



BRUTAL LIES

BJALPHA

BRUTAL LIES
THE BRUTAL DUET PART II

BOOK 2

B J ALPHA

OceanofPDF.com

Copyright © 2024 by B J Alpha

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

This book is a work of fiction. Characters, names, places and incidents are products of the authors imagination or used fictitiously.

Any similarity to actual events, locations or persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Without in any way limiting the author's exclusive rights under copyright, any use of this publication to "train" generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to generate text is expressly prohibited. The author reserves all rights to license uses of this work for generative AI training and development of machine learning language models. No audio files can be produced without the authors written consent beforehand.

Published by BJ Alpha

Edited by Dee Hought

Proofread by Brandi Zelenka - My Notes In The Margin

Cover Design: Acacia - Ever After Cover Design

OceanofPDF.com

DEDICATION

*To all my **Brutally Devoted** readers who crave more.*

More Devotion.

More story to the Secrets and Lies.

More morally grey men who make our panties wet and hearts pound.

I got you!

The truth is about to be unveiled.

I just hope you're prepared this time...

*Grab your tissues, your toys, your significant other half. You're about to be
in for one hell of a ride.*

Forever.

BJ

X

OceanofPDF.com

AUTHOR NOTE

THIS BOOK HAS DARK ROMANCE TROPES AND TRIGGERS!
If you love possessive, dark and dangerous men with an obsession for getting their girl pregnant, while delivering the most filthy methods possible, this is the book for you.

Here's what to expect from this delicious book:

Men who love their milk.

Men who love to breed.

Men who love fiercely and show it in the bedroom, against the wall and in spilt blood.

Men who are destined for one another and NEED to get there.

Men who are completely devoted to their girl.

**Please check my website for a full list of triggers and tropes.*

OceanofPDF.com

CONTENTS

[ARE YOU READY?](#)

[PREVIOUSLY...](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[COLE](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[COLE](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[SKY](#)

[CAL](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[LUCAS](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[TIA](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[COLE](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[TIA](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[RAGE](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[COLE](#)

[TIA](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[COLE](#)

[JACE](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[COLE](#)

[LUCAS](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[SNEAK PEEK AT A NEW SERIES...](#)

[MORE?](#)

[Also by B J Alpha](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)

[*OceanofPDF.com*](#)

ARE YOU READY?

As the story continues for Tia and her men, can her recently extended family support her in a quest for justice and peace. Or will their determination for vengeance be at everyone's detriment.

A **STORM** is brewing, **unveiling secrets** and **lies** in its wake.

It will be **brutal**, but we'll be ready.

Tia

They're a brother down . . .

But I'm free.

Though, am I really?

How far do the lies travel? How many more secrets can we withstand?

With new allies by our side, we're safe. But what happens when the lies unraveling become our downfall.

What happens when Lucas's quest for vengeance turns brutal.
Can we all remain devoted forever?

OceanofPDF.com

PREVIOUSLY...



BREN

Glancing around the dark room, I struggle to make anything out in the poor lighting and sweat beads on my forehead. I don't have long and am acutely aware of it. I already hear the thunder of footsteps above us. Moving deeper into the basement, a small whimper draws my attention toward a corner of the room. My hand fumbles in my pocket to locate my phone, then I hold it up and put the torch on, shining it in the direction of the low noise. A bundle of something is scrunched up in the corner, and a surge of regret hits me like a Mack truck. Fuck, I'm a bastard for letting this happen.

Shaking off the guilt, I move toward the shadow, and knowing it's her, makes every step heavier with what I'm about to discover, and I hate myself for it.

She shuffles back, as if trying to hide. Her head is buried into her knees, and her hands are bound behind her back.

"Tia?" I question as I kneel in front of her, unsure whether to touch her or not. Her entire body trembles, and my heart aches for the poor girl. "Tia, sweetheart. You're safe now. But I gotta get you outta here." I glance toward hushed voices heading our way. "Gonna get you home to your babies. To Harper."

Her head snaps up, and her eyes latch onto mine, and just like that, my stone heart plummets to the floor and the air is sucked from my lungs. My mouth is so dry I can't even fucking swallow. Staring into her wide blue

eyes is like a knife slicing through my heart, because she is a replica of my wife. My Sky. My fucking everything.

The woman I protected from day one. Who engrained herself so deep inside me, I never want to be without her, and the thought is too much to bear.

My blood is frozen, making it difficult for me to move, to breathe, to function.

A wave of nausea rolls in my stomach as her face merges with Sky's. They're so much alike, and I hate myself for not protecting her as I should have. Hate myself for not allowing Sky to meet her.

Jesus, I need to make this fucking right.

In that moment, while our eyes remain locked and my heart freefalls, I know what I have to do. My head drops forward.

There's not a doubt in my mind that what I'm going to do is the right thing, the only thing. I need to give my girl her family back, at whatever cost.

Without realizing what I'm doing, my thumb swipes away a lone tear streaming down her dirty face. The swelling, bruising, cuts, and dirt that coat her pretty features make my blood boil and my jaw grind. How anyone can treat a woman or child like this is beyond me. They're monsters, sick fuckers who deserve to have their lives extinguished . . . painfully.

"Harper?" Her voice is weak but laced in concern for her little girl.

I take out my penknife and lean over her, cutting the cable ties, and she winces.

"Harper?" she repeats.

Her question makes me jolt, the sound of her voice different from Sky's yet familiar. "Harper is with her dad, whichever fucker he is." I attempt to joke and can't help but curl my lip into a smirk at the thought of this scrap of a woman taking on three men. She must have fire in her. Like my woman.

A sound outside the room has her body shuddering and her lips parting in terror. I glance over my shoulder and know time is running out. I need to get her out of here. ASAP.

Moving quickly, I unclip my bulletproof vest, but my eyes remain locked on her. "My name is Bren O'Connell." I hold her gaze, and she gives me a nod. "Gonna help ya, sweetheart." Her eyes widen and fill with tears,

and her lip wobbles, but I ignore it, I need to remain focused. “Now, can you stand?”

“Ye-esss, I think so.” She tries to avoid eye contact.

“Ain’t gotta be scared of me, sweetheart. I’m gonna get you home.” She nods and pushes back on the wall. Then she wobbles before righting herself, her strength is clearly drained, but I don’t have time to second-guess my plan. I clip my vest onto her in case she needs an extra layer of protection.

If only I gave her the protection when she needed it the most—before this shitstorm went down.

“Gonna need you to be strong.” I watch her, then take her delicate chin between my fingers. She’s as cold as ice, and I wince thinking about the conditions she’s been kept in. Once again, I shake off the guilt. I fucked up of epic proportions but don’t have time to dwell on it either. Every fucking second counts. “Can you be strong, Tia? For your girls.” I tack on the latter to give her the strength I know she needs.

She straightens her shoulders, and I couldn’t be prouder. She’s a force to be reckoned with, only now I just wish I could be there to see it.

“We don’t have long. I’m going to lift you to that window, then you’re gonna run like your ass is on fire to my SUV.” I point toward my vehicle in the distance. “You drive toward the gate and don’t let anything stop you. You hear me?” I look at her pointedly, and she nods and stares back at me wide-eyed.

“Gonna need you to do something for me.” I hand her the keys to my car. Her small hand shakes as she takes them from me, and I cringe at her delicate features so like my wife’s.

“Okay.” Her voice is so low and scratchy I barely hear her.

I gently tip her chin up to face me. “Need you to tell my woman something.”

She nods again, her expectant eyes not leaving mine this time.

“Need you to tell her, ‘Forever.’”

“Forever?” She furrows her eyebrows.

I lick my lips at the meaning behind my words. “That’s right, sweetheart. Forever.”

“Okay, but may-maybe you can just tell her yourself?”

I choke on a sardonic laugh and shake my head, and her shoulders sag, as if suddenly aware of the severity of our situation.

“Thank you.” A tear streams down her face once again, and my heart tugs to draw her toward me, to embrace her, and tell her it’s all my fault. That I’m sorry. That she’s deserving too. Like my wife was.

Instead, I turn on my heel and motion for her to join me, and when we reach the small window, I take out my gun with the silencer attached, then I shoot through the lock. I’m another bullet down and need every single one of them. It doesn’t hurt like I expected it to, because that bullet will spare this girl’s life.

It will get her home to her babies, to her men who are devoted to her, and, more importantly, it will get her home to my girl.

“Up.” I lower myself and put my hands together for her to climb on and heave her onto the small windowsill.

A storm of heavy thuds above us makes my heart race at the realization of what I will walk into, but I refuse to back down or consider any other option.

Tia glances down at me as I check the safety clips on my guns, and then I say the one word that springs her into action.

“Run.”

She turns and pushes through the window with ease, then runs toward my SUV, and I pray she makes it there safely. Taking a deep breath, I steel myself, step forward, and open the door to the basement.

My plan falls into place as I become the perfect distraction to allow Tia to escape.

Regret floods me as I step out into the line of the men waiting on the other side of the door. Regret over the secrets I’ve kept and the lies I’ve told, hoping to keep my family safe but never giving them an opportunity of more.

My wife and boys will grow up to know I gave the ultimate sacrifice; I gave up being with them so they could have so much more.

So they could have them in their lives.

I fire bullets freely, but it becomes white noise as they fire back just as quick. Footsteps thunder down the stairs in my direction, and even though I know I’m taking down one man after the other, I’m also acutely aware of the pain searing through my chest, leg, and shoulder as bullet after bullet slices through me and my vision becomes hazy.

My footing stumbles when warmth flows down my chest, and I drop to my knees with a heavy thud when another bullet sends a shooting pain up

my spine. I can only hope that Tia has made it out, that she's driving toward the gate not looking back but looking forward to the future with her babies.

That she forgives me for the pain she's endured and lives a life of happiness with my family by her side, protecting her, like I should have done.

As my eyes flutter, I fight to keep them open, to send another bullet through the stairwell. I try in vain to protect myself, but now all I see is Sky, my beautiful girl. She has our boys around her and her belly full with my baby. A bloody cough escapes me, and I wince at the torrent of pain searing into my chest, making it difficult for me to inhale.

My mind wanders away from the pain and to our children. Another, more excruciating, surge of hurt spears through me thinking about me not being there to watch them grow into the strong, reliable, and protective men I know they'll become, and I hate myself for it.

Will Sky have the little girl I always wished for? Or will our baby add to our brood of boys.

The rattling in my chest as I try to breathe becomes louder, and I concentrate on looking down at Sky as we dance. I sing "It's You I've Been Looking For" by Lewis Brice, and my lip twitches at the memory as I float above the scene playing out.

She smiles up at me, those bright-blue eyes that captured me from the first moment I saw her. They're full of life, life I want her to lead even if I'm not by her side.

The whooshing in my ears encompasses me, causing my entire body to drift away from her, and I want to scream, I want to shout, to bring her back where she belongs, in my arms, curled up in my safety.

But then Sky steps toward me once again, and standing in the sand, her hair blows in the sea breeze and her eyes settle on mine, and she's never looked so damn beautiful. So damn mine.

"Forever," she whispers with a soft smile that forces my body to sag at having her feel the same way about me as I do her. For her to be back where she belongs.

"Forever, baby," I whisper as I finally close my eyes, succumbing to the darkness surrounding me.

I'm numb now, my body free as the room becomes silent, and so does my mind, apart from the gentle whisper of her lips to reassure me as I descend into a sea of darkness. "Forever."

My lips move one final time, determined to tell her how I feel.
“Forever.”

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER ONE



TIA

Everything inside of me screams for me to continue running toward the SUV. I want to glance back, I do, but I'm scared. I want my babies; I want to hold Harper in my arms and never let her go. Shots being fired have me shaking uncontrollably, and I try my best to ignore it and not imagine the harm he's facing in order to rescue me.

A pang of guilt hits me as the pebbles crunch beneath my sneakers. The man with the kind blue eyes—Bren O'Connell, he's a savior. He's my savior, and I left him there.

To die.

A sob catches in my throat, and I stumble as I reach the car. It opens when my hand touches the door, and I scramble to get inside. The moment my ass touches the seat, I slam the door shut. My pulse races so hard I can hear the whooshing in my ears. Panic surges inside me, and my mind goes blank, I can't think straight. I can't function. I don't know what to fucking do.

"Tia. My name is Oscar O'Connell, I'm Bren's brother. I'm going to start the car's engine for you." A cold voice fills the SUV, startling me.

My seat moves forward, and my eyes widen as my hands dart out onto the steering wheel for support. *What the hell is going on?* I glance around the SUV, searching for the voice.

“I need you to put your seatbelt on. Put your foot on the accelerator and calmly drive toward the exit through the gate. Please do not rush, it will only draw attention to you.”

I squeeze my eyes closed. Is this a fucking dream, did I die in there? I glance back toward the building.

“Tia, listen to me. You have little time. Now, do as I ask and let’s get you home to your children.” His voice is firmer this time, making me take notice, so I buckle my seatbelt and tighten my grip on the steering wheel. “Good. Now, press the accelerator.” I nod, unsure if he can see me or not. *He can, though, right?* “I have cameras in all my brothers’ cars,” he responds, as if reading my mind. “Now drive.” And I do, my foot touches the accelerator, and I turn toward the exit, leaving a piece of my heart behind as I do.

Bren O’Connell is a hero, and now I have to deliver his message. My heart crumbles at the thought.

The lone tear that trickles down my face multiplies as the wave of guilt takes over me.

“Forever,” I mumble, welcoming the air from the vent as it warms my cold cheeks.

CHAPTER TWO



CON

Adrenaline pumps through my body as the sound of the rotor blades whirl above us. As soon as Oscar informed me of how dire Tia and Bren's circumstances were, I sprang into action.

Tia's man Cole wanted to join me, but I insisted on him staying behind to support our men, Angel, and Tia's baby.

When you move into combat as a Mafia member, you need to be reassured everyone you care about is safe and secure, that way you can remain focused on the task in hand. To give us that level of mental protection, Oscar declared our family safe word, redcars. This would ensure our loved ones moved into a safehouse or nearest saferoom until they were given the all clear.

Oscar's solemn voice filtered through my earpiece, and I know he was reluctant to let me participate in what now is not only becoming a rescue mission for Tia but Bren too.

He's walked into the lion's den, not only unprepared but knowingly to save a girl he doesn't know from an existence purely for evil's entertainment, from a life of sheer misery.

“One minute out.” The pilot’s voice filters through the earpiece, and I nod.

Staring toward the metal gates ahead, I notice Bren’s SUV leaving the property, and as if reading my thoughts, Oscar’s voice filters through the system. “Tia is on her way toward a safehouse.” I breathe a sigh of relief, but it’s short-lived. Her safety means my brother has put himself in the firing line to protect her. And while my stomach rolls with nerves, I couldn’t be more fucking proud of him.

I glance over my shoulder at the three men double-checking their weapons and know we’re in for a tough battle, but it’s one I don’t intend on losing.

“Are you sure you can do this, Con?” The concern in my brother’s voice sends a pang of emotion through me.

He thinks he’s dead. Maybe he knows it already?

Maybe I’m going in to retrieve his body?

But I don’t care. I watched my younger brother die; I held him in my arms, and a part of myself died that day too. A part of me that never will come back. And if anyone is going to be there for my older brother when that happens, it will be me.

Ironic, really.

I get to be the brother that holds both the youngest and oldest brothers in the family as the light disappears from their eyes, leaving a hole so deep in our family that it can never be filled. A cavern of heartbreak, never to be fixed.

My heart skips a beat as anxiety and remorse sit like cement in my gut. Regret surges through my veins, causing me to gasp, unable to take a full breath.

My blood curdles thinking about what’s to come, but I shake my head at the anxiety that grips me, determined to remain strong.

But I’m different now, I’m stronger, I’m not the boy I once was. I’ll be the man my family needs me to be. The father my son looks up to. The man my wife deserves. I’ll be their everything, as I always should have been.

“I can do it,” I reply with conviction in my tone. “I can fucking do it!” I say with sheer determination and confidence in myself.

A heavy sigh fills my ears. He’s worried about me, I know he is, and I’m grateful, truly, I am. Oscar is the one brother who sees me, sees my struggles with my mental health. And I’m not about to let him down either.

“Very well. As previously discussed, head straight toward the basement, the team will cover you.”

“Understood.”

The helicopter lowers, and the pilot turns to face me. “Ten seconds.”

I gift him with a nod, lick my dry lips, and unclip my seatbelt, then, before the helicopter has fully lowered, I’m out the door like my ass is on fire.

Gunfire sends a rush of adrenaline pumping through me, and my mind now focuses on getting into the building and, more importantly, getting my brother out.

We’ve been informed they have a chopper on the scene too, one I’m hoping we can take out before they try to use it.

My boots crunch the gravel as I run toward the door Oscar described. Slamming myself against the wall, I lock eyes with one of our men. He’s been briefed about his role and knows he’s going in first.

He nods in my direction, and I respond likewise, then he swings open the door and immediately a gun fight ensues. Heavy footsteps come from inside, so moving lower, I crouch, then glance around the corner, lifting my gun and taking aim at the two men filling our guy with bullets. My mind doesn’t have time to register the loss, and I press my earpiece against my ear, unable to hear if Oscar is speaking or not. “Man down. I’m making my way toward the staircase.”

Keeping low and my gun in hand, I work swiftly through the corridor. After memorizing every detail Oscar gave me, I’m on a mission to be as quick as humanly possible.

Every second counts, I know that only too well myself.

Every fucking second.

The staircase is notably silent, and a sliver of uncertainty ripples through me, causing me to hesitate, but all of that uncertainty is banished when I lock onto the lifeless body of my brother surrounded by a pool of blood.

CHAPTER
THREE



CON

The air is knocked from my lungs as my chest constricts, yet somehow, my legs move. My body feels heavy, weighed down by dread with each step I take. The echo my boots cause on the metal staircase plays as background noise to my heart beating so fast I feel the familiar effects of my panic attacks. Briefly, I close my eyes, taking a moment to gain clarity.

I refuse to go back there, to my nightmare, the one where I stand by and do nothing as my brother dies in front of me.

Dropping to the floor beside my brother, I roll him over to face me. He's missing his bulletproof vest. I grit my teeth, annoyed with him, but knowing he must have given it to Tia to protect her, takes away the bite of anger I feel toward him. Blood pumps out of him, so much so, I'm unsure of how many wounds he actually has.

"Con? Are you there?" Oscar's shrill voice breaks through the sound of the erratic heart beat in my ears.

Quickly, I take out my knife, using it to cut Bren's pants and use the material for compressions. "Yeah, he's bleeding out. Somewhere in his chest." I clear my throat. "Multiple places in his chest."

"Med team is on its way. Is he alive, Con?"

I still, stopping while tearing his shirt open. I squeeze my eyes closed at the pain lancing through my chest, it's so strong it renders me useless, and I hate myself for it.

But when his blood warms my fingertips, I snap out of my daze and answer my brother honestly. "I don't know. But I'm going to try and save him."

I reluctantly glance toward Bren's pale face, his lips parted, and his eyes closed. He appears peaceful, but I know better. Dead or alive, my brother will be kicking and fighting, determined to come back to us.

Come back to Sky and his boys.

And I will do everything in my power to make that happen.

His face merges with that of my younger brother Keenan's. When I discovered my wife named our son after him, I was angry but for all the wrong reasons. Now, I couldn't be prouder, he gets to live on through my son. My best friend.

I spent too many years wallowing in self-pity, the guilt of losing my brother due to my own negligence. It nearly cost me everything I treasure. I refuse to let this cost me a damn thing.

"He's with you, Con. And he's proud of you." Oscar's voice is emotional—unlike him. And I know it comes from a place of guilt, that I'm here right now and not him. He likes to protect us. All of us. It's what he does best, so when he tells me Keenan is by my side, I know he tells me what I need to hear, but part of me thinks he believes it too.

Emotion clogs in my throat, making it difficult for me to construct words, but when I do, I say them with confidence.

"You're not dying on me, Bren. I refuse to lose another brother!" I scream at him as my emotions overpower me, then tears spill down my face, and I welcome them as I press the material of his pants into the gunshot wounds on his chest. My eyes lock onto his babies' names, and I choke on the turmoil as memories of my brother with his kids assaults my mind. I squeeze my eyes closed when Keenan's face flashes in front of me, and how he would try to football tackle Bren to the ground. Always the strength in our family, always the protector.

"You understand me, you big ass motherfucker!" I press down harder, but my arms shake with devastation. "Come on, Bren. We fucking need you. I need you!" I admit. "Sky needs you, your babies need you!" The

thought of the boys and Sky has pure determination kicking in. I refuse to fucking lose him. My teeth grind.

I refuse to give up on another brother.

Blood seeps through to my fingertips, and I bite into my lip, and my jaw sets as my eyes bore down on the continuous flow of blood coating my wrists.

“I refuse to lose you.” A tear falls down my cheek, and I ignore the sob screaming to be released. I will not break down. No, I will remain strong.

“Don’t do this to me, Bren,” I plead as my tears mingle with his blood.

“Don’t do it to them,” I grit out.

I’m going to fucking save him.

Like they saved me.

I will save him for his girl and babies.

I will save him for myself.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER FOUR



TIA

My vision becomes hazy, and my hands loosen on the steering wheel as I veer off the road, then just as quickly right myself. “Tia! Do you need hospitalization?”

The guy—Oscar—barks through the SUV speaker system, making me jolt and bringing me back to my senses.

My lip wobbles, and I can’t help the snuffle that escapes me. “I just want to go home.”

“I have a doctor waiting for you at the safehouse, along with your loved ones.” His voice doesn’t give away a hint of sympathy, but his words speak volumes.

“Thank you.” I sob through tears.

He clears his throat. “Just continue to follow the directions. I’m tracking you, and you’re not in any danger.” He speaks very monotone, with no emotion, and I wonder if he always works in rescue missions.

Glancing at the satnav and seeing I have twenty-seven minutes left to travel, has me pressing down on the accelerator, and as I do so, I think about the man I left behind.

The one who gave his life to save mine.

Bren went on a rescue mission to save me, with the knowledge of it being a suicide mission.

He knew there was little to no chance of him getting out of there alive.

Why would he do that? Give up his life for someone he doesn't know when he has a woman he loves waiting for him at home.

It's selfish and wrong of me, but I wouldn't want my guys to do that. I want them to come home every night to me and our babies.

Oh, Jesus, do they have children? A stuttered gasp escapes me, and a slice of pain flares through my erratic heart at the mere thought.

I hope when I tell his woman the words he whispered, she doesn't hate me.

I hope she accepts them with comfort, but they couldn't be any more of a lie, though, could they?

Why tell her forever when you know there's no tomorrow.

OceanofPDF.com

COLE

As soon as Oscar received news of Harper's successful rescue, Lucas and I were shoved in a car and transported to one of their multiple homes.

The estate that the families' homes are on is incredible, and we're assured the security is top notch. The house is luxurious, if a little messy, but I like the fact it's clearly lived in, with toys strewn about and sneakers littered in random places.

My leg bounces as Lucas and I stare toward the door of the living area. His normally put-together self has unraveled, and it unnerves me. He sits with his legs parted, his shirt collar open, and one hand in his pants pocket, no doubt stroking over the wood of his knife while his eyes are locked onto the door.

Angel stayed with us, and honestly, she's been a godsend, amusing Mia when she becomes fussy. She glances toward her phone, then lifts her head. "They're coming through the gates now."

"Thank fuck," I breathe out, jumping to my feet as I hurry toward the door to greet them.

Jace bursts through the front door of the O'Connell safehouse, and I fly toward him. He carries Harper in his arms, and all my resolve crumbles as I rush him and tug them toward me, hugging them both against my chest.

Jace releases a low chuckle. "Ease up, brother."

I step back. "I'm sorry." I scrub a hand over my short hair.

"Any news on Thalia?"

Hope is in his eyes, hope I'm about to destroy with one simple word. "No."

His shoulders slump, and his deep inhale takes my breath away too.

"How's she doing?" Lucas asks from behind, his gaze locked on Harper, but his eyes seem empty. *Odd.*

Just what the fuck is going on with him?

"She's okay. I'm almost certain she's completely unaware of anything. They had a doctor waiting for us in the SUV, and he checked her over. She's unharmed. I just can't fucking believe it." He places a tender kiss on the top of her head while he cradles her against his chest.

Turning around, I watch the worry slip from Lucas's face, but something is still there, and I'm determined to find out what it is.

"Would you like me to take you to a spare room we have made up?" Angel's voice fills the foyer, and I glance over my shoulder to see her rocking Mia in her arms.

"Yeah," Jace grunts. Then he clears his throat. "Please."

"This way." She points down the corridor, and we follow behind.

Jace leans into my ear. "Just where the fuck are we?"

"Finn O'Connell's house," I reply.

Jace lifts his eyebrows and whistles low, the surprise plastered on his face.

Angel opens the door to a crisp-white bedroom, clearly barely used, then spins to face us. "There's a bathroom through there." She points toward a closed door. "And I can get a crib pulled in for Mia, if you'd like her in here too?"

Stepping forward, I hold my arms out to take Mia from her. "I'll stay with them both."

She gives her a soft kiss on her head, then hands her over. "I'll go and see if there's any news."

She turns to leave the room but before she can, Jace speaks up. "Angel." She stops at the door to face him. "Thank you for everything." The emotion in his voice is evident.

"You're welcome. I hope once all this is over, we can stay in contact. I'm kind of fond of your little one." She smiles toward Mia, and I choke on a sardonic laugh.

If only she knew how much her family is determined to keep us apart. Annoyance rumbles inside me once again as I drag a hand through my hair, awkwardly glancing toward Jace and Lucas for some guidance of how to respond, but with their eyes wide, it's clear they have no idea how to respond either.

Her stare darts from one to the other, then her eyes narrow. "I'm missing something here, aren't I?" My mouth dries as I open it to lie once again. No matter how much the lies burn on my tongue, even worse, they burn my heart too.

But Lucas steps in before I can respond. "If you could check if there's news, that would be great, thank you." I wince at his rudeness and the way he blew over her question.

