Circling the Crow

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Summary

What if Tara never thought about leaving Charming and stood her ground? Would Season 5 and 6 have ended differently? She is trying to be a good mother, old lady and doctor. When conflicts start tearing her family a part it becomes more difficult. Things have to change and soon. Look through Tara's eyes at the chaos and mayhem. See what it really takes to be the queen and stand by Jackson.
Sitting in my babies' room feeding Thomas while I watched Abel sleeping. I couldn't help but feel as though I was betraying them by staying here in Charming to some degree.

I was in the position of being stuck in between a mother and wife. I would hurt someone with any decisions I made. Sometimes it was myself I've betrayed, hurt and lied to just to make it through another day.

Was I cheating them out of a normal childhood by living here? Most children growing up never knew what the words chaos and mayhem even meant. But I know my boys were destined to not only know those words but, to live them out as well. No matter how much I have tried to protect them from it. I couldn't as long as Jax remained a part of the club and we stayed here. It was a reality I finally surrendered to.

I've always been told that a good old lady was strong at all times and never lets anything bother her. Allow them to do as they pleased, then love them through it all. I totally disagree with that scenario. You must be somewhat weak to learn to live this kind of life. You must be torn down, rebuilt to become accustomed to what they done in the club and the way they lived to survive it all.

That's the place I was at today. I've been rebuilt in my way of thinking about what's right and wrong. Changing my beliefs in almost everything to stay beside the man I love. Going against what I was taught and how I was brought up to keep my family together. It was basically look the other way and never ask any questions. It went against every fiber of my being.

He was always so strong and truly nothing scared him. It wasn't very often he showed even me his weak side. The promise he had made me was with time he would make things right in the club and then get out. We would move on and have a normal life together. I wasn't really sure he knew what the true meaning of normal really was. Or if he could ever adjust to living that kind of life. It went against every fiber of his being.

No murdering or worrying about who would come after the boys because the club pissed them off. Or worse they have a personal score to settle with Jax. I've witnessed some of the cruel and harsh punishments the families have suffered because of their loved ones were a part of the club. We were just a sick pawn used in the game.

I loved Jackson Teller more than I had all those years ago. I never stopped loving him, actually. I just couldn't see myself living this life. But now with him being my husband, I couldn't see living life without him no matter all the bad shit that came with it. He gave me my strength to be what I have to be or become to stand by his side. I vowed my love and loyalty to him. It was the same vow he made to me as well. To put nothing above the other, including the club.

Getting the boys ready to leave so I wouldn't be late for work. I went in and woke up Jax. So, he could get ready too. Gemma called and asked me if I had time to swing by the office to talk to her. I told her I would after I got the boys situated for the day.

Just like I started off any other normal day. Sometimes I need to remind myself that yes, I was still a
normal person. Even though part of me seemed to get lost more in their world all of the time. I dropped the boys off at daycare and checked my messages at the hospital. This day would be as normal as I could make it.

But when I got to the garage it was anything but what I would consider normal behavior. There were a group of girls dressed in hardly nothing and I mean nothing. I just ignored them as I walked by dressed to work in clothes that were acceptable in society. Here, they dressed and lived out the outlaw life.

These were grown women who acted like they were still in high school. I pity women when they had to do things to just get attention drawn to themselves. They hang out around here hoping one of the MC will sleep with them. They think it makes them be somebody by getting nailed by a club member, I think it just makes them a biker slut.

Gemma had been helter skelter ever since Clay left. I've listened to her cry all night. Then she would be so drunk at other times I could barely make out what she was actually saying to me. I think today was one of those days she could still go either way.

Jax had no patience or compassion for his mother now. He didn't understand why I would put my time into trying to hold her together. She had been written off as a lost cause to him. But she was still the grandmother to my children and I was going to be there for her as much as I could be. It was new for me to feel all alone in this world as she felt now.

When I heard their bikes coming, we went out to meet them. Only Jax was met by someone other than me. I didn't know who this little bitch thought she was but, she was getting on my shit list and fast.

"Are you good with her rubbing up on your man?" I tried to blow it off and pretend like it didn't bother me. But it did because I didn't see him make the slightest attempt to push her away.

"You know if you put her in line the rest will follow. The crow eaters circle our men like they are a fresh kill. They are not anything but pussy to the guys. But, yet they never quit trying to take them away from us."

What Gemma said was very true. Those girls couldn't do anything without the group of them to protect each other. While I always tended to be a loner. They never seemed to leave alone what is someone else's either. They had to take what was yours to make themselves feel better. Like they were somebody and should be made to feel like they were something special.

I decided today was the day. Walking out to Jax's bike to see my husband but, the girl just stood there when she saw me. She was flirting with Jax right in my face. I knew Gemma would never put up with this kind of shit and neither would I.

Pushing her right out of the way to get to Jax. "Hi baby." I gave him a long slow kiss. But I had a special greeting for her as well.

Before I turned around, I took his helmet out of his hand. A back swing, I bashed her in the face with it as hard as I could. "Stay away from my man."

She was holding her face with the blood dripping. I hoped the damage I had done to her would be enough of a reminder for her to not fuck with my man. Or she would get your ass kicked again.

The rest of them all joined in of course. Like the low lives, they really were of a feather, always
flocked together.

Gemma was standing beside me before I knew it. "Tara might only have one good hand. But I have two to beat your asses with."

They knew the queen meant it too. She never backed down from a fight. Most of the time the fight was because of her. Yet, they got the point. You always seen them backing down when you pushed back. Like the true cowards they truly were. Because if they were really a bad ass they would fight back and never stand to be treated that way. Because I won't stand to be treated with disrespect any longer by any of these bitches.

They did the best thing they could do and fucking left. Talking shit as they walked away. At least they done it from a distance because it was hell on if they came back around Jax.

"If you want anymore just come around my man again. That's mild compared to what I will do to you next time." It wasn't a threat coming from me either. It was a fucking promise to them.

On my way back to the office with Gemma, I tossed Jax his helmet back. Fuming more with each step I took.

"Whoa. Mama has spoken." I heard Bobby as I walked on even though I chose to not comment on it. Nor acknowledge it.

They were all laughing and making jokes about it but, I was pretty damn serious. Seriously pissed and seriously not taking anymore shit.

Jax came in wiping the girl's blood off his helmet. I didn't care if I had made her bleed either. Which was a major switch for me.

"Mom, can you give us a minute?" Gemma hesitated but left as he requested. She didn't push her son much these days. "What was that all about, Tara? It's not like you. You know they don't mean shit to me. I never touch any of them cause I love my wife. I have you and I don't need anything else on the side."

What I done even shocked me a little bit too. Violence had never been my way or a part of my life other than when I was with Jax. I felt like I was pushed into a corner and had to fight my way out. That's the feeling I got for almost everything I done with Jax and the club.

"You're always telling me you can't be half in and half out of the club because it will get you killed. You have to be all in. I can't be half an old lady just sometimes. Then be this sweet caring person who they run over the rest of the time, Jax. I'm still trying to figure out who I am when I'm with you. Without losing who I was to begin with."

He took me in his arms and held me like he always had, only he could bring that calming effect on me. There had been many times I wanted to run away from this life. Take flight out of Charming and never return. But, that little bit of reassurance he showed me always sucked me right back in.

"I promised if you stayed with me we would find where you fit into all of this. We will find that together cause I love you."

Men always wanted to be a woman's first love, first on the list for her everything. But a woman needed to know she was a man's last romance. She was enough for him in every way so he never needed another other than her. It was the reassurance I sought from Jax constantly.

Just as I began to enjoy his touch, it was over. We never got much time alone or time that wasn't
uninterrupted by someone. I couldn't be alone for more than five minutes with him here before somebody needed him. It had gotten to be the same way at home too. The club needed him more than this family. We always had to take the back seat and wait until he had time to spare for us.

Juice came in to get Jax, it was time for them to go somewhere. As I walked to the car Jax yelled to me. "Hey Rocky." It did make me smile a little bit as I turned around to see what he wanted. "Behave and no more beating on little girls today."

Mumbled under my breath. "She started it." Jax still needed to learn the difference between a woman and a girl. The same gender but a totally different breed. Just as man verses boy. A boy will wander from woman to woman. But a man, will respect and love only one woman.

Before I made it back to the hospital I was rear ended by a car at a stop light. This day started off badly and I had the feeling the rest of it would be the same way too, terrible. I got out to look at the damage they done to my vehicle.

It was a lady probably in her thirties. She was ranting on about how I stopped in front of her. How was it all my fault she hit me while I was sitting completely still was beyond me.

Totally ignoring her, I went to get my cell phone because I wasn't going to listen to her bullshit. The sooner an accident report got filed the quicker I would get away from her.

"Hey bitch. You are not going to get into your vehicle and drive away on me. I'll kick the shit out of you for payment of the damage that you did to my car."

She grabbed me by my hair and banged my head off the car door several times.

My long story really begins here. The day I snapped and knew what the term being an old lady really meant. Becoming one of them and walking it beside my old man with pride. Doing whatever the fuck I had to do to protect my family, Jax and the MC.

I was all in and there was no going back for me now.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!
Chapter 2

I Won't Break

A SPECIAL THANK YOU: To OTB for making the wonderful banner for this story. If you click on the picture you can see it better. xoxoxo PG

The cops were taking me through the booking process after being arrested for public misconduct and assault. This was my first time for that. I've experienced a lot of first times today for many things. I was being charged with a crime. When the woman attacked me I lost it. I was having trouble with keeping that part of me in check lately. Living in violence was not how things were supposed to be.

Most people always noticed the changes made in your direction when it involved you. Their attitudes towards you. However, most of the time it was you that changed. Those were staring me in the face. It was painfully clear, it I chose to defend my actions. Then I had no intention of changing them.

It killed me, the wait to find out what they would do to me next. I thought long and hard about what I had done to her. No, she should have never put her hands on me. But, I should have not smashed her face into the door either. I might add that I smashed her face several times more than she had mine. I was out of control and it was not something I ever let happen or experienced until now.

The lost control was sometimes a sign of fear. It was also a signal of bigger things to come. I never wanted to give or give up so much of myself I lost who I truly was and wanted to become.

Chief Roosevelt came to stop them from doing anything further with me and I was relieved. "Mrs. Teller the charges are being dropped against you. I spoke with Ms. Whyler and explained to her that it would be a futile point to continue this because you would counter charge her with assault as well. If you will see the deputy in the front before you leave to finish the accident report."

"So, I'm free to go?" Which completely amazed me. I would be let off so easily after what I had done.

"Yes, you are after you complete the report. I called Jax and he should be here anytime."

Fuck, I was going to call Gemma or Margret to bail me out. I didn't plan on telling him about this right now. Not only does he have a full plate with dealing with club business, but I was ashamed of my actions.

The deputy had typed up the report and I gave him my insurance information. "Just a moment. I will take a copy of your card then you will be on your way." He was very nice to me and polite.

Not a lot of people were nice in this town because of my association with Jax. They never say anything because they fear what the repercussions would be for speaking out against the club. You could always tell though by the way they look at you with disgust on their faces. The quiet whispers when you're leaving a room. Or my favorite when they were sickening sweet to your face. They couldn't wait for you to leave so they can talk about what they thought they knew goes on in the MC.

Trust me when I say most of them had no clue about what really goes on in the club. But I did. That
has been the one of the hardest problems for me, getting past it. Knowing the truth and living in it is two completely different things. The more I knew, the more I have to worry about.

When you knew for certain, your husband was a cold blooded killer and done as though it were as normal as getting up and going to work every day. You watch the same man holding his children and being a normal father at other times. Lying beside him at night letting him hold you as a lover and as a husband should. You just prayed he doesn't ever want to do to you the sick and twisted things you knew he was capable of doing to others.

I was brought out of my thoughts when I heard Jax. "I'm starting to think I can't let you go anywhere without me." He had a smile on his face and was joking. But I wasn't in the mood for it.

Nothing about today was typical in any way for me. I was finding more and more the saying you took on some of the traits of the one you loved were true. I was still waiting for Jax to pick up some of mine. The good ones anyway. Maybe was waiting for nothing and that day would never come around.

Jax was talking to the Chief and after the deputy was finished with me I went over to where they were. They immediately stopped talking. That was nothing new either. I come into many conversations I was never supposed to hear or know about.

"I'll talk to you later. I'm gonna take Tara home now."

My vehicle had already been taken back to the garage by a Prospect. Jax said there was some damage done but nothing they couldn't fix. We would ride on his bike. Not my favorite thing to do, but I still done it.

"Do you want to have lunch with me or maybe we could just go see a movie or something? We have time before we have to pick up the boys from daycare." There was no way in hell I was going to work now and I needed the connection with him. Just time to be Jax and Tara. Him my husband and me his wife.

"I can't babe. I've got club business I've gotta do this afternoon. Don't forget tonight is the grand opening of the Lodge for Nero. I've gotta be there for it. It'll be really late when I get home."

Knowing all too well exactly what went on when they have those so called grand openings and so called patch over parties. Every whore in town showed up and they all took a sample of whatever pussy they wanted. It was a pussy smorgasbord and free reign for them to fuck whatever.

I've really tried to overlook it and not even think about it when Jax goes to those things. But sometimes I wondered if he was faithful like he says he was. It wouldn't be the first time he lied to me.

"Okay. I think I'm going to go home and lay down before I pick up the boys. I'm not feeling to good anyway."

Running his fingers over the knot on my head I still had. "Is your head feeling okay? I'll see you tonight and we'll do something later. I would now if I could go."

He gave me a kiss and I know I'm just being silly and suspicious even thinking he would cheat again. He knew if I found out that he's ever with trash again, I'm gone. He would lose his family and there was no discussing it.

"Sure, I understand." But I really didn't though. Since we got married he spent more time at the clubhouse and with the guys than he does with his family. I tried to be supportive of the club and not
be selfish with his time. For once it would be nice to spend time with my husband. As husbands and wives were meant to.

Most nights I have already put the kids to bed and I'm a sleep when he comes in. When we try to do anything as a family it always changed and he had to go. Or someone needs him more than we did and he left in the middle of it. I've tried to talked to him about it. He always tells me it would calm down but, it never does. Maybe it never would.

Home was so quiet without anyone else around. I took some aspirin for my headache and was going to try to get some sleep. I laid down trying to get my mind to stop racing around in circles, but I couldn't.

After I searched the frig for food, nothing appealed to me. I even threw a load of laundry in to kill time and cleaned the kitchen until it was spotless. Nothing I did stopped my mind from going places it shouldn't go to.

There really wasn't anybody I could talk to other than Gemma. She had a shit load of her own problems. Most of the time the violence was started by her or over her. Talking to her would be a lost cause I guess. So, I called the only person I knew would understand where I was coming from. Even though she and I were nothing a like we both have been old ladies in the club.

It was down to a couple of hours until I had to pick up the boys anyway. Driving out to the Lodge to meet Lyla. The inside was decorated very nice considering it was nothing but a brothel. A brothel my husband would be at soon.

She was surprised I wanted to see her. I know I should have kept in contact with her after Opie died. But honestly we really have nothing in common.

"Um...Tara don't take this the wrong way but why are you here? Not that I want to be rude or anything. I still have a lot to do to get ready for the opening."

"I just wanted to check on you and see how you were doing that's all. You're busy, I should go. We should have lunch sometimes." I even rolled my own eyes at that one. Do lunch sometime was a way of basically brushing someone off. I couldn't bring myself to open up to her. I couldn't get all the words to form to what I was really feeling. Maybe I never would. She had things to do so I left her to it.

Driving around with no particular place to go and thinking about life. What it was going to hold for my family in the long run?

When I came up no answers. I went and picked up the boys. Thomas and Abel were always happy to see me. They were what was good and pure in my life still. Sometimes I thought and felt they were the only thing left in my life that was real and true.

We stopped and ate dinner on the way home since Jax wouldn't be there anyway. We haven't ate together as a family in over a month after I stopped and thought about it.

Abel always got so excited about pressed pieces of chicken in a cardboard box. Go figure. But I love seeing my boys be happy. All of them, including my biggest baby, Jax.

Flipping through the channels and found nothing to watch. Someone knocked on the door. I never knew who might be here to hurts us and I wasn't comfortable having the gun that Jax left me. I peeked out and it was Gemma. She wanted to spend time with kids.
"The boys are already asleep."

"That's okay I will see them later. If you wanna go to the Lodge opening I will stay with them." I couldn't understand why she would even think I would want to go to it. She told me Clay always asked her if she wanted to go and most of the time she didn't. Jax never even asked me if I wanted to.

"It's really not my thing anyway. Probably nothing that goes on there would be of any interest to me."

"Really. Do you remember the Cara Cara opening? How interesting that one was?" Gemma was driving the point home to me. In her snide way, she was right.

Well of course I remembered, the problem was forgetting it. That was when the porn skank Ima was chasing after Jax. Which she eventually caught him too. I have tried so hard to never think about the morning I walked in on them after he fucked her.

But today was one of those days the old feelings and scars were coming to the surface no matter how deep I tried to keep them buried. It was hard enough trying to have a normal relationship with a man. Try having one with someone who lives a secret life and keeps you on the outside of it as much as he can. He hides so many things from me to protect me he says. But what does he hide from me that would crush me if I knew the truth?

"You know what, I think I will go."

Searching through my closet until I found something even remotely close to a fit for the occasion. After I put on the shortest black skirt I owned and a red shirt; I still looked nothing like those girls would. I curled my hair and done my makeup. When I looked down at my cast it didn't go with the outfit but there was nothing I could do about it. It's removable but, I should always have it on unless I take a shower.

As I drove there I kept thinking how ridiculous I was being about this whole thing. What would I say was the reason I came? Would Jax be mad I just showed up? But if there was nothing he had to hide from me it shouldn't be a big deal. I was his goddamn wife after all.

Once I went inside it was wall to wall whores everywhere. Seeing some of the guys from the club. Some of them had two women all ready. Even the ones who shouldn't be doing anything. While their old ladies were still at home watching their children.

I glanced around the room for Jax but, I never found him. I turned around and there was a guy in my face.

"Hi, their baby. Would you like to have a drink with me?" I wasn't sure if I should be flattered or insulted he thought I worked here.

"Um...no. I'm just looking for my husband."

He pushed his body into mine and I was up against the wall before I knew it. He whispered in my ear. "I'll be whoever you want me to be tonight."

Trying to push him away from me as hard as I could. But Jax took care of it for me. "Get the fuck away from her before I kill you." I knew Jax meant what he said too.

The guy looked at his leather and wasn't even about to challenge him. Lyla was there to stop any
trouble from happening. "Come on, honey. I'll show you a really good time." I'm sure she would too.

Jax literally threw me over his shoulder and carried me out of there. I knew the fight was coming when we got outside. I was about to get the same speech I always did; it's just business Tara.

When my feet touched the down on the ground, I was going to get my say first. "Before you get mad Jax I was just..." But I didn't get a speech. His lips were on mine and he showed me more passion in this kiss than I've felt from him in so long.

He got on his bike and held out his helmet for me. The same helmet I hit the girl with. "Come on, get on."

Looking down at my skirt and giving him that look of no way.

"What you can be a bad ass during the day but afraid to show a little ass at night with me?" My husband was more like the playful boy I fell in love with. The one who could charm my panties off with a smile.

We were flying down the highway and I had no idea where we were going. He came up to this lake and parked his bike. I stood there not sure of what he had in mind.

He took his clothes off and gave me that cocky little smile of his that melts me every time. Then he jumped in. "Come on the water feels really good."

"What the hell." I undressed and followed him in. I'll have to change my hand dressing when I get home but, I didn't care right now. I was going to get some Jax and Tara time.

The moonlight shown on the water and it did feel really good. We swam and splashed around like kids. This felt like when we were teenagers again sneaking off from everyone to make love. He was holding on to me so tight in the water.

"You're the only one for me, Tara. You always have been."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

I wrote this for you Darlin. Let me know if you think I got her right. I will be waiting to read your first chapter. xoxoxox PG

I want to give thanks for all the love I was sent on this story. The PMs I got were totally awesome and if I have not answered yours yet, I will. It was really a nice thing to wake up to...it made me feel really good for all the author favorites and alerts too. Sending you back my love.

Thank you to those that review, mark this story as your favorite or alert!
Chapter 3

Madames and Crows

No one had ever reached me with just words, except for Jax. Being with him tonight meant more to me then any sexual encounter ever could. It was love we shared between us.

Love only grew by sharing it. You could only have more for yourself by giving it away to others. Along with; respect, caring about them, make sacrifices and give them everything you got. To truly love a person was to see all their magic. To remind of them of it when they had forgotten. Tonight, I fully intended to remind my man.

After we played around we got out of the water. I went to get dressed and Jax stopped me. Our naked wet bodies were glistening in the moon light and clinging to each other. When I felt his hands touch me made me melt just like it always does.

Going to my knees in front of his beautiful body. His eyes were telling me he wanted it and his hand went to the back of my head. My mouth always decided how much of him I took in.

With Jax you can always tell when he was getting close. He would start thrusting in my mouth and as fast as he was doing it, I had to stop before he came because I wanted to feel him. I needed that connection between us.

We kissed and caressed each other. He suddenly stopped and was walking towards his bike. "Lets ride."

"It will be trouble if we ride nude. It is indecent exposure and we could go to jail for it."

"It will be hot and jail isn't anything new to either one of us now is it, Rocky. Come on, babe. You know you want to. Besides you can wear my shirt if it makes you feel better. What else would be hotter than me riding shirtless with just my leather on."

Jax had always had the ability to convince me to be adventurous. Even if I really didn't want to. Most of the time he could persuade me to do about anything.

"Okay. Let me get my clothes."

Throwing on just his t-shirt. I was putting my clothes and shoes in his saddle bags.

"Not the shoes. Wear those."

Standing before him in nothing but high heels and his t-shirt. The look on his face was one I hadn't seen in so long. He was looking at me like he had when we were young and he couldn't wait to be alone with me. Back in the day when he couldn't get enough of me and always wanted more.

"That's a good look for you cutie. Wanna take a ride with me we both will enjoy?"

The ride started off awkward for me. When I straddled his bike seat I was already wet. With every bump we hit on the country road my pussy would slide back and forth against the leather.
Chilled from the warm evening air as we flew down the road. My body and hair was getting wind-blown dry. The speed of the bike made the hairs on my body stand on end and goose bumps covered my exposed skin. At least my hands were warm tucked up against his body inside of his leather.

Since Jax was my husband you would think I would be used to the feel of his body or would tire from it. But I never had. As much as he was gone I forget just how good this man feels as I was rubbing my hands along his muscled sides and chest. I snuggled my body closer to his not for the warmth but, to just feel him.

Spreading my legs wider to be as close to him as I slid my body up against his back. His hand went down to my leg and lifted it up to be around his waist. But his hand didn't stay there. He was rubbing the inside of my thigh and then found the spot that made me moan when I felt his fingers sliding in and out of me.

As good as it felt I went to push his hand away. He needed both of his hands to control the bike and not to crash us.

"Don't, Tara. I have concentration of steel when I ride."

Jax was getting me so close to cumming when he stopped on his own. He lowered my leg down and took my hand from his leather. He gave me a kiss on the top of my hand when the bike came to a halt at the stop sign.

The deep continuous roar and throbbing vibration of the engine beneath me was giving me extreme pleasure. Pressing myself down harder against the seat to feel the vibration better. When I let out a deep moan. Jax throttled up the bikes speed so the vibration increased. Wiggling against the seat only seemed to increase the internal fast throb that was coursing through my body.

"Enjoy the ride babe. We could do this all the time if you wanna."

Enjoying it I was until Jax slowed down and pulled off the highway. He stopped the bike. "Get off and get on me."

This was the part that made me really nervous. He wanted me to straddle him on the bike. He unzipped his pants and pulled them down just enough to release his already hard cock. I climbed on and wrapped my arms around his neck. Grasping on to his leather for my life. When we started moving I grasped on to him even harder so I wouldn't fall off.

"Relax, babe. I've got you and you're not going anywhere."

The movements inside me were slow and gentle at first. He had one hand on the bike grip and the other on my ass. He was moving my hips with his hand. Once I was relaxed and comfortable I started moving them against him on my own. I think this was when Jax started enjoying the ride.

We did this for a few miles until he stopped again and he pulled his t-shirt off over my head. He hand me sit on the seat, then bent me over. I was holding on the grips now as he pounded his cock into me from behind. He didn't slow down or stop until he came. This wasn't the gentlest Jax had ever been with me but, I must admit it was the best ride I had ever had with him.

"Are you cold, babe?"

"A little."

Jax took his sweatshirt out of his saddle bag and handed it to me. He gave me a slow sweet kiss on the lips and then one on my forehead.
"This was fun. I guess you have done this before."

"Nope. This was my first time on a bike too."

Even though I wanted to believe it and him. I wasn't sure if it was or not. The way he controlled himself and the bike while we made love; I wanted to say he had done it before. But in my heart, it was his first time and it was with me.

The ride home was full of laughter and love between us. This was the Jackson Teller I knew all those years ago. It wasn't the same man who set at the head of the table and was capable of doing horrible things. It was a sweet man who could love with the heart of a lion and one you would never worry about betraying you.

Pulling up in the driveway. Jax held my hand as we walked across the yard together. We were still giggling when we went through the door.

The house was quiet and Gemma was asleep on the day bed in the boy's room. Jax went to wake her up and I stopped him. So he grabbed a blanket and covered her up with it. I know Jax wanted nothing to do with her. But as long as she wasn't doing anything to hurt my family, she and I would get along just fine.

We went in our room and got ready for bed. Laying in his arms was something I craved these days. It was ashamed I don't get it anymore than I did. But I knew once he took over the gavel, our lives would be this way even though he said it wouldn't be.

It didn't take me long to drift off in a happy restful sleep. Because it wasn't until the alarm went off, I moved from Jax's big muscular body. I hit the off button on the alarm and cursed the day was starting.

My eyes gave Jax a long glance while he laid in our bed sleeping like a normal man would. I knew once I woke him, he would be all SAMCRO and it would start over again.

Gemma was gone when I went into the boy's room. Thomas was already awake playing in his bed and I changed his diaper then dressed him. Abel I had to shake a few time before he would get up. I went into the kitchen with Thomas in my arms and started the coffee.

Watching my boys this morning reminded me of all that was good and right in the world. But when it was time to wake up Jax, it was reality of the bad things that were to come for us.

We rushed out the door together. Jax gave me and the boys a kiss. Then rode off to do whatever in the hell he does all day. I had them strapped in and pulled out of the driveway.

There were birds circling in the road. It was a group of crows. I noticed how they all flocked together but one. It was still sitting there. It wasn't budging even though I was coming. It stood alone and didn't seem afraid. I had to swerve to not hit the damn thing.

"What's wrong, Mommy?"

"It's okay, baby. It was just a bird."

When I looked in the rear view mirror, it was still there. It was either one determined bird to get what it wanted. Or a stupid one that was going to get itself killed.

What caught my eye when we pulled into the parking lot of the hospital was one single crow was perched on my reserved parking sign. Like it was waiting for me to get there. It looked exactly the
same as the one in the road with a small patch of white on its face. Yet, I knew it was impossible it
couldn't be the same one.

Only a convertible pulled into my spot in front of me. A girl got out of the car. So I rolled my
window down. "Excuse me. I am Doctor Knowles and it is my parking space. My name is on it."

"So. Park somewhere else."

"The hospital will have your car towed if you don't move it." I gave her a warning, nicely as I
possibly could.

"I am only going to be five minutes. You can wait old woman. I can't help it if I am younger and
quicker than you are. Fuck off."

This little bitch went past annoying me. She pissed me off. It was clear to anyone who could read, it
was dedicated parking for me. I tried to be nice and it didn't work. I even used reasoning with her
and it didn't work. So I was going to handle the situation with as much grace as she would allow.

Parking in the spot next to her car, I got out. The crow never moved. It cocked its head and looked
straight at me.

"This is the last time I am going to say this. Move your fucking car now."

"You are making me late. Didn't you hear what I said. I will be out in a minute and then you can
have your precious parking spot."

This was no longer about a parking spot. It was about having respect for others. I grabbed the girl by
the arm and she took a swing at me. It was a bad move for her. So, I swung back. Only I connected
the hit with her. Then I grabbed her by the throat.

"Do you know who I am? Jax Teller from the Sons is my husband. If you say anything to anyone
about this. I will hunt you down and handle it SAMCRO's way. Now move your fucking car."

The girl couldn't wait to get out my parking spot now. It was all she had to do in the first place.
When I got the boys out the bird flew away. I noticed it circled above us until we got into the
hospital.

Once I dropped the boys off at daycare I started my day. Only I couldn't shake the damn bird. Was it
a oman or something. I knew nothing about crows, so I looked it up.

... One of the great animal phenomena of the world is the congregation of large numbers of birds
into a single group to sleep together. The birds get some protection from predators by being in a
large group.

"Damn that sounds like the crow eaters. They sleep with anybody and they don't care how many of
them there are either."

... Six Terrifying Ways Crows Are Way Smarter Than You Think...

1. Adaptive Behavior
2. Planning
3. Tools and Problem Solving
4. Memory
5. They conspire With One Another
6. They Can Remember Your Face

(*** Source /by David Dietie

It kept me fascinated with reading about them until a knock came on my office door.

"Hi. What a pleasant surprise. Come in."

"I hope we are not disturbing you Dr. Knowles. Jimmy had to get x-rays done on this floor and he wanted to stop and see you."

"I am glad you did. How are feeling today?"

"I'm okay."

Jimmy's case broke my heart. He was only eight years old and had been in the hospital most of his life. He battles against the odds to live another day. As fast as we could get the cancer to go into remission, it comes back again.

"I was going to stop by to give this to you later. But since you're here, I will give it to you now."

He was a huge NASCAR fan and I found a book on the history of racing. I couldn't help myself but to buy it for him. I tried to make sure once a week to purchase some little token to brighten his day.

"Thank you, Doctor Knowles."

"You're welcome, sweetheart."

"Well, I better get him back to his room."

I held the door so his mother could wheel him out. I watched her rummaging around in her purse for change to buy something out of the vending machine. Jimmy's medical bills had put a strain financially on the family. I pulled out the cash I had in my lab coat. I stuck a ten dollar bill in the machine and got a package of gum.

"I don't want the change. It will be in quarters and I would be jiggling in the hallways all day. Why don't you get something."

"Oh no, Doctor Knowles. I couldn't take it. You have already done so much for my son."

"Well okay. But if you don't the next person who comes along will."

When I rounded the corner I heard the machine dropping something from it. I think most of the time Jimmy's mom doesn't have the money to eat on. It went to the person who needed it the most as far as I was concerned.

After I made my rounds my cell went off. It was the daycare and Abel had gotten into trouble. They wanted to know if I had time to come by.

Abel was sitting in the time out chair for hitting another little boy who took a toy away from him. So, I sat down in the tiny chair next to him. We would need to have a long conversation about it.

"What happened Abel? You know we don't resolve issues by hitting."

"You did, Mommy."
Talk about getting a big shock to my system. What he saw me do this morning was how he handled the little boy who took his toy. I always thought they would learn violence from Jax and not me.

"What I did was wrong Abel. I never should have ever behaved that way. Just like you should have never hit Jason with the toy car. You need to apologize to him and don't do it again."

"Are you going to apologize, Mommy?"

"Um...yes I will as soon as I see her."

"Then I will too."

He took off to find Jason. Abel told him he was sorry and they went to play together. If adult life was as simple. But it wasn't. I was so ashamed of myself for loosing my cool in front of my children. I've been ashamed for my behavior a lot lately.

"Abel is such a good boy. We never have any trouble with him. He must be having a bad day."

"Yes it must be why."

There was no way in hell I would admit to them it was because he witnessed my poor judgement. Even though I had to admit it to myself. "If you need me, call me. I'm going to lunch."

With my sandwich, juice box and lap top gathered in my arms. I went outside to get some fresh air. It wasn't long after I sat down I saw a crow, one single crow pecking at the ground near the tables. Now I thought I was going crazy. It looked like the one from this morning.

"Maybe I'll have lunch inside instead."

My hand went over my eyes so I could watch it circling in the sky above me. According to what I read this morning, they like to be with other crows. So it made no sense as to why this bird would be all alone.

After I found an empty table I kept reading about these strange creatures. It wasn't getting me the answers I had hoped for.

"May I sit down?"

"Please Margret sit down and join me."

"I want to talk to you about the Spalding boy." She said it with concern in her voice. It immediately put me on guard.

"Did something happen? He seemed fine when I visited with them this morning."

"That's what I want to talk you about. You are getting to close to the situation, Tara. You're no longer Jimmy's doctor. I know you want to heal everyone. But sometimes, we just can't. The maximum has been met on their insurance, he will be getting released soon from St. Thomas."

"You can't do that. Without more operations, he doesn't have a chance of making it." My sons were the faces I seen while those thoughts cluttered my mind. What would I do if I was put in this same type situation?

"I spoke with Jimmy's mother. I gave her a list of places she can go to get government assistance. Unfortunately we don't accept that kind of payment and he will moved to another hospital." With Margret everything was cut and dry. The hospital rules dictated her actions. However, I had a
"Those places won't give him the care he needs and you know it. Most of the time they are understaffed and there isn't enough funding to go around. What if I volunteered my services for free?"

"You are an employee of this hospital and you can't perform an operation with your hand the way it is. You will follow the policy in place. In our profession we have to face and accept death of patients. It is just part of the job."

Margret kept talking and I didn't care what else she had to say. There had to be a way to help the family get Jimmy what he needed.

"I have to go. My next appointment is in ten minutes." It was a lie. My schedule was clear for the rest of the day. But now, I had an agenda all of my own going on.

My children were the center of my universe. If I was in the position Jimmy's mom was in, I would dance with the devil himself to allow my child to live. It was what I was going to do as well. Dance with Sons and hope they could help in some way.

As I drove to the clubhouse I kept thinking about how we could raise the money for Jimmy. I knew they do fund runs all the time for the children. Of course most of the time it was a cover to deliver of illegal drugs or guns. But hey, beggars couldn't always be choosers.

Gemma was outside smoking when I pulled into the parking lot. All the bikes were gone. "Jax won't be back for a couple of hours."

"I came to talk to you actually. I have a problem."

"What?"

After I explained the situation to Gemma, she wanted to help out. "How much money do you need to raise?"

"About eighty thousand dollars. It will only cover the next operation and his hospital stay. After that, I don't know what will happen. This next operation is so important for his chance at survival."

"Eighty thousand dollars. Hell I don't know if we can raise that much money, Tara. We'll do what we can. You should talk to Jax when he gets back. If I bring it up, you know he will say no to it."

We went into the clubhouse a couple of the prospects were there along with Bobby. He had a few ideas of how to raise some money. None of them would be how I would personally choose to do it though. I had to set my feelings aside and do what was right to help Jimmy. Even though it was going to be dirty money if we did it their way. It was always dirty when the SOA got involved.

It wasn't long until they all came walking in except for Jax. "Where is Jackson?" Gemma took the lead just like she always does.

"He is looking into a new club venture with Nero."

"What?"

"You should ask him Gemma."

"Yeah like it would do me any good to ask. He keeps me on the outside of everything. I'll ask Nero,
he'll tell me." Gemma wasn't the only one being kept on the outside of their circle of trust. I wasn't sure if I was ever let in or not. Several times I called Jax's cell and he didn't answer.

She called Nero's cell and of course he answered her on the first ring. I've never been envious or jealous of Gemma in any way. Most of the time I made sure I don't end up being anything like her. In this case though, I was envious.

Envious of how her men always put her and her feelings first. Even when Clay was around, he babyed her when she was upset about something. Most of the time Jax doesn't even notice that I was upset or he just ignores it and goes on. Gemma can be a conniving bitch there was no doubt about it. But she always knew how to handle her man. I was falling short in that area.

"Nero is on his way back."

"Where is Jax?"

"He will be back soon. Well, I still have work to do." If Gemma thought she could just blow me off and it would shut me up, she was wrong. Because I followed her to the office and shut the door.

"Don't bullshit me, Gemma. Where is Jax at?"

"If I tell you. You have to promise me you won't over react or tell Jax I was the one who told you."

"I promise. Just tell me already."

Gemma was never much for tact or suspense. This time however, she chose her words carefully. "He went with Colette to see her business."

"Who the hell is Colette?"

"A madame looking to go legit and she might be doing a joint venture with the Lodge."

Now, I sat down in the chair while I tried to catch my breath. I didn't even know if Jax was doing anything wrong or not and at this point it didn't matter. In my head he already had. If he was with her and nothing was going on why didn't he answer my calls? Or was it because he was so busy or entertained he wouldn't? Perhaps, he wanted to make certain I never knew.

"Tara, you promised me."

There had been so many times, I wished I could get my head and my heart to tell me the same thing about Jax. But they never had. My heart always spoke of love and commitment. My head goes the other way, betrayal and he would never be just mine.

This was where the old Tara would have sat down and cried or kept it all in. Suffered in silence and all alone. The new Tara chose to handle it a lot differently.

"I will keep my promise, Gemma. Jax will never know you told me. I need you to help me with something."

"Help you with what?"

If I was ever going to step up and be the queen to my man in the SOA. I had to figure out how to handle Jax. Draw a line for him to walk and make certain he doesn't ever stray from it. So I told Gemma exactly what I wanted her to do. If she ever thought about betraying me on this, I would fuck her world up.
"You want me to do what?"

The boys were put to bed alone, just like I always done. I waited for Jax to come home. The later it got to be the more pissed off I became. There was only one way for me to get it out of my system. At the kitchen table. While I schemed on just how to handle my husband and how to stabilize the life we shared. I took out my laptop from work and set up a file just for me; *Circling the Crow.*

*Taking care of my family is always first and foremost for me. As I grew up I never knew what having a real family meant or even felt like. I guess it's part of the reason I have endured what I have to keep mine together.*

*When I looked in the mirror; the woman who stares back at me changes daily. On the days I see her resembling the frightened girl who wants to run away, I firmly plant my feet on the ground and stay. When I look into their little smiling faces, I always know I made the right decision for my children. I have to believe I can coexist and be true about what Jax really is without losing myself in the mix of the chaos.*

*It frightens me most of the time when I have to defend and try to protect the man I love. With every ounce of my patients and understanding I still can't truly come to grips with the outlaw life he leads. There are so many things he does I don't condone either. But I will never apologize for defending him or trying to cover up what he does. Because at the end of the day, he is still my husband.*

*I have been told many times; if you love the man you will learn to love the club. If the man truly loves you, what does he have to do to be with you?*

"Not fuck around with whores would be a good start." When I seen the headlights come through the kitchen window. I quickly hit the save button.

"Hey, babe."

"Hey."

"What's that stuff?" Jax seemed interested in what I was doing. I was more interested in what he had done already.

"Just some case notes I am working on. Where have you been? We went by the clubhouse and you weren't there. No one knew where you were."

"I had a club problem to take care of." It was always those vague answers. He never actually lied about it because he never told me anything direct either.

"Oh really. What was it? Because I called you a couple of times and you never called me back."

"I had to meet with Roosevelt. No big deal I handled it."

"I bet you did."

"What?" It threw him off quilter because he wasn't used to me pressing him on anything he done or said.
"I just meant you are always on top of your club business. Thursday night I would like us to have dinner with the boys. You haven't been home to eat with us in over a month." This was where I started to set boundaries. I thought it was a reasonable request for him to show up for his family and spend time with us.

"Okay it sounds good. I'm gonna take a shower and go to bed. I'm exhausted."

"I wouldn't miss dinner if I were you, Jax. I am giving you a three day notice."

"I won't. You can count on me babe."

Irrational, crazy or even wrong. Things were about to change. Maybe not for the good but, change none the less. I gave Jax the chance to tell me where he was and he lied to me about it. My behavior was made out to be irrational by him. He agreed to full disclosure and no more secrets. I guess the rule doesn't apply to what he doesn't want me to know about.

While I cuddled up in a blanket on the bed waiting for him to come out of the bathroom. I wanted to talk about Jimmy. When he came in I explained the problem and what I wanted to do about it.

"The club is tapped, babe. Or we would help with the money."

"I don't want the club to donate the money. I just need help raising it. Gemma said she is willing to help."

"We will do what we can. Are you ready for bed?"

When I laid in Jax's arms there was no questioning why I chose to live his kind of life. The outline of his face was all I could see by the alarm clock light. Watching him sleep until I must have drifted off myself. Because I was woke up with a very wet kiss and little hands on my face.

"Good morning, Mommy."

"Morning, baby. Where is Daddy?"

"He is making pancakes."

"Really?"

Jax couldn't make toast by himself without burning it. I rolled over and looked at the clock and I should have been up an hour ago.

"Maybe we should help him."

We stopped to get Thomas only he wasn't in his crib. Jax had already dressed him and had him at the table in his high chair.

"What is all of this?"

"I thought about what you said last night. I know I haven't been around and I thought we would eat breakfast as a family this morning."

My orange juice and coffee was poured for me. This was a complete switch in roles for us. I was always the one who got up first, got the kids dressed and feeds everyone.

Jax was trying to flip over the pancakes and lets just say they wouldn't be the prettiest I have ever had. When someone else cooks for you the food always just taste better for some reason no matter
Abel didn’t even notice how they looked after Jax put syrup on them for him. Abel ate and jabbered on with him about absolutely nothing. I think it made him happy to have some time with Jax.

Unfortunately I don't think Jax realizes the time he was missing out on with the boys. It made me sad to know the club takes precedence over what was happening with his children. They were growing by leaps and bounds. Soon Abel would be starting school. Thomas would be walking on his own and not want to be held so much. Before you knew it they would be grown and gone with their own families.

Someone was already at the door as early as it still was this morning. Jax went to answer it and Gemma was following along behind him when he came back into the kitchen.

"I will take the boys to daycare this morning. So you can over see the car wash."

"Car wash?"

"Yeah you said you needed to get the money as soon as possible. They are having it in the parking lot across from the Lodge." Overnight they came up with a solution. This was where Gemma was great. She could angle so much shit. Of course, most of the time she caused the shit. It really wasn't the point though, she was trying to be helpful.

"It's not like I am not grateful or anything. But how is a car wash going to help raise the kind of money we need?"

"It's a special car wash." I really didn't care for the way she said it. Nor the look on her face much.

We got the boys ready to go. Jax helped Gemma get them in her car. Before he got on his bike I gave him a kiss. He was making an effort and I wanted him to know it wasn't going unnoticed.

"Thank you for this morning. It meant a lot to me."

"You mean everything to me, Tara. I know I'm far from perfect. But it doesn't mean I don't love you and don't appreciate everything you do."

Just when I wanted to stand up to Jax and say this was it. I have had enough and couldn't take it anymore, he does something like this or says the right thing to always make me stay.

While I drove to the Lodge I thought about last night. Maybe I jumped to fast to think the worst of Jax. It could have been Roosevelt was the last stop he made and it was what he told me about. Hell anymore I got confused by all the shit he does and had to go through everyday. He was always going in fifty different directions.

When I looked across the street from the Lodge I couldn't believe my eyes. Talk about being shocked. The whole brothel was out there in nothing and I do mean nothing to wash cars. I thought it was rush hour holding up traffic but of course it wasn't. Cars were lined up to get washed by them.

Some were walking up and down the street holding signs in barely enough to cover their nipples up. At least they were eager beavers. Nero came out when he saw me.

"Hey, Tara. I hope this will help Jimmy. My boy takes a lot of care and I understand about how expensive it is."

Nero told me about his son. I guess I wasn't aware of what was wrong with him or he had a child for
that matter. We talked for a bit and his heart was in the right place. But I still wasn't sure this was how I wanted to raise the money. With all the bad things I had said about them. I felt kind of bad they were willing to do it. Not to mention if the hospital ever found out I had anything to do with this and the brothel, it wouldn't be a good thing at all.

"Anything will help Jimmy and his family. I appreciate you doing this."

"I would like to do a lot more. With my old business getting shut down and just starting this one, I'm a little short on cash."

Nero didn't mention the fact he had given the club so much money. Jax told me about it. I wondered what else Nero wasn't mentioning to me.

"It's okay. You're doing as much as you can do, Nero. How did things work out with Collette?"

"I'm not excited about it. I think Jax wants it more than I do. It just doesn't feel right to me. She seems nice and all but having the cop involved makes me nervous."

Once Nero believed I already knew what was going on. He opened up a little. Like how my husband went back to the house with her to see the operation yesterday and how he was going there again this morning. Something else Jax failed to tell me himself.

"I have to check in with the hospital and I will be back this afternoon. I can't thank you enough, Nero."

"You're welcome. If there is anything else I can do, I will."

Nero was genuine. It wasn't exactly something I was used to seeing from people around the club. I was thankful to him for many reasons. One he was helping with Jimmy's cause and two he told me all about Collette's little business. Including where it was.

Her whore house was the first place I went. Jax's bike wasn't here so I knew he wasn't either. Next I found the bakery Nero described to me. Bingo, Jax's bike was parked in the back of it.

Now was when I could have acted irrationally and thrown a fit to let him know I knew he lied to me. Or I could have handled it like Gemma would have and hit the bitch in the face with a skate board. I choose to neither of those things. Collette and I would come to an understanding only it would be when I was ready and on my terms.

After a quick check in at the hospital I wanted to get back to the car wash. With those women doing it I was really curious as to how much money they could raise. Only it was closed up by the time I got back. I figured it ended up being a flop. But I wanted to thank Nero anyway for the effort he made.

When I went inside the Lodge it was quiet. Lyla came out when she heard the door.

"Is Nero here?"

"He went to see Jax. This is for you." She handed me an envelope with a wad of cash in it.

"Wow, there has to be at least three thousand dollars in here. You made this on a car wash?"

"There is nine thousand dollars in there to be exact. We made it doing a car wash and some soapy girl on girl fantasies. What can I say, pussy sells. Nero gave you the house's cut and we donated our services."
Holy fuck, pussy really does sell. Of course they sold their asses too. I was taking prostitution money. In just four hours or so they made this. It would come out to be roughly two thousand five hundred dollars an hour. As badly as it made me feel to know where the money came from and how it was earned, I took it. I don't think Jimmy's mom would care if it came from robbing a bank as long as it saved her baby.

"Thank you, Lyla and everyone who helped."

"We did it for Jax. And well you too. I really hope it helps the little boy."

Of course they didn't do it for me. They done it for Jax. But at this point I couldn't have cared less. Then she handed me another envelope.

"This is Nero's donation. He gave five thousand and said to tell you he wished he could do more."

Lyla's cell went off and I wasn't intentionally eves dropping, it just worked out that way. It was Nero. Jax and Nero were bring Colette to the Lodge tonight so she could she how it operates.

"Well I have to go and get things ready for tonight. So I'll see you later, Tara."

"Lyla wait. The other day when I came to see you, you asked why I came here and I wasn't honest with you. Do you have maybe five minutes so we could talk?"

"Okay. Do you want a cup of coffee?"

"That would be great."

Lyla was actually a lot more understanding than I thought she would be. When Opie was still alive, she felt like I do. The club always came first and he shut her out. Not to mention he cheated on her with the same skank.

"I am the one men cheat with. I was hurt when Op slept with Ima but, I eat pussy for a living. So how could I stay mad at him. If you're worried about Jax being here, I can tell you he never touches any of the girls."

"I'm not saying Jax has done anything. It's just he is never home and we hardly ever see each other anymore. Maybe I am being insecure for no reason."

"Hey, I get it. You want your man to pay attention to you. You should do something to make yourself feel good. Make him see what is in front of him."

"You have to educate them. The best way to make your old man stay home was for him to know everyone else wants you. You need to fit in better, Tara. Being a part of what they are is the best way to be close to them and keep them close to you."

In some ways I knew Gemma was right. She had said it so many times. I didn't fit in well with the other women. Mainly because I was nothing like them nor really wanted to be for that matter.

A girl came in and needed Lyla for something. "Excuse me, Tara. I'll be back in a few minutes. Make yourself comfortable."

On the couch in the waiting area. I was just hoping I wouldn't catch anything from sitting on it. Then I laughed to myself it was this kind of thought that separated me from them. Well among many other things. I was going to have to work on it, a lot.

Today was a turning point for me. You stumbled, caught yourself and recovered. Recovering was
what I planned on doing. The other old ladies believed there was only one way to act to fit in with the club. I must admit I was going to try some of their ways to see if I could do it. Also, I would set the bar at a higher standard for them to meet.

This may or may not work. Someone started this sort of behavior a long time ago. The rest have played follow the leader instead of being a leader and making changes. I knew it would take time to evolve them in a new direction and change won't happen overnight or easily without resistance.

After I thought about it, it was a lot like high school. You choose which lunch table to set at. If you followed the cool kids, dressed just like they did, condoned their actions and behaved like them. Nine times out of ten they let you in their circle and you got to sit at the popular table. I wanted to be at the cool old ladies table and still do it my way. Was it even possible to take years of demonizing women and turn it around with changes?

"Okay, where were we?"

Hitting the save button when Lyla came back in. No one ever needed to know about my feelings or thoughts. This was the safest way to make sure it doesn't happen either. Jax would never get into my work computer and besides, I always kept it with me in my bag.

"Is the crises diverted?"

