested John, and he admitted to all his crimes in exchange for police protection for my sister and me. They kept us apart because the press instantly reported that John had killed Julianne and Spring. They also said that John had killed me and buried my body in a shallow, unmarked grave. The lie kept Riff away from Spring and me, but it didn't save my younger siblings.

Why would John save Spring, and I yet not give a damn about his other children?

"I need to get you out of here."

Spring shakes her head. "We wouldn't get out the front door before one or both of them caught up with us."

I open my mouth to tell Spring that we have to try, but yelling cuts me off. Yelling so loud even I can hear it.

"What the hell was so special about those two?" Riff points at my sister and me. "Why were you a father to them when the rest of us were nothing?"

John laughs, and it's such a mocking laugh that I know this isn't going to end well. Someone is going to die here today, and it seems John doesn't care who. "You stupid boy. Your mother was a whore, and I treated her like one – same with the others. Their mother," This time, John points to Spring and me. "Was the light of my life, and she gave me two beautiful little girl's."

I try not to scoff. The light of his life? Who the hell is John trying to kid? You don't beat, rape, and belittle the light of your life. Also, since when was I John's beautiful little girl? He told me that I was defective, and he wished Julianne had miscarried me plenty of times in my life.

The man is delusional. Either that or he's saying this stuff just to hurt Riff.

"My mother was right about you," Riff stands taller. "She knew you were a monster, and I should have known you wouldn't care if your kids were dead or alive. The only thing you've ever given a shit about is those two whores over there!"

John pushes his hands into his pants pockets and rolls his shoulders. "Oh, I care. You killed my children and grandchildren. Not only that, but you also kidnapped my baby girls intending to kill them. You should never have done that, Riff, and now, I'm going to kill you!" John pulls a gun from the back of his pants and points it at Riff.

Riff's eyes widen. He moves his hand back, searching for something. My heart is in my throat, and Spring is begging for John not to do this. Riff realizes he no longer has what I'm assuming is his gun, and finally brings his hands up in defeat. John must have taken Riff's gun somehow, but I didn't see him do it.

"Spring, be quiet!" John yells without taking his eyes off of Riff. Spring instantly stops yelling and whimpers. "Were you looking for this?" John mocks. "You should have known it would end like this, Riff."

"Just tell me one thing..."

"No," John shakes his head while cutting Riff off. "I'll tell you, nothing. You've had your fun, and now I'm bored." Both Spring and I scream involuntarily when John pulls the trigger, and the bullet hits Riff straight between the eyes.

Riff's body hits the floor with a thud, eyes wide open and looking at me. I think I'm going to throw up! John killed his own son in front of Spring and me, and he doesn't even care. The smirk on his face is evidence of that.

John never cared about any of his children. They're dead, and I doubt he shed one tear for them. He's angry only because Riff took what John believes belonged to him. My heart aches for those people. They lost their lives for simply sharing the same DNA as John Anderson.

John leans over Riff's body, moving his head from side to side with a smile on his face. "I always knew I should have drowned you at birth." John sneers. He stands his full height and tucks the gun into the back of his pants.

He turns to look at Spring and me, and he smiles. I'm not used to John smiling at me for any reason, and it makes me uneasy. "I think it's time we talked. Don't you?"

The last thing I want to do is talk to this man. I want to run and never stop. I want Spring and I to leave this place alive. I want Havoc to hold me, and I want to start our family, and never think about John Anderson again. However, as he stalks toward us, I don't think any of those things will ever come true.

Chapter Twenty-Three

HAVOC

It didn't take Trace long to gather all the information surrounding John Anderson's breakout from prison. Someone working at the prison tipped John off about Wynter and Spring finding each other. He knew it would only be a matter of time before his lunatic son found out. So, John, with the help of his prison guard friend, made his escape.

John is obviously looking for Riff, and Riff has the girls. If we don't find them before John does, we may never see Wynter and Spring again.

Riff is pretty much a ghost. Trace couldn't find much on the man himself; there's no driver's license, no cell number, no home address. In other words, no way of finding the cunt!

There has to be something we've missed; some place Riff would take the girls – somewhere others wouldn't think to look.

I'm going out of my mind with worry. There are two psycho's out there, and one of them has my wife, and the other is no doubt looking for her. If Wynter escapes Riff, she won't be so lucky when it comes to John.

I've never felt this sick in my life. I should be out there searching for my wife, not pacing a hole in the concrete. The clubhouse yard has never seemed so small.