She stands still, staring back at him before releasing a loud huff. "Fine, but one day, I'll get your secrets out of you." Her smile splits her face as she turns the atmosphere from frosty to playful in an instant, then she slips through the door, shutting it with a soft click.

Lucas slides down the wall, landing on his ass, then drops his head into his hands. "I need her." He tugs on his hair. "I fucking need her back here."

I swallow past the lump in my throat at seeing his distressed state. "They got Harper out, Lucas. She's coming home, I know she is."

Lucas's dark eyes snap up to mine and fill me with fear. "And what state do you think she's going to come back in, Cole?" Terror washes over me. Does he know something I don't? A deep-seated pit of dread takes residence in my stomach.

Just what the fuck is she going through?

And what the hell does Lucas know?

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER FIVE



TIA

My footing wavers on the accelerator as I approach the gates of a luxurious housing estate. The guy at the security gate waves me through with a welcoming smile, as if I'm some long-lost family member but scoff at the notion before continuing on.

The estate is beautiful, with large houses set back in their own private grounds. Trees line the driveway at what I can only describe as a picturesque, idyllic way of living.

My body continues to vibrate with the aftereffects of my trauma, and I want nothing more than to drown my body in bleach and burn away their touch. A flash of nausea hits me, and I swallow it down with a whimper while the SUV comes to a stop outside a house. I wasn't even aware I'd approached.

Movement at the door catches my attention, and when I register that it's Cole and Lucas rushing down the stone steps, I burst into uncontrollable sobs as I fumble with the door handle, eager to get out of the car.

The door is yanked open, and Jace lunges forward, scooping me into his arms like a child, and I allow it. I accept it because it's what I want more than anything.

My body aches with each movement, touching me as if disbelieving I'm here. "Thank fuck, baby." Jace cries into my neck, and I cling to him tighter.

"Harp-p-per?" I mumble through tears.

"She's fine, baby. I swear, she's absolutely fucking fine."

"Let me see her, Jace." Cole's concerned voice breaks through the moment, and when I turn to face him, his face pales. "What the fuck did they do to you?" His jaw tightens as his searing gaze travels over me. I squeeze my eyes closed at the impact of his stare, unable to take in the look of horror on his face.

Does he see it?

The cum coating my skin? The cuts and bruises evidence of their assault. Does he see them?

My lungs struggle for air as the immense pressure of the past twenty-four hours takes its toll on me.

In Jace's arms, I'm safe, but in my mind, I'm riddled with the fear they instilled in me with their actions.

"You're safe, baby." Jace holds me tighter, planting kisses on my head that I want to bat away. Doesn't he see the filth I'm covered in, doesn't he see me?

As he walks up the steps toward the house, a feeling of being watched has my eyes snapping open, and when they lock with Lucas's, my heart stops. The man looking back at me with trepidation is the boy who once was so lost and has now been found.

And the way his eyes filled with guilt flick away from mine, brings with it an awareness of my realization.

He knows I know.

Jace carries me through the doors, and warmth hits my cheeks, but it does nothing to disperse the cold I feel inside when I see my man's gray eyes flooded with terror.

Does he realize the veil has been lifted?

And the lies he told will be unearthed.

The secrets he hides are about to be revealed.

Does he realize the storm that is brewing.

The door closes behind us, but he remains on the other side.

CHAPTER

SIX



CAL

Taking a deep breath, I open the door to Bren's home, nodding at one of STORM's security details guarding the outside.

While driving toward where Bren was, Oscar informed us of the news, and I chose to take a detour, knowing it's what Bren would have wanted.

Five minutes ago, the threat to our families was downgraded, and now I have to inform Sky with the news of Bren.

I've already gone into my Mafia mindset and stepped away from how I feel as a brother, refusing to give myself time to process what has happened. I'm his second-in-command, which means I'm first-in-command now.

So, as I step into their family home, I ignore the nausea which threatens to spill over as I close the door behind me and wait for the stampede of tiny feet that rush to greet every visitor.

The house is silent, which is rare for this usually chaotic home.

Soft footsteps head toward me, and my head falls forward as I suck in a deep breath, and when I lift my head, my heart falls from my chest. A warm smile greets me as Sky heads toward me. I'm not sure what she sees on my face, but the usually permanent smile on her innocent face slips. "What's

wrong?” She tugs on the hem of her baggy T-shirt while I struggle to formulate words.

“It’s Bren, sweetheart.”

Her bottom lip wobbles, her eyes fill with tears, and her chest heaves, then she licks her lips and pulls her shoulders back, pulling herself together.

“Is he okay?” She stands motionless, waiting for my reply, but I know she already knows it, probably feels it in her heart, like we all do.

“No.” I shake my head, refusing to be emotional. “No, sweetheart. He’s not.”

She chokes on a gasp; her legs give way, and a blood-curdling wail rips from her, and I rush toward her.

“He promised me forever,” she whispers before slumping to the floor, taking my heart with her.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER SEVEN



JACE

As I carry Tia toward the spare room, I'm already wondering how this will work. How am I going to put her down for even a second? I want her in my arms and need to feel her warmth and the beat of her heart against mine.

Angel appears from the kitchen. "I made drinks and put them in the bedroom. Finn called; a doctor is on his way. Should I move Harper?"

"No," I snap. Too harshly. "I'm sorry. I want them both together."

Sympathy fills Angel's eyes, and she nods. "Of course."

"Do you need anything? I put some bath salts in the tub. I figure Tia will probably want to clean up."

Cole steps forward. "Thanks, Angel. We got it." His tone is softer than mine, and I appreciate that he's taking control.

Tia lifts her head from resting on my chest, and a mewl escapes her lips. She glances toward Angel, and when Angel registers Tia's face, her mouth falls open and her eyes widen, making it acutely obvious how much our girl must resemble her sister.

Angel's mouth moves as if to speak before she clamps it shut, then looks toward me for guidance, so I give my head a swift shake.

“None of this is our choice,” Cole spits out, and I want to kick him in the balls, but all I can do is throw him a death glare that makes his shoulders shrink back.

Angel’s jaw sharpens, and there’s no hiding the pissed-off expression on her face. “I’ll leave you to it.” She sashays away, tugging her phone from her pocket as she does.

Something tells me Angel is on the warpath, and as much as I’d like to see the O’Connell men be handed their asses, right now, I couldn’t give a shit less.

“Come on, baby. Let’s get you sorted.” I kiss her head, ignoring the grime marring her, and follow Cole into the bedroom.

OceanofPDF.com

COLE

We bypassed Harper's sleeping form and went straight into the bathroom where Angel had the bathtub filled with salts.

The room is as big as the bedroom, with white marble floors and gold fixtures. Jace sits on a chair in the corner of the room, it resembles a throne, and it's not lost on me how he looks like a king with his subject in his arms.

He exudes power and possession, but the way he stares at the top of Tia's head tells me all anyone would need to know.

She's the one with all the power.

In his arms, she may seem vulnerable and at his mercy, but he would fall to his knees for her, she's the one who possesses him.

Possesses us.

She's the one with the power. Over all of us.

Lowering myself to the floor, I kneel beside them, fully aware that Tia has avoided our eyes. Although, I'm not sure Jace has realized it; he's just grateful to have her in his arms again.

"We need to check her over, Jace," I try to coax while stroking Tia's back.

"You don't think I fucking know that?" he spits out, glaring at me.

I ignore the bite in his tone. "Jace, brother, whatever has happened to her, we'll deal with it together."

Tia moves in Jace's arms. "It's okay," she whispers. Her voice is scratchy, and it makes me realize she needs fluids.

Leaping to my feet, I grab the bottle of Gatorade Angel had the foresight to leave and hold it out to her, along with the Tylenol.

She sits up with a wince, and when I see her face, fury like no other shrouds me. Her lip is split and swollen to twice the size, bruises mar her normally unblemished skin, and her right cheek has finger marks embedded in it, as if she's been hit at such force her skin is scarred from it.

Her left eye is so swollen it's almost closed, and her cheek has received the same cruel treatment.

Jace stares ahead, glaring at her reflection in the mirror, his heavy breaths and flared nostrils the only giveaway at his budding anger. When he pumps his fists beside him and his eyes snap to mine, I reel back on my knees. The anguish, anger, and turmoil swimming in his eyes and pleading with me for vengeance, for help, for answers, has a knot tightening in my stomach.

Jace looks as vulnerable as Tia, but I know it will be short-lived. Once she's settled, the rage will take over, and the thought has my mouth drying and anxiety rippling through me. He's going to need to be restrained, that's for sure.

Tia's hand shakes as she takes the pills and drink from me. Avoiding my eyes, she swallows them down and guzzles the drink, as if desperate to hydrate, and I grind my teeth at the thought. Sensing Jace's growing anger, I move things along a little.

Standing to my full height, I offer my hand to her; she slips hers into mine, and the coldness of her touch sends a current of electricity through me. "Are you hurt anywhere?"

I ask the question, and my blood turns to ice as I await a response.

Her body shakes, but she straightens her shoulders, then raises her eyes to meet mine. “The back of my head hurts and my face.”

Gently, I trace the dirt mark running along her cheek. “You still look beautiful, beauty.”

Her eyes close on my words, and she swallows hard, causing the hairs on the back of my neck to stand with a new awareness. Did something else happen to her? Is there more to this than we’re aware of?

“What happened?” I coax.

The room is filled with anticipation as Jace and I wait for her response with bated breath.

Her eyes open, and the sadness in them is almost enough to bring me to my knees. “You can tell us, Tia.” My fingers twitch to tug her toward me, to hold her and tell her everything is okay now.

“There was a man.”

“What fucking man?” Jace spits out, and the venom bouncing off him feels like he’s about to combust. I glare at him with a silent warning, and he clamps his lips closed.

Tia takes a deep breath. “A man I know from my childhood.”

Jace rears back, and his face pales. “What man, Thalia? What did he do?”

She doesn’t look at him as she robotically speaks, as if disassociating herself, and zones out. “His name is Viggo. He hit me.” She winces as if she felt the hit all over again, and I clench my jaw with fury. “He pushed me to the floor and humiliated me.” Anger boils my blood. I want to ask her what he did, but I don’t want to push her. “He fucked my mouth and hit me again and again. He was one of Martin’s friends, one who would go down to the basement.”

All I hear is that some sick fuck assaulted our girl, and I’ve never wanted to rip someone apart as much as I do right now.

Every muscle in Jace’s body is coiled tight, he looks fit to explode, and I’m not sure how he’s reining it all in.

“He do anything else to you?” His voice is devoid of emotion, and I know we’ve lost him to his inner demons, his rage.

Tia shakes her head but grimaces, and I want nothing more than to take away her obvious pain.

“Can I clean you up?” I lift her chin to face me, not caring about the dirt on her face nor the evidence of her assault.

“Pl-please.”

My heart breaks, and I sweep away the tear that flows down her cheek.

“I’m going to find out what’s happening with Bren.” Jace stares toward the door. The dumb shit couldn’t be any more obvious with how he’s struggling to deal with Tia’s bombshell, and part of me wants to punch him in the gut and make him face facts, face her. But the other part thinks his absence will be for the best until he can release his guilt on someone who deserves it.

He needs to get his shit out, preferably aiming his temper toward a punchbag, then he can come back in and be the man Tia needs him to be. Because we’re in the dark, and something tells me there’s more to come.

He heads toward the door, but one word from Tia stops him in his tracks. “Jace?” I know deep inside that if she asked him to stay, he would. But she knows as well as I do he needs to release his demons. “Lucas. He’s going to need someone.”

Her cryptic words have my blood freezing, yet the confusion etched on Jace’s face no doubt mirrors my own, but before I can ask anymore, she lifts her top, and my blood is simmering once again.

The door clicks shut, leaving me to tend to our girl, to show her how incredibly strong she is.

CHAPTER
EIGHT



LUCAS

Staring out to the yard, there's a swimming pool, playhouse, basketball court, and manicured lawns, which are littered in kid toys.

My heart pangs at wishing I'd created a home like this for our family before it all goes to shit.

Before they all hate me.

I'm forever living on a knife edge, worried someone will swoop in and steal what's mine, destroying me in the process.

Destroying us.

"Hey, are you okay?" Angel's voice filters in from behind, and I tilt my head to see her tugging on the hem of her sweater. She's nervous to approach me, and I can't help but wonder what she sees: a man on edge maybe? A man with so many secrets he's drowning in them and sinking his family at the same time.

My thumb strokes over the knife in my pocket—my reassurance, my life saver.

"No," I answer honestly.

"I thought you'd want to be with her." She sits on the kitchen counter, regarding me, and usually when I'm being scrutinized, it makes my skin

crawl.

Only that doesn't happen with Angel. I turn to her and instantly see it in her eyes: the darkness, the trauma, the same reflection staring back at me when I look in the mirror.

My body relaxes ever so slightly, yet I'm still on high alert.

"She won't want to see me," I say.

Her gaze roams over my face, as if she's searching for answers. Answers she will never find, that no one will ever find. Not unless I want them to, of course.

She takes a deep breath and flicks her eyes away from me. "A long time ago, I was raped by a man. A monster." She chuckles sardonically. "Multiple, actually. But he was a family member, so that person hurt the most, ya know." I nod, knowing too well how it feels to be so sadistically hurt by someone who was meant to protect you. "He was Finn's uncle, and I ran. For years, I ran. Until one day, Finn walked back into my life, bringing with it his determination to keep me." She smiles solemnly. "There was never a doubt in my mind that he loved me, and I loved him just as much, but I also knew the truth would hurt him. I thought I was protecting him, protecting us. But I was hurting him so much more by not giving him what he deserved. The truth."

My heart hammers with each word. Our lives are different, our experiences worlds apart, and yet we're the same. "He deserved that part of me, the part I was ashamed of. He deserved it all. I was lying to him, and it wasn't fair. When I thought I was protecting him, I was hurting him too." Her truth is a dagger to my heart, but there's more to it than protecting Tia. Selfishly, so much more.

"What if . . . what if I'm protecting me too?" I admit meekly.

She nods. "Let them protect you, Lucas. Let them protect you like you want to protect them. You owe it to them to give every part of you. They deserve and want every part of you. Trust me on that." She hops off the counter. "I'm going to call Finn for an update."

"Lucas, we need to talk."

Spinning on my heel, my breath catches when I face the man I hoped to never to see again.

Rage.

CHAPTER
NINE



COLE

After undressing Tia, I helped her into the tub, cleaned her, and washed her hair. Then I dried her frail body, tending to each cut and bruise with ointment while my heart was breaking and my mind racing. My entire body conflicted with the need for vengeance yet the quest to shower her in love.

Once she was dressed in clothes provided by Angel, the doctor came in and checked her over. He said he was happy she was only battered and bruised, and his words made me want to tear his fucking head from his shoulders. *Only battered and bruised?*

I place a gentle kiss on her forehead as she snuggles with Harper tucked under her arm, and Mia is asleep in a crib beside her bed. “Love you, beauty,” I whisper as I close the door behind me. I want to stay and cherish them, but a bigger part of me wants to know what the fuck is happening. Needs to know.

Loud voices fill the corridor, and I march toward the sound, pissed at their lack of control with knowing what the girls have been through.

Pushing open the door to a dining room, the atmosphere is filled with fury. “What the fuck do you mean, she escaped?” Jace roars, and I wince at

the venom in his tone.

“Don’t raise your voice at me, you ungrateful little shit. Now sit your ass down or get the fuck out.” I open the door to find Cal facing off with my brother.

I exhale and step up to take control of him. “Jace. Sit the fuck down.”

Snapping my gaze toward Finn, I ask the question Tia has asked multiple times now. “Any update?”

His head drops forward, and he shakes it, taking with it the hope of some good news.

“Are you going to tell them, or am I?” Oscar sits forward, his hands steeped on the table in front of him as he leans in, aiming his question toward Lucas.

My jaw clenches, pissed at this continual façade displayed between them. They both know something, and the fact we’re in the dark pisses me the hell off.

Jace turns his aggression toward Lucas. “What the fuck’s he talking about, Lucas? What the fuck have you got to tell us?”

Lucas ignores his outburst and stares back at Oscar. “I’d sooner show them.” My eyebrows furrow.

Oscar nods. “Very well.”

“Show us what?” The veins in Jace’s neck protrude. “Show us fucking what?”

Lucas turns in his chair, his face as white as a ghost. “Show you my secrets. Hers too.”

All tension falls from Jace as his panicked eyes meet mine.

Lucas pushes back in his chair and stands, straightening his shirt and avoiding eye contact.

But I know my brother well, I see the turmoil inside him. As we walk through the door, my eyes lock with Angel’s, and she sees it too.

He’s drowning in his pain, but we will be the ones to save him.

We will always remain devoted.

CHAPTER TEN



LUCAS

Traveling to our apartment is done in silence, and there's an odd tension hanging above us, each family shrouded in a web of lies, a sea of uncertainty.

When Cal explained to us that Mrs. Lancaster and Viggo were not among the dead at the offices, Jace threatened to morph into the man we know he can be—Rage. He's there already, of course. He, much like I, can hide it well. It's a part of him as much as my darkness is a part of me and Tia. Cole is the glue which binds us all together. He's the one who remains calm during the storm and dives into the aftermath, all in, like he did when we dealt with Martin.

When Martin uttered the words, "I can tell you about the others" just before his life was ended, my blood ran cold, causing my body to shut down. At the time, it felt like a cruel taunt from beyond his grave. A promise of more to come. So, I did what I do well. I locked the taunt down, along with all the secrets that caused guilt to ripple through me, hoping to never have to reveal them, no matter how much it ate away at my conscience.

Until Mrs. Lancaster showed her face at Harper's school and with it, the threat of resurfacing all my demons. My secrets are about to be unveiled, when I so desperately wanted them to remain hidden.

My search took me down a road I never anticipated being on, and inevitably, it's what brought us to where we are now.

Our families have been hurt, and retribution is needed.

There's a storm brewing, and no one will get away unscathed.

My hand trembles as I unlock the drawer to my secrets, my past.

As I tug out the files, I can barely breathe. This is the moment I could lose it all.

Lose them all.

They get to see every part of me: the dirty, the dark, the traumatized. I squeeze my eyes shut at the thought.

They get to see her too, and I hate that.

Hate that they get to see every part of me and every part of how she engraved herself into not only my mind but my heart too.

The moment when I became utterly and brutally devoted.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER ELEVEN



COLE

I hold the punchbag as Jace slams his fist into it again and again, then he jumps up and delivers a swift kick, causing my feet to stumble back.

Sweat drips from him, and each measured action is filled with more fury than the last, but I can understand it. Jesus, I feel it myself.

The thought of what he's been through is unimaginable.

"We knew he had some demons," Jace spits out, then punches the bag again with a grunt. "Never knew it was that bad."

"Me neither. I can't imagine what he went through."

"Thought my childhood was bad." He mocks with a sardonic laugh. "His is like a horror story."

"Yeah." I grimace at how my childhood was compared to his. Although I lost my parents when I was young, I never went without. My nana showered me in love, and no one ever laid a finger on me.

"All this fucking time." Jace shakes his head. "Both of them, all this fucking time!" He shakes his head harder this time. He's in as much disbelief as I am, only Rage's comes out in aggression.

"And Viggo? Do you think she remembers anything?" he asks, sweat pouring from him.

Anxiety ripples through me at the thought that Tia might know more than she's telling us. Maybe we're all keeping secrets?

"I don't think so. She'd have said if she remembered, right?"

Jace nods and delivers a swift kick to the punchbag.

My mind wanders to the connections we've discovered, and I swallow back the bile in my mouth, at the secrets our brother has kept from us. "She's going to be pissed if she ever finds out we didn't tell her everything." My voice is a whisper as I tell Jace my concerns.

He stops punching and his head snaps up to mine, and his stare sears into me. "She isn't going to find out." There's a threat behind his eyes, and I almost want to balk at him; he doesn't scare me, but his actions do. The damage he can cause others when his rage burns so deep it consumes him, that's what scares me.

"Right. She won't find out." I nod, agreeing, once again just to keep the peace, but regretting every word.

SKY

The noise filling my ears has become my solitude. Without it, there would be no him, no forever, and that's a thought I simply cannot bear.

"The boys are content at our house, Sky." I lift my head from Bren's pillow to face Oscar. "Paige is managing."

I bite into my lip to stifle a smile at Oscar's words. The boys might be happy, and Paige might be too, but Oscar hates having visitors, and if he didn't hate hospitals so much, I'd think he was using it as his escape. Instead, as I stare down at my husband, I know as much as Oscar does, he's here for Bren. The bond they share is one beyond that of protection, they're entwined.

"Are you going to tell me what happened?" I stare toward the man I respect wholeheartedly, and he stares back at me. "I want to know why

Bren is in a hospital bed.” I slide down off the bed; where I’ve been since he received lifesaving surgery for multiple gunshot wounds to his chest. “I want to know why he was so badly hurt . . . yet you’re all unscathed.” My voice hitches with emotion.

I’m pissed nobody has told me anything. I’m in the dark as to why my husband is lying in a hospital bed and the families were put on lockdown, yet he’s the only one hurt. No, hurt is an understatement. We could have lost him. Our boys could have lost their daddy, and we might still lose him. I squeeze my eyes shut, and my hand finds my stomach, where our baby is growing, and the anger I feel deep inside overthrows all other emotions and boils to the surface. Determined to get answers, I snap my eyes open with a renewed vigor.

“I’m pregnant.” I ignore Will gasping from Con’s lap and instead continue on, “I know my husband, the father of my babies, would not put himself at risk of not coming home. So, tell me, Oscar, why is he lying in a hospital bed, unable to breathe for himself?”

Oscar glances toward Cal, and that has me seeing red. I turn my attention toward Bren’s second-in-command. “Cal?” I ask with hope, but he gives little response.

“Fuck this,” Con grunts. He gently removes Will from his lap, stands, and begins pacing. Blood covers his clothes, my husband’s blood, and the sight of it has tears filling my eyes again, but I refuse to let them fall.

“Con?”

“Sky!” Oscar yells at me for pushing him. And for the first time ever, I want to take out my brother-in-law’s eyeballs. Instead, I choose a more subtle approach and try a tactic I’ve witnessed his wife use many times. I hold my hand up to stop him from speaking. “I’m not interested in anything you have to say, Oscar.” His eyebrows raise, and I spin to face Con. “Con, please? Do you really think he wouldn’t want me to know?” I implore.

Con chokes on a sarcastic laugh, throws his head back, and looks toward the ceiling before pinching the bridge of his nose, then he rolls his head to face me. “He wouldn’t. He didn’t want you to know a damn thing.”

Worry settles in my stomach, making me want to retch again. Is this to do with another woman?

“Con!” Cal bites out, standing, and his whole demeanor commands the room.

“No. Fuck you, Cal. And fuck him too.” He tips his head toward Bren. “No more fucking secrets. You should know better than anyone where that gets us.”

“No more fucking lies.” Finn pushes off the wall, throwing his toothpick to the floor.

“Great, another fucking shitstorm,” Oscar grits out as he throws himself into the armchair in the corner of the room, then unbuttons the top button of his collar. His uncaring attitude makes me wonder if he’s having some sort of mental breakdown, but when I look toward Cal for guidance, his face mirrors Con’s.

Guilt.

OceanofPDF.com

CAL

Con is right, our family has been veiled in secrets, and the consequence of each of them brought a storm of lies so brutal we struggle to remain standing.

I almost lost my son, more than once, to lies, and I know I'm damn lucky to still have him and his family in my life. Some things are unforgivable, even if we are doing it as a form of protecting the ones we love.

"You better sit down."

"I'll stand, thanks," Sky sasses with a feistiness she rarely shows. My lip quirks at her defiance, and I take my seat once again, hoping to lower the budding tension in the room.

“A while ago, we were approached by three men claiming to need help. They said the girl they were involved with was a relative of yours.”

Her small body jolts. “Mine?”

“Yes. Your sister.”

“Like a real one?”

“Yes, Sky. A real one, your blood sister.”

She glances toward Bren, and her jaw clenches. “Why didn’t he tell me that?”

I lick my lips, preparing to be honest with her. “At first, we wanted to be sure that she was who they said she was.”

“And was she?” Her bottom lip trembles.

“Yes. She’s your sister, Sky.”

“Jesus.” Will sighs. “And you didn’t think she had a right to know?”

“It wasn’t our choice to make!” I snap in her direction.

A tear slides down Sky’s cheek, and she swipes it away. “Why didn’t he tell me?”

“He was trying to protect you,” I say. “The girl, she’s been through a lot.”

Sky jolts, and her bright-blue eyes widen. “Like what?”

My mind whirls to formulate the right way to tell her.

“Like fucking what, Cal?” she screams. “What has she been through?”

The room waits with bated breath for me to respond. Whatever way I tell her will never be the right way. But it is the only way.

“She was in foster care for years and was abused while there, sweetheart.”

Her chest rises and her eyes fall shut, but I continue, “She had a child while in care, and until recently, she thought the baby was her abuser’s.”

Sky swallows, then opens her eyes. “How old is she?”

“She’s twenty-two. She has custody of her daughter, and she recently had a baby girl.”

“You said guys, what do you mean?”

“Huh?” My eyebrows furrow.

“It means she fucks more than one guy.” Finn smirks. I shake my head at my brother’s bluntness, always straight to the point.

“Oh . . . Well, that’s different.” Sky nods, as if talking about a change in the weather, and Con snorts.

“So how did we end up here?” Will asks, waving toward Bren.

“It’s a long story, but the top and bottom of it is, Tia had threats against her, and those threats made a move. They kidnapped her and her little girl.” Sky stumbles, and her hand bolts out to grip onto Bren’s bed.

“Are they okay?”

“They are,” I confirm quickly. “But Tia was in a different location, and she was about to be in real danger of being trafficked, Sky.” I hold her gaze, hoping she can understand the enormity of what Bren did for her. “If Bren didn’t go in and rescue her when he did, she would have been sold to the highest bidder.”

Sky’s face goes even paler. “He saved her?”

A ball of emotion lodges in my throat. “He did. He sacrificed himself to save her, and I’m pretty sure he did it for you.”