"The girls were deciding the wardrobe for the evening. With Collette coming, they wanted to make sure it was okay." Lyla was a lot more open with me than she ever had been before. Perhaps, it was the approach I took with her.

"What are you doing with Collette?"

"We are going to show her the right way to run an escort business. There is a fine line between a whore house and a legitimate escort service. The money the customer pays for one. Most of them want it to be discreet and for no one to know they were ever here. How much the cops try to bust you is the other big perk of being an escort. I'm sorry to cut this short. But I have so much to do to get ready."

"You helped me, Lyla. I would like to return the favor. What can I do to help you?"

"Um... I'm not sure Jax will like it." I understood her hesitation. There was nothing she wasn't used to a man controlling for her. But times were changing.

"He is my old man and he'll get over it."

"Wow, you sounded just like Gemma."

Oh that was so good and so bad at the same time to be compared to Gemma. It was a place to start my experiment though. It would allow me to have a reason to be around without looking like I was checking up on Jax. It would also give me time with them to try to fit in.

"Gemma can you pick the boys up from daycare and watch them until I get home tonight?"

Grandma used every excuse she could find to spend time with the boys. This phone call would give her that time with them she longed for. The opportunity to fit in with her family again.

"Sure. Where are you going?"

"I'm helping Lyla with the Lodge."
Time with Lyla was another eye opener for me. I thought it was all pussy and just them laying it down. But it wasn't. Even though it was the end result. The girls all listened to what she had to say and what she wanted them to do. She was Gemma of the pussy world.

Lyla made sure everything was clean. From the kitchen to each of the girl's room. Their permits and applications were laid out nightly so if they would had a surprise visit from the police, they were ready for them. I cleaned the bar and the waiting area. I even went to buy a bunch of fresh cut flower arrangements to help while she was doing something else.

It was down to the girls getting ready for the evening. "Tara, I don't know how to say this. You can't wear that tonight."

"Why not?"

"Because you look like a banker. Come on, I will find you something to wear."

Lyla took me in the back where they kept boxes and racks of clothing. "Here hold on to this." It was a pair of red leather pants. She found a red leather bustier to go with it.

"I don't think I can wear this."

"If you want to be here when Colette gets here. Don't you want to look good?" It was the smirk Lyla had on her face. Obviously she knew why I wanted to be a part of tonight.

"Yes, I do."

Wiggling my ass into those tight pants and it still wasn't working. "Jesus Christ. Who is supposed to wear these, a sixth grader?"

"Suck it in, Tara."

"These feel like a second skin."

"Well, it is the point."

A push up bra made my boobs look huge and stuck out like they never have before. Hell, I might even have to buy one later for myself.

"Lets do your hair and makeup."

There was so much of it caked on my face. I am pretty modest with the makeup and hairspray. Lyla wasn't however. After she picked through the curls she put in my hair. She pulled one side back and used a diamond clip to hold it in place. Along with another gallon of hairspray. I bet it was a big expense for these girls.

She placed a diamond choker around my neck with long dangling diamond earrings to complete my ensemble.

"You look great. Now let's get you some shoes."

It was the worst part. How in the hell do they walked around on four inch spikes was beyond me. Of course I guess in reality they don't walk around as much as they laid down.

"All you have to do is mingle with the clients. Stay out here in the front. Be friendly and offer them a
drink until they pick their date. If they should hit on you. Politely decline them and say one of the
girls will be happy to take care of you. Can you do that, Tara?"

"Yes, I can." The words came from my mouth but, the thoughts running through my head were
different.

Lyla disappeared into the back to get dressed. Some of the other girls came out and was setting
around waiting for the men to come in. I noticed one of them was leaning her head over on the
couch.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm not feeling well."

When I touched her forehead, she was burning up. "Where do you hurt?"

We went into her room. After she showed me, I knew what was wrong with her. "Let me go get my
bag. I'll be right back."

"Is it bad, Doc?"

"Nothing some penicillin won't cure."

The girl had a simple case of chlamydia. I should have made her do a blood test but, hell I have seen
a thousand cases of it. I just wonder how many men or women she had spread it to already?

"What's going on?" Lyla stayed on top of her game. She made her rounds to all the girls before show
time.

"Bianca will be out of commission for about thirty days. She has gonorrhea."

"Oh shit. Don't let anyone else find out."

With my gloves on I gave her two shots. I also gave her the pills I had in my bag. "When those are
gone. Call me and we will do a blood test to make sure it is all cleared up. And don't have any sexual
contact with anyone until then."

"Okay. But how am I supposed to take care of my daughter?"

"You have a daughter?"

"Yeah, she's two."

Taking three hundred dollars out of my bag, I gave it to her. I would put my money in there later to
make it up for Jimmy.

"Thanks."

"You're welcome and remember no sexual activity for thirty days."

Bianca left and was going to go out the back door. It wasn't exactly something a brothel would want
to advertise one of their girls having.

"You did a nice thing for her, Tara. Thank you."

"We have to feed our children, Lyla."
"Yes we do. We better get back out there so I can feed mine."

When we did. Jax was with a blonde I would assume was Colette. She was giggling and hanging all over him. And he wasn't even trying to push her away either. Her hand went to his leg and she was rubbing it. I wanted to blow up.

"Keep your cool, Tara. Show him you can handle anything."

Lyla was right. If I went off it would only prove I hadn't changed at all. The old Tara would have thrown a fit and accused him of sleeping with her. So I chose to handle it differently.

Jax was so lost in her. He didn't even notice I was standing in front of them. Or maybe it was because he didn't expect me to be here so he thought he had nothing to worry about.

"You must be Colette. I'm Tara, Jax's wife."

Let's say it more than got his attention. "Hey, babe. What are you doing here?"

"Lyla had a lot going on today with the car wash and everything. So I volunteered to help."

"Jax, can I talk to you?" Nero didn't seem so enchanted with Colette. If anything he was short with her and Jax about the whole thing.

"I'll be back."

"So, you're Jax's wife. For some reason I thought you would be prettier."

"Yeah and for some reason, I thought you would be younger and prettier too. You must have a lot of experience. What are you fifty-five, sixty years old? You should talk to my mother-in-law. I bet you two have a lot in common with being the same age and all."

"Hi, I'm Lyla. Let me show you around." As they walked off together. Lyle did give me a smile over her shoulder.

After they left I went to go into Nero's office. But I stopped at the door because there was arguing.

"I don't like this shit, Jax. It could be a setup by Barosky."

"It's not. Colette is cool with everything." Jax was so damn confident with his statement. But, I couldn't help but wonder if pussy was clouding his judgement to some degree.

"Is she? Or she is just making you believe that shit?" Nero stood his ground. His experience in this game somehow made me believe his doubts about Collette. Or hell, It could have been because I didn't like the bitch either.

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean? I think I know about street shit, Nero."

"We're supposed to be partners man and making the decisions together. On this one, you're making all the decision. I don't see her or her girls bringing in the kind of money she says they are. I have done this for a long time. They are not high end pussy and bringing in guys from the docks doesn't equal a big money payout. It just doesn't feel right to me."

"Okay. You dig in a little deeper and find out more about them. We are partners, Nero. If you find something on them, we end it."

In these high heels I was trying to make a quick get away from the door before they came out. Only,
I ran straight into the one person I never wanted to see me here. The hospital’s top administrator. He made all the decisions of who stayed and who goes. I was staring into his face and no words would come out. Looking like a whore as well, I might add.

He turned his head away from me and kept walking like he never saw me. With his arm around one of the girls. He was married and had four children at home. Is there anyone who doesn't cheat on their spouse?

"Lyla do you know that guy?"

"He is a regular here. Why?"

"Never mind. I just thought he was someone I knew."

Jax wasn’t exactly happy I was here. Because he startled me when he came up behind me. "What are you doing Tara?"

"I'm following your lead, baby. This is just business for you and I want to be a part of whatever you do."

"This is not a place for you to be hanging out at."

"Then it's not a place for you to be either."

"We have talked about this."

"Yeah, you talk about it Jax and I have to go along with it. Without further input on my part or a discussion about it."

Needing a minute alone. I couldn't believe he was giving me the same damn speech again after the other night. It wasn't a big deal then so why the fuck was it a big deal now? As I stood in the kitchen I was trying to calm down and it just wasn't working.

"Tara."

"I'll be out in a minute."

"Don't let them get to you."

"Do they get to you, Jax?"

"Tara come on I..."

Talking was over. I needed action from him. To know he was my husband and wanted me too. So I pushed him by the chest until he was up against the wall. He was taken off guard by what I had done. I've never been an aggressive person but maybe it was time I learned to be.

Ripping his shirt until there wasn't a single button left on it. His hands went to my bustier and was trying to undo each of the hooks.

"Get it off of me. Use your imagination, Jax."

He picked me up and laid me down on the big counter in the center of the kitchen. The steel of his knife felt cold against my skin as it ripped easily through the leather.

The hurry he was in to get me naked was the passion I've missed so much from him. His hands ran
over my bra pulling my breast out of the cups. Then his tongue was swirling around my bare nipple. With each breath he would let out a cool breeze was making my nipples more erect.

It took me a lot longer to get those damn pants on then it did for Jax to get them off of me. I sat on the edge of the counter waiting to feel him. Waiting to be one with my husband. When he stuck his cock inside me I couldn't help but to let out a moan.

Holding on to his shoulders I kissed his neck while he let his dick show me how much he wanted to be with me. Until I saw her standing in the doorway watching us. The smile she had on her face when she came in tonight with my husband wasn't the same one she wore now.

Half smiling and with a cocky smirk on my face I mouthed the words to Colette. "He's mine." She turned around and left.

Jax lifted me off of the counter and wanted to take me from behind. I was more than willing to let him drive his cock into me hard. With each thrust he made inside of me, we were feeling the love between us.

The sweat was running down his face when we were done. "I don't want you hanging out here anymore Tara."

"Okay. Whatever you say baby." I let Jax win this one. But you could damn well bet, I would win the next one. As they kept telling me. Don't sweat the small stuff and fight over things that really weren't important. Wait it out until it is something big came and then you be relentless about it.

Throwing on his old flannel shirt. I tucked my boobs back in the cups of the bra and put my panties back on. Since there were no buttons left on the shirt, I would have to hold it together. Hell I didn't care. I felt so good and I wouldn't let anyone take the feeling away from me.

"What am I supposed to wear?" I tossed him his leather.

"It will be a sexy look on you, Jax. Your leather without a shirt on."

We walked out of the kitchen together. I handed Lyla back the pants and what was left of the bustier. "Thanks. I'll buy a new one to replace it."

"Um... okay." She seemed stunned by what transpired here tonight. So was I actually.

"I will be expecting you home soon, Jax."

"I need to make sure Colette gets home then I'll be there."

"She's gone. She took a cab home." Lyla informed him quickly when he brought up Colette's name.

Jax got a long kiss from me in nothing but his flannel in front of everyone. "Like I said baby, I will see you at home real soon."

Holding my head up high while I walked past them all. Hell I still had on more than most of the women in here. I had nothing to be ashamed of. At least I was fucking my husband and not another woman's man.

Jax made a point to call me to check in several times. Or send a quick text to tell me he loved me. I thought we were getting back on the right track until today. Or maybe I was lulled into a false sense
of security.

We were supposed to take the boys to the park and eat lunch. Jax promised he would spend the rest of the day with us. Then we would eat dinner together as a family.

Jax's cell went off after only being at the park for twenty minutes with us. I already knew he would have to go. He could never keep a promise to the ones he loves. When I found out why he had to leave, let's just say it would be a hard lesson learned for him. Because it was a promise I made to myself.

"Colette got shut down. I don't know what happened but she needs me."

"I need you, Jax. Your children need you." It was the same unanswered plea I made with him over and over. Many times anger was just a misguided plea for love. I was about to become fucking angry with him.

"I won't be gone long. I promise. We will still have dinner together tonight as a family."

I watched him ride away without as much as a second glance in our direction. I couldn't even believe I got sucked in again by him. He threw a little affection at me and I swooned for him like a school girl. Only to have it shattered in a couple of days down the road.

As much as you wanted someone to change and believed they could or would, they were in control of their life. Not you. There was only one person whom you could control and try to find happiness with, yourself. We all craved love and it made us a blind crazy. Even I couldn't be blindsided with what just transpired between us and his sons.

The whore called and he goes running to her. When I needed something I had to take a number and stand in line to wait until he had the time. Well, this would be one promise he would keep or suffer the consequences of it.

We all made choices, but in the end our choices made us. The choices we made, whether bad or good, followed you forever and affected everyone in their path one way or another. This was where Jackson Teller was blind. He couldn't see what it done to me or his sons.

"Choices be damned."

When you were the only parent around most of the time. You had to carry on alone and try to make it a good time for your children. Try to not let them see the pain you felt. Try to still make it a pleasant day for them.

Abel had other children to play with and I held on to Thomas while he slept. I pushed him on the baby swing until his little eyes couldn't stay open any longer.

After the other children left Abel got board. It was a good time to feed him. Because when he had someone to play with he showed no interest in food.

"Abel honey, I am going to get our lunch. Stay right here until I get back okay?"

"Okay."

He was such a good boy and done what I said most of the time. I wouldn't be to far away from him. It was just a short walk to the car but still, I had to use caution just in case.

Laying Thomas in his carrier. I buckled him in. He could sleep in it on the picnic table while Abel
and I ate. When I grabbed the basket out of the back of the car I noticed a man was talking to Abel. I could tell by the way he was dressed, it was a threat to my son.

Grabbing the gun out of my purse I went running to get there. "Get away from him. Abel run."

Abel froze and didn't move. Dammit I told him to stay there and of course he didn't know he was in any danger. The man took off. I wasn't sure if he was a random pervert or if he wanted to hurt us because of the club.

As swiftly as I could, I scooped Abel up in my arms to getting back to Thomas.

"Mommy, my ball."

"I'll get you a new one."

"No. I want that one. Daddy got it for me."

First I strapped Abel in his booster seat. I made sure they were alright. I locked the doors and put the key in my pocket. I tried Jax's cell but of course he didn't fucking answer me.

It was only a short walk to get Abel's ball. It meant the world to him because Jax bought it. It was pathetic how Abel had to hold on to a ball instead of his father. I looked around before walking across the grass to pick it up.

A car came barreling towards me from the parking lot. Two men got out and there was no way I was going to get back to the car without a fight.

"You're Jax Teller's old lady."

"What do you want?"

"We have a score to settle."

My children were near and in danger. Because if anything happened to me, it would end up happening to them too. Bashing the one in the face with my cast. It was my only defense against them.

The other guy grabbed a handful of my hair. The only thing I could think of, I reached in my coat and pulled out the gun Jax gave me. I started firing it on them son of a bitches. Really I didn't figure I would hurt them, I wanted to try to scare them away. It didn't take them long to get back in the car and leave. I managed to hit one of them in the gut. If he didn't do something soon, he would bleed out.

As fast as I could run, I had to get back to the boys and get us the fuck out of here. Fumbling to get the key out of my pocket. Once I pushed the button to release the door lock. We were speeding to get the hell out of here.

Through the rear view mirror, I watched with scared eyes. I never saw anyone following us. Once I thought we were safe, I pulled over to have my break down. Gemma was the only one who I thought of to call. At least she would answer her damn cell for me.

"Tara I can't understand what you're saying. Where are you?"

It wasn't long until Gemma showed up with Nero. Chibs, Juice and Bobby weren't far behind them. They kept asking me question after question. There was only one thing important to me and what
they needed to know the most.

"They have a score to settle with Jax. I'm taking my children home now."

"You need to have someone staying with you Tara until Jax gets home."

"Thanks Bobby. But I can take care of my family."

"I really think you need us to be around. Nero and I will stay until Jax gets there." Gemma was pushy as normal. Only I was grateful for it this time.

"Okay."

As much as I wanted to believe I could take care of myself and my family, could I really? The next time I might not be as lucky as I was today. Me and the boys walked away but, would we the next time? Because there was always going to be another person waiting in line to hurt us as long as I was with Jax.

Nero and Gemma followed us home. Once I got the boys inside my four walls of sanity I felt a little better. Gemma was giving them a bath while I fixed dinner. If Jax knew what was good for him, he would be here to eat it with us.

The first thing I done was go into the bathroom so I could wash my hand. His blood was on my cast. I took it off and scrubbed my hands many times. Even though they were clean, I still could see the blood on them.

"Are you okay Tara?"

"I don't know anymore."

Chibs called Nero. They went to the park after we left and never saw anyone or found anything. I was still worried about what would happen to me for shooting the guy.

"Do you think they will go to the police, Nero?"

"No I wouldn't worry about that. The last thing they will want is the cops involved. If I had to guess they won't even go to a hospital. They'll get patched up somewhere else."

"I shot a person. What the hell does it make me?" Gemma drilled in my head. You should never show weakness, ever. I felt comfortable with Nero, so I done exactly what she told me not to.

"A survivor. You protected Abel and Thomas on your own, mama. It wasn't Jax Teller, it was you who did what you had to do to take care of your family."

"Everything in this life scares me. Sometimes I think I'm afraid of my shadow."

Nero just listened while I talked. He was different from the others. The best part was he never passed judgement on me or said it would get better. They always say it would get better and I found it only got worse.

"Shit still scares me. You're not the only one."

It was a relief hearing Nero say those words. I wasn't sure if everyone else around me feared nothing or if they just got so damn good a pretending they truly weren't any longer.

Gemma came in with Abel and Thomas. Nero went with Abel to watch his favorite video. Gemma
was fed Thomas for me. For my children I had to get my shit together. I was going to finish this
damn dinner come hell or high water.

After I peeled the potatoes and carrots, I started the roast in the oven. It was always Jax's favorite and
I wanted this meal to be something he would want.

Jumping when a knock on the door happened. I looked at the clock. I was hoping it was Jax but, he
wouldn't have knocked. Nero was pushing me back so he could open it.

"Juice."

"Hey I was just in the neighbor hood and thought I would drop by. I'm not checking up on you or
anything Tara."

"Really just in the neighbor hood. Why?"

"I was... coming by to talk to Jax." Juice didn't hide his emotions as well as the others. He came up
with several excuses as to why he came by. Other than the fact he was here to check up on me.

"He's not here. Would you like to eat with us?"

"Yeah. If you have enough?" His boyish charm was cute. It seemed to please him I even asked. But
I understood all to well how much it meant to be included.

"There is plenty."

There was plenty because Jax broke his promise to me once again. The last promise he would break
without feeling the repercussions of his actions. He was always telling me I had to think shit through,
maybe this time he should have.

"They only know what you teach them Tara. The more you let your old man get away with, the more
shit he will do. When you let them push you around, they will keep pushing until you push back."

Gemma's words rang loud in my head while I finished up dinner. They also touched me in a new
way this time.

We all sat down at the table together. The boys may not have had their father but, they still had a
family who loved them here. We ate, had a pleasant conversation and a few laughs. This was
something that hasn't happened at the dinner table in a long time.

After dinner Gemma wanted to put the boys to bed. So, I let her while I cleaned up the kitchen. Juice
took off Nero and Gemma followed him shortly afterwards.

There was still one more thing I had to do before Jax got home. When it was done, I lit up a smoke
and had a glass of wine.

His headlight came in through the kitchen window. I waited patently for him. He was jiggling the
doors handle and trying his hardest to get the door open. It wasn't long until my cell went off. Well,
I'll be damned he does remember my phone number and how to use the phone to call me when he
wanted something.

"Yeah."

"There's something wrong with the lock. I can't get in."

"The lock is fine. Your key doesn't fit anymore because I had the locks changed. If you would like a
new key, you have to earn it. I'm done fucking around even though I do love you."

"What the fuck is going on, Tara?"

"There are new rules to the game, Jax. The boys and I were attacked today and you weren't there. This is what happens when you choose whores over your family. We will try this again tomorrow night. Dinner will be on the table at six o'clock. I will expect you to be on time for it without any exceptions."

"What are you talking..."

Talk time was over, I hung up the phone because no matter how many times I told him something he just didn't listen. It was up to Jax to take action if he wanted to keep his family together as much as I did. He kept trying to call me and I kept pushing the ignore button. I watched Jax from the window throwing a little fit like Abel does out in the driveway. I fully expected him to go running back to the club like he always had done. But he didn't.

Jax let out a long line of curse words while he took the boys car seats out of my SUV. He sat them down on the ground, climbed in the back seat and slammed the door shut.

"There maybe hope for you yet Mr. Teller. I am going to get you to walk the line one way or another."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

I would love to hear what you think about the story. I know some of you are probably wondering why I would put the crow in there. I am going somewhere with it, I promise.

Tara will be a lot stronger and harder on Jax when he screws up or doesn't have his priorities in order. Sometimes it has to get worse before you can make it better. And this story will be about how she can make a better life for her family and find a happy medium with the club.

I really believe by the time she tried to change things in the show, her destiny was all ready written. Maybe if she would have shown Jackson some tough love in the beginning she would have made it out alive.

How many of you are excited about season seven starting? I know it is their final ride and I will watch it but, I can't say I am excited like I normally am.

Thank you for marking this story as your favorite or alert and leaving a review.
The boys were eating at the kitchen table when the knock came on the door. I thought it was Jax wanting in but, I got a surprise when I opened it.

"Hey Nero. What's going on?"

"I just wanted to check on you to see if you are better today. I brought the boys doughnuts. Do I even want to know what that's all about?"

Jax was setting out in the driveway having his first smoke of the morning. His hair was a mess and he had one of Thomas' baby blankets wrapped around his shoulders.

"Probably not. You can come in if you want to."

The boys were excited to see him. Nero spent a lot of time with Gemma so in return he seen my boys a lot too. Out of all of them I really didn't have a problem with it. I knew I should because of the whore house and him being an ex-junkie and all. But for some reason, I trusted him. More than even Jax sometimes these days. I mentally scolded myself for thinking that way about my husband. It was still a reality in my mind I just couldn't let go of.

"Look what Nero brought for you guys. What do you say?"

"Thank you."

Abel was so loving, sweet and kind. I have seen changes in him lately that forced me to take a stand with Jax. Thomas was kicking his legs and holding out his arms until Nero took him.

"I'll watch the boys if you need to get ready or anything Tara."

"I don't want them to be a burden on..."

"I like spending time with them. It makes me feel young again. Besides you know Grandma Gemma will kill me if anything happens to them on my watch."

If I could only get my husband to be around the boys as much as Nero was. It wasn't as though I didn't know in my heart Jax loved them. It was his commitment to his family that worried me. We always took the back seat to whatever was going on in the club. Maybe it was never intentional on his part. But, at this point it didn't matter if it was intentional or not, it would somehow stop today.

There was another knock and I was sure it was him this time. "Am I allowed to come in my own house? I need to shower and change before I go to the clubhouse."

"Sure, it's your house Jax."

"It wasn't how I meant it, it's our house. I really am sorry about not being here last night when you needed me. I'll have a Prospect stay..."

"You still don't get it, do you? I don't need a Prospect posted at my house on Tara babysitting duty."
The boys need a father to be there for them while they are growing up. I need a husband who loves us enough to come home at night where he belongs to make sure his family is alright. Not one when every whore, crow eater and sweet ass flashes a little smile you forget about what your family needs."

"That's not fair Tara."

"Do you really want to talk about what is fair with me? Because I don't think you do. None of this is fair to your family." If Jax hadn't figured that part out on his own. This was going to be a hell of a lot harder on him than I originally thought.

"What is this really about? I love you. You know that."

"Sometimes, love just isn't enough Jax. A little respect and everything else needs to go along with it."

"What do you want from me Tara? I got all this shit coming down on me every fucking day. I do the best I can."

"I want you, Jax and everything you promised me. What is coming down on you, is your own damn fault. Including why you are losing your family a little more every day."

"What the hell does that even mean?"

"Figure it out, Jax. If it is a problem with the club you would search until you find the answer of what to do. All of your time, energy and heart goes into it. I suggest you do the same on our relationship. I also meant what I said last night; you better be home for dinner at six tonight."

He acted as though I was speaking a different language to him or something. This was where I needed to stop the conversation before it became a heated argument between us. If I let him argue with me, it gave the opening that somehow he was still right. I was not going to allow it to happen this time.

After I got dressed Nero helped me get the boys loaded up. Jax was still in the shower when I left. I figured the worst case scenario was he would get mad and change the locks so I couldn't get back in. But I had a plan of action for it if he did. I would move in my dad's old house with the boys. It set empty and I never got around to selling it yet.

"Tara it's none of my business. But is everything okay with you and Jax?"

"I don't know anymore Nero."

"If you need someone to talk to, I'm here."

"Thanks for the offer. But I have learned over time anything I say gets repeated to Jax." My bitterness came to the surface this morning. All though, every single time I let my guard down or confided in one of them, they ran straight to Jax.

"That's kinda harsh, mama."

"I'm sorry, you don't deserve that. You are always nice to me and my boys. I'm just a little lost lately." In fact I lashed out out at the wrong one. Nero had done nothing to me. I need to take a step back and tone it down with him.

"I can see that. My offer stands if you want to take me up on it. I'll catch you later. Right now I'm going to see my boy, Lucius."
"Do you want some company, maybe? I really don't feel like going to work today anyway. My head is just not in it." Perhaps it was wrong of me to play hooky from work. It wasn't like I done it before. After seeing Jax this morning my head was going in about twenty different directions and I had such an uneasy feeling.

"Sure, I'd like that."

We dropped Nero's car off at the clubhouse. I kept Abel and Thomas in the car for obvious reasons when he went inside. I called Margret and took a vacation day from work. It wasn't long until he came back out and we were ready to go.

The conversation was casual between us on the way to see his son. I guess I didn't realize how much I missed having people around me. For the most part, I shut out the world. When I was with Jax or the club, nothing was a normal conversation. At work, it was at about the patient or my profession. With Nero, it was absolutely about nothing pressing or bad.

"This is it."

It wasn't a bad place from what I heard about it. They took good care of their patients. The boys and I took a seat at the picnic table while we waited for Nero to come back out.

Thomas was napping and Abel went to play on the swing set. While I was waiting I took out my laptop.

The worst part of being the wife and old lady of Jackson Teller is not knowing. I never know where my true place is in all the chaos. Just when I think I have found it, it is lost once again. I'm always wondering what horrible things will come my way or what will happen to my family. My mind never gets a rest from it.

Then there is the fact of how many criminal acts did my husband committed today? How will it come back to bring us harm? The list of his new enemies seems to only grow longer. With a stronger meaning of what is in store for us in the long run.

On certain days I have a sense of belonging with Jax and the club. I find myself handling what is thrown at me by knowing I fit in it somewhere. But yet, I am never sure where it really is. Those are the good days. On other days we are worlds apart from having a life of our own and being rid of the curse of SAMCRO. We see nothing the same way. It makes me feel as though we have lost the connection between us.

On certain occasions, I get a shimmering glimpse of the connection again. For the most part it is enough to keep me hanging on to hope and faith in us. But is it a false hope? Am I only fooling myself into believing it? I wish I knew how to bridge the gap of what we are and find the place where we are both happy at the same time.

For every life I save on the table in the operating room, Jax takes one away. When I have a moment of peace, the club takes it away. Any stolen time with my husband I can get, another woman always seems to take it away. My family, I will let no one take them away from

"This is my son. This is my friend Tara."

Nero was completely amazing with Lucius. As I watched Nero I knew what I did last night was the right thing. My boys lack that so much in their lives. Their father was only a visitor in our home. He was never around for moments like this with them.
Abel wanted to be pushed on the swing so Nero moved Lucius in his wheel chair over too. "I wish I could swing."

It broke my heart to hear that come out of Lucius's mouth. Every child needed to have some normalcy during their childhood, including my boys. I would have to see what I could do to let Lucius have his moment when I got back to the hospital.

We left when it was time for Lucius to go to physical therapy. Since he spent most of his life in a wheel chair, the rest of his muscles had to be worked on every day.

"Your son is very sweet Nero."

"Yeah he is such a good boy. He's nothing like his father or mother, thank god." It must have been the look on my face that said it all. "I wasn't meaning Jax or anything Tara."

"I know."

I knew he wasn't referencing Jax directly. But it didn't change the fact if my children turned out to be like their father; they too would be criminals and killers. It was the worst nightmare a mother could have about their children. Unless you were Gemma, then you encourage it and want them to be a common street thug.

My breathing got faster and my heart was beating more erratically. Every breath I took in I was laboring to take. I gripped the steering wheel so tightly my knuckles were white. Something was wrong with me, my vision went blurry, and I could barely see what was in front of me.

"Tara are you okay? Look out."

"Shit."

Within a few feet I managed to stop the car before it hit a deer in the road. He was already dead from another car but, they just left it laying there. From every direction crows were flying off. They made a feast out of the dead carcass. Except for one that stood alone on the side of the road and away from the crowd of others. It looked like the same as the crow I had seen over the last couple of days. It was the white mark across the eye that made it so identifiable.

When I went to get out of the car, Nero stopped me. "Where are you going Tara? We can drive around it."

I thought about explaining it to Nero. But thought better of it. He would probably think I was crazing too. Because I was sure I was being stalked by a crow.

"I'll be right back."

One step at a time, I tried to approach the crow slowly. It had no fear of me though. Those little cold black eyes looked directly in mine and never lost their focus on me. There was something in its mouth but, I couldn't tell what it was. So I slipped a little closer to it. Before I reached it, whatever was in its mouth fell to the ground. It cawed a couple of times and flew away.

As I bent down to look at it; it was a small piece of baby blue ribbon. As silly as it was, I picked it up and put it in my pocket. There had to be a meaning to all of this. Why would a crow be following me around?

"Hell maybe I am fucking crazy."
"Tara. Do you want to tell me what you are doing?"

"Do you believe in omens?"

"I guess so." Nero sort of shrugged. You could tell he really didn't believe.

"It's what I am doing."

Nero didn't ask anymore. But he did offer to drive us back to the clubhouse. All I knew was with him being with Gemma, he should be used to bizarre behavior by now. I caught him looking over at me a couple of times without saying a word all the way there.

The queen bitch, I meant Gemma, was waiting outside for us. How in the hell she always knew when we were going to arrive was beyond me. Like the crow, she had some sixth sense going on too.

"Don't you have to work today?"

"I took the day off."

"Why don't you let me and Nero take the boys this afternoon? We will feed them lunch and drop them off later. So you can have some Tara time, mom."

"I'm fine. I would rather have the boys with me."

"You might wanna take a drive to Stockton or something."

"Is that where Jax is? Did he go to Collette's place again?"

"He went to meet the Madame whore..."

"Gemma." Nero scolded her by the way he said her name. Possibly she still even schocked him from time to time.

"It's okay Nero. I'm sure it's just for business purposes only." Those might have been the words that came out of my mouth. Inside my head was screaming that mother fucker.

"Yeah me too, it's probably just business. Come on Nero let's get some lunch made for the boys. I'll see you later mom."

This was where I once again had to make choices. I could walk away from it and do nothing. I had plenty of other things to do today to occupy my time from not going to Stockton to check up on Jax. Would he cheat on me once again? Or had he and I just haven't found out about it yet? The biggest question was did I trust him enough not to go?

"Fuck no I don't trust him. He has done nothing to earn it from me yet."

Before I made it back to the car Nero came out. "I need to go to Stockton. Do you mind if I tag along with you?"

"You really don't need to go to Stockton, do you?"

"I do if you say I can go with you."

The fact Nero wanted to go, had me guessing what exactly I would be walking into. Did he know something I didn't?
"Will you tell me what Jax is doing there?"

"I don't know. These days he seems to be flying solo and making decisions without me. That's the truth, mama."

"I believe you. He does the same with me too." Well at least I wasn’t the only one Jax decided what was best for without consulting anyone else first.

The first place Nero took us to was the bakery shop. I had already been here before but, I would keep that information to myself for now. Nero told me it was used as a front of course for illegal business. But weren’t they all when the club was involved?

"What do you want amigo?"

"I'm looking for Jax. Have you seen him?"

"Nope. But then again I haven't been looking for him. Who's she?"

"A friend of mine. If you see Jax, tell him to call me."

Nero seemed on edge when we walked in. I noticed he kept an eye on the guys in there and tried to stand so his back wasn't directly to them. He almost walked out of there backwards.

"I'm confused Nero. Why didn't you tell him who I am?"

"Because, Barosky is a scum bag and I don't trust him. He will call Jax and Barosky will tell him I brought you here. This way all he can say is a classy pretty chick was with me."

"Thanks, I haven't been called pretty in a very long time." It made me smile and sad in the same breath. When I thought back to exactly how long it had been.

"That's a shame, because you should hear it from Jax all the time. I always want Gemma to know how beautiful she really is and how much she means to me." Those words made my heart flutter. It wasn't even me Nero referenced. Yet, I still felt his love for her.

"You don't appear to fit in with the rest of them. I mean it as a compliment by the way." After I assessed the situation and the more we talked. Nero was special. I just wasn't certain how he fit in with all this shit.

"I am taking it as a compliment too. I wasn't always this way. It took my son being born, time in prison and a lot of reality checks in life for me to get here. The way a man was; is not set in stone. A Leopard can really change its spots. I am living proof of it. So don't give up on Jax just yet."

There was the false hope again seeping in my heart. I truly wanted to believe someday Jax could change and leave all of this behind. Rome was not built in a day. So, I would take baby steps with him and we would get there together somehow.

The next place we went was to see the great Collette. Perhaps my hate for her was unwarranted and it was spilling over from the past. But with Jax, I could never be too sure.

"Do you want to wait for me?"

"This is something I have to do Nero."

"I get it, I really do. It's just I..."
"You don't know for sure what I will find Jax doing. I get that part too, I really do."

Before we ever made it up the path to the stairs leading to the front door I stopped. Crows were circling up above us. Flying together in perfect harmony, flowing so freely through the air. They had to be an omen of some sort but, I still wasn't getting it. The significance of their meaning just wasn't clear to me yet.

When I heard that familiar sound, I jumped as I was startled and turned around quickly. It was the same white face crow perched on a limb in the tree. I didn't even know why I was surprised by it being here.

"It's not too late to turn back Tara. I will never say anything to Jax about you being here."

"It's not that. It's the crows."

"You got a thing about birds don't you girl?"

"Not really."

A brunette with her boobs and everything else hanging out greeted us at the door. "Hi, Nero."

"Is Jax here?"

"He is upstairs with Collette in her office."

Those words and what I expected to find rang in my head with each step I walked up. Could it be possible she had an actual office and the girl didn't mean she was upstairs fucking my husband?

As I approached the last step, I stopped once again. Did I really want to know what was going on past the door? Could I still have love in my heart for Jax if he was fucking around again? Especially if I had to witness it.

Nero held out his hand for me. "We will do it together. No matter what happens Tara, I'm here and it will be okay."

A very quiet "Thank you" passed from my lips as I took Nero's hand.

I took a couple of quick breaths in as we stood in front of the door. Nero leaned against the frame and waited for me to make my decision. My free hand finally reached for the door knob. I could hear Collette's laughter from the other side. She was saying my husband's name. So I knew this was the right room.

Jax was really surprised when he seen me standing in the doorway. I was even more surprised to find him setting in a chair doing absolutely nothing with her. Guilt should have been my emotion at the time. Only it wasn't, it was relief.

"What are you doing here Tara?"

"She came with me. We went to see Lucius and Tara was kind enough to make some medical recommendations for him. I thought I better come by and check shit out while I was sort of in the neighborhood. You know with the call Collette made yesterday about getting shut down and all."

"You could have just called me on the phone Nero."

"Yeah, I'll do that next time. You could have called me yesterday too partner."
Jax looked pissed off when he stood up from the chair. His eyes kept glaring at our hands being locked together, then his gaze went to Nero. I smiled at Nero before I let go of his hand. To let him know I appreciated him being here with me. Nero smiled back then turned his attention to Jax, only to give him a cold stare back.

"It was a false alarm yesterday. I was so upset, Jax stayed with me and calmed me down. I am hoping Jax can stay around so we can sort out all the paperwork tonight. We are having a party, you and Jax should attend." Collette smiled directly at me when she only invited them to come.

"I can't, I have a date with my wife tonight." The shocked look on her face, he turned her down. It made my heart leap with joy. Damn, it was so wrong to get excited over the fact your husband actually acknowledged you as his wife. Even though it was a small victory, it still was a win for me this time.

"I'll have Lyla come over and help with the paper work. I'm sure Jax has important club business to handle. If that's okay with you partner? I won't make decisions without you knowing about it."

"Yeah, that'll be great Nero."

Knowing Jax the way I did, he was irritated at the fact Nero called him out on it in front of us. It was one of the things to change rapidly after he took over the gavel. If you called Jax out on something, he made sure you never done it again. What once was for the good of the club, became what was good for his leadership instead.

"What about you Nero, will you join us this evening?"

"Nah, I can't. I spend my evenings with Gemma. But thanks anyway."

It was a silent walk to the car for all three of us. Until Jax broke it. "Why didn't you go to work today?"

"I took a day off because I didn't feel like going."

"Are you sick?"

"No, I'm not sick. I just didn't want to."

Jax kissed my forehead before I got in the car. "I'll be home for dinner tonight."

"If you are, you are. If you're not, don't bother coming back home Jax. You better like living at the clubhouse."

"I love you Tara and I will be there. Nero give me a call later. We have some shit to talk about."

We followed behind Jax's bike. But I took a detour to the hospital. "I have something I want to show you."

They had many gadgets for physical therapy sessions. One of them was a swing which held the legs in place for patients who couldn't move them. It was perfect for Lucius.

"I don't know what to say Tara. Thank you."

"You don't need to say anything and you're welcome. Let's go so Lucius can swing like he wants to."

Nero was a good man. My original assessment of him was correct. I knew what a good feeling it was
to see your child happy. You done anything you could to make it happen too.

We got it approved first by Lucius's physician to use it. It was something I insisted on. Nero went out and hooked it up to the swing set. I just sat back and watched as he went to tell his son about it.

It brought a calming to my heart to watch the father and son spend a glorious bonding moment together. Lucius smiled and laughed as Nero pushed him on the swing. Of course he didn't want to quit when they came out to get him. Nero really didn't want to either but, he knew it was time.

Nero cleared his throat and put on his sunglasses after he hugged his son goodbye. He didn't want us to know he was a little choked up. I changed the subject on the way back to the clubhouse. It was hard to tell which was happier at the moment; Nero or Lucius.

I was running short on time because I still had to cook dinner. I got the boys quickly from Gemma. We still had a lot of things to do.

Thomas went into his play pen while I ran Abel's bath for him. It wasn't his favorite thing to do but, he done it without protest when I told him Daddy might join us for dinner tonight. I had to use the word might, I didn't want it to be another disappointment to my son.

Running around the kitchen like a mad woman to get everything started. The potatoes were on to boil and I started the fried chicken.

When I glanced at the clock it was 5:42 p.m. and no sign of Jax. I set the table as though the four of us would be eating together. "Don't let me down this time."

With five minutes to spare I heard his bike pull in the drive. He actually made it like he said he would for once. I was waiting for my husband like a wife should at the door.

"It's not six yet."

He didn't need to say anything else, I wrapped my arms around him tightly. "I really do love you, Tara. I'm sorry."

There were only a few times I would actually agree with Gemma on well, anything. She made it known to everyone nothing good ever came out of rehashing old history. But this was one time I would take her stand on it and let it go. At least for tonight. All I cared about was having my family together under the same roof and safe.

After I put the fried chicken, green beans and mashed potatoes with gravy on the table. We actually set down as family for a meal. I looked around at my boys, I wanted to cry. No one would understand something this small could mean so much. The fact my husband made damn sure he came through the door on time, was priceless to me. Just the simple act he had done meant he still at least cared about our relationship.

"Do you want to know what I saw today, Daddy?"

"Sure."

"I saw a lizard by the swing set. Tommy was scared but, I wasn't. I protected him from it."

"That's great you protected your little brother."

"I always try to protect him and Mommy because you're never home anymore to do it."
Abel's statement or observation, however you looked at it. Simply stunned Jax and he gave no reply. I noticed he didn't eat anymore afterwards. I warned him what could and would happen with him being absent so much from their lives.

After they finished eating, I started clearing the table. "Let me give you a hand babe." This was definitely something I wasn't used to, Jax wanted to cleanup something. Other than a mess the club created.

Abel took Jax by the hand. "Daddy, will you watch Sponge Bob with me?"

"As soon as I help Mommy, okay?"

"Go ahead Jax. I'll clean this up."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

It felt like another special father and son moment I witnessed today. Abel was literally cheering at the fact his father was going to be with him. Jax picked up Thomas from the high chair. I honestly had to stop and think about the last time Jax held Thomas for more than five minutes.

Quietly I slipped around the corner. Thomas was cuddled up to Jax's side in the chair. Abel was setting on the other side chattering about Sponge Bob. If I could freeze time, it would be now. So I could enjoy my boys being together.

Then the fear rushed over me, tomorrow would eventually come and what would it be like in our home once again? "I might have to find another way to shake up Mr. Teller."

For a couple of hours we were a normal, loving family. Doing the basic everyday things in life. "Go get ready for bed. I will be there to tuck you in."

Jax went into the bathroom while Abel put on his pajamas. I heard the water running and thought he was taking a shower until he came out dressed. "I'll put the boys to bed. I ran you a hot bath."

"I'm sorry, you did what?"

"I know I'm a shitty father Tara and a worse husband. But tonight, I will take care of the boys and you go a soak." Jax gave me a quick kiss before he disappeared into the boys' room.

Well, I wasn't going to waste it that was for sure. Hell I haven't had time to soak in a tub for months. I stripped down and couldn't wait for the bubbles to consume me.

The smell of fresh lilacs calmed my senses as I settled into the hot water. I soaked a rag then covered my forehead when I leaned my head back against the tub. This was pure heaven for me. Most women wanted expensive things and to be treated like a princess. Me, I just wanted a quiet evening with my family.

"Can I have some water?"

"Yeah."

"It's not how Mommy does it."

"It's a cup with water in it Abel."
"She always puts one ice cube in it for me."

"Well, just drink it son."

"No. I need an ice cube."

It made me giggle when Jax was rummaging through the freezer looking for ice. "Sorry Abel, we are all out of ice."

"No."

"Yes we are."

"No."

"Yes."

"Let me show you."

Abel took Jax back into the kitchen. I heard the ice falling from the door. "Oh."

"See, I told you."

"It is bedtime little man."

After Jax got Abel finally into bed. He came in and sat down on the potty. "When did we get the new refrigerator?"

"Three months ago Jax."

"You've made your point. I need to be here more."

"Will you hand me my razor from the sink?"

"I'll do something better than that."

Jax took off his shirt and set on the edge of the tub. He lifted my leg out of the water. Then placed my foot on his leg. With a handful of shaving cream he rubbed my leg until it was completely covered. Each swipe of the razor was followed by his hand caressing my leg.

Next went his pants down to the floor. He climbed on in the tub down by my feet. My other leg went propped up on his shoulder. Only this time when he was done shaving it, he rinsed my leg then his lips explored my calf. It felt so good when he licked and nipped at it.

I went to get out of the tub only for him to stop me. "I wasn't done yet babe."

Jax let some water out of the drain then filled it back up with more hot water. He settled his body in behind my mine. With Abel's tub toy he filled it up with water and leaned my head back on his shoulder. He dowsed me a couple of time before applying shampoo to my hair.

I only thought he had magic fingers when he massaged my scalp and ran his fingers through my hair. When his hand went under the water and inside of me, I was certain of it.

After we played around in the tub I had to mop up the water from the floor. I didn't mind though, it was one mess which was fun to make.
Jax was already out when I went into the bedroom. I sat in the chair and watched him for a while. I decided to grab my laptop and make an entry before I went to sleep too.

Jax is in such a deep peaceful slumber while I type this. Peace is something never used much in his vocabulary. He is such a tortured soul most of the time. It used to be he felt guilty about some of the things he's done. Now I don't even see as much as any remorse for it in his eyes. That's what worries me the most about him. I blame the club and his mother for it. But to some degree it's his fault as well, he chooses to stay in the middle of the chaos. It's almost like he enjoys it.

Will the day come when a woman blames me for my sons as well? I say a prayer every day for them to change their path of direction away from SAMCRO. If we stay in Charming, I don't think that will ever happen. Their destiny becomes clearer to me. They too will be dragged down in the lower pits of hell with the club. I will have no way to save them from it.

They say you can only teach a child so much. Then it is up to them how their life turns out by the choices they make. But is it really the truth? If John would have taken Thomas and Jax out of Charming away from the club when he still had the chance. What kind of man would Jax be today? How different would our relationship truly be? Would it save my boys from the same fate? Is it too late or can I somehow turn it all around still?

I laid beside my husband in bed and thought about it until I must have drifted off to sleep. It startled me a bit when I woke up in bed alone. I went into the boy's room and they were gone. I ran to the kitchen. No one was there either. A piece of paper was on the counter by the coffee pot which was still on.

**Tara,**

*I took the boys to daycare. Enjoy your morning babe. I made your coffee too.*

*Love you,*

*Jax*

"Maybe this will be a great day after all."

I actually got to sit around and just drink coffee before I had to go to work. I even stopped off for a fresh baked doughnut because I had so much time on my hands.

The best part was no crows were around all the way to work. I looked for them too. "I must have just been imagining it all."

With a big smile on my face I entered the elevator to go up to my office. So I could start my day. Only it was short lived. "I need to speak to you in my office."

"Okay, Margret. I'll be there after I make my rounds."

"Now please." It was the way she said it. This wasn't Margret my friend, it was my boss speaking.

"You are suspended until further investigation Tara." She threw a bunch of papers down on her desk.

When I picked them up I couldn't believe what I seen. It was me out there with the brothel girls at the car wash we had for Todd. Another one of me in my red leather pants greeting the whore's clients.
"Son of a bitch, it looks like I am the one running pussy for the club."

"You have tied the hospital to prostitution. They will conduct a full investigation."

"This doesn't mean anything, I can explain it. It is a legitimate escort business. I have nothing to do..."

"But your husband does have a lot to do with it. You can call it an escort service if you like. But, we all know the truth to what it really is. They have turned a blind eye to the activities of the Sons of Anarchy because they value you here as a doctor. But they will not ignore it when it questions the integrity of the hospital and one of its chief surgeon's reputation."

"Isn't there something you can do?"

"I warned you Tara to not get involved with a patient's problems. You chose to do it anyway according to the signs the girls are holding. My hands are tied. Please empty out your things and I will advise you of the outcome."

Security escorted me out of the hospital. Could you guess what was perched on the post by my car? That's correct, a damn crow. "I don't even see you. Nope, I am not dealing with it today."

Once I got in the car it landed on the hood of my car and was staring at me through the windshield. "Okay fine, I fucking see you. Are you happy now?"

It cawed a couple of times before it flew off. But I knew it would only be back at some point. I sat in the parking lot for an hour trying to sort it all out in my head. Every time I asked the question who would do it and why? My answer always went back to the same person, Collette. Nero, Lyla and the other girls had nothing to gain from it. Even if someone was trying to hurt the club, getting me fired wouldn't affect them one way or another.

To the clubhouse I went to confront Jax about the damn Madame. Of course his bike was gone when I got there. I stormed into Gemma's office.

"Where is Jax?"

"They went to Stockton."

"Fuck, of course he did."

"What's wrong?" It was easier to just show her. "You think the Madame had something to do with it? I don't like that bitch either. She's been getting pretty cozy with Jax lately."

"I'm sure she did it. What would you do Gemma?"

"I think you already know the answer to that one sweetheart."

Yes, I knew exactly what she would do. I was going to confront the bitch too. For once I was doing it on my own and in my own damn way. When I pulled up to the brothel I was the one confronted with yet another problem, a fucking huge problem.

"Son of a bitch. It's him."

Collette was on the porch with the ones who attacked me. They were dressed in Police uniforms and of course they knew her. She must have been the party favor because each guy was taking turns kissing her before they took it inside her brothel. Maybe she hired them to get me out of the way. I
thought about calling Jax but, would he believe me or not? She seemed to have some sort of unspoken hold on him or at least she was trying hard to. So I called the person who I trusted the most.

"Nero, I have a problem. You said I could call you if I needed anything."

"I'll be right there. Don't start shit with them Tara."

It wasn't long until Nero pulled up behind me. "Stay here."

"Shouldn't we call Jax? What if they hurt you?"

"Stay here, mama. I got this." He took his gun out of the back of his pants. It was obvious he meant business.

Of course I heard what Nero said for me to do. I would also be pissed if my boys didn't listen to me in a dangerous situation. But part of me was screaming on the inside to not let Nero face this alone. So I followed after him anyway.

"What is this shit? You better have a damn good excuse to roll up in here with your gun out amigo."

"I do, Barosky. Tara says they attacked her the other night. I need for you to lift your shirt up. Being dirty cops all you understand if I don't just take your word for it."

"Who the hell are you going to believe; a crazy bitch or me? They were watching my warehouses for the last four nights."

"I believe her. So lift your shirt up. It's the last time I am gonna say it."

"Put the gun down Nero. Let's not make this get messy because I will blow her away." I wasn't watching the bitch. I was too busy trying not to go into panic mode with what Nero was doing. Collette had a gun pointed at my head as she wrapped her arm around my neck from behind.

"Alright, let's talk about this calmly. No need for anybody to get hurt."