I look at my cell for the umpteenth time, but I have no missed calls or messages. It's frustrating because that means there's still no news. I bang my fist against my head in frustration. I have the urge to scream my lungs out! I just want Wynter back, and I'm terrified that I'll never see her again.

"Don't do that," My mother grabs my hand and stops me from hitting myself again. "I know how afraid you are for Wynter right now," Mom holds my hand in hers, the way she did when I was a child. "But, you have to stay strong, Havoc."

"I am staying strong, Mom. I'm frustrated that no one has a clue where Riff could have taken them. I'm even more frustrated that no matter where I've looked, she isn't there."

Mom nods her head. "I know you are, but we will find both Wynter and Spring, Havoc. Wynter is an incredibly strong woman, and she will fight to survive that man, no matter what."

Mom's right, I know she is. That won't stop me wondering if I'll ever see the woman I love again.

I look at my beautiful mother, standing in front of me in her jeans and leather jacket. I'm so grateful for this woman and all that she's taught me in life. I realize as I look at her, that the only other woman I'll ever love as much is Wynter.

"What if she can't, Mom? What if Riff hurts Wynter so badly that I lose her?"

"A wise young man once told me, 'No matter the injury, the pain, the suffering, never let anyone break you because you're stronger than you think. After the storm there will be calm. With love comes healing. I love you, and I will never let anyone hurt you.' Those words have stayed with me always."

"I was thirteen, Mom," A child in pain seeing his mother hurting so much.

"A strong, brave, and caring thirteen-year-old." Mom puts her hand to my face. "All I'm saying is that you saved me at a time when I didn't see any way out of my misery." I blink twice. Mom has never said anything like that to me before. "My beautiful, kind, protective son. When Wynter comes home, no matter what, you'll be there to make things better. Just as your dad was there to make things better for me, with a little help from you." She winks with a smile. I wrap my arms around my mother and kiss her head. I hope she's right about Wynter coming home.

Mom and I make our way inside. Everyone is talking loudly, and the noise is deafening. As soon as Cormack and Cassie set off for their honeymoon, everyone headed back to the clubhouse. Jett filled them all in on what happened, and now everyone is up to date.

"Anything?" I ask Trace.

"Shut up!" Jett yells, and instant silence befalls the room.

Trace tips his head in thanks. "I've done a search spanning twenty miles, looking for anything..." My cell rings, cutting Trace off. I grit my teeth because there's no caller I.D. I fucking hate that!

"Answer it," Tank tells me. "It could be Riff or John."

"Put it on speaker."

I nod at Jett, take a deep breath, and answer the call. I'm praying so hard that Wynter is okay, and neither Riff nor John has hurt her.

"Hello?"

"Havoc,"

"Wynter," My heart slams against my chest. "Are you all right? Where are you?"

"Is BlackJack there?"

I narrow my eyes and look at BlackJack. Why won't Wynter answer my questions? Why not talk to me while she can?

A look flashes across BlackJack's face. He knows as well as I do that this isn't going to be good.

"Yeah, he's here."

"Can you ask him to come to the phone, please?" I know my wife and I can hear the fear in her voice, even though she's trying to hide it.

"Yeah," I nod even though I know she can't see me.

I tip my head at BlackJack, and he comes closer. I hand him my phone and run my hand through my hair. I've never heard Wynter like that before, scared and unsure.

"Wynter?"

"Wrong," Comes a deep voice through the phone. My head shoots round. I don't yet know which asshole it is, but something tells me it's not Riff. "It's been a long time, little brother."

I knew it. John fucking Anderson has Wynter!

"Find out where he is," Jett mumbles. BlackJack puts his finger to his lips. No one knows John better than Jack, though he doesn't know him well.

"What do you want, John?"

"Straight to the point, Jacky." John chuckles. That cackling laugh has me wanting to strangle the cunt with my bare hands.

"What have you done with the girls, John? If you've hurt them, I'll rip your spine out!"

"Now, why would you say something like that, Jacky?" If I had fingernails, I'd be biting them right now. "I wouldn't hurt my little girls for the world."

Says the man who shot one daughter, and would have killed the other if he had the chance.

"Don't make me laugh, John. You and I both know those girls mean as much to you as your other kids – nothing!" Jack's face is suddenly red with rage. He can't lose his temper right now; it could put the girls in real danger.

"That's where you're wrong. I want to see you, Jack."

"No," Comes BlackJack's instant answer.