Her teary eyes turn toward him, and she walks over to his bed, grazing her fingers down his face. She whispers in his ear before turning to face us all with a set jaw, and with determination written all over her face, she lifts her chin.

“I want to see my sister.”

CHAPTER
TWELVE



TIA

It's been two days since we returned home with Harper and Mia, and I know the guys are hiding something huge from me.

Angel, the lady who lives at the mansion, gave us space, and to be honest, I was grateful. I couldn't bear to see the pity in her eyes. I'm not sure how she came about opening her house up to strangers, but I'm thankful for it.

Thankfully, Harper was none the wiser at being taken, the only side effect being a sore head. The guys told her I'd had an accident in my car, and after a round of tears at seeing the evidence on my face, she's turned into Cole's little helper with Mia.

Whenever I ask about Bren, they shut the conversation down but tell me he's stable in the hospital with his family surrounding him. Each time I think of him, guilt swims inside me, regret too. Maybe I could have done more. After all, he gave his life to save me, a stranger. I bite on my finger as I contemplate how I can get to the hospital to see him, to thank him for helping me and to ask him why. Why did he help me? I need to speak to his partner too. I need to tell her the word that means something to him, to them.

When I question the guys, they say he's a contact of STORM Enterprise. I'm meant to just accept it.

Lucas has kept his distance, and that hurts more than ever before, and yet I feel him watching me at night when he sneaks into the room where I'm sleeping with Jace and Cole; both too scared to let me leave them. He falls asleep in the armchair, as if desperate to be in the same room but scared at the same time.

Frustration gnaws at me, how long is he going to keep his distance, trying to avoid the inevitable, trying to avoid the truth.

He knows I know, but he makes no move to reassure me or to explain.

With a heavy huff, I throw the sheets off me and step out of bed. My head swims a little, but I ignore it.

I tug on the hem of Jace's T-shirt—it covers me to mid thigh—and avoid looking in the mirror, unable to stomach the damage caused by them.

My body aches like a bitch, but I refuse to acknowledge it, and instead, I storm toward the bedroom door, determined to have it out with him once and for all.

Throwing it open, I ignore the soft giggles of the girls coming from their bedroom and head toward his office.

It's time to talk this out.

LUCAS

I continuously tap the pen on the desk, and the rhythm I'm creating is somewhat soothing as my mind wanders over how to fix this.

All of this.

Without warning, the office door flies open, jolting me from the dark thoughts I should avoid.

And there she stands, like a fucking angel, albeit a bruised one. Stepping inside, she makes no attempt to disguise her anger and slams the door behind her when she's normally so considerate of the girls.

Is this it, when my world crumbles?

My mouth goes dry at the realization, and my stomach lurches with a wave of nausea.

She's going to force me to move out, I know it. She hates me.

I attempt to swallow down the nausea, but that only makes me panic all the more as my chest caves in on me. *She hates me.*

Gasping for air, I choke as I struggle to regulate my breathing. *She hates me when all I want is for her to love me.*

“Lucas. Lucas, open your eyes and look at me.” Her soft voice caresses me, and her warm hand touches my cheek. “Open your eyes, Lucas. You’re panicking. Please don’t panic.” My eyes flash open, and my body relaxes into the chair at her touch and the tenderness behind her eyes. I wasn’t even aware I’d closed my eyes as the panic took a hold of me, and I became so lost in the surge it creates while I scramble to escape it.

Tia remains standing between my legs as my pulse rate steadily declines, letting me breathe more easily, and think more easily too.

Her blue eyes bore into me with such intensity I can feel the anger rolling off her while she tries to remain calm enough to pacify me.

I lick my lips, and her gaze trails the action, not missing a thing. At some point, my hands wrap around the back of her thighs, securing her in place, ensuring she remains between my legs while I try and explain things.

Keeping her as mine for a little while longer.

I scan over her face, and my fingers itch to touch over each bruise, each cut, and each blemish on her perfect skin. How I’ve longed to be the one to care for her, piece her back together.

“Give me your knife.”

My body freezes at her words. She couldn’t have shocked me anymore than she is right now.

“Your knife. Give it to me,” she demands again when I make no move to hand over my sacred possession. A lump gathers in my throat, unwilling to hand it over, knowing the consequences of the action could be the end of us.

A tremble filters through me, and I silently plead with her, my eyes imploring hers. *Please don’t do this. I need it. You know I do.*

She shakes her head, and my stomach sinks. “Give. It. To. Me.” She holds her hand out while glaring at me with a warning in her eyes.

Swallowing thickly, I remove a hand from behind her and fumble in my pants pocket, stroking over the grain of smooth wood before retrieving it and placing it in her familiar, delicate palm.

She licks her lips as she flicks open the blade and places it beneath my chin, forcing me to stretch my neck at the nick of pain.

The irony isn't lost on me at the predicament I'm in. When I think I have all the control, she reminds me I have none.

"I should hurt you, Lucas."

My gaze flicks down to hers. "Do it," I coax.

She presses harder into my flesh, and a warm stream of blood travels down the column of my throat. "I should slit your throat for the lies you've told me."

"I never lied to you, Tia."

She presses harder, but I don't care. I'm at her mercy, and I'm there willingly.

"You kept it from me. I trusted you!" Hurt swims in her eyes, and I despise myself for it.

"I . . . I thought you'd remember me," I say, the pain evident in my voice of her not remembering who I was.

Her lip wobbles and so does the knife that rests precariously close to a very important artery. "Why couldn't I remember? Why can't I remember this?" She tilts her head toward the knife, and my heart constricts thinking about her not remembering the significance of her gift. The one item I held dear, the one item that saved my life and gave me hope.

"You tried to intervene, and my dad hit you. You banged your head on the coffee table. Martin went ape shit and made everyone leave."

She touches the side of her head, as if remembering.

"I went home, and I did it, Tia. I did it for you." The tears in her eyes flow freely now, but I continue on, "You should have seen it, Tia." She gasps at my words, and her eyes search mine.

"I made it brutal."

CHAPTER
THIRTEEN



TIA

“You should have seen it, Tia.” I gasp at his words and search his eyes for the truth behind them.

“I made it brutal.”

He repeats the words I once whispered to give him the strength he needed to fight against the monster who was his father. But instead of fighting that monster for himself, he withstood the pain and terror, and then he fought the monster for me.

His lip lifts at the side, as if proud of his actions, and with it, comes an increasing awareness that this man has always had my back. Repeatedly, he was traumatized, assaulted in the worst possible of ways, but the moment I was hurt, he took away the threat.

“I made him suffer for you,” he whispers, and goose bumps spread over me.

My body moves on its own accord, and I slam my mouth over the trail of blood running down his neck, flicking my tongue up toward his open mouth, where our mouths clash in a messy, intoxicating kiss.

The knife leaves his throat but remains in my palm as Lucas lifts me onto his lap while unbuckling his belt. We scramble in a tangle of desperate

need; him pulling his hard, dripping cock from his pants, and me pushing my panties to the side. He lifts my ass, then slams me down onto his thickness. Without giving me a chance to accommodate him, he repeats the action. “Take all my cock, Tia. Stretch that little cunt for my cock,” he grits out as he powers into me.

I push his chin back, giving me access to the trail of blood on his throat, where I continue my assault by surrounding his cut with bite marks—a symbol of our love born in brutality.

My hands tangle in his hair to hold on, while he nips at the flesh on my neck, leaving marks. “Yes, Daddy. Please.”

“That’s it, little girl, let Daddy fill you,” he mumbles against me while I bounce up and down on him. Then he grinds his hips, causing a flurry of arousal to build deep inside, the telltale sign of my orgasm building, and I beg for it. I need it to wash away the memories, to scrub them from my mind, to fill them with new ones. “Fill me!” I scream as my pussy convulses, and Lucas continues his assault on me.

I tug his head back by his hair and slam my mouth against his, and my body explodes, and his breathing stutters. He grunts, and with one final surge, his cock expands, and his mouth falls lax, but I continue my invasion on his mouth, pulling his bottom lip with my teeth, then sucking away the sting.

“Jesus,” he grumbles as the tension slips from him, and our bodies sag together in appeasement.

Our hearts beat in time as we come down from our quick, messy sex, and as we sit in silence, my mind is a hazy whirl of content.

“It was one of the hardest things I ever did,” he whispers as his hand strokes over my hair. Pity swims in my stomach thinking about him struggling to come to terms with killing his father, but he quickly eradicates it. “Knowing I wasn’t going to see you until you were older. But it was worth it for me. Or I thought it was, I thought you’d be safe, Tia.” I feel him shake his head above me. “I thought you’d be safe. But I was a silly boy with a stupid notion.”

“You didn’t know, Lucas. Nobody did. Not even Jace and he lived there.”

His body tenses. “But I saw what Martin was capable of. I saw the monster inside him, and I did nothing.”

I raise my head to stare into his gray eyes, the same gaze I would hold onto as a child hoping to give him strength, hoping he found solace in my presence.

“When we ended him, he didn’t even acknowledge me. He didn’t even know who I was, Tia.” His words are laced in hurt, and I hate it. The man who contributed to his trauma wasn’t even aware of him.

My eyes fill with tears at the pain in his eyes. Martin didn’t care about the boy who suffered in his basement, the boy he offered to friends for money. “I’m sorry,” I whisper.

“Don’t be sorry.” His finger grazes over my swollen eye and travels down to the finger marks on my cheek, then his jaw sharpens, and he grinds his teeth.

“I’m going to end them, Tia, and it’s going to be fucking brutal.” His familiar words send a shiver down my spine, and I suck in a sharp breath at the intensity behind them.

They’re filled with a dark threat of danger and a promise of vengeance. But most of all, they’re filled with devotion.

CHAPTER
FOURTEEN



TIA

Loud voices have my attention turning toward the door as I struggle to make out the conversation.

Lucas's muscles coil tight below me.

Slipping from his lap, I grimace at the flow of cum leaking from me as I adjust my panties back in place and tug the T-shirt down to cover my thighs.

"Tia, maybe . . ."

Ignoring Lucas, my pulse races as I swing open the office door and walk down the corridor toward the living area.

The unfamiliar voices lower. "I just want to see her," the voice pleads.

"Now's not a good fucking time," Jace grits out.

"Why do you look like my mommy?" Harper asks as I round the corner.

My feet come to a standstill when I see the young woman in my kitchen, and like some strange magnetic pull, she turns her head to face me. My vision blurs, and I reach out to grip onto the wall, suddenly feeling so lightheaded it's like I'm floating.

"Thalia, baby." Jace strides toward me, his blurry face laced in concern.

Something inside me snaps me from my daze as my world feels like it's erupting at a chaotic speed, leaving me dizzy for a moment, because the

woman in my kitchen is a replica of me.

I hold my palm out to stop Jace from coming any closer, and the hurt in his eyes is there, but above all, there's guilt, and the way his Adam's apple slides slowly down his throat and his chest heaves tells me all I need to know.

"You lied to me," I bite out, but I don't address just him, because if Jace knows something, then the other guys do too.

My scowl flicks to Cole, his head falls forward, and his hands tremble until he stuffs them in his pockets as if trying to disguise his nervousness at the situation.

Glancing over my shoulder toward Lucas, his stare remains ahead.

"Mommy, why does she look like you?" Harper asks again, and a whimper leaves my throat.

How do I answer that? How do I tell my daughter I don't know why the young woman looks like me, so much so, we could be twins.

She has golden hair that's so straight it looks silky, whereas mine always has a kink to it. Her skin is pale, where mine is a little more golden, and her clothes are more sophisticated and pretty, where mine usually consist of jean shorts and camisoles.

I glance down at the oversized T-shirt with some gym motif on it. I'm like the rougher version of her.

There's not a doubt in my mind we're related.

"Maybe you guys should talk, alone?" the guy with her suggests. He's wearing a suit, with his hair combed back that holds a wave to it. He has bright-blue eyes, maybe around forty years old, and the way he holds himself tells me he's important.

Cole lifts his head and turns to face me. "Do you want me to stay?"

I clear my throat of the emotion lodged in it. "Did you know?"

He sucks in a deep breath, and guilt and regret pool in his eyes. "Yes."

I reel back as pain hits me square in the chest, making it difficult for me to breathe. How could he do this? How could he lie to me? Out of the three of them, I'd have thought Cole would have told me. I thought he wore his heart on his sleeve, maybe I was wrong. Maybe it's as deep and dark as Lucas's selfish one.

"I don't want you to stay." He swallows thickly on my words.

Jace steps toward me, as if about to argue. "I don't want any of you to stay," I clarify, and the finality in my tone leaves room for no argument.

Cole's shoulders droop and his jaw tightens, and just when I think he's going to put up a fight, the man with the woman steps forward. "Give them space to talk," he suggests firmly.

Jace sighs heavily, then scoops Harper up and heads toward her bedroom.

Harper peeks over his shoulder, and she gifts me with a little smile. The same soft smile the woman in my kitchen has on her face as she looks toward Harper with tears in her eyes.

Cole throws Lucas a venomous glare, grabs his car keys from the counter, and storms out of the apartment, slamming the door behind him.

Lucas steps from behind me, and my body jolts at his proximity. I'm standing here with his cum between my legs, and still, he held secrets from me. Betrayal swims heavily in my stomach, pulling me down. Drowning me in our darkness.

Deceit, anger, hurt, they all swirl inside me, threatening to combust.

I spin to face him. "You knew!" I spit out. "You fucking knew!" I fly toward him, my fists hammer against his chest, and he stands there and takes it. A sob catches in my throat. "You knew and I trusted you."

"I wanted to protect you," he whispers. "We all did."

I shake my head, refusing to listen. They knew I had relatives out there and kept it from me, and I know in the pit of my stomach that Lucas is behind it all.

When I've always done everything in my power to protect him, when I make excuses and treat him with more tenderness than the others, when we had our darkness, our trauma, a connection. That connection.

He knew everything, and not once did he consider what I might want.

"I wanted to protect you," he repeats when my fists stop and my chest heaves.

I step back, and he attempts to step forward, but I shake my head. "I'm done." I lift my chin and stare at him, the flash of pain in his eyes makes my heart skip a beat. "I'm done, Lucas. I don't want you anywhere near me."

"Please . . ." He steps forward again, and I step back.

"No. I'm done making excuses for your actions. You hurt me, here . . ." I hold my hand over my heart. "More than them. I thought we'd always protect one another. This isn't protecting me, Lucas. It's protecting you."

His lip wobbles, then he pulls it into his mouth, unshed tears swim in his eyes, and I long to draw him against me, to offer him the comfort I

know he craves.

“I’m sorry,” he whispers. Then he takes a deep breath and heads toward Harper’s room.

When it’s just me, the woman, and the guy left behind, I fidget with the hem of my T-shirt, unsure of what to say, then swipe my tears away.

The guy clears his throat. “I’ll go wait outside.” She nods toward him, then casts her attention back on me.

“Is it okay if I sit down?” Her hand finds her stomach, drawing my eyes to the tender action I recognize well. She’s pregnant.

The thought makes me spring into action, and I clear my throat. “Of course. I’m sorry,” I blurt. “Can I get you a drink or something?”

She sits on the edge of the couch with her hands wringing in the lap of her blue sundress; something I’d never wear but seems to suit her well. “No. I’m good, thank you, Tia.” Her sweet tone is just how I’d imagine someone like her to speak.

Sitting on the couch opposite her, I grab a pillow to clutch, my stare never leaving hers.

It’s weird how similar we are, yet not alike at all.

“Who are you?” My voice comes out shaky, full of uncertainty, exactly how I feel.

“My name’s Sky, and I’m your sister.”

It’s obvious that’s who she is, she’s far too young to be my mother. But still, hearing her say the words has my pulse racing.

“I only just found out about you,” she’s quick to add.

I nod in understanding, yet confusion floods every cell of my body.

All the secrets, all the lies coming out, and our recent kidnapping has my head pounding with so many emotions.

Deceit being a big one.

I rub at the throbbing pain in my temple.

“I know you’re confused right now, Tia.”

“You don’t know anything about me,” I snap, but then wince at my tone when her expectant face falls.

She casts her eyes away and swallows. “You’re right, I don’t, but I’m angry too. My husband lied to me.”

This intrigues me; she’s feeling the same as I am. So, I ask the question on the tip of my tongue. “Why did he lie to you?”

Her hands move quicker in her lap. “He thought he was protecting me.”

I stare at her, unsure of what to say or do. "From me?"

"He knew you were in danger."

I scoff. "He thought I was too much trouble, is that it?"

Her chest expands and she swallows slowly. "I—"

"You know what, Sky. It's fine, he's right. I'm clearly too much trouble." I wave my hand over my face and the bruises on my legs, showing off every inch of trouble I've recently endured.

"I don't think that, Tia." Tears fill her eyes, then she opens a purse I wasn't even aware she had with her. Then she takes out a photo and holds it out toward me. Who even has photos these days?

"They're your nephews, they have a bunch of cousins, but I know they'd love more." It's an olive branch I feel like snapping, but looking at the hope on her innocent face has me taking the photo from her.

My heart aches and my vision goes blurry. Four little boys all seem to be below preschool age. The oldest two are fair-haired with impish smiles, but the toddler and baby are brown-haired, all have the same bright-blue eyes. Familiar blue eyes.

I point toward the door. "What does your husband say about you being here?"

She snorts on a laugh. "That's not my husband, he's my brother-in-law. He's the second-in-command for the family, so he's stepped up because my husband is unavailable."

There's a lot to take in from her words, but the one that sticks out the most spills from my lips. "Second-in-command?"

"We're a Mafia family."

I choke on thin air and laugh. *She's kidding, right?* After everything I've been through, uncontrollable giggles escape me, and she sits staring at me with wide eyes.

When I finally calm down, I clear my throat, then search her face for a sign of deceit, but her innocent eyes roam over me as if I'm having some sort of mental breakdown and she's unsure of how to deal with me.

"A Mafia family?"

She nods intently. "Hm-mm. I was found in a crate. My husband rescued me. He's good like that."

My mouth falls open. "A crate?" I repeat like an idiot.

"Yes. I'm unsure of when we were separated, but I was sent to a training facility, then I was sold for my virginity. Luckily, my husband intercepted

the shipment I was in.”

My body jolts. “Holy shit.”

“So, he’s overprotective.” She nods again.

I nod along, kind of understanding why her husband didn’t want to add more drama into her life, but I can’t help but feel pissed at the decision too.

“He felt guilty about not telling me about you.”

“He said that?” I query with hope.

“Oh, no, he didn’t say that.” She shakes her head. “But when he saved you, his actions said it all.”

Her words are like a truck hitting me in the chest, and my hand goes over my heart to protect it. “*But when he saved you, his actions said it all.*”

“Wh-what’s your husband’s name?”

“His name’s Bren.”

A tear trickles down the side of my face, but I ignore it. “Bren asked me to tell you something, Sky.”

Our gazes collide, and it’s like I’m speaking into a mirror.

“He asked me to tell you, ‘Forever.’”

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



RAGE

I pace the room, ignoring Lucas's eyes boring into the back of my head. Harper didn't argue about her lack of a bath tonight and, as if reading the tension, settled into bed and repeated her favorite story, one she's memorized word for word. It gave me time to allow my mind to wander.

Lucas sits in the armchair in the corner of the room with his collar open, exposing the bite marks she left lining his throat.

Where Cole and I have been giving her space to recover, the most fucked-up dude out of us all is getting fucked into oblivion, then we have to cover his ass and try to carry out damage control on his dumb decisions that affect us all.

"You're going to create threads in the carpet." His monotone voice makes me want to punch him in the jaw and destroy his chiseled good looks Thalia compliments him on.

I stop in my tracks and turn to face him. "You think I give a shit about the carpet?"

"I'd say not, given the marks you're creating." He points toward the floor, and I glance down and the freshly hoovered lines have been replaced

by my footprints.

“Fuck the carpet and your OCD-created-hoover lines,” I grit out.

“We’re all angry, Jace.”

“Yeah, but you caused this shitstorm.”

He jolts on my words, but I continue on, uncaring whether I hurt him further.

“You caused this shit. You!” I point my finger in his direction, the vitriol spilling from me in waves. “It’s your fault she’s going to hate us.”

“You don’t think I know that?” he counters.

“All your fucking secrets, Lucas.” I shake my head, pissed at myself for letting it get this far. “Then you play the victim and have her all over you, while Cole and I get the scraps. You fucked us over, Lucas.”

He shakes his head. “I didn’t mean—”

“Shut the fuck up!” I tug on my hair, and my pounding heart adds to my unraveling. “Just shut the fuck up.” He clamps his mouth shut. “We stuck by you. We agreed to go along with keeping your secrets, but we shouldn’t have.”

His Adam’s apple bobs. “It . . . it meant a lot to me, Jace. It wasn’t easy to open up.”

I roll my lip between my teeth. “You think I care right now about you and your fucked-up past?” I snipe. “I don’t give a shit. We might lose her; our girls might end up with a broken fucking home, Lucas.” He pales on my words. “All because you were a pathetic piece of shit that can’t get over his childhood. Well, boo fucking hoo. I hope she realizes you’re the cause of all of this. I hope it’s you that ends up with nothing!”

His face falls, and I know I’ve hit him deep, but I’m too far gone in my fury to care, so I head toward the door, determined to make sure Thalia hears sense, and if she refuses to listen, then I’ll have to make her see.

CHAPTER
SIXTEEN



RAGE

I throw open the bedroom door, and Thalia sits up from under the duvet, and tears coat her cheeks, but I refuse to see reason.

“Get out!”

Fury bubbles inside me, and I clench my fists at how quick she’s rejecting me. “No.”

Her chin wobbles. “Get out right fucking now, Jace! I don’t want to speak to you. Any of you.”

“You don’t want to speak to me, but you’ll fuck Lucas, who keeps shit from you too,” I snipe. “Fine. We won’t talk.”

Her mouth falls open. “I’m not having sex with you.”

I scoff. “We’ll see about that.”

“Jace, don’t you fucking dare.”

My lips tip up at her warning, then before she can even guess my next move, I throw off the sheets and grab her ankles, flipping her onto her stomach.

“Jace?!”

“Shhh, it’s okay. Let me fill you. Let me make you feel better.”

I fumble with the buckle of my belt, snapping it open with one hand while holding her down at the base of her spine with the other. She makes no attempt to move.

“Let me make us both feel better,” I croon, trailing my hand below her T-shirt and slipping my fingers inside her panties. Wetness greets me, filling me with a jealous, possessive rage because my brother has filled her with his cum when she’s about to punish us so greatly. I know her, I know she will not let this go, and inside, I want to punish her for the pain she will make me feel.

My cock is so hard it’s painful, the head swollen and dripping. I hiss when my hand comes in contact with it, pissed that I have such a desperate reaction toward her.

“Jace . . .” I rub over her clit, it’s swollen and needy, and I wonder if she’s into this or is this the aftermath of her arousal from my brother.

The familiar signs of my bitterness course through my blood, and coupled with the frustration at the cracks in our relationship and the lack of being able to keep her and our daughter safe is a deadly concoction.

“Wait . . .” she warns as I rub over her clit, and she bucks against me, her ass rubbing my solid length.

My lips tip up into a smug smirk, pleased she wants me above telling herself she doesn’t.

“Jace . . .” Her breathy moan is an aphrodisiac to my soul, and every cell is alive and heightened with pleasure at her neediness. The end of my cock leaks strings of precum and when I push two fingers into her pussy and it greets me with a pool of cum, I don’t know how to react. A ball of annoyance itches at my skin, but arousal zips through me at warp speed, my body at war with itself.

“You still have his cum inside you, Thalia.” I pull my fingers from her pussy and rip her panties in both hands. “My little whore is going to be fucked so damn good.” I line my cock up and slam inside, and the force makes the headboard hit the wall and a grunt of satisfaction escape my lips. “So fucking warm and wet from my brother’s cum.” I groan, embracing the wetness coating me as I push inside her. It’s like he got her ready for me, and with that thought, my hips work quicker.

“Jace, I want . . .” Her arms move, and she tries to slap at me, so I take hold of them, pinning them above her head with one hand while I lean over her.

“Tell me to fucking stop.” I surge inside her, slamming my hips against her ass. “Tell me to stop filling you with my cock, Thalia,” I grit out. “See what fucking happens.”

Her grumbles turn to moans as her pussy spasms on my words, and I couldn’t be more excited at her response. She likes this, the rough, dirty fucking by her man filled with rage.

“You like this, me fucking you hard? Me fucking you like my little whore.”

Her pussy clamps around my cock, making it difficult for me to continue the assault on her pussy. “You’re my girl, Thalia.” I draw out and slam in harder, my breathing becoming heavy. “Mine.”

The sound of our bodies slapping together fills the room, and I close my eyes, trying to fight against the orgasm building inside me. I want it, I want it so bad, but I want it to last forever more.

“Fuck, little slut. You feel so damn good milking my cock.”

“Oh god!” She moans loudly as her body tightens, and the feeling of her coming has me smiling in exhilaration.

“Fuck, yes. Come on my cock, you filthy little whore. Let me fill you.”

“Jesus . . .” she screams into the sheets, and the tight grip of her pussy muscles has my balls drawing up, but I continue relentlessly, determined to pull another orgasm from her body before I reach my own.

“Beg.” *Slam.* “Beg for my fucking cum, Thalia.” *Slam.*

She shakes her head, and it pisses me off. She’s rejecting me already, and I refuse to accept it. I’m not letting her go.

“I’m never letting you fucking go!” I roar without realizing I was voicing my worries out loud.

Then I lean back on my knees, pulling her with me as I do, her ass is higher now. I part her ass cheeks roughly, gather the saliva in my mouth, then spit it onto her asshole. She clenches, and with one hand gripping her hip, I use the other to swirl the saliva around her tight hole, relishing in the shudder and consecutive goose bumps that spread over her like wildfire.

The tip of my cock is still stretching her pussy as I push two fingers past her tight barrier, pumping them in and out. Slowly, I work my hips with the same steady motion, the reprieve from my previous pace gives me a chance to regain control of myself.