Nero was going to surrender by lowering his gun but, I couldn't let him because of me. This was no longer about just my family, it was about his son as well. God only knew what they would do to us if he surrendered. We were all our children really had. I should be ashamed for even thinking their father wouldn't be there for our boys if something happened to me. But again, reality was staring me in the face and slapping the shit out of me at the same time.

As Jax always told me there was no being half in or half out, it was all or nothing. I still might be searching for my place as an old lady and the club queen. When it came to being a mother to my children; I had no doubt what my place was. So I was all in when I head butted that bitch as hard as I could in the face with the back of my head.

"Fuck, Jax makes it look so easy." I was woozy and felt nauseous as I stumbled around trying to regain my senses.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Now that I have Hot Harleys and Cool Vampires complete. I hope to be posting more on this story, along with my others. My goal is to post the next chapter in a couple of days.
I want to give a huge thank you to the one who recommended this story on Face Book. I greatly appreciate it and it made my day.

A couple of you have asked me if Tara will make it through to the end of this story, absolutely she will. By the end there will be no doubt who the true SOA queen is.

Thank you for reviewing and marking this story as an alert or your favorite.
Tattooed Blue

Chapter 5

Tattooed Blue

Nero picked up Collette's gun from the floor. All she could do was hold on to her nose. Which had blood gushing from it.

"Tara get out of here."

"I'm not leaving you. No matter what happens, I'm here and it will be fine." Nero gave me a quick smile before handling his business. Only Barosky had another plan and a surprise in store for us.

"You piece of shit." He ripped opened the cop's shirt and just like I said, he had been shot in the stomach. The cop was shot in front of us with his own gun by his boss. Then Barosky turned the gun on the other cop and shot him in the head.

"It's hard to get good help these days. Sorry I doubted you."

All the girls were screaming and running for cover. I knew I should have but, I couldn't get my legs to work now. Nero pushed me behind him and still wasn't lowering his gun off of Barosky.

"It would have been nice to find out why they attacked Tara before you killed them."

"I handle my own internal business the way I want to. Just like you do amigo."

"Well my crew doesn't go around attacking women." Nero found the fairer sex to be revered not tossed to the side like garbage. No one could ever convince me otherwise after being around him.

"Why would I want to hurt her? It will make the deals with the SOA a little sour don't you think?"

"What deals are you talking about?" Apparently Nero was kept on the outside as much I was. He had no clue of the arraignments made by his partner and the dirty cop.

"Put the damn gun down Nero. You need to talk to your partner about that shit. Handsome Jack has already been called and is on his way. I'll clean this shit up."

Nero was at a bit of a loss as I was about what Barosky meant. It figured Jax knew something the rest of us were blind to.

"One of you girls get Maggie cleaned up." The Madame needed cleaned up as much blood that was running down her face. It gave me a sick pleasure I shouldn't have. But I had it none the less.

"We'll wait outside for Jax." Nero was practically pushing me out the door.

"Didn't I tell you to wait for me Tara?"

"Yes."

"That's shit could have went down in bad way in there. I don't want you to get hurt."

"I'll probably listen the next time."
"The next time?" He was as surprised as I was. But let us face the facts. When the club got involved. There was always a next time to still come.

"I'm sorry Nero. I just didn't want something to happen to you because of me."

"This is not because of you. So you don't even think that shit, mama. This is...I don't even know what it really is."

"It's got everything to do with me." I showed Nero the pictures. He leaned against my car and was speechless.

"I swear Tara, I had nothing to do with this. I trust all my girls."

"I know it wasn't you. It was Collette. She is the only one who would have something to gain from it."

"But Collette wasn't around when we had the car wash. Fuck...Kiki was though."

"Who is Kiki?"

"It doesn't matter. It will get handled. You got my word on it."

Could it really be handled now? Was my career over because of who I fell in love with and chose to protect? I was no longer guilty by association of just Jax any longer but, the club too now. Anything they did or was involved in would eventually come back to haunt me somehow. It was the way it would come back around that worried me the most.

It wasn't long until Jax and the rest of the club arrived. "Babe, are you okay? Why the fuck did you bring her here Nero?"

"What the hell are you taking about Jax? Maybe if you were more involved with what was going on with your family, you would know why Tara is here."

They were in the middle of a screaming match when I tried to put an end to it. "This is why I came here to start with." I shoved the pictures hard into Jax's chest. "Once I arrived, I saw the men who attacked me at the park and I am the one who asked Nero to come here."

"Why didn't you call me first?"

"Because Jax every time I call you, you never answer it."

Jax tried to justify it. Then chose to move on because this was one argument he had no defense for. "Barosky made it sound like you went crazy and was waving a gun around Tara."

"And you seriously believed him?" If my husband knew me so well. He would have never thought I could do such a thing. Nor did I just out of the blue go looking for trouble.

"This is where knowing what is going on with your family helps Jax."

"Stay out of it Nero. I'm talking to my wife right now."

Nero didn't stop talking though. He gave Jax a rundown of the events that transpired here tonight. Then it was a clash between him and Barosky. I thought it was about time Jax focused on what was the most important thing, those cops tried to hurt his family.

By the time I pushed my way past the rest of the club to get back inside the house, Jax had Barosky
cornered. "If I find out you had anything to do with the attack on my family. I will come after you, deal or no deal."

"You might want to remember just where you are handsome Jack. No one comes on my port and threatens me. I let this little misunderstanding slide tonight but, I won't again. I had nothing to do with what they did to your old lady. I need this deal to go through as much as you do. We all have something to gain from it. So why would I do that?"

"You heard me Barosky." It was the outlaw that took my husband over. He was that caged animal ready to pounce on those who defied him.

"Collette pulled a gun on Tara." Nero was in there still fighting for me. Bless his heart, it truly was in the right place.

"What?" It was a piece of the puzzle that the dirty cop left out for Jax. But now he turned his complete attention to Barosky.

"It wasn't even loaded. I told to Maggie to do it. Nero started this shit by busting in here, I was just trying to get things under control."

Collette stood there in front of Jax still bleeding with pleading eyes. She acted as though I beat her until she couldn't get up. Which now I guess I should have since she was seeking solace from my husband for it.

When a smile crossed Jax's face, I wanted to slap him. How could he do that with me standing here? His hand brushed Collette's cheek as she leaned her head to rub against it. Her eyes closed as she was enjoying his touch. But I forgot just how treacherous and cunning my husband truly was. He slammed her against the wall by the throat.

"If you ever pull a gun on my wife again, I'll kill you yourself."

Chibs was pulling Jax off of her. "This is not the time Jackie."

"You might want to listen to him handsome Jack and let go of Maggie. We need to meet in the morning with the Myans. Nero needs to be there too." I had to agree with Nero. Barosky was only out for himself. You could tell by the way he spoke and handled shit. He definitely had his own agenda in mind. Was he just setting Jax and the club up? I thought he was too.

"I need to be where for what?" Poor Nero, he just wanted to know how he played in all this. How they involved him without his consent. In the end, he put up with it and stayed involved because of her, his love for Gemma.

"Do want to fill Nero in handsome Jack. Or do you want me too?" Although while I watched Barosky work the room and con everyone. Gemma came to mind. He was the queen of the port rats.

"Yeah handsome Jack, what the hell is he talking about?"

"Can you guys give us a minute?" We went outside while Jax talked to Nero. It didn't go well either when they brought it outside.

"I don't give a shit what the club voted on. You have no right to make decisions for my crew." Nero could be straight up gangster when he needed to be. Now was one of those times. The way he stood up to Jax and refused to back down just because he was SAMCRO.

"The streets are getting ready to blow up Nero. We have to have allies or none of us will survive it."
The lingo Jax used normally left me in the dark. However, this time, I knew things were about to change in a very bad way.

"I wanna buy you out of Diosa Jax."

"Do you got the cash for it?"

"You know I don't since I gave you the money for Wendy. But my crew, will not have any part this venture."

"Baby, what's going on?" Gemma arrived on the scene. It would only to make things worse I was sure.

Since Nero didn't stop his heated conversation with Jax, I had a question for her as well. "Where are the boys?"

"They're with Unser and Chucky. Why is Nero upset?"

"Because your son sold him out." I made sure I said it loud enough Jax heard me too.

"I'm done with this shit. I'll figure out a way to dissolve our partnership." Nero walked off. Gemma stood still for a moment before she approached Jax.

"What did you do, Jackson?" Now he had the wrath of his mother thrust upon him. I knew how the hell that felt all to well.

"This is none of your damn business. So stay out of it and go home Gemma where you belong. You need to know where your place is."

It wasn't only me who had to make decisions lately. Gemma got that tight jawed look before she turned and walked away from her son. She chose which side she stood on and it was Nero's.

"I told you that would happen someday too." I warned Jax he could only push his mother away for so long. But he felt her loyalty would remain true to him forever. He was testing a lot of boundaries these days. Only to find they were willing to push back.

"Gemma, wait up."

"Yeah."

"Do you want to go to Diosa with me?"

"Why are you going there?"

"I have some business to handle."

"Jax okay with that?"

"I didn't ask him."

"Good, then I'm in."

Jax spoke of making allies to survive in the streets. He should consider the repercussions of making enemies within his family. Gemma might be the biggest bitch when she wanted to be. But, she also was the one who held her family in the highest regards. It didn't matter who she had to fuck up or kill to keep her family together. It's too bad Jax didn't get that trait from her.
There was only one thing on my mind when we reached the lodge. Nero was yelling at a girl. He told her to pack her shit and leave. Gemma went to comfort Nero. I went to get some answers.

"Lyla, which one is Kiki?"

"The redhead in the white dress. Why?"

"No reason." It was the girl Nero yelled at just like I thought. But I didn't want to make a mistake before I took care of my business.

Patients for the attack was what I learned from Jax. He would wait for the perfect moment before he goes in for the kill. So, I waited until she went into her room then followed in after her. Looking around to make sure it was only me and Kiki before I announced my presence.

"I believe you are the one who took these pictures of me." I tossed them on the bed after I locked the door behind me.

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"Fine, we will do it your way."

My gun was tucked in the back of my pants, just like the SOA would do it. She gasped when I pulled it out. No one would expect me to do something like this. Even I wouldn't. But yet, here I was standing before her going to do something I may end up being sorry for.

"I am going to start screaming in about three seconds you attacked me. You know who I am and no one will condemn me or convict me for killing a whore. We had a struggle and the gun just went off. I'll swear to it and the SOA will cover it up for me. The clock is ticking, are you willing to die over a pictures someone else had you take?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Okay then."

After I screamed, I bashed her in face with the gun. I grabbed a handful of hair. "Who had you take those pictures?"

"Collette told me to."

Nero was trying to get in. "What is going on in there?"

"The crazy bitch is holding me at gun point. Someone help me." I thought I had said it convincing enough.

Whispering in Kiki's ear. "I told you bitch how this is going to go down. Open your mouth and you won't live to regret it."

Nero bust through the door and I backed away from her. He looked between us both before he helped Kiki up from the floor. "What the hell happened?"

"Yeah Kiki, what happened?" It came out as a dare you to open your damn mouth. If you tell them what I done, I will make sure you suffer from it.

"It was a misunderstanding, that's all." Was all she said before shoving her shit into a bag. I shrugged my shoulders and walked out the door.
"Well, I'll be damned. You do have it in you after all." Gemma's comment wasn't making me feel any better about what I had done. I couldn't say I was exactly proud of it but, I wouldn't say I was sorry for it either.

Before I made it to the end of the hallway, Kiki wanted her revenge or round two of this fight. She slapped me in the back of the head and now I was pissed off. We both bounced off the walls until I pinned her up against it with my cast. I was finding it to be more of a weapon than a healing tool.

Nero's office was across from us. God knows I shouldn't have done it but, I did. Things spiraled so far out of control for me tonight. I no longer had the good sense to know when I should have stopped. I shoved her head through the glass window.

After I straightened out my coat and regained my composure. "You should get those cuts cared for. Infection can be a real killer. I'll pay for the window Nero."

As I turned around to walk away, there stood Jax. The outlaw seemed a little shocked at what I had done. To be honest, so was I. "Wasn't it old lady enough for you? I'm just following your lead Jax. Isn't it the club's way to use violence to get the message across?"

"I don't even know what in the hell you're talking about Tara."

"Yeah, well, that makes two of us these days. If you will just stop being blinded by pussy, it will make both of our lives a lot easier."

"Tara." Jax went to take a hold of my hand and I pushed him away. It wasn't that I didn't love him. It was more I had to put the distance there for the moment. Before I done something stupid and lashed out at him next. Collette may have been the one who ordered the dirty dead against me. But it was in some way connected to Jax and the club. I choose not to share the information with him just yet. Not until I sorted it out.

"I'm picking up the boys and going home."

"Don't worry Jackson, I'll be with Tara and the boys until you get there. Or is that none of my business too? Maybe, you should know where your place is."

As much as I hated to admit it. Gemma had a way about her of getting to Jax more than I could. She reached him on a level neither one of us understood. He leaned up against the wall and brushed his hair back with his hand. He lit up a smoke and looked down at the floor.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine Gemma."

"I don't believe that for a minute. You've changed the last couple of weeks. Even with Jackson." Gemma's best factor was her perspective personality. She watched, studied all while she lurked in the shadows to use it against you.

"I'm tired and I don't know what to do anymore." There was no clear path from here for me take. There was no neon arrow just take this direction and everything will be fine.

"With them you have to make sure of three things; the most important one. They have to know in their hearts they can't live without you. But more so, they have to know it in their head. Stop being so available at his beckon call."

"What are you talking about Gemma?"
"Where are you every night?"

"At home with the boys."

"Where is Jax?"

"Fuck if I know anymore. He doesn't bother telling me."

"That's my point. Jax knows you are always going to be there when he decides to come home. Change it up a bit. Make him wonder if you will be." I wasn't really in the mood for one of Gemma's riddles. She gave you a piece of information with no indication of what the hell she actually meant.

"I think you're forgetting I have the boys to take care of."

"I'll babysit tomorrow night. Take a night out with your friends."

"Thanks for the offer but, I probably won't go out."

"Let me know if you change your mind. You will be surprised what it does for his attitude."

The only thing I wanted to do was get my boys to bed and go myself. It had been a long exhausting day. They were out as I carried Abel in my arms and Thomas in his carrier.

Putting them to bed was a breeze. My head felt like it was going to split open. I took a couple of aspirins and went to take a long hot shower. As I took the cast off my hand, little blood splatters were all over it. I couldn't even tell you which one it was from; Collette or Kiki.

While the water ran over my body I thought how much it took to wash away all my sins. I had to start getting myself in check again. Even a month ago I wouldn't have done it to them. I wouldn't have even thought about it. Bringing harm to someone never existed in my world until I married Jax.

I never knew what true violence was until now. I've always ran from any confrontation in my life. I found it to be easier that way. Today, I didn't find it to be an option anymore. If I run now, I will have to stay on the run until I was dead. It's no kind of life for my sons and I won't be without them.

However, could I live with myself being like Jax? When did the tide shift in me and I evolved into being this way? Gemma mentioned tonight she seen the change. How in the hell had I missed it? Was I turning into an evil person?

My father was a religious fanatic that also happened to be a drunk. It was my mother who brought changes within him. Once she left us, he was an empty shell of a person. He drank himself to death with no other agenda. I always wondered if she didn't love me enough to take me with her. Or if I was just a pawn in the game? By leaving me behind maybe she felt my father would leave her alone and not look for her. It could have been her way out. I would never leave my sons behind no matter what I must face.

Too much time was spent trying not to turn out like my mother, I ended up just like my father. Jax was leading my life down a path I said I would never go down. But not by his choice, it was by my actions. I was slowly evolving to be Jackson Teller with each act of violence I committed.

"I need to start fighting smarter instead of stronger. How in the hell am I going to do that though?" There were still a lot of things about the life of SAMCRO I needed to figure out.

I checked on the boys to make sure they were fine before I went into my bedroom. When I stood in the doorway looking at their little innocent faces in the happy sleep they were in. I knew no matter
which direction my life went in, this was where I belonged.

Jax came in and sat down gently on the bed. "Do you still love me Tara?"

"Yes."

"What's gonna happen at the hospital?"

"They are going to conduct a full investigation. They know you're tied to the lodge so it reflects badly on me."

"I'll figure something out, babe."

"Not this time, Jax."

"What?"

"This will be the one time you will not tell me you will take care of it then do nothing. It is my career on the line. I have worked hard to get where I am. I will not allow you or the club to piss on it. I am going to take care of it my way. I need you to be on board with that and respect it."

"Okay."

"Will you tell me what you did to Nero, to make him so angry? I need the truth Jax. You use to tell me everything baby. Let me in again."

When Jax displayed feelings with his heart, I couldn't be more in love with the man. He was going down with the club. We had no way out left now. All of our money was gone he earned illegally. The club was completely broke because the money dried up. I still had a few thousands in savings but it would only sustain us for a couple of months if I didn't get to go back to work.

The deal Jax made with Barosky was stupid on his part. Collette's place was part of it too. There wasn't going to be any real money to collect there either, I agreed with Nero on that. Jax had no choice but to play nice with them for the moment. But knowing him and the way he conducted club business, it could all change in a heartbeat. If the Myans didn't come through on the next dirty deal for the club, we would lose everything.

Jax told me more than I wanted to know. But at least we were on the same page now. It didn't change how I felt about things. I thought of comforting him by saying it wasn't his fault. In reality most of it was because of the decision he made on his own and how he chose to lead the club. I laid my head on his chest and listened to him until I must have drifted off.

When I woke up Jax wasn't in bed again with me this morning. I went by the boys' room and they were gone too. He left another note on the kitchen counter for me. It wasn't like I had a job to go to today. But I was still grateful he made an effort to do something for me.

Since my boys were all at TM. I got dressed to go there too. Only I was met at the car by the crow. It cawed a couple of times and I ignored it. I pulled out of the drive and took off for my destination.

When I rounded the curve on the highway I was bombarded by them. They were scattered all over the road, the side of it and the trees. Slamming on the brakes I tried to not run over them. I honked the horn a couple of times but, they wouldn't budge.

The sky turned instantly grey in color. A storm was brewing around me. Maybe more so than the one up in the sky. The same crow cawed loudly to get my attention. It wasn't until I seen it perched
high up on top of the black iron gate, I knew where I actually was. But what the hell could it want me to see here?

My gun was the first thing I reached for before I got out of the car. They lined up in perfect formation as they were leading the way for me. I was Hansel and Gretel following the row of crows down the path. As I passed by them they held perfectly still without any movement or a single noise made.

The one flew up above from tree to tree waiting for me to reach the end. Now everything went dark surrounding me. Piercing high pitched birds making their call at the same time were making me scream in pain. I covered my ears to block the noise. Only until I seen the tombstone in front of me. It went total silence as the pain in my heart took over my body when I read the name with the date on it. I dropped to the ground on my knees. "No." I screamed it over and over. "No. God please no."

"Tara. Babe what's wrong?" Jax had me in his arms when I woke up. Was it a bad dream or a warning of what was to come? Jax was still talking to me when I got up and went outside to look around. There were no crow here.

Abel and Thomas's room was where I went to next. Slowly I sat down in the rocking chair. Everything was replaying in my head just like a movie. I couldn't get it to stop. I rocked faster and couldn't fight back the tears any longer.

"Tara? Do you wanna talk about it babe?"

"No. It was just a bad dream. I'm fine."

"Let's go back to bed."

"You can go back to bed. I'm staying here."

Time passed by me while I watched over my children. Jax made me a cup of tea. He turned back the covers on the day bed. I finally laid down because exhaustion took over.

Only when I woke this time, Thomas was awake rolling around in his crib. I moved Jax's arm off me so I could get up.

"Good morning, baby."

In silence I fed Thomas in the rocking chair while I just watched Abel and Jax sleeping. My family was together and safe for the moment. But how much longer would it be the case?

Once Abel was awake he went and jumped on top of Jax. Now they were all up.

"Do you want me to take the boys to daycare today?"

"They can't go there anymore. Since I am no longer employed at the hospital."

"Oh yeah, I forgot. Do you want Gemma to watch them during your appointment for your hand?"

"Yes. Then I will pick them up afterwards."

"Are you sure you're okay to drive babe? I will go with you."

"We both know you can't. But thank you for offering." I kissed them all goodbye.

"Hey babe."
"Yes."

"I might be a little late getting home tonight. I have the meeting with the Myans and some other shit to do."

"Thank you for telling me Jax." He was at least still making an effort.

On to the next task at hand. I looked for crows all the way to the hospital and seen none. When I parked the car I let out a sigh of relief.

As I went down the halls of the hospital. I got the same response I did when they knew about the club. It was obvious the ones who knew I was suspended. They would stare then whisper after they passed by me.

"Tara you know you are not allowed at the hospital until the outcome of the investigation."

"I know Margret. I have a follow up visit for my hand today."

"I'm sorry to be so rude with you. How are you?"

"I'm okay."

We talked for a couple of minutes. Margret gave me a hug before she went back to her office. But not before I swiped her hospital badge. They took mine when they escorted me off the property. Not that it really mattered. Mine didn't have the clearance hers held.

At the last second when I was out of sight from the nurses. I ran Margret's badge for the special elevator to take me up to the top floor where the executive's offices were. One secretary was out front for all of them. I called the hospital's phone number and asked for Mr. Price's office.

"We have a package down in the lobby for Mr. Price."

"Can't someone bring it up?"

"We're short staffed today. It's marked urgent. I guess I will leave it just sitting here until you have the time."

"Fine. I will come down to get it."

It was rude of me to not knock on his office door before I entered. "What are you doing here? How did you get in?"

"We have some things to talk about Mr. Price."

"I'm calling security."

"Go ahead. I will call a good friend of yours and mine, Lyla Winston. She works at Diosa which you frequently visit."

"You crossed the line Doctor Knowles. I will make sure you are terminated."

"If I go Mr. Price, I am taking you with me. If you do not get these bullshit charges dropped that are against me. I will be sending some very compromising photos to your wife along with the board of directors. So don't you sit there in your big comfortable chair and look down on me."

"You wouldn't dare…"
"Oh, I so will do it. I might end up losing everything by coming here today to see you. But so will you. You know who my husband is. As it was bluntly thrown in my face by the same board of directors who receive their large bonuses on the work of the doctors in this hospital. With all that being said the SOA always protects their old ladies and has our backs."

"Are you threatening me with the Sons of Anarchy?"

"You can take it however you like. But I advise you to use all your power to get the charges dropped against me. A lot of patients need my help."

I went to leave his office and threw it in for good measures because I was on a roll. "It would also be a kind gesture made to go before the board for Todd's family. I already raised almost ten thousand dollars. Actually, it is probably the same money you spent on buying whores there. Or that's how I am going to tell the story to the board anyway. You have a nice day Mr. Price."

The move was risky at best. I saw Mr. Price at the lodge the night Kiki took the picture of me in the red leather pants. There were no pictures of him with the girls but, he doesn't know that for sure. If my plan worked I would get my job back. If not, oh well, I was already fucked before I went to see him.

The rest of the day didn't actually go too badly. My hand was healing faster than they expected. The boys were happy playing with Unser when I got to the clubhouse.

"Wayne, I need a favor."

"What is it?"

"Can you find out some information about a Madame they call Collette? I heard someone else call her Maggie though. She operates out of the Port in Stockton."

"Is this the same Madame the Sons are doing business with?"

"Yes, but I don't want Jax to know you're doing it."

Wayne said he wouldn't tell Jax. But I never knew who to really trust. Except for one person. I saw Nero coming out of Gemma's office. Although he wasn't his normal charming self. He was really short with me before he took off.

"Gemma is Nero okay?"

"No sweetheart, he isn't."

The meeting must have not gone well with the Myans for Nero anyway. I felt bad it was Jax keeping him from getting out. Nero gave his money to the club to rescue Wendy. Poor Nero was seeing his future at a stale mate and having to stay here forever. Just like I was.

"I really like Nero. He is a good man."

"I'll tell you what, Nero is a fantastic lover. His dick is…"

"Gemma, please don't."

"Is that too much information?"

"Oh yes. Way too much information."
She just shrugged it off and went on talking about other things. In Gemma's book I didn't think anything was off limits to talk about. With me, I still consider some things private and others didn't need to know about.

We fixed the boys some lunch. Wayne came in and motioned his head for me to come outside. "What did you find out?"

"You're not going to believe what I am about to tell you. The shit is deep when it comes to the Madame."

It was worse than I initially suspected. I could go to Jax with this information. But until I had proof, I would bide my time. It wasn't like she already didn't have knowledge on the Sons.

"We really need to tell Jax."

"Give me two days Wayne before you do anything, please."

"Two days then I'm giving this Intel to Jax."

"Thank you."

The question was how did I get the proof? Without exposing myself to further damage. I couldn't take my children with me. Then it hit me.

"Gemma, are you still willing to babysit tonight?"

"Sure."

"I'll see you around seven, it that good?"

"Nero and I will be there."

The boys were fed and bathed already by the time they arrived. I even dressed up a little with a simple black halter dress and some flat shiny black ballet shoes. Then I curled my hair along with putting some makeup on.

"Wow, look at you all dressed up. Where are you going tonight?"

"Just to meet a friend. Tell Jax when he gets home I…"

"I'll handle Jackson."

"Behave boys. I love you." I kissed each of them before I left. I felt better with Nero being there too. I didn't think he would let anything happen to my boys.

It really didn't net me anything watching Collette. I should have thought it through better. I'm sure in her profession, she worked mostly the night shift. After three or four hours of watching men coming and going, I called it a bust for the night.

Before I drove off the crow landed on my hood. "Oh shit. What the hell do you want now?"

I couldn't resist following it, even if it was a bad thing when I got there. When it landed on the sidewalk. "Seriously?"

Then a smile crossed my face. "Why the hell not." I pulled down street until I found a place to park. People were walking down the street hand in hand. Jax I never done that anymore.
A young blonde guy looked bored as he sat behind the counter. When he looked up at me, all I noticed was his big crystal blue eyes. Until he stood up that was, his chiseled body didn’t go unnoticed in the tight black t-shirt he wore. Shaking my head at my gawking at him. It was a definite Jax move.

"Can I help you?"

"I want to get a tattoo."

"Do you know what you want?"

"I want a crow with a ribbon in its mouth. I would like my son's names, Abel and Thomas, to go inside the ribbon somehow."

"That's cool. I got an idea. I'll draw it up for you and you can tell me what you think of it."

It didn't take long for him to sketch it out on paper. A mother crow was protectively standing on the edge of a nest with two baby birds inside of it. A ribbon coming out of each side of its mouth. Abel's name was on one side of the ribbon and Thomas was on the other.

"I love it. Can you make the ribbon be baby blue like this one?" The ribbon I got from the crow I had tucked inside my wallet. I tossed my purse up on the counter and was ready to get started.

"I can make it be anything you want it to be."

For hours I had my head bent down on the tattoo chair. I chose my left shoulder for the location. It was easy access with the dress I had on. All I had to do was undo the tie around my neck.

The first few pricks of the needle were painful. But no more pain than I had throughout my life time and carried in my heart over the years. All the shit that came rushing back to my thoughts were horrifying. What would be in store for the future of my family if things continued on the same path, was mortifying.

"I'm done. There's a mirror so you can have a look."

"Wow, it's beautiful. How much do I owe you?"

"You don't owe me anything, I know who you are."

"What?"

"No charge, I know who you are."

"Is this about the club?"

"The club? What is the club?"

My nerves were striking out hard. I was trying to get across the room to my purse which had my gun in it. If he didn't know about the club, how did he know me? I could never be too careful. Would he try to hurt me too?

As I went to grab my bag off the counter it went tumbling to the ground. My gun laid there on the floor for him to see. "Whoa lady. Are you in some kind of trouble Doctor Knowles?"

"How do you know me?"
"You operated on my nephew. My sister's name is Nicole, my nephew is Cody. You saved his life."

Cody was in a car wreck when he was only six months old. His mother was frantic and riddled with guilt. She was beside herself because she was the one behind the wheel when it happened. They were side swiped by a drunk driver. The child was only given a twenty percent chance at survival. He beat the odds and had a purpose on this earth.

"I'm sorry about that. I remember them."

"Is somebody after you or something?"

"No, I'm fine. I really want to pay you for my tattoo."

"Your money is no good here Doc. I can never repay you for what you did for Cody."

"Thank you, I should go."

I was stuffing all my shit back in my bag. Kyle picked up the gun from the floor and handed it to me.

"I'm locking up shop for the night, I'll walk you out to your car Doc."

"You don't have to do that."

"I want to."

In some ways I was glad Kyle walked down the street with me. A car full of gang bangers slowed down and I started to panic for a moment. Did they recognize who I was and have a score to settle with Jax? Every moment of my day was wondering who was out to hurt us today because of the club.

Jax and the club thrived on the chaos and mayhem. They search it out most of the time. Me, I hated even the thought of it. The bangers gave us a small nod and drove on.

"Doc you're shaking. Do you want to tell me about it?"

"I'm just cold and a little on edge I guess."

"There is an all-night coffee shop down the street, want to grab a cup with me?"

"I can't I'm married."

"I just asked you to have coffee with me, not come to my bed. I usually wait until the second time I talk to someone for that. So the next time you see me, be on your toes, girl." He gave me the cutest grin. I was almost positive he was kidding.

"I'm a great listener. I'll even buy. Of course if you're trying to seduce me Doc, I'll let you buy. And I want a piece of pie too, I'm not a cheap ho ya know." Kyle made me smile and seemed genuine enough. I felt comfortable around him. I got to know his sister when Cody was in the hospital. They were nothing alike for being related.

He actually opened the door for me, I was stunned. Jax never done that for me, not even once that I can remember. I couldn't think about the last time we went out somewhere out in public together even. "This is where you walk through the door while I hold it open for you."

Next Kyle grabbed the back of my chair. "Please don't pull it out for me. I might pass out from all the attention you're giving me."
We talked for hours. Too many hours. It was early in the morning already. "Shit, I have to go. Thanks for the talk and the coffee."

"You're welcome Doc."

All the way from Stockton I sped home. The house was dark inside by the time I arrived home. They probably had been asleep for hours. I let out a sigh of relief. I could still catch a couple of hours before the boys were up.

Just as I walked in I saw the flames glowing from his cigarette. The living room light went on rather quickly. "Where have you been?"

"I had a cup of coffee with a friend. I lost track of time, sorry."

Jax didn't question me any further after that. He followed me into the bedroom and sat at the edge of the bed. I went to use the bathroom and came out in my robe. I was ready for bed but, Jax had other plans for us.

From behind I felt his arms come around my body. Losing the tie on my robe his hands explored slowly with passion. The kisses he laid on the nap of my neck made me shiver a little. Then he was gone from me.

When Jax came out of the bathroom with shaving cream and my razor, I was confused. "I already shaved my legs today."

"It's not for your legs babe."

He laid me down on the bed, I once again found the loving man I have been in love with for so long. The sweet boyish look on his face as he spread the shaving cream on my pussy. Old feelings were roused within me. The sexy smile he wore when he looked up from his kissing my inner thighs. It served as a reminder of simpler times when we were just once Jax and Tara so much in love with each other. It was a time when no others seemed to penetrate our world together.

The handle of the razor brushed against my folds as the cold steel felt so good on my clit. With each scrape the razor made I got wetter. As I started to squirm around a little, Jax's hand met my ass with a smack. "Lay still you don't want me to spank you, do you?"

Giggling as I kept squirming around. He took a towel and wiped off the excess shaving cream. Then poured coconut oil into the palm of his hand. Rubbing his hands together then on my bare mound. Only he didn't stop there. My stomach and breast were coated with the oil. I took the bottle from him because it was my turn.

With his cock in my hand, I oiled that baby up really good. I dribbled it out of the bottle from his neck down to his knees. Making sure I spent time rubbing it in on each part of his body.

As our bodies pressed tightly together, we were a giant slip and slide. Just trying to hold on for dear life to each other. I felt his cock more with each stroke he made without having any hair left on my pussy. He didn't last long, I would say it was because he got a little over excited.

"Babe?"

"Yes."

"Do you think we can play barber shop again?"
"Oh yeah."

Lying in bed with Jax was different this time. We were both happy and content. It was a shame I would have to be up in an hour with shit returning to the normal crap again. But my thought on it was Gemma might be on to something. Because if my going out was make his attitude change like this, I might have to do it more frequently.

The morning came before I ever got any real sleep. Jax was off to the clubhouse. I went to the garage to rummage around. I found a couple of wooden steaks and stapled my for sale by owner signs to them.

I went to throw them in the car before I got the boys ready to go. When I raised the garage door I almost had a heart attack with him standing before me.

"What the hell do you want? How did you find me?"

"You left your wallet on the counter last night. I am just bringing it to you." Kyle laid my wallet on the concrete and walked away.

"Kyle, I'm sorry. Thank you. Would you like a cup of coffee? It's the least I can do for you driving all this way."

"No thanks. Are you selling this house by chance? I'm looking for a place closer to Nicole and Cody."

"These are for my dad's house. He passed away and I never got around to selling it."

"What's the house like?"

Kyle followed me and the boys over to see it. It was a smaller home but he found it to be perfect for him. I sold it without even really trying to. I just had to make sure I put the money to good use to get us back up on our feet again.

We were out in the front yard when Lyla drove by and honked. "I can have all the money in a couple of weeks. I think I am going to like it here. Maybe I will open up a second shop in Charming. Do many people get tattoos or piercing?"

"A lot of people have tattoos here. I will write the real estate contract for you to sign."

"Let me know when it's ready. See ya, Doc."

We went off to start our day. The boy stayed with Gemma while I went to see Nero. I was going to ask his advice on what I should do about Collette.

"Hey Tara, who was the hunky boy you were talking to this morning?"

"Just a friend. He's buying my dad's house. Can I ask you something Lyla?"

"Sure." Lyla had changed my point of view of her. She was always willing to lend an ear when I needed it.

"I told Jax I was with a friend last night when I was with the guy out in the yard…"

"So you cheated on Jax with this guy?"

"Of course not."
"Did you blow him?"

"Hell no."

"Then exactly what did you do with him; a hand job? Come on Tara give me something to work with here."

"I had coffee with him."

It perplexed her mind you could just have a conversation with a man. Then again, perhaps she could see from my point of view either. "That's it, you had coffee with him and feel guilty about it?"

"Yes."

"You did nothing wrong. It's okay to have a friend to talk to. I love Jax and you know that. Believe me I would tell you."

"Thanks Lyla."

"Well duty calls. I will catch you later."

"Bye. I am just going to hang out and wait for Nero to come back."

Before I plopped my butt down on the couch. She made an offer which took me away from direct contact with the other girls. "You can wait in his office if you want to."

Hours had passed by while I was waiting. I found things to keep myself entertained. Nero left the books for the lodge out on his desk. Perhaps I should have spoken with him first before I went through them. But I wouldn't have thought it through as well. If Jax and I stood a chance at any kind of a future, it had to be done. Especially a stable financial one.

"Hey Tara."

"Nero, you and I have a lot to talk about. I think there may be a way we can help each other out."

After I explained my plan to him, he was silent for a while. Then he came around to my way of thinking. This is where putting my head before my fists or tits would pay off.

"If we do this, I need total disclosure from you and honesty Tara on everything. I need to know I can trust you and you can trust me. No back handed bullshit to deal with. Did Kiki attack you or did you attack her?"

"I attacked her to find out who told her to take the pictures." Nero deserved to know this truth if this partnership stood a chance to work. So, I gave it to him.

"Did she tell you who it was?"

"It was Collette."

"I'll have to run this by Jax first though." Even though Jax hadn't dealt with Nero in the same manner. Nero still extended the curiosity to him.

"Okay."

Nero called Jax and wanted to setup a meeting time. Jax wasn't far away. I stayed in the office until Nero had a chance to discuss it with him first. It wasn't like I couldn't hear everything they were
saying anyway.

"I found a partner to buy you out on Diosa. It will help with both of our cash flow problems."

"You did it without talking to me first about it?"

"We're taking now Jax. I'm not doing anything behind your back, man. I want out on Collette's place. You can take it all over if you want to. The side deals you made with Barosky, ain't got shit to do with the Byzlats. We have never been about drugs and won't ever be. This seems like a solid exit plan for us both. I'll give you seventy five thousand dollars down and the balance in a couple of weeks. It will also erase the money the club owes me. We'll make it all official on paper too."

"The lodge is close to Charming. I need to know who the new partner is and it's not gonna bring shit down on the club before I agree to any deal. Are you buying the farm?" Jax considered every aspect of what would effect or hurt the club. If he would only do the same for his family.

"Yeah, after we complete our transaction, I'm buying my uncle's farm. It's time for me to get out of this life Jax. I give you my word, there will be no conflict of interest with the new partner when it comes to SAMCRO. They will be a silent partner. To be heard and not seen. Come on, they are waiting in my office."

Jax walked in first. His eyes went huge when I was the one setting at the table, smiling.

"What the fuck is this? Tara is not gonna be your partner."

"That's where you're wrong Jax. I am going to be Nero's partner, things are about to change."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! I should be posting again soon.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert.
"I will be along shortly. I have lodge business to discuss with Nero. You should pick up the boys on the way home. Feed them if Gemma hasn't already and give them their baths."

A confused look crossed Jax's face. This was going to be a big change for him. He wasn't used to having any responsibility for his family and doing whatever he wanted when he wanted. Gemma was right; I done everything while Jax done nothing in return for his family.

"It felt good didn't it Tara?" Nero waited until Jax left before he said it.

"Oh yeah. Do you know how many times I've heard; I have club business to handle? If I had a dollar for every time, I would be a millionaire."

"Well, how are we gonna do this partner?" I felt at ease with Nero. He already addressed me as his partner. It was too bad my husband never done it in anything.

"You need to stop pimping pussy and start selling discretion. Men will pay five to ten times more money to keep their secrets safe."

"Five...five to ten times more? How?" Nero seemed eager to hear what I had to say. Again, it was something else I longed for from my husband, for him to listen to what I had to say.

"I just happen to know someone who uses the lodge as their escape. He makes around three hundred thousand dollars a year. He pays five hundred dollars for a fuck. He will pay twenty five hundred to five thousand at a time to know his little indiscretions will be kept quiet so his wife doesn't find out and take everything."

"Okay, Hedi Fleiss, let say he does. That's only one guy though." Skepticism was in Nero's voice. I hoped to turn it around to a reality at some point. Sure, I'd have to prove it to him, prove it I would.

"It is one guy who has a lot of powerful, rich and elite friends. We will no longer sell it only to the common John. If the girls have regulars they want to keep, then they can work out something. But why would they want to take it up the ass for a small amount of money when they can do the same for a bigger score?"

"This all sounds real good Tara. But, how are we gonna get these clients in here?"

"You leave it to me. It's how I will earn my money, my portion of the profits. Some of the girls will have to go though. They are just strung out whores. I'll let you choose the list of who stays."

"Well, let's bring Lyla in on this conversation." While Nero went to get her, I took in a couple of deep breaths. This had to work out for me and my boys' sake.

Lyla was quiet but listened to what I had to say. Then she gave her input. "Men are here for pussy Tara and nothing else."

"You're wrong, most of them have a woman at home. They are buying the fantasy, so lets give them
the best damn fantasy a lot of cash can buy."

Nero was leery about the plan. "We have to put on a good front here. To cover our licenses and not get busted by the cops."

"You do massages. So, we call the jungle fantasy room, a therapeutic spring massage. All the while the girls fuck them as they make their jungle fantasy come true." This was where being with Jax taught me. If you could scheme a way to get around it; you would probably get away with it.

"How much is all of this going to cost?" Nero's other concern.

"We will split the money, partner." I smiled when I said it too. "Lyla, are you on board?"

"Sure. When are we doing this?"

"I'll meet you here tomorrow morning and we will start making decisions then."

Lyla left and I was getting ready to go home when Nero stopped me. "Are you positive this is what you want?"

"Yes."

"Why are you doing it? You make good money being a doctor?" I appreciated Nero's concern for me or maybe his worries he had too.

"Look at my hand, I may never operate again. I was suspended for helping out Todd's family from the hospital and I could lose my licenses permanently. I am looking to make a bunch of quick cash to get the hell out of this poisonous town before it kills me or my family."

"Does Jax know? Tara, I can't be doing shaky shit behind his back. I'm hooked up with Gemma and it all affects me."

"You said we need total disclosure between us. I need to know I can trust you too Nero."

"You can trust me Mama, but you didn't answer my question."

"I will answer it when I know for sure I can trust you as well. I'll see you in the morning."

The toughest part of all this was still left for me to face, Jax. The lights were still on and I knew he was up. When I went inside he was sitting on the couch smoking.

"Did you put the boys to bed?"

"Yeah, I did. Sit down Tara, we need to talk."

Jax was so good at convincing you he was doing you a favor while fucking you over. The saddest part was he done it right in your face before you realized it. The double talk of how he was concerned for my well being. He took the I love you and only I can protect you approach. Well, it wasn't working on me this time.

"I appreciate your concerns and giving me permission to be a stay at home mom with our boys. But, I am following through on what I planned with Nero. We have no money, you're broke, the club is broke. I have no way to earn a living right now. I'm doing this."

"How long do you think the Lodge will last without the club's protection? You're in over your head Tara." Jax switched gears on me. This was to scare me into doing what he wanted. But, it wasn't
"I'm going to check on the boys. Then take a shower." So many times when I wanted to talk to Jax, this was his excuse to leave the room and to end the conversation between us. Only this time, I used it before he could.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

It wasn't a huge surprise Jax was already gone when I got up. He left the boys in bed and never even gave me a kiss goodbye because he was pissed off. He'd get over it though, I've had to many times in our relationship.

The boys ate their breakfast as I made my list of things I needed to do. First thing, was get some money to invest in the Lodge and hope for a huge return of profit. I couldn't use what little I had in reserve, we needed it for bills and food.

"Kyle, this is Tara. I am wondering if you are still going to buy my dad's house and when you would have the down payment available? Great. Then I will stop by your new shop this morning with the paper work. I know exactly where it is in Charming." It was a relief, he already had money for me and was willing to sign the real estate contract.

One more call to make before we took off. "Lowen, can you do me a favor, I need a sales contract drawn up?" I was batting a thousand this morning. If the rest of the day went as smoothly, I had it made.

Scooping up all the boys stuff, we took off. Gemma was helping out with them until I could make arrangements for day care. She was a crazy bitch but I knew she loved the boys and wouldn't let anything happen to them. Well, not on purpose anyway. Sometimes, shit just followed if you were to close to the club.

"Thanks for watching them."

"What are doing today?" With the smirk on Gemma's face I assumed she already knew.

"I guess, Jax told you already."

"Jackson, doesn't tell me shit. Nero did." I envied the closeness she shared with Nero. When he was away from Gemma, she was all he talked about. I wondered if Jax even thought of me through out the day the way I done him.

The fleeting thought of him wasn't wasted. When I pulled up to Kyle's shop, three bikes were parked on the street. I seen Jax inside the plate glass window talking to Kyle. I hadn't done anything wrong or stepped over the line, I remembered who I was married to and the vows we took. Yet, I felt uneasy to see my husband talking to him though.

Pacing the street until they came out. "Hey." It was all I could come up with to say to him. Before Jax responded, Kyle was out on the street and up in Jax's face.

"Is the biker harassing you?" Kyle showed no fear of him. As he pushed me behind him like he needed to protect me from Jax. Which was surprising and dangerous at the same time.

"The best thing you can do is; get your ass back inside and stop touching my old lady." Jax meant what he said to Kyle. It was react with violence then ask questions later on with him.

"Old lady? Sorry, I thought there was a problem. I gave Tara a tattoo and I don't want to see
anything happen to her." Now, Kyle looked at me the same way everyone else did. He backed away from me like I had the plague.

"You're mistaken, Tara didn't get a tattoo."

"Actually, I did Jax. A couple of days ago. You just didn't notice it." It wasn't a uncommon thing either. He spent so much of his time away from us, he never bothered to notice what happened around him or with us.

Jax was shocked, I pushed my shirt down so he could see my shoulder. His fingers lightly grazed over my tattoo. "I love it and you. You're a really good mom to my sons."

The softer side of my husband was showing through. Not many times did he let it with others around, especially the club. He felt it portrayed him as weak and venerable. I thought it made him a caring man. So I would take it as a small victory none the less.

With a couple of kisses from Jax, he went riding off with the others. To my amazement, he never asked me what I was doing here or nothing about Kyle. Which he was watching out the store front window. Although, I hoped it hadn't changed his mind on buying the house. There wasn't but one way to find out, go inside and take it head on.

"So, does the house price include the protection money your husband wants from me or is it a separate transaction?" Kyle was snide with me as soon as I walked in the door.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Come on Tara, he came in here and shook me down. If I don't pay them, he intends on ruining my business. I sank a lot of money already into this place. I won't be pushed around with fear by anyone. Did he send you to sell me the house and get a tattoo in my shop? Is this the game you run together?" Kyle done exactly what everyone else did, he associated me with the club and their bullshit.

"I have nothing to do with what SAMCRO does. Jax always keeps me on the outside of it. I hate the fact my husband is in the club and we are still here in this shitty town. My apologizes for what he did to you. Believe me, I spend more of my time trying to justify their actions than I do approving of them. I am just trying to scrape money together to take care of my children. Because the club has ruined my life and the only way I have to earn money."

There was no need to continue the conversation. Kyle formed his opinion and I wouldn't insult myself trying to change it. Before I got the car door opened he was there. "Is it why you live in fear and seem so guarded all the time?"

"Yes." It came out at above a whisper. The emotions I felt saying it out loud were taking over. I never had anywhere or anyone to turn to. Kyle wrapped his large arms around me as I cried until I couldn't cry anymore.

"I'm sorry." I tried to wipe my tears off his shirt.

"I'll let you make it up to me, girl." This was more like the guy I met the other night. Rather than the angered man from earlier.

"How's that?"

"You can buy me a house warming present for my new home. Nothing extravagant or anything." Kyle made me feel better some how. He signed the contract and gave me a check for the down payment.
Holding money in one hand and it getting ready to leave quickly when I pulled up to the Lodge.

"Good morning, Tara."

"Hey, Lyla. Are you ready to get started?"

"This is your party darlin, I'm just the party favor."

We came to an agreement on the theme of every room but one. "Seriously? I'm not into the whole little Bo Peep does the sheep thing Tara. It's not my style."

"Would you rather have Little Red Riding Hood gets ate by the bad wolf theme?" We both had a good laugh at my joke. We left the room open for whatever we came up with later.

Nero seemed pleased with our ideas. He had some contractors he used in the past. He was making calls to get pricing. Tonight would be the last time Diosa was an open establishment. From now on it would be by invitation only. An expensive invitation to get.

It was my next stop to get it set in motion. Mr. Price, our wonderful hospital president, was like clock work. From around eleven to one, he disappeared for lunch. I followed him off of the hospital property. Only to find out he was keeping more than his weekly visits of the Lodge from his wife. The girl who welcomed him inside, was younger than me. He was old enough to be my dad. I waited patiently for him to come out to his car. After his hour tryst, he finally did.

"Mr. Price, are you visiting your daughter by chance?" I knew he only had two boys in his family. Of course I was being snide anyway.

"You are starting to piss me off Dr. Knowles. I put my recommendation in to the board already. So there is no need to make any further threats towards me."

"Yeah, about that. I need one more favor from you. It's just one night, one time of all your rich friends coming to Diosa. Afterwards, you will never hear from me again."

He balked at my request of him bringing in some high end clientele for the Lodge. "It's ridiculous, I will not participate in this charade any longer."

"Then by tomorrow, this disc will be in the hands of your wife. She will have evidence of your extra actives and take your ass to the cleaners for every dime you have." It was Abel's, Thomas the Tank disc, I held in my hand. But Mr. Price didn't know it when he agreed to go along with the plan.

When I got into the car, I cursed myself for what I done. I was ashamed I pushed the envelope so far as to use him for my gain. This involved my children's well being, nothing would stop me from succeeding.

They were on my mind as I drove to the garage to pick them up. Abel came running when he seen me. "Mommy."

"Hey, baby. What do you want to do today?"

"Can we eat at the park?"

"Sure we can. Me, you and Thomas will have a picnic."

Abel rambled on as we went through the drive thru to pickup some food. Thomas was baby rambling along with him and didn't make any sense. But I loved every moment I spent with them and
all the noise they made.

After Abel finished his burger, he went to play. I put Thomas in his carrier when he fell asleep. I got my list out to check off what I accomplished today. Before long, I had visitors. The crows were gathering in the tree above where I sat on the park bench. I didn't enjoy their jabbering sounds at all.

"Crows call to awaken you to your true souls purpose. To remind you to follow your heart." The old man startled me who sat down on the bench.

"That's an interesting observation, I guess."

"It's a fact actually. They are beautiful creatures aren't they, Tara?"

"How do you know my name?" I bent down to pick up my purse setting by Thomas's carrier. It was my gun I wanted. I could never be too careful with those around me.

The old man stood up and stretched as though he were stiff from sitting too long. "I can assure you, it isn't necessary. I mean you no harm."

At a snail's pace he walked casually toward the edge of the park where it met up with a wooded area. He literally disappeared before my eyes into the mist of the thick trees.