No one could blame BlackJack for not wanting to see his old brother. However, I hope his decision doesn't put my wife in terrible peril.

John sighs. "That's a shame. It looks like your uncle doesn't care about you, after all, girls."

There's a whimper on the line, but I can't tell if Wynter or Spring made the sound. My gut drops. If BlackJack doesn't meet with John, I could lose Wynter!

"John, stop!" BlackJack yells before I can say one word. "Don't hurt them."

"I haven't hurt them, Jack."

"How can I be sure of that?"

My palms are sweating with anger. I'm an inch away from snapping, and Red knows it. That's why he clasps my shoulder. "Keep your cool, Havoc. Now isn't the time, son."

I snatch my shoulder from Red's grip. "Easy for you to say. It's not your wife being held captive by a lunatic!" I hiss.

"Wynter," My heart starts to race at the sound of Wynter's name. "Tell your uncle that you're okay, and I haven't hurt you."

"I'm okay, uncle Jack. Dad hasn't hurt me."

I let go of the breath I was holding. Wynter might be just fine, but she could also just be saying what John wants her to say. However, I don't hear pain in her voice, and I thank the Lord for that.

"Spring?" John urges.

"I'm okay, uncle Jack. Dad didn't hurt me."

"See?" The smirk in John's voice is enough to make any man sick.

"What about Riff, John? He took the girls, so where is he now?"

"Dead," Comes John instant answer. "Stupid little cunt killed my kids and grandkids. Then he thinks, after everything I did to hide my girls from him, that he can torture and kill them? I couldn't let that happen. Riff is dead, and that's the end of that. I just want to see you for a few minutes, Jack, and then all of this will be over. I promise. The girls will be able to go home with you, and none of you will ever have to see me again."

I widen my eyes and nod my head. I don't give a shit if BlackJack wants to see John or not, this isn't about him, it's about Wynter and Spring. We have to bring them home safely.

BlackJack rolls his eyes. "Fine. Where are you?"

"Leave your little friends at home, Jacky."

The man is stupid if he believes BlackJack will meet with him alone. John Anderson won't think twice about killing his brother. He thought nothing of attempting to kill Spring and Julianne.

"Anything else?" BlackJack snaps between his teeth.

"Yeah, bring the husbands. I wanna meet the men my little girls love." BlackJack look at me, and I nod. I'll meet the bastard. I'll get Wynter away from him, and then I'll blow his fucking brains out!

BlackJack turns his head to James, and he nods once. I can see from the look in James's eyes that he's thinking what I am right now. We'll do whatever it takes to bring our wives home.

There's no point analyzing why John Anderson wants James and I to tag along, we'll find out why soon enough.

"They'll be there." BlackJack shifts on his feet.

"Good. Good." I can almost hear the evil in John's voice, and it makes my blood boil. That bastard could have done anything to Wynter and Spring. He could have forced them at gunpoint to say what they said. We only have his word that he hasn't hurt them.

How the hell am I supposed to believe a man who killed his own son?

"Remember, *BlackJack*, none of your friends and no cops, just the three of you. I have words for you all."

"Then you'll let the girls go?"

John says nothing for a moment, and the wait is agonizing. "You'll find me where it all began. You have an hour. Don't be late, Jacky." With that, the line goes dead.

"What the fuck does that mean?"

BlackJack looks at me, and I can see that he doesn't know the answer. Great!

"We have to be very careful with this," Jett looks at me. Bastard thinks I'm going to do something stupid. In normal circumstances I would, but I can't go rushing in there because I won't risk Wynter's life for anything. No matter how badly I may want to throttle the cunt, I can't be stupid. "Regardless of what John said, you're not going alone."

"You don't know my brother, Jett. If he spots anyone other than the three of us," BlackJack points to James and me. "He won't hesitate to kill Wynter and Spring."

"We ain't risking that!" I snap.

"No one is risking..." Julian is cut off by the door bursting open.

All eyes turn toward the woman rushing into the room. Julianne scans the room for less than three seconds before she spots Julian. "Where are they?" She screams while rushing Julian. He grabs her wrists before her fists slam down on his chest. "Where are they?" Julianne screams again.

"I'm sorry," Neil looks around the room, addressing everyone it would seem until his eyes find Julian's. "She heard Justin and me talking, and she took off before I could stop her."

"Someone's in trouble," VJ mumbles beside me. I shoot him a look that says, *shut the fuck up!*

"VJ!" Jett hisses, but VJ just rolls his eyes and smirks. How he can find this situation funny is beyond me.