As I stare down at my fingers stretching her ass wide, my mouth practically waters at the sight before me. All fight in her is gone as she

becomes putty in my hands, and when I push my cock to the hilt, she grips onto the bedsheets, her mouth falls open, and a loud moan is muffled into the sheets. “Oh god.”

“That’s it.” I stroke my fingers along the muscled barrier that separates her ass from her pussy, and my eyes roll at the sensation. “Fuck, I can feel my cock inside you, Thalia.” My voice comes out choked, in awe of the woman beneath me, the only woman to make me feel anything. The only woman for me.

I withdraw, then slam inside her harder, and the mattress squeaks as I pick up speed. “You’re mine, Thalia.” My pace quickens. “Fucking mine!” I roar as my cock hardens to the point of pain, and I grit my teeth, pissed that I’m about to come before she does. So I shove another finger in her ass alongside the other two, delighting in the stretch of her so fucking full of me and the way her body reacts to mine.

Her eyes roll, her body tenses, and she falls over the edge with me.

“Fuck!” A groan rumbles deep in my chest as my cum shoots inside her with such force I sway, and I grip her hip to stabilize myself and her, leaving bruises with my strength. When her body slackens, I let my fingers slip from her ass and withdraw my spent cock. I watch in fascination as my cum oozes from her and have a sudden urge to scoop it back up and push it in so she remains full of me.

“Jace. I want you to leave now.” Her words are like a bucket of ice thrown over me. “Right fucking now!” she grits out, rolling onto her back before I get to push my cum back where it belongs. I stare back at her, unmoving.

“Get out!” she screams, and points toward the door. My eyes roam over her bruised face, and I hate myself for how vulnerable she looks and for the predicament I allowed Lucas to put us in, but most of all, I hate myself for how I fucked her hard when she needed love.

My mouth goes dry, and I drag my tongue over my bottom lip, trying to think of something to make her feel better.

“Leave.” Her words cut through me like a blunt knife, leaving a path of misery in its wake. “Now.” Her eyes are full of the hate I feel deep in my soul. As guilt swims inside me, I can’t bear to look at her, so I do as she asks, tuck myself back in, buckle up my belt, and head toward the door.

Feeling worse than when I entered.

Feeling full of rage.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER
SEVENTEEN



COLE

I swing another punch at the punchbag, ignoring the split of my knuckles and the pain lancing through my fists with each savage strike.

Slam after slam I pound my fists into the bag, sweat drips from me, and the sound of my heart pulsates in my ears as I push myself past exertion.

“Can we talk?” Lucas’s deep voice penetrates the air, and every muscle in my body becomes tense, hyperaware of his presence. Annoyance rumbles inside me at my reaction toward him, and I hate my body’s natural response to soften.

I stop the assault on the punchbag and spin to face him with anger coating my every feature. His eyes flick toward my fists that I pump beside me before slowly traveling up my coiled body toward my face, and he jars, as if seeing the depth of my hatred. “Cole, I—”

“Fucking save it!” I spit out with vitriol. “She hates me because of you, Lucas.”

“She doesn’t . . .” He steps forward and tries to reason with me, but I step back, unable to trust myself to not lash out at him because of the level of fury I feel in my bloodstream.

He caused all this shit, him and Jace orchestrated my involvement, even after I voiced my concerns, and now she fucking hates me and thinks I'm disloyal, all because I put my loyalty and trust in them. In him.

"Have you any idea how much I fucking hate you for what you made me do!" Hurt swims in his eyes before he quickly masks it.

"I understand how—"

I scoff and stab my finger in his direction. "You don't understand shit. You don't even understand your own fucking feelings, Lucas. You're a scared little boy stuck in the past, and I fucking hate you for it." His face pales, his head falls forward, and this time, it's him who steps back. His Adam's apple slides slowly down his throat, and his hand dives into his pocket, no doubt searching for the knife he clings to like it's his salvation.

I motion with my hand toward his pant pocket. "Look at you, you're pathetic."

His breathing stutters, and for the first time during my tirade, a surge of guilt hits me.

But as if a switch has been flipped, he snaps his head up, and his eyes are cold and devoid of any previous emotion, his blank expression sends a shiver down my spine.

"I'm sorry." His monotone voice sends a sliver of nervousness through me, but before I can say another word, before I can get my body to move in his direction, he turns and strides toward the exit, leaving me with a feeling of dread. It spreads through me at a rapid speed, and I grip my hair, frustrated with myself for lashing out so viciously.

"Fuck!"

Every word I said was meant to hurt him, every word meant to cause him pain and to take away my own. Every word has done just that.

They were cruel, merciless, and unforgivable.

They were brutal.

And I regret each and every one of them.

CHAPTER
EIGHTEEN



LUCAS

I walk out the door and feel like my legs will buckle, my chest so tight I can barely breathe. My hand goes toward my collar to loosen the button, but it's already open, so panic sets in, which then spirals into terror.

Somehow, I make it down the sidewalk and turn into the nearest alley, away from everyone, away from their words.

Away from him.

I thought I'd reach out to Cole first, knowing he's the brother who would understand my actions the most. Always so in tune with me. I wrongly thought he'd support me, tell me how to make things right when I'd made them so wrong.

My head falls back against the wall as I try and fail to catch my breath, the inability to command my own body sends my ass sliding down the wall and onto the ground. I bury my head in my hands as a cry for help catches in my throat. I want to scream, I want to shout for help, but Cole's words come back to haunt me. I remain silent as the truth in his words is glaringly obvious. *"You're a scared little boy stuck in the past. Look at you, you're pathetic."*

Just like back then, when I would remain silent.

My hand involuntarily finds my knife, and I tug it from my pocket. But it doesn't bring me the comfort like it normally would, it brings me the past. I squeeze my eyes closed, trying in vain to block out the memories that taunt me, and nausea builds, threatening to spill over. I shake uncontrollably, trying and failing miserably to stop my past from colliding with my present.



I HATE that they make her watch. My cheeks and ears are burning hot, and I can feel my chest getting red too. I've tried to bury my face into my arms, but something draws me to her, and she stares at me as if she wants me to watch her too.

Occasionally, her eyes flick toward the guy hurting me, and normally, when I wince or something, she swallows hard but remains in the corner of the room with her legs drawn up and her arms folded over them, as if protecting herself from everything happening.

Her foster father is a piece of shit for letting her see this, but when my dad asked if he could have her, I was grateful he said she belonged to him and was waiting to make her his.

That meant she wasn't being hurt like me.

She still had to get on her knees for that Russian prick, Viggo, and with every move he forces on her, I crumble a little inside that she has to do it. In my head, I make her a promise. A promise to protect her as soon as I can. I'll make him suffer for hurting her. For the way he forces her to call him "sir" and the way he chuckled when he hit her face with his cock.

I hate having to do that shit to him, but I'd rather me have to do it than her. The guy enjoys humiliating you like it's his hobby. He's just another sick, twisted fuck who needs to die, and I wish it every time I come here.

But at least he doesn't fuck her. That's what I tell myself. I think I'd die inside if he did it to her too.

My teeth clench to stifle a whimper when my dad slams into me again. He likes it when he hurts me, but I refuse to give in to my agony, in front of Tia at least.

She plants her feet on the floor, and I lock eyes with her, giving her a subtle shake of my head. My eyes silently plead with her not to make a

move. If she tries to step in, he'll hit her, I know he will because I've felt firsthand the insanity that he wields.

She sags into the chair, and my body relaxes a little, knowing she's safe from his anger.

"Useless little fucker," he spits out when he takes hold of the back of my neck, then his hand tightens around me, and I try not to panic, but I can't breathe or stop the tears that fall from me.

When I hear her sobs, my eyes shoot open, and we both remain frozen as his body moves above mine. I'm sure she doesn't realize it, but the strength she gives me with her presence stops me from wanting to permanently drown in my misery.

I've even considered ending my life, but the thought of never seeing her again twisted me up inside with the hope that I mean as much to her as she does me.

For some reason, her being here gives me power, and that's one thing I'm pretty sure I don't have, but when I'm older, I'm going to take her as far away as possible from this place.

I'm going to do everything I can to protect her; nobody will touch her but me.

When he finishes, I sag against the coffee table in relief while I wait for the sound of his zipper, then he snags the bottle of beer off the table, switches off the video camera, and gives my unstable legs a swift kick. "Hurry the fuck up and get your ass upstairs." He doesn't pay me any attention as he moves to walk up the basement stairs. Then he stops in his tracks, and when his lecherous stare lands on Tia, my pulse triples in speed, but my body is frozen in fear. I'm unable to move, and I hate myself for it.

"I'd sell your pretty little ass." His words are taunting, with a hint of something more to them, then he takes a swig of his beer. "Fuck keeping you for himself." A loud belch erupts from him, and he laughs before stomping up the stairs, leaving us alone.

Dropping my head into my hands, I want to sob at the pain lancing through me, but it's nothing compared to the thought of her getting hurt by my dad or his friends.

It feels like it's only a matter of time before it happens, yet I'm always too weak to be able to save her.

At least Martin said he wouldn't touch her until she's older. By then, she'll have probably moved on. Besides, I'm older than her, I'll make sure

nobody hurts her.

"I got you something." She doesn't even know my name, and I prefer it that way. When I finally save her, I'll tell her. That way we can pretend none of this ever happened.

I lift my head but grimace at the pain that transcends down my spine. The fucker really hurt my neck bad this time.

"I'm scared he's going to kill you," she whispers. "So, I got you something," she repeats as she fidgets with her hands in her lap.

If I was to tell the truth, I'd say I'm scared he's going to kill me too, because the pain doesn't stop when we leave here. He doesn't stop.

In the past, I would have wanted him dead, welcomed it even, but not now. Not now that I have her.

Sniffing, I swipe the snot from my nose but make no move to cover my bruised naked body, unlike usual when I scramble off the table to cover myself up so she can't see me.

It's as if she knows how bad this time hurt. All my energy is drained, and I barely care about anything, anything but her being harmed.

"What is it?" My voice sounds weak, pathetic.

I've never had a gift before, not that I can remember anyway. When I used to go to school, kids talked about their birthdays and what they were getting, Christmases too. I'm not even sure when my birthday is.

When I lift my head again, she's in front of me, holding the blanket from the couch in one hand and something else in the other. Then she throws the blanket over my body and crouches down so we're eye level, and our gazes are like magnets, the pull so great there's nothing else between us. It's just us, just how it should be.

Then she slides something past my coiled fingers until it slips into my palm. It's smooth, and I find myself intrigued, so somehow, I find the strength to lift my head and open my palm, and there sits a penknife.

A gift.

Tears well in my eyes because it's so much more than that.

In my hand sits hope.

With this knife, I get to carve out a future.

Our future.

A smile tugs at my lips, and she smiles back at me.

"Make it brutal," she whispers.

My heart stutters on her beautiful words, the significance in them greater than she could ever know.

I stare at the knife in my hands, knowing how I fucked up my life. Knowing it all started with them.

Standing, I brush the dirt off my pants and inhale the crisp air with a new purpose in mind.

I'm going to destroy the root of the evil, the very cause of my misery. The cause of hers too.

They tried to sell my girl, they took my daughter, now it's my turn to destroy them. Fuck waiting for the O'Connells to seek vengeance.

It's mine to take, after all, and I'm going to make it fucking hurt.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER
NINETEEN



JACE

I went too far. I bury my head in my hands, scrubbing at the back of my tattooed neck to try and ease the budding tension growing with each minute she remains in the bedroom.

“Dad, why are you so sad?” My frown snaps toward Harper, and I gift her a smile I don’t feel. She sits on the floor beside Mia, who is on her playmat attempting to suck her blankie into her mouth, and my lip quirks up at her lazy attempt. The poor girl is exhausted and probably wants to fall asleep in her momma’s arms. I glance toward the corridor that leads toward the bedroom again, and when there’s no movement like I hoped for, I pick the beer bottle up off the coffee table and take a swig.

It’s not lost on me that even holding a beer bottle now has become something to remind me of her. Another reason to crave her and her pleasure.

“If you made Mommy sad, take her food. That always makes me happy.”

This grabs my attention. “Who made you sad?” My eyes scan over my daughter. If someone hurt her during her kidnapping, I swear to fuck I’ll make their death even more prolonged than I anticipated. Every muscle and

vein in my body waits for her response. The O'Connells reassured me she was just fucking sleeping while with the Lancasters, but if there's more to it than that, if they're covering shit up, I'll make them pay too.

My eyes roam over her, looking for something out of place. She's as cute as a fucking button, a mini version of Thalia. Her blonde hair reaches her butt, and she sits with her legs crossed and her favorite doll in her lap, who just so happens to have long blonde hair too. She fixes hairclips in the dolls' hair while assessing me as much as I am her.

With a huff, she finally relents, and I suck in a breath as I wait. "Cole, he dropped your toothbrush in the toilet."

I stare at her, then blink.

"I know. I told him he made me sad."

"He made you sad," I repeat, a little dumbfounded. Not quite the admittance I was expecting.

My tense body relaxes, and I sag back into the couch.

"Epic sad. He put toothpaste on your brush."

I swear I could choke on the laugh of relief bubbling inside me, but her face has me attempting to remain serious and catching my lip between my teeth to stop the humor erupting from me.

Jesus, I'm fucked up. One minute, I'm about to destroy the world, the next, I'm laughing like an idiot.

I take a drink from the bottle of beer.

"He knew it made me sad, so he gave me a cookie."

"A cookie, huh?" Great, my own brother buys our daughter's trust with a cookie. "Did he tell you not to tell me?" I lift a playful eyebrow.

"Oh, no. But he told me not to tell you that he scratched Lucas's red car."

My eyes widen. "He did, huh? And Lucas doesn't know?" I take a gulp of beer.

"Nope. He said he'd make him choke on his own balls for doing it. So we took it to the garage to be fixed before he found out." I spit the beer out, covering my lap in it, but she continues on, "He gave me a double chocolate chip cookie for that one." She grins back at me, and this time, I can't help but mirror her smile.

I only wish all I needed was a cookie to fix this shit between us.

All of us.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER TWENTY



COLE

My hand fumbles with the door handle to the apartment, and every part of my body swims in so much guilt I'm drowning in it. I've never felt so useless, so awful in my entire life.

This is not me; this is not the person I want to be.

I don't want to be the liar, the one who keeps secrets from the woman he loves, the guy who lashes out and says things he's unable to take back, causing irreversible damage.

On that thought, I step into the apartment.

We need to have a conversation, all of us do. I need to clear the air and apologize, it's the only way for us to move forward.

As a family.

TIA

The sound of the front door clicking shut has me moving.

They're all here now. I know they're probably regretting their decisions, in their own way, but I refuse to stand for it.

I won't be lied to in the veil of protection they insist on shrouding me in, and I refuse to be a scapegoat for their frustration too.

I know in my heart that one by one they will try and win me over: Lucas with sympathy, Cole with his puppy-dog eyes, and Jace with his obsessive need to be with me, and I won't stand for it.

When I spoke to Sky and learned about her past, I realized I, too, don't need a man who thinks I depend on him. I refuse to be kept in the dark any longer. I've been through hell and back and remain standing. The only thing

I ask of them in return is honesty. It's clear they're devoted to me and the girls, but that's not the issue.

They should have had a conversation with me about my sister and should have told me about Mrs. Lancaster approaching my daughter at school. They should have trusted me, then I'd be able to trust them, but not anymore.

I pull my shoulders back and throw open the bedroom door, marching down the corridor toward the hushed voices.

Cole and Jace are opposite one another on the couches, deep in conversation until they see me, then their conversation draws to a stop, and they turn to face me.

If my face wasn't burning with anger, it would be heating under their scrutiny, both wearing a look wavering between animalistic and regret.

I brush the thought to the side and cross my arms over my chest, not missing the flash of arousal in Cole's eyes when I inadvertently push my heavy tits up. The milk in them has gathered, and I'm seriously considering pumping and dumping just to punish them.

Cole jumps to his feet. "Tia, I'm sorry."

I grit my teeth, then hold my hand out. "I don't want to hear it, Cole."

"Please . . ." Pity oozes from his eyes. He's sorry, I can see that. I lick my lips, knowing I'm about to hurt him, not wanting to but feeling like I have no choice.

"I need space." Even admitting it out loud makes me want to wince at the lie on my tongue. I don't need space; all I need is them. But I can't be with them if we're not a team. A family.

Jace jerks and Cole flinches, the hurt in Cole's stare has me darting my eyes away from his.

Tears well in my eyes, and I blink them back, then glance back toward them.

"You said we were a family. Yet you lied to me." My lip wobbles but I remain steadfast.

Jace jumps to his feet. "We wanted to protect you!" he grits out, fury taking over his shock now.

"You put me and our daughter in danger because you lied to me!" I scream back at him. All the pent up hurt, trauma, anger, and fear comes flooding out.

"We thought we could protect you . . ." I can barely look at him.

I shake my head and swipe at the tears flowing down my face. “You didn’t protect me! You put me in harm’s way. You put us in harm’s way.” My gaze meets his, the hurt swims in his eyes, but I ignore it and clench my teeth with a steely determination to see through with my plan.

“We thought we were doing the right thing!” he says, and instantly, I want to hurt him. I want him to know the depths of the depravity I endured.

“I had to suck that scumbag’s cock, Jace,” I spit out, and his face pales but I continue on, holding his gaze with my every word. “Just like when I was a child.” His body jolts. “You didn’t protect me then, and you can’t protect me now.” Jace clings to the wall, and he looks like he’s seconds away from vomiting, and part of me wishes I could take back my words, take back the pain I just unleashed, but I can’t, and a bigger part of me doesn’t want to. I want them to feel the pain that I feel too.

I spin on my heel to face Cole. “And you! I trusted you! I asked you not to lie to me!” My face floods with tears. “I trusted you, Cole—” I choke on a sob. “I trusted you.”

“I’m sorry.” I ignore the panic in his voice. “I’m so sorry, Tia. I swear.” The gut-wrenching edge to his voice almost brings me to my knees.

I grind my teeth, pissed at how his reaction affects me when I want to remain strong, when I want to make them pay too.

“I don’t want any of you anywhere near me. Do you hear me?”

“What happens now, Tia?” Cole asks, his voice broken and empty as he stares at the carpet. “What do you want from us?”

I lick my lips, already reconsidering my plans, can I do this? Can I hurt them more than ever before?

My throat clogs with a ball of anxiety, and it takes a moment before I clear it and continue on with my plan for them to move out. “Can you get Lucas in here, please?”

Cole’s eyes dart toward Jace, then he scrubs his hand over the top of his head before looking back at me. “Fuck, Tia. Really?” He knows as well as I do that this will push him further away, hurt him the most.

I simply nod, too frazzled by the guilt at hurting them rolling in my stomach.

Jace pushes off the wall. “He isn’t here.”

Cole’s eyes widen. “What do you mean he isn’t here?”

Jace scoffs. “It isn’t fucking difficult. He. Isn’t. Here.” Then he shrugs, ignorant to the way Cole’s face has drained, but my heart speeds up at his

expression. Something has happened, I can feel it.

“Where is he, then?” he asks, his focus drilling into Jace.

“How the fuck would I know? I assumed he went to pour his heart out to you.” His voice is mocking, and I want to hit him in the back of his head, because as Cole stares back at him with a look of bewilderment and terror, my blood floods with a prickling awareness. He’s in danger. I can feel it.

“What happened?”

Cole’s eyes snap to mine, and he gulps. “I said some shit I should never have said.”

I huff in understanding. So, he took his guilt out on Lucas.

“What did you say to him?” I say through clenched teeth.

He sighs, darting his eyes away, then brushes his hand over his head. “Fuck.”

“What did you say to him, Cole?” I stand firm, refusing to back down and needing to know how far he went. How far he’s pushed him.

When his gaze finally comes back to me, I startle at the devastating look in his eyes. He fucked up, big time.

“I told him I hated him.” Tears well in his eyes. “I told him he was pathetic and a scared little boy stuck in the past.”

I suck in a sharp breath as pain pierces my heart. “You said that?” My voice comes out like a whisper, and I hate myself for how weak I sound. “How could you say that?” I bellow. “After everything he’s been through, Cole. How could you say that?”

Cole jolts. “I know. I’m sorry.”

“Where is he now?” I flit my eyes over to Jace, who is on his phone, no doubt searching for Lucas’s location on our family tracking app.

He gives his head a shake, indicating he can’t locate him.

“Fuck.” Cole bends over with his arms folded behind his neck, and when he lifts his head and his eyes clash with mine, the fear in them has my breath stuttering with intensity. “He’s going to do something stupid, Tia. I can feel it.”

“Like fucking what?” Jace grits out. “What the fuck is he going to do?”

“He’s going after them,” I answer, my tone void of emotion.

“He’s going after them,” I repeat louder.

“He’s going to make it brutal.”

CHAPTER
TWENTY-ONE



COLE

Regret takes over me, and every part of me fills with a bitter hatred toward myself and the things I said.

There is no excuse, there was no need for me to push as hard as I did, no need to punish him with the utter bile that came flooding out of my mouth.

It was meant to hurt and meant to cut to his core. What kind of person does that make me?

What kind of man wants to take someone's trauma and hold it against them? I may not have grown up with my parents, but my nana assured me they loved me. Unlike the piece of shit Lucas got dealt.

When Lucas gave us the file in his drawer, we uncovered his secrets with the police reports of his trauma. The way his father would pimp him out to his friends and record it, sell footage and images of him. Yet, we didn't take any of that into consideration, not once when we considered the pain of losing Tia did we consider how he might be affected too, how he was probably beating himself up, mentally struggling to comprehend his carefully constructed plans going so devastatingly wrong.

We burst through the warehouse doors in a whirlwind of panic. The workers turn toward us, and one man steps forward and holds his arm out to stop us going any farther. My shoulders broaden, prepared to fight, but a sharp voice cuts through the air. “Let them in.”

Finn O’Connell throws a toothpick to the floor and tilts his head in the direction of the office.

The guy drops his arm, and I can’t help but shoulder barge him as we storm past and into the office.

“What are you doing here?” Oscar’s scrutinizing gaze slices up toward mine, and the coldness behind his stare makes my blood turn to ice.

I fucked up.

I know it.

And the way Oscar is assessing me now, he knows it too.

Harper mumbles something to Tia, and she shushes her with a calm tone I know she doesn’t feel.

“You brought the children here again?” he asks with a raised eyebrow. The insinuation that isn’t a good idea clear in his tone.

“We need help.” I jut my chin out.

Oscar leans back in his chair while Finn tenses beside me. His stare cuts to Tia, then back to me. “I told you we’d take care of them.”

I shake my head with growing frustration. “It’s not that. It’s Lucas.”

Oscar flicks his eyes over us, as if searching for my brother, before his jaw sharpens in understanding.

“What’s his plan?”

I scrub a hand over my head, anxiety building with each second he’s unaccounted for. “I don’t know.”

Finn steps forward. “Did he know anything about Viggo and our plans to take them down?” he asks Oscar in some sort of clouded conversation, as if they don’t want to give too much away about their plans. My gaze darts from Finn’s to Oscar’s, searching for a sign as to what exactly they’re talking about.

Oscar finally exhales, taking my breath with his. “He did.” His jaw clenches, then unclenches. “Fuck!”

Jace pushes past Tia. “Just what the hell are you talking about here?” He leans over the table, eyeing Oscar. “I want to know what the fuck you’re talking about. Right fucking now!” he demands, stabbing his finger into the table for emphasis.

Oscar stares back at him, his gaze unwavering; he's not about to back down. He doesn't like giving control over. It's something I see in Lucas's eyes on a regular basis.

"You think I give a shit what you want? I don't." Tia whimpers, and my body tightens. "No one gave you permission to come here. Now get the fuck out while I sort this mess out." His voice is dark and commanding, and I can't look away from him, begging him with my pleading eyes to take pity on us. On him.

A scuffle at the office door has our attention turning toward it, and to my surprise, Tia's sister steps closer to the table.

Her eyes narrow on Oscar. "I gave them permission, Os, and I expect you to help them. Right now!"

My mouth falls open before I quickly snap it shut. Oscar stares back at her.

Then after a few moments, he jolts and tugs his phone from his pocket, the screen illuminated as if someone is calling him. He lifts it to his ear. "Yes, Paige." His jaw clenches, and he glares at Sky. "Understood." He nods. "I know you do." Then he ends the call.

"Get Owen on the phone." He speaks toward Finn. "It appears my takedown mission is turning into a rescue mission. Again." Curling his lips, he scans over Tia with disdain.

Is he for real? What an arrogant prick.

"Your brother is going after Viggo, the man who raped him as a child while the girl he loved watched on." Oscar delivers the latest clusterfuck as if he's delivering a food order.

The man who hurt Tia is one of the men who caused his trauma, and we threw him in the sea of darkness he's been drowning in, and now he might not come back from it.

I widen my stance, my gaze holding Oscar's. "We're coming with you."



Sky took the girls back to her house, where she has Angel waiting to help babysit so she can return to Bren in the hospital. Apparently, the poor dude's condition hasn't changed, and he's still considered high risk.

Still, Sky talks about him as if he's resting up after a minor surgery, not that he's been shot multiple times and can't breathe without assistance.

I'm pleased Tia had contacted her before we arrived at the warehouse. If she hadn't, there's no way in hell Oscar would have budged.

Owen used a satellite to track where Lucas's phone was last submitting a transmission, and it came as no shock to discover it was outside of a club belonging to the Russian just over forty miles north of here.

Oscar informed us a plan had been put in place to attack Viggo's club when his cousin Dominik was no longer in the area.

He explained that they have a good relationship with Dominik and if we go in and begin attacking their men in his presence to get to Viggo, then an all-out war would start, and that's something neither of us wants, nor could possibly come back from.

No, all that matters is we get Lucas back and we rid the world of Viggo and that sadistic piece of shit Mrs. Lancaster.

"Do you think they have him?" Jace asks as he looks over Oscar's shoulder to stare at the multiple views from various cameras inside Viggo's club.

"I think you need to step back. I like space to work, and you're too close to me, unnecessary proximity is preventing my productivity," Oscar snaps, shocking me with his bluntness. Jace glances down at him, his gaze assessing Oscar as if searching for truth behind his words, that he is indeed holding up the search. Then he releases a loud huff and steps back while holding his hands up defensively.