Thomas was the first thing I grabbed, my gun went down the back of my pants. "Abel, come on baby." I got the boys strapped in quickly.

After I started the car, I hesitated. My head told me to hit the gas and drive like hell away. But my gut said I needed to know more. I clicked the lock button on the door so no one could get in. I drove along the edge of the grass until I seen it. The same crow with the white patch across it's face, came flying out of the woods swiftly in the direction of the car. At the last second, it lifted up towards the sky and flew past us.

"What's wrong Mommy?" Abel was too observant for his age.

"Nothing, honey. Mommy is just a little crazy. How about we stop for some ice cream on the way home?" I found the easiest way to not explain something to Abel was to change the subject. It wouldn't work as he got older but it did for now.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"Are you ready, partner? One more time as Diosa, then on to bigger and better money."

"Sure." I said it but I didn't truly mean it. This was no longer me playing the role of a greeter to the men who came in. This was my livelihood and my world depended on it.

Quickly I stepped in the kitchen to catch my breath way from them all. I leaned on the wooden island to hold myself up. "I can't do this. Jax is right."

"I suggest you figure it out or fake it well. You go out there and strut your shit like you own the place. Or you go crawling home to Jax and admit you were wrong. He will own you then. You will never be your own person again." Gemma was trying to cheer me on or to scare the hell out of me. Actually, she was doing a good job at doing both.

"Everything okay in here? Something going on I need to know about?" You could find Nero wherever Gemma was. I didn't even notice he was in here with us.
"We're fine baby, thinking about painting the kitchen in earth tones. Ain't that right, Doc?" Gemma wrapped her arms around Nero's neck. Then I realized she just done to him what I done to Abel. She didn't want to explain it, so she changed the subject. There was still so much I could learn from her.

"Yeah, I think earth tones will look great in here." I gave my best smile when I said it too.

"I gotta get out front." Nero kissed Gemma before he disappeared.

"Tara, you own your shit and place tonight. No one will doubt you can do it, especially yourself. I gotta go relieve Ninta with the boys. If you need me, call me." Gemma went out the back door when she gave her advise.

Deep inhaled breaths was what I took in. I ran my hands down the front of my dress to make sure it was straight. I flipped my hair over my shoulders and went to pimp some pussy. It was time for me to suck it up and make it work. There was no turning back now.

The lounge filled up quickly, wall to wall horny men. I done my best to blend in with the crowd. Until Nero startled me. "If anyone bothers you, let me know and I will handle it."

"I don't think you need to worry Nero, I can't even compare to these girls."

"You're right, you don't, most of them don't have half the class you do. Don't get me wrong, I love the girls but they don't compare to your beauty either." The heat came to my face. This was kind and great for my ego.

Our conversation was interrupted by a phone call Nero took. "I gotta run out for a minute, my crew needs me. Can you handle this until I get back?"

"Sure." It was my standard answer for most questions tonight. Perhaps if I said it enough, I would start believing it myself.

Most of the evening went well. I kept a tally on the number of men who came in. On a good night, they made around ten to fifteen grand before all the girls got paid. My goal was to make a hundred grand every night. If I pulled this off, a month or two and I was out.

Tonight went to smoothly for me. When we heard screams and a loud crash coming from the back. It made sense what Jax warned me about. Nero was gone. I had to step up and handle business.

One of the guys was roughing up my girl. He was slapping her around when I barged in the room. "Hey, get the fuck out."

"I paid for pussy and I'm getting what I paid for. This little bitch bit me." He went back to knocking her around.

On a general bases, I thought shit through. I went out of my way to not put myself in danger. This wasn't one of those times. I picked up the large vase from the table and hit him over the head with it. Anything to make him stop hurting her.

Since Nero was gone and we weren't sure how to handle it, we improvised the best we could. I called him to get back here quickly.

Lyla helped me secure the guy to keep shit quiet. We couldn't call the cops and I sure as the fuck wasn't going to call Jax. It would just prove his point of I couldn't handle it.

Nero seemed amused at our work. "So, which one of you came up with using the sex swing to tie
this guy up with? Nice red sequence panties as a gag too. But did you really need to duct tape them in his mouth?"

"He hurt one of my girls, I used what you had available. We didn't know what else to do with him."

Lyla smiled and hugged me. "You just called us your girls." She reached out to me, as much as I wanted to, I couldn't make a total connection with her yet.

"We'll take care of this, mama. You did good tonight. I think you'll do just fine Tara." Nero had his crew carry the guy out the back. I felt it was best not to ask how they would handle it. I broke enough laws for one day.

"Lets get you patched up." I took the girl to the empty room we hadn't made a decision on yet. He busted her skin open above her eye and around her mouth. Other than that, it was fear she was feeling. "How old are you?"

"Old enough." She might be tough on the exterior but on the inside she was falling apart.

"There are better ways to earn a living than laying on your back."

"Not for me, my mom kicked me out and I got no place to go. This is better than sleeping on the streets."

This was her first official hooking night and she freaked out. As far as I was concerned, it was her last one too. "You can sleep here tonight. We will talk in the morning. Put this cream on your cuts when you wake up. It will help with scaring."

"Why are you doing this for me?"

"I remember a girl they thought would never amount to much either. But I believed in myself enough to at least try. You should too." Not to mention, I knew what it felt like to get hit by a man. To live in fear of what he would end up doing to you in the long run.

No matter how much of an asshole Jax was, he never physically abused me. He would kill anyone who lifted a hand to ever hurt me. In my heart, I knew it was true. I took out my cell and fiddle around with the numbers until I dialed him.

"Hey, Jax. I just wanted to tell you I love you." I reached his voicemail but he would know I was thinking of him.

There was a lot more to running the Lodge than I had originally anticipated. At the end of the night, money had to be counted, then split up accordingly. A lot of work went into closing it up. Around one in the morning, I was yawning.

"Go on home Tara, we got this." Nero made the offer and I took him up on it. Lyla had this down to a fine art as she ran around taking care of everything.

"I'll see you guys tomorrow."

I felt drowsy on the way home. I rolled down the window to get some air blowing on my face to help keep me awake. But I was wide awake when I seen him standing on the streets of Charming.

Under the street lamp on the corner stood the old man I seen in the park. He had on a sweater vest, trousers and a patty cap sported on the top of his head. A cane was propped in front of him. I didn't
recall him having it before.

Maybe it wasn't the best decision call I made, but I still made it anyway. I flipped a u-turn in the middle of the street about the same time he rounded the corner. For being so elderly, he made good time down the street.

It was almost as though he wanted me to see where he went to. Because he waited at the front door before he entered inside of the retirement home. I tried to push the door open to follow him in but it wouldn't budge. I seen a guard walking by, so I knocked on the glass doors.

"Can I help you?" He finally let me in.

"I am wondering if you can tell me the name of the man who just came inside?"

"We are closed. No one came in here."

"But I seen him go through these door just a couple of minutes ago."

"Ma'am, these doors lock automatically at nine o'clock at night. No one comes in or goes out until around six in the morning when the nurses does a shift change. You'll have to come back tomorrow."

Now, I was sure I lost my mind or it was well on it's way there. All the way home, I tried to rationalize what took place tonight, I came up with nothing.

Once I made it inside the house, I was too tired to think anymore. Jax had Abel in bed with him. They looked so comfortable and peaceful. I wouldn't wake them. I check on Thomas and covered him up. I threw a blanket on the couch and crashed for the night.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"Thanks, for everything Tara. I appreciate you letting me move in early too. Are you sure you don't want the furniture or money for it?"

"There is nothing here I want. You're saving me from cleaning it out actually. So, thank you, Kyle." Everything in the my dad's house was tied to a bad memory of some sort. From my childhood to the present.

"I don't have much in the small apartment I rent. This will help out a lot." Kyle continued to unload boxes from his truck. One of them was a box of books, it immediately caught my attention. The one laying on top. It was called; The Land of the Dead. With a large black crow on the cover.

"Do you like mythology?" Kyle waved his hand in front of my face. "Tara, are you in there, girl?"

"Um.. yeah, sorry. I am taking it, you like mythology."

"Well, I do have a degree in it." The look on my face at his statement must have said it all because I didn't say anything before he responded to it. "Don't judge me based on my burly size, the lack of proper English when I speak, my body art and piercings."

"Piercings? I don't see any." He had no earrings or nothing sticking out of his face.

Kyle grabbed the button on his jeans. "If you really wanna see girl, I'll show you."

"No, that's okay. I should go. Here are the keys." My face felt flushed with the heat setting my cheeks.
"You should drop by later. Nicole is bringing Cody. I'm cooking tonight."

"I'll have my boys."

"Bring them, your sons can play with Cody." Kyle was genuine as far as I could tell.

"Thanks, for the invitation. But I probably won't."

"Here, you seem interested in it." He handed me the book I flipped through earlier. Later on, I would make time to read it.

"Thanks. See ya." I kept my exist simple and direct. He was giving me mixed signals. I didn't want to lead him on or pretend like he was in to me. Men never paid me much attention in that manner.

After I picked the boys up, I went home to get dinner ready. It wasn't long until Jax called. "Hey, babe. I've got a late one tonight. Just wanted to give you a heads up as you asked me to do."

"Thanks, for letting me know. What's going on?"

Jax was beating around about where he was going and what he was really doing. So I answered it for him. "A patch over party at Collette's place, maybe?"

Lyla told me about it three days ago. Which meant, Jax knew longer than that. He waited until the last second to tell me because he wanted to pass it off as nothing.

"Tara, you know it's just business. I don't even wanna go."

"Then don't go. Come home to your family." I threw it out there on the table for Jax to choose. I waited patiently for this moment too, since Lyla told me. I would not make demands upon him, this one would be his call.

"I love you, I'll be late tonight."

Jax made his choice. I hung up thinking about all the things they do at those parties. I had to get myself under control.

Not trusting ruins a relationship. It took me a long time to get it, if Jax loved me, he would remain faithful to me. If he doesn't, no amount of my bitching at him, demanding his love, would make him love me enough.

The book laid on the table with the crow on it. I ran my good hand over the slick cover. Jax used my emotions against me to keep me in line. Well, not this time. He wouldn't get as much as a raised eyebrow from me when he came home. But, I would not be the good supportive wife sitting alone sulking in my sorrows until then either.

"I love you Jax, but I will be late getting home. Abel, get your stuff picked up honey. We're going out tonight."

The boys and I stopped off at the store. I bought a couple of different deserts to take along. With a bottle of wine, assorted alcohol, a welcome to my home mat and blender to make mixed drinks in my cart. We were ready to go.

Kyle seemed surprised we showed up at his door step. "Well, come on in."

"I hope it's okay we came. I probably should have called first."

"Don't be silly. Make yourself at home, Nicole is in the kitchen."
Abel made a friend quickly with Cody. They sat on the floor watching a video and giggling. It was the first fun I seen my son have in a while. It made me smile watching him have a good time.

I offered to help out but Nicole wouldn't hear of it. She took hamburger out of the frig and made them into patties. The place didn't look the same anymore. He already moved out a ton of stuff. It was amazing how one perceived what a home really meant or the way it should be.

"Want a beer?" Kyle held up a bottle.

"Thanks."

From the window I watched Kyle with the boys. They were kicking around a soccer ball in the backyard. He would pretend to chase them while they ran and laughed. Looking from the inside, they appeared as a happy family enjoying each others company. It wasn't something I could say I experienced in this house with my family once.

"Kyle loves kids." Nicole was watching them play too.

"He's still young. He will find the right girl someday."

"Only if he gets over her before he dies."

Nicole gave me some insight to her brother. While he served overseas in the military. His wife was serving his best friend in a real friendly manner. By the time he came home for good, she was gone and took their little boy with her. She ended up marrying his best friend and their son calls him daddy now.

We all have one love we never got past or got over. I understood where Kyle was coming from all to well. For me, it was Jackson Teller. No one ever sized up to him in my mind or heart and definitely not in my bed. They could be the worst possible person in world for you to be with and never truly loved you. Yet, they were all you craved.

"I'll help you finish up dinner Nicole." I was getting better at switching the subject when I didn't want to discuss something or think about it anymore.

After we spent the evening with them, I felt better. It was laid back without any problems or anything going wrong. We talked about normal everyday life stuff. I didn't have much adult interaction other than at work. I actually enjoyed it.

"Cody is tired, I'm going home. It was great to see you again Tara."

"You too, Nicole."

While Kyle walked them out, I gathered up the boys stuff so we could go home and I could put them to bed.

"The movie is almost over. Please, Mommy, I want to see it." No one reached me faster than my children.

"Okay, Abel. Ten more minutes. Then we have to go."

Only more like an hour or so passed by. Kyle and I just talked. He knew everything about crows I thought was possible to know.

"Crows feast on death. People once believed that when someone dies, a crow carries their soul to the
land of the dead. When something so bad happens that a terrible sadness is carried with it and the soul can't rest. Sometimes, just sometimes, the crow can bring that soul back to put the wrong things right. It's not a resurrection of the dead, just their soul returns back here."

It was fascinating what I learned about them from him. No one would believe me if I said I spent hours with this man talking about damn crows. But it was the truth.

"Come over tomorrow night, I will show you thesis papers I wrote about crows in college."

"I can't."

"Why not, do you got a hot date or something?"

"Kyle, are you interested in making some extra money?"

We reached an agreement. Maybe it was another bad decision I made but I made it and I would see it through.

"Goodnight."

The boys were out on the drive home. I checked my watch twice when I pulled up and seen Jax's bike parked in our driveway. He got home really early tonight.

He was sitting out on the porch steps having a smoke. The glow from the inhale of his cigarette was all I could see in the dark.

"Where the fuck have you been?" Jax didn't give me a sweet greeting. But then again, I wasn't expecting one from him.

"Out. I didn't think you would be home until later. Remember, you had more important things to do."

He reluctantly helped me get the boys inside and to bed. It sort of made me happy he now knew what it felt like to be the one at home alone. Worrying about where they were, who they were with and what the hell they were out doing all night. I've spent years doing the exact same thing he had done for only a couple of hours tonight.

Jax just kept making remarks while he followed me around. He wanted to fight with me so, I wouldn't give him one.

"Do you want to fight or fuck?" It took him back a little. For once I was the aggressor in the relationship.

The way Jax took me was rough and hard, I begged and yearned for more of it. It was an angry, raw, and passionate sex. Something we hadn't experienced together since Thomas was born.

There were times, maybe I was too hard on him. While we laid in the dark together. Nothing but the sounds of our hearts beating as one, I knew where I belonged. I rolled over to look at the clock. It was already three in the morning. Once daily light came, this would all end. So, I held on to the moment and hoped it would be enough to get me to the next one we had.

"You shouldn't be mingling with the girls. Make everyone come to you. Give me a second." Kyle was now my right hand. He was here to protect me, who I really was, the girls and to handle anyone who got out of control.
The transition of a common whorehouse to the escape of sexual glitz and glamour wasn't an easy thing. It wouldn't happen overnight either. I couldn't see Nero's crew just hanging out in here casually to keep the peace. Their presence set a mood which high end, rich men couldn't relate to.

Kyle, however, seemed to blend in well. He was big enough to intimate you when necessary and gentle enough not to scare you away. Nero was getting used to the idea of having him around too. They hit it off pretty well. I agreed to pay Kyle's salary out of my share of the profits so there wouldn't be that problem to deal with.

Lyla dressed me in a tight, short red dress. The gold attachments woven in it beamed the light off of them when I moved just right. The bold makeup and with large gold bangle bracelets for my arms. I felt ridiculous but she insisted. No other girl had red on but me. She basically told me the same as Kyle, don't act or look like the other girls. You are in control so do your thing.

This was my night and the one shot I had to get the word spread among the elite. Judges, politicians and surgeons were here to experience and sample the pleasures the Lodge had to offer. It was a smorgasbord of wild pussy fantasies.

They were carrying the white day couch in from Nero's office and placed it by the window.

"What's it for?"

Nero just smirked at my question. "It's your boy here, Kyle came up with it."

Kyle patted it for me to set down. "Your throne my lady." I actually didn't mind putting my feet up for a bit. It was rough walking around in the four inch heels Lyla gave me, worse trying to stand still on them. The girls had the advantage over me, their clothes and shoes didn't stay on long enough to bother them.

The night went quickly by. The men came, then cum hard with the girls and threw cash around like it meant nothing to them. Expensive Champagne flowed between their lips as water. Most of the girls were used to being treated badly, tonight most were treated like a queen after they gave them a fuck to remember. But what had been a pleasant evening, took a turn when the Jax and the Sons walked in.

Kyle made sure to flex his muscles a bit. I didn't stop to see how dedicated to the cause he really was. "Nobody gets close to Madame Ecstasy unless she wants to see you." His nickname for me made me smile.

"Yeah, you might wanna rethink who the hell you're talking to." It was a treatment Jax wasn't used to getting. He expressed his disapproval of it quickly.

When Jax went to walk past Kyle as he ignored him, he put his hand on Jax's chest. "You might wanna think about who owns this business establishment now."

Jax shoved him and Kyle shoved Jax right back. "Kyle, it's okay." It was time for me to intervene between them.

"Another time bro." Jax would never back down from a fight.

"I'm counting on it." But to my amazement, Kyle didn't either.

"We need to talk." Jax was pissed because his authority was challenged. Which, no one ever done with him. Simply because of you he was.
Nero's door was open to his office. "Can we use your office for a minute?"

"Mama, with this kinda cash flow, you can use anything your heart desires. We pulled in eighty two thousand dollars tonight." I didn't make my goal but it was close enough I would run with Nero's numbers.

"Bullshit." Jax seemed to disagree.

"For real man, Tara here, has a real good head for business. Give me some, mama." Nero held out his fist and we bumped them before he left.

"How the fuck did you make that kinda cash?"

"You're selling pussy to earn a little money with Collette. I'm selling the fantasy to earn a big score."

He didn't believe me until I took him into the jungle room. The sounds of the water splashing around in the rock hot tub. Jungle type trees placed around with leaves and vines covering the wall. A swing from high above. Hell, I wasn't even sure what they done with it, but they all loved it.

"I'll be damned."

"You know, Mr. Teller, I might be able to work you in for a therapeutic session tonight with Madame Ecstasy, if you would like?"

"Really."

"Oh yeah, I got moves baby, you ain't seen yet." If the girls could figure out how to use the swing, so could I.

Once I slowly took off my clothes, I climbed the platform up to it. I would have to admit, having your pussy licked and taken while hanging upside down from a swing was a new and pleasurable experience for me too.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

A couple of days had passed since the Lodge opened to our new clientele. It was also a few days of Jax paying me attention and complements like he never had before. The sex was incredible. If you could believe it, he actually played hooky from the club one afternoon. We spent hours in bed pleasing each other and not stressing or worrying about anything but our next orgasm.

He had to go when Chibs kept calling him. We lingered at his bike kissing before he took off. When I went to leave, the damn same crow was sat on the hood of my car.

I thought it would fly away once I started driving but it didn't. "I've had it with you crow." I push down hard on the accelerator. Then slammed on the brake. The thing set perfectly still on my hood. The term maniac wouldn't describe the way I was driving to shake this thing off my car. I even swerved a couple of times. By the time I pulled off the side of the road, the damn thing flew off on it's own.

But I should have known better than to think it was over with it. The sky went dark as the night and it was day time. The lighting flashed around and the storm was coming for me. It brought back it's friends. There were a hundred crows covering the ground and my car now. I closed my eyes with the thought when I opened them, it would all go away and be gone. It didn't work either.

"This is not real, it's just a dream."
They made a path for me when I got out of the car. The black iron gate slammed shut after I went through it just like in my dream before.

The same walk down the path of crows seemed longer this time. Maybe, it was because I knew where the path led and how the story ended. The fog was rose slowly from the ground. It swirled around my legs as I stepped through it. When I would stop to think about turning around to go back, more crows would caw behind me to urge me forward. It wasn't a threatening sound this time, more of an encouragement.

Whatever they planned for me to see was going to happen one way or another. So I rolled with it and continued on. Several of them were flying in unison in a circle above me with the white faced crow hoovering in the middle. I should be scared but I wasn't.

Until I seen him perched up on the tombstone then, fear struck me. "It can't be. This isn't real." It's what I kept telling myself hoping to wake up soon from the nightmare. "Who the hell are you and what do you want from me?"

The old man took his time to get down off the headstone. "Tara, you are a smart girl. You already know who I am, you summonsed me here. Begged me, to come and save him."

A honk behind me brought me out of it and back to reality. The light at the intersection had changed to green and the car was getting impatient for me to go. The white faced crow was still perched on my hood, staring at me through the windshield with his cold black eyes.

"Son of bitch, I am a wake and seeing it now."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

I promised I was going somewhere with the crows and I am ; ) If it confused you about them in this chapter, I made a video for this story and it will help clear it up. It's on YouTube, Circling the Crow by Peters Girl. The link to it is on my profile page. If you watch it, please let me know what you think.

In the 2016 BIT AWARDS, there are several of my favorite Sons of Anarchy authors nominated; Samantha Renk, elbeewoods, Lady Romona and girl-at-home13 . Make sure to check out their stories and vote for your favorites.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert.
I will fix my errors tomorrow. It's late and I wanted to get this posted tonight!

The word spread about the Lodge like wildfire. The new, Madame Ecstasy Play Palace, was a success. They gave it's name for us because we could never decide on one. We were having a little trouble keeping some people out though. Rift raft we didn't want rubbing elbows with our clients. It needed to be a place they could run to for their fun while they felt safe.

We came up with a new system for the elite clients to get in by themselves during certain hours. They had a private entrance in the back with another one of the girls standing by to take of care them on arrival. A gold pass was purchased by them for an extensive amount of money for the extensive sexual experience.

No one thought the idea would fly. When I told Nero it was going to cost around ten grand to install it, I thought he was going to pass out.

But I sold twenty of those gold cards already in a week. It was the same key card swipe used by the hospital. They had a specific password assigned for each card. There were many reasons for it. We could program it to know who came and went. It was also a way for me to keep track of names. Of course the best part, they always paid in untraceable cash.

As I laid lingering in bed, I went down the mental list of what I need to get done today. Working most of the night, then staying up all day was killing me. It felt like days had past since I had a good night's sleep. This morning I was running behind already. I threw on a pair of jeans, put my hair up in a pony tail.

It was my ritual before going outside. I peeked my head out the door to see if they were around. There hadn't been a sign of a crow for a week. I found myself looking up at the sky searching for them. Those silly superstitions got the better of me. I chalked it all up to my mind playing tricks. I had been under a tremendous amount of stress lately which didn't help matters.

First to drop off the boys with Gemma. Then I hauled ass to the Lodge to get the day started.

"Howdy, Tara." Lyla greeted me in some get up I hadn't seen her in before. Complete with cowboy boots and a lasso.

"What is up with Lyla?"

Nero was having a cup of coffee at the bar when I went in. "Beats the hell outta me. She is trying to be cowgirlish. A guy said he would pay extra for it."

When Lyla got Kyle in the act, I couldn't watch it anymore. "Dammit, hold still Kyle, I need to practice lassoing someone."

"Girl, you are killing me. Come here so I can show you how to do it right." Kyle was giving Lyla roping lessons in the bar. The strange things we all done for money.
"The next thing you know, we will have saw dust down on the floor and a mechanical bull in the corner."

"I bet the guys will pay extra for it." Nero was kidding, I think. Or at least I hoped so.

Then I passed another girl playing pretend as Nero and I were going to his office. "Is she dressed like Scarlet O'Harra?"

"Yeah, the girls take their roles pretty seriously."

"It's turning into a freak show."

"A profitable freak show, mama, don't forget that part."

Nero threw a small bag down on the desk and pushed it in my direction. "It's your cut, sixty nine thousand dollars. The irony and shit of the number huh? I did take five thousand out for the key card system we had put in. You know you can't just go put it in the bank, right?"

"I know the drill." From being with Jax so long, I knew all to well I couldn't make a deposit of this size without sending up red flags. Like I needed another reason to be investigated for something.

Next week my hearing at the hospital was to be held. It was part of my worry and adding to the stress level no doubt. My professional fate would be decided by them. Nero was understanding, if I got my job back, I would be more of a silent partner then. It was what I actually wanted in the first place.

She knocked before she stuck her head in. "Kyle and I are gonna run down to the local store and russel up some supplies. Bye, y'all." Lyla was adorable. She was a huge draw to the men. Seeing her play cowgirl, it wasn't hard to understand why either.

"Well, I better get busy, Nero. I'll catch you later."

"There is one more thing. Jax called this morning. He wants to come by tonight and get a feel for the place. He wants to bring Collette with him. I told him I would have to talk to you first about it." Nero was trying to approach it with me carefully with caution. Unfortunately, my husband never done that.

"Jax didn't even mention it to me."

"We don't have to do it Tara, it's your call mama."

"Let him bring Collette. I think it will be good for all of us."

"You're not gonna do something crazy are you?" I understood why Nero thought most women were crazy actually.

"Of course not. You've been with Gemma to long. I will be nothing but sweet, pleasant and helpful."

"Okay, I'll call Jax and let him know it's alright then."

But it really wasn't alright with me. It was a slap to the face for Jax to bring his whore here and flaunt that bitch in front of me. For a couple of hours I went over in my head the best way to handle the situation. I came up with nothing. I decided to take a break from cleaning and thinking.

Nero and Kyle were tearing the kitchen apart, hauling out cabinets and stuff. "What are you guys doing?"
"Gemma want to redecorate. She thinks it needs updating." It made me snicker at Nero. He rolled his eyes when he said it. But I noticed she was getting her way about it.

After climbing over piles of boards and crap, I made my way to the sink for a glass of water. It slipped through my fingers crashing to the floor when I seen Kyle's shirtless back, the glass shattered instantly on contact. A large crow's head with something in it's mouth. When I took a closer look, I was freaked out even more.

"Are those bullet wounds?"

"Yeah." Kyle quickly put his shirt back on.

"How did you get them?"

"I don't want to talk about it." Now Kyle was the one who seemed guarded.

It all came rushing to me; the white faced crow led me to his shop where I met him the night I got my tattoo. Every time I was around Kyle, the visions of crows became stronger for me.

"It's you, you're the old man. You know everything about crows there is to know."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

Quickly I got my shit together and went out the door. I needed some air. "Tara, wait. What's wrong?"

When he grabbed a hold of me, it was instinct to push him away to protect myself. "Don't touch me. What do you want from me?"

"Get a grip on yourself, girl. When is the last time you slept or even ate for that matter? You're falling apart."

The air around me swirled leaving me dizzy as it was cutting off my air supply. It was the last thing I remembered until I woke up on Nero's couch.

"Feeling better, sweetheart?" Gemma was sitting in a chair having a smoke.

"Where are the boys?"

"They are home with Nitta."

"How long have I been out?" My head was pounding, my mouth felt dry and I was shaky when I tried to stand.

"A few hours. Nero called me."

"Did you tell Jax?"

"No. I thought it best he not know for now. What happened?"

"I've just been under a lot of stress lately and I haven't been feeling well, I got dizzy. I don't remember much after that."

"Nero said you were talking about an old man and crows?"

"I don't remember doing that." I just shrugged it off. It was easier than explain the truth to Gemma of
all people.

"Lyla, where is Kyle?"

"He left to do a tattoo. He said he would be back soon."

Good sense told me it could wait until he got back. But I felt the need to talk to him and get this out in the open. His truck was parked in front of the shop. The door was open so I went on in.

A girl was giggling in the back room. For a brief moment I put Kyle in the same category as my husband and knew what he was doing with her. I scoffed to myself for even coming here.

When I pulled back the curtain, he was just giving her a tattoo. It was a massive one, the tiger started on her back, continued over on to her side, with it's paw placed on her breast. She wasn't shy about having her naked body laid out for him to see on the table either.

"That's enough for today. Let this heal up, then call me and I will continue it. It will be probably another three or four sessions before we're done."

"How does it look?" The big boobed blonde bounced off the table. She stuck them right in his face.

"Looks great."

Kyle didn't seem tempted by her. This was something from man I wasn't used to. If she had done the same to Jax, especially the way she looked, could he resist her?

"Hey." The girl noticed me before he did. She still didn't move an inch to put any clothes on.

"Sorry, I'll wait out here until you're done."

She got dressed to leave. But made one more attempt to throw herself at him. "Are you sure you don't want to have a drink with me tonight?"

"I can't, I gotta work. But thanks."

"I can arranging for you to have the night off if you want to go with her. She is a pretty girl." It was an offer to makeup for the way I acted earlier.

"I see the art I am creating and nothing more." Kyle was short with me. Not that I didn't somewhat deserve it.

"About earlier..."

"I don't get you, Tara. One second we're friends, the next second you act like I'm trying to take your virginity or something."

"When I seen your tattoo and bullet wounds, I freaked out. I'm sorry. I know you don't owe an explanation. I.."

"Is that what's bothering you, my bullet wounds? I was assigned to a mission. My only job was to take out the enemy and watch over the convoy. I seen her coming towards them with a baby in her arms. The little girl must have been around a year old. Never in a million years would I have guessed what was coming next, she threw her little girl at them. There was a bomb strapped on her. The mother blew herself and her child up just to kill our soldiers. I should have shot that bitch before she ever made it to them, but something inside me, told me it was wrong and I didn't do it. The only thing I had to do was protect them and I failed."
"Kyle, I'm so sorry. I didn't know. You don't have to tell me anymore if you don't want to."

It took him a while. But he finally continued. "I don't know how I got to the hospital after the ambush. I woke up a week later, someone pulled me out and saved me. They gave me a fucking metal for living while others died. Like I'm some god damn hero. Cody won't think so when he finds out the truth."

"What's Cody got to do with it?"

"His dad was in one of trucks that blew up. He only had three months before he was out. It was his last tour of duty. I served the rest of my time and went home. Just to find out there wasn't nothing there for me anymore. So, I came here to help out Nicole and Cody. Knowing the day is coming when I gotta look that boy in eyes and tell him what happened. Now, you know how I got the bullet wounds. I hate talking about this shit. Are we good, Tara?"

"Yeah, we're good. I gotta get back so I can get ready for tonight. Again, I'm sorry, Kyle."

Part of me thought Kyle wouldn't come back to the Lodge as crazy as I acted. The same part sort of wished he didn't. But the other side, wanted him here with me. I felt safe and secure when he was around.

Lyla didn't waste anytime getting me ready. Once she was done polishing my look, I went to find Nero.

"Mama-san, I love it." Nero seemed to like my attire Lyla picked out for me this evening.

Me, not so much. The short red silk Japanese style dress was barley enough to cover me. Red was now my official signature color. It buttoned over to the side all the way down so at least my breasts were covered. When she put my hair up with long black sticks, I didn't care for them. But I did like the dangled gold little butterflies off of the ends of them though.

I used to think Lyla took the easy way out to earn a living. She handles so much of the business and coordinates everything. The girls value her opinion as well. I had a new growing respect for her.

"They're here." Lyla let me know it was show time.

Kyle was waiting outside the office for us. He never left my side when we went to greet Jax and Collette.

"Hey, babe." Jax gave me a kiss on the cheek. Collette just gave me glares.

Jax's cellphone went off. "Talk to Tara, I gotta take this. She can teach you some shit." Collette rolled her eyes at what he said.

As a matter of fact, she walked right past me like I wasn't even standing there and went straight to Kyle. "Well, I definitely could teach you some things honey. Maybe you should come and work for me?"

"No thanks." It wasn't what Kyle said, it was the way he immediately removed her hand from his chest. You could tell she wasn't use to rejection from men. So, she went at him again.

"Are you sure? There would be all kinds of perks in it for you baby."

Kyle didn't have a chance to respond that time before Jax was up in his face once again. "You wouldn't last in my world, bro. We don't need someone like him around." It pleased me, even though
I knew it was wrong, Jax was no longer the only pretty boy in the room anymore. The best part, Jax knew it too.

"If you can't control your bitch, you should keep her on a leash. Don't worry Jax, I wouldn't fuck Collette for free, let alone pay for it, bro." I think it surprised us all Kyle didn't worry about who liked what he said or didn't. He spoke his mind.

It was getting heated between them when Nero stepped in. "Let's take it down some guys. We got clients in here."

"Are you seriously picking that little prick over me?" Jax sounded like a child on the playground throwing a temper tantrum. How many times had he chosen others over me and his boys?

"Come on Jax, I'm not choosing sides man. I'm just trying to conduct business."

"You did pick a side Nero. You know what bad shit can happen from it."

"Are you threatening me Jax, you wanted out as I recall. I've paid you off. You don't got shit to do with my business any longer." Even Nero was starting to lose his patience with the situation. Which, spoke volumes.

"Whatever man, Lyla can you help Collette out? We need to get her up and running like this place." Since Jax wasn't getting his way, he went on to the next person.

"I can't Jax, I work for Tara now. Sorry." It almost made me sad the way Lyla looked when she told him. But on the inside it made me happy too.

The great Jackson Teller stood alone for once with no one going along with what he said. Or hanging on his every word because of who he was. All he had left was a used, dried up whore. Who would sell him out for a twenty dollar bill if it suited her needs at the time. It was one lesson he would learn on his own and from what I could see, it wouldn't be long now either.

"Jackie, we need to go." Chibs came in to get him. Jax blew Collette off just like he does me. It irked her, it made me smile even bigger.

"Love you, babe." Jax kissed me before he took off with Chibs.

There was no way I could have planned this night better if I tried. But there was still more of the show to come.

Especially when Collette chose to fuck with the wrong guy, Nero. "Maybe we could co mingle our girls a little?. I'll share mine with you and you can share yours with me."

"Oh, I'm sorry. We're not accepting applications anymore for low end pussy. But if we should, you'll be the first I let know." I felt I could give her the best answer to her question.

"I am not talking to you. I'm discussing this with Nero. So, what do say baby?" Collette was literally rubbing up on him in front of us. But she should have been paying more attention to who was behind her.

When I seen Gemma start after her, I moved out of the way. "Bitch, you come at my man again. I'll rip your tits off."

Nero was trying to control wild Gemma. Good luck I wished him because he was going to need it. He was dragging her down the hallway. Collette had no idea the stroke of luck she had tonight.
because Gemma would kick her ass.

"Get out Collette and don't come back here again. This belongs to me now. What you don't end up running into the ground on your business, Jax will." She didn't even try to challenge me. Actually it made me on the leery side how easy it was. Rat was left behind to take her home. She would get no time alone with my husband this evening.

After they left, I needed a drink. Hell, we all did. I didn't hang around long. I went straight home to see my boys before turning in for the night.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"You said we could take the boys with us this weekend to the farm."

"Shit, I forgot Gemma. I'm sorry. I've been so busy lately. I'll get their stuff together."

"It's no big deal, sweetheart. You should pack a bag and come with us. You could use some time away from here."

"Okay, I'll get our stuff together."

She was right, I haven't had a moment still for over a month. Nero made arrangements for the Lodge. I rushed around to get packed. Jax was on a weekend run with the club and wouldn't be back until Sunday evening. I had nothing to keep me here. Then I seen him talking to Nero in the Kitchen.

"Hey. Are you coming too?" Kyle was leaned up against the wall.

"I changed my mind, I should probably stay here and catch up on some stuff."

Kyle followed me down the hallway. "Tara, you haven't really talked to me since the other day. Nero asked me to go help him out with a couple of things. I would never cross the line with you. You got my word. Besides the fresh country air with just a hint of cow shit, nothing better, girl."

Kyle convinced me I was being silly. I was putting distance there between us and he knew it. When I done it with Jax, he didn't even notice. So, we loaded up our stuff along with the boys and farm bound we were.

Since I needed the entire back seat for the boys to be strapped in, I drove too. I turned on the radio and just drove in peace. I was actually looking forward to getting away from Charming, even if it was for only a couple of days.

It took hours before we crossed the sign; Welcome to Norco. I was ready to get out and stretch my legs for a bit. Abel and Thomas both had a long nap so they would be wired for sound later on today.

Living in the city my whole life, I had never really been out in a rural area. The houses were off in beautiful scenery. All kinds of animals were seen as you drove down the road.

The long driveway Nero turned up led to a huge white ranch house. Cows in the pasture, chickens roaming freely around the in the yard. Once I stepped out of the car, all the wonderful scents hit my nose. Rows of apple trees, flowers everywhere and strawberries growing up along the fence in spots.

They were already getting plans together for the day. "We will take the boys, they will love it."

"It's okay Gemma, they can stay here with me."
"Just relax mom, take a nap, read a book or whatever."

Nero's uncle was on a cruise with his new wife. The house was quaint but modern. I found a picnic table in the backyard under a shade tree. They had designed a sitting area around it. They laid stones where the barque was and a giant fire pit. Nice lawn furniture was placed all over to chose from.

It was so peaceful out here. I don't remember the last time I felt so tranquil. I took a walk down the hill. A hammock was tied up between two trees. I only laid there for a couple of minutes until my eyes became heavy. I kept trying to read but I lost the fight.

"Tara." Gemma was slightly shaking me. The sun was getting ready to go down already. I slept the day away. "Get up, dinner will be ready soon."

The smell in the kitchen when I opened the door, made me hungry. It was fried chicken and something baking in the oven. "I'll help you finish it Gemma."

"I didn't cook it. Kyle did."

"I told you I can cook, girl. Try this." He took out a big fluffy biscuit out of the oven. After he put honey and butter in it, he handed it to me.

"That is so good."

"You got a little on your mouth." Kyle wiped my mouth with a napkin like I done with Abel. I couldn't help but to giggle a little.

As I turned around Gemma was intensely staring at me. "Why don't you help me set the table?"

After she got me alone in the dinning room, she wanted to talk. "You are getting way to close to lover boy. There needs to be some distance put there."

"There is nothing going on between me and Kyle. I haven't done anything wrong. We're just friends."

"It's how it started with Clay. He was always there for me and we would share our hopes and dreams. Before I knew it, it went to a whole another level. John was never around, always gone on club business. I stayed at home alone with the boys without any friends or family. The only people I had was in club. Does any of this sound familiar to you?"

"I'd never cheat on Jax."

"It's not about you cheating on Jackson. It's about the hate you have growing for him in your heart. Things have changed between you, I see how you look at him now. The same way I looked at John."

Gemma could be a downer sometimes. But my little guy brought the cheer right back in my life. Abel told me about everything they done today and he seen. He had a box of rocks he collected. A sweet little wildflower bouquet he picked just for me.

We got the table set and sat down to a damn good meal. I ate until I literally couldn't take another bite. Abel was dosing off in his chair and Thomas was out cold on Nero's lap.

"I'll help with the dishes after I put them to bed."

"Don't worry mom, I'll do the dishes." Gemma started carting off stacks of them to the kitchen.
Abel wanted me to lay down with him until he fell asleep. We talked about the animals and how he wanted some when he grew up. When I was sure he was out, I slipped out of the bed. I check on Thomas in the crib once more before I left the room.

They were drinking by the time I made it back to the kitchen. A bunch of gold studs were laying out on the table Gemma was fiddling around with.

"I might get my clit pierced, what do you think Tara?"

"I think it sounds very painful."

"Kyle might give us a discount if we both do it." Gemma was dead serious about it. Sometimes, I thought she reveled in the pain and brought some of it on herself. This was one of those painful decisions.

"I just don't see the point of it. No one will see it." I had a counter argument for her.

"Where's your sense of adventure, girl. It's for stimulation, for both of you. Your old man might like it." Kyle could talk all he wanted to but I would not be putting a hole in my clit.

Gemma leaned over the table closer to Kyle. "Stimulation, do tell me more, sweetheart." She continued to give him hell about it too.

"If you think you're getting to me, Gemma and I'm all shy, I'm not. I will whip it out right here."

"Promises, promises." Hell now Gemma was just taunting him. She had the way about her to initiate you into things.

Kyle was inches from her face when he done just that. "Wow, nice."

"Thanks, Gemma. I really like my stud."

"Who said I was talking about your piercing. Baby maybe you should..."

"It's not gonna happen Gemma." Nero was quick to put an end to her request of a stud being poked in the end of his dick.

We drank and laughed. Even razzed each other a little. I felt more at ease today than I had in months.

"I'm putting her to bed now. Goodnight guys." Nero was helping Gemma to the bedroom.

"So, are you going to let me pierce you or what?" Kyle was cute when he was being all cocky.

"No. Not only no but hell no."

"Start slow, get your nipple pierced. It's minimal pain and I'll do it for free."

It took some more wine before I finally agreed to it. We went into his room so we wouldn't wake up the boys. "Take your shirt off, Tara."

"What?"

"I can't do it through your shirt. I've seen breast before girl. Don't be all shy."

He stood me in front of the mirror shirtless, I felt insecure with my body. Worse, I was with another man doing this. He put gloves on and marked the spot so I could say it was where I wanted it.
As Kyle stood behind me, I felt his warm skin rub on mine. The cold antiseptic wipe went across my nipple making it erect. "Take in a couple of deep breaths and let them out slowly." The piercing stud went through my nipple the second breath I let out. It wasn't as much pain as I thought it would be.

"Leave it in for at least eight weeks. Then you can change it out. Twist the ball a couple of times a day and put this ointment on it after you shower."

"Thanks."

"Goodnight, Tara."

"Goodnight."

I snuggled close to Abel. He was in a blissful sleep. I wanted to be in one too.

Gemma kept the boys for me overnight so Jax and I could have some time alone. He said he would be home by the time I was on Sunday and his bike was already in the driveway. I was sort of excited to see if he noticed my piercing without me saying anything about it.

The shower was running and he left a string of clothes down the hallway. I picked them up so I could start a load of laundry. I had tons to do with mine and the boys stuff from the weekend. I emptied out his pockets on top of the dryer like I always do.

When I went to take Jax’s belt out of the loops of his pants, it hit me. It was the same leather belt he always wore; SAMCRO.

To the garage I went. Tossing boxes out of the way searching for it. When I couldn't find it I started dumping boxes out on the floor.

"Tara, what the hell are you doing?" About the time Jax came in the garage, I came across it.

"Son of bitch. I didn't notice it before. I gotta go."

"Tara." Jax kept calling for me but I didn't have anytime to waste. I sped over there.

When no one answered I started banging on the door. "Jesus Christ. Tara, what are you doing here?"

"John spelled the club's name Sam Crow. They spell it now, SAMCRO. When did it change?"

"At least come inside. What's going on?" Gemma invited me and I reluctantly went. I only wanted her to answer my damn question.

"Can you please answer my question?" I handed her John Teller's manuscript; The Life and Death of Sam Crow; How the Sons of Anarchy Lost Their Way.

"It changed after Clay took over. Why do you want to know?"

Her African crow was in the cage in the kitchen. "Why do you have a crow?"

"John bought me one and I've had one ever since. He loved those birds. He thought they were free and stood for what the club was. Will you tell me what's going on?"

"I'm so stupid, the answer has been in front of me the whole time."
"The answer to what? Tara?" I left Gemma standing in the doorway calling for me just like I did Jax. There was somewhere I had to get to. When I turned on the radio it was playing, Highway to Hell.

"Isn't that the truth."

For an hour I waited on the side of Interstate 580 and nothing. "If it's you; please, give me some kind of sign. This is crazy." Just as I started up the car, the sign became clear for me.

The white faced crow landed on the side of the highway. He crouched down waiting, something new it had done. I seen the ribbon in it's mouth. I dumped my purse out in the seat searching for mine. I know it was tucked in my wallet and now it was gone.

With caution I proceeded to get closer to it. The ribbon was the same color as the one it gave me before. Before it flew away, it dropped the ribbon on the ground just like before.

Once I picked it up, I was on melt down. "Jesus Christ." The name on the ribbon; John.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Now, the crows will get down right interesting ; ) I am completely fascinated by the powers they process and the mythological magic they hold.

Most of the story is written already. I have tons of editing to do and a few undecided spots still to write. If you are willing stay with me until the end of the story? I will bust my hump to get it done.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert.
Chapter 8, Gone to the Dogs

"I'm fine."

"You call me up at one in the morning, half crying and rambling on about shit I don't understand. Trust me, Tara, you are not fine."

"I shouldn't have called you. I'm sorry for waking you up." I spent hours wandering around aimlessly. Every thought I had was a jumbled up mess. Until I reached the point I had to talk to someone or lose my sanity. If anyone would understand what I was going through, it was Kyle.

"I don't care about that. But, why are we meeting here in secret? It's not like we're having a hot love affair. Or are we and no one told me about it?" Kyle winked at me when he was done. It was part of his charm I was usually amused by. But not tonight.

"This is a safe place. No one will come here looking for me."

"You mean, Jax won't come looking for you and find you here with me?"

"Yeah, something like that. Are you going to open the door or not Kyle?" We were standing on an empty street in front his tattoo shop in a town no one knew about from my world.

There was so much I needed and wanted to tell him. For it all to make sense I started at the beginning when I was a teenager and meet Jax. To a harder part of my life, making the choice to come back to Charming after my dad died. I left out most of the incriminating things about Jax and all the details for it.

When it came to discussing the recent events, I knew Kyle would think I was crazy, seeing things that weren't really there. Or hell, just fucking flipped my last cookie. With the last sentence I said, I waited for it.

"I think it is possible. According to the tales of the crow; they can bring a tormented soul back to rectify wrongs. But, I've never read anything about it happening in the form of another human being. It's always been they act through the crow who still carries their soul around with them." Kyle just opened up bigger questions in my mind. If John wasn't the old man, then who in the hell was? Or did John somehow figure out a way to make himself appear before me and would never reappear again?

"If I show you something, you have to promise, you will never tell anyone." This was a risqué move. But I felt if John had a coded message somewhere in it, Kyle would pick up on it. They were similar to the way they thought and spoke.

"I'm not going to tell Jax. It's who you're really worried about, isn't Tara?" Kyle's question was a fair one. But even the club hadn't seen what John wrote yet. I knew for sure Gemma wouldn't be thrilled about the idea either. Another decision call I made to let him read it, right or wrong was to be seen.

Kyle started reading and I paced around. I had to find something to do while he did. So, I went to get us coffee. I needed a lot of coffee. There wasn't nothing open but an all-night truck stop. I bought six cups and could use the microwave in his shop to heat it up later. I wasn't sure how he took his. They didn't have any cream or sugar packets. The girl behind the counter was nice and put some of each in a cup for me to take.
The glance I made at my cellphone when I got back in the car because the light was blinking; I had sixteen missed calls. All of them were from Jax. "Shit." Most were made in the last few hours.

A quick call to Kyle to let him know I had to go home. I felt horrible about dragging him out in the middle of the night then running off. But as always, he understood.

Jax however, wasn't so understand when I went inside the house. "Where have you been?"

"I drove around and lost track of time. Sorry."

"Who were you with?"

"No one." I lied to Jax. Only because I couldn't tell him the truth about John and the crows. Would he even believe me if I did?

"Sit down." Jax was pissed and I had it coming. Or did I actually. How many times did I wake up to not find him in bed with me all hours of the night? He never bothered to give an explanation of where he was or who he was with.

"Can we talk about this tomorrow, Jax. I'm tired."

"Tara, is there something you need to tell me?"

"No, I don't think so."

"I'm gonna ask you one more time, is there something you wanna tell me?" Jax was being coy. As though he knew I had done something wrong. The only thing I could come up was he knew I spent time with Kyle and talked about crows. I rolled my eyes even thinking about it. I would consider myself lucky if it was all Jax done when he was a way from me.

"No."

"Then what's this shit?" Jax threw a picture down on the table. It looked like something Abel had drawn.

"I have no idea what it is."

"Stop lying to me." Jax was getting loud with me. It made me jump a little. It wasn't just from him but everything else that happened tonight as well. My nerves were shot.

"Gemma called and wanted to know what was going on with you. She said you came by the house and left in a hurry. I told her to go ahead and bring the boys home. I figured you would be back soon. Abel wanted to color before he went to bed. He drew this picture. Then he told me who is in it with him; Mommy, Thomas and Kyle." Jax was looking through me not at me any longer. I wasn't sure if he was mad or hurt by it. I wanted to respond to him, I really did. But I couldn't come up the right words.

"You've been taking my kids around him. Abel told me all about the fun weekend you spent together. Kyle collected rocks with him, went on a nature walk and spent time with him, like I don't do. Those were his exact words too. Is that the shit you put in my son's head? Are you trying to poison that boy against me?"

"Did you really hear what your son said? Jesus Christ, Jax, open your eyes and see what you are doing to our children. I don't have to poison Abel against you, you do a good enough job of it yourself. He is a smart little boy. At what point did you think he would get tired on your empty
fucking promises and never being around for him?"

Jax took his arm and cleared off everything on the counter. He broke most of the dishes from it. Not only that, but now, Thomas was crying from the crash and shattering noises which woke him up.

"I have to take care of our son. Just like I always do because we both know you never have time for them." At least I was getting a reprieve in Thomas' room. I held my son so tightly to me and rocked him. I was setting in the same room, while so many times contemplating the same exact things.

How will all of this end up effecting my children? What will become of them if I don't remain strong and stand my ground with Jax. Would they grow up to hate him or worse, be just like him. From what Abel told him tonight, the cycle was already set in motion.

It didn't take long for Thomas to fall back to sleep. I only had a couple of hours until the boys would be up and ready to start their day.

Jax was sitting on our bed spinning his wedding ring on his finger. "Do you still love me, Tara?"

"Yes, I do."