Julianne is still trying to attack Julian, and he's still trying to calm her. "Please tell me where my babies are, Julian. I only just got Wynter back, and now I could lose both of them."

Julian sighs and shakes his head. "John has them,"

Julianne's eyes are wide, and she shakes her head erratically. "How? He-he's in prison."

"No," Julian shakes his head. "He broke out this morning."

"Oh, God," Julianne swallows so hard that it's audible to the whole room.

"Listen to me, Julianne. Right now, the girls are okay. John hasn't hurt them yet, and Jack is about to meet with John and bring Spring and Wynter home."

Julianne turns her head and spots BlackJack. She swallows hard again and makes her way over to him. "You're John's brother?" I'm

not sure if it was a question or not, but BlackJack nods his head anyway. "Wynter told me all about you. She said that you're nothing like John," She blinks and I see the tear fall from her eye. "She said that you've been good to her,"

"This is all well and good," Phoenix mumbles in my ear. "But we need to get out of here and find my cousins now."

Phoenix is right; I know she is. We've wasted ten minutes already!

"Julianne, I will bring your girls home. I promise you that."

Julianne nods her head at BlackJack, then she looks at James and then me. "I know the two of you love my daughters, and I know you'll do everything you can to bring them home safely. Just be careful, John is worse than a monster. He's smarter than most would believe, and if he thinks you're there to take him out, he will kill my babies." She turns in her husband's arms and sobs.

"We need to go now."

"Go where, James? I don't have a clue where my brother is."

I roll my neck and let it crack. "Think, BlackJack. What did he mean by *where it all began*?"

There has to be some significance to what John said. I don't know the man at all, so therefore I have no damn clue what to think.

"Wait," Julianne pulls away from Neil. "That's what John used to tell me."

"What did he used to tell you, Julianne?"

She looks at me and tells me, "When John kidnapped me, and he took me to his house, he used to say that I was where it all began. He said that I was the light in his darkness. I was the only one he ever felt the need to keep with him. I was where it all began for him." What the fuck is she trying to say? "The house where he kept me, that's where the girls are."

That's all we need to know.

* * *

THIS HOUSE LOOKS like any other abandoned house – filthy and falling apart. Jett and the others, because they all insisted on being here,

are waiting around the corner. BlackJack told them not to come, but you don't argue with Jett.

"Listen to me,"

"What now?" I hiss between my teeth at BlackJack.

"Do not go in there thinking you can grab your wives and run. We don't know what state the girls are in, and you don't want to cause them more harm. Do not turn your back on John, he will kill you faster than you can blink. However, be on your guard, I don't wanna lose either of you. Don't play the hero. We have no time for that. If I tell you to run, you run."

In other words, if things go bad, grab the girls, and run, even if that means leaving BlackJack behind.

We make our way inside the house. It's not as rundown as I imagined. The room to the left of the hallway has a handful of furniture pieces dotted around the room, covered in white sheets. The room to the right looks to have been the den, and this is where we find John Anderson. He's standing in front of what was once the open fire. He's taller than I imagined, slight in build but no less strong.

"There he is!" John's smile seems genuine as he looks at BlackJack. John embraces BlackJack, who himself doesn't move to hug him back. "Little Jacky boy. You grew, little brother!"

"Tends to happen after forty-seven years, John. Where are the girls?"

John laughs while wagging his finger. He doesn't answer BlackJack's question, he turns to James and me, still with a smile on his ugly old face. "Now, let me guess," John looks James up and down. "Expensive suit, neat, slicked-back hair, clean-shaven. Mexican?"

"Cuban, on my mother's side,"

John nods in thought.

It's no secret that John Anderson is a racist piece of shit. Knowing his daughter married a man of Cuban descent must be irking the hell out of him right now.

"You must be Spring's other half."

"That's right," James rolls his shoulder, trying to John that he can't be intimidated.

James is a good guy, five-eleven, around one hundred and fifty-five pounds, and not a bad looking guy. However, it's obvious to me

that James is a little afraid, though that could be for his wife rather than himself.

"Apart from the color of your skin, you're just who I imagine Spring would marry. Always thought Wynter would be the one to date a colored kid," John snorts.

James grits his teeth, but I shake my head at him. I know how angry he must feel right now by what John said, but getting into it with him won't change anything.

"That must make you Havoc." I don't answer. "Tall, built, a fighter, just the type I always imagined Wynter would go for."