Oscar's lip quirks up ever so slightly, so slight I almost missed it.

My leg bounces as I watch Oscar drag a finger over his lip while his focus remains locked on his laptop screen.

His phone vibrates across the table, and everyone's attention is drawn to it, the tension heightened as we wait for Oscar to take the call.

He picks it up, and I bite into my lip as he speaks, desperate for him to hurry with the conversation and give us some news. "Speak."

A loud voice echoes, forcing Oscar to pull the phone from against his ear. Instead, he places it on the table in front of him and sets it to speaker.

“If you ever speak to me like that again, I’ll fucking ruin you. Do you understand me, O’Connell?”

Oscar sighs. “I understand you need to remember who you’re talking to also, Luca.”

I sit forward on my elbows at the mention of Luca’s name.

“Now. If you could give me the support I require, then we can end the threats and get this over with,” Oscar states as he taps away on his laptop.

Luca’s heavy breath plays out over the phone, and if I wasn’t so fraught, I’d be laughing at how easy he is to enrage.

“Go ahead. Tell me what you need this time,” Luca drawls.

“We’re going to be taking down Viggo’s club on Davenport Street. I don’t want any blowback. While we’re at it, ensure Dominik Kozlov sticks to his word, I know you have him in your pocket.”

“Done. Anything else?”

“Yes. I want a full breakdown on how deep the Carrera family are involved since they had a chopper at the site Bren was found. One can only imagine they’re part of this human trafficking.”

I grimace on Oscar’s words. This is so much bigger than us, and it’s terrifying.

“Mm, that could be difficult. I don’t intend on getting involved in their business,” he declares. “I will be at the club within the hour,” Luca confirms, ending the call.

I glance toward Jace, who shrugs.

“Looks like we’re going to Viggo’s club.” Oscar nods toward Finn, who smiles back at him manically.

Then Oscar’s cold eyes turn in my direction. “To reiterate, we are going to take down his club and to get answers from his manager as to where Lucas is.” Oscar points toward the laptop. “Because he hasn’t stepped foot in that place.”

Dread pools in my stomach. If Lucas isn’t in that club but that was his last location, then where the hell is he?

CHAPTER
TWENTY-TWO



LUCAS

My temple throbs, and my muscles are pulled taut, prickling with awareness that I'm not alone. The scent of the room is nostalgic for all the wrong reasons.

When I approached Viggo's club, I was well aware he wasn't in there and the cameras surrounding the vast building were aware of my presence and tracking my every move.

Once I'd garnered enough attention, I sat in my car and waited for the inevitable to happen. So it came as no surprise when my car door was flung open and a gun was pointed at my temple. I wasn't sure if Viggo would recognize me, and as I turned my head to face him, I was disappointed to see not a flash of recognition in his eyes, which pissed me off. Gritting my teeth, I wondered how someone could inflict so much pain and trauma on someone else on such a regular basis and then not have an ounce of recognition of it. Was I really that disposable to him. That much of a toy?

He didn't so much as search my face. "Who the fuck are you?" he grunted out, and I wanted nothing more than to cut his filthy tongue from his mouth, knowing the monstrous shit that would have spewed from him while he hurt Tia.

“Don’t you recognize me, *sir*?” I sneer.

He jolted at the pet name he made me call him, then his head tilted from side to side as he surveyed me before letting out the familiar sick chuckle that kept me awake as a child.

I felt the pain before I even saw it coming. It was so quick, then blackness, and I welcomed it with open arms, knowing what was to come.

OceanofPDF.com

TIA

Anxiety sends shudders through my body riddled with guilt, regret, and panic.

Knowing I was going to push them further away to punish them and now Lucas could be enduring the worst punishment of all, is breaking my heart. They didn't betray me out of disloyalty, they did it out of love.

My eyes meet Jace's, and he swallows slowly. He's worried about me, of course he is, always the protector. Again, the pang of sorrow fills me at the way I reacted. I was going to ask them to leave. My heart skips a beat at the thought, and I gasp for breath and jump to my feet with a need to do something.

Jesus, I would have destroyed them.

"I'm coming too," I declare.

Oscar doesn't even regard me and just looks to his brother. Finn frowns in Jace's direction, and slowly, the hope I had to help and be there for him like he was always there for me diminishes.

"She's coming," Jace announces, and I want to throw myself into his arms with gratitude. "You do as we say, Thalia." His stern voice leaves no room for argument.

"I will. I promise." I nod.

"Can she use a weapon?" Oscar asks.

Jace's lip curls. "No. She can't use a fucking weapon. Jesus, she wasn't bought up in some gang."

"Well, she's Mafia now, so things are going to change." Oscar stands, closing his laptop before turning to face Jace and looking at him pointedly. "For all of you." He tacks on, making Jace's eyebrows furrow.

"Come on, beauty, let's go get him home." Cole holds his hand out toward me with a glimmer of trepidation in his eyes, but when my hand slips into his, all tension vanishes.

Love shines in his eyes and seeps through the coldness of my skin, warming me from the outside in.

It's heart-stopping, all-consuming.

It's complete and utter devotion.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-THREE



JACE

“Do you think they’re expecting us?” I glance out of the SUV window toward the imposing building. It looks more like a dilapidated warehouse than a strip club.

“Is it even open?” Cole asks, shoving his head between the front seats, and his nose scrunches.

Finn chuckles from beside me, his toothpick dangling from his mouth. “It’s open, alright.”

“So we go in there, cause a scene, get dragged into the office, and then what?” I ask.

“Then we fuck shit up!” His eyebrows dance up and down in a way that makes my eyes widen at how maniacal he looks in a move that was clearly meant to be comical.

He glances over his shoulder toward Tia and Cole. “You two stay put.”

“You want me to bark like the fucking dog you think you’re talking to?” Cole spits back, and I rub my forehead. Why the hell does he have to choose now to be petty? I know he’s pissed at not joining us, but he needs to rein it in.

“Hey, whatever gets you off, man. Got myself a good woman, and I ain’t interested in sharing or that pet shit you’re into.”

My mouth falls open, did he just fucking imply we want him?

Cole’s face morphs into disgust. “Ewww, dude. Shut the fuck up and go do damage.” He waves toward the building, and Tia gives an awkward chuckle to break the odd tension.

“Come on, Rottweiler, let’s go.” He tilts his head toward the door. His nickname for me sets my teeth on edge as I open the door and jump out to follow his cocky swagger toward the club.

As soon as we’re within one hundred feet, we can feel the beat of the music inside. Every cell in my body is coiled with an underlying tension, an aggression desperate to escape, a rage screaming to come out. “Act cool,” Finn grunts as we head toward the door.

I turn to face him and scan him up and down. *Is he serious?* “I am fucking cool,” I spit back, mortified at his assumption.

Finn scoffs, and I’m surprised he doesn’t choke on the toothpick. “Fine. Act less like you.”

My feet come to a standstill to ask him what the fuck his problem is, but a sharp voice cuts through the air. “O’Connell, what the hell brings you here?”

A security guy stands in the doorway with his arms crossed over his chest as he glances from me to Finn.

“Need my cock sucking, what the fuck else would I be doing here?”

The dude searches Finn’s face, no doubt looking for a sign of deceit. “You got your own clubs.” He lifts his chin.

“Yeah, twenty-five of the fuckers, and can’t get sucked off without one of my brothers being alerted.”

Jesus, twenty-five clubs. A low whistle leaves my lips before I can stop it.

“Got a couple of the Varros family in there tonight, don’t want no trouble,” the guy adds before spitting on the floor.

“No trouble from me.” Finn shrugs, then doesn’t even give the security guy a chance to consider letting him in. He shoulder barges him out of the way and strides through the door, with me trailing behind him and apologizing on his behalf.

“Fucking bald-headed prick,” Finn spits out as soon as we step inside. Then he marches toward the bar. “Darlin, two beers”—his eyes dart around

the room—"in a bottle." The busty fake blonde smiles in his direction.

He's oblivious to her fluttering eyelashes and the way she adjusts her top to expose more of her cleavage. Her heavily painted eyes scan my body, and I glare back at her, then her painted red lips turn up into a calculating smile.

"Eleven o'clock," Finn grunts, then throws a twenty at the blonde. She huffs when it falls to the floor, which I'm pretty sure he did on purpose after he winks at me with a smirk.

We grab our beers and turn to take in the room.

My focus is instantly on the person at eleven o'clock. Luca Varros is drinking liquor with what I can only assume is another Varros family member the security guy at the door mentioned. I glance away just as quickly, taking a swig of my beer, then I scan the room for Viggo's men.

They stand out like a sore thumb, their strong Russian features giving them away. There's two at the door to our left; the door that Oscar informed us leads to the office. Then there's two at the entrance at the back and a handful scattered around the dancing strippers, paying more attention to them than what's happening in the room, such as one of their arch-nemeses who is now out of his seat heading toward the two at the back door.

That's our cue to make a move, and I take the opportunity to land my fist to Finn O'Connell's smug face, and the fact he called me out before coming in, makes it all the more satisfying when his startled gaze meets mine and he spits the blood from his mouth.

The deal was we would create a diversion, we just never had the chance to discuss what that might be.

The two brutes from the door on our left stampede toward us, and I hold my hands up, letting them know I'm done with the fight that barely even started. Finn has other ideas, and his crazy ass flies through the air, shocking the hell out of me when he football tackles me to the ground, sending the chairs behind me flying at the force.

I hit the floor with a whoosh. "Motherfucker." I grunt when he lands a fist to my stomach.

Someone drags him off me, but I'm not naïve enough to think he allowed it to happen.

"Enough. Sven said to watch you, O'Connell. You fucked up." The tallest one taunts while holding Finn in a headlock, in which he allows.

“Bring that piece of shit with him.” He gestures toward me, and I growl in response to the other guy manhandling me to my feet.

We both make a show of fighting against them while they pull us toward the doors, and my eyes lock with Luca’s, and he nods subtly as they steer us down the corridor toward the manager’s office.

The one holding onto Finn swings open the office door, revealing a guy being sucked off in his chair. He kicks the woman to the side and quickly fumbles to pull up his zipper.

“Get the fuck out,” he sneers in her direction, and she all but falls over herself to leave the room.

The moment the door closes, Finn throws the guy over his head. I slam my head back into the prick behind me, then spin him around so I have him in a choke hold while Finn has one boot on the guy’s throat on the floor and a gun in his hand trained on the manager. Just like that, we have control of the room.

The manager holds his hands up. “Look at the screen.” Finn gestures with the gun toward the security screen. I smile when I see that Luca has full control of the room outside. “Varros?” the manager whispers to himself.

“Varros,” Finn confirms.

The manager’s eyes bounce from mine to Finn’s and back again. “What the fuck is happening?”

“Here’s what’s going to happen, you’re going to tell us what we want to know about Viggo, otherwise every one of those men out there dies, and then you die.” My eyebrows raise because this is all news to me. He talks about killing people as if it’s nothing, while I never realized we would kill so many people. “Oh, and we’re taking the club.” Finn digs into his pocket, pulls a toothpick out, and shoves it in his mouth like he’s chomping on candy.

The guy swallows thickly, as if struggling to form his words. “What do you want to know?”

“A friend of ours went missing today, from outside this club. We want to know where Viggo might have taken him.”

He shakes his head. “Viggo doesn’t tell me shit. He didn’t even step foot in the club today.” He’s confirming what we already know. “He’s been staying low the past week or so. Some shit went down I’m not privy to know.”

The gun Finn is holding wobbles, making the sweat pour off the manager's head in dread. "We know that shit already," Finn tells him. "Jace, snap the fucker's neck." The guy in my arms fights against me as I brace my feet into position and tighten my hold on him to do just as Finn asks.

"Wait. Wait. He's my fucking cousin." The manager squirms and nods in the guy's direction.

"He called me this afternoon." He licks his lips. "He didn't say where he was going or what he was doing though."

The door to the office opens beside me, and I tug the fucker in my arms back. Tia rushes into the room with Cole right behind her. Her eyes dart from mine to Finn's in question. "Do you know where he is?"

I give my head a shake.

"Can neither of you follow simple instructions?" Finn snaps.

"No." Tia crosses her arms over her chest.

"I cleared it with Owen." Cole shrugs.

"Sure you did." Finn rolls his eyes. "Take over here." He kicks the dude on the floor, and Cole springs into action and flips the guy onto his stomach and kneels on his back, pulling both hands behind him and holding him in place.

Then Finn steps forward, he tucks his gun behind his back, and flicks open his penknife, and it gleams under the light, adding to the increasing tension in the room. "Put your hands flat on your desk." His voice is dark, deadly.

Panic hits the manager, and his chest rises at a frantic speed, then his eyes flick around all of us, as if pleading for help, and sweat rolls down his cheeks. "Wh-what are you going to do?"

Finn stares at his blade, moving it in one direction, then the other, his gaze unwavering before he pulls his attention back to the squirming piece of shit. "I'm going to slice your fingers off one by fucking one."

"Do we really have time for this shit?" I spit out, desperate for answers rather than torturing someone for kicks.

"We do." Finn smiles toward me, and I swear I shudder at his crazed expression.

"Okay, okay listen. I swear he didn't tell me anything useful."

"What did he say?" Finn tilts his head. "Word for word."

"He . . . he said. He said something about he was taking a trip down memory lane."

“That it?” Finn asks as he takes a hold of the guy’s wrist, the blade within an inch of his fingers. “Yes. That’s it. I swear that’s it.”

My mind works over his words, unable to grasp the meaning behind them.

“I know where he is.” Tia’s voice is faint, and as I turn to face her, I’m struck by her ashen expression. “I know where he is,” she says louder this time, but the sound of her crippled voice has fear lancing through my chest, searing it so deep I’m worried there’s no coming back from it.

Cole stares back at her with hope in his eyes. “Where?”

“He’s in hell, Cole.” Her tone is laced in certainty. “He’s in literal hell.” The way she whispers the latter has my body curling tight. Anger, fear, and darkness consumes me, and without realizing it, the life in my hands diminishes, and it isn’t until he sags that I realize I killed him. Releasing his body, he slumps to the floor in a heap.

The manager moves to stand, but Finn moves quicker and slices his throat without hesitation, letting him fall to his desk in a stream of blood. Then, without warning, he whips out his gun from behind his back, aims, and pulls the trigger, and brain matter splatters onto the floor where the lifeless body beneath Cole slumps.

He turns toward us. “Let’s go get your guy.”

I only hope whatever trauma Lucas is enduring, he’s able to come back from, because we need him.

He’s ours.

Always has been, always will be.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-FOUR



LUCAS

My head spins with dizziness, nausea, and unwelcome nostalgia as I scan over the familiar room. Dust now coats every surface, the same green carpet seems darker than it once did, and cobwebs hang from the ceiling. There's no television or DVD player playing out the porn that was on repeat, but the same furniture is still here. The table and couch. I grimace at the reminder.

The scent of the room invades my nostrils, and I swallow back the bile building, creeping up from my stomach, through my chest and clogging in my throat, making me wince at the intensity to keep it at bay.

"Took me a minute to recognize you." His thick accent fills the room. I've tried and failed for years to eradicate it from my memory. He blows out a cloud of smoke from where he sits on the couch, his thick legs open, waiting. He hasn't changed a damn bit. Only, his skin is more weathered and his eyes crueler, if that's possible.

I grind my teeth to rein in my growing temper as my hands wrestle with the cable ties behind my back.

The sick fuck chuckles. "You're going nowhere. Where the fuck you gonna go?" He swings his arm out toward the staircase, knowing I'm

incapacitated, or so he thinks.

My hands are restrained behind my back but I'm able to reach down to my tied ankles and pull my knife from my sock, then as I glare back at Viggo, I slice through the cable tie with a well-practiced ease that I'm grateful to Jace for teaching me. I wonder if he realized that one day I'd find myself in a position to need the skill. Shaking my head of the thought, I listen on in disgust when Viggo licks his thick lips as though I'm his next meal.

"As you're aware, I normally like to fuck those a lot younger than you, but for old times' sake I can make an exception." His slimy smile spreads over his face, exposing the gold tooth at the front, and I realize how I'd love to extend that smile, all the way up to his thick ears. I keep my knowing smile at bay, biding my time. "You sucked cock good as a kid. You get any better?" He raises an eyebrow, as though expecting me to answer, but instead, I smile back at him manically, making his eyebrows furrow. Instead of him being baited, he sits forward, stubbing his cigarette out on the armrest with his thick fingers lined in the chunky gold rings, and rests his elbows on his knees to stare down at me on the floor. "You as good as that woman of yours?"

Fire flares through my bloodstream, and a surge of violence threatens to erupt. My nostrils flare as I try in vain to diminish my growing need for vengeance.

His intentions toward me, I can handle. I always could.

But she's my weakness, my greatest weakness of all.

And I just declared it.

He throws his head back on a laugh, knowing he hit his mark before his stern gaze finally settles on me once again. "Maybe I'll film it." I raise my chin and narrow my eyes.

"Yeah, maybe I'll do just that. Film it, like old times." My eyes widen, and my teeth ache from holding back the venom desperate to fire back at him. He stands to his feet, peering down at me kneeling at his feet. "Then I'm going to make sure I film it as I kill you." He pulls his belt from behind his back, dropping it to the floor.

Like old times.

Only this time, I'm not an innocent boy. I'm not broken and defenseless.

I'm stronger, I'm more of a man than he will ever be, and more importantly, I'm armed.

Not just with the knife she provided for my security, but with a lifetime of poison in my veins that I'm about to extinguish.

Every part of my fear, fury, terror, and trauma is about to become unleashed, it's about to become my greatest shield.

I'm about to make it brutal.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER
TWENTY-FIVE



LUCAS

He pops open the button to his pants, pulls down his fly with his thick, ring-covered fingers, and my eyes scrunch closed, willing away the assault of the memories trying to invade my mind, determined to stay focused.

“Open them fucking eyes while you choke on my thick cock, you little prick. Remember to say, ‘Thank you, sir.’” My eyes snap open at his pet name, and as he pulls his phone from inside his pant pocket, he’s unaware that in that moment he’s lost control of the entire situation. Not reading the room, his eyes go wide and his mouth falls open as I move so quick, barely a grunt escapes his lips.

My feet and hands are freed, and I use the freedom to pull his legs from beneath him, then I slash the back of his Achilles, making him scream out in agony, before quickly throwing him onto his stomach where I press my knee into his spine. I grab the belt he discarded to the floor and wrap it with ease around his face, wedging it in his mouth and preventing him from being able to speak. My lip curls up in satisfaction at knowing how he’s at

my mercy. I can treat him as I please; punish him, torture him, and maim him as I please.

He's all fucking mine, and I intend to draw every ounce of life out of him like he tried to take mine from me.

He may have broken me as a child, but my family fixed me. They became the glue to my insanity, showed me how to love, and gave me their devotion, and when this all ends, so will the secrets and lies.

"I'm going to destroy you inch by motherfucking inch, you sadistic fuck, and when the life drains from your eyes, I'll fuck my girl in your blood, and for old times' sake, I'll film it." I unbuckle my own belt, then tug it from around my waist. With deft movement, I have his wrists tied behind his back and I tie it to the belt behind his head, holding him in place. He's unable to stand now and his movements are constricted, filling me with satisfaction.

I snatch the phone off the ground, ignoring the throbbing pain in my head from my sudden movement, then position the camera toward him on the floor.

My feet have pins and needles in them from being tied together, so I use the opportunity to circle the piece of shit, like a predator stalking its prey, while reveling in his vulnerable position. My knife feels like a Samurai sword in my hand. This small blade, this small piece of wood and metal, is my lifeline.

It saved me on more than one occasion and gave me the courage and strength to see each day through, knowing that inevitably it would bring me back to her, and now it will grant us our freedom.

Funny how this very room, where my worst fears were created, a doorway to a dark existence, will become the doorway to his hell.

He grumbles and fidgets, unintelligible words spilling from his restrained mouth, and I laugh at the irony. How in the blink of an eye someone's life can change so epically.

I kneel beside him, and his eyes widen, filling me with a power I've never felt before. Only when I control Cole and Tia does this feeling ever come close.

Using the knife, I press it against his cheek, sending a flash of panic through his eyes. A fine line of blood tracks down toward the belt, but the slice in his skin is shallow. Still, my intention is clear, the power to cut him

deeper, to slice the skin from his body when I deem necessary. I have the control now, I wield the power to cause the pain, and I intend to use it.

I spring to my feet and stride toward a familiar broken cabinet, pulling the door open. My shoulders relax when I find an axe, and picking it up, it feels heavier than it should. I wonder if this is the weight of a small boy protecting the girl from their foster father, a drunken story told to me by Jace, in one of many of his heartbroken nights that molded him into Rage.

Viggo shuffles on the floor, as if trying to escape me, and I laugh mockingly. “You’re going nowhere. Where the fuck you gonna go?” I taunt, repeating the very words he said to me only minutes ago.

A whine leaves his throat, and I smile toward the camera as I raise the axe into the air with ease. Bringing it down on his ankle, my pupils flare at the tortured, muffled scream of the sick fuck that haunted our dreams.

“In complete and utter devotion,” I mumble while thinking of Tia.

OceanofPDF.com

RAGE

Wild unrestrained fury builds like a hurricane inside me, an uncontrollable force fixated on becoming unleashed at those who threaten to harm us.

Threaten to harm my girl.

My daughter.

Lucas.

Our family.

A touch of warmth spreads through me, and I glance down at Thalia's small hand resting on my thigh. The tension in the car is multiplying by the minute as we race toward our old foster home. A place known only for pain.

"Try to stay in control, Jace." Her soft-spoken words send a small flash of guilt through me as my temple throbs and my fists clench and unclench with the need to expel my demons.

“I can’t,” I say through clenched teeth.

She exhales as if dejected, and I hate the disappointment behind her action, the disappointment in me.

“I’m trying,” I bite out.

I turn my head from staring out of the front window to face her, and instantly, my resolve weakens. “I’ll try harder,” I add, to which she nods, then I turn back toward the familiar streets.

Cole’s leg bounces uncontrollably from the passenger seat, and he switches between scrubbing his hand over his head with a deep sigh and chewing on his fingernails. The anxiety radiating from him in waves, threatening to drown us all.

“We’re not far, five minutes out.” Finn motions toward the satnav in what is meant to be a reassuring comment, but I know better than him, of course. I know we are three minutes out.

As a child, I knew the time it took to walk, run, and cycle back to the house before Thalia to save her from Martin’s wrath. As a teenager and adult, I knew the time it took to drive to the house that caused me the heartbreak in a desperate need to be with her.

So, as we turn down the next street, I know we are one minute out to saving my brother, not two like the satnav predicts.

“When we get there, I’ll check the place out first.” Finn glances in the rearview mirror, no doubt attempting to instruct me. But he can go fuck his plans, all bets are off.

I’ll do whatever it takes to get my brother back.

I’m about to slay our nightmares once and for all.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-SIX



TIA

I squeeze my eyes closed, attempting to block out the memories of the last time I was on this very street.

At sixteen years old, I was rescued by police, transferred into social services, then moved into a foster placement with a new identity.

It pained me to be detached from Jace, but for me and my baby to live without fear of being discovered, I had no choice.

During my police interviews, I learned that Martin was from a prominent family with access to wealth. This shocked me, as looking at the guy you never would have guessed it.

Knowing what I know now, that Mrs. Lancaster is his biological mother, I can only imagine she kept him a secret, that his existence was not one she shouted about, hence her reason to have her date of birth changed on government documents.

I wonder if that occurred before or after his arrest? Distancing herself as far from her son's charges as possible.

She was intent on making sure nobody would make the connection between the two.

Her determination to win custody of Harper now makes even more sense; she genuinely thought her son was Harper's father, as we all did until we discovered otherwise in a turn of events none of us ever saw coming.

The car slows as we approach from a few houses down, and before I know what's happening, Jace has opened the car door and thrown himself out, barely keeping upright as he runs toward the house. "Shit!" Finn spits out. "Goddamn motherfucker!" He slams his hand onto the steering wheel in anger.

My heart rate picks up when Jace disappears through the overgrown garden.

"Please." I whimper. I'm not even sure what I'm begging for at the point.

For Jace's safety, for Lucas's well-being, for it all to end.
Once and for all.

OceanofPDF.com

COLE

Adrenaline surges through me as Finn slams on the brakes and pulls two handguns from beneath his seat. “She good with one?” he asks me, cocking an eyebrow.

“She is.” Tia leans forward, snatching the gun from Finn and making him chuckle. He doesn’t need to know she barely knows how to use one. Lucas has recently been giving her lessons. Another secret we keep from Jace, knowing he’d throw a fit if he thought she was around weapons.

“Owen, how far out are you?” Finn asks into the car’s intercom system.

“At least twenty-five minutes.”

Finn nods as if Owen can see him.

“You left a fucking shitshow back at the club. Luca is on the warpath,” he grumbles.

“Oops.” Finn winks at me, then ends the call. “You ready?” He glances over his shoulder toward Tia, and my eyes follows his.

She trembles as she stares out of the window toward the garden where Jace has disappeared, and her hand fumbles with the gun. I can’t help but wonder if this is a good idea, taking her with us, back to where all her demons lie in wait.

As if hearing my thoughts, her head snaps toward me and she lifts her chin and straightens her shoulders. “I got this.” Confidence oozes from her, and not for the first time since meeting her, my chest fills with pride. She’s a force to be reckoned with, a true survivor, and with us by her side, I know we can conquer anything.

“Let’s do this.” I nod with determination.

We open our car doors in unintentional unison. Finn’s eyes narrow as he takes in the quiet street. While Tia bounces on the balls of her feet, glancing at me for direction, I can’t help but reach out and drag her toward me, kissing the top of her head and inhaling her coconut scent in a move originally made to give her strength but me being the one to find it empowering.

Finn pulls out his toothpick, pointing it toward a run-down house that looks a lot different from when Jace had me driving over here in search of Tia years ago. “That the place?”