"What's going on between you and Kyle?"

"He is helping out at the Lodge. We're just friends and nothing more."

"Then why do I get the feeling you are seeing him behind my back?"

"I have no idea. But I get the same feeling every day when you walk out the door with someone. There are always women around you flaunting their bodies, the crow eaters who are willing to suck you off at your command and others throwing themselves at you on a daily basis. Not to mention how much time you spend with Collette. Yet, you are unhappy about one guy being around me who hasn't even as much as put the moves on me. Or done anything inappropriate once."

We talked for another hour. My eyes were so heavy. I was suffering from sleep deprivation anyway. This would catch up with me during the day tomorrow.

Jax and I slept together like we used to. My head on his chest while he held me. It became part our routine to only sleep this way after we had sex and it got to be only sometimes now. Many times I begged for my husband's attention or just his touch. As much as I wanted to stay awake to enjoy it, I couldn't.

No more than I had got comfortable and dozed off, the alarm went off. I hit the snooze button again and again. Until I heard Thomas. Jax was out so I got up.

After I fed Thomas, he went right back to sleep to my amazement. Abel was starting to stir around in his bed. I laid on the day bed trying to get another five minutes of sleep before he got up.

It ended up being more like another hour when Jax woke me up. The sound of the drawer shutting startled me a little. "You can sleep. I've already fed Abel and I'm getting the boys dressed."

"Aren't you late heading to the clubhouse?"

"I'm not going today." It was all Jax said before leaving the room. He didn't have his leather on either.

When I could finally make my body move to get up, I went and took a quick shower. I continued on
with my day. I wasn't sure what Jax's plans were yet. But I had tons of stuff to get done.

"I'll take the boys to Gemma. So when you're ready to leave you can." I had a bag for every venture I had going on. My Lodge bag held the clients list and passwords. Nero and I had a notebook full of ideas we eventually wanted to put in motion. I got the boys' stuff ready too and set everything by the door.

"I'm gonna hang out with you today, If it's okay?" Jax surprised the hell out of me. He never took an interest in what I did before.

"Um, sure."

Shocked wasn't the look on Gemma's face when she seen us both come in with the boys. Her jaw was tight and she didn't have much to say to either of us. Which was unusual because she always had more to say than you really wanted to hear.

Chibs seen Jax and came in from the garage. "Jackie, I need to talk to you for a minute."

"I'll be right back, babe." Jax gave me a kiss on the cheek before they went outside.

Gemma slammed the door shut when Jax left. "What game are you running with me Doc? Jax threatened to take Abel and Thomas away from me last night."

"I have no idea what you're talking about. Jax wouldn't do that."

"Jax would and he did. He jumped up all in my shit over Kyle. Cause I knew he went to the farm and didn't tell Jackson. I suggest, sweetheart, you start paying attention to what's going on around you." It was all Gemma got out before Jax came back in. I had no idea what she meant but I would find out later.

"Oh, by the way, mommy lays them all called here looking for you this morning Jackson. I told her she should wait to try your cellphone again until you left Tara and the boys. You probably wouldn't answer it with Tara around." Gemma's comment didn't please Jax. It didn't exactly set well with me either.

But how Jax handles most shit, he blew Gemma off because it wasn't something he wanted to discuss. We left to go to the Lodge. We didn't receive any warmer of a welcome there.

"Why's Jax here?" Nero was pissed off. It was a rarity he got angry.

"He's spending the day with me. Is there something going on I don't know about?"

"Nope." Nero was short and went straight to the source, Jax setting at the bar having a smoke and a cup of coffee.

"I like you Jax, I always have. But if you talk to Gemma that way again, me and you, we're gonna have problems man. You getting what I'm saying to you?"

"Stay outta my family business, Nero. What you do with Gemma, I could give a shit less about it."


"Yeah, and you heard what I said." Jax wasn't going to maintain his temper much longer. So, I stepped in to break it up.
"Nero, can I go over a couple of things with you?" It wasn't a necessity I spoke to him. But it sounded like a good excuse.

We shut the door to his office so no one could hear our conversation. "What did Jax really do to Gemma last night?"

"He called Gemma screaming at her because Kyle went with us down to the farm. I even told Jax it was my idea and everything was perfectly innocent on your part. Later on, he called back and said some real cruel things. He made her cry. Do you know what it takes to make Gemma cry?" I felt horrible. Jax took out on Gemma what he was feeling for me.

"I'm sorry, Nero. Jax was mad and said shit he probably didn't mean." Again, I made an excuse for Jax. It didn't justify his actions by any means.

Nero was getting something out of his pocket. When I saw it, I smiled. Even in the mix of all this shit, there was a rose. "I'm gonna ask Gemma to marry me. She is my world; I won't let Jax tear her a part."

"I am happy for both of you. Congratulations." I hugged him because I knew he was true about his feeling for Gemma. Never once, with all the naked girls running around here; did Nero falter with his love for her.

"Don't break out the Champagne just yet. Gemma hasn't said yes." It was cute, he was nervous about asking her.

It lightened the mood somewhat. We discussed Lodge business and Jax and I left. It was better this way for a lot of reasons.

"So, what are we gonna do for the rest of the day?"

"How about we pick up the boys and spend the rest of the day at home? I don't get to that much anymore." Never being there was catching up with me on sleep and house chores. I wondered if the boys noticed it too.

Jax didn't seem to mind the idea. I went to get them as he went to talk to Chibs. I felt it best to keep him away from Gemma for a day or two to let it blow over. Which, it would because it always does between them.

It was a quick entrance in and out. I let Gemma know just how important grandma was to my boys. Later on, when she and I could set down and have a conversation, we would discuss what happened and what she meant earlier.

The boys were as tired as we were. Jax held Thomas and Abel laid close to me on our bed while we watched a movie. I didn't make it much past the intro before I was out.

Abel's jumping around on the bed woke me up though. "Mommy, we made you dinner."

"Wow, you're getting to be my big boy." Abel loved it when we played the kissing game. I would put a kiss on him and he would give me one back and so on until he giggled.

"I helped Daddy make green beans. I poured them in a bowl."

"Well, I can't wait to taste what you made. Let's go see if daddy needs some help."

But Jax didn't need help at all. The table was set already. In the center was a small vase of flowers
even. Thomas was banging his toy around on the high chair while taking in what everyone was doing around him. It was the perfect setting of a real family.

Then it set in with me, this was only one day. How many more would I get like this? I didn't want to get my hopes up again to just be disappointed. But this was a moment I would hold on to of all my boys.

Abel carried my plate to the table. He moved so slowly and concentrated on every little step he took. "Thank you, baby." It actually looked good. To good in fact for Jax to have cooked it. I saw the grocery bag on the counter. He visited the deli and bought most of it. It warmed my heart he made such an effort.

Sometimes when I looked at Jax, I seen the man I fell in love with. Other times, it was stranger looking at me from across the table. A man I couldn't relate to at all. One who had grown cold and callous.

"This is really sweet. Thank you, Jax."

"I'm not perfect. I know I am not. But I do love you and my boys. Abel helped me this afternoon. We went shopping. He knew your favorite flower. I didn't." Jax dropped his head and stared down at his plate for a long time before he raised it up again. "I'm sorry."

Jax teared up when we made eye contact. Like Gemma, it took a lot to get to him. I've seen do him do cruel and horrible things without showing any emotions at all. What I would consider a break through with my husband, most women would consider normal everyday life.

"Look what Daddy got me." Abel was excited about the present he got while shopping today.

"Oh wow, a kite."

"If I'm good, we are going to put it together after dinner."

"Then I will do the dishes so you guys can get started on it."

Abel was skipping towards the living room. It only took small things for him to be happy. Jax came up from behind and wrapped his arms around me. "I do love you."

"I love you too."

Even though Jax bought most of the meal, he still made a hell of a mess in the kitchen. I filled up the dishwasher, clean off the counters and called it done for the night.

Thomas and I joined them in the living room just to watch. It was kind of cute Jax had to read the instructions several time. He bought a cool but complexed kite which required a lot of construction.

It was time for me to get ready to go to the Lodge. I called Nero. "I won't be in tonight. I have more important things to do than take care of business. I'm spending time with my family." He didn't have a problem with it. Which I didn't think he would. It wasn't like he really needed me to run it.

For hours Jax and Abel sat to get it put together. "Can we fly it now?"

"It's dark already little man. We'll do it after I get home tomorrow night. You need to get ready for bed."

Jax took Abel and I took Thomas to get them ready. I rounded the corner and heard what they were
talking about.

"Abel, do you know I love you?"

"Yes."

"I don't wanna be away all the time. I have to work so I can take care of you guys. Do you think Mommy spends too much time away from home too?" I wasn't certain why Jax brought me in their conversation. Other than to maybe soothe his guilt.

"No. Mommy is with us every day. She is here when I wake up, makes me food and watches Tommy. You're never here and you never watch Tommy. It's why I watch over Mommy and Tommy to protect them."

"Good night, little man." Jax had no response to Abel's comment. It would be a rough one to answer back to.

Jax went to take a shower and he never said another word about it. We cuddled up in bed. In the dark, it was quiet around us. I could feel his heart beating fast while he held me. We didn't need to have sex every night to prove he loved me. Him just not having sex with other women would be a big mark in the bonus column for it.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

You just know when you dream they will get shattered. For the most part I accepted it well because it was a part of life and I learn to deal with it. But when it came to my son, it completely irked me.

The first day wasn't as bad. Abel set waiting for Jax to come home and fly the kite with him like he promised. Of course, he didn't make it home until after dark. You would of thought Jax wouldn't do it again to break his son's heart. But, he did.

"Tomorrow night little man, I promise." When those two little words came out of Jax's mouth, I thought of all the times he said them to me. Never once did he follow through on those promises either.

"I hope you mean it Jax. Abel set for two hours waiting on you."

"I do."

"You better." It was a warning and I would not elaborate on it any farther. If Jax couldn't see it, then I couldn't be of any help to him.

The next day, the same thing. Abel set out on the step looking up and down the street for Jax for an hour. Gripping the kite in his little hand as though it were his only procession.

"We need to go inside and make some dinner."

"I'm not hungry."

"Honey, daddy is very busy and has a very demanding job." How do you explain to a child what Jax really does? I tried to keep things as vague as possible when I talked to Abel about it.

"Does that mean Daddy is not coming home to fly it with me?"

"I don't know baby."
Abel threw the kite down. I watched it almost float to the ground in slow motion. It was more than a kite he was done with. There was a rip in their relationship I couldn't fix this time for Jax. He would have to be man enough to step to and do it himself. Or from this point forward, more distance was bound to grow between them.

However, I could help my baby feel better. Abel set in the chair playing with his fingers. "How about we order pizza for dinner?"

"No, thank you."

"You know, until daddy has time off from work, we could fly your kite together. Do you want to go to the park and do that, baby?"

"Okay." Abel had no enthusiasm to him. His excitement for it was completely gone.

After I strapped the boys in the car. I picked up Abel's kite. I cursed Jax all the way back to car for what he did to our son.

Well, I wasn't exactly the best kite flyer known to man. But we did get it up off the ground. Abel had more fun running around pulling it behind him. So, I let him be until it was time to go home.

In the parking lot, was a box of puppies. Abel had to pet each one of them. When they told him, take one home, we are giving them away for free. I cringed because I knew he would want one and he suffered enough let down tonight.

"Honey, I can't take on a puppy right now. Maybe later we can get you a dog."

"The puppy can protect me and Tommy from the bad people when they come. He can bark to warn us." I had to fight back the tears when it came out my son's mouth. Abel, at his young age, has learned what fear was and lived with it already they could hurt us. Just like I do.

"Abel, you're completely safe, baby. Mommy would never let anyone hurt you."

"I know. But what about when you're asleep? Daddy is never home to protect us." Now the tears were trickling down my cheek, I couldn't hold them back any longer. Not only had Abel formed his own opinion on our safety. But knew for sure Jax was never around or not at least when it counted the most.

"Hey, guys." I didn't even see Kyle and Cody standing behind us.

Slowly Kyle took Thomas out of my arms until I let go. "Why don't you guys come play with me and Cody? So mom can have a break." He looked back a couple of times while the boys ran ahead of him to go play.

The good cry I had didn't make me feel any better. But I wiped my face, got my act together and pulled my sunglasses down over my eyes to hide it. I would put on a smile because Abel caught on to a lot more than I originally gave him credit for.

Kyle was holding Thomas in his lap on the swing. I took my son back from him. "Thanks, for doing that. I guess you're wondering what Abel was talking about."

"Not really. Abel told me you go to where his daddy works on lock down when the bad people are trying to hurt everyone again. It's a lot of baggage for a little a boy to carry around."

"I know." There wasn't anything else I could say on the matter really.
We didn't stay to much longer before we got ready to leave. There was no way around not seeing the puppies again before making it to the car. So, I rolled with it.

"Please, Uncle Kyle."

"Please, Mommy." I stayed firm on the no we can't do this right now.

Kyle, however, couldn't. "I'll tell you what. I need a guard dog for my shop. I will take him home with me and you boys can share in taking care of him. That way you both have a dog and your moms don't kill me."

"You're such ole softy."

"Yeah, but don't tell anybody, Tara." I don't think I had too. Everyone could see what a good man Kyle was. The way he put other's feelings first and how much he loved Cody.

The boys were ecstatic about their little chocolate Labrador puppy they named George. I allowed Abel to ride with them to get some pizza. It was another decision call I made. I trusted Kyle with my son. The only problem I foreseen from it, was Jax.

The place we went to, I had never been before. It was a common hang out for Kyle and Cody. The boys rushed to eat so they could go play the games they had. We both gave them all the quarters we had.

The evening wasn't what I had expected but it turned out to better than I thought it would be. Abel was getting to be a kid, a worry free child like he was meant to be.

"Did you get a chance to read what I gave you?"

"I read it all twice. John Teller, was a very tormented soul when he was here. I don't expect he found much peace after he passed either. He was totally conflicted before he died."

"What do mean, Kyle?"

"He was search for something throughout his life, he never found. There were only two things he was adamant about; shutting down the club and saving his sons. Neither one of those things ever happened. Man, I'd love to sit down and have a rap conversation with that dude. All the shit he must have seen over there. Unfortunately, he served in a time when they didn't carry them around on a parade when they came home. Instead they got treated like shit and a disgrace to their country."

Kyle had so much insight for me on John. Stuff I hadn't thought of or knew for that fact. When I read JT's manuscript, I seen the words on the paper. Kyle, he was reading John's soul. "It was almost as though the club, was the brotherhood John had there and missed when he got out of Vietnam. People spit on them, threw garbage at them and they got labeled as baby killers. Some went into hiding and wouldn't ever admit they served in the war. While others became rebels because there was no way for them to fit within society any longer. With him, he rebelled against the rebellion and his government. A government which failed him and the other soldiers who came back from that war. He used the club to do it with. I can only assume; it's why they are called the Sons of Anarchy; because anarchy means a state of disorder due to absence or non-reconnection of authority. For John, he never reconnected with the general society again. The club was a society he created and fit in."

"Why would people call soldiers killers? They are fighting to survive in a war with their lives."

"Tara, a killer is a killer. Regardless if you're given an official government uniform to do it in or not. Do it once, the next time, it just gets easier. I think it was John's biggest problem. He wanted to fight
the war still after he back home but not kill anymore. There was something, he couldn't find peace with and it came out on every page he wrote. He never gave specifics of it. But it's there. A piece of him never made it home from Vietnam.

"Is that how you feel too Kyle, a piece of you never made it home?"

"Semper Fi do or die, it's the code I live by baby. I got my crow tattoo because I believe they carry souls. I wanted them all I left behind in the war to have a safe passage to the promise land and hoped they found peace finally when they got there. The olive branch it has in its mouth is so maybe someday, I will find peace again too."

It was getting so late, I had to get the boys home. Even though I could have spent hours listening to Kyle talk about this. Abel hugged and petted George before we left.

The house was empty when we went in. To some degree, I was relieved by it and sad in other ways. I sat down in the rocking chair. Page by page I read again JT's manuscript. Only this time, I understood it better.

"Please, Mommy. Just for five minutes?"

This became Abel's every morning request. We stop and checked on George. I didn't mind because it made my son happy and he didn't seem bitter anymore towards Jax. If it kept my son's mind occupied from the bad shit, I was all for it.

Not that Jax even noticed to begin with. He spent most of his time the last couple of weeks working on the new gun distribution and keeping the club afloat. The kite never once crossed his mind. Just as I'm not sure how often he crossed Abel's anymore either.

As soon as Abel's little feet hit the ground, he took off running. He got the leash and took George for a walk around the front yard with it.

"I appreciate what you're doing for my son." Kyle knew the importance of what the puppy meant to Abel. More than just having a dog.

"Actually, I figured Jax would have cut you off from me by now."

"Jax wouldn't do that. I don't even know why you would say something like that for." I blew what Kyle said off. Jax and I had been getting along fine and he never brought up Kyle to me again.

"He will, it's coming. It is harder to control you Tara when you are outside of his circle. He uses it to manipulate you."

"Is that what you do to me too, Kyle, manipulate me?"

"Have I once asked you for anything? Or to do something you didn't want to do?"

"No, you haven't"

"Then I guess Tara, you answered your own question."

Gemma called me last night to let me know she had stuff to do today and couldn't watch the boys. She asked I stop by her house because she wanted to talk to me before I went to the Lodge. I was short on time and still needed to take the boys back home to meet Nitta. "Come on, Abel. We need to
go honey. I'll see you in a little while, Kyle."

Gemma was smoking and met me at on the front step at her house for some reason. "If I were you Doc, I would swing by the clubhouse on the way to the Lodge."

"Why, is something wrong?"

"No, but there might be something you wanna see though." Gemma knew what the something was but didn't want to say it.

"Just tell me, Gemma."

"The Madame has been there every day this week, hanging out at the clubhouse."

"Is Jax fucking her?" I should be ashamed it was where my mind automatically went. With the past history, I wasn't though.

"I don't know, sweetheart, but I don't trust that bitch. She knows way too much about club business."

Gemma wasn't the only one who felt Collette had ulterior motives with Jax and the club.

"Why didn't you tell me, Gemma?"

"I walk a delicate line around here. If I piss you off, you could hold the boys over my head. If I piss Jackson off, I lose everything." Gemma was caught between a rock and a hard place, I'll give her that much.

It infuriated me the more I thought about it. Well, wouldn't Jax be surprised when I just dropped by for a friendly visit. But I only thought I was pissed off until I walked in the clubhouse. There set Lyla with Jax, Collette and Charlie Barosky.

"Hey, there she is. The woman of the hour." Charlie addressed me in a strange way. I trusted him less than I did Collette.

"I'm sorry, Tara. Jax called and asked me to stop by the clubhouse this morning. I didn't know they would be here too." Lyla was honest most of the time. I had no reason to doubt what she said.

"We were just discussing how well you are handling the Lodge, babe and how proud I am of you."

Jax had a sweetness to him and I so wanted to believe it was the only thing going on. But my gut told me different.

"Yeah, we're looking to clean up our act and make things more legit around Maggie's place. When you deal with guys from the docks, you get all kind of pieces of shit walking in the door."

"It's not your clientele, it is the type of women you present to them. You will always have shitty low life men ready to climb aboard on them for very little cash." I looked directly at Collette when I said it too. She smiled kindly back at me.

Her whole demeanor was off, especially with me. She sat closely to Charlie and hung on his every word. She didn't look at Jax once. Fuck, from watching them and listing to them talk, it was hard to tell who was shoveling the most bullshit out.

"I've got to go meet Nero. So, please excuse me." I gave Jax a kiss and made a quick exit. Lyla wasn't far behind me out the door.

"What really went on, Lyla?"
"Jax asked me to stop by because he wanted to talk to me. They were sitting at the table when I got here. Jax praised you and then you came in."

None of it made any sense to me. I might not have caught them doing anything today or understood what was going on yet. But, Gemma made a good point, I definitely needed to be paying more attention to what goes on around me. It would become a top priority of mine to find out what Collette was really up to.

"I'll see you at the Lodge, Tara."

"Okay."

There wasn't anyone around when I went inside. It was unusual for not at least one person to be nearby. Lyla finally appeared.

"Where is everyone?" Before she could answer me, Nero came out to get a bottle of whisky. "Kind of early in the morning to start drinking isn't it or is this going to be a bad day?"

"It's for Gemma. She's getting her engagement piercing." Nero shrugged his shoulders. "It's what she wanted."

"She said yes then?"

"She did. We're getting married." Nero was so happy. Lyle and I both took turns hugging him.

We followed after him to watch like the audience that had already gathered around. Nero handed Gemma the bottle and she took a big swig from it. She threw the sheet off of her and let everything hang out. She never had a problem showing off her body no matter how old she got.

"Are you ready, Gemma?"

"Yeah, let's do this shit."

Kyle put his gloves on and brought out the antiseptic wipe. Just about the time he grabbed a hold of it. Gemma arched her back and started moaning loudly. Immediately Kyle froze and his eyes got huge. He was quick to glance over at Nero.

"I knew I would get to you, sweetheart, sooner or later." We all busted up laughing. Kyle's face turned a beet red color. Him blushing was on the adorable side. His fear of what Nero would do to him, hilarious.

Nero and Gemma was applying for their wedding licenses today. Along with just spending some time together. I was happy for them. I truly was but somewhat green with jealousy of them too. They acted like two teenagers in love and were happy.

"I gotta couple of things to do before we leave Gemma."

"Take your time baby. I'll sit here and talk to Tara."

"Can I ask you a couple of questions about John?"

"I guess so." Gemma didn't seem thrilled about it but she didn't refuse either.

"The other night you said Clay changed the name of the spelling of the club after he took over. What did the w stand for in Sam Crow?"
"John was a complicated man; I've never known anyone to have the thought process the way he did. He wasn't highly educated by any means. But he would read for hours about anything and everything, just so he would know. No specific reason for it other than he wanted knowledge. When he formed the club, he wanted it to be a strong brotherhood. Since he served with Piney, it was more for them really. (S)ons of (A)narchy (M)otorcycle (C)lub (R)edwood (0)riginal (W)ithstands. The withstand part meant to John; to stand your ground against a powerful or a negative force, the government. Clay didn't get it or approve of it. So when he took over he dropped withstands from the name."

"How did Clay get to be a member of the club?"

"John couldn't get a job anywhere. No one would hire him because he served in Vietnam, he had long hair and rode a motorcycle. So I suggested we move back to my hometown, Charming. Clay had the garage his father left him and it was going under. He hired John to do side job for a little cash. Once John and Piney started riding with Lenny the Pimp, they started making some descent money. Clay wanted in on it. John bought half the garage from him and the club started operating out of there. Clay became a member with them. When bad shit needed to be done for the club and John couldn't bring himself to do it, Clay did it. Clay took over the club way before JT ever died."

"Do you think it's possible John suffered from the war with problems when he came home? Maybe a part of him was still there?"

"Oh yeah, there were times John would break out in cold sweat and wake up screaming in the middle of the night. Once he got it under control again, it would be a long time before it repeated. Everything he touched, he left a piece of himself there."

"Did you really love John?"

"I did. More so then Clay even. But John never loved me back in the same way. I think he loved me the best he could. He truly hated his life and most of the time, everything around him. He loved few and trusted fewer. He was completely dead on the inside before he died."

"He wanted to take the boys and leave Charming to save them. I almost understand where he was coming from. Why didn't he?"

"This is where your questions should end, sweetheart. Don't be like John and hate your life. You only get one." Gemma was done talking about. She got up and left. In so many ways Jax was similar to her. In others, they are worlds apart.

The rest of the day I spent contemplating all that happened over the last couple of weeks. What would happen in the future for my family. Was destiny something made or totally out of your control.

When my cell rang, it gave me something else to think about. "Margret, tell me this is good news."

"I think you will be pleased with the outcome. Come by my office tomorrow so we can talk about it."

The rest of the day, I was up in the clouds. My life could go back to semi normal soon. No one or nothing could ruin this for me. I picked by babies and we headed off to the pet store. Just like I promised my son we would.

Abel wanted to load down the cart with stuff for George. I couldn't fathom how a simple little puppy brought him so much joy. To be honest, I thought once the new wore off, he would get tired of
taking care of it. But the whole experience seemed to help him learn responsibility. If all went well with Margret tomorrow. I was seriously considering getting Abel a puppy of his own.

We bought doggie toys, a brush and a cozy little bed for George. I argued with Abel he would grow out of it quickly and it was too small. But with Abel's come back, I threw it in the cart and he won. "Then we should put Tommy in a big boy's bed instead of a crib. George is a baby and needs love to, Mommy."

While Kyle was at work or at the Lodge, he put George in his shop with papers down. He still had to learn to not pee everywhere like he did on the carpet. Most of the time Kyle had the puppy beside him riding around in his truck. George was his new best friend.

"That is the coolest thing, Abel. George will love it buddy."

Abel was so careful when he picked George up off the towel he was laying on. Then laid him down gently on his new bed. It made me proud to watch my son be a good care giver.

"Well, we have to go. I'll see you tomorrow, Kyle."

It wasn't long after we got home so did Jax. He came in cussing up a storm. "Those mother fuckers."

"What's wrong?"

"A flock of damn crows followed me home. One of the mother fuckers dive bombed me on the way in the house. Don't you think that's some strange shit?"

"Oh yeah, baby. It is some strange shit for sure." I laughed to myself. Perhaps, soon even, Jax and I could have an interesting conversation about crows.

The crows almost disappeared from around me since I saw the white faced one on Interstate 580. Occasionally, I would see one flying up above me. Now, I got it, they were familiarizing themselves with Jax and his schedule.

By the time I got the kids around and to bed. Jax was taking a shower. I watched the fog form on the door from the steam. He still looked good through it. I stripped down and went in.

I wrapped my arms around him from behind. When he turned around, he was fixated on my nipple ring. He didn't say anything to me but his mouth found it fast. He even lifted my body up against the shower wall as I put my legs around his body. He wanted better access to my breast. When he kept flicking his tongue over it, it did heighten the sensitivity of my nipple. My feet were finally back down on the shower floor.

Jax poured a bunch of shower gel all over my breast. He folded up the wash cloth for my knees to rest on the tile. We never had done this before and it was thrilling for me too. His cock pushed through my slippery soapy breast as he gripped them so hard in his hands. His thumb would rub my nipple ring in between thrust. Soon his cum squirted on me as his cock pushed through my breast one more time.

"Maybe we can do it again tomorrow night, babe?"

"Consider it a date Mr. Teller."

We were getting ready for bed when Jax asked the question. "Who pierced you?"

"Kyle."
The reaction Jax had was nothing like I expected it to be. He didn't seem mad at all and gave me a kiss good night. Before I knew it, we were making love again. And again he was fixated on my nipple ring.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

Thing were better between me and Jax. He made several attempts to behave better and take an interest, especially when it came to me. I just had to push for him to do the same with our boys.

The entire time I've known Jax, he was never the romantic type. I woke up to a couple of love notes left on my pillow. Along with the surprise roses he came by and gave me at the Lodge last night.

This was another surprise morning for me. A small box was setting on the kitchen table with a big red bow on it by my coffee cup. It was a small gold loop nipple ring. I couldn't wait until I could put it in.

"Thank you, Jax. I love it."

"You're welcome babe. I'm think since you start back at the hospital next week, you won't need Kyle around anymore. You could go ahead let him go."

"Absolutely baby. Kyle is history. I will fire him this evening."

"That's my girl." Jax had a huge smile on his face while he kissed. Like he thought it was a victory.

Although before I went to leave I added on to what I said. "Just call me after you sever your ties with Collette and fire her. Then, I will get rid of Kyle." That was check and fucking mate to Jax. I was prepared to follow through on what I said and fire Kyle. But Jax wasn't being sly as he thought about what his motives really were. Now, it was on him what happened from here forward.

After I dropped off the boys, I went to the Lodge. I only had a short period of time left to do this. Next week I would start back at the hospital and put all this behind me. Not to mention, I had a huge nest egg built up now.

Only when I pulled up Lyla wasn't having a good day like I was. She was crying in her car. When she seen me, she got out of the car and took off towards the Lodge. I kept saying her name but she completely ignored me.

"Lyla, stop and tell me what's wrong."

"I overheard a conversation Jax had last night when he brought flowers by here to you. I think he is going to hurt Nero. I don't know what I should do. If I say anything and Jax finds out. I don't know what evil…""

"What evil shit he will do to you." I finished the sentence for her, since she couldn't or wouldn't.

"Yeah. I'm afraid to not tell Nero. But I'm afraid to tell him too because I know what he will do to Jax."

"I know what Jax will do as well. I won't say anything you told me about this. Exactly what did Jax say?"

"Jax was talking on his phone when I came outside. I don't know who he was talking to. He said to them, do it tomorrow night but to make you weren't anywhere near him when it went down."
My first thought was Jax wouldn't do that. But the last few times I said it, it was exactly what he done. "We'll figure out a way to watch over Nero tonight."

Lyla agreed with me. We weren't exactly sure how to pull it off yet but we would make it work. One person I knew would be on Nero's side, Gemma.

It was time to involve Gemma without getting her to involved with the situation. I gave her a personal invitation after I made arrangements with Nitta to stay with the boys. The big clincher for Gemma, was simple, I needed her to be with me tonight for support. In the end, she would be where every Nero was.

For hours after the Lodge opened, we waited and nothing came in a bad way. Not sign of Jax or the club. It was possible Lyla didn't have the correct time frame or they would wait until after the Lodge closed. If that were the case, there was nothing I could do to protect him.

"Goddamn it. That son of a bitch." Kyle was furious once he hung up from his call. He threw his phone against the wall and broke it. Rage wasn't something he ever displayed before.

"What's wrong?" Both Nero and I repeatedly asked him. He ignored us and stormed out the door.

"I'll be back soon." Nero was going wherever Kyle went and so was I. Lyla and Gemma had things under control at the Lodge.

The plan was to never hurt Nero. Kyle was Jax's intended target. Jax pretended as though everything was great with me, then went and did some outlaw shit. He blindsided me so I would never see it coming or suspect him of doing it.

Lights were flashing in front of Kyle's shop. The police were taking pictures of the scene. One talked to him as he sat on the curb pissed off. All the windows were broken out, glass shattered all around on the ground. Bottles of different colored tattoo ink covered everything. A lot of the shit from inside the shop was strung along the sidewalk and some of it laying out in the street.

"They killed my dog. Jax will pay for it." Poor Kyle, his voice was emotionless when he spoke. He wasn't the same fun loving guy, I grew to like and count on. Most of all, he wouldn't even look up at me.

Them destroying his shop didn't seem important to him at the time. From the door I seen what was though. George was laying twisted up in a pool of blood on the floor beside his doggie bed Abel bought for him.

On the wall they wrote out a message for Kyle in the puppy's blood; You are next bitch.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

This will be it for a while my lovelies. Until I am done hosting the 2016 Better in Texas Fiction Awards. I might be able to squeeze in another chapter with the long weekend. But odds are, it will be a week or so before I update again.

I have an author friend who writes the SOA too. We converse back and forth on our stories and she knows how much I adore her. She asked me who I envisioned when I wrote Kyle. His name is Jessie Pavelka. His body art just makes him appealing to me and not to mention he is smoking hot too!
These are just a few of my favorite, fantastic authors and their stories, who are nominated in the contest. Once the voting poll is open this weekend, I will post it to my profile page. Don’t forget to show them some love.

SOA AUTHORS:

Last Of the Ole Lady's by Lady Ramona

Little did they know by Samantha Renk

Little Toy Guns by girl-at-jome13

The Unmarried Soul by elbeewoods

SOA CROSSOVERS:

Bella Teller by decadenceofmysoul

Fire Fire by hardy101

My Best Friends by Emmetts Girls

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert.
Semper Fi

Chapter 9, Semper Fi

A/N- Semper Fi, is a Latin word for always loyal/always faithful. Each chapter name has a meaning to the story.

As, the last one did; Gone to the Dogs. It is an idiom for something going so terribly wrong, they feel they have lost all things good they have left. Or are in the process of losing them.

Just like with the crows, I promise I'm not crazy. I am going somewhere with Jackson and all of it. There is still a lot of story left to tell.

CONGRATULATIONS! To my fellow SOA authors for their wins in the 2016 Better in Texas Fiction Awards; decadenceofmysoul, elbeewoods and Samantha Renk. You ladies are awesome. Keep up the excellent writing!

What timing they had too. Bobby and Tig pulled their bikes up to the curb where we were standing around.

"How could you guys do this?"

"Do what? We only stopped because we saw you out here and a bunch of flashing lights." Bobby was nonchalantly blowing it off.

"Are you going to stand there and tell me the Sons had nothing to do with this?"

"The club didn't do anything." Now Tig was trying to convince me too.

"The puppy you killed, wasn't just Kyle's. It was Abel's too." I shoved Tig in the chest as hard as I could. I was at a place, I could no longer control my anger. It got the better of me. A physical act of violence wasn't my normal way of handling things. If you wanted to enrage me, hurting my children would do it.

"Puppy?" It was all Tig said before he took a look himself. "Oh, man." He was crushed. He kept inhaling in air deep to breathe.

Tig was heartbroken and he couldn't stand to look at George anymore. He unfolded a towel he picked up off the sidewalk and laid the puppy's small body in the middle of it, then covered him up. Tig closed his eyes and I swore he said a prayer for the dog.

"I'm telling you Tara, the club had nothing to do with this." I heard what Bobby said. But my focus was still on Tig.

Until I heard Nero yelling that was. "Kyle, no."

But it was too late already. Kyle knocked Tig's ass to the floor.

"Oh, you, son of a bitch." With blood coming from his mouth, Tig still smiled when he got back up on his feet. Bobby was literally pushing me out the door which had been torn off the hinges.
The cops went rushing inside to break up the fight. I finally set down on the curb to get out of the way of them. The one person I didn't want to see right down of course came to join us too.

"What's going on?" Jax pretended as though he didn't have a clue to what took place.

"You should know since you did it, Jax."

"I don't what you're talking about." He acted completely innocent. Even on the concerned side.

"Please, don't play stupid with me. I'm not in the mood for it."

"I've been at the clubhouse all night." Jax once again elaborated the same thing to me.

"Jackie has been with me all day. So, he didn't do anything." Chibs was chiming in for Jax. But I ignored him, this was between me and my husband.

"Then you had it done."

The action around me was happening so quickly for me to keep up with it all. Nero was trying to control Kyle. Jax, only encouraged it along. "Let him go, Nero. If want some, come get some. I'm standing right here pussy."

The cops were literally earning their money tonight. I finally had enough of it and all of them. I went to leave but I couldn't. "Fuck, I don't have a car." Wayne was out by his truck in the street. "Can you please give me a ride?"

"Sure. What's all this about?" I ignored him and got inside. The faster I got away from it all, the faster I could calm down and think shit through.

"Where do you want me to take you, Tara?"

"Anywhere there is booze."

"Okay. I don't hang out at bars anymore. We can have a beer back at my place. If it's okay with you?" I nodded and looked out the window. At high speed everything flashed by as we drove. Just like my life; it was flashing by at a warp speed and spiraling completely out of control.

There wasn't anyone around when we pulled up to TM. I was grateful I didn't have to face them yet. Because it would come soon enough, especially Jax.

"Are you gonna tell me what's going on, Tara?"

"Beer first." I've never been one to drown my sorrows. But there was a first time for everything. I had a lot of those recently.

When I stepped inside Wayne's trailer, I seen photos and reports laying out on his tiny table. "What's this shit?"

"Um…. well, I gotta pay my rent to Jax somehow." Wayne wasn't proud of what he did. You could tell by the way he dropped his head and wouldn't even look up at me. But when you owed a debt to Jackson Teller, you paid it back ten times over.

Right or wrong, I browsed around in what Wayne had laying out without asking his permission to do so. Those pictures were of Kyle and some of me too. The folder had the military record of Kyle Alex Brandon in it. "Have you been watching us?"
"I wouldn't call it watching you, just getting a feel on Kyle. Jax has never seen those pictures and won't."

"Jax had you do this. Why?"

"Jax asked me to find out about Kyle. Who he is and where he came from. All I found out is he has no criminal past, honorable discharge as a decorated soldier, kind of a loner and got a couple of speeding tickets."

"That's it? Kyle got a couple of speed tickets. So why the hell are digging into to him, Wayne?"

"I've heard all these stories about you getting into prostitution, seeing this fella and having the boys around him. I got worried. Again, Jax don't know nothing about nothing." Wayne's statement sent me into a tizzy.

"And exactly what did Jax say when you told him there is no dirt on Kyle?"

"Jax told me to dig deeper until I found it. Then got pissed off because I couldn't come up with anything bad about the guy." It was the one thing Wayne said which made perfect sense. Jax was pissed because it's easier to hate when you can see them as dirty as you are. It puts them on an even playing field in Jax's eyes.

The more I looked around, Wayne had a little setup of different investigations going on inside this trailer. One cork board was nothing but Collette and her known associates. "What else did you find out about her?"

"Collette isn't her real name."

"I knew that already, her real name is Maggie."

"No, it isn't."

What Wayne and I discussed before was minor compared to the information he gathered since the last time we talked. I thought her connection with them was bad. But nothing would have prepared me for this.

Wayne even mentioned what he found out previously about the whore to Jax. Of course, Jax blew it off because they owed the port. He just figured they went to Collette's place for pussy. Me, it didn't make sense. Only my husband would take an omen of what was to come and associate it with pussy.

"I thought maybe since the Madame and this Kyle fella came around about the same time, it was related somehow. It's probably the old cop in me or the only part of cop I got left in the old me."

"Do you think Kyle is still related with Collette?" It was a dangerous question to ask Wayne. Maybe, I didn't really want to hear his answer.

"No. Not after researching Kyle and watching his routine. Mostly, he spent his time with you, giving tattoos or with a little boy and some blonde gal. They visit his house frequently. Which, just happens to be your dad's old place." The way Wayne looked at me; he was expecting some sort of reaction to what he said. But I already knew he was talking about Nicole and Cody.

"How are we going to find out what's inside Collette's file?"

"Hadley is working on finding out. She does me favors from time to time. Whatever is sealed in the Madame's file, she sure don't want nobody to know about." Wayne had faith something bad was in
there. He took precautions and started the process to find out.

Over Wayne's police scanner we heard the news; Nero, Tig, Bobby, Jax and Kyle were taken into police custody. For disorderly conduct, public disturbance and assault.

"Are you gonna bail Jax out?" Wayne seemed sincerely concerned about his wellbeing.

"No, not tonight anyway." It was another decision call. It would give Jax a chance to cool off. Also give me time to think shit through. When he made it out and I knew he would eventually. Where would shit go with us?

"Tara, I gotta ask, are you seeing Kyle? You know, personally."

"No, of course not. We're just friends. I don't even know why everyone keeps implying it. What Jax told you about us, is bullshit."

"I'm not going off just what Jax told me, Tara." When I pushed Wayne, he clammed up about what he said.

"I need to get home. I will call Gemma for ride."

"No need, I'll take you home." Wayne was kind with a big heart. But his love for the club was probably the biggest bond he had left in this world. I wasn't completely sure just how far his trustworthiness went when I was concerned.

"Thanks, Wayne. For the ride."

"Do you think the club had anything to do with busting up Kyle's place tonight?" My heart wanted to say absolutely not to Wayne's question. But, a part of me felt, Jax did.

"Do you?" Sometimes, the best answer to a question asked. Is to ask them the same question.

"I don't know. Jax is sort of outta control lately. He's been shooting from the hip without thinking shit through. When I heard the ruckus over the scanner and the club was involved, I went to see what was going on. I did a lot of bad shit over the years to protect Clay and the club. Because I got sucked in. Don't let them suck you in too, Tara. You're better than that."

"Good night, Wayne."

Nitta was asleep in the chair. I touched her arm to wake her but not startle her. "I'm home. I'm sorry it's so late."

"It's alright. What's wrong?"

"Nothing." I put my best smile forward to hide what I truly felt. I was getting so good at living the lie. I even managed to convince myself of it on the occasion.

"You look like you lost your best friend, darlin. Sit down and tell me about it." Nitta was very perspective. I felt like I did too.

Once I convinced Nitta I was fine, she took off. I asked her to come back early in the morning to watch the boys for me. Who really knew what tomorrow would hold for any of us actually?

Thomas was asleep when I checked on him. So was Abel. I set down for hours just watching my son. What would I tell him without breaking his little heart in to a million pieces? Nothing I could say would easy his pain of it all. I had to protect him from the brutal truth. At what point, could I no
longer protect my children in the brutal reality of it?

A knock at the door woke me up. I felt sore from sleeping in the chair. I peeked out to see who it was first before I opened it. "Morning, Nitta. I appreciate you coming over so early."

"Maybe it's none of my business, child. But I can tell you're hurting. When I need help making it through the day, I turn to god. I pray for his help and guidance." Nitta carried her bible with her everywhere she went. It's not that I didn't believe there was some sort of higher being. But when you are a small child, praying your mommy will come home again to be with you. You get your heart broken because none of your prayers get answered, it makes you have doubts.

"If Jax shows up here, please, call me."

"Is he not supposed to be here? I need to know what I'm walking in to."

"Please, just call me." Nitta didn't need to know about all the history of the shit happening. In my heart, there were things I was still certain of. Jax would never physically hurt me or our boys. In other ways, he has done some serious damage to his family and I never knew what to expect from him anymore.

Since my car was still at the Lodge from last night, I took Jax's old truck. I hated driving it but what choice did I have. Most everyone I knew was in jail this morning and Gemma wasn't answering her phone. Or I assumed they were still there. I made it my first stop to find out.

"You gotta charge them with something or let them go. Are any of you dumb asses listening to me?" Gemma had arrived already. You could hear her all over the place as loud as she was. When she couldn't get her way with one cop, she went on to the next one.

"Dr. Knowles." Roosevelt was kind to me. Considering his history with Jax and the club, I had respect for him not treating me differently.

"Good morning."

"I'm not charging them with anything this time. But, I suggest you get Gemma Teller the hell out my police station before I throw her in a cell."

It took some doing to get Gemma to go outside with me. "Roosevelt is letting them go. Please, Gemma." It might not sound like a hard task to perform. But she was more than a handful to handle.

We stood around outside for almost an hour. The bikes rolled up, the club knew Jax was getting released too. It amazed me sometimes how connected to each other they actually were. They were unwavering with it.

Jax came out first, followed by Tig and Bobby. From the looks of Jax's face, it was a very nasty brawl between them. He wouldn't even acknowledge me or Gemma as he walked by us. His bike was parked by one of the Prospects and it's where he immediately went. They all followed Jax's lead and rode away.

Next it was Nero and Kyle's turn to get released. Their face's didn't look any better than the others. They too passed us by as though we weren't standing here. In Nero's car, they drove off in the opposite direction.

Gemma glanced in the way Jax went and chose to go off in Nero's. Her devotion belonged to Nero now. "Are you coming, Tara?"
"I have to see Jax."

"I'd leave it alone right now. He's still pissed off." Gemma's advice was good. However, I couldn't take it this time.

"I wish I could. But, I can't."

Gemma and I rode together to the clubhouse. It was another relationship with her son that had a rip in it. The only reason she came along was because of me. For the first time since I came back to Charming, her actual loyalty was to me. Otherwise she already made her choice and it was Nero who had her affection in the end. I warned Jax, someday, if he didn't change. Even Gemma would give up on him.

The doors were closed and most of them were already drinking in the bar this morning. "Where's Jax?"

"He's in the chapel."

"Is he alone?"

"Yeah, but I wouldn't go in there, Tara. Jax is working some shit out." Tig was the only one of them who acknowledged my presence.

"Yeah, well, I got some shit to work out too."

When I opened the doors, I found Jax sitting alone at the head of the table. His white t-shirt had blood stains on it. Mostly, from the cuts and bruises he wore on his face. He was drinking a cup of coffee, smoking a cigarette.

"We need to talk." I shut the doors behind me. There was no need to air our dirty laundry in front of everyone.

"Yeah, I guess, we do."

"I get the store being trashed because Kyle refused to pay. Everyone pays the club some price to stay in Charming, it's got SAMCRO wrote all over it. But the puppy, it's an all-time new low. Even for you, Jax."

"Sounds like you have been listening to your boyfriend a little too much. If you really believe I killed a dog instead of putting a bullet in him, you don't know me at all. We're done with this conversation." Jax just thought he could walk away from me to put an end to something he didn't want to talk about. So, we took the fight out into the bar for everyone to witness.

"Kyle, isn't my boyfriend. But I know you had him watched, Jax."

"I just wanna know who the man is my wife spends all her time with. Don't even tell me is about the Lodge either. You've been meeting Kyle every day for the last month almost. Varies places too; his house you sold him, different tattoo shops he has, the park and then lying to me about it. Did you really think I wouldn't find out?"

"How the hell, do you know that?" Either Wayne lied to me and told Jax. Or Jax was having me followed around by one of the Prospects. In end, I knew where their alliance was, to Jax and the club.

"Juice." Sheepishly Juice placed a stack of papers in Jax's hand. He wouldn't even look in my
direction before he walked away from us.

"We tracked your cellphone. It pings off the nearest tower available and gives your exact location along with how long you were there. The night you told me you were alone and drove around, you were with Kyle. You're always on my ass about honesty and telling you everything. How honest are you, Tara?" They were all staring at me now. It was true I expected something from Jax, I hadn't given him in return lately. But I could honestly say I wasn't doing anything wrong either. Could Jax do the same?

"I can't believe you. Is it why you destroyed his shop, because of me?" The guilt was consuming me now. I caused problems for Kyle. Which I never intended to.

"Go home and stay away from Kyle." Jax wasn't speaking to me like his wife. More ordering me around like he does the members of the club.

"No, I won't just go home. You're twisting this shit around. I haven't done anything wrong."

"Do you really wanna know what's it's like to be an old lady in this club? Then do what you're told. Maybe I should have enforced this shit a lot sooner with you. Then I wouldn't have to wonder who my old lady is spreading her legs to." Jax was screaming at me, I was stunned and hurt. Was it really the life the women of the club had to endure? Were their choices taken away from them? Did they have to give up their own opinions, thoughts and dreams just because they were told to? Well, it might be fine for them. But it wasn't for me. I would not be the obedient step ford wife.

"You, hypocrite, son of bitch. Maybe you should learn to keep your dick in your pants before you pass judgement on me. Don't you ever talk to me like that again." Without even a thought, I grabbed the empty beer bottles from the table and just started firing them in his direction. They all took cover wherever they could.

Happy was standing by the door not moving a mussel. "What are you looking at?"

"Nothing." He just shrugged his shoulders as I passed him by.

Gemma followed me outside. She only observed and didn't get involved. Which, it wasn't normally like her.

"Can I have one of those?"

"Since when do you smoke, Doc? It's bad shit for your health, you've told me so."

"Are you going to give me one or not? I need something to calm my nerves. After what I just did in there, Jax won't ever speak to me again."

"That's where you're wrong, sweetheart. Jax don't like to be challenged, he'll even be pissed off for a while. But in the end, he will respect you more. You never respect people you can push around easily." Gemma had a strange perspective on everything in life. But she was right, Jax always told me over and over. If you push a Son around, we push you back until we mow you over. Was it what he was doing to me as well? Pushing until I wouldn't allow it anymore.

"Tara, can you give me a minute?" Bobby was unsure of what my reaction would be. He kept his distance and at this point, it was a wise choice.

"What?" I was a little on the short side with him.

"I'll be in the car when you're ready to go." Gemma excused herself to give us some privacy.
"I know you believe we did that shit last night. It wasn't a club call. We had nothing to do with it. Jax is acting outta fear. Because we don't know any other way to be." I almost had persuaded myself of what Bobby said was true. Tig for certain had nothing to do with it. But, I knew something Bobby was unaware of. Jax didn't always act on a club call. Sometimes, he went off on his crusade they didn't know about.

"Fear of what?"

"Losing you, Jax is just scared. Because he doesn't know how to handle the situation. There is only one thing in his life that's steady, true and outside of the club, you. If he loses you; he won't ever survive it. I know he loves you more than anything."

There was no need for me to respond to Bobby. I had nothing left to say about the subject. I slammed the door shut and Gemma drove us away from there.

It saddens me as we passed by Kyle. He covered the windows up with plywood. From the sidewalk he picked up what little could be salvaged.

"Drop me off at the truck, Gemma."

"Are you coming to the Lodge?"

"Yeah, I'll be there soon. I've got something to do first."

"Tell Kyle, I said hello." The smirk Gemma wore when she said it. Only she was correct, it was where I was going. To start healing the damage I've caused him.

"Hey, Kyle." He ignored me and went on with what he was doing.

"I'll help clean this up."

Before I even began, Kyle took the broom away from me. "You should go, Tara."

"I know this is my fault and I'm…"

"It's mine, it was my mistake. I got to close to you. You should go." I understood why he pushed me away.

"I'll talk to Jax. He won't try to hurt you anymore."

"I don't give a shit about Jax. I'm trying to protect you, Tara."

"Protect me from what?"

"You should go." It was all Kyle had left to say about anything. He eventually left me standing on the sidewalk talking to myself as he drove away. Now, I did feel like I lost my best friend. The only one who remotely understood me or at least listened when I talked. Maybe deep down, I was more attached to him than I wanted to admit.