"Enough with the chit chat, John. Tell me what you called me here for." John stares at BlackJack for a moment, and I'm fighting the urge to walk away and search for Wynter.

So many things are rushing through my mind right now. Did John kill Wynter the moment he ended the call to BlackJack?

Is Wynter's body lying next to Spring's in one of these rooms?

Is she tied up and gagged?

In pain?

Is she here somewhere wishing I'd saved her?

"I wanted to put things right while I still can. Take a seat."

"We'll stand. We're not here to get comfortable."

John sighs. "Suit yourselves. How's your family?" John directs his question at BlackJack, and I'm fast losing my patience.

"They're fine, John. Stop stalling."

John nods his head. "Before I tell you what you want to know, I just want to apologize."

BlackJack folds his arms around his chest and breathes deeply. "For?"

"For everything, but mainly for the way I treated you over Taylor." I see BlackJack's spine straighten. "Everything I said to you back then was wrong, Jack. I did a lot of thinking while in prison, and I met a few people who became friends. One, in particular, helped me see the world in a very different way."

I look at James, who mouths, 'What the fuck?' I shrug my shoulders. I don't have a damn clue what the point of all of this is.

"Koji was in prison for killing his brother," John laughs to himself. "However, he was an insightful man, and he changed a lot about me. I realized how badly I'd treated Taylor, how badly Mom and Dad also had. I knew when the girls were born that I never

wanted them to think the way they did. I hadn't even been to prison then, so I suppose my mindset had already been altered."

"Yet, when Wynter came to visit you, you called me, what was it again?"

John nods at BlackJack. "I know, but I had to keep the lie going. All I'm trying to say is that you have a beautiful family, Jack. I know you took Wynter into your heart, even knowing that she's mine. I know you'll do the same with Spring. I'm proud of you, Jacky, I really am."

BlackJack doesn't reply; he simply tips his head before saying, "Tell me what I want to know, John."

"You wanna know how I broke out of prison? And at my age!" He laughs with wide eyes. God, he really is an ugly fucker. "It doesn't matter now. All you need to know is that everything I did was to protect my girls."

I can't believe John would expect anyone to buy that bullshit. Shooting your child is not protecting them. You'd have to be insane to think that! Wait, he is.

"How was shooting Spring and Julianne, and leave Wynter to the care system protecting them?"

A small noise like a shuffle has me turning my head to the left. It's gone as quickly as it came, so I turn my attention back to John Anderson.

It was probably just a mouse, Havoc.

"Riff was coming for my girls, Jack. It was only a matter of time before he found them." He sighs. "It didn't take me long to figure out that someone was killing my kids in order of age, long before the police even knew they were mine."

I fold my arms around my chest and take a deep breath. I'm itching to find my wife, and the longer we stand here, the more chance there is, she could be dying from her injuries; if she has injuries.

"You know, there ain't many people could ever get one up on me, but that little shit did. It didn't take me long to figure out *who* was killing my kids, either. From the moment that kid was born, I knew I should have drowned the little prick. There was something just not right about him."

The fact John Anderson was his father might have been the reason. Fucking moron can't even see that his evil genes had to have gotten into one or two of his children.

"Oh, I searched for Riff, but I never found him. The little bastard was good at hiding. I mean, how can you kill so many people and never get caught? That takes some balls."

Again, this man is a fucking idiot. He raped countless women and got away with it because he scared those women into keeping their mouths shut.

"I couldn't risk Riff finding my little girls. I had to throw him off the scent by making him believe the girls were already dead."

"And you couldn't have faked their deaths instead of shooting them?" I grab James's arm and shake my head. This isn't the time for him to put his two cents in.

"As I was saying," John ignored James and continues talking to BlackJack as if James and I don't even exist.

John explains how he planned to shoot the twins and Julianne only to incapacitate. He'd then allow himself to be arrested. Once at the police station, he'd explain about Riff, in exchange for his confession about all crimes he'd committed, including the kidnapping and fifteen-year imprisonment of Julianne Bucannon, he wanted police protection for the girls.

Long story short, all that happened from that day until today, did so because John loved his daughters and wanted them to outlive Riff.

In some fucked up way, I understand why John did what he did. I'll never understand why he didn't ask for help when it came to his other children. All in all, it will never change the fact that this man is a monster. Everything Riff did, right or wrong, was due to John Anderson and the pain he caused.

Everything that Julian, Spring, Julianne, Wynter, not to mention the world believes happened, it's just fiction. Stories were told, and facts were distorted, but only John knows the truth.