Tia clears her throat and steps back from me, disconnecting us and leaving me with a cold absence I long her to fill again.

I know it’s her way of showing us she’s strong on her own, but I want to stand with her hand in mine, being the strength for one another. “Yeah, that’s the one.”

“You want front or back?” His question startles me, and it takes me a moment to figure out the true meaning behind it.

“Jesus fucking Christ.” He drags a hand over his already messy head, then points toward the property. “The house, do you want to go in through the front door or the back door.”

I broaden my shoulders. “The front.” With the reckless way Jace flew out the car, I know he won’t have second-guessed his arrival, he’ll have gone in through the front, and with that in mind, that’s exactly where I’m headed too.

“Right. I got the back covered,” he confirms, and without a second glance, he takes off, running toward the house with me and Tia following

swiftly through the gate behind him.

Finn ducks low behind an overgrown bush, then signals for us to head toward the front door while he scans the house, the gun in his hand, prepared to protect us.

Tia stays glued to my back as we rush across the front lawn and up the broken steps toward the wooden porch.

She stiffens as we approach the open door, and I don't know whether it's from being back here, or the fact we're closer to the guys. I repress a shiver at the thought they could and may very well be hurt, and I wonder once again if it's a good idea having her here with us.

She senses my hesitation as always, and her footing wavers. "I need to do this, Cole." I glance over my shoulder and take her in, her chin is high, her shoulders pulled back, and her jaw set. Her steely demeanor has me nodding in agreement.

Taking a deep breath, I swallow back the ball of anxiety and push open the already ajar door.

The door creaks beneath my touch, and all my senses are on high alert as a muffled whimper sends an icy chill through my body.

"You're not in control anymore, you sick bitch," Jace spits out. I step into the small open living space with Tia tucked behind my back and take in the scene in front of me.

Jace holds Mrs. Lancaster's hair in a tight grip, her face oozing blood, and a gun I don't recognize is on the floor. When I glance back at the wall, there's blood there too, as if Jace smashed her face into the wall, and I only wish I had been there to see it happen.

She's not the perfectly-put-together person she always prided herself on, she looks her age; the dark bags under her eyes emphasize the stress she's under. Her normally well-put-together clothes appear days old and wrinkled, and the carefully crafted makeup she uses to help hide her age is absent, she looks like a disheveled piece of shit who has lost it all.

She has lost it all.

Jace's heavy breaths fill the room, the veins on his neck protrude, and he yells, "It's fucking over! You hear me? Over." His tattooed body coils, and he throws her onto the lone armchair behind him, then his darkened eyes slowly draw up to meet ours.

I take in my brother, his chest heaving as he fights to rein in his temper, his fists clenching beside him, and my heart aches for the torture he feels

inside. "It's over," he repeats, as if talking to himself, as if needing to confirm it.

Tia steps to the side of me, and in a move I don't see coming, she lifts her handgun, and, as if in slow motion, presses her finger to the trigger, sending a bullet through the air toward Mrs. Lancaster, who, unbeknownst to us, had crawled onto the floor toward the gun. She drops with a thud, her demonic eyes wide open and her neck pumping blood furiously onto the withered carpet.

Tia's hand trembles as she holds the gun up where she released the shot. I gently place my hand across her arm, and her taut body sags in relief, and she lowers her gun.

"Where's Lucas?" I ask Jace, frowning.

He shakes his head and bites into his lip, guilt floods his eyes. "I didn't get that far. The hag was waiting for me behind the door." I nod at his words, confirming what I assumed had happened.

A tortured scream reverberates through my soul, and every cell in my body freezes at the sound of Lucas's pain from below us, each of us stilling as the chilling echo pierces through the room.

TIA

Seeing Jace's hands covered in blood from Mrs. Lancaster doesn't scare me, nor does the rage radiating from him, but when he throws her into the armchair and turns his back to her to tell us it's over and she crawls toward the gun with Jace oblivious to her plight, fear grips me. I don't even have a chance to contemplate my next move as I step to the side of Cole and aim at her head.

My aim is shitty and off, and the bullet fires through her neck in a move that could have been considered a success if it wasn't for me aiming for her forehead. Still, she drops to the floor with a strangled sound that I relish in, and blood pools around her in an instant.

Jace's frantic gaze finds mine, and the tension in his coiled body eases.

Cole gently lowers my arm, and the warmth of his touch allows me to breathe again, giving me the time to take in the scene before me.

A shudder works over my body as I scan the familiar room. I squeeze my eyes closed at the memory of being carried from the house by paramedics.

“Where’s Lucas?” Cole asks, and Mrs. Lancaster is forgotten as my pulse races with uncertainty.

“I didn’t get that far. The hag was waiting for me behind the door.” Cole nods in understanding.

A gut-wrenching scream comes from the basement, and my heart freefalls at the pain in Lucas’s tone. We all still, as if frozen to the spot and unable to contemplate what is happening to him.

Movement at the door catches my eye, Jace’s too, then he spins around and widens his stance as if to protect us, while Cole pulls me behind him.

“Your man has it all under control. Let me know when you’re done here.” Finn strolls past us and heads through the front door, and I glance at his retreating form in confusion.

Jace moves first, but I’m quicker. I need to see Lucas for myself, I need the reassurance, because that scream, that scream did not sound like he’s in control.

It sounded barbaric, and the thought of his terror brings bile to my mouth.

My feet move toward the basement, and a rush of apprehension makes my footing waver as I reach the basement door.

The very door that held the key to my nightmares, his too.

I only hope the demons behind the door are not causing him to drown in his darkness.

But if they are, we will be the ones to drown with him.

I find myself whispering the familiar words I once said to him, “Maybe we can drown in our darkness together.”

Then I press down the handle and open the door to hell.

CHAPTER
TWENTY-SEVEN



LUCAS

Finn slips away from the shadows, knowing I have control of the situation, but I didn't miss the shock on his face at the sight before him before he shrugged his shoulder and left me to it. I can only assume my family are safe, as he would have stated otherwise, and I sure as hell wouldn't waste my time here any longer.

When daylight streams down from the door he just left from, my gaze snaps toward it in confusion. The throb of the vein in my temple lessens with each step she takes, while her eyes widen as she takes in the room.

I glance around, taking in the scene she's witnessing, the room is a bloodbath, there's no doubt about it. The walls are painted in the splattering of his poisoned blood, like an antidote to my fragile state. The withered carpet is a sea of red, along with his dismembered body parts that I took delight in feeling the scream ripping from my lungs as I tore him apart, limb by limb, nightmare by nightmare.

His dismembered head is without his tongue, a huge cut from ear to ear making me own that maniacal smile of his, instead of him.

His thick fingers and the gold rings I grew to hate as much as him are haphazardly scattered near the basement steps, and I grimace a little

thinking about Tia touching them. When I threw them one by one, I didn't consider where they might land, now I regret that action a little.

My feet remain frozen, and my posture broadens as I bask in the glory of my creation.

Pure brutality paints the room. Pure devotion.

Cole's face comes into view next, and he pales before he scans over my body with wide eyes, as if checking whose blood is coating my clothes. His eyes search mine in a silent conversation, pleading with me to tell him I'm okay, and I gift him with a nod that sends relief flooding through his face.

Jace whistles happily as he strolls down the steps into my newfound haven.

It's amazing what sanctuary you can find in the tortured screams of monsters. Their cries of pain are like flashes of euphoria to my heart.

Each slice of his skin stealing a sliver of torment from my sordid soul. A past that will forever be tarnished but leaving a future brighter than I could ever imagine.

"Lucas, are you okay?" Her soft voice encompasses me, grounds me as always, and like when we were children, our eyes become magnetized, and I get lost in the concern and love that binds us. The tender touch to my cheek is done so with trepidation, like she's wary of me, and I hate it. I place my hand over hers, pressing her warmth against my face. She ignores the blood coating my hand, now coating hers, and her features soften with the love I feel.

"I am now." I answer truthfully as I stare into her eyes fearlessly. "I made it brutal," I bend to whisper into her ear.

She shudders against me at my familiar words, her eyes flare with arousal, and she steps forward, as if allowing me to feel more of her, and suddenly, that's all I want to do. I want to feel her, every part of her, and what better way to feel her than in the depths of our hell now transformed to a place of repentance.

"Lu-Lucas," she breathes out as if sensing my thoughts as her other hand finds the opening to my bloody shirt that exposes my chest. I hiss when her palm rests on my skin and my cock swells with the need to consume her, like she consumes me, while she presses her body against me.

I bend to whisper in her ear, "I need you." Heat flares in her pupils, and her heart rate kicks up against my chest while I sweep my hands down to her ass, squeezing it for emphasis.

“Fucccck. Are we really going to do it here?” I glance toward Cole; he leans back against the bloody table I used to pin Viggo down to slice his ears from his lecherous body. His hand strokes over his jeans, showcasing his thickening cock.

I draw my eyes up to meet his. “We are. What better way to revel in their ruin.” I lift an eyebrow at him, the question hangs in the air. Is he in on this?

His lips lift into his cocky grin, and my cock jumps with joy, knowing he’s always by our side.

“I’m down. I think we need to take the control back, what do you say?” Jace scans over the room, his jaw tightening when his gaze locks with Viggo’s decapitated head. “Just cover his fucking face, I don’t want to see it as I come.” He turns his back to Viggo with a grimace.

Cole chuckles and grabs a discarded blanket from the corner of the room, and a memory of her shrouding me in it to cover me as a form of protection makes my body jolt. It’s not the same as the one Tia covered me with. Then she kisses my jawline. “I remember,” she whispers, and I gasp at her admission, relieved that she remembers me. Among all the bad memories, she remembers me.

Love pools in her blue eyes, it seeps from her touch, burning beneath my skin and igniting a wildfire of exhilaration that causes my cock to spurt in unnatural excitement.

My lips slam down on hers, and they’re feral as they clash with her teeth. I tug her lip into my mouth, then suck away the sting at my assault. Our tongues fight for control as our hands work our clothes from our skin. She scrambles to unbutton my shirt, and I pull her T-shirt over her head, missing the taste of her mouth while we disconnect, only to slam our mouths together again just as fierce.

She works my pants open with well-practiced ease, tugging my blood-stained pants down while I fumble to push her shorts to the ground. I lift her ass and her shorts fall to the floor while I push her against the wall.

From the corner of my eye, I witness Cole popping the buttons of his jeans open and sliding his hand into his boxers. My mouth waters as his eyes close in pleasure at his touch, and I groan into Tia’s mouth in approval.

I smack my cock against her pussy, and a gasp escapes her. “Who does this pussy belong to?” I rub the tip of my swollen cock up and down her

slit, relishing the clench of her thighs wrapped around me on each upstroke. “Who?” I ask again, watching her lips part as she struggles to answer.

“You. All of you.” She pants out, and I slide my cock inside her, delighting in her wetness enveloping me.

“Lucas, please . . .” She moans deep in her throat. Her head hits the wall each time I thrust back inside her harder, enjoying the way her pussy fights to keep me inside her.

She arches her back, shoving her tits against me, and when warmth drips down my chest, I realize what she’s begging me for.

Releasing my grip on one of her hips, I guide her heavy tit into my mouth, and my eyes roll back as her milk floods me, an aphrodisiac to my crazed need for her, my hips work faster, harder.

“Oh fuck,” Cole groans. “I’m going to come.”

I release her nipple and tilt my head toward him, my gaze locking onto his solid cock. “Don’t you fucking dare!” I spit out and he stops. His thumb and forefinger are covered in the blood from the table and my balls ache painfully at the action. He squeezes the tip of his cock, allowing his precum to drip over his fingers, and the sight nearly has me coming.

“Jesus,” Tia mumbles, and her pussy clenches around me as her mouth parts. She’s watching something from over my shoulder, and when I turn to see what has grabbed her attention, my balls draw up in ecstasy.

Jace stands over Viggo’s decimated torso, aggressively pumping his cock, and the anger and hatred bleed from him, like the sea of blood consuming the room.

“Fucking take it, you piece of shit,” he grits out while I grind my hips into Tia.

The room fills with an all-consuming air of need, a need to regain the control we once lost.

Tia clamps her fingers on her nipple, plucking at it with sharp tweaks that send a deluge of milk flowing between us. I groan as my gaze darts between her, Cole, and Jace. My mind frantically trying not to miss the bloody filth I’ve created.

Then she throws her head back against the wall as she convulses around my cock, and the pressure sends a potent surge of need mixed with possession rocketing through me. “Come!” I bite out as my orgasm hits me hard, forcing my body to become a trembling mass with the intensity of my cum shooting into her pussy. Black spots dance in front of my eyes, and my

hand snaps out to stop myself from swaying from the most electrifying orgasm that momentarily blinds me.

Our rugged pants fill the room, the smell of copper invades my nostrils as if my senses have been reignited under her touch, and suddenly I want so much more of it. I need to recreate my memories, washing away the old with new, turning my nightmares into a conscious reality.

I lift Tia, my cock still buried inside her, and it twitches as I wade through his blood, bypassing his severed ankle as I do.

Cole meets us at the table, his fingers coated in a perfect blend of blood and cum, but his cock is still hard in his hand. Jace strides toward us, the pulse on his temple throbs violently, and he licks his lips as I lay Tia down on the tabletop. Then I drag her farther down the table, and she slides down with ease through the blood. The thought is intoxicating.

Jace stares down at her face, with his cock exposed above her head.

We surround her, honor her.

Possess her.

“We possess you, Tia. Like you possess us.”

“Possess?” She arches an eyebrow.

“Possess,” I confirm with a hard thrust of my cock.

“Possession is just another word for our devotion, beauty,” Cole confirms.

Jace bends down, he gently kisses her forehead. “Brutally devoted, baby.”

He then raises himself, and she tilts her head back to accept his cock into her mouth.

His eyes flutter closed, and a guttural groan leaves his throat. “Our possession.”

CHAPTER
TWENTY-EIGHT



LUCAS

The table rocks beneath us, but I don't have the capacity to consider its stability as I power inside her pussy with vigor.

"I want you pregnant, Tia. Fuck, I want you pregnant with our baby again." Cole groans while darting his mouth from one nipple to the other like a starved animal, and he guzzles the milk from her heavy tit.

Her back arches off the table, and her pussy is so tight from her orgasm that my thrusts become difficult. I wrap my hand around her throat, delighting in the blood now coating her skin, then I glance toward Jace for approval, acutely aware of not wanting to make him uncomfortable with anything I'm doing. His eyelashes flutter open, and his Adam's apple slowly slides down his throat, then he gifts me with a nod, and I tighten my grip around her throat.

His cock bulges, then retreats with sharp deep thrusts, and I swear I could combust. I grab Cole's head in the palm of my bloody hand and shove it toward her tit, encouraging him to drink from her. The control I have and the sound of the slapping of our skin sends pure liquid pleasure zipping up my spine.

Cole's hand moves over his cock faster and faster, the pounding of the table leg against the floor and the groans spilling from Jace adds to my exhilaration.

"Fuck, such a slut for us, baby. Such a fucking slut." Jace's tone drips in lust.

"Mm. Beauty, you taste so good on my tongue. Such a good girl letting me play in your milk."

The sheer exhilaration of her body smeared with the blood of the one that hurt her is a sight to behold. I've never seen anything look more dark, alluring, and precious; she's simply spectacular. A darkened bloodlust angel.

"Fuck, yes. Bite her nipple, Cole. Leave your fucking mark on her. Show her who possesses her."

"Ahhh," she gurgles around Jace's cock, and the vibrations must be too much for him to bear.

"Fuck." He grunts. "That's it, fucking take my cum." He leans over her and spits on her face, then he shocks the hell out of me when he pulls out of her mouth, drags his cock through his saliva, then begins fucking his hand. "Gonna wash away their fucking touch, Tia."

She attempts to nod, but my grip around her throat doesn't allow it.

"Keep that fucking mouth open for me." He uses his thumb to widen her mouth. "Come deep inside her, Lucas. Fill her with our baby." His words set me off and send Cole into a frenzy, his body tightens, the muscles on his neck protrude, and I move the hand from the back of his head to feel him too while holding her throat in place. Both of them under my control. With one hand around his throat and one around hers, my hips buck with wild abandon. "Daddy's fucking a baby into you for being a good girl," I murmur tenderly, a contrast to my feral actions.

"Shit." Jace's body stills as his hot thick cum pulsates over her face, splashes into her open mouth, and coats my fingers around her throat. The action spurs my orgasm and hers too, and when Cole lets out a strangled moan, I know he's coming in unison.

In that moment of pleasure, my mind separates the past from the present and creates a void so wide I've no choice but to accept the here and now as my entity. My all.

As I fill my girl with the aid of my brothers, I do so while every fiber of my being is reawakened in a way I never felt before.

I finally feel free.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER
TWENTY-NINE



COLE

My hand fills with my hot cum, and my eyes roll in pure satisfaction. With her peaked nipple in my mouth, I flick my piercing over it again, reveling in the warm milk that sprays out as an effect of my deliberate coaxing, I pump her tit for more, loving the strangled whimpers that escape her while Lucas grips her neck in a punishing action he uses to show his control, but he's holding back slightly given her recent kidnapping, and I can't help but be enamored at how even in the throes of his pain and the psychological trauma, he's still protecting her.

His hand tightens on my throat as he comes, and I fucking love it. My cock pulsates painfully.

Slowly, my body relaxes as my orgasm slips away. Lucas releases my throat, and I release her nipple with a pop. Lucas watches me with lust filled eyes, his pupils still dilated, like he didn't just blow his load inside her, but more that he can go again, and my body heats at the thought. He licks his lips, and I swear I feel it in my cock. He darts his gaze away, as if knowing where my thoughts have descended.

I lean forward and place a kiss on Tia's lips. She tastes salty, and I swipe the cum from my lips as I pull back and tuck my spent cock into jeans.

“Ewww, brother.” Glancing up to face Jace, I laugh at his scrunched-up nose, the way disgust rolls off him is nothing new, but it’s comical how he picks and chooses his moments to be freaked out by the fact nothing is off-limits for me.

Pushing him further, I swipe Tia’s face and make a languorous show of licking the cum off my finger, and my piercing dances over the tip. Feeling the heat radiate from Lucas has my chest puffing out in pride. He wants me, he just doesn’t know how to deal with those feelings.

“Jesus, Cole! Did you really need to do that? You realize you almost ruined the whole damn thing for me, right?” Jace grumbles while tucking his cock away.

Tia moves to sit up, and I help as she takes in the room, and her eyes widen. Heat travels up Lucas’s face, and he fidgets with his bloody shirt. I’m not sure what he expects to see, but Tia has never given us anything other than her devotion.

Then she clears her throat. “Well, he’s not coming back from that, is he?” She breaks out into an awkward chuckle, and Lucas’s shoulders relax, the tension vanished in a split second.

Jace helps Tia off the table, then he removes his T-shirt, tugging it over her head and guiding her arms through the sleeves as if she’s a child. Blood covers her, but she wears it like it’s a trophy.

“We ready?” He looks to me, then over at Lucas.

Lucas delivers a firm nod. “Absolutely.”

There’s an air of freedom about him as he walks hand in hand with Tia up the stairs. His shirt remains open. Free.

Like a weight has been lifted not only from his shoulders but his mind too.

What was once a permanent tension in his face has now been erased, and the darkness in his eyes seems lighter somehow as he smiles down at Tia with a softness I never knew existed in him.

I stride up the stairs behind them, leaving behind the dismembered corpse of a man who not only stole the innocence of others but stole their futures too.

Lucas took his future back and made it ours.

He glances at the hag on the floor, a sneer to his lips as he marches past her and out the front door.

“Took you guys a while.” Finn pushes off the side of the porch and throws his toothpick to the floor, then he scans over each of us before he releases a low whistle, and his eyes dance with jest. “You really are blood brothers now, huh?”

Jace scoffs. “Funny,” he says, with a monotone voice that makes me chuckle.

He jumps off the last step of the porch before spinning around to face the house, then stares back at it before turning to face Finn. “Can you burn it to the ground?”

The emotion in his voice is evident, and he does nothing to try and hide it.

Tia releases Lucas’s hand and hugs Jace from behind. His hands close over hers, and Finn watches the interaction between them. “Sure.” His lip curls up at the side. “I know just the guy. Got myself a little fire starter at home.” He winks as if we should know what he’s talking about, then spins on his heel, tugs his phone from his jacket pocket, and then gestures for us to follow him toward his car.

“You guys ready?” I ask as I face my family.

They turn at the same time, and as our gazes clash, we break out into a smile.

With a promise written on each of our faces.

A promise of brutal devotion.

CHAPTER
THIRTY



TIA

We were silent on the way home, each lost in our own thoughts, each of us feeling like the heavy weight of the burden of our darkness slowly lifted.

My hands sit in my lap, coated in blood from the man who took so much from me and Lucas, and then the path created affected Jace, and inevitably, Cole along the way too.

Little did Cole know when he walked into that bar over a year ago that my heart belonged to others, it always would, even though I wasn't aware of it at the time.

Our darkness forged our paths, and in it came the brutality of our love for one another. A love that isn't understood by many but only makes us stronger, binding us and making us a force to be reckoned with.

The car turns into the underground parking lot, and Finn raises his hand to one of the STORM security guards.

At some point during the journey, I vaguely heard him say Jace could collect the girls from their house later, but I was too lost in my thoughts to consider when later might be and when they were taken to his and Angel's

home. It's amazing to feel the trust and loyalty within their family becoming a part of mine too.

"Come on, baby, let's get you cleaned up." Jace lifts me from the back seat of the car into his arms and cradles me against his bare chest as if I'm broken. The truth is, as long as my girls and men are okay, I'm unbreakable. He places a tender kiss on my head, and I nestle into his neck as he walks us into the elevator, followed by Cole and Lucas.

Each of them painted in the blood of a monster, each of them depicting a dark avenger born in blood to protect me from the depths of hell, because there's not a doubt in my mind if Lucas didn't exist in that basement, I would have been a substitute. Martin was saving me as his ultimate prize, but I don't doubt he'd have handed me over if the pressure was on to save himself.

He strides through the apartment and into his bedroom, both of my men follow behind him, he kicks open the bathroom door, then slides me down the front of his rigid body. His exposed chest red with blood creating a veil over his tattoos. I trace my finger over the name of our children, and my chest swells with pride, with appreciation at the lengths my men go to show their loyalty to us.

My fingers find his sharp jawline, and his breath comes out in a gentle hiss. His eyes transfixed on mine, filled with a power of love so strong it feels crippling somehow, and my breath hitches at the thought. The atmosphere around us is heavy, filled with a bloodthirsty strength, a sexual intoxication, a need.

Only the sound of the running water snaps me from our stare, and the sound of clothes falling to the floor has me stepping back and swinging into action. I lift Jace's T-shirt off me, hold it out, then let it drop to the floor. Jace's pupils flare at the action, and he licks his lips like a predator.

I turn my back and add extra sway to my hips as I step into the shower

"Fuckkkk." Cole bites his fist, and I smirk, then he steps inside behind me, both of us careful to stay out of the splash of the water.

I watch Jace through the steamy glass window as Lucas steps inside too and pushes my hair off my shoulder where he places a loving kiss that sends a shiver down my spine and causes his lips to curl up in satisfaction. "Tease him, Tia. Open your folds to him and tease him." My pulse races at the thought.

He peppers kisses down the column of my throat while Cole holds his hands on either side of my head, resting them on the glass becoming steamier by the second. "Fuck yes," Cole grunts.

Then he grinds his solid cock into the ridge of my ass, causing arousal to pool between my thighs.

My fingers delve swiftly between my legs, separating my folds under Jace's darkened gaze.

"Show him my cum, Tia. Show him Daddy's cum." Lucas's gravelly voice has me moaning in pleasure as I slide my fingers inside of me, and my lips part at the warmth of our combined arousal. "Good girl. Such a good girl for Daddy." Lucas's deep voice has a velvety caressing edge to it, making me squirm in anticipation.

Cole kneads my tits, and warmth pulsates from my nipples. "Fuck, beauty, look at you leaking for me." His tone is full of wonderment, full of desire and a promise of more.

Lucas tugs on my skin, and I wince at the bite of pain. "Taste us, Tia. Show him how good we taste together."

With my focus on Jace's hooded eyes, I bring my fingers to my lips, slipping them inside slowly and reveling in the groan that leaves Cole and the twitch of Lucas's cock against my thigh.

"Fuck. Do we taste good, little girl? Do we taste good together?" he rasps.

I gift him with a nod, and then I make a languorous show of repeating the action of collecting our cum and licking the remnants from my fingers in a seductive display, purely to taunt Jace. His nostrils flare, then, like a coiled viper, he snaps, kicking his boots off and dropping his jeans and boxers in one fell swoop.

He strides into the shower, and before I even have a chance to blink, he shoves past a smirking Lucas, then yanks my head back by my hair, causing my eyes to sting at his rough touch.

"You want to be our cum slut, Tia?" The veins on his entire being protrude with such ferocity they threaten to combust. "Get on your fucking knees," he snaps, and I scramble to the floor under his dark command without question.

COLE

Watching Jace control Tia has my cock as hard as a fucking rock again, and I groan in awe at her submissiveness. She's so in tune with each of us, and the way she can bend to comply is a turn-on for us all.

Her knees find the tiled floor, and instantly, she looks to Jace for further instruction. "Good girl," he coos, then he tucks strands of her hair behind her ear. "Now you're going to suck my brothers' cocks like the cum hungry whore that you are. Do you understand?" He lifts an eyebrow, and she tries to nod, but his strong grip barely allows it.

A whimper escapes her, and she fidgets. I can only imagine her clit is pulsating with a need to be toyed with, and my lip curls into a smile thinking about how needy our girl is for us.

The warmth of her mouth encompassing the head of my cock, teasing my piercing, and her tongue sliding into my slit to lick the precum out, has my back slamming against the tiled wall and my eyes rolling to the back of my head. "Fuckkkk."

"Good girl," Jace grunts, and under a heavy-lidded gaze, I watch him use her hair to direct her head up and down my cock, guiding her, controlling her.

Lucas watches on beside me, stroking his firm hand over his steel length.