In defeat, I got in the truck. Only to see Wayne across the street writing something down on a notepad in my rearview mirror. Was Kyle or I his secret assignment today?

"What are you doing here?"

"Well, I got to thinking last night after we talked. We might be able to know for sure if the club was involved or not." Wayne paced around while he spoke. Almost as though he was looking for
"How?"

"There are cameras around in different places."

"The stop lights have them?" In Chicago they tracked every single car that passed by.

"Yeah, but there not connected because of obvious reasons. Clay had me take those out years ago."

Wayne kept walking as he talked. Then he seen something, as he took off in that direction. "This might get us the information we need." It was the bank's ATM. Of course, there was a camera attached to it.

"Let's go talk to them."

"Tara, I'm not a cop anymore. They ain't just gonna turn it over to us willingly. You gotta have warrants and shit to get it. I'll call Hadley and see what she can do."

"Will you call me, when you find out, Wayne?"

"Yeah, sure." Wayne was steady when it came to being a cop and his instincts. But how truthful would he be with me when he found out?

The Lodge was where I was headed to. I wasn't sure how Nero perceived all of this either. I didn't want it to affect our relationship. He wasn't just my partner anymore; he became a dependable part of my life.

He greeted me with a smile as though nothing had happened. It was one of Nero's endearing qualities he processed. To blow up and forgive as he moved on from it.

"I'm sorry about what happened with Jax…"

"Jax don't got shit to do with me and you, Tara." Nero halted my apology. I was right about him; he was one of the good ones.

"At least you're not holding it against me. Kyle wouldn't even hardly talk to me because of it."

"Kyle's a real stand up kinda guy. I've gotten to know him pretty well since he started working here. He won't be the reason your marriage is strained. He's doing it for you." Nero's reasoning was far off.

"Kyle is not the reason my marriage is in trouble. It was before he ever came along. But for him to bail on me. Makes him just like all the others in my life. At least, he isn't going to do anything stupid again Jax or the club."

"Oh, I didn't say he is letting it go with Jax or the club. Because Kyle won't. With him there is only right or wrong, no real grey areas. He's not bailing on you, mama. He's trying to do the right thing."

"I don't even know what the right thing is anymore. Besides, how is abandoning me, doing the right thing?" If I had to pinpoint one of my major issues in life. It was the fear of being abandoned. It began in my childhood.

"Do you have feelings for Kyle? I mean, I'm not judging you or him. I didn't know Gemma was married the first time I slept with her. But I knew after that and couldn't make myself stay away from her."
"What are you doing?" This was where I cut off the very emotional conversation and changed the subject.

"I'm trying to come up with something for our wedding vows. Gemma, don't care about that kinda stuff. But, I do. It's my first time getting married. Will you give me your opinion? You're really good with words."

Nero had scribbled a lot of beautiful words and paragraphs down on the paper. One particularly he had a big circle around; *Corinthians 13:4-8, Love is patient love is kind. It does not envy; it does not boast. It does not dishonor others; it is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered; it keeps no records of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves.*

My eyes filled up as I looked down at my wedding ring. So many of those things mentioned in there, I failed in at my marriage.

"Come on, Tara, I don't write that good." Nero was joking around trying to lighten the mood.

"It's really beautiful."

"Oh, I didn't write that part. It's straight outta the bible. I want the minister to say it at our ceremony. When I was in Chino, I had a lot of time on my hands. I read the bible several times. I always said when I met a woman, I felt that way about. I would marry them. Gemma, is the one. I've gotta run and meet with him. Wanna come with me?"

"Isn't Gemma going with you?"

"She hates churches. I think it's goes back to her childhood. I go to confession once a week still. I'm not sure if it helps a pimp daddy, ex junkie, like me. But, I gotta keep the faith it does."

"Why not, I'll go with you." This would be something happier to focus on. Nero was so involved in the wedding arrangements. I was amazed at his firm beliefs too. I volunteered to drive. At least it would be in my own car this time. I hated driving Jax's truck.

"Why does my car smell like burnt toast?"

"Get out. Get outta the car, Tara." Nero was screaming at me and I wasted no time in doing so. I swore my feet were lifted up from the ground and my body was tossed away from the car.

We fell to the ground together as the car burst into flames. Nero covered my body with his. All I could do was cover my ears and beg for the pain to stop.

From my unclear vision. I saw a figure walk out of the smoke in slow motion. No human could have survived the blast being so close to it. His long hair dark made him recognizable to me. Within a few steps, his wings fully expanded. I had to of hit my head when I fell. I rolled over on my back looking up in the puffy clouds. I saw nothing though.

"Tara." Nero's screams only echoed in my head. What all the others were saying around me, I couldn't tell. The ringing in my ears wouldn't go away.

They wouldn't allow me to move. Not that I actually could if I wanted to yet. "Follow my finger." The EMT began working on me as though I couldn't understand what was going on around me.

"I'm alright." I needed to catch my breath. With them all standing over me, I felt like I was suffocating to some degree.
"Ma'am, we need to take you to the hospital to get you checked out. You have a bump on your head and you could have a concussion."

"I'm a doctor. Get the release form and I will sign it." The EMT was just doing his job. They were liable if they allowed a patient to walk away who were in need of medical assistance. Once I signed off on, I denied his treatment, he let me go.

"Where the hell are you going, mama? We need to take you to the hospital." Staggering down the street when Nero stopped me.

"I have to get to the boys." If I had to walk to make sure they were safe, then so be it.

"I'll drive." Nero made me wait until he started his car first. Then he let me get in.

Gemma got in the back seat and we took off for my house. Nero's cell was going off. "Yeah, she's alright. We're taking her to Saint Thomas to get her checked out to be on the safe side. After we stop to pick up the boys. Okay, we'll meet you there."

"Was it Jax?"

"No, Kyle. He came as soon as he heard about the Lodge."

"Oh."

"Do you want me to call, Jax?" Nero made the offer to help. He was always the sweet one.

"No. I'll call him from the hospital."

Worry was what I did all the way to the house. I still felt a little woozy when I went to go inside. The ringing in my head subsided slightly. Nitta had Abel at the table playing a game. I hugged him and hugged him. It almost made me cry with joy my babies were alright.

Eventually though, I lost it. "My babies could have been in the car. I wouldn't have gotten them out in time." I shook as I held my son to me and cried even harder.

"Come on, Abel. Let's go outside and play." Nero took him away from me. For Abel's sake it was better for him to not see me break down.

"Tara, look at me. They weren't in the car. It's gonna be alright, sweetheart."

"How can you say that shit, Gemma? Jesus Christ, someone tried to blow me and Nero up today. It could have been my babies."

Gemma sent Nitta home. I wasn't going to no damn hospital. I would be right here with my children. Thomas was playing in his crib when I picked him up. Just the sight of his sweet, little innocent face made me start crying again. We set together in our favorite spot while I rocked him.

"Tara, Roosevelt is here to see you." Gemma stuck her head in to tell me.

"Dr. Knowles, I need to ask you a few questions about what happened today."

"My car got blew up."

"Yes, I realize that. Do you know anyone who is out to harm you? Maybe, someone who has a problem with the club?" I wasn't sure if he was fishing to know club business or if it would actual help find who did this.
"I don't know."

"If you're scared, Tara. You can tell me. I will have an officer here to watch over you."

"I don't know of anyone who would want to harm me. Or anyone who has a problem with the club."
It would be the only statement I would make. It didn't matter how many times he asked me the question. Jax would be irate if the cops got involved.

"We both know you're lying to me right now. You have children to think about. I am going to ask you again. Can you tell me if you know of anyone who is trying to hurt you or the club? I can see you're shaking. I can have an officer posted outside your house to watch over you and your children. All you have to do is tell me."

"I don't know of anyone."

Who came through the door wasn't who I expected at all. "You should really go to the hospital, Tara. Nero said you refused to go. What are you thinking, girl?"

"What are you doing here, Kyle? I got the impression earlier you were done talking to me."

"I heard about what happened. I probably shouldn't have come here but, I'm worried about you. Until I know you are alright, I couldn't make myself stay away."

"I'm fine."

"Trust me, you are not fine, girl."

Again the tears were flowing. Kyle hugged me and I let him. It brought me some comfort no matter how selfish I was being. Most of the time I lived in fear but when he was around, I didn't for some reason.

"We will go together, okay?" I couldn't stop crying long enough to answer him but I shook my head no. "Please, for me? You know you can't tell me no, girl." He had that way about him to always make me smile and feel better.

"Okay. But I want the boys with me, I won't leave them here. Are we done here, am I free to go?"

"Yeah, I think so." Roosevelt looked Kyle up and down before he walked out the door.

It should have been an easy thing to do. Walk out of the house and get in the truck to leave. However, it got complicated when Jax rode up.

"Why the fuck didn't you call me? My wife is almost blown up and no one can pick up their god damn phone." Jax was already harassing Gemma. She ignored him. So, I took over.

"Because, I told them I would call you once I got to the hospital. Leave her alone."

"And you, mother fucker, what are you doing at my house?"

"I came to check on Tara. Somebody needs to be around to make sure she's alright." Kyle wouldn't back down from Jax again. It was going bad quickly.

"She's my wife."

"Then treat her like it."
"Alright guys, don't make me take you both in again." Roosevelt stepped in between them. It was probably a good thing he hadn't left yet.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah." Jax hugged me tightly. I was surprised he still wasn't pissed off over what I had done at the clubhouse this morning.

"I'll take over from here. Get the fuck off my property."

Kyle waited until I nodded it was okay for him to go. I don't think he would have done anything in front of Abel anyway. Unfortunate, I couldn't say the same for Jax.

"Is there a problem Roosevelt? Why are you still here? Are you gonna arrest me?"

"Nah, I'm not going to arrest you today, Jax. I'd say you got bigger problems." Chief Roosevelt seemed to smile as he looked over at Kyle while he said it.

"Tara, here is my card. If you can think of anything to help with the case or need some protection, call me." I only nodded at Roosevelt before he left.

"We can't all ride on your bike. I'll ride with Gemma and Nero to the hospital." Jax kissed my forehead and rode behind us. Along with the others.

It was complete silence in the car. I had my boys, it was all that mattered to me. It wasn't so silent when we reached the hospital though.

"You can't be here." Margret was already enforcing the conditions of my license and being reinstated to the hospital.

"I'm her fucking husband. I have every right to be here."

"Jax, I should have told you sooner." I finally intervened between them too.

"Told me what, Tara?"

"The only way I could get my licenses back is not to be associated with the club on hospital grounds. It's a temporary probation period I have to get through. I don't have any choice, it's the only way to keep my licenses active. Then it will be normal again and I can change them over to another hospital if I want to. I'm sorry, I didn't tell you."

"There's been a lot of shit, you haven't told me lately. I'll wait outside for you. Or should I park across the street? So no one knows you're associated with or married to the known outlaw." Jax stormed out the door. My timing with him hasn't been exactly the best.

"Everything alright in here?" Nero was at the door because Jax blew past him.

"You can come in, Nero."

"Well, I will come back and check on you later." Margret excused herself to go back to work.

"Thanks, Margret."

"Is something wrong, Nero? Are the boys okay?"

"Yeah, they're with Gemma right outside the door. She got Abel a snack to eat and is playing with
"Then what is it?"

"That bomb was meant for you, Tara. If you would have left the Lodge to follow Kyle last night, I… It just makes me nervous. They were certain you would follow after him. Jax or someone got the car towed away before the cops got there."

"How do you know that?"

"Roosevelt said the car is missing. I saw the club ride past us when we got to town. It took them an hour to get to the house. Now, I'm not imply…"

"You're not implying Jax did it. But everything points to him." It literally made my heart ache to allow those words to come out of my mouth. Something I was so positive of this morning, I no longer could be.

Nero's cell rang and he excused himself to take it. When he came back in the room he was pacing.

"What's wrong?"

"That was Lyla. The cops just delivered a cease and desist order. We're officially shut down. I gotta go the girls are freaking out."

"Yeah, go take care of them. I appreciate everything you do for me, Nero." Nero only smiled before he left. I wasn't smiling at all.

For hours, I set in the room waiting for the test results. When the doctor finally came in. "I want to keep you overnight just as precaution." My concern was my hearing. Which he said should return to normal with a week or so. But I might have some slight humming in my ears until then.

"I'm fine. I will sign the release form." Again I went through the same routine of denying recommended medical treatment. There was no way in hell I was staying here away from my boys with everything going on.

We went outside to find Jax. But of course he had business to handle and was gone already. He left us Phil behind to watch over me and the boys. So I called the one person I could count on.

Only Kyle wasn't picking up this time. I knew he had another phone because he called Nero from it. Gemma even called Nero to make sure Kyle hadn't changed his number and he hadn't.

After I tried him a couple more times, I gave up. "So, now what?"

"I guess we wait for Nero to get back. Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine." For the whole day I said those words many times and hadn't meant them once yet. I didn't this time either.

"Kyle is probably just busy." Gemma blew it off to make me feel better. But we both knew that was a bunch of bullshit.

"Yeah, probably." It shouldn't have bothered me at all. He definitely didn't owe me anything. But when you've never had a real friend before, it meant something to you. He was my best friend lately.

Everyone I should have been able to count on in life has always abandoned me in one form or another. My mother when I was just a young girl. I've always wondered how differently my life
would have been if she never left me.

Although my father stayed, he wasn't ever there for me either. He let the bottle and her rule his world until the day he died. Once upon a time, I thought Jax was in it for the long haul too with me, until death do we part. He would never leave me or Charming or the club. But if I chose to leave here, he wouldn't follow me either. I guess it's why it hurt so much Kyle left me too.

Nero was kind enough to drive all the way back to get us. He tried to avoid all the bad things and keep the atmosphere on the positive side on the ride back to the house.

"Thanks, for the ride."

"We'll help you get the boys in the house."

Jax was setting at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee in his hand. "Sorry, I had to go back to the clubhouse. Phil called and said you were already on the way back here."

"Everyone knows Tara is here with you Jackson. I expect everything to be fine when I come over in the morning to check on her too." Gemma said it in a way she wasn't accusing him. But she might as well come out said she thought he did it all.

"What's that shit supposed to mean? Do you think I got something to do with what happened today? Have you lost your fucking mind? Or are you still laying drunk and high all day?" Jax was only making things worse by being snide to her.

"You've said enough to your mother, Jax." You could tell by Nero's tone he wasn't going to take much more before he exploded.

"Don't buy into Gemma's bullshit, Nero. She will twist shit up until she gets her way." There were those times Jax didn't know when to shut the fuck up. Now was one of them. Although what he said about his mother, applied to him as well.

"All I know is Kyle's shop gets busted up, Tara and I were almost killed today and we got shut down." It was coming close to the point of Nero becoming confrontational.

"You think I did that shit? Maybe you're the one who needs help, Nero. You've been with Gemma to long."

"Thanks. I'll see you tomorrow. I will be over to help get everything packed up. I'm not giving up on our business, we will find a new location." It was the easiest way to not allow another argument to break out. So, I ended it for all of them.

After they left, I put my boys to bed because I was exhausted. I was leery of Jax in the house with us. Mentally I tried my best to rationalize it all. But, it always came back to the same conclusion. He did it, he had it done or someone wanted me to really believe he did.

When I flipped the light on in our room; he startled me. Jax was staring at the wall without even blinking. The smoke circled around him from his cigarette as he took another long drag from it. "Are you in love with Kyle?"

"No."

"Did you fuck him?"

"No."
Then why didn’t you tell me you were with him?” Jax kept this conversation level a lot mellower than he had earlier today.

“If you knew, why didn’t you say something, Jax?”

“I kept quiet because I thought it would blow over; Kyle was just some sort of fascination and you would get past it. Then, the two of you just got closer. He even started replacing me with my son. Best case, it was my payback for what I’ve done in the past. Worst case,… I won’t ever give up and let you go.”

“How many times do I have to say it? I have not done a damn thing with Kyle or anyone else for that matter. This isn’t some sick retaliation, Jax. To get back at you for cheating. The whole world is not out to get you even though you think so. Just like the world doesn’t focus around you as much as you want it to.”

“Let’s face it, you’re a step up for me. I’m five step down for you. I guess, you didn’t marry so well, huh? I got the better end of the deal. I know what I am and you still love me anyway. I didn’t have anything to do with what happened. I love you, Tara.” Jax went to come near me and I stepped away. Internally I was conflicted and torn. He only looked down then walked away.

Once he was out of our room, I waited to hear the front door slam. For Jax to go running off to the clubhouse. But it didn’t. I went on with my nightly routine. I took a shower and brushed my teeth. My mouth felt so dry, I went to the kitchen to make me some ice water.

Jax was in the rocking chair holding Thomas. I stared at them for a long time. These moments were so precious to me. When I saw the feared outlaw be a normal loving man.

Thomas was hungry and began to cry. “I’ll make him a bottle.”

“What about you? Do I still get time to turn shit around with you, Tara?”

“Tara, I’ve missed a lot of the boy’s life. Do you think they will ever forgive me? Especially, Abel.” If there was ever a time I sensed Jax being true with his feelings, now was it.

“I think they love you, Jax. All they want is for you to show them you love them back and pay them a little attention. You still have time to turn this all around if you really want to.”

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Jax swore on our children’s lives he had nothing to do with any of it. With all my being, I wanted to believe him and still believe in him. The club turned up nothing about who did it though. Even my car went totally missing without a trace from the face of the earth.

The club put someone with me at all times to make sure I was safe along with the boys when Jax wasn’t around. They wouldn’t be back from their run until Sunday. He actually offered to stay at home with me. But, I declined the offer. Maybe someone would be good for the both of us.

The club had someone with me at all times to make sure I was safe along with the boys. I was walking on egg shells whenever he came home anymore. I never knew the term prisoner in your own home and heart until now.

For the most part, I tried to keep everything on a normal scale and not vary much on my day. But I found the energy had just been sucked out of me.
I went in to make a cup of tea. When I felt Jax take a hold of my hand. "I don't know how to fix whatever this is between us. But I want to. I've always loved you. I know you don't believe me sometimes cause of how I am. You're the only woman I can honestly say I ever had real love for. I'll be back Sunday and I'll call you when I get there." He gave me a hug and a long kiss on my forehead. Then he was gone.

From the kitchen window, I watched Jax ride away. The warm sunshine was coming in on my skin. Children were playing and laughing while running around. Families outside enjoying the day together. But on the inside I felt no warmth, my children had nothing to laugh about and we certainly were far from being a normal family.

"Mommy?" Abel had to say it a few times to get my attention.

"What, baby?"

"Can we go see George today?" Every day Abel asked this question and every day I avoid it with another excuse.

"Not today, baby."

"Why?"

"I have a lot to do."

"Then, can we go tomorrow?"

"I think it might be time for us to go get you a puppy of your very own. I start back at the hospital on Monday and I will have time now. Would you like that?"

"No. I'll just wait until I can see George. Can I have a cookie?"

"Sure, baby." If all thing were so easily solved with milk and cookies. I was simply putting off the inevitable by not telling Abel the truth. I cursed myself for it. But when I looked at his sweet little face, I couldn't bring myself to do it.

While I watched Abel eat, I didn't want our relationship to end up like Jax and Gemma's. I didn't want it to be like with my father or mother's. So, I had to make a choice of what to do.

My cell was on the couch and I picked it up as though it had just rung. "Hello. Oh, hi Kyle. Oh no. I haven't seen him. No, if I see George I will call you. Good bye."

"Where's George, Mommy?"

"George got out of the store somehow and is gone." Of course it was wrong to blatantly lie to my son. But the truth would have only made him feel worse and crushed him. Stringing him along wasn't going to happen any longer and I should have already addressed the issue.

Abel said nothing as he got up from the table. "Baby, do you want the rest of your milk and cookies?" When he didn't respond, I went to look for him.

At the coffee table Abel was drawing a picture of a dog on piece of paper. "What are doing, baby?"

"Making a picture of George. So we can find him. I got two dollars Grandma gave me. We can pay to get him back, Mommy. I know we can find him because he misses us."

"Oh shit." What the hell was I thinking? I only escalated the problem by lying. This was a small one
that got out of control. It was no wonder why Jax and Gemma were so fucked up as many lies as they tell.

"Abel, you do understand we may never find George, right?"

"I know. But if he finds a good home where they love him as much as I do. It will be okay." As a mother, these are the moments you live for. Abel put his own little feelings aside and thought of George. At his age he knew what was really important. Why couldn't adults do the same?

"Someday, you are going to grow up to become a good man. That's a very mature approach, thinking of George first."

"It's what you do Mommy, think of me and Tommy first. Since George is a baby, I just want him to be okay and have someone who loves him too."

"I always will, baby. You know what, I think I still have the picture on my phone with you and George. Let's see what we can do with it."

Abel set on my lap while we downloaded the picture to the computer. I printed out several copies of it. One he wanted hung on his wall for him to see George every day.

The others we would put up around town. It was Abel's way to do everything in his power to find George. While giving him closure of it at the same time.

"You need to take a nap, Abel. Then we will have some lunch when you get up."

"Okay. Can we go see Kyle when I wake up?"

"Not today, baby." It was another issue I had to address with Abel and soon. But not now. He dealt with enough already. "Sweet dreams."

Once I got Abel down for his nap. I checked on Thomas, he was still out. I wander around the house aimlessly. With my boys asleep, it was so quiet.

Phil knocked on the door to see if he could use the bathroom. It wasn't that much of a detail for them to watch us. I spent the last three days locked inside the house. Only associating with my children and Jax on the occasion. It was a full blown depression for me.

Other than doing something with or for the boys, I didn't get off the couch much. It was almost noon already. I was still in my pajamas and hadn't even combed my hair yet.

"Would like something to eat and drink, Phil?"

"Please, Ma'am." He was so polite. Judging by his size, he should be mean and intimidating. But he was nothing of the sort. He reminded me of another large, kind and sweet man.

When my cell rang, I excused myself. "Make sure you clean up your mess when you're done."

"Yes, Ma'am."

It was Nero. He and Gemma called me daily. They only made small talk to avoid dealing with the elephant in the room. We all knew they were checking to make sure nothing miraculously happened to me and I just disappeared from the face of the earth.

Every time my phone went off, I thought maybe he was returning my calls or texts. But I got nothing from Kyle. He wrote me off like just like the rest of the world did. As I passed by the kitchen table I
ran my hand over the cover of the book he gave me. Since the boys were taking a nap, I decided it was time for me to set down and read it finally.

"To my darling Kyle. Some day you will change the world with your knowledge, wisdom and kindness, love Mom." It was written on the inside cover. I couldn't believe he gave it to me being from his mother.

"In the Norse mythology, Odin is a widely revered god. He is associated with; healing, loyalty, the gallows, knowledge, battle, sorcery, poetry, making crows his spies and frenzy. Wedded the goddess, Frigg. Odin held a particular place as the ancestral figure among various other Germanic people. It was said, he fathered so many children, they couldn't keep track of them all."

Once I got to the last part, I could relate. Who knew for certain how many children Jax really fathered? So, I flipped through the book until I stumbled upon something that seemed so familiar to me.

"I fly upon the blackest wings. I soar through the darkest night sky. I answer no call but of my own. I alone forge my reality. For I am the crow. The child of Odin."

It baffled me the more I thought about it. It wasn't coming to me where I read it before. "Tara, you have company." Phil stopped my thought process quickly.

"What are you doing here?"

"Can you give me a minute?" Wayne had something he wanted to tell me in private obviously.

"Sure, want a cup of coffee?"

"Yeah, coffee's good." He seemed really nervous for some reason.

"So, what's going on, Wayne?"

"It wasn't Jax or the club that busted up Kyle's shop. Hadley got a copy of the video from the bank."

"Who was it?"

"You're not gonna like the answer any better." Wayne handed me the black and white photos. Along with the vehicle registration.

"Oh, shit."

"I went by the clubhouse and Jax wasn't there."

"He's on a run until Sunday. I'm going to need your help, Wayne."

"Help to do what?"

Wayne wasn't particularly fond of my answers either. He didn't feel it was safe for me to go off on my own. I wasn't sure it was safe for me to stay put here either. The first thing I had to do was get away from Phil. Or they all would know what I was doing.

Wayne would cover for me by telling Phil, I didn't feel well and went to lay down for a while. He was staying to watch the boys for me. After I coerced Wayne, he gave up his truck keys.

A long sigh came from me when I slipped out the bedroom window. "A lot of protection you guys are. They could come in and kill me in my sleep without anyone ever knowing it."
Then it occurred to me. I tossed my cell phone in the bushes under the window. "You won't be
tracking me today, Jax." That problem I would rectify the first chance I got.

When I made it down the street to Wayne's truck, I figured I got away with it and Phil didn't know.
Because if he did, Jax would be the first call he made.

Nero was going to stay at the Lodge until the end of the month then make his decision where to go.
More than likely he would move in with Gemma. They would become husband and wife in just a
week.

The lodge was completely empty when I pulled up. It kind of made me sad to see it end. As hard as I
worked to put together a thriving business, it was gone in a matter of a day.

Inside nothing was left except the day couch and the bar. "Tara, what are you doing here?" Nero
made me jump when he came up behind me.

"I have to find Kyle. Do you know where he is?"

"I don't know where he is. He came by a couple of days ago and left this for you.

"What is it?"

"I don't know." Nero shrugged as he handed me an envelope.

"Damn it, Nero. Where is Kyle? If he told anyone it's you."

"He just said he needed to put some distance from here. I wouldn't worry too much about him. Did
he ever tell you what he did on the military?"

"Not exactly."

"Kyle was a sharp shooter. He can take care of himself, Tara."

"If he does anything to the club, they will kill him."

"He knows that already. To him it's a war, one I'm afraid he won't win. Do you know what the
difference is between Jax and Kyle? Jax thinks he is untouchable and bullet proof. Where Kyle,
knows he isn't and can be taken out but doesn't give a shit." Nero's analyses of them was really spot
on from what I could tell.

"I don't think the club had anything to do with his shop getting trashed or killing George. I have to
talk to Kyle before he goes off and does something stupid. Please, just tell me where he is."

"I can't because I don't know. Maybe his sister could help you out though."

Nicole's house I was bound. I made a stop at the hospital to get her last known address and prayed
she still lived there. What would I say to her? Did she know anything that went on already? None of
it mattered, I had to find Kyle.

She seemed surprised to find me at her door. "Hey, Tara. Kyle isn't here."

"Do you know where he is, Nicole? It's really important I find him."

"He needs some time to get his head straight. I heard from him a couple of days ago."

"I am afraid he is going to get hurt. Please, just tell me where he is."
"Come in. I am just fixing some lunch."

The entry way had a table full of pictures on it. One with Kyle holding a baby. "Is this Cody?"

"It's Kyle's son, Zac. He came home on leave and it's the only time he ever got to hold his son. By the time he got out, she was gone."

"Hasn't he even tried to see his son?"

"Zac has no idea who Kyle is or that he even exists. He doesn't want to tear Zac's life a part. He is a happy and healthy little boy who believes another man is his real father. Kyle found them once. He went as far as going up to the door. But he couldn't go through with it. She calls here, when she needs money because being associated with the military. They move around a lot. Kyle never fails to send it while it rips his heart out. I've seen him give her thousands of dollars at a time and do without for the sake of his son. It is what parents do. Don't think she doesn't take advantage of it either. I guess a lot of it stems from our childhood."

"Did you have a bad childhood or something?"

"We're really not brother and sister, by blood anyway. Didn't Kyle tell you?"

"No, he didn't. I thought you really were."

"Well, we are in every other sense. My dad married his mom when we were young. She was a wonderful woman. She always took care of me and treated me like she was my real mom. After she died my dad did the best he could with us. Since Kyle's father didn't want anything to do with him, he stayed with us. My dad was a drill sergeant in the Marines and he treated us accordingly. We were his little soldiers instead of children. A government issued nanny raised us when he did his tours of duty and was out on maneuvers. Which, was the majority of our childhood. The only person I had growing up was Kyle. Now that my dad has passed, I only have him and Cody left."

Nicole and I talked about a lot of things instead of what I actually came for. So, I decided to put it out there. "If Kyle retaliates against Jax or the club. They will hurt him. If you know where he is, you need to tell me. I got a letter from Kyle. I'm very worried what he will do. It wasn't them, they didn't do it."

"Jax is your husband right?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever seen the symbols tattooed on Kyle's abdomen? Cody's dad wore the same ones proudly on his arm."

"No."

"They mean Semper Fi. To always be faithful and always be loyal. Their brotherhood bond never made much sense to me. I get the whole we fight beside each other and trust the other with our lives part. But they would die for the others on and off the battlefield. It is a tight niched group, that never allows anyone inside of their circle. I was with Cody's dad since I was teenager and he never let me on the inside of it. Nor really ever trusted me. I know he loved me and was faithful to me. But Kyle, is a lot of the same way. He is a very loyal and faithful man. When he loves, he does it furiously. I never found him to love many and he trusts, even fewer. The only reason I am telling you this is because you seem to have brought him back to life again. Since he truly does trust you, Tara. I will tell you where I think he went to. He didn't say for sure."
"Where do you think he went to?"

"Kyle went home. It's where he always goes when he gets fucked up." Nicole gave me the address of his old house. It would be a three-hour drive if I hauled ass all the way here.

It took me forever to find the place. I thought I was going out to the middle of nowhere by the time I arrived at it. No one had been here for a while, you could tell. The grass needed mowed, the flower bed only had weeds growing in them now. It looked as though a loving family once occupied this nice home. Now, it was just an empty, ran down house that meant nothing to anybody except him.

The door was open and the screen door was unlocked. "Kyle." After I said his name a couple of times, I let myself in. I heard the shower running so I knew he was here.

By the front door laid a couple of large duffel bags, a large gun with a stand, a pile of camo fatigues and his dog tags thrown on top of them.

There wasn't much furniture inside. Only a couch, coffee table and television. On the table was a sketch book along with a bottle of Jack Daniels.

Kyle drew a lot. It seemed to be his way of expressing himself. I took a seat on the couch and browsed through it. The crow drawings made me smile for some strange silly reason. Then I came to one I wasn't expecting. It was me standing in front of a large picture window. The sun was shining in; with Thomas in my arms and Abel standing at my side. The relaxed happy smile I wore on my face was an unknown reality to me anymore.

"Break and enter much?"

"The door wasn't locked so technically I just entered. Oh shit." When I looked up he was standing in front of me dripping wet and naked.

"Sorry, I wasn't expecting guests. But I do notice you're not looking away." When he said it, I looked off in the other direction.

"Well, I am a doctor. Besides, I've seen bigger." As the words escaped my lips. I cursed at myself for sounding like a naïve little school girl.

"No you haven't." Kyle was cocky as ever. It relieved me in some ways. He took his sketch book out of my hands and disappeared from the room.

"Nicole told you where I was, didn't she?" At least he had clothes on this time when he came back.

"Don't be mad at her. I came here to tell you, Jax didn't have anything to do with it. I…"

"I don't want to hear about Jax, Tara. If it's the only reason you came here. You can leave."

"Anything you do to Jax, Tara. If it's the only reason you came here. You can leave."

"Anything you do to Jax. Hurts me and my boys. I'm begging you don't relate against him or the club. If you try to kill him. They will kill you, Kyle without even thinking about it. They actually didn't trash your…"

"Kill him, I don't want to kill Jax. I want to hurt him. If I wanted him dead, I would have smoked his ass already. In the still of the night I would have picked him off and he would have never seen it coming. With no evidence left behind to prove I was the one who did it. Just like a ghost, in and out without a trace. I spent years learning how to do it with perfection. I don't know about you but, I need a fucking drink."
It wasn't just one drink though. Kyle guzzled down almost a quarter of the bottle of whisky before he offered to pass it to me. I only shook my head no. You could tell he was going down a bad road.

"You can talk to me, Kyle. I tell you everything and trust you won't pass judgement on me. You can do the same with me, you know."

The internal struggles he had were similar to my own. The loathing of what your actual worth to anyone around you was recognizable by me as well. The way he felt growing up without a mother and dreamed life could have been different for him if she just had been there. Then we came a touchy subject for both of us.

"Abel is my son. But not my biological child. I love him as much as Thomas. I couldn't stand the thought of Wendy coming back in Abel's life."

"I won't ever hurt Zac by trying to butt my way into his life. I'm not his father. The man who spends every day with him, taught him how to ride his bike, shows him love and he loves back is his father. I'm just a sperm donor and he got caught in the middle of it." The pain he spoke with; I couldn't help erase. I could tell he was lingering in those tortuous thoughts.

So I changed the subject. "I finally read the book you gave me."

"What did you think?"

"I really didn't get to read much of it. I didn't understand much of it either. There was something about flying with the blackest wings, it all I can remember of it. But I swear I've read that somewhere before."

"It's similar to John Teller's manuscript. Read page two hundred."

"How do you remember it?"

"How do you remember which body parts to operate on? I was my old man's biggest disappointment. With my size he wanted me to be a star athlete. I was better with words than I ever was with a football. You should read the ending of it, it's the best part."

"What's the ending?"

"Odin and his brother shared the fair goddess, Frigg, between them. Once the crows didn't come to Odin anymore and tell him the enemy's secrets. His realm fell down around him. They stoned him and he became an outcast of a society that was built for him. The crows warned him, his love for Frigg would be his short fall and she would have a hand in his death. Frigg and his brother killed Odin."

"If this is such a popular story, why haven't I ever heard about it before?"

"Odin has one hundred and seventy different names recorded throughout time which he is known by. All of them being a god of some sort. There is only one mythical tale and Odin is the only name ever acknowledged for it. A wyrm serpent came crawling but it destroyed no one. When Odin took nine twigs of glory. Then struck the adder so that it flew into nine separate pieces. The poison and evil could not survive without soldering the nine together."

Every number Kyle mentioned pertaining to Odin, was nine. The crows only come to special ones. By the time I made all the comparisons of them, I couldn't breathe. "Jesus Christ." My air supply felt cut off. The woozy feeling was coming back again. My head swam in the words he said.
"Tara, what's wrong?"

"It's getting late and I have to go. I know you don't want to talk about this. But the real reason I came here was I got your letter. The club had nothing to do with your shop. The ones who did it, used you to get to me. I know you have no real reason to believe what I am saying. But it's the truth. I'm asking until we figure it all out, don't do anything stupid. Put aside your rage and hate for Jax because I need you. I don't how deep the betrayal runs. I don't really have anyone else in my life I can trust and I know I can you."

Kyle only looked at me but refused to answer one way or the other.

"I need you, Kyle. I know you will do the right thing and be there tomorrow. So you can help me find out what is really going on." I threw the copies down on the table Wayne gave me.

"How can you be so sure I will be there, girl?"

"Because you are a loyal, faithful, loving and caring man who always tries to do the right thing. Until I met you, I didn't know they still existed in this world. Any other time, I would have run away already from all this shit, you give me strength to see it through. I have hope now in people again. I trust you and I never completely trust anyone, not even my own decisions. Don't take that away from me. Be there tomorrow, Kyle."

"Tara." When Kyle called my name I stopped in my tracks but refused to turn around so he could see my tears. "If you ever need a place to run to with the boys. So no one knows where you are and you feel safe, I keep an extra key in the frog on the porch." I only nodded before getting in the truck to leave.

Home was the direction I started off in. But where I ended up, was in a totally different place. I sighed and surrendered to the fact, this was where I needed to be at.

The walk to get to him was as long as in the dreams I've had. I plopped down in front of him and tried to get my thoughts together. For thirty minutes, I did nothing but pick a circle of grass around me.

"I know what Gemma and Clay did to you and I know why now. The crows coming around made you conflicted and everyone thought you lost your mind. When all you wanted to do is the right thing. I'm still trying to figure what the right thing is. I'm not sure how to save Jax anymore. Or if he even can be saved. But you can damn well bet, my boys will be spared and saved from this chaos."

Most would think, I lost my mind. Sitting in front of a tombstone trying to have a conversation with someone I never as much as met before. They would lock me up for a psych evaluation if I told them I thought he came back as crow. Or worse, I would get the same fate John did for it.

The longer I talked to him; the more I wept. For my sons who would never escape this life because of who their father was. My husband; I couldn't completely trust him anymore or wasn't sure if he was ever faithful to me. The one who I dragged in this mess with me, Kyle. Even for Gemma, who just wanted to repair her relationship with Jax but, he wouldn't hear of it. Then, it came to John; death wouldn't even put enough distance from this place for him to rest.

"You're the only one for me Tara. You always have been. I promise, if you stay with me, we will find the place you belong in all of this. I gotta go, I got club business to handle. I promise, little man, we will fly your kite tomorrow night. I promise, I won't be gone long. Abel helped me shop today. He knew your favorite flower, I didn't, I'm sorry. I promise, I'll be home for dinner tonight. Go home and stay away from Kyle. I promise, I'm getting outta the club and we're leaving Charming. Do
"You're right, it's time for a change."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! I should have the next chapter out in a few days; Something New, Something Borrowed and Something True Blue.

As most of you know, I love reader interaction. I also love the PM's I get from you all after each chapter. From one of the readers, "There is no way to fix this in just one chapter." You bet ya!

Take a guess at how many times in this chapter we discussed always faithful/always loyal or the lack there of in variations. In thirty-seven different ways between them all.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert.
"I soar blindly through the darkest nights. Unsure of the blackest fate I set in motion. I answer to no one but my own guilt. For I alone forge my reality of the club. No one sees it's fraudulent cover for what I really am. I am the creator of the monster I can no longer contain."

"Jesus Christ." John's words meant more to me now than they ever had before. It was on page two hundred just like Kyle said it was.

"I'm ready." Abel had his pictures and scotch tape in his little hands. Today my son would get some closure to many problems to come throughout his life. I checked my watch one more time, then my phone. Kyle had apparently made his decision and it wasn't the one I hoped for.

"Let's go then." After I gathered up Thomas' stuff and we took off to town with Rat riding behind us.

Abel handled it better than I expected he would. We went to different places around town and taped up George's picture. He did most of it himself. Except he had trouble with the tape. A few wads of it got thrown away.

"Mommy, I found him."

"Oh, baby. We talked about this yesterday. George isn't….son of a bitch."

"George." Abel went running as quickly as his little legs would carry him. He threw his arms around the puppy's neck and placed a peck on its nose. "I love you, George. Don't run away no more. You got bigger since you were lost."

"He got bigger because he ate lots of food on his way home."

"Oh. Can I lead George around, Kyle?"

"Sure, buddy. Just don't go too far down the street, Okay?"

"Okay, I won't. Come on George."

"How did you.."

"I couldn't disappoint the boys and I couldn't tell Cody the truth. So I bought another one. But wait until they figure out George is a girl." Kyle shrugged his shoulders. "It's the best I could do."

"That's the sweetest thing I've ever heard. I guess we will deal with George's sex identity crises when we come to it."

"Tara, we need to go. Jax won't like this."

"What did you just say to me, Rat?"

"I'm just following Jax's orders." Rat was like everyone else. If he didn't do as Jax wanted, he would suffer the consequences of it.
"Get out of her face. If Jax has got a problem with it, he can take it up with me."

"Kyle, it's okay. We will see you later. Abel, come on baby. Rat, we will be there in a minute. Let Abel say goodbye." Rat just stood there totally ignoring what I had said to him. "I said, we will be there in a minute. If I need to call Jax myself and tell him you are interfering in a joyous moment for his son, I will. Since, my son doesn't get many of those, I will throw one hell of a bitch fit."

"Five minutes, Tara." Rat finally stepped away. He lit up a smoke and sat on his bike.

"So, daddy cut you off from me? Nice."

"It's a long story. I will explain it all later. Wayne and I will meet you at the hospital." I took Kyle's hand and pressed a small piece of paper in it. "This is my number for a burner phone. Call me on it from now on. I've got a lot of eyes on me and I can't be too careful." When I let go he didn't until we heard Abel.

"Mommy, can we take George to the park?"

"Not today, baby. We have to go so you need to say goodbye."

A couple of gentle pats on the head was given to George by Abel. "Be good George and do what Kyle tells you to. I'll see you tomorrow. I love you." It warmed my heart to listen to my son speak to the puppy. It was some of the same things I said to him almost daily.

But what Abel did next, neither one of us expected. "Bye, Kyle. I love you." Abel hugged Kyle's legs and you could tell he wasn't sure how to handle it either.

"I'll see you later, buddy." Kyle ran his hand over the top of Abel's head. It was enough to please my son because he took my hand and was ready to go.

Rat stayed right behind us all the way to the clubhouse. As soon as Abel's feet touched the ground he ran in Gemma's direction.

"Grandma, we found George."

"Wow, sweetheart." Gemma looked at me and I shook my head not to say anything farther about it.

"What are you doing today?"

"I start back at the hospital on Monday. I've got tons of paperwork to catch up on. I appreciate you watching them."

"No problem, mom. Just be careful."

"Oh, I will."

Wayne came out of his trailer when he seen us. "Wayne is taking me to the hospital, I won't need you to go Rat."

"I have to go with you, Tara."

"No, you don't." I called the only one Rat would listen to.

"Jax, I need to go to the hospital today to get some work done. Wayne will be with me. You know I can't have the club there. You said you wanted to fix this, start here."
"Let me talk to Rat." I handed the phone to him. He paced around while he talked to Jax. Shortly, Rat handed me back my phone.

"Be careful, babe. I love you."

"I love you too."

Rat continued to follow us all the way through the parking lot. "I used to be a real cop, you know. I'm sure I can manage to get Tara to the truck." Wayne was being sarcastic but it was kind of cute. "I can't get no damn respect around here, I swear."

"Me and you both, Wayne."

"I got a chemo treatment today. So, it all works out. But you might have to drive us back. They make me sick sometimes."

"Okay. I shouldn't be gone long."

"You know when Jax finds out you're meeting this fella. The shit is gonna hit fan."

"The shit already has, Wayne."

We didn't speak anymore on the ride to the hospital. We took the elevator up to my office. He was waiting for us in the spot I told him to be at.

"Wayne this is Kyle. Kyle this is Wayne."

"How ya doing?"

"Good."

It was all they had to say to one another. "This is the number to the phone I will have with me. Don't give it to anybody. Thanks, for your help on this, Wayne."

"You're carrying a burner phone now? Man, the shit just keeps getting deeper around here." Wayne was still muttering to himself when he rounded the corner.

"Why are you carrying two phones for, Tara?"

"Let's go inside my office and I will tell you." After I closed the doors so no one else could hear our conversation. I told Kyle about everything that happened while he was gone. He ignored most of what I said or chose to just not comment on it.

"The first thing we do is teach you how to defend yourself."

"What?"

"Someone wants you dead, Tara. There may not be anyone around the next time. You need to know how to defend yourself."

Our conversation was interrupted by a knock on my door. Since, no one knew I was actually here. It worried me. "I'll get it." Kyle yanked the door open.

Only to find a mortified Margret standing there looking up at the big man. "Um."

"Hey, Margret. This is my boss."
"Um." Was all she said for a moment. She stuck her hand out to Kyle. "I'm Margret, Margret Murphy."

"It's nice to meet you, Margret, Margret Murphy." She giggled when she shook his hand. I let out a little giggle of my own to that one.

"I'll wait outside for you, Tara."

"Okay, Kyle."

"Who is that nice looking young man?"

"He's just a friend. Did you need something?"

"Jax called asking if you were here. I told him you were and asked if he wanted me to page you. But he just hung up."

"That little shit. Jax is checking up on me. Do me a favor, if he calls back. Tell him you're not sure if I'm here. You will have to check. Then call me on the other line before you give him an answer." I wrote my number down for her to my burner too.

It made me smile when I tossed my cell phone in my desk drawer. They could track it all day long if they wanted to. All that would come up is the hospital location.

Margret turned her head to one side as we walked behind Kyle towards the elevators.

"Shame on you, Margret. Are you checking him out?"

"Don't be ridiculous. Of course I am, he has a nice rear end." She giggled again before she took off.

When the elevator doors closed, I pushed the button to take us back down to the main lobby. "You got no idea the effect you have on women, do you?"

"What?" He seemed more confused by what I said rather than flattered by it. It was meant as the ultimate compliment, he got to Margret.

"Never mind, Kyle. I was starting to think you weren't going to show up today."

"I was starting to think the same thing. If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have."

"We need to find the car and go from there."

"Does anyone else know? What about Nero? I don't want to keep shit from him, Tara. He's always been straight up with me."

"I don't want to tell Nero until we know for certain. We need to stop at the Lodge, Lowen is meeting me there. To see what we can do about getting our business started up again." It's not like I didn't have a trust in Nero. Or even remotely thought he had anything to do with it. But I didn't want to get him involved if I was wrong about it.

Kyle wasn't real talkative. He would answer me if I initiated the conversation but that was it. It wasn't the same between us as before. I'd say he accomplished his goal and put distance there. You couldn't always have everything, at least he showed up. It was a start.

Lowen already made it by the time we got there. She and Nero were having coffee together.
"Thanks for doing this, Lowen. Is there anything we can do to get up and running again?"

"We can file appeals to buy time. But in the end, only getting a judge to sign off on it; stating they found no illegal actives on the premises. It's the only way to get the Lodge reinstated to good standing. Unfortunately, it could all blow back on you and Nero if it goes public."

"How, my name doesn't appear anywhere? I'm a silent partner and never signed any paperwork."

"Tara, you own this property. You came to my office and signed it with Jax."

"No, I didn't. The only thing I signed is for the lease here. Wouldn't it just make me the landlord? I will be ruined if this gets out. I'll never be able to get a job at any respectable hospital again."

"You signed for ownership, leasing the property to the club. You own everything, the warehouse included they use for storage for the extra Harley parts. Didn't you read it?"

"No I didn't. I trusted Jax when he said it was just a lease and we were in a hurry that day."

"Tara, it all ties you back to the club and their activities. Whatever comes up with them, is always going to have your name on it and lead back to you. I thought you knew and understood what you were signing. Jax said he explained all of it to you."

"Yeah, I bet he did. Will you excuse me for a minute?"

Nero followed after me and I didn't want to stop. But he made me. "Hey, mama. I will take full responsibility. None of this will land on you."

"That's the problem, Nero. You are willing to put yourself in jeopardy to save me. While my husband just pushes me down deeper in the shit."

Before the mirror in the restroom I stood trying to calm myself. There was so much going on around me I never seen or maybe wasn't paying close enough attention to it. What else had Jax done right in my face and I missed?

The woman I wanted to be and woman I become, were two totally different people. On certain days I knew exactly what I was doing and what the plan was. On others anymore I winged it the best I could to make it through another day. When I took a good look; I didn't even recognize myself any longer.

"I can do this. I've got to do this for my boys' sake. You channel it from down deep if you have to and you do what you gotta do."

It was more of a pep speech for myself to continue on and not to give up. Do not surrender yet. Do not let them think I was too weak to handle this shit. I let out a couple of deep breaths before I went back out there.

"In all fairness to Jax. He came to me, Tara and took out a life insurance policy for you and the boys. In some ways he's trying to protect you by leaving you everything if something should happen to him."

"Jax doesn't have a policy I know of."

"Tara, I'm not trying to defend Jax. But after you the two of you got married he wanted to make sure you had enough money just in case something does happen. I think in his mind by making you the owner of everything, he is trying to take care of you too. I did warn him however, of the
consequences if something went wrong and it left you open for exposure. There is a way to make it look like Nero is just a renter of the property if we back date some paperwork and he is willing to do so."

"I'll have to ask Nero if he will. Where did they go?"

"They went towards the back."

The door was cracked to Nero's office. At first I went to knock until I overheard what they were talking about.

"Kinda puts you at odds with your step kid asking me to be your best man, doesn't it?"

"I asked Jax first. He basically told me to go fuck myself. He is not even coming to the wedding. I didn't tell Gemma about it because it would crush her. I want it to be her special day and I don't want her to feel like she has to choose between me and Jax. I hope she wouldn't ever make me choose between her and Lucius, he's my blood. Besides, you can walk down the aisle with Tara. Gemma is gonna ask her to stand up there with her."

"As much as I would like to man, I can't."

"Kyle, at some point you're gonna have to deal with this shit and tell her. I see the way you look at her. It's the same way I look at Gemma."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Nero."

"Yes you do. You've turn down so much free pussy here it should be a crime. There's only two reasons a man does that. You already got Lyla questioning her sexiness. She's starting to take bets you're gay. But she's pretty convinced she can fuck you straight though and I don't think she is gonna give up any time soon."

"Yeah, I kind of got that vibe from Lyla."

Since I couldn't stand to listen to any more of their man talk about pussy, I knocked on the door.

"Am I interrupting?"

"Nah, I'm just waiting on the shit head, here. To say he is gonna be my best man."

"I will if Tara will give me one dance at the wedding."

"I can do that."

"Then I'm there, Nero. You got a best man."

"Good, now that's settled. What do you need, Tara?"

"Can you come talk to me and Lowen for a minute, Nero?"

"With a little creative accounting, I think we can manage to clear name Tara's name on this. Are you willing, Nero?" Lowen had a page full of notes of things she would have to do.

"Yeah, whatever we gotta do."

"I want to sell it. Split the profits fifty, fifty with Nero."

"Tara, you don't gotta do that."
"I want to, Nero. Lowen, do whatever you need to do then, I want it sold."