How wonderful!

"What is it you want from me, John? You've already taken Riff out, what's left?" John looks at BlackJack, not once blinking. "Do you want a medal, John? You kidnapped, raped, and tortured a child in this very house! You force her to carry your children and then act as though she was your wife for fifteen years! That didn't stop you raping more women than I care to count. Jesus Christ, you forced eighteen women to carry your children. You tormented them, mentally

abused and physically tortured them, John. Was it any wonder that Riff turned out the way he did?"

John's face remains impassive. I have to wonder if he's even hearing what BlackJack is saying.

"No matter how those kids came into this world, they didn't deserve to die for your crimes." BlackJack is right. No one can choose their parents, and John Anderson's children didn't deserve to die just because he was their father. I don't condone what Riff did, but in a fucked up kind of way, I understand the madness within.

I hear another shuffling noise, only this time louder. Something tells me that I should be investigating, but we're still not done here.

"Is Julianne happy?"

BlackJack nods. "She's happy."

"I know you don't understand it, but I loved her, Jack. I still do."

I shake my head in disgust. Pedophile scum!

"If you love Julianne, then let me take her daughter's home. She's so afraid thinking Riff has hurt them. All Julianne wants is to know they're safe. For all the terrible things you put her through, Julianne loves Wynter and Spring. She's hurting right now, and I know you don't want that, John. Those girls have been through so much in their young lives. They have families of their own now, and people who love and care for them. Let them come home, John."

John smiles wearily. "You're a good man, Jacky. I was never a good man." He sighs dramatically, I refrain from rolling my eyes. No one here feels sorry for him. He could have found God and become a devout catholic for all I care; it won't change what he's done. "You will take care of them for me, won't you? The three of you?"

"Until the day we die." I'm not saying that to make this man feel better, I'm just being honest. Once this man is safely back in his prison cell, I'll make sure to keep Wynter safe.

"That will do. Riff is in the bedroom on the left. I'm not sure how long he'd been staying here, but there's evidence enough in that room to prove the man was a serial killer. Make sure the police know that I killed him and the reasons why."

John crooks his finger, beckoning us to follow him to God knows where.

There's nothing to worry about, Havoc, he's just one man, and there's three of you.

We follow John into the kitchen. The room is empty but for the built-in cabinets.

"We should call the police now." James whispers toward me.

"They'll be here soon enough," I whisper-hiss back.

"The girls are in the garage," John tips his head toward the door behind him. "They're not hurt, Jacky. I checked them both for any injuries Riff may have caused them. They'll have a headache for a while, but nothing serious."

Thank the Lord, though it won't stop me from getting Wynter checked out by a doctor.

"Don't let them into this room, and make sure they know that I loved them." Then the motherfucker pulls a gun from the back of his belt, so fast, I didn't see him do it.

BlackJack and I pull our guns just as fast and point them at John Anderson. "Don't be fuckin' stupid, John. Put the gun down!"

John shakes his head at BlackJack. "There's nothing to fear, Jacky. You have one job, and that's to take care of Spring and Wynter for me. Oh, and one more thing - tell Julianne that she was the light." In less than a second, John Anderson puts the barrel of the gun in his mouth and pulls the trigger. Brain matter hit the wall behind him, his head falls back, and soon after, so does his body.

What the fuck?

BlackJack's eyes are locked on his brother's dead body, James is vomiting in the sink, and I'm frozen to the spot.

Shake yourself out of it, Havoc, your wife needs you.

However, it isn't me who speaks first. "Havoc, James, get the girls and take them through the garage entrance." I nod at BlackJack. "They don't need to see this."

I watch BlackJack take out his cell and call Jett. It's time to get this mess cleaned up. I can't imagine what BlackJack is feeling right now, but I have no time to think about it either.

I make my way to the garage door, James following. "Before we go in," I turn to James. "You need to pull yourself together. I know what you just witnessed was horrific, but just tell yourself that Spring is finally free. Nothing can hurt your wife anymore."

He nods while taking a deep breath. "Let me in there. I need to hold my wife."

I open the door slowly as not to scare the girls too much. "Wynter?" No answer.

"Spring?!" James yells loudly. I cringe because the bastard made my ears ring.

"James?" Spring comes running from behind an old bookcase. "James!" She jumps into his arms.

Then I see her, my Wynter, and I charge toward her. She sobs as I scoop her up. "I thought I'd never see you again."