The blood draining down his body with the spray of the shower makes him look dark and deadly, a reminder of our filthy bloodbath as it descends down his sculpted body like a paradox of savagery and avenger.

He's washing away his sins. Ours too.

Her tongue traces the thick vein that protrudes my cock, the one that travels from my balls and all the way up to the tip.

"Fuck," I grunt when her tongue flicks over the barbell again, playing with it, and Jace chuckles in response to my heightened pleasure.

"That's it. Play with him, Tia." His stare is transfixed on the tip of my cock, and the way her lips suckle it into her mouth greedily and the vibrations of her moans have my teeth grinding in desperate need to stave off my impending orgasm.

"Give our brother some attention. Show him how much you love the taste of him in your mouth too."

I leave her lips with an audible pop, and I refuse to lavish any attention on my cock, knowing I'd come if I did.

Watching her take Lucas into her mouth has my own mouth watering. The way his eyes flutter closed and the tension drains from his face as Jace guides her head up and down him at a punishing speed, has my hand snapping out to his arm, and without thinking, I tug him in front of me, and he stumbles, but I want to witness the euphoria on his face when he comes.

I want to see him give in to the ultimate pleasure up close.

"Fuck, yeah. Use them both, baby. Taste both my brothers." Jace pants.

Her hand fists my cock as she guides me once again into her mouth, and I glance down at the small space between us to watch her. With one hand on each cock, she pumps us together and with a combination of saliva and precum dripping from her lips, oozing onto the tiled floor and coating her chin, she takes us one at a time into her greedy mouth.

My body craves more, and it screams at her to take us both at the same time, for me to feel him against me in her warmth.

As if hearing my thoughts, the tip of his cock hits mine, and I close my eyes as I struggle to rein in my desire. I lose myself at the feel of her tongue and the softness of his skin against my own.

A warm breath tickles my face, forcing me to snap my eyes open in surprise at Lucas's proximity, and his breath hitches when our gazes lock. Like magnets, we stare at one another, him with his palms splayed out on the tiles behind me, bracing either side of my head, cocooning me in him.

Pure lust hits me square in the balls, and I hiss through gritted teeth, begging with my eyes to touch him, to feel more of him, but I'm scared to do so, terrified I'll push him away and endure the familiar feeling of his regret once again.

I lick my lips, longing for more from him, and he doesn't miss the action, his body tenses, his hands ball into fists, and his chest heaves with a restraint he appears to be struggling with, then he pushes farther into Tia's mouth with a heavy grunt, choking her in the process. It's as if he's desperate to touch me, his pupils are blown, full of want and need. Full of everything I feel.

"Fuck, good girl." Jace continues on in the background, guiding our girl between us while sharing us at the same time. "Come down her throat, let her taste you both."

Lucas's eyes flutter closed, and his body tightens, but I can't look away from the pure unadulterated look of ecstasy on his face. His lips part, his cock twitches, and suddenly, my cock is flooded with his warmth, encouraging me to fill her mouth alongside his. She chokes and gargles, but I know Jace is giving her no choice but to accept us both and our cum.

My stare is unwavering, lost in the man so close to me, I can almost taste his lips against mine. He leans forward, just a little, just a gentle brush of his soft lips against my own, and I sag against the tiles, basking in the glory of his possession, only to have his lips pulled away and my spent cock forgotten when Jace tugs Tia to her feet.

JACE

Watching Thalia take my brothers under my command is the epitome of the control I crave. The same control I fight Lucas for on a regular basis.

But he allowed it tonight, as if he needed someone to control him too, and I wonder if my brother will relinquish more of the power he insists on holding in order to be the man he'd like to become.

As soon as they shoot their load in her mouth, I pull her to her feet and spin her around, her back to me. She gasps as I push her flush against the steaming glass, no doubt the chill hitting her tender nipples, and the thought has my lip curling in delight.

"My turn now, baby," I croon while tracking the ripple of blood still trickling down her perfect body. I kick her legs apart and lift her hips higher to give myself the perfect angle to align my cock with her wet pussy.

With one hand on the back of her head and the other on her hip, I groan as I slam my desperate cock into her with such force her hands smack out in front of her, leaving bloody handprints to streak the glass.

The scene looks symbolic as we wash away our sins while drowning her in our possession.

My thrusts become wilder, more forceful as my fingers tangle deeper in her hair. "You like this, huh?" I grit out as I withdraw from her, the warmth of her pussy begs for me to slam back inside her, so I do. I power into her with vigor, determined to leave my seed deep inside her.

"I'm fucking our baby into you, Thalia." I pant and bask in the glory of the hitch in her whimper, knowing she wants this just as much as me. "Are you going to make me a daddy again?" Fuck I want that, I want that more than anything. There's nothing I love more than to see her swollen with our baby, watching her tits grow to nurture our babies while benefiting in the process of her body's natural development, all for us.

Lucas steps up beside me, and my fingers twitch to bat him away. This is my time, my turn to fill her.

"That's it, you're taking him so well, Tia," he praises, making her pussy clamp around me, and my cock twitches with excitement. "Let him fill you with our baby, like a good girl."

Pleasure zips down my spine, and my balls draw up. *Holy fuck.*

"Give us a baby, like our good girl." His tone is full of lust, making me grunt in response at his words.

My pace grows faster, and her hands slap out on the glass again, as if to try and hold onto something while her pussy convulses. Her body tenses, her head falls forward against the glass, and a breathy moan sends a flurry of steam into the air as she comes on a scream.

"Take my cum, baby. Take. All. My. Fucking. Cum." I grind out each word with reverence as my cock pulsates deep inside her.

Lucas steps forward and trails his finger down a bloody stream of water sliding down her cheek. "Possession is just another word for our devotion, Tia."

Cole steps to the other side of me. "And you possess us, Tia."

"And we possess you," I add on a breathy pant.

"We possess each other," she adds.

CHAPTER
THIRTY-ONE



LUCAS

THREE WEEKS LATER . . .

With my jaw clenched and my shoulders bunched tight, I glance around the table again, briefly taking in Sky's similarities to my girl. Yet she does nothing for my cock, no one has but her. Sky's the epitome of innocence and also dresses like she was born in the wrong era, whereas Tia dresses her age and has an attitude which rivals a teenager's, one who gets my cock hard and makes the punishment all the more rewarding. Then I assess every O'Connell brother, apart from Bren. Con and Finn sit with their legs open, and chuckle like schoolboys at each other's phones, while Oscar's blue eyes are so calculating they appear darker than I know them to be. Cal sits as head of the family, his stressed

demeanor evident with the dark circles below his eyes, tousled hair, and open-collared shirt.

One of the files resting beneath Oscar's hand is my own, and when I handed over the information to him, it made me feel sick, but a part of me was glad to be rid of it. I've spent years of my life shrouded in a lair of darkness, waiting for the moment my happiness would be ripped from me.

As I straighten my shoulders, I glare at Oscar, a strange understanding between us.

He won't dig any deeper than necessary. He doesn't wish to witness the nightmares of a small boy and the way he obsessed over a girl always out of his reach, how he stalked her, watched her from her bed at night, while keeping her location a secret from his brother who he held so dear.

He won't breathe a word about my searches of switching her birth control with pregnancy supplements, he will mention none of it. Because something tells me Oscar O'Connell is more like me than he likes to admit. He likes the control too.

"Is there an update?" Tia asks, pulling me from my visual debrief.

Sky's face lights up. "He's breathing without help, and the doctors are confident he can make a full recovery, it's just going to take time."

"How much time?" Cole sits forward, and his question garners the attention of all the brothers, each of them sitting forward in their seat as if ready to defend Bren. He scrubs a hand over his head. "It's just, we have facilities at the gym he's welcome to use, and I know some amazing physiotherapists you could have access to."

Finn's lip twitches at my brother's insistence on helping. "You're the fucking Chihuahua of the pack, aren't you?" The toothpick in his mouth sits between his teeth as he smiles, and it appears sharklike.

Cole's eyebrows shoot up and his head rears back, stunned at Finn's analogy. "Huh?"

He plucks the toothpick from his mouth and points it toward Jace. "Rottweiler, angry and possessive, needs to be kept on a short lead"—he points it toward Cole—"Chihuahua, happy, attention seeking, desperate to make someone's day."

"You're comparing us to dogs?" Cole's eyes narrow.

"Yep." Then he points the damn pick toward me. "Border collie, diligent, cunning, intelligent." My lip curves at the side.

“I have a Chinese Crested dog, cute as shit,” Con declares, then scrolls through his phone as if he’s about to show us a photo.

“Enough.” Oscar’s voice cuts through the room. “Can we have a constructive conversation, then we can leave.”

Sky’s eyes dart toward his, and her cheeks turn red. “Oscar, don’t be rude. They’re only talking about their pets.” I’m about to open my mouth and correct her, but Oscar puts his hand up to stop me.

His eyes slice to hers. “My pet is at home where it belongs, with a collar around its neck.” His lip turns up as he scans her up and down. Then his cold gaze lands on Tia, making Jace bristle in response. “Now, if we can move on.”

I watch in curious satisfaction as Sky’s mind whirls over his words, she tilts her head to the side and the blank expression on her face is somewhat amusing. “Oscar, you don’t have a . . .”

Oscar shuffles papers on his desk, glances down at his tablet, then addresses me. “I’d like to give you all a summary of the recent turn of events.” He talks over her, not letting her question him on his lack of pet, and I can only imagine he’s referring to his wife, something I’m sure she’d have something to say about.

“Jesus, it’s as if he’s telling you the weather forecast,” Jace grumbles, and Finn grins in response. Something tells me they will get on well.

“My life, you mean? Mine and Sky’s, Lucas’s too,” Tia points out, her jaw tics, and Cole slowly entwines his hand with hers beneath the table.

Oscar sighs heavily. “Among other things. Yes.” He glares back at her, and she stares back just as hard.

“Just cut the shit and let’s get this over with,” Cal spits out.

Oscar clears his throat, grabs a sheet of paper, turns it toward us, then pushes it in our direction. A photo of two young girls stares back at us, and he points to the older-looking child. “Jenny Olska and her sister.” He taps on the toddler’s face. “Anastasia went missing from their foster family.” A lump forms in my throat at the realization that we’re looking at Tia and Sky. Tia licks her lips and steels her shoulders, while Sky’s bottom lip wobbles and her eyes fill with tears. “My research has shown me that somehow you were split, with Sky ending up in the compound, and Tia, you were adopted.”

Tia jolts. “I don’t remember that.”

Oscar nods. “Only for a short while, your adopted family paid good money for you, then you were placed back in care. My thoughts are you were too much trouble and more than they could handle. Either that or they wanted to look like a perfect family temporarily, and when they didn’t need you anymore, they got rid of you.”

Oscar’s blunt words make my teeth grind. He talks as though he’s discussing a transaction at a store, not people’s lives. He’s devoid of any emotion, and that’s coming from someone like me. “You eventually ended up in the same foster home as Jace, with Martin as your foster father.” Tia shivers at the mention of his name. “His mother had him at a young age and brought disgrace to his family. She, herself, placed him in foster care but did see him regularly. When she was older, she married into a political family, her husband becoming Senator Lancaster, and to keep Martin a secret, they disguised her age, knowing her new age would not allow for her to have a son of his age.” I nod along to Oscar’s breakdown, impressed at everything he’s uncovered.

“Her original birth certificate, along with information about a previous investigation into the trafficking of women and children, were kept in a vault within the FBI. The Lancasters, along with Bratva members and a well-known Mafia family named the Carreras are named in those files. It also gave us numerous locations to their warehouses, clubs, and safe houses.”

Jace sits forward in his chair, and his eyes glimmer with vengeance. “When the fuck do we take them out?”

Oscar chokes on a sardonic laugh and shakes his head. “We don’t.”

“This is a part of our lives, and I want to fucking end it. All of it,” he spits back with venom.

“If you’d just allow me to finish before rudely interrupting.” Oscar glares at Jace, until he sits back in his chair with a heavy huff, and the sound of his teeth grinding grates on my nerves. “From what I can gather, Martin barely saw his mother, but when she did, she saw an opening for vulnerable children, and with the knowledge of her husband’s preferences, she used her son and their power to wield a web of protection around them, exploiting children.”

Tia turns to face me, the sadness in her eyes unmistakable, and I want to slay the sick fucks all over again. “I don’t remember seeing her there. Do you?”

“No,” I answer truthfully.

Oscar cuts off our conversation. “When the Lancasters discovered the arrest of Martin and subsequently the birth of Harper, they wanted custody of her, assuming she was their maternal granddaughter. Obviously, they weren’t prepared to outright admit that they’re blood related to a rapist, so they tried other tactics to gain custody of her.”

Tia’s face pales, and Cole draws circles on her hand in a reassuring motion, while Oscar continues on with his breakdown of events.

“Of course, your relationships”—he waves a hand out toward us—“probably made her question Martin’s sudden disappearance. She wanted to take Harper and punish you in the process.” His eyes lock with Tia’s, and the intensity behind them makes me want to pluck them out with my knife. I find my hand in my pocket, stroking over the wood grain for reassurance.

“But Harper’s blood results came back proving she’s mine. How could she not know this?” Jace asks, and I can’t help but be impressed by his quick thinking.

Oscar shrugs. “She could have known and not cared. Maybe in her own head she felt something toward Harper. Or maybe, somehow, she just didn’t know. She’s dead, so we can’t torture an answer from her.” He comments as if we weren’t aware of her death, making my eyebrows knit together and my teeth grind, just how dumb does he think we are? He actually considers himself intelligently superior to us all yet forgets the basics? I’m about to open my mouth and point out we were there, that Tia actually did the deed, but she cuts in.

“So, she was definitely selling me to traffickers?”

“She was, she had a very good deal.” He confirms as if it’s nothing. “A doctor uploaded your certifications of good health to the dark web along with the confirmation of your pregnancy, they were fetching a very good price for both of you.”

My mind whirls with what he said, and Tia’s mouth falls open, her eyes widen. “I’m sorry, what did you just say?”

Oscar sucks in a sharp breath and grinds his jaw from side to side, as if annoyed, while I sit darting my eyes between them both in some out-of-body experience. Euphoria consumes me.

“Did you say she’s pregnant?” Cole asks before Oscar has the chance to repeat his shitty deliverance of news again.

He slowly sits forward, his calculating eyes land on Tia's. "Let me guess, you don't know which one is the father?"

She blinks, still in a stunned-like state. Then she blinks again.

"You're fucking pregnant, baby!" Jace declares, pulling her into his arms and planting a kiss on the top of her head, while she remains frozen in shock.

Slowly the news filters through my bloodstream; she's pregnant. We did it.

I did it.

"You're pregnant," I repeat, a smile graces my lips as I see the joy on my brothers' faces.

"Oh, how wonderful!" Sky claps her hands together and springs up from her seat. "We're going to have our babies in the same year!" She rushes toward Tia and almost knocks her out of her chair.

Tia pulls back from Sky, overwhelmed.

"Sky, give Tia some space to process, she clearly didn't know she was pregnant," Cal asserts, and I'm thankful for it.

Sky practically bounces on her tiptoes in glee back to her chair, giving me the perfect opportunity to take Tia in. A soft smile plays on her lips, and I lean forward and place my own against them, the lack of control in public something that's new to me, but I don't have it in me to care. I pull back and search her face, my eyes convey everything I want to say, *I love you. Thank you. Devoted.* Tears brim her eyes, and she nods as if understanding every word I didn't voice.

Oscar clears his throat. "It really shouldn't have come as a surprise. Fucking multiple men, it's inevitable you were going to end up pregnant again sooner or later. Perhaps if you weren't so promiscuous." Jace flies across the table before I can blink. The papers go flying, as does the glasses of water provided for us. Luckily, Cole grabs him by his neck and deposits his seething form back in his seat. The rage radiates from him, and he bites into his lip while glaring at Oscar, who seems completely unperturbed by his outburst. I'm not sure which one of them is more deranged in that moment.

Cal pinches the bridge of his nose. "Oscar, can you try and think before speaking?"

Oscar's head snaps in his direction. "I always think before speaking, Cal. You should know this by now."

Yeah, the man is a prick.

Finn chuckles away in his chair, as if amused by the drama unfolding.

“Is there anything else?” Cal prompts, with a wave of his hand toward Oscar’s tablet.

Oscar broadens his shoulders, and his scrutinizing gaze lands on mine, causing the hairs on the back of my neck to stand. “Yes. When Lucas killed his father, it started a turn of events for so many reasons. Questions were being asked, and it forced the Lancasters to take a step back. Scared her son would out her at any minute, they completely detached themselves from him. Timothy Lancaster however continued his depraved assaults via one of the clubs that host nights specifically for trafficked victims.”

“We need to put an end to that shit,” Finn spits out, and tugs on the strands of his hair as he unravels before us. I couldn’t agree more, but I watch Oscar, searching for a reaction to Finn’s words. Does he intend on using the information he has by putting an end to a trade he knows is happening?

Oscar shakes his head. “It’s not on our turf. It would cause a war.” His gaze flicks toward Cal, as if looking for confirmation.

Cal glances toward Finn, and his expression softens. “Not yet. But we will when the time is right.” He holds Finn’s stare. “We will be there.” His words are said with confidence, full of sincerity.

“Us too,” Jace tacks on, and Cole gifts them with a confident lift of his chin in agreement. Pride swells in my chest at the way my brothers are taking a stand against the inhumane scum that walk the earth in plain sight at the detriment of the innocents around them.

Standing by us.

Con sits forward in his seat. “When the time is right, we’ll all be there.”

“We’ll all stand together,” Oscar confirms, and his eyes convey a promise of retribution, overshadowing previous thoughts that the man is devoid of emotion.

My Adam’s apple slides slowly down my throat, overcome with emotion, our new allies, our newfound family giving us the strength we need.

A strength we all deserve.

Tia turns to face me, a serene smile graces her lips. “Brutally devoted,” she whispers, causing a tremor to zip down my spine.

“Forever.” Sky grins from ear to ear, and I mirror her smile.

Our darkness brought us together, it binds us for an eternity.
A promise of devotion, a future of hope.
When we drown in our darkness together, we do so knowing we're not
alone, because behind us, we have a family.
A family born in brutality.
Devoted in love.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER
THIRTY-TWO



TIA

FOUR WEEKS LATER . . .

I race toward the toilet again, retching into the bowl, and empty the small amount of toast I could stomach.

Jace takes hold of my hair, pulling the strands off my face, and as I sit back on my heels, he swipes away the sweat with a warm, wet washcloth.

“No more babies!” I declare as I stand up and snatch the toothbrush from Cole’s hand, delivering him a death stare as I do.

Lucas glares at me as if I declared I was walking out of the apartment naked.

Scrubbing away the remnants of vomit from my teeth, I glance at my men in the bathroom mirror.

Jace’s tattoos make him look deadlier than I know him to be but also know he can be. As much as I love Jace, I have to admit I love it when feral

Rage comes out to play. Lucas wears only his black boxers, his cock already at half-mast, as if he knows I want to fuck them before I even know.

I feel tiny beside Cole's thick, muscular body, and wetness pools in my sleep shorts. I spit out the froth, relishing the flare in Lucas's eyes when I spit into the sink, and rinse my mouth with mouthwash. He definitely wants to play.

I turn on the balls of my feet and each of them watches me as if predators waiting to devour their prey.

"Are you wet?" Cole asks first, knowing I've been insatiable since finding out I'm pregnant.

"Are you going to stand there all night teasing us, or are you going to get your ass on the bed?" Jace grits out, and it's only now that I take in the fact that he's lowered his boxers to the floor and standing naked. His thick cock is hard, standing tall with expectation. I bite into my lip as I contemplate my next move.

"You're going to have to catch me first!" I declare. Springing into action, I dart past them and slam the bathroom door shut before tugging my camisole over my head and dropping it to the floor. Before I even have chance to drop my shorts, Cole is swooping me into his arms, then throwing us both on the bed. He cradles me as we fall, and his huge cocky smile sends butterflies fluttering in my stomach. Forgotten is the sickness, now all I want is them.

He grinds his cock into me, and I melt beneath his touch and tender words. "Fuck, you're so beautiful, beauty." Love emanates from him, the touch of his lips against my neck causes a flurry of goose bumps to riot over my bare skin.

"Please." I beg when his fingers dig into my chin to hold my head in place while his lips ghost over mine, and I arch my back into him as encouragement.

"Fuck yes. She wants to be fucked like our whore, don't you, beauty?"

I'm unable to function, especially when Cole slips his fingers into my shorts, and his fingers stroke over my aching clit. "She's drenched," he confirms before releasing my head to slide down the bed. I open my legs to accommodate him, and he pulls my shorts from off my hips, while pressing kisses down my inner thighs, then he tugs them off my feet and throws them to the floor.

I turn my head to Lucas stroking his solid cock slowly, up and down, up and down, and my mouth waters to taste the precum pooling at the tip glistening in the light, and when Cole's tongue swipes up my slit, I cry out in desperation. I need them to fill me, I need to feel them stretch and use me, I need to feel their devotion.

Lucas's pupils flare under my gaze. "Daddy's going to make you a mess, little girl."

Arousal slips from me, and Cole uses it to push his thick fingers inside me. "Lick that little ass too, Cole. Get her nice and ready for me."

Cole groans deep in the back of his throat, it's full of the same need I feel, a sound that reverberates through my body, fueling my desire.

"Oh, shit!" I throw my head back as he pumps his fingers inside me while licking around my puckered hole. He swipes his tongue up and down, making me squirm with his attention.

"Jace . . ." I beg, for what, I'm not sure, but I just need to feel them, all of them.

"You want my cock, Thalia?" He holds it out to the side of my face, and my tongue darts out to taste him. "Kiss it. Lick the tip and tell me how much you want it." The tip glistens, and I watch in rapture as a string of precum slides down his shaft.

"Please . . ." I swipe my tongue out over my lip.

He groans, deep in his throat. "Mm. Please what?"

"Please, let me taste you."

Then he leans over, holding his steel cock, and brings it to my lips.

Lucas's heavy breaths fill the room. "Kiss my brother's cock, little girl, don't suck. Be a good girl and do as Daddy tells you."

"Oh god," I pant wantonly.

Then I pucker my lips while Jace brings the tip forward for me to taste. He paints my lips in his precum, releasing a low hiss at the contact.

"Good girl." He breathes heavily. Every cord on his body protrudes as if he's holding himself back. Then his eyes dart toward Lucas, so quickly I startle at the intensity behind them. "I want to fuck her." His stare remains locked on Lucas, and it dawns on me for the first time ever, Jace is seeking permission, he's giving over the control he fights so hard to maintain in our relationship.

Cole's fingers have slowed, and he watches Lucas with a gleam of excitement in his eyes, the same excitement I feel, I'm sure, and as I

involuntarily clench around his fingers, his cock jumps, confirming my suspicions. He wants this as much as me; he wants Lucas to control us.

All of us.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER
THIRTY-THREE



LUCAS

The moment Jace utters those words I know he means more than that, I know he wants to fuck her with us, and the thought sends a fire of power through my bloodstream and a torrent of desperation to my cock.

I've been avoiding touching my cock while this all plays out in front of me, but now I stroke over the fabric of my boxers to ease the dull ache. I glance down at myself, the head of my cock pokes through the waistband, leaving a pool of precum on my abs, and I want to punish her for it, punish them all for it.

Jumping to my feet, I ignore their watchful eyes and remain focused on the control they've given me. I push my boxers to the floor and step out of them, giving my cock a quick jerk, hoping it takes the edge of need from it, but it doesn't.

Nothing will. Not until I have them.

"Jace, lie down on the bed." My voice is guttural, it's on edge, just how I feel.

They all move quickly. Jace lies with his head on the pillow, and his heavy eyes meet mine as if waiting instruction, and my balls draw up at the

thought. He slowly works his hand up and down his shaft, opening his legs for Tia to slide between them.

I step toward the bed where Tia remains crouched, then I drape her long blonde hair over her shoulder and place a delicate kiss to the top of her neck, breathing in her coconut scent. "I want you to stretch your pussy hole using Jace's thick cock, can you do that for me?" I rasp. The air around us is thick with need, and my heart races with excitement for what I have planned for us.

"Yes," she exhales on a heady pant, and my lip twitches in response.

"Good girl," I murmur, and pull on my cock as she straddles Jace. His focus is locked on hers, and I know the moment he slides inside her, because the muscles in his shoulders stretch and his jaw twitches as if trying to exert some form of control over himself.

He really shouldn't, not when all the control is in my hands now.

"You're all mine to control, mine to possess," I grit out while staring at him with narrowed eyes. *Does he really need reminding so soon?*

I snap my eyes up to Cole, and his meet mine, like magnets. Always so in tune with my being. His broad, muscular shoulders are tense, and his cock stands tall, the barbell at the tip taunting as it glistens with his precum. "Separate her ass cheeks for me."

He licks his lips, and he swallows slowly, then he climbs on the edge of the bed between Jace's legs and pulls Tia's ass cheeks apart, exposing her stretched pussy. Jace's cock is pushed inside her to the hilt, and they both remain still, waiting for my instruction.

I lean over, and he pulls her cheeks harder, the grip on them bruising, then I bend down with my focus on Cole, our gazes locked with one another's, and I spit on the crack of her ass. He gasps, and being so close to him, I can feel his sharp intake of breath, and I revel in the way his pupils dilate when I repeat the action and my saliva coats his fingers too. My abs become stickier with the intoxicating need to have them, and as I pull back, he releases a breath of air, as though disappointed I'm moving away from him. The thought thrills me.

"You're going to fuck her ass," I tell him with certainty. "You're going to stretch that little ass wide for me."

His head bobs, and he clears his throat. "Okay."

"Hard," I add, my eyes drilling holes into him with the intensity of my stare.

He slides his cock up and down the crack of her ass, coating his piercing with my spittle, then he swirls the tip around her puckered hole. He pulls back, then lines the tip of his cock up.

“Hard, Cole!” I bite out, annoyed at the time he’s wasting when I need her to feel this, feel us.