"I'll call you both when I get it ready. I need to go, I'm due in court in an hour."

"Don't tell Jax I know about this. I've got a better way to handle it. Thanks, Lowen."

When we got in the truck my mind was going off in so many different directions to even make one complete thought. Rattled didn't even begin to cover it.

"Do you want to talk about it, girl?"

"Not really."

We drove out to the middle of nowhere. Kyle set cans up on a rock and gave me his hand gun.

"I already know how to shoot a gun."

"Then show me you do."

After several attempts, I got really frustrated. "Fuck."

"Let me show you the right way to do it." He hit them all with every single shot he made. He went and set them all up again for me.

"You're too stiff, Tara. Don't be afraid of the gun. Loosen up your stance." I tried it but still I didn't hit shit.

"You're gripping it too hard. It's not a dick. Hold it firm but let it breathe in your hand." There were two more shots wasted when I was done.

"When you fire it, do it on the exhale breath. If you do it when you inhale, you jerk the gun and miss your target." It was the same effect no matter what I tried, I missed the damn thing.

Kyle stood behind me. He adjusted my legs to not be so far apart. His one hand went under my own to hold the gun study. The other went over my heart. "It's the adrenaline coursing through your veins because you're too excited; it makes you shaky, your blood flows faster and it speeds up your heart rate. Get your body and breathing under control as one. They need to react together when you fire a weapon. Think of it like making love to it. Enjoy the feel of it in your hands. How the cold hard steel excites against your warmth. Savor every second leading up to the passionate eruption. When you cock it back, know it will go off at your command. At the perfect, precise moment. When you can't hold it any longer and need the release, let it go."

Well, that shit didn't help my heart rate any. If anything, it sped it up to go faster. So close to my ear, Kyle almost whispered it to me. "Tara, breathe." His hand slipped down to my abdomen and he pushed in on it. To force me to take shallower breaths. "Do it with me; in and out slowly." After a few times of doing it, I had it under control finally.

"Good, I'm going to let go now. When you're ready on an exhale, fire it."

There was no containing my excitement. "Did you see that? I hit it."

"You did great. That's enough for today. We should get going." He didn't seem excited like me at all and he wouldn't even look at me.

"Kyle, what's wrong?"
"Nothing."

It went to complete silence between us. Kyle said absolutely not one word to me on the way to the port. I took him by Barosky's bakery first. But he wasn't there. So we went to Collette's.

"What do we do now?"

"We wait until hopefully we see something." It wasn't much he said but it was something.

Hours passed by with not much activity at the Madame's place and nothing spoken between us either. The quiet was awkward and killing me.

"When are you going to tell me what's wrong with you, Kyle?"

"After I help you do this, Tara. I'm out."

"Well, isn't that just nice. Run away Kyle. Maybe you should do it today and not wait until we find out."

"Didn't you see Abel? My being around is only confusing him. I can't do that to him. Don't get me wrong, I think Jax is a punk ass bitch. But they are still his kids. I've had mine taken away from me, I know how it feels."

"What I saw today was a little boy excited to see you. Abel doesn't really have anyone constantly in his life except me and Gemma. We're the ones he is around pretty much daily. Abel lacks a bond with Jax because Jax doesn't put forth much effort in to it. He is always gone with more important things to do and makes promises to Abel he never carries through on. I know he loves our son the best he can. But it is going to be the same outcome with Jax and Abel if you're around or not. Unless Jax does something to fix it with his son. You have nothing to do with it."

Always the noble one. Kyle was concerned for my child and what it would do to Abel. There was still more going on with Kyle though. A lot of weight was coming down on him of guilt, missing his son and things in his own life. Finally, after coaxing him, I got him to open up to me.

"We both already know how this is going to go down. Jax is never going to allow you to be around me again. You'll have to sneak around and always be looking over your shoulder just like you are today. Every time you're with me. I won't be your dirty little secret too, Tara."

Since we had nothing but time on our hands and to kill. We talked about life. All my concerns for my children and the life they were bound to lead. What life would truly hold for them. The time Kyle missed out on from his son's life. Even about our childhood and how we wanted more for our children than what we had.

"There are worse things, Tara. Than having a shitty father. Jax at least acknowledges the boys are his. Mine never did me. My mom refused to ever talk about him. I was nine years old and completely lost without her. She was all I had. My step dad set me down and told me the truth because my mom gave him full custody of me if something happened to her. My real dad was married at the time with a family already and he didn't want me. He knocked her up and moved on with his life. I was just a dirty little secret they all buried like it was nothing. I was so angry with my mom for a long time for not telling me. When I got older I realized she was only trying to protect me from it. She did what she thought was right at the time. The same way I try to protect Zac by what I think is right."

It took me a long time to process what Kyle said. No words could fix that shit. From his perspective, Jax was at least there for my boys. He still had a lot to figure out but it gave me hope he would do it before it was too late.
"There's the car."

We followed it to see where it went to. The cop car had made its rounds past the Madame's place and drove on. The license plate was the same as in the picture, car number nine.

It met Barosky down by the docks. Where it picked him up at. We followed it around to other various places too. A couple of fancy houses and only Barosky went up to the door when they stopped. I wrote down all the addresses to find out who he visited. Once it dropped Barosky back off, we decided to leave.

It was more silence between us on the way back. The silence was the good part when someone came up on us very quickly and hit us from behind. Once they started firing, it all went to shit.

"Get your head down." Kyle pushed me down on the seat. There was a gun under the seat and the one in the glovebox I used earlier. I couldn't see what was going on around us. It almost threw me to the floor board when he slammed on the brakes.

"If anybody gets near the truck, you kill them." He left me a gun and disappeared. Shots were ringing out everywhere. The back glass came in on top of me when it was shattered by a bullet.

The truck door opened and I didn't hesitate to fire. "Oh shit. Oh shit."

"You shot me, you fucking shot me." I couldn't say Kyle was any happier about the situation than I was. He ripped the gun out of my hand. "Give me that." He took his shirt off and let out a long string of cuss words. Then held his shirt on his side.

"We need to get you to the hospital."

"I just shot at fucking cops. Do you really think that's a good idea? It a whole lot of explaining I don't want to do. Dirty or not, it's still a federal offense to try to kill a god damn cop. We got no proof of shit. It's my word against theirs."

"I'm sorry. It was an accident. I didn't mean too. I did it on the exhale like you taught me."

"Seriously?"

Kyle wouldn't let me near him. "Will you just let me look?"

"No."

"I can patch you up. I got to get the stuff from the hospital. Will you just get in the truck, Kyle?"

Nero was the first person I called. He was going to let Gemma know what happened then we would meet up at her house.

"Stay here, I'll get what I need and let Wayne know."

"Where in the hell do you think I'm going to go, Tara?"

Quickly I grabbed my cell phone out of my desk and raided the medical supply room. Wayne was sitting outside still waiting for me.

"What's the rush, Tara?"

Since Wayne wanted to know I showed him. "Jesus Christ, who shot you, son?"
Wayne had his mouth open. "Bad day?"

"It was a fucking accident. We'll take Kyle to Gemma's house. Let me park his truck in the garage so no one knows he's there. Then you park behind us in the driveway."

We got him up the stairs before Nero and Gemma got there. But they weren't alone when they came. Rat was hanging around outside.

"You brought Rat with you. What the hell, Gemma?"

"I didn't bring Rat, he followed us. I had to tell him something or he will call Jax. I don't think you want that shit to happen. As far as Rat knows, you and Wayne are having dinner with us. You miss Jax so much, you are spending the night here with the boys. That better be the exact story you tell Jackson too. If you nark me out to my son, I will never help you again." Gemma made it perfectly clear to me what would happen. It wasn't like I could tell Jax any of it so it didn't really matter much now.

"Are you okay?" It was time to get on with it and tend to the patient.

"Just get the bleeding to stop and I'll be fine." If I would have been an inch over, I would have missed him completely. Unfortunately, it wasn't. But the good news was, it only hit muscle and went clear through. The bleeding was the worst part of it for him. He had already lost a lot of blood.

Blood never bothered me before. I'd had my hands in it a million times and then some. When I was putting the gloves on I was shaking so badly. I couldn't get the one on and ripped it. "Fuck." I threw it down and got another.

"Maybe I can help." Nero offered to but there was little he could do.

There was little I could do in this state of mind. It had been months since I operated or done medical practice of any kind. The smell of the blood was making me sick. I swallowed it down hard and tried to focus on the task at hand.

The needle was ready for me to pull the syringe when the light reflected off the scars on my hand. I had so many scars from this life I wore already. This was no time to have a breakdown. It would have to be put on the back burner for later.

Kyle grabbed my hand before I went to inject his side because I couldn't stop shaking. "I really need you to be steady with that, girl. Just breathe." Several attempts at it didn't help. "Tara, do it with me." We did it together until I had control of myself again. He must have felt I was too because he let go of my hand.

When I went to throw the syringe away, Nero was staring at us in disbelief. "I haven't done this for a while." It was my excuse I gave him anyway.

The rest of it fell in place. I was in my comfort zone again with what I was doing. I had him stitched up fairly quick. Once the bandage covered his wound I was done.

"I'm going to get cleaned up."

My head went in the toilet bowl as soon as I got in the bathroom. I sat on the floor after I wet a cool rag for my face. When I could stand up without the room spinning I went to find the boys.
"How did you get a boo boo, Kyle?"

"I fell down."

"I got one on my knee. See." Abel took the little band aid off for visual effects. It was barley a scratch but he insisted it needed one. "Mommy kissed it and made it all better."

"Mommy is pretty cool isn't she?"

"Yeah, except for when she makes me take a bath. And eat peas, I hate peas."

"Abel, let's go find Grandma."

"Then come back, Tara. We got some things to talk about." Nero was firm when he said it. I could imagine he had a question or two about today's events.

Gemma was keeping Abel busy for me. So I could get our talk over with.

"What happened?" When we didn't say anything, Nero got a little louder. "Well, don't everybody talk at once."

We ran down the list of events. What Wayne found out, what took place on the way home and the suspicions we had.

"Neither one of you two felt the need to share this shit with me? Here's how the trust thing works. I trust you with stuff and you trust me. Are we clear from this point forward?"

Kyle and I agreed with Nero we would tell him everything from now on. There was only one person we had to keep out of the loop until we knew for sure; Jax. They also made the decision I would stay out of it and not go back to the docks anymore because they felt it was too dangerous.

"I'll do that. As long as you both promise me, no matter what happens or what you find out. You will not withhold any information from me. You'll tell me the whole truth even if it hurts me." Nero and Kyle said they would. I had to trust them to do so too now.

"I should get out of here." Kyle went to get up from Gemma's bed and wobbled a bit.

"You need to rest. Blood loss makes you weak."

"I can't stay here. It just puts Gemma in the middle of this shit with Jax. Then she has to hide the fact and lie about being around me too. Just like you do, Tara." Those were some harsh true words coming out of Kyle's mouth.

"You let me worry about that, sweetheart. I can handle Jackson. You can stay here tonight and let Tara take care of you. Then you can go home tomorrow. Do wanna help me fix some dinner, Tara?" Gemma always makes her appearance at the right time it seemed.

We made Kyle stay put. Gemma gave him one of Clay's old shirts I would assume to cover his wound up with.

While we cooked I decided to ask Gemma some more about John. "Who was the ninth member of the club?"

"Clay, why?"

"Then the serpent member Clay slithered his way in and brought the poison and evil to the club. The
nine pieces were then soldered together."

"What the hell are you talking about, Tara?"

"They came to John and he told you about it, didn't he?" It was best to get down to the point of what I truly wanted to know about.

"I don't know what you're even talking about."

"Come off of it, Gemma. Everything John did was focused around the crows; SAM CROW, crow eaters, even the crow tattoos the old ladies wear to show unity. He's been gone a lot of years and you always get a new crow when the others have passed. I think it's your way of holding on to a piece of him."

"What's this new fascination you got with John? You and Jax have John up on a pedestal like he is a god and he was far from it. You think you got it bad living with Jackson. You got no idea. Imagine taking your sick baby to the hospital and when you get home you find your old man in your bed with another woman. He did it in our bed with her. She was supposed to be watching Jackson for me while I was gone. Instead I come home to find her fucking John. He didn't even think I should be upset about it. He told me he just need a release and it meant nothing. So I should just get over it. That's the day, I decided no bitch will ever touch my man in front of me again. I would have killed her if it hadn't been for Clay. But he was just as fucked up with it all as I was."

"Why was Clay fucked up because of it?"

"She only offered to babysit Jackson so she could get to John behind our backs. She was Clay's old lady at the time, she didn't love him either. She was in love with John. Clay immediately dumped her, but John didn't. He kept a thing going with her on the side. Three months later, she got pregnant. Clay was the one who convinced her doing anything against John or the club would be very bad shit to come down on her. Clay could have set fire to it but he didn't. He did it to protect me and my boys. So I could keep my family together."

"Jesus Christ, Gemma. Jax has another sibling he doesn't know about?"

"She lost the baby and moved away. I still had to live here in this town and face those who knew about it. They never look at you the same way again. It's a respect you gotta earn back. I couldn't look at John the same way anymore either. Everyone only talks about all the bad shit Clay did. But he did some good things too."

"Is that why you got closer to Clay? It was to even the score with John?"

"Men cheat for straight up pussy. Women cheat because they lack something at home. I lacked a lot with John for a very long time before I finally gave in to Clay."

"Did John…" I didn't even get out my sentence before Gemma cut me off.

"I'm gonna give you some really good advice, sweetheart. Stop chasing dead men and crows that don't really exist. Fuck the shit outta Kyle only once and get past it. Jackson can't say shit about it because he knows he's got it coming. Why do you think John never confronted Clay when he knew we were sleeping together? Because John had it coming too. You'll never get past Jackson cheating on you until you find what you lacking from him and satisfy it. Then you bury that shit down deep and get your head on straight. Go home be a good wife to my son and a good mom to my grandsons."

"Men are not collectibles, Gemma. You only get one."
"After you've lived with Jackson for twenty years and taken his shit. Tell me that then."

Gemma's personality changed quickly. As soon as she went to the dining room table and set the plate down. She got past what we just talked about and it was over for her.

"Tara, are you bringing the rolls in, sweetheart?"

"I give up. They are all fucking insane."

After dinner Wayne left. He wasn't feeling well. I went to get the boys down for the night. Gemma had a room setup for them already. I would sleep in there with them. Kyle took the couch. We were all exhausted and ready to get some sleep.

I must have been really tired because both the boys were gone when I woke up. They usually didn't move unless I knew it. Gemma had Thomas. Abel was sitting on the couch with Kyle. They were eating Captain Crunch watching cartoons.

The more I watched them together, I started worried. Abel seemed so happy with him. They were laughing at the same time about those silly cartoons.

"Gemma, do you think it screws Abel up being around Kyle?"

"It's no different than Abel spending time around Happy, Nero or Tig. Maybe it's not how attached Abel is to Kyle that scares you so much, sweetheart."

Since Gemma wasn't any help on the subject. I went to dress Kyle's wound then she would take us home.

"You know, girl. There are easier ways to tell me you don't want to be friends any more other than shooting me."

"I thought you covered that subject, Kyle by saying you're out after this is over."

Kyle wouldn't comment back. He put his shirt on and got ready to leave. "Don't go anywhere." I blurted it out of the blue.

"I've surrendered to the fact, Tara. The more distance I try to put between us, the closer we get. I'm not going anywhere. As soon as I leave here, I'm going to get the glass fixed in my truck. Then spend the day with Cody. I'll call you later."

Gemma took us to the house. We made a list of things to do for the wedding. When it came to her dress she wouldn't budge.

"I don't wear dresses. Its what Rose made me wear when I was a kid. A lady wears dresses only. It would please her for me to have a traditional ceremony with a dress. So, I won't be doing that shit."

Gemma stayed for a couple of hours until she went to meet Nero.

Phil was my guard dog for the day. I asked him if he minded to watch the boys while I took a quick shower. He was always good with them and didn't care.

The hot water felt good running down over my body. All my muscles were tense from so much stress lately. I jumped when I heard the shower door shut. He was home early.

Jax stood there just looking at me. We stared at each other for a long time. Neither one of us making a move forward towards the other. Until his fingers brushed the wet hair out of my face and pushed it
behind my ear.

"I've done a lot of thinking this weekend. It doesn't matter what you've done with Kyle. I wanna be with you and get past this. I get it, I haven't been a good husband to you and you deserve more than that. I'll try to be a better man. I'm not saying I won't fuck up from time to time cause we both know I will. It's what I've been most of my life, a fuck up. I need to know I've still gotta chance to make shit right with you. You don't gotta answer me tonight. You…"

Since Jax attempted to make the first move to bring us closer, I made the next one by reaching out to him. We stood holding each other under the water until we were wrinkly. There was no need for words to be spoken.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~

"Are you coming?"

"No. She will use Nero up and spit him out when she's done with him. Their marriage is a joke and it won't last."

"Everyone said the same thing about us Jax. We won't last either; the outlaw and a doctor. Gemma is not perfect but none of us really are. I would be devastated if Abel or Thomas ever treat me the way you are your mother."

"My whole life has been a lie because of her. She's the one who put my old man in the ground. I can't go."

Gemma made me her matron of honor. The boys and I went out to the grounds along with Kyle and Lyla and decorated it up for them. I had to get their early to finish up and help Gemma get ready. I would not disappoint her.

"I love you, Jax. I really do. But you can be selfish sometimes and not think about what you do to other people. I am asking for once, put what is best aside for yourself for just one night and do the right thing."

Nitta was already here just in case Jax changed his mind and went with me. I waited by the door for almost ten minutes, then gave up. "Let's go, Gemma." There was no way in hell, I was going to be late.

If Jax wanted to be stubborn, then so be it. He didn't as much as speak to Gemma when she got there. I was to get her there on time and Kyle would Nero.

On the drive there I occupied my mind with a check list of what I had to still do before the ceremony. Since Rat, had been my shadow lately. I put his ass to work as soon as we arrived.

Most of it was done and it looked good too. Gemma chose red, black or white for everything. The red floor stood out around the black table clothes and wooden dance floor. We strung large red and white lanterns around to light everything up with later.

The mock arch they built for Nero and Gemma to stand under when they exchanged their vows was covered in red and white roses. Just like Gemma wanted.

Rat took orders well actually. He placed all the flower arraignments around and on the tables too. The caters were already setting up the food line and bar. Only one more thing to check on before I went to get the bride ready.
"Where's the groom?"

"The last time I seen him, he was drinking and pacing around."

Drinking didn't even start to describe it. Nero and Kyle were out by his truck getting shit faced.

"What the hell are you guys doing?"

"Nero's a little nervous. So we're hanging out getting loaded."

"Nero is getting married in less than an hour. You guys still have to get ready and he needs to be able
to stand up when it's time to say I do."

"He's just scared, Tara. Love is such a fickle bitch. You crave it, gotta have it but yet it scares the hell out of you. Stop worrying, girl. I'll have Nero there on time." I wish I could have shared Kyle's confidence in the matter.

"There's the handsome groom. Is everything okay?"

"What if I don't make Gemma happy? I don't know shit about being a husband. What if she leaves me, Tara? I don't think I could take it." Nero was on a melt down with pre-wedding jitters. Completely unsure what path love would end up taking them down. Just like everyone else was when they blindly took the leap of faith in love.

I gently took his face in my hands. "Nero, just breathe." He took in a couple of deep breaths.

"Yeah, okay. How's my bride? Is Gemma stressed out? Is she talking about not going through with it?"

"Not at all. Gemma is excited. She is counting down the minutes until she becomes your wife."

It was enough to get Nero moving in the right direction. "I guess I better get dressed. It'll take me an hour to get in those tight ass wranglers Gemma bought me."

Gemma bought Nero and Kyle a very tight pair of wranglers and a simple button down long sleeve black shirt to wear. Her theory was those jeans showed off their best attribute and she liked to look at their asses. It was her day and I went along with whatever in the hell she wanted.

They setup a small tent off to the side for Gemma to use to get ready. It was the first time, I ever seen her in one. She chose a black halter dress. Hers came down to mid-thigh and was more flowing. My black halter dress was short and clingy but basically matched hers.

"I'm too old for this shit." Gemma looked in the full length mirror after it got it tied around her neck.

"You look beautiful, Gemma. You still got a rockin bod and definitely the tits to pull it off. All that matters is the man who will be out there waiting for you. Nero will be there every day to love you for the rest of your life."

"Yeah, I guess I do." The mention of just his name soften her face when she smiled.

"I got you a present. Here is your something new."

When we bought the dresses, she seen a pair of diamond earrings she wanted. They were gold with a diamond heart dangling from them. She wouldn't spend the money on it. So, I went back and bought them the next day along with the necklace that matched them.
Gemma began to cry after she opened the box. "Thank you, sweetheart."

"Here is your something borrowed."

"Jackson gave you this for your eighteenth birthday."

"Yeah, he did." It brought back a lot of memories when I clipped the bracelet around her wrist. Jax pledged his forever love to me on that day.

"One last thing, something blue."

"My son makes me blue, does that shit count?"

The box was old I took out of my bag. I ran my hands over the top of it when I handed it to Gemma. "It was my mothers. She wore it when she got married. I always thought I would wear it on my wedding day. Since, I won't ever get to, I want you to have it."

Gemma took the blue laced garter out of the box and put it around her leg. "Are you sure you don't want it back?"

"No, I don't." It was the last piece of holding on to my mom I had left. Today was a new start on getting past it.

We heard a loud whistle from behind us. "You ladies look beautiful. It's time, Tara."

"Here's your bouquet, Gemma." I hugged her before I left with Kyle and took his arm.

"Are you ready to do this, girl?" Kyle kept leaning as we were walking.

"How much did you guys have to drink?"

"A shit load."

It was time for the bride to make her appearance. Once Nero seen Gemma, by the look on his face. I thought Jax was wrong. This time she was about to marry the right kind of man and it would last.

"Who gives this woman's hand in marriage?"

Nero whispered it to the minister. "You can skip that…"

"I do." The sound of his voice made my heart do little leaps. We all turned around to look at Jax standing there. He took a seat in the front row and mouthed to me; love you.

It gave me and Gemma both tears of joy. Jax came on his own to show support for his mother on her special day. He made the right decision. It came down to the very last second but, he still did it.

Nero wiped away her tears and they continued on with the ceremony. Until the most important part came.

"I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride."

Now it was time for the party to begin. I went to Jax and couldn't help myself. I threw my arms around his neck. "I'm so proud of you."

"At least I did something to make you proud of me."
We stood hand in hand in the congratulation's line. When it was our turn, I let Jax go first. Gemma hugged him so tightly. "I love you Jackson." He kissed her but he wouldn't say it back to her. Today was a small amount of progress with them. But it was still progress in the right direction.

Nero held out his hand to Jax and like a man, Jax shook it. "Am I supposed to call you daddy now?"

"Please don't." Nero laughed and they talked for a minute. I gave Nero a peck on the cheek so the next person could go.

"Do you wanna get a drink, babe?"

"Sure."

Jax got a beer and I got a glass of wine. We made our rounds visiting with everyone. Mostly it was the club members. They were who he felt comfortable around.

"Sit down with us Jackie." Chibs pulled around a couple of chairs for us.

"Nah, were going to get in the food line. Are you hungry, Tara?"

"A little."

"You need to eat more. You've lost a lot of weight." It shocked me Jax even noticed. I knew some of my clothes felt baggy on me. But, I had been so busy lately, I hadn't paid much attention.

"Where's your seat at?"

"At Gemma and Nero's table. Take my plate and I'll get us another drink."

"Okay." Jax gave me a quick kiss before he went to set down.

"You should probably slow down on those." Kyle didn't say anything to me. He just downed another drink while leaning against the bar. "Are you ignoring me?"

"Nope. Just keeping my distance so I don't piss Jax off. You probably shouldn't let him see you talking me. This isn't the place for any bullshit."

"Jax is fine. He's here for Gemma tonight and no other reason."

"Really, he is paying attention to every move you make right now." I glanced over my shoulder after Kyle said it. Jax was watching us with a tight jawed look on his face. "At the end of the day, Tara. You will always go home to him. Just like your supposed too. It's what I love and admire about you. I don't get why you fucking do it. But I still admire it. There has to be some reason Jax is not so sure of it."

"Dance with me, Kyle." Lyla was rubbing up on him like I wasn't even standing here talking to him. "You promised."

"I will, later."

"No now. Please." I'll give her, she was relentless in the chase. "Please." If she could have straddled him in front of everyone, she would have.

"Be gentle with me, girl." Kyle downed the rest of his drink and went with her.

"Looks like Kyle made a new friend." Was all Jax had to say when I went back to the table.
"I think he has a thing for Lyla. Men can resist anything but porn pussy, right?" When it came out, I guess I wasn't just referring to Kyle. Although I was slightly disappointed because I thought he was different.

Part of what Gemma said was true. Men cheat for straight up pussy. It's why Jax did it no doubt, because it was offered and he couldn't refuse it. The question was how many actual times had he?

"I love you, Tara. We leave the shit we've done in the past and move forward from here." Jax held on to my hand. As much as I've tried to get past it. It always seemed to find a way to come back and smack me across the face.

There was no reason to not enjoy the evening to spite the fact I still had issues with everything in my life. The happy married couple exuberated a radiant love most will never get to experience even for a short period of time.

Jax's cell rang and it was obviously a call he needed to take in private. He gave me a kiss and left to talk to them.

The more I watched Nero and Gemma be together tonight, I seen it all clearly. It hadn't donned on me before the difference Nero really made in Gemma's life. She always been a strong woman, fucked in the head and sort of crazy. But she wore a smile on her face now. It wasn't a fake one to hide anything, it was real because when she was around Nero she found true happiness. She never did any of that with Clay. It was a rarity she even cracked a smile.

Gemma was hurt by Jax's actions of exiling her out of the flow of the club. But it had been the best thing for her. She didn't deal with all the drama, lies and chaos anymore. Some of the worst hurtful things in life, turns out to be a blessing in disguise.

Jax had been gone for a while now. I started looking around for him. The rest of the club disappeared as well. I began to panic when I didn't see Kyle anywhere. "Shit." I wasn't certain what they would actually do to him.

"Have you seen Kyle?"

"No, why?" Nero and Gemma didn't know where he was either.

"If you're looking for Kyle, he left with Lyla." Fuck was all I could think. Jax was behind me and heard what I said.

"It's time to give our best man and matron of honor speeches for Nero and Gemma. That's why I was looking for him."

"Yeah, it is time for you guys to do that part." Gemma covered for me with Jax.

"We got a problem, I've gotta go."

"Do you want me to stay with Tara?" Rat was waiting for Jax to make his decision.

"Go ahead Jackson. We'll take Tara home. She'll be fine." He gave Gemma another kiss. Followed by the other members of the club which you could tell, completely made her day.

"I'll see you at home, babe. I love you." Jax gave me a kiss and they took off.

"I love you too."
The party was beginning to wind down. This was how it usually ended up for me, sitting alone wondering where my husband went off to. Hell, I needed another drink now.

There was only a few guest left and it would be all over with soon. Their new life would start together. Nero and Gemma were still out on the dance floor without an inch of space between them. It wouldn’t have mattered if a thousand people were around, they only seen each other.

"I want that someday. Maybe not the crazy Gemma part. But the rest of it."

"I thought you left already."

"Come on, I've got something to show you." Kyle kept motioning his head towards the woods until I got up to follow after him.

We didn't walk far and to be honest I wasn't sure he could in his condition. Because he was all over the place. In the clearing I could see lights out ahead of us. Hundreds of tiny white lights hung around a gazebo out in the woods. Along with candles lit around the entire circle.

"This where you disappeared to?"

"Where did you think I went? You still owe me that dance, girl."

"I'm not a very good dancer."

"Then I'll show you how. It's the rhythm of two bodies moving as one." Kyle held out his hand and I took it. He hit the button on the cd player as we walked up the couple of steps.

He lifted me up by the waist and set me on top of his feet. My heart was beating out of control as fast as it was going. "Just breathe, Tara."

We moved together as the song played on. Every time I would look down at our feet, Kyle lift my head back up by my chin. Our eyes were having a conversation all of their own with one another. Maybe one, I was trying to avoid. But he wouldn't allow it.

When I finally relaxed into him, he let go of my hand and wrapped his other arm around me. It wasn't a forceful move or even really sexual. His gently touch stroked the bare skin of my back with his fingers. It gave me a slight shiver I couldn't seem to fight off.

Kyle singing along with the song made me feel at ease with him, almost too at ease. It wasn't something normal for me to feel completely comfortable around someone. No one ever had done anything close to this before for me. I've never been made to feel special by man to this extreme. For the most part, I went unnoticed even by my own man. "So hold me close and love me, give my heart a smile. Mmm feels so right. Feels so right. Your body feels so gentle and my passion rises high. You're loving me so easy, your wish is my command. Just hold me close and love me, tell me it won't end. Mmm feels so right. Feels so right."

The music stopped but the rhythm of our hearts kept beating in perfect sync. Kyle rested his forehead on mine. "You feel so right, girl." The moment came to a halt when they started clapping for us.

"Sorry, to break up the party kids. The honeymooners are leaving. It's time for Nero to take me home and make a woman outta me."

"Gemma, not in front of the kids, now behave. You'll have to excuse my blushing bride. She just nervous, cause it's her first time and I'm such a stud." Nero played along with her. They were so adorable together. I never thought the day would come when I saw Gemma ever as adorable.
"Well, it's my first time as Mrs. Nero Padilla. We said we'd take Tara home and were getting ready to leave."

"I'll take her. You guys can go ahead. But not before I steal a kiss from the beautiful bride." Kyle went to kiss Gemma on the cheek. She grabbed his face and wouldn't let go of him.

"Damn it Gemma, we've only been married a couple of hours and you're already kissing a guy half my age." Nero laughed after he said it. They had an easy feeling with each other. They could joke when it came to other people and not be jealous of them. It wasn't something I mastered with Jax because I could never be sure.

"Come on, baby. Let's start the honeymoon in the car." Gemma meant it too. I'm sure Nero wouldn't make it past getting in the car before she pounced on him.

Gemma hugged me goodbye. "You remember what I told you. Then you get your head on straight." It left me speechless how she could promote me cheating on her son. Like it was nothing.

"What's Gemma talking about, get your head on straight for?"

"My, aren't you a perceptive drunk."

"I try to be, girl."

We walked in silence. Well, I walked. Kyle mostly leaned in my direction. I finally took ahold of him to help steady him to get to the truck.

"You've had a lot to drink. You should let me drive." Kyle didn't argue with me. He just handed over the keys.

When I fired up the truck, the same song we just danced to was playing on the radio. We were quick to look at each other.

"You better drive my drunk ass home, girl. So I can pass out and you can get home to the boys."

"Thank you, for tonight. You made me feel really special."

"It's because you are. So, take advantage of me or take me home." Kyle made me smile with what he said. It was definitely time to go home.

The night air felt cool and good blowing on my skin. I rolled the window down for the fresh air. Kyle was passed out in the passenger seat. My only company was the radio playing until I parked in front of his house.

"Kyle, wake up." I kept shaking him. When I could get him to move, I opened the door to get him out of the truck. "I'll bring your truck back tomorrow." He only nodded as he zigzagged his way on the lawn up to the door.

For the next problem of the evening, what do with his truck. I couldn't exactly park it in my driveway for Jax to see. So I parked the fucker a couple of street over. Took off my heel and walked home. I should have been frightened to be alone in the dark but I wasn't anymore.

There weren't any lights on in the house except for our bedroom. I checked on the boys when I went by their rooms.

Photos were strung out all over our bed. Mostly of the club and when Jax and Opie were young.
Jax was sitting on the end of the bed. He had one picture in his hand he was focused on intensely. "I've had JT on my mind for the last couple of days. All the struggles he went through just to make it for one more day. Trying to find a balance between family and patch. In the end he had nothing, it was all for nothing. I don't think Gemma ever really loved him. She had Clay in her bed before he was even cold. JT died miserable and alone. I don't wanna end up like him. I just don't know how not to."

He tossed the photo down with the others and pulled me by the waist to him. "Do you wanna know why I lie to you all the time, Tara? Cause I know you'll set me straight on shit. I didn't wanna be straight then. I'm trying to fix that. I just need time."

Jax looked up at me with pleading eyes. "Please, don't leave me."

While I held him close to me. I ran my fingers through his hair. "I'm here baby. I'm still here."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"We're not gonna have a table left, Chibs. If we don't play this shit out right." Jax was getting loud, I could hear him from our room. So I got up and I went out to see what was happening.

"Bullshit, Jackie. You made that call on your own. You didn't even bring it to the table for a vote."

Tig stopped whatever was going on between Jax and Chibs. "Come on boys, let's work this out at church." Chibs just walked off and Tig followed after him.

"What's going on, Jax?"

"I'm meeting with the Irish today. The club is getting outta guns. JT will not have died for nothing. He couldn't make it work but I will. You won't understand my reasons for it because it won't make any sense to you. But I can't step away from the club now. I can take care of us, Tara. We can still have the life we talked about. I love you." Jax kissed me goodbye and left.

When I looked out the door, I seen the white face crow take flight from the tree in the front yard. He followed behind Jax in the sky. I understood his reasoning more than he thought.

Wayne was early this morning. He pulled up as soon as Jax left. "You're bright and early Wayne. I don't have the boys ready to go yet."

"I came over to talk to you, Tara."

My cell went off and it was Nero. What he and Kyle found out was a place to start. For over a week one or both of them had been watching every night. "Okay, I'll meet you guys later."

"Wayne, you will never guess what they found out?"

"What did they find out?"

"They have a construction site down on docks for a river boat casino project. Jacob Hale was there with Barosky, Collette and the Mayans."

"Yeah, that is big news. But, I bet I can top it."

"How?"
"Hadley got Collette's information back. She's a federal informant."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! You all motivate me to write more of this story with your awesome reviews, I really appreciate it.

The next chapter should be posted in a few days; Tangled Web.

Does anyone see a pattern forming? Not necessarily from the words on the page. But the characters, emotions and such. The circle comes back around. The past, present and future all connect.

The music lyrics is Alabama~ Feels so right.

Thank you for leaving a review. Marking this story as favorite or alert!
Chapter 11, Tangled Web

Part 1 of 2

Tangled web~ a complex, difficult and confusing situation or thing.

Since this chapter is almost 20,000 words long, I split it in two chapters; Tangled Web Part #1 and Part #2.

"Jesus Christ, Wayne. Why would you do that?"

"I had to do something. It's above Hadley's pay grade to get the intel on Collette. So, I said words to Roosevelt like; I think she may have something to do with it. It would probably be the first place I would look into if I were still chief. She might have the biggest motive to want you gone. I didn't say anything concrete. All you gotta do when he questions you is say Collette doesn't and it stops there."

"If Jax finds out…" It came out in a rush because it was my worst fear at the moment.

"He won't because Roosevelt ain't gonna share the information with Jax. There's shit in there about Collette that's above his paid grade even. She was facing twenty to life and chose to turn rat to save her ass. I'd be more worried about what intel she's got on the club, Jax and you."

"Me?"

"If Collette has enough powerful information to use against Jax. Who has the most to lose by not turning against him too? It's you and the boys, Tara. If I were still in charge, you'd be the first one I came after."

The web the black widow spun wasn't just for the club or Jax. It now involved me and Nero too. She knew everything about us. But the puzzle wasn't complete yet. Why would she try to get me fired from the hospital? Or shut us down? Fuck, or want me dead for that matter? If what Wayne said was true; I'd be no good for cause dead.

"We need to find out what Jacob Hale has to do with it?" There was no way I could stop what was set in motion already. I had to proceed forward on all of it. Saving my husband and my family along with myself depended on it.

"I gotta friend on the commissions board. I'll poke around there and see what we come up with."

"Okay. I'll talk to Nero."

We had a plan. It wasn't a great plan but it was a place to start at. Wayne did his morning routine of taking me and the boys to the hospital. I was used to never being alone anymore, to be alone for five minutes would seem odd now.

"I'll be back when you get off work to pick you up."

"Thanks, Wayne."

They were great about making a place for the boys in daycare. Everyone actually welcomed me back
with open arms as though I had never left even. Which, was sort of surprising to me.

"I love you, baby. You be good today, okay?"

"I will. I love you, Mommy."

Abel was excited to have other children around to play with again. He took off to see the other kids in a hurry. It helped him build social skills and built a foundation for when he got older. It was one of the reasons I never fit in well. As a child I was reclusive. It didn't change when I became an adult, I still didn't socialize with many.

It was early yet to teach Thomas the kissing game. But I smooched him goodbye until he giggled. "I love my big boy."

Now to figure out where to start the day. Mr. Price was coming down the hallway the same time as I was. "Good morning, Dr. Knowles."

"Good morning."

"It's good to have you back with us." His phony facade was sickening. He walked around here held his head high as the pillar of the community. While the whole time he was a piece of shit just like the rest of them. But being a rich piece of shit got him a free pass. Or so he thought.

When we got on the elevator his true colors came out. "I'm sorry to hear the establishment got shut down. I did get the invitation for the grand opening. I will be attending it."

"Grand opening for what?"

"Your new establishment."

The pile of shit was so deep now it was drowning me in it. A new place in Stockton was opening up under the name; Madame Ecstasy's Play Palace. Not only did people want me dead; they were taking over my life one little piece at a time.

Fuck, at this rate I was going to start carrying around a tape recorder. It would be easier to play back my day for Nero. Rather than remembering all of this stuff.

After Mr. Price got off the elevator. I pulled out my cellphone to call Nero. Only for Margret to get on. "Shit." I shoved it back in my pocket quickly.

"They are prepping for surgery. You are going to be late if you don't hurry."

"Oh, I, I'm not sure I should do it yet. With being so out of practice and just coming back."

"You are a professional. When a patient needs you, you do everything in your power to save them. You have to operate at some point, Tara. So, you should figure out what it is you need to do and get to the operating room. Besides, there isn't anyone else available to take your place."

Nero was put on the back burner along with all my many other problems. I had to get my head cleared and focus on the child whose life depended upon it.

It had been so long since I had a comfortable pair of scrubs on. I covered up my hair and went to do my job. The anesthesiologist was already sedating the patient. Every instrument on the trays shinned brightly from the light above it could have blinded me. The air seemed so stale in the room.

"Just breathe."
"Did you say something, Dr. Knowles?"

"No."

It was all I could do to get through it. The sweat was dripping from my body. So much it made my eyes sting. It felt repetitious, it was such an easy fix. I should have done it quickly. But this took me forever to do.

Without my even asking, the nurse wiped the sweat from my brow several times. When the final stitch was in. I had to get out of there. I pulled my mask down as soon as I hit the door. The wall became my support as I leaned against it to not fall.

"Just breathe." Over and over I told myself with no prevail, it didn't work either.

"It's to be expected, you know?"

"What is, Margret?"

"You did great, Tara. I'm glad you're back." She went on about her business without really answering my question.

"I'm glad you think so." Hell, I wasn't sure anymore what I should actually be doing.

For the rest of the day I was so busy trying to get back in the groove of things it went by superfast. Wayne was already here to pick me up.

We picked up the boys and I called Nero several times on the way home. I never got an answer or a return call from him. So I tried Gemma, they were always together. It was the same thing. I even called Kyle and nothing.

"Abel, put your shoes on honey. We are going for a drive." Maybe Gemma was still at TM and had an idea what was going on. Of course we didn't go alone. Phil was right behind us.

If I did nothing else tomorrow, I was buying a car. I hated driving Jax's old truck. It was difficult to get the boys in and out of it. Not to mention, I had a hard time seeing over the dash.

When we pulled up to TM, I found Gemma and Kyle there. Don't think it didn't confuse the hell out of me as to why. Kyle was hanging out at Nero's car. No sign of Nero either. But not Gemma. She made her presence well known.

Gemma was screaming at Jax. "What the hell did you do, Jackson?"

"Did you seriously bring that mother fucker here to my clubhouse?" Jax was screaming right back at her.

"They took Nero when we were all three together. Sorry, if it doesn't fit in to your evening plans." Gemma turned over a new leaf. She hadn't pushed Jax or stood up to him for a long time. But Nero was involved now and she wouldn't back down.

"Who took him?"

"Nero got picked up by the cops."

Abel went running before I could grab him. I was still trying to get Thomas out of the truck. "Kyle, how is George?"
"He's fine."

"Abel." Jax was pissed by his tone. Even more pissed off when Abel completely ignored him and went on talking. So Jax said it again. "Abel."

"Your dad is calling you. You better go see what he wants, buddy."

Abel took off to Jax finally. "Daddy."

Jax picked Abel up and gave him a kiss. Then handed him right over to Happy. I let out a long sigh because Jax was truly oblivious to his son's needs. He couldn't even take five minutes with his son when Abel craved his attention.

"Jackson." He ignored Gemma and kept walking across the parking lot. "Jackson." I found it funny. Jax did the exactly to Gemma what Abel had done to him. If Jax would just open his eyes to see, Abel followed the example he set. Just as to some degree Jax followed the precedence Clay set for him so many years ago.

What wasn't so funny was where Jax was going. It was about to get complicated quickly. "Jax." I tried to grab his arm when went he passed me but he ignored me too.

"Hold Thomas for me." Gemma took my baby and I went to stop the other baby from starting something that didn't need to be. It was strenuous relationship between them already.

"Stay the fuck away from my wife and my sons." Jax thought it was easier to throw out commands to Kyle rather than discuss it. Just like he does the club members. The members do what they are told. But I already knew Kyle wouldn't.

"Technically, I'm here with Gemma. Is she off limits to me too? Am I taking your mommy away from you now, Jax? You could actually take the approach of a little respect with her and Tara. It would go a long way with both of them. Because if I ever talked to my mother or my wife the way you do yours; my old man would have beat my ass for it."

It was brought to an abrupt halt when seven police cars pulled up. Roosevelt stepped out with a piece of paper in his hand. I had no idea what it was but you can damn well bet it was something bad no doubt.

"Tara, I need for you to come with me to the station."

"I didn't do anything."

"It's not a request, Tara. You can come with me or I will take you there in cuffs."

Roosevelt shoved the piece of paper into Jax's chest. "In case you don't know what it is already. It's a search warrant."

Then Roosevelt turned his attention to Kyle. "I don't know how you play into all of this. But I will find out."

"Good luck on that, sheriff. Because I don't even know myself."

"We will be behind you." Gemma gave Thomas to one of the crow eaters. Which killed me to see one them have my son.

"Someone needs to watch my children." I thought I was stating the obvious. But just case they
needed a reminder.

"I'll be there, babe. As soon as they do their search." I rolled my eyes at Jax. Unless their search turned up something illegal. Then he might be longer than expected.

"Mommy." Abel was struggling to get down and out of Happy's arms. He was scared and confused as to what was going on. My son would see and remember my being carted off by the police. At least my sweet Thomas was too young to ever remember it.

"Please, let me say goodbye to him." It was more of a plea than a question to Roosevelt. He only nodded in agreement.

The main thing was to soothe my son. Put everything else aside and make him feel better. Abel hugged me and I wanted to stay with him but I couldn't. "Mommy, will be back. I love you, baby."

"Are you in trouble with the policeman?" The words wouldn't form to come out. What should I say?

"Hey, I'm policeman, Roosevelt." He stuck his hand out to my son. "What's your name?"

"Abel."

"It's really nice to meet you, Abel. Your mom is just helping me out." Abel stared down at the ground when Roosevelt talked to him and shied away. "You don't have to be scared of me. I help and protect people. It's my job."

"Like my daddy? He protects us from bad people."

Roosevelt debated for a moment. It probably went against all his fibers. But he said it anyway. "Yeah, like your daddy. I have something for you." He gave Abel a sticker of a dog dressed like a policeman.

"This is like George." It made Abel smile. It made me smile when he stuck it on his shirt even though the sticker was upside down.

"I love you, baby." After another hug to my son and I had to tear myself away from him.

"Thank you for doing that. It means a lot to my son." Roosevelt opened the back door to his car and motioned for me to get inside. Of course, I did it because what choice did I really have.

On the way to the police station I tried to find out why and for what he was taking me in for. "It's not me, Tara. ATF showed up today and are here to investigate the bombing. Especially since your car went missing afterwards, it is a very big deal. They issued a search warrant for TM. To see if the club is hiding the car there."

There was no way I could control it. The shaking and the fear I felt. If they thought the club had something to do with it, then they knew all about Jax and the club already.

For an hour I sat on a bench waiting to see what was going to happen to me. Gemma wasn't so patient with the situation. "I'm not leaving until you let my old man go. What the hell is taking so damn long?"

It wasn't uncommon for Gemma to get in the middle of everything and take complete control of the situation. Most thought I couldn't handle it in the manner she would. It wasn't I didn't want to; I didn't know how to. There were so many difference between me and her. One of the most obvious was her strength to take anything on. What would tear apart and kill most women on the inside. Only made
her stronger.

Nero finally came out of a room with two men in suits. He was very pissed off by the look on his face. Gemma immediately went to his side. "Are you okay, baby?" He only nodded.

"Mrs. Teller, we are ready for you now." One of them in the suits stood in the door way to the interrogation room.

"We should get out of here." Nero took Gemma's hand to leave.

"What do they want with me, Nero?"

"They got a lot of questions, mama. I don't know anything to tell them. I'm not a mechanic so I got no idea what happened. For all I know it was faulty wiring that set your car a blaze." The way Nero said it. It was meant for me to follow his lead with the same story he gave them. I only hoped there weren't any other questions the same way I varied answers on.

"Maybe, I didn't make myself clear to you. Stay the fuck away from, Tara. Get off Gemma's tit already." Common sense should have told Jax when he came in and they were still here. Starting with Kyle the middle of the police station was not a grand idea. But, hell, it didn't.

"Take a look around, Jax. Is showing me how big your dick is that important to you right now? I'm not the one under the microscope. So, we can do this any way you want to."

"This is on you." Since Jax got nowhere with Kyle. He went on down the line to Gemma. He went on down the line to Gemma.

"What the hell did I do, Jackson?"

"You didn't just disrespect the club by bringing him with you. You disrespected me. I'm your son, what happened to family comes first bullshit you shoved down my throat all these years?"

"There's been a lot of disrespect going around lately. You might wanna remember who the hell you're talking to. I'm not Tara. Save your bullshit for her." Well, he didn't get far with Gemma either. Because she lashed out at him.

Roosevelt shook his head, let out a long sigh and came out of his office in a hurry. "I am about to lose my patients with all of you. But while you're still here, Mr. Brandon. I ran you. Your background doesn't exactly click with the MC. Now I got to ask myself. What would some special ops, clean past and decorated military guy be doing with this bunch? On such a regular basis."

When the cocky little smile crossed Kyle's face, I worried was about to come out of his mouth. "I'm just here to hang out with my buddy, Jax. He loves having someone around whose dick is bigger than his and doesn't mind showing him so."

"You, son of a bitch..."

There was very little tolerance my husband had about anything. But nothing was worse for him than someone who challenged him in anyway. His word was considered gospel to the club and how dare someone question his authority in anyway. Even when it came to me.

"Mrs. Teller, we're still waiting." I left them all standing there to get this over with. I figured Roosevelt would intervene from them killing each other while I was gone.

Only one of them spoke to me. The other seemed to just be the observer. He laid a bunch of pictures out on the table. "You are married to Jackson Teller, the President of the Sons of Anarchy
motorcycle gang, correct?"
"Motorcycle club. It's a club not a gang."
"But, you are married to him, right?"
"Yes, I am."

The rest of his questions weren't so easy to answer. I stayed along with Nero's explanation to what happened to my car. But the other ones; I didn't know anything about. Even when I did, it was still the same answer I gave. You would have thought they would tire of hearing me tell them it. Oh no, they asked the same question ten different ways to see if I changed my story at all.

After two hours they finally got tired of me or they were actually done with the interrogation. "Mrs. Teller, you do realize. If you protect your husband, you can be held accountable for his actions as well."

"Yes, I do understand."

"We will be in touch again with you." He never said when or for what though. They existed the room so I left too.

Jax's greeting to me wasn't as warm as Gemma's was to Nero. "You didn't tell them anything. Did you?"

"No. I'm not stupid, Jax."

"What did they ask you about?" I ran down the basic question for him.

"How much does Kyle know?" It never ceased to surprise me how Jax truly seen what evolved around him. It wasn't his fault he committed criminal acts. It was the fault of others around him he could pin the results on when he got caught.

"What does he have to do with it?"

"It makes sense why he's hanging around. He's using you to get to me. It's why you're so important to him. He's even tight with Nero and Gemma now too. It's just another revenue to get to me. All this shit started after Kyle came. Or why else would they be coming after me and club? The cops weren't just looking for your car. They tore shit a part to find something they're not saying while they searched."

"I've never told Kyle anything about the club."

"This guy is bad news, Tara. I'm telling you the best thing that can happen, is he goes away. I think I'm a better judge of character than you are."

"Yeah, Jax. You know best." Jax's judgement of character was off. He was in business with an informant. The question was how much did Collette know about all of us already? What hell would rain down on us because of her? Just because Jax's was always blinded by pussy; what would happen to our family in the process?

The ride back to TM went quickly. But the bad wasn't over yet when I saw her standing there. "Oh shit."