I set Wynter on her feet and take her face in my hands. "Are you okay? Did he hurt you?"

She shakes her head. "John didn't hurt me, but he killed Riff, and I saw it." Wynter closes her eyes and shakes her head.

Seeing someone murdered is mind-altering, and I can't imagine what that was like for Wynter. However, Riff is gone and so is John Anderson, and they can never hurt her again. Though I never expected John to take himself out, and it was selfish to do so in front of BlackJack. No matter how BlackJack felt about his brother, it's never easy seeing someone die the way John did.

"Where's John?"

James looks at me, then back to his wife. "He's dead, sweetheart. John took his own life."

Neither Spring nor Wynter shed a tear, though I believe that's because they're in shock. Whatever John had done, he was still their father. I'd never tell Wynter how she should feel, but if she does breakdown, I'll be there to catch her when she falls.

Wynter looks at me as I stroke her face with the back of my hand. "It's over now."

"Yes, baby, it's over now." Wynter wraps her arms around my waist, and I hold her tightly in my arms.

I hope I never witness anything like this again in my lifetime. Hell, no one is that unlucky. Wynter is safe, and we can finally move on with our lives.

Things are sent to try us, and we either battle through or succumb. Wynter is a fighter, and she's all mine.

Chapter Twenty-Four

WYNTER

Epilogue

Two years later...

“Come back here, Drake! Daddy is going to be so cross with you when he gets home.”

Drake stares at me for a second before taking off upstairs. I love him to death, but I could strangle him sometimes!

“What’s he done this time?”

I look at Spring and point to the overturned potted plant. “He was digging it up again. No matter how many times Havoc and I have tried to teach Drake not to, he can’t help himself.”

Both Spring and Phoenix laugh, and I roll my eyes and carry on brushing up the soil.

It’s been two years since Riff kidnapped Spring and I. Two years since John broke out of prison and saved us, and two years since John blew his own brains out. I can’t say as my sister, and I went home and lived happily ever after. We had nightmares, and we needed therapy to move on from it all. But we survived because that’s what we do.

Spring and I now have a close relationship with BlackJack and his family. My sister finally let our uncle in, and we’ve all be happily getting along since.

It’s with Phoenix that Spring and I have the closest relationship. The three of us meet regularly to discuss how our week has been. Put Cassie and Ava in the mix, and the five of us are a force to be reckoned with.

Julianne has been a rock for Spring and me. She put aside her own pain at almost losing us to help us move on from it all. We’d be lost without our mother, and that’s a fact.

I also have close relationships with my much younger brothers and my nephews. Brody and Brady are amazing, and I love them more than I could say. I have two nephews now due to Spring giving

birth to her second son last year. Bradly is the image of Matthew, and I adore them both.

"I don't think you should be on your knees in your condition, Wynter."

"Come now, Spring," Oh, here we go. I roll my eyes before Phoenix can finish what she's saying. I know what's coming, and I'm hardly in the mood. "You know that's where Havoc likes her best." They both start laughing, and I'm trying not to bite back.

I don't know why I feel so annoyed right now, but I think it has something to do with how uncomfortable I am.

"How I like her best is none of your concern." I look up from my position on the floor. My husband is looking at me with concern on his face. "I'm taking it Drake misbehaved again?" I nod my head as he looks at Phoenix and Spring. "And neither of you could have picked this shit up?"

I listen to them bickering for a moment. I really don't need this today; I just want to lie down and sleep. Drake comes paddling over to me, and I smile as he nudges me with his nose. I wrap my arms around the husky's neck and bury my face in his fur.

Havoc bought Drake for me a couple of months after John killed himself. He thought the dog would bring me comfort and help me feel safe while Havoc wasn't with me. He was right, and I worked hard to train Drake. That and it helped to have my mind on something other than John and Riff.

Drake has been a good friend to me, but the past couple of months, he's been a nightmare. I don't know what's wrong with him, but he's driving me nuts. I love my dog to death and I would never re-home him, I just wish I knew why he was acting this way. I'm just days away from giving birth to my first child, and I don't have the energy for Drake's doggie tantrums.

"Hey," I feel Havoc's hand on the back of my head. I look up at him as he crouches down beside me. "What's wrong? Why are you crying?" I hadn't realized that I was.

"She's been in pain for over an hour, but pretending she isn't," Spring tells Havoc. "I've had two kids, and I know what labor looks like."

Havoc looks at me. "Is that true? Are you in pain?" I nod my head before dropping it to his shoulder.