Tia lets out a sharp scream and falls forward onto Jace. She braces herself on her forearms on either side of his head. His eyes roll and his lips part, then he grips her chin and slams his mouth against hers, swallowing her whimper.

His hips rise as Cole withdraws and thrusts back inside. Again and again, I fist my cock at the motion of them filling her.

I watch on in rapture at the way Cole’s impeccably chiseled body thrusts back and forth inside her, stretching her wide, like I asked.

“Mm,” she moans.

“That’s it, little girl. Let my brothers stretch you, like a good little whore.” My fist works faster and faster as I tighten my grip on my cock, imagining I’m the one stretching her and the one feeling them too.

“Fuck, you feel so good.” Jace groans. Each of his tattoos glisten with perspiration as his hips power up into Tia while she moves her hands onto his shoulders for support. Her fingernails dig into his skin, making him hiss in response.

I squeeze the head of my cock; it’s angry, purple, and leaking precum all over my fingers, leaving them a sticky mess. “Give him your milk, Tia. Feed my brother your milk,” I encourage through a guttural groan.

Her mouth falls open. “Oh, shit!”

Then she does as I ask. Lifting her heavy tit to his waiting mouth, he leans forward to help her, and a strangled choke lodges in my throat at the sight of them.

“Fuck, Tia. Such an obedient girl for Daddy. Feeding my brother like a good girl.”

“Yes. Yes.” Her body coils tight, and I lunge forward, gripping her hair between my fingers and yanking her head to face me.

“Don’t you dare fucking come. You understand me. Don’t you fucking dare!”

She parts her lips as if to speak, but Cole slamming into her leaves her speechless. I release her head and step behind Cole, needing to step away

from her before I shove my cock so far down her throat, she's unable to speak again.

I step toward the bed. His toned ass on full display as he surges into her, and his balls are drawn up. I can't help but to lick my lips at the sight of my brother taking her and me commanding him from behind. I can feel myself unwinding, like I'm losing control of my thoughts, like he's controlling me when I should be the one to take charge, and I struggle to handle it.

I snatch up the pants I discarded earlier, and as soon as my fingers touch the wood of my knife, my racing pulse steadies. It's the reassurance I need, the power and control is back, and it sits in the palm of my hand.

With one hand on my knife, I watch them take her like I permitted, and I use the other to stroke my cock, basking in the slapping of their skin.

"Fuck, Lucas. You like this?" Cole turns his head over his shoulder, his green eyes full of need. Full of want.

Does he want me too?

Fire burns behind his eyes, and as if hearing my thoughts, his eyes dart down to my cock that I'm pumping with vigor.

"You like seeing your brother fuck her ass? Do you like watching me share, Daddy?" His lip curls on a taunting smirk.

He's goading me, pushing me to the brink, determined to force me to snap, and my heart skips a beat on his words. Holy fucking shit. My cock pulsates in my grip, but somehow, I stop my orgasm from erupting, precum coats my fist and when I snap my eyes back up toward Cole, his lips tip up into a knowing smirk, and now all I want to do is punish him for it.

Kneeling onto the bed behind him, his smirk falls to shocked as I lunge forward. Hovering over his solid form, I take hold of the back of his neck, flick open my knife, and hold it against his skin. His body stills and so do Jace's and Tia's. With careful measure, I press the tip of my blade into his neck, and my cock leaps when his blood seeps down his spine.

My eyes widen, my whole body alive as his warmth coats me, then I lower myself to lick the path of his blood all the way up his spine, enamored by the goose bumps I leave behind in my wake.

"You think you can handle me, Cole?" My deep voice is full of malice, full of a need to punish him. "You think you can play games and control me?" I push his head down toward Tia, my grip bruising, and his blood pools around my fingers, and I delight in it. Then it drips onto Tia, and I almost combust at the sight. "Mark her fucking skin. Show her she's ours."

His body tightens, and he lowers his head and takes the skin on her shoulder between his teeth. I hiss in approval when he pulls away, leaving a mark behind, before his mouth descends to the other shoulder. "You're mine to control, Cole." A groan escapes him, and my skin breaks out in a ripple of excitement.

His thrusts are slow now, and I know it's only a matter of time before our orgasms take hold, especially with his warm body pressed against mine.

"Do it, Lucas. You can do it." Tia's words fill me with strength, not once has she shown any sign of jealousy or concern that my attention might waver, it's like she wants the best for all of us and encourages it, and suddenly, I feel a hell of a lot more determined to see this through, for all of us.

My cock rests against his ass cheek, and it twitches as I slide myself down to pull away from him.

"Fuck, Lucas. Touch me again." His tone is full of desperation. "Please, brother."

"Oh, shit." Jace grunts, milk spurts down the side of his mouth, and I've never seen such an exhilarating sight, all of us together like this. Basking in our fucked-up glory. Drowning in our darkness, together.

I trail my hand down his toned back, and he jerks at my touch. I continue on until I meet his ass cheeks, and I can't help but position myself directly behind him, fucking my hand frantically, losing the control I fought so hard to gain.

"Please," he begs, and I close my eyes to contain myself.

"Lucas. Lucas, look at me." I snap my eyes open, and our gazes lock. The sound of skin slapping and then scent of sex permeates the air, but the space between us feels like it's only us. "Do it, brother. I want to feel you."

Does he not get it? Does he not understand how fucking difficult this is for me? I grind my jaw. Pissed that I'm unable to push myself further. Yet he insists on pulling me to the brink of explosion. Once I do this, there's no going back.

"Fuck, man. Just do it." His lips twist up in a sneer. "I'm nearly fucking there, Lucas. I'm fucking her and our brother. I want to fuck you too."

His words snap me from my mind.

They're all fucking without me.

I control the narrative, yet they're fucking without me.

Rage surges through my veins, and I bring my cock toward his asshole. “This what you fucking want?” I grind out. “You want my cock in your tight ass, Cole?”

His Adam’s apple bobs, and he nods.

“Use your fucking words!”

He gulps, and I wait at his muscular ass, ready to deliver, ready to punish him hard for pushing me. Always fucking pushing me. My teeth clench at his persistence, always wanting more from me.

“Yeah, brother. Give it to me,” he rasps.

My restraint snaps, and I spit on the tip of my cock. He sucks in a sharp breath, and I barely give him chance to exhale before I take hold of his hips and push into him, past his tight barrier. Fuck me, he’s tight, so fucking tight, I second-guess myself.

“This what you want?” I snipe out as I watch in awe of his muscle opening to accept me. He’s frozen beneath me, his head ducked low so I’m unable to see his face, but I imagine it, oh fuck, I imagine it. His lips will be parted and the veins on his neck protrude as I push further inside.

“Fuckkkk,” he chokes out, and excitement builds inside me.

“Fucking take my cock, Cole.”

“Oh, Jesus!” Tia’s tone is laced in splendor.

“Fuck, take him, Cole. Take all his cock in your ass,” Jace encourages, and all my patience is evaporated as I pull out, then slam back in with such force his body shifts forward.

I repeat the motion, I’m fucking him into Tia. I’m filling him while they fill her, and it feels fucking euphoric.

Again and again, I slam inside him. His grunts and groans fill my ears, and I can’t find it in me to care if they’re from pain or pleasure, too lost in my own exhilaration to care.

I watch my thick cock in rapture as it sinks in and out of his tight stretched hole, and every grunt and strangled groan is an aphrodisiac to my feral need, my absolute desperation for him. My grip turns bruising, determined to leave my mark on him, every part of him needs to be marked by me. Owned by me.

“Fuck, yes.” My balls draw up as his ass muscles tighten around me. “Take it!” I spit. Then I lean forward and bite into his bronzed shoulders, leaving my mark as my cock spurts. “Take my cum. I’m filling your ass, Cole. I’m filling you up with my cum.”

One of his thick arms snaps up from beneath him, pulling me so I'm flush against his back, and the action sends me wild, the thought he needs me so close to him, he needs to know it's me fucking him, drives me to insanity. "Fuck, Lucas. I'm . . ." He convulses.

"Fuckkkk!" Jace bellows into the room while my vision blurs and my body floats in ecstasy in what feels like a lifetime of tranquility.

Slowly, our orgasms dissipate, and my reality sets in. I still as I stare down at my cock in Cole's ass. I did it. I actually fucked him. A sting of regret over allowing myself to give into my needs, pangs my heart. I wasn't strong enough to hold back, my control slipped, and I became the person I didn't want to be. All because of my fucked-up childhood.

I slip from his ass, and he winces, my stomach rolls at the thought that I hurt him, but my cock twitches at my cum dripping from his exposed hole.

I stumble to my feet, feeling like my chest is closing in on me, making it difficult for me to breathe.

My eyes dart around the room in a desperate attempt to locate my boxers.

COLE

Feeling Lucas's warmth and control behind me makes my body burn with desire, and every part of me is unhinged, desperate for him to control me to his maximum, to fill me like he does Tia. To consume me like he does her too.

My cock twitches at the thought as my hips work, pushing me deeper inside her tight little ass. The rub of Jace's thickness is the perfect friction set to make me combust at any second, but something is missing and that something is him.

I can feel his restraint threatening to snap at any second, he's almost there, so close to the edge, so close to giving into me.

"This what you want?" his gravelly voice spits out, rendering me speechless, and my body freezes. Holy shit. Is this it? Is this the moment

when he gives into me, into us?

Every muscle on my body coils tight as the tip of his cock pushes into my ass. The hole so tight I clench my jaw to stifle the pain ripping through me.

“Fuckkkk,” I choke out as he stretches me.

“Fucking take my cock, Cole.” The excitement in his voice is exhilarating, it lights a fire inside of me, eager for more, eager to please him.

I shift forward when he sinks deeper, and my eyes roll as his cock rubs on a part of me untouched until now. Holy fuckkkk.

Tia moans, and I know she’s benefiting from this too, she’s feeling the weight of him, the pure unadulterated ecstasy that him finally sinking inside of me brings. “Oh, Jesus!” she whimpers in awe.

“Fuck, take him, Cole. Take all his cock in your ass,” Jace encourages, and Lucas shifts above me, his knees sink deeper into the mattress, and he pulls his cock out, making me wince before slamming inside so hard I’ve no choice but to accept it. Every fucking inch of him tearing me open while rubbing on my prostate. The pain and pleasure something I’ve never felt before, something I’m determined to feel more of. I push back on him in encouragement.

His grip on me feels like it’s bruising, and I fucking love it. Each thrust more impactful than the last, more uncontrollable, he’s unraveling, he’s fucking us all, and the thought causes my balls to draw up.

“Fuck, yes.” He slams inside harder. “Take it!” Then he leans forward, sinking his teeth into my shoulder. “Take my cum. I’m filling your ass, Cole. I’m filling you up with my cum.” My mouth goes dry; he’s everything I’ve always wanted, him, her, us. They’re everything.

I need to feel more of him, to show him how much he means to me. Quickly, I move an arm behind my back and tug him closer, and I close my eyes in ecstasy as he lets me pull him against my back. He rides me hard, my cock brushes against Jace’s at a quicker pace, and when I can’t take it any longer, I allow myself to go. “Fuck, Lucas. I’m . . .” My orgasm hits me, and stars dance in front of my eyes. *Holy shit.* His cock hits that part of me, the unknown, untouched part that has my body convulsing and my cock pulsating so strong my body sways.

“Fuckkkk!” Jace shouts as Tia convulses between us.

Time stands still as we catch our breaths, and the enormity of what took place feels cataclysmic.

Lucas slowly slides from my ass, and the pain causes me to whimper, but I disguise the sound with a cough.

Coldness takes over me; he's pulling away; he's withdrawing already, and hurt slams inside of me.

He regrets me.

OceanofPDF.com

LUCAS

“Lucas,” he growls, but I ignore him. “Lucas!” he snaps louder, and I’ve no choice but to raise my head from staring at the floor to face him.

His usual playful green eyes are shining with unshed tears, giving me another reason to hate myself. Disappointment mars his features as he remains frozen inside Tia. “Don’t you dare fucking leave. Don’t you fucking dare.” The accusation and hurt in his tone has my spine bolting straight with recognition. He feels used. Like I once did. And I refuse for him to feel like that.

He deserves more.

They all do.

My shoulders drop, and with my heart hammering in my chest, I make the decision and hope he doesn’t hate me for his pain.

Three sets of eyes are on me as I walk around the side of the bed. Then I lift the sheet, slide in beside Jace and rest my head on the pillow, not missing the way Cole's shoulders sag in relief, nor the way Tia untangles herself to come and lie beside me. Her scent invades my nostrils, cutting through the messy fog inside my head. She places a tender kiss over my heart, then whispers, "Devotion is just another word for possession, Lucas. And we're brutally devoted."

Jace turns his head to face me. "All of us."

I nod in understanding, then face Cole. "Brutally devoted." He swallows thickly, as if overcome with emotion, and I know although the words were meant for all of us, he knows I was saying them directly to him, accepting him.

We're a family.

A brutally fucked-up family, and I couldn't be happier about it.

OceanofPDF.com

EPILOGUE

TIA

SIX WEEKS LATER . . .

y heart hammers in my chest, and my stomach flutters. I'm a bundle of nerves and excitement all rolled into one.

The moment the car comes to a standstill, the front door to the mansion opens and Sky rushes down the steps toward us. Her blue summer dress blows in the breeze and adds to her air of innocence. I open my car door and barely have a chance to shut it before she pulls me into her arms with a tight hug that fills me with warmth. “I missed you.”

I breathe in her scent; she smells of cookies, and I smile while imagining her baking with her boys. “I missed you too.”

Pulling back from her, I scan over her features, trying to gauge how things are going here. “How’s he doing?”

A smile encompasses her face so wide, it’s hard not to mirror it with my own. “Good. So good.” Her eyebrows begin to dance, and I swat at her arm playfully.

“I hope you didn’t blow his stitches again!” I admonish. Her cheeks heat.

It’s become a joke among the family that Bren’s slow recovery is due to his and Sky’s sexcapades, much to Cal’s annoyance; he’s desperate for Bren to be back in charge, saying dealing with a multitude of Chloes is easier than dealing with his brothers. His daughter Chloe has a reputation in the family for being a diva and a drama queen. Apparently, her meltdowns are epic and usually end with her getting her way to shut her up. I wince when I consider Harper meeting her, it will be an eye opener, that’s for sure.

The car doors slam behind us, and Harper is suddenly by my side, Jace too, carrying Mia. They both wear pretty, matching pink dresses and little pink bows, and they look as cute as hell.

“Oh my gosh, you’ve grown.” Sky kneels to speak to Harper. “Are you ready to meet your cousins?”

Harper gives a shy nod, then slips her hand into Sky’s outstretched one.

“Come on. I baked cookies.” She tilts her head toward the house, and I smile at my earlier assertion.

Cole’s hand slides into mine as we follow her up the steps to their mansion.

“She’s like a proper little Stepford wife with this shit, isn’t she?” he whispers in my ear, and I nudge his shoulder with narrowed eyes, mouthing the word, *Stop*.

Jace releases a low whistle as we step into the marbled foyer of their home. “You think we could afford something like this?” he asks Lucas.

“Probably not,” Lucas grunts back, his handsome face unperturbed at the grandeur.

Sky spins on the pads of her bare feet. “Oh, about that. Bren said he’s building you one on the estate.”

Jace chokes. “Absolutely fucking not. We don’t want to live near you guys and his overprotective bullshit.” His lip curls up in displeasure.

“He said he wants to keep you all close to look after you.” Sky shrugs, ignoring Jace’s obvious insult.

He scoffs, and I elbow him to stop the drivel about to spill from his mouth, then a huff of disapproval escapes him instead.

“About feckin’ time. I’m hungry.” A loud voice has me stilling, and when I glance up to the doorway of the kitchen, my eyes meet with his blue ones. He’s watching me as closely as I’m watching him, and the emotion in mine seems to be affecting him. He swallows hard before clearing his throat and darting his eyes away, then settling them on Harper. His gaze roams over Sky’s hand in hers and a smile escapes him when his focus eventually lands on Sky’s stomach. It’s hard to consider he’s imagining anything other than her with their baby. The love in his eyes is difficult to ignore.

This man is a protector, through and through, and without him, I wouldn’t be here.

We wouldn’t be here.

Before I have chance to second-guess myself, I rush forward, throwing myself at his solid chest. He grunts and I grimace, remembering he’s received multiple surgeries to be standing here today.

To save my life, he was going to end his.

A tear falls down my face, and I try in vain to catch the sob in my chest before it escapes.

His thick arms band around my back as he lets me cling to him for no other reason but my own comfort. “Thank you,” I whisper.

A shudder runs through him, and he fidgets from side to side, the move odd, but when I draw my eyes up to face him, I see the guilt bleeding from his pores, and I hate he feels this way.

“Don’t say thank you, sweetheart. You’ve nothing to thank me for.” His voice is low and husky, mixed with sorrow, guilt.

“I’ve everything to thank you for.”

He shakes his head. “I’m sorry for not getting my head out of my ass.” He chuckles. “I wanted to protect her; thought I was doing right.”

I nod, as he speaks so low, I know this conversation can only be heard by us.

“I was wrong to do that, and I’m sorry you had to pay the price.” He’s clearly riddled with regret, and I hate that for him. But more than that, I’m grateful for him, no matter what he says. He chose to save me.

My lip quirks up as I try to change the narrative of our first proper meeting together.

“I think you paid the price too,” I joke, pointing toward his chest.

“Yeah, I did.” He chuckles a little awkwardly.

“Yeah, yeah, you’re sorry. You’re forgiven.” Finn pushes past Bren, knocking him in the process. “Now let the girl go so we can finally have this barbeque.”

I step back and straighten my T-shirt while I gather my thoughts and blink away the unshed tears.

“Oh, you don’t have to worry about anything there.” Sky throws her hand out toward me, then waves it at Bren. “Tia needs three men to fill her. She says she couldn’t handle another. Isn’t that right, Tia? What was it you said, you only have three hol . . .” Finn’s wife steps up behind her and slaps a hand over her mouth, her bright-green eyes wide as she glances down at Harper.

Con, Bren’s youngest brother, pokes his head around the door. “Dude, you need to sort your kids out. Sam and Seb have run off with scissors, and they’re encouraging Prince to cut Chloe’s pigtails off.”

Bren pinches the bridge of his nose and clamps his mouth shut, as if it’s a struggle to respond logically.

Sky once told me how feral her children and their nieces and nephews are, and I’m not going to lie, it makes me nervous to introduce them to Harper.

“Oh, she’d totally look cute with short hair, though.” Sky smiles as she makes her way outside.

“Jesus fucking Christ,” Jace grumbles, not as low as I wished because Bren breaks out into an all-mighty chuckle, then he slaps his hand on Jace’s back in a fatherly manner.

“Welcome to the family, brother.”

Then he turns his head toward me. “Forever.” He winks.

“Forever,” I repeat.

Brutally devoted, forever.

THE END

OceanofPDF.com

SNEAK PEEK AT A NEW SERIES...

OSCAR

ONE YEAR LATER . . .

I assess the room, the way their eyes dart toward one another awkwardly, and the way Cal scrubs his hand through his hair with nervousness, shows

me he's holding out. He has a good hand, and it's making him twitchy.

Cole grins from ear to ear like he's been given the key to a candy store, and Finn's eyes drill into his cards like he's burning through them. He's probably desperate for one more card, given he acted the same way the last three times we held a poker night at the guys' fight club.

The women don't realize we're not actually working, so while they hold their monthly little pamper parties, we come to work, i.e., play poker. Then we return home to find them riddled with guilt at our late-night exertions all in the name of family.

Last time, Paige felt so guilty after my all nighter, she messaged to say she would come off birth control. My lip tips up at the memory, the poor woman is deluded if she thinks I ever allowed her to take it in the first place. Unbeknownst to her, she's been taking pregnancy enhancing supplements, all in aid of my wish to expand the family of a next generation of intelligence.

The next generation of Mafia.

"Brendan has dark hair. He looks just like you." Con points toward Lucas with a chip in his hand, and Lucas's lips twitch in response to Con's assertion.

It's clear as day their baby is Lucas's biological child, and if they hadn't chosen such a ridiculous name for him, I would comment on the fact that he seems intelligent for his young age. Knowing that the name Brennan was gifted to my own son, they chose the next available name to Bren, Brendan.

Hideous.

"Has Tink's smile settled down yet?" Cole asks Bren, concern laces his tone.

One of my multitude of unruly nephews decided it would be a good idea to draw a permanent smile on their youngest, the apple of her father's eye, baby Tink.

"Na, gonna take a while I reckon." Bren throws another chip in his mouth, and the crumbs slipping from his lips make me fidget in discomfort, but not as much as his lack of concern regarding his delinquent children.

"I mean, I can see where the boys were coming from. She does cry a lot, and pout," Finn adds with a grin so wide it rivals Tink's permanent marker one.

He's ridiculous for even trying to excuse their feral behavior. "What's your excuse for the horns they gave her?" I snipe, cutting my scowl toward

his.

Finn shrugs, of course he does. The man is incapable of a valid response; his only ability to converse is through jest.

“I’m trying to win Will over to having another.”

I scoff at my little brother’s words. “Trying to win her over?” He needs to be man enough to make it happen.

“Has anyone heard from Reece lately?” Cal asks, darting his eyes around the table before landing on mine. We both know that’s where he should have started.

I clear my throat, ready to deliver the news we both know he doesn’t want to hear.

“He’s visiting with family.” And with that, I push back on my chair and throw my winning cards on the table, ignoring the groans of displeasure at their lack of poker skills. “His words, not mine,” I tack on to soften the blow.

I don’t even give him a second glance as I stride toward the door with the intention of filling my woman with my baby.

Nor, stupidly, do I pay extra attention to my surroundings.

The air is chillier than normal, so I pick up my pace as I make my way toward my car. It’s quiet on the streets, and I revel in the tranquility, but a noise grabs my attention just as I reach my car, and a little too late for my own good.

Pain slices through my shoulder as I spin around, and my focus is hazy, and I find myself falling to the ground. As if in slow motion, my head hits the concrete, and I mentally kick myself for not having the foresight to brace my fall.

Darkness flickers in my peripheral vision, then heavy hands roll me onto my back.

It’s strange how time slows down when you’re facing something profound.

Something that makes it difficult to breathe despite the pain radiating in my chest.

The blood pumping through my body speeds up in anticipation and I can feel the effects of it taking hold, I become dizzy with the injury but as my eyes lock with his, my heart freefalls, leaving me no choice but to give away my shock with a heavy gasp.

I'm not known for having emotion, nor am I known to show a reaction but even I have little choice in the matter.

Not when I'm staring back at familiar blue eyes, so familiar, I consider the fact that I have indeed passed away.

I've joined him.

Because there's no way he can be alive.

There's no way that my brother is staring back at me.

Available to preorder here: [STONE](#)

OceanofPDF.com

MORE?

Would you like to find out what has happened to the youngest O'Connell brother, and how he became the enemy?

Available to preorder here: [STONE](#)

I know so many of you were affected by Bren's mishap, this led to reader therapy groups being created to support one another. As a way of an apology for your trauma, I wrote a little hospital scene just for you.

Would you like a sneak peek of what Bren and Sky got up to in the hospital? You can download it here: [Bren and Sky](#).

[OceanofPDF.com](#)

ALSO BY B J ALPHA

Secrets and Lies Series

[CAL Book 1](#)

[CON Book 2](#)

[FINN Book 3](#)

[BREN Book 4](#)

[OSCAR Book 5](#)

[CON'S WEDDING NOVELLA](#)

[O'CONNELL'S FOREVER](#)

SECRETS AND LIES SHORT STORIES

[CAL](#)

[CON](#)

[FINN](#)

[BREN](#)

[OSCAR](#)

Born Series

[Born Reckless](#)

The Brutal Duet

[Hidden In Brutal Devotion](#)

[Love In Brutal Devotion](#)

The Brutal Duet Part Two

[Brutal Secrets](#)

[Brutal Lies](#)

STORM ENTERPRISES

[SHAW Book 1](#)

[TATE Book 2](#)

VEILED IN Series

[VEILED IN HATE](#)

MAFIA DADDIES

[Daddy's Addiction](#)

[Daddy's Possession](#)

CARRERA FAMILY

[STONE](#)

[OceanofPDF.com](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tee the lady that started it all for me. Thank you for an eternity.

I must start with where it all began, TL Swan. When I started reading your books, I never realized I was in a place I needed pulling out of. Your stories brought me back to myself.

With your constant support and the network created as ‘Cygnet Inkers’ I was able to create something I never realized was possible, I genuinely thought I’d had my day. You made me realize tomorrow is just the beginning.

SPECIAL MENTION

To Kate, thank you for everything, particularly finding the kettle at my house.

Your support means the world and I’m grateful to have you not just as a PA but a friend too. Thank you for being so **brutally devoted**.

Jaclyn, thank you for your continual support. I’m looking forward to that day we finally meet and I can hug you.

Lilibet, thank you for all your support, you amaze me.

Jo, thank you for being on board, your support means so much to me.

My Incredible ARC, Street and TikTok Teams.

To all of you, I appreciate you. Your love of books and passion to share is incredible. I want you to know how much your support means to me, the world!

My Reckless Readers!

THANK YOU! What an amazing group of readers. Thank you for joining me on this incredible journey, I really couldn't do it without you.

To my world.

To my boys, I hope you find the same love and passion for something, and you become **Brutally Devoted**.

To my hubby, the J in my BJ.

Thank you for being my additional PA, for learning new skills to help us succeed. Thank you for learning to cook, when we both know you can't. Let's keep aiming high and keep chasing those dreams **forever**.

Without you I wouldn't be BJ Alpha. Love you trillions!

And finally...

Thank you to you, my readers.

Thank you for helping make my dreams a reality.

Love Always

BJ Alpha. X

OceanofPDF.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BJ Alpha lives in the UK with her hubby, two teenage sons and three fur babies.
She loves to write and read about hot, alpha males and feisty females.

Follow me on my social media pages:

Facebook: [BJ Alpha](#)

My readers group: [BJ's Reckless Readers](#)

Instagram: [BJ Alpha](#)

[OceanofPDF.com](#)