Gemma had her hand on her hip. She was definitely in her authority stance. Whatever it was she was
about to do was going compound my life somehow.

"I wanna talk to you, Jackson."

"I don't got time for this shit." Jax's full intention was to blow her off and go on.

"Now." Mother Gemma had spoken and her son made time for it.

But I did notice she brought Kyle back with them just to defy Jax. Just to show him she could. Kyle hung back with Nero at the car and it was probably a good thing at this point to not push Jax any farther.

"I need to talk to you, Nero. I'll be by in the morning." I've been trying to have a conversation with him all day.

"Okay. Come by the Lodge."

Our conversation was mild compared to the one Gemma had with Jax. Especially when he blew up on her. "You're just an old lady and not even that around here anymore. This is my fucking club and I'll run it as I see fit. And I don't need any family advise from the whore who ran JT and Clay in the ground."

The lioness was finally unleashed from her cage. I was wondering when it would raise its ugly head and make an appearance. Gemma slapped Jax's across the face as hard as she could. He wouldn't take it from no man but he did her. She stuck her finger in his face and meant business. Before my eyes I watched a strong outlaw turn back to the little boy of his mother.

"You need to get your shit together and get your head screw on straight, Jackson. You're losing it just like John and Clay did. Either you're to blind to see it. Or too foolish to not do something about it already."

"Wow, mommy slapped his dick in the dirt." Kyle seemed surprised by what Gemma had done. I wasn't at all. It's the way she used to be with him.

"Yeah, Gemma has got that way about her." It was hard to tell if Nero was pleased with his woman or speaking from personal experience.

Jax and Gemma parted ways. But obviously her rant wasn't over quite yet. "I held John and Clay together to keep shit going with the club. I can't do it for Jackson too. It has to be you, Tara. The day Clay got drummed outta the club, so did I."

"I don't even know what I'm supposed to do about anything anymore, Gemma. I'm not like you."

"In your heart, do you love Jackson without any doubts?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"Don't let them fool you, sweetheart. We are what makes them or breaks them in this club as leaders. There are some lessons in this life, even I can't teach you. You gotta figure it out on your own and sometimes it's the hard way. If you really love him, you will figure it out."

"I'll see you guys tomorrow."

Jax slammed the door to the clubhouse because he was so pissed off. Then another slamming of the chapel doors came next.
My first priority to was to check on my children. Abel was out already and Thomas was still up going strong. Tig had him.

"I'll be right back to take him. If it's okay?"

"Sure, doll. Take your time." Tig had a peacefulness to him when he held one of the boys. It connected him to something deeper. I just didn't know what.

Jax set alone at the head of the table staring at the reaper in the center of it. There were times I wished, I could be more like Gemma. This was where she would know exactly what to do for her man. How to console him and make everything alright again.

"Hey, babe." It took Jax long enough to see me standing here.

"This is killing you, Jax. I see it more all the time. You've changed so much since you took over the gavel. The torture of it haunts you. If you don't step away from it soon, I'm afraid there won't be any part of you left."

"It's hard to unplug from it when you're everybody's life support and they all depend on you. There's days when I look in the mirror. The reflection looking back at me is broken beyond repair. I can't ever seem to get past this shit long enough to heal from it."

"I only used to see the struggles and pain you go through. I feel it now too, Jax. Every day I wake up with the burden in my heart weighing me down. There's times when it's hard for me to even make it through the day anymore. I just do what I have to so I can get by. If we are experiencing it, it will spill over to our boys' lives at some point. You can still change, there is still time. It doesn't have to be this way, baby."

"Unfortunately, it does. I didn't choose this life. It chose me." If Jax really believed it, I wasn't sure he would ever change. Would my sons end up feeling the same way? They had no other option but to turn to the club.

"There was a time, Jax. When all you wanted to do was get out of Charming and save our boys from any of this life. Not to have them live with the torment you do. When is it going to happen?"

"I can't walk away from the club right now. I'm trying to move it in a different and better direction. I just need time to make it happen. We'll get past this somehow, babe. Me and the club won't let anything happen to you or to my boys."

"The club is the reason everything happens to me and our family, Jax."

We could have debated it back and forth all night long. But I was tired. Jax helped me get the boys together. When I went to pick up Abel from the couch, Jax stopped me. "I got him."

It was the same thing when we got home. Jax had to be the one to carry Abel inside. Since I did it most of the time, it was good for Jax to be around to get the opportunity to do it.

By the time we got the boys down for the night. I fell into bed, literally. I had only been at this kind of life style a couple of months and it was killing me already. Jax had been at it a lifetime. I could only image the damage it done to him.

It comforted me to feel him snuggle in behind me. Jax kissed my shoulder a couple of time and I couldn't keep my eyes open any longer.

As every good thing must come to an end. So did the comfort of lying in bed knowing I had Jax's
attention and affection. Thomas woke up before the alarm clock went off. A mother's work was never done around here.

"Good morning, baby." I never wanted Thomas or Abel to ever doubt my love for them. Or to not know they didn't have my affection at any given time. Before I started the day, I always took a few minutes to just hold Thomas to my chest and not let go of him. He always responded in kind by laying his little head against my heart. I always gently rubbed it with my fingers. He always cooed back at me.

Jax was at the doorway just watching us when I turned around. He kissed me then Thomas on top of the head. He never said a word before he left the room to ride away to start his day.

Today was my day off but it wouldn't be one for me. I had a bunch of stuff to get done. Wayne came by just like he does every day to pick me up.

After we dropped the boys off at daycare it took some talking to get Wayne to drop me off at the Lodge unsupervised.

"Where's Nero?"

"In his office." Gemma was just hanging out drinking a cup of coffee and smoking.

They seemed to have many conversations when I wasn't around or even a part of. Because there was another one going on between Nero and Kyle.

"How do you pretend this shit is okay? It's not okay. None of it is okay, Nero."

"Yeah, I know. Me and Gemma have already discussed what to do about Tara and the boys when shit goes bad with Jax. Shit is just so upside down with them. I don't condone it but I gotta play it out for Gemma's sake. I get what you're saying. My head says; run, you, stupid mother fucker while you still can. But my heart says something completely different. If you love the woman, you'll figure it out. I need you to get right with this, Kyle and stay focused. Or it'll get you upside down too."

"You keep pushing me to get right with all this and tell her something. What the hell am I supposed to say? Oh, hey, by the way. When I'm around you I feel like a horny teenage boy with my first hard on that's not sure what to do with it. It's got to be the reason I am such a stupid fucker because the blood flow has all gone to my dick and I've lost my fucking mind. Or I wouldn't be any part of this fucked up crazy shit."

"Yeah, if it's what you gotta do. Then do it. We're men, we handle our business."

"Tara." Gemma scared the shit out of me when she came up behind me. It's what I got for eves dropping on them. Since she was here, we both just went on in.

Where to begin with this long ass story I had to tell them. I expected Nero to be the calm one out of all of them. But it wasn't the way it went down. He pounded his fist down on the desk.

"I knew something didn't feel right with Collette. I warned Jax not to get in bed with that bitch." Once he seen the look on my face, Nero adlibbed more. "No, mama. I meant it as a figure of speech."

"Yeah, I got that part."

"I say, we get Collette's down and beat her ass until she confesses what she knows. Then shoot the bitch in the head when we're done." Gemma solution to almost everything was violence somewhere
"Gemma, you're not helping here. If we kill Collette, it brings more shit down on us. More feds roll in here and probe us all anally." There was the rational Nero I expected him to be.

She shrugged her shoulders. "It's how I'd handle it."

"There's more. The new Madame's Ecstasy Play Palace is getting ready to open up in Stockton soon. One of our clients has already got an invitation to it."

Nero opened his desk drawer and took out a gun. He checked the cartridge for an ammo count, then shoved it back in it. "I need to have a little chat with Barosky."

"Baby, it's too dangerous for you to go alone." Gemma never stopped worrying about something or someone.

"I can't let it just go, Gemma. Charlie shits on me and the word gets out, no one respects boundaries anymore."

"Kyle, are you in? You gotta be all in or none, man. I'm good with it either way. But I gotta know if I can count on you or not." Nero waited for his answer.

"Yeah, I'm in." The confidence wasn't in his voice. Maybe he just needed to convince himself he really was all in on it.

They left but I should have known better than to think Gemma would actually obey what Nero told her to do.

"Well, just don't sit there, Tara. We got shit to do." I had no clue what Gemma's intent was. But I followed after her anyway. She twisted her ass out to the car.

"This can go down one of two ways, baby. I go on my own and handle it my way. Or you just accept the fact we're a team Nero till death do us part and I go along with you to do it your way."

Nero let out a rant in Spanish I didn't get nor understand. He finally opened the back door to the car. "Get in, Gemma. But we do this my way, mama. Do you hear me?"

"Sure, baby." Gemma was saying yes to him. But, I had a feeling it really meant no somehow in her fucked up mind.

If Gemma was going along so was I. I couldn't be just a part of it without see it all through. As soon I grabbed the handle of the door, he stopped me. "You got Thomas and Abel to think about, Tara. You shouldn't do this."

"They are the reason I have to do it. If I don't, something bad could happen to me anyways because of it. What will happen to my sons if I'm not around anymore? Everything I do is to protect them."

Kyle surrender to the words I spoke to him because he knew they were the truth. He opened the back door for me. "This is such a bad fucking idea, girl." Then slammed it shut.

Nero made a few calls but talked in his language. We met up with some of the other Bizlats outside of town. Again he had a conversation with them in front of us, I couldn't comprehend.

"Do you know what they are saying, Gemma?"

"I know what Nero's doing. He's flexing his dick with them. He's the boss." Gemma had Nero down
to a fine art. She didn't even need to know what he said.

"English, damn it." Gemma couldn't stay out of anyone's conversation.

One of the younger guys from Nero's crew got up in Gemma's face. "You want English. I'll give you English. It's bad enough Nero brought a white biker bitch into our world. Now he is running knee deep in white bitches."

"Hey." It didn't take Kyle long to get involved. He went to Gemma's rescue by shoving the Bizlat out of her face.

Although it wasn't Kyle, he needed to worry about when Nero got ahold of him.

Nero shoved the guy down on the hood of the and pistol whipped him across the face a couple of times. "You ever talk about Gemma or Tara, that way again. I will cut your tongue out. I run this crew. You got any problems with that shit?"

"No, man. I don't got no problems." The guy spoke through the blood coming out of his mouth. Spitting a few teeth out as well when he got far away from Nero.

"We're going to Baroksy's territory, homes. You know the blow back we feel because of it." When this Bizlat said what he had on his mind, I noticed it was nowhere near Nero or Gemma when he did it.

"Charlie crossed over in ours first, fools. If he isn't taught better, he will eventually take over our street too. Either you're in for this or those tatts you wear, mean nothing. I'm just gonna have a talk with him about boundaries." They all had their reservations about following Nero. But they finally agreed to do it.

They all knew what they were doing obviously. Each had their guns ready to go and referencing things in just broken sentences around me.

"Do I get one?"

Nero and Kyle looked at each other and started laughing. Then said it at the same time. "No."

"Are you ready to do this, shit head?"

"It's your party Nero, I'm just a guest."

Gemma and I were to hang back while they talked to Charlie. At first Nero told us to stay in the car. But, then decided since she wouldn't do it anyway. So, it was better to keep her in his sight.

Charlie came out of the bakery when he seen Nero and his crew pretty quickly. "What's up, Nero?"

"We need to talk."

"Brought a lot of fire power with you for just a talk. You should know better than to roll up in here with your posse. I don't take kindly to this shit. These are my streets."

"Yeah, well I don't take very kindly to the shit that's gone down lately either, Charlie."

We stepped back to give them a minute to have a private conversation. They set down to the little table outside the bakery. Nero took out his gun and slammed it down on the table. It got all of our attention. "I'm just an old gangster at heart. Looking for reason to make a comeback. You just might be the reason, Charlie."
"Are you seriously threatening me, Nero?"

"It's not a threat, man. If I find out you're behind any of it. I'll come back to do more than talk next time."

Most of the time Nero was a gentle man and a sweet soul. Unless you fucked with him or what he believed was a wrong you've done to him. Then I think he could unleash a hell down on you.

"How about you? You got a problem with me too and need Handsome Jack to handle it for you?" Charlie was addressing me now.

"I can handle my own shit and I don't need Jax for it."

"And what she can't handle, I will."

Charlie sneered at Kyle. "Who might you be?"

"I'm nobody."

"Well, nobody. Just because you have a handsome face. Doesn't mean I won't shoot you in it if you fuck with me." Charlie loved to intimidate people, you could tell.

"Just because you got an ugly face, doesn't mean I won't do the same to you." Of course, Kyle didn't take intimidation well either.

"You heard me, Charlie." Nero gave him his last warning. Before we all walked away.

The motorcycles were coming down the street. I heard the roar of the engines before I ever seen them. My breathing increased so badly, I had to stop to catch my breath for a second. It felt as though an elephant was sitting on my chest robbing me of the oxygen supply. Only it wasn't Jax or the club.

"Shit." I was surrounded by a bunch of Mayans. They were all drawing weapons. I knew it was bad shit because even Gemma drew hers too.

"Let's all calm down here and talk about this, Marcius."

"Time for talking would have been before you came to my territory, Nero and brought Teller's old lady with you. You know me and the Sons still got bad blood between our MCs. You even brought the biker queen herself too."

"Gemma and I are married now, she's with me. Tara, don't have nothing to do with it. Me and her are partners at the Lodge. Come on Tara, come over here to me, mama." Nero stood right in front of Gemma because he would take a bullet for her if he needed too.

Alverez held out his arm so I couldn't get past him. "Not yet. Call Teller for a sit down before I let her go. He's got some sins to make right with me."

"Let Tara go or I drop you." Kyle wasn't the same man I've seen the last couple of months. The charming and carefree soul turned to a much darker place. Anger clouds judgement and we do things because of it. But he wasn't angry. He was completely calm and focused on the task at hand. What stood out the most was the change in his eyes and facial expression.

"You need to realize son; my men will kill you where you stand on my command." Alverez didn't even flinch a bit. No different than Jax would have done.

"Not before I kill you. I can hit my mark from five hundred yards away. You're only fifteen feet from
me. I won't miss. Let her go." If I could ever get my breathing under control like Kyle in this type of situation. I'd be much better off. His was still at a steady rate when he spoke.

"Let's all keep our heads here. It doesn't got to be this way, Marcius. I've always made it work with you and your crew. We don't got shit to do with what Jax does. Let Tara go and we'll talk about this shit like men." Nero tried to keep the peace before he enforced violence. It always separated him from the others.

Once Alverez gave the nod to his guys to put their guns down. So, did Nero. Only Kyle didn't lower his until I got over by them.

"Get them to the car while I talk to Marcius." Nero walked off with Alverez while we got our butts to the car.

"How did you know to go after Alverez as your target?" Gemma was very inquisitive.

"He had the president patch on. So, he means something and they will do anything to protect him." Which what Kyle said was true MC. They always protected Jax above all else.

"Thank you, for what you…."

"Tara, this is not a game. You have two kids who need you. You could have been killed today."

"So could you, Kyle."

"I have nothing to lose and you do. Stop this bullshit, before something happens to you. You don't belong in this or anywhere near it." Kyle got in the front seat and slammed his door shut because he was done talking about.

"I can take care of myself." He might be done with it but I wasn't yet. I even opened his door and slammed it shut just so he knew I was now done with the conversation.

"No, you can't." He got out and slammed the door again.

So I did the door again too. "Yes, I can."

"Really, you wanna do this here and now? Fine, let's do it then." Kyle gripped on to my throat. "Get out of my hold and don't go for the obvious."

Each time I grabbed his hand to get it off my neck, he would smack mine down. "Don't go for the obvious."

"You made your point." After I surrendered to the fact, I couldn't get out of his grip. He let go of me and I felt so stupid.

"Look, you are too small to stand and fight it out with a man. You can't win with them; they will always overpower you with their strength. So, you have to learn to fight smart or at least do enough damage to get away from them. I'm not trying to be a dick to you. I don't want to see something happen to you."

"Then teach me how." If you can't beat them, join them. Since, I already chose to join in. I needed to feel I could take care of myself.

"It's not that simple. I felt your heart starting to race as soon as I gripped your throat. When you panic it fucks up your thought process. The obvious solution and easiest solution is not always the best
"How do you know all this stuff, Kyle?"

"Part of my test was they take you into a dark room where you can't see a damn thing. A plastic bag is put over your head and it's cinched up tight around your neck with a rope tied in knots almost impossible to get undone. You have two minutes to figure out how to survive. Because in two minutes, you will suffocate. A lot faster if you panic because you use up more oxygen quicker. Most spend the time yanking and trying to untie the rope from their neck because they panic. When all you gotta do is simply tear a hole in the bag for oxygen then take your time to get the rope off. If you control the fear, you won't panic. If you don't panic, you control the adrenaline rush and you think it through clearly."

"Is that where you learned the just breathe thing from?" It had actually helped me somewhat.

"No."

"Kyle's right. You need the instincts to fight back. You kick, claw, punch or bite if it's what you gotta do to get away. Do it with me."

He did the same with Gemma's throat. She was incredible to watch. She made a bunch of different moves to get away from him, he blocked each one. But still, she knew, she just knew how.

"What the fuck?" Nero was back with us now.

Only Kyle should have been paying attention to Gemma, instead of Nero. Because he didn't block her last move. Which was a shot to nose. "Oh shit, I'm sorry."

Another long cussing rant came out Kyle. "You two, are fucking killing me."

Nero laughed while he embarrassed Kyle a little more. "I can't leave you alone with them for five minutes, shit head. Tara shoots you and Gemma kicks your ass."

"That shit isn't funny, Nero."

"You ain't seeing it from where I'm standing, Kyle. Don't worry I won't the little girls hurt you anymore."

"I really am sorry, sweetheart." Gemma gave him kiss on the cheek.

"You're like the good son Gemma never had or ever wanted." Nero was still giving him hell.

On our way back Nero explained the situation between the Mayans and the Sons. "Marcius isn't pulling any shady shit. He's protecting his interest it's just business with him. It's all about the bottom line percentages. Its why he was included in on those meetings. Hale, he's playing hard ball to get the Sons outta Charming."

"Since when do the Mayans operate outta of Stockton?" Gemma knew so much more about club business than I could even keep up with.

"They setup shop here and opened up a charter. Jax is pushing boundaries with them by being in business with Collette. The Sons will feel the pain of it, Gemma. You know this shit works."

"Jesus Christ, Jackson is completely lost. The Sons won't survive another bloody war with Alverez. It tore apart the club the last time." She was referencing old history. Which again, I knew nothing
They continued to talk and I went off in my own thoughts on it. Was this the new direction Jax was taking the club in? How much worse could it possible get before he finally steps away from it all? There was so many backstabbing each other, you needed to make up a chart to see who was fucking who over the worst.

Gemma and Nero went to talk privately in his office. I couldn't stop thinking about what was coming our way. Nero made it clear to not tell Jax about Collette. Because he already knew how Jax would handle it and what the repercussions we would all suffer from of it. At least not until we knew for sure what information she had already. What convinced me the most to keep my mouth shut was Gemma. I knew she wouldn't let anyone hurt Jax or the club.

"Hey, are you okay?" It got my attention when I saw Kyle grasping on to the bar. From a distance I could tell how badly he was shaking.

"I'm fine." As he used his hand to wipe away the sweat from his face.

"You are not fine. What's wrong?"

"This town is what's wrong. Everything about it goes against what I am and who I am. Yet, I'm still here doing it. I never panic and I did today when he had you. I've always got my shit in check. All I could think was shoot the fucker in the head before he could hurt you. I'm not a violent by nature I usually have to be provoked to it or in self-defense. But this place brings it out in me. Since I've been here, look at all the shit that's happened already. I just got this bad feeling; the worst of it is still to come and it's coming your way, Tara. I can't ever get right with any of this if something happens to you."

Before I could talk to him about it, Nero was getting to leave. "Are you ready to go?"

Nero and Kyle left. Gemma and I were going to the car lot to find me something to drive. We had to promise we would be careful of course before Nero was okay with it.

I sat at the bar waiting for her to finish whatever it was she was doing. The more I thought about what happened with everything today and the new place they were opening in Stockton. It always went back to the same conclusion of how they got our list of names.

"It has to be Lyla. She is the only other person who knew the clients names besides me. Not even Nero knew them. It wasn't his end of the business."

"Then we pay Lyla a visit."

"We told them we would just go down the street to the dealership and be right back."

"Technically, we are going down the street to buy you a car. A little farther down the street to see Lyla. Then we'll be right back." Gemma always had a strange logical way of presenting anything.

We made our way down the street. I found a car. It's wasn't brand new but I really liked it. I could have paid cash for it. After thinking it through, I financed it and would pay it off early. So not to bring any attention to myself with cash flow. It wasn't as though the ATF, local police, gang bangers, the club, my husband and I'm sure I left out a few names who had eyes on me.

We moved on a lot farther down the street actually to the next place. When Lyla seen who it was at her door, she wasn't thrilled by the idea we were here. I wasn't too thrilled by what I seen on the inside either. Food take out cartons and boxes were strung around her apartment. Clothes laid on the
floor in piles. The way these poor kids had to live was a shame.

Even worse were the empty cocaine vials and needles laying on the table. In her state of mind, it wasn't hard to get her to confess to everything she had done. She didn't once pretend like it wasn't her.

"You backstabbing little gash. You are going to help me make this shit right. By doing what you did, you took food out of my children's mouths. Or I will make your life a living hell." Lyla's head only bobbed around because she was so out of it from all the drugs she took. "This is a waste of time. She won't even remember anything I said tomorrow."

"Here, let me handle it." Gemma slammed Lyla's face down on to the counter. All Lyla could do was hold her face. "Betrayal is unforgiving. You will redeem yourself by whatever means are necessary to make shit right. The only reason I don't take it to the next step, is I loved Opie. If you tell Jax anything about this, I will be back." Once I let out a breath because it was over. Gemma did it again by pounding her face on the counter. "That's just to remind you, sweetheart. Who I really am and I will seriously do some damage to you."

The way Gemma could switch gears in a heartbeat amazed me and confused the hell out of me. She wet a kitchen towel and went to the frig for ice. Then she handed it to Lyla. "Once the bleeding stops, you'll be fine." Gemma said it cheerfully too and as if she were a concerned mother.

"Do you think it was the best approach with Lyla today? She so out of it, Gemma."

Gemma put sunglasses on and lit up a smoke as soon we hit the porch. "I'm a gangster mama now. I approach shit in a whole new way."

"Yeah, I can see that." It was the best response I could give at the moment.

"Oh shit." I didn't know what Gemma was talking about. Until Mary pulled up with Ellie and Kenny. My boys had a charming life compared to what these kids went through already.

"Where's Lyla? The school called me again because she didn't pick them up."

"I'd say she's doing some real soul searching. Trying to heal herself right now." No one could be as coy as Gemma could be.

"I'm too old for this shit, Gemma. Being a grandma isn't supposed to be as hard as being a full time mom."

"Yeah, I hear ya. I'll take Kenny and Ellie for a couple days. It'll give you a break and give Lyla some time to get her shit together."

We packed up what we thought the kids needed for a few days. Piper was with Lyla's mom. So it was one less child we had to worry about. "I'll help out too with the kids, Gemma."

"Okay. If you could watch them this afternoon. Me and Nero have an appointment with Lucia's doctor."

"Sure, I'll take them all to the park or something."

The first thing we did after picking up the boys was stop to eat. Ellie and Kenny ate as though they were starving. Sometimes it takes others around you to put life in perspective for you. My children always had food available to them. A warm bed in a home. Their mother was still with them; fighting for them to have another tomorrow. Most of all, they knew they were loved and wanted. When you
take it away from a child, it's hard to get it back even as an adult.

"It's so sad."

"What is, Wayne?"

"Motherless children." Wayne joined us at the park because he was supposed to be my babysitter after all.

But from personal experience of growing up without a mother. I couldn't have agreed with him more. The thought was always in the back of my mind. What would happen to my boys without me?

Kenny seemed to handle things better than Ellie did. He went off to run around with Abel. But not her. She sat on the bench between me and Wayne. Not moving a muscle, not making a sound and not showing one ounce of any kind of emotion at all.

"Hi, Tara."

"Hey, Nicole. I see you have custody of George today."

"Do you mean Georgina? I could kill Kyle for getting another dog. But it does make my son happy." Nicole spoke like a true mother would. Everything we did was for our children's happiness even if it wasn't something we wanted to do.

After I introduced Wayne and Nicole they struck up a conversation. So, I got George. He got up on his hind legs and stretched as far as he could to get Ellie to pet him. It was the first smile I had seen from her all day.

"Do you want to walk George? He probably needs to go potty."

Ellie peeked under him. "Isn't George a boy's name?" She was older and not so easily fooled.

"Yes. But it's a secret. So, don't tell. Besides once Abel sees him, you won't get the chance to."

"Come on George." Ellie was getting the opportunity to behave like a child. The silly little puppy made a difference for the kids.

It wasn't until I stepped out of the box of Abel's life it hit me why the puppy mattered to them. It wasn't their attachment to it. It was the way the puppy was so attached to them and the love it gave them freely. We all wanted a love like that.

"Have you seen Kyle?" I heard what Nicole said but I was still trying to wrap my head around the true meaning of my thoughts. "Tara."

"I saw him earlier today."

"He was supposed to be here already to get George. He said he would look at my car for me and I have to go soon."

"I can look at it if you want." Nicole took Wayne up on his offer. I kept Cody and George. Although Ellie played with the puppy.

When the boys went running and screaming his name. I didn't have to turn around to know who was here.

"Where's Nicole?"
"Wayne is looking at the car for her." By the time we discussed it, they were back already.

"It's just the battery. I will get one on my way to work. Are you still watching Cody for me?" Kyle nodded his answer to her.

"Thanks, Wayne. You're really sweet." Nicole placed a little innocent peck on Wayne's cheek.

"Yeah, sure. No problem." It gave Wayne a grin from ear to ear.

"Cody lets go." He was so busy playing he didn't even hear Kyle calling his name. "Now." That deep loud tone got the little boy's attention quickly.

"I'll see you later, Tara."

"Are you okay? We didn't get a chance to talk earlier and I…"

"I'm fine, girl. Don't worry about me. I'll see you later."

"Bye." There was nothing else I could say when Kyle just walked away like it was no big deal.

For another hour or so Wayne and I sat quietly. Letting the world pass us by while the kids played, except for Ellie. After George left, she became disconnected again. When I did try to finally get her to talk to me. She wouldn't do it. This little girl was seriously broken a part.

"I didn't have a mom growing up either. It's a hard thing to deal with. So, I do understand. If you ever want someone to talk to about it, I'm here, Ellie."

"I miss my mom. I didn't even get to say goodbye. She never left me anywhere she didn't kiss me and say goodbye first." Ellie lacked closure from Donna's death. Hers wouldn't be as easy to solve as Abel's.

It was the small things with your children they remembered. Ellie held on to the fact her mother would never ever leave her without saying goodbye first. What would my sons hold on to in their memories about me?

"Maybe there is a way for you to say goodbye to Donna."

Lately I had enlisted Wayne's help on a lot of things. This was no different. We stopped and bought flowers. He kept the boys in the car while I took Ellie with me.

"Do you think my mom will know I'm here?"

"Yes, I do. When you smiled earlier. It reminded me of your mother so much. She will always be a part of you and is still with you in various ways." She wore a different kind of a smile now on her face.

Ellie grasped on to my hand tightly as she too took her long walk like I had many times recently. When I paused at Opie's grave. Ellie let go of me and never stopped walking on until she reached Donna.

It was hard to tell which was the saddest part. Watching Ellie tell her mom she loves and misses her so much. Or the fact she didn't care about Opie at all. Even when I pointed it out to Ellie, just to make sure she hadn't missed where her dad was buried at. She just shrugged her shoulders at me. As though she didn't know what to do or really cared.

"Tara."
"Yes."

"Do you think you can bring me back again to see my mom?"

"Sure, we can come back to see her. I'll give you my phone number and anytime you want to. We will come together. I know she misses you too."

Ellie hugged me. It was the first true emotion I seen this little girl display. All little girls needed their mother around. Just like all little boys needed their father around.

"I'm going to tell Mommy I will be back to see her."

"Okay, baby. I'll be right over here when you're done."

The crow landed on Donna's grave before. Perhaps this was something else I needed to fulfill as well. Since I was here anyway. I walked over the hill to visit John. Only he had another visitor already.

Gemma had knelt before John's tombstone, grasping on to it for dear life. Crying her eyes out. She was so drowned in sorrow she didn't know anyone was around her. Whatever was weighing on her, hadn't been fixed yet.

Tangled Web, Part #2, Chapter 12 is already posted for you. Forward on to read the rest of it. Please be kind and stop here to leave a review before you proceed on. Let me know you are still with me for this story. You are what makes it fun for me to write it and even a simple smiley face lets me know you are reading it. I plan on posting more chapters this way too if you guys like it.

I know this is an extremely long read. I get a little carried away sometimes. I hoped to squeeze more in it than I actually did. Do you like the super long chapters? Or would you rather have them shorter?
Once again Jax had pictures of John and other club members strung out everywhere on the kitchen table. He was more focused on his and Opie's than any of the other ones. I'd say Jax was doing his own soul searching, along with maybe some healing.

"I'll get this cleanup, babe." Jax wiped his eyes and started gathering up the photos.

"It's okay, you don't have too. Tell me about them."

"You really wanna know about the club?" Yeah, I was shocked as Jax was. But if it brought me closer to him somehow, then it was worth it.

"Yeah, I do. I don't even know who these members are." The photos were aged. Some were bent while others were torn.

"Most of those guys were the Original 9 members."

They varied from daredevils to the first rat in the club. John Teller just didn't write the bylaws for it. He lived out every single one them and then determined how to handle it. In some cases, he filled in the blanks accordingly as he went along. Or what he felt was the right way to handle it at the time.

Jax told me stories about him and Opie. It was a cleansing of the heart for Jax. I don't think he ever got past losing Opie. Nor dealt with it all yet either.

As we looked through the photos, we came across one with Jax as a little boy setting on JT's lap. "It's the only real memory I got of JT. We fed the birds together. Then Gemma would get pissed off because we used up all the bread. He didn't care if she was, he'd tell her to get over it and buy more. Sometimes we'd spend hours doing it and he'd tell me stories. Other times it was only a few minutes because he had to go do something with the club."

It was no wonder Jax ended up the way he was with our children. It was a part of his normal life to put the club first. It was all he was ever taught and knew. But to break the cycle of it with him, Thomas and Abel seemed impossible sometimes.

We talked for hours. It was the longest conversation I think we ever had between us. Most of Jax's talking was done in bed with sex or on the streets with the club. It too was all he really knew. The way he handles everything.

This was the first time he went to sleep before me in a very long time. For some reason, I felt restless. I tossed and turned in the bed until I finally got up so I wouldn't wake him.

In the freezer was salted caramel ice cream. It was my guilty pleasure I indulged in but hadn't in a while. I grabbed a spoon and just enjoyed it. There weren't many things I actually looked forward to these days. But damn, I was for the next spoonful of the creamy goodness in my mouth.

To wear myself out I started reading about Odin again. The more I read, the more I had to know. It captivated me until around four in the morning. I finally put it down because if I didn't lay down soon, it would be time to get up already.
Of course all these late nights were taking a toll on me. When I went to work the next morning, I had a couple of meetings which I yawned through most of it. Although it felt good to be back doing what I loved so much.

Once I got those out of the way it was a light day for me. Wayne wouldn't be back until tonight to escort me home. So I went to see what Nero found out. I loved the freedom of having my own car again and not someone up my ass twenty-four hours a day. Even though the club didn't know I left the hospital whenever I wanted to.

"What are you doing? Is that Nero and Gemma?" Kyle was sitting at the bar drawing in his sketch book.

"I've never known two people to be with each other like they are. Nero feeds off her strength and Gemma feeds off his love for more strength. When one of them comes up short on something the other one is there to cover it. If he moves, she moves. If she's happy, he's ecstatic. If something is wrong in her world, he would give up anything to make it right for her. It's what most search a lifetime for but never find."

"Wow, I guess I didn't notice all of that about them. I know they really love each other."

"It's because, I pay attention, girl. Just watch." Kyle called Nero over to talk to us. It wasn't even two minutes later Gemma was by his side. Not just standing by Nero but she had to be touching him too. Nero never took his attention away from our conversation but touched her back. As though it were a natural reflex of their love for one another.

"See." Kyle gave me a little wink when they walked away. "Their love is like a fairytale."

"I don't believe in fairytales."

"Sometimes, Tara. You have to write your own. One page at a time."

Nero and Gemma were in the kitchen. She was making coffee and Nero just needed to be near her. It was true when she moved, so did he. After she filled the pot with water, he went to the other side of the kitchen too while she poured it in to start the coffee. For no other reason than it was where she was.

"Did you talk to Wayne, Nero?"

"Yeah, I talked to him. I also talked to Marcus and he'll do whatever we need as long as he gets his kick back from it."

"And his issues with Jax and the club?" This is where the plan got a little tricky. Navigating around the two biker clubs who had hate for each other.

"It gets settled, Tara. I don't have shit to do with it. But I made it clear to Marcus, Jax and the club doesn't get harmed from what we're doing. I say we let Marcus and Jax take their aggression's out on Charlie in the end. Charlie is only for the good of Charlie and he don't give a shit who he steps on to get there. Maybe it will bring them enough unity to settle their beef with each other and get on with business."

"What if it doesn't?" Jax was my biggest concern of all of this. I had to make sure he was protected too.

"Then Marcus and Jax needs to set down and work it out like men between them. Instead of spilling blood. But we saved them both in the end either way. It's what really counts."
"When do we do all of this?" All of our extra activities had to fit in my real job schedule and around my children.

"You start with Hale today. Tomorrow we handle Charlie and Collette. We take back what's ours, mama." Nero was so certain of what we were doing.

"Yeah." I tried to be certain too but I still had some doubts about pulling it all off.

"Are you gonna make it through this, Tara?"

"Do I have a choice? If I don't want the possibility, to go to jail and lose my freedom. I'll lose my professional licenses I worked for years to have if anyone finds out. I will lose my family too if they take Jax down because of it. Or my boys in the process of it all."

"Are you ready to go do this, Nero?"

"Take shit head with you. I got a lot of tatts on me I can't cover up. Hale will see me on the same level as Jax."

"Kyle..." I went to call for him. But when I turned around he was standing right behind me.

"Looking for me, girl?"

This was stage one in progress. If I could be convincing enough, Jacob would see it our way. If I wasn't. We would have to come at it from a different angle then.

We hung out until lunch time. Jacob visited the same place to eat at every day, at the same time and set in the same booth.

"Mr. Mayor, do you know who I am?"

"Yes. I do. I'm trying to have lunch if you don't mind."

"Actually I do mind." I set down to join him in his booth without an invitation. "I have a proposal for you which will end up saving your life. I know you have been filtering funds from Charming to Stockton and all about the projects you want to build after you get the Sons shut down."

"I have no idea what you're talking about and I'm not going to listen to this." Jacob just thought he wasn't going to hear me out.

But Kyle changed his mind for him. He shoved Jacob back down to the seat. "Sit the fuck down. She is not through talking to you yet."

"Here is what you are going to do for me. Or I will tell Jax what you're doing and he will kill you. For all the backhanded shit you did to the club to get them out of Charming. I will also be bringing out publicly how our fine Mayor of this town has been stealing funds from it."

Jacob was very conceited and hard headed but he came around to my way of thinking. Because most of his options were the same conclusion for him; ruination or death unless he did what we needed him to do.

"I do have contingencies in place, Jacob. Just in case you might think about double crossing me. If you think Jax is dangerous, you have not seen anything yet. Until you have a pissed off mother protecting her young up in your face."

Jacob for some reason wasn't hungry anymore and didn't finish his lunch.
"Well, how did I do?" Once we got out to the car I let a sigh of relief because I got through it.

"You did great. Seriously, it was hot even, girl. To watch you stick your tits out and take control."

"You're such a goof ball." It was the first laugh I had in days. I sort of missed it.

After I dropped Kyle off at the Lodge, I went back to the hospital to pick up the boys. Everything seemed to be falling in place like it should for once. The elevator was playing a catchy little tune. The mood I was in, I even hummed along to it.

There was still a lot of stuff I had to get done. I made dinner early and got the boys in the tub. Then I set down to figure out what I still had left to do.

"You guys already ate?" It was later than I thought because Jax was home already.

"Yeah, we did."

"Oh." Was all he said and went into the kitchen.

"Are you hungry, I will fix you a sandwich." I yelled it to him from the living room but he never answered me.

"Jax?" Still nothing. So I got up to go see what the hell was wrong.

"Do you even care if I come home anymore, Tara?"

"What kind of question is that?"

"You used to want me home for dinner every night. Now, it's like it's no big deal to you."

"I got tired of fighting with you about it, Jax. Either you're here or you're not. There isn't anything I can do about it." I couldn't really comprehend where Jax was going on this. It's what I wanted him to do for a long time. But I could never get him to follow through on it.

"I'm tired. I'm gonna take a shower and go to bed. Are you coming?" Jax actually waited for me in the hall instead of just taking off like he always does.

"I'll be back in a little while. I have some reading to do."

It kept bothering me what was up with Jax. It wasn't just dinner he was pissed off about or stressing on. Let's face it he was never around for much to begin with.

The last couple of nights he came home in the same mood for absolutely no reason what so ever. I went to talk to him but he was already out. So, I let it be for now and went back to reading.

Which I fell asleep on the couch and never made it to bed because Jax woke me up. The page the book was opened to. Of course, it was starting to make somewhat sense to me. If I hadn't fell asleep I would have already found my answer. So reading was the all I wanted to do.

Jax kept talking to me. I had read the same damn paragraph four times already. So I tried to tune him out until I could get what the fuck the page said. "Yes." Every now and again I would throw in. "Okay, baby." Then a "Uh huh."

"I'm getting a blow job on the way home."

"Okay, baby." Then it really registered with me what he actually said. "What?"
"Where the hell are you these days, Tara?"

"I was just caught up in reading."

"Do you even care anymore? You should have your family on your mind. Isn't that what you're always preaching to me?"

"My family is all I think about, Jax. You got no idea the things I do to keep us together."

"You couldn't tell it from my end." Jax didn't even give me a chance to talk to him about it. He slammed the door and left.

Jax could pout all he wanted to, I would deal with it later. I had one goal in mind, find the answers. The part I was sure of, it was all about the Original 9 members of the club coming together. The poison and evil couldn't survive until the nine pieces were joined together as one again. So, it's where I started with the puzzle pieces. I wrote down everything I knew about them and what I could remember from what Jax told me.

1. John Teller, founder and President, military, married to Gemma, father to Jax and Thomas, deceased

2. Piney Winston, co-founder, military buddy to John, Opie's father, deceased

3. Lenny 'The Pimp' Janowitz, military buddy to John and Piney, Sergeant-at-Arms for John, serving life in prison, alive

4. Keith McGee, moved to Belfast at John's request, President of SAMBEL charter, deceased

5. Wally Grazer, valuable asset to the club with ties in Redwood County where they set up, moved to the east coast later, President of New Jersey charter, deceased

6. Thomas 'Uncle Tom' Whitney, ratted on the club, killed in prison by Lenny, deceased

7. Chico Vellenueva, club daredevil, first Hispanic member, formed alliance with the Mayan MC, deceased

8. Otto Moran, spent most of his club time in prison, deceased

9. Clay Morrow, President, married to Gemma, Jax's step father, killed John, killed by Jax, deceased

John was the beginning piece and Clay was the end piece. But the rest of it made no sense to me yet. But the three always connected together in some way; John, Gemma and Clay. When I marked up the page connecting them all together in every way possible, it looked like a spider web.

"Two crows named Huginn and Muninn would set on the shoulders of Odin. He would send them to fly around the world. They would always return at dinner time to tell Odin about their journey and what they seen. As a result, Odin obtained much knowledge and wisdom from it. More than any other mortal man obtained. The wisdom is why he became a revered god among normal men. Until his evil brother discovered how Odin reached such a high status. When Odin was gone his brother killed the crows and buried their bodies deep in the ground. Odin paced for days waiting their return which never came. Eventually he lost his way without them and appeared weak among his followers without their knowledge they gave him."

I did it over and over. They always connected up in the same form no matter where on the page I put their names.
"Oh, what a tangled web you've weaved, John Teller."

There was no way each time it could have just been coincidental either. I was headed in the right direction but had a lot more to learn about John.

Me and the boys never left the house. I cleaned, played with them and piddled the day away. Because tomorrow would be a rough day. I had Lodge business to handle with Nero.

Once I got the boys down for the night. I went to clean up the kitchen.

"Hey."

"Hey."

It was all the dialog we exchanged when Jax got home. He didn't seem as pissy as he was the last couple of nights. I refused to baby him this time. He would figure it out on his own eventually.

Jax came up behind me while I was doing the dishes. He moved my hair and kissed down the back of my neck. My eyes closed while I enjoyed the feel of him so close to me. The passion I've shared with him always brought my emotions to the surface I could not hide.

"It's been a while. I wanna make love to my wife."

"I still have to finish this."

"No you don't, babe. Just let me love you." There was no way for me to refuse him. He always held the power over me. No matter what he's ever done.

In bed was the one place with Jax I always fit into his world. He showed me more emotions and love there than anywhere else.

His movements were so painfully slow inside me. I encouraged him to speed up but he wouldn't. I needed him to take me this time. Make me feel like we did when our love was new and he couldn't get enough of me. I even tried to force him to by grabbing his hips and moving under him.

There was one thing since we've been together Jax always wanted me to do. But I wouldn't be on top of him especially naked. I wasn't like those other girls he was used to and I didn't have a great body for it. Maybe it was my conservative attitude that held us back from advancing forward.

Since he refused to take me, I took him. Maybe I could make him feel like it was something new again in our love. I pushed him off of me until I got him to roll over on his back finally. Pinned his arms down to the bed and pleased my man.

The way he grunted, moaned and grasped on to my ass underneath me; made me ride him so much harder. It was freeing for once to let myself go with him and just be the woman he wanted me to be. He was so close to cumming, I pounded down on him as he could feel the love I was giving to him.

It left me breathless when we were done. I laid down on Jax's chest and went to kiss him when he turned his head away from me.

"What?"

Jax reached for his smokes off the nightstand. After he took a couple of drags from it he eventually got up out of bed. "Was it even my cock inside you? Or were you with him just now?"

"I just wanted to please you. Have you lost your mind, Jax?"
"I'm well on my way to losing it, I really am. You've never moved liked that with me in bed before."

"How many more times do I have to say I have not done…"

"Congratulations, Tara. You finally managed to hurt me back." He put on his sweats and disappeared.

Jax was wallowing in his own self-pity about something I hadn't even done. I certainly wasn't coddled by him after I found out about Ima. The subject was dropped by him and life went on like normal. He never wanted to hear what I had to say about it.

How would he feel if I punished him for years afterwards? He was punishing me for a crime I wasn't guilty of. My biggest crime was loving him the way I do and I lost my self-respect in the process. Because if I had been woman enough back then, we would have had it out about that bitch a long time ago. Fear took over my better judgement. I felt if I pushed the issue with him or kept bringing it up. He would get tired of me and I would lose him all over. I just got him back in my life again then.

For hours I laid awake staring at the ceiling. Everything in life was a judgement call. John Teller had a lot of wrongs to still rectify in his life and so did I.

When Jax didn't come back to bed, I got up to look for him. The door to garage was standing open in the kitchen. I wasn't exactly sure what he was doing but he was working on something.

"What are doing out here?" It was the best way I could come up with breaking the ice with Jax.

"I couldn't sleep."

"Are we okay, Jax?"

"Why don't you tell me. I don't know what it is you want from me anymore, Tara."

"I want you, Jax and everything thing promised me. It's all I ever wanted from you. So, I don't understand how you don't know it already."

"Is Kyle part of what you want too?"

"Don't bring Kyle into this. He has nothing to do with it."

"Bullshit, he doesn't. Do you know how it makes me feel knowing another man has been inside what's supposed to be mine?"

"So, that's what it's all about. How you feel, Jax? I had to witness it up close and personal. I don't recall you even giving it a second thought to how I felt. You only think I slept with Kyle and it makes you feel this shitty. Which I didn't. But I know for sure you fucked that bitch. So imagine, how I feel and have felt all this time? How is it any different to know what's supposed to belong to me has been inside some nasty whore?"

Jax went on like what I said had no real effect on him what so ever. It really pissed me off. "It could be it's not so much you're truly upset about. The hottie new boy wants to spend time with the one everyone least expects him to. Instead of whores, like you do, Jax. Maybe it's just a cold blow your ego. Or he's the kind of man you should be, want to be but can't be."

The last part enraged, Jax. I struck a nerve with him because it was a truth he didn't want to deal with. He threw the wrench he had in his hand across the garage at wall.
"Don't push me, Tara."

"It's too late for that."

Toe to toe we went at it because I wouldn't back down from him. An hour long screaming match at each other went on until we were exhausted from it. Along with the good cry I had, I actually felt better. All those bottled up emotions I've carried around weighed me down so badly.

Jax could stay up for the rest of the night if he wanted to. But I had to get some sleep. It wasn't long until I felt the bed move. He slipped in behind me. "I'm sorry. It won't ever happen again." He never stated what he was sorry for or exactly what wouldn't happen again. But it was a monumental event he did it even.

We drifted off to sleep finally. He held on to me for the rest of the night and I welcomed it. Until the alarm went off and it was time to begin another day of the same shit.

Up all night already took a toll on me. I drug my butt to the kitchen to make a pot of coffee. Jax came in and set down at the table. I wasn't sure what his mood would be like today. But I poured us both a cup and joined him anyway.

"I know living with me isn't easy. I don't get why you chose to spend your life with a guy like me. But I am grateful you did. You're a part of what I am and you always have been. You're the only truth I got left, Tara."

Jax finished his coffee and put his leather on. "I'll never let you go. Or give up on us."

We kissed goodbye and he rode away like he does every day. As much as I hated to, I got up to start my day as well.

Wayne came by like I could always count on him to do. I think he kind of enjoyed having a purpose to get up in the mornings and someone to socialize with too.

He followed me to work and I dropped off my babies. I pretty much had gotten to the point; I did as I want to anymore. I pretty much had gotten to the point; I did as I want to anymore. I didn't wait for the club when they had time to follow me around or cared if they knew where I was. Today was no different. I had shit to do and had my schedule already changed around to make it happen.

My first stop was to see John. Since, I couldn't make heads or tails out of any of it. Maybe the crow could give me some sort of sign. Or at least send me in which direction to go in next.

Only today John had a new visitor with him. Jax was leaned up against his tombstone writing in a notebook. Smoking a cigarette and lost in his thoughts. Whatever he felt the need to get down on paper was consuming him completely.

"I feel like I have to take a number to talk to you lately, John."

The sight of her car and license's plate enraged me. "Fuck no. Not today." The bitch had slapped me in the face one to many times.

"Where is she?"

"Where's who, mama?"
"Ima."

"She came in looking for Lyla. Her and Kyle were getting real friendly. So, they took it to the back room. My guess is; she's already got his cock in her mouth by now."

"Gemma." Nero was practically scolding her for what she said.

It didn't matter to me what the fuck they were doing. Ima would never come around me after today. Because as of today no bitch would ever touch my man again without feeling the consequences of it.

Ima was sprawled out on the bed with her pussy stuck in his face. He was giving her a tattoo on her twat. As soon as she seen me she twisted her hair around her finger. I think she might have been trying to push his face down in it too.

The smug smile Ima wore brought a rage to the surface like I never felt before. "Do you think Jax will like my pussy...cat?" When she rubbed on her twat to torture me or intimidate me, that was it.

"I was just following his lead. Married pussy is boring pussy. Why don't you ask the cock that was inside me last night?"

The hooker in high heels, Ima, said it directly to Lyla about Opie. But it was etched in my mind, heart and soul because essentially, it was Jax too.

By the long blonde hair, Ima liked to flip around so much. I yanked her off the bed on to the floor with it. I squeezed her throat with both hands until she gasped for breath. It only fed my need to do it harder as she tried to get my hands off her. "You shouldn't go for the obvious, bitch." Not all of my aggression I was taking out on her belonged her; but she was here and she would do.

Her high heel shoe was all that was in my reach. Bash after bash to her face with it. Until she felt some of my pain. Only her face bled because she was with Jax. My bleeding came straight from the heart.

"Goddamn it, Tara. Let go." It took both Nero and Kyle to separate us. Because I would no longer let this kind of behavior go or tolerate it.

"You come back, bitch, around me or my family. I finish what I started the next time." I had to scream it at her. Because Kyle finally got tired of fighting me to keep me off Ima and carried me out of the room.

"What the hell is wrong with you, Tara?"

"Get off me." When he finally let go of me, I shoved him away. "You're just like all the rest. You enjoy have porn pussy rubbed your face."

"Why are you mad at me for? What the fuck did I do to you?"

"I know you got a thing for Lyla. They all do for sluts like them."

"You don't know shit, girl."

This was not like me. None of it was like me or the person I was or strived to become. There was nothing else for me to say or do here.

Gemma was leaning up against the wall with