I didn't want to make a fuss. I thought that pain was nothing more than Braxton Hicks again, but now I'm not so sure. I've been terrified of having this baby. I don't know why, but hearing how Spring struggled with her first pregnancy worried me that it would happen to me too. When it didn't happen, I became obsessed with what might happen.

Would my baby die before it was even born?

Would I die giving birth?

What if I'm not a good mother?

What if I don't love my child?

I know it was irrational thinking, but I couldn't help what my mind was telling me. Everything that ever happened in my life had me believing that I couldn't be anyone's mother. It didn't matter what anyone told me; I couldn't make myself feel that I was good enough.

Havoc helped me through my fears. He made me see that I'll be the best mother I can be to our child. I'm not John Anderson, and I won't hurt my baby. It took a while, but I got there.

Right now, a little bit of my fear of dying in childbirth is creeping in. I don't think I could ever go through this again. I feel like I'm going insane with it all.

"Spring, call the hospital and tell them I'm bringing Wynter in now." I hear Spring mumble something to Havoc, but I'm trying to concentrate on breathing through the pain shooting through me. "Phoenix, let the family know what's going on."

"Havoc, I'm okay," I clutch the bottom of my stomach and whimper. "Maybe I'm not okay,"

Havoc raises his eyebrow, *you think?* I laugh and wrap my arms around his neck as he lifts me in his arms. "Let's go have a baby,"

* * *

"HE'S BEAUTIFUL, WYNTER," I tear my eyes away from my son and smile at my mother. "Welcome to the world, little man."

Havoc wraps his arm tighter around my shoulders as my mother kisses my newborn son's head. Mom kisses my cheek and leaves the

room with Neil. Spring and Phoenix follow, with BlackJack and Taylor.

It was a long seven-hour labor, but Hunter Scott Caldwell was born an hour ago, weighing a healthy 7 lb 3oz. I got away with just three stitches, and I'm feeling pretty good about things. Havoc stayed with me the whole time, and we both got to welcome our little man into the world at the same time. That's just how I wanted it.

My family and Havoc's, waited outside for news. I had no clue so many of them would be out there to welcome our son. Each person came into the room to welcome Hunter personally. Tammy was beside herself with glee as she held her grandchild. She, along with my mother, couldn't stress enough how beautiful they believe Hunter to be. Mom and Tammy have become best friends over the past couple of years, and it's so amazing to see.

Red held his grandson for a few moments, before handing him off to BlackJack. I don't have a father, and though BlackJack is my uncle, he's become a father figure to me. Watching him with Hunter brought a tear to my eye. BlackJack held my son so tenderly and told him how he now has a big family to love him, and how he'd always be safe.

My uncles Julian and Justin, and my grandparents were here. I love them all, and it wouldn't have been the same if they weren't here to welcome Hunter to the world.

I kiss my son's head. I knew I'd love him the moment I held him, more than I did while I was carrying him. However, I never imagined I'd love him this much. I never want to do this again, so Hunter is going to be my one and only child.

"Do you want to hold him?" Havoc nods and takes Hunter from my arms. He gets out of his seat and gently paces the floor. I smile while lying back on my pillow. I'm exhausted, and I don't know how much longer I'm going to be able to keep my eyes open.

"You have no idea how long I've been waiting to meet you, Hunter." I smile again as Havoc speaks to our baby boy. "I have a lot to teach you, little man. We're going to have so much fun getting to know each other. Daddy loves you so much, Hunter."

I smile at Havoc when he kisses Hunter's head. He turns to see me watching him, and he winks. I sigh happily and close my eyes.

If someone had asked me two years ago where I'd see myself today, I never would have imagined I'd be here. I may have resented

Havoc for coming to the diner were I worked and not leaving me alone. However, I'd be a liar if I said I wasn't happy that he did.

My life may not be perfect, but it's perfect for me. I don't know what the future will bring, but I'm up for the challenge.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

So, heres the thing. I'm quirky and crazy, and I'm not afraid to be just who I am. Why should anybody have to be afraid of who they are?

I live in London, England with my man and three children, whom I love more than life itself.

I am also a teacher of history and I enjoy every aspect of it. I love children, they can teach you just as much as you can teach them.

A child's mind is a sponge that absorbs informations from every person around them. Teach them well and they can do anything, be anyone.

I'm probably too talkative sometimes, or so I've been told by my older siblings once or twice. But I believe it's good to talk!

So don't be afraid to get in touch any time!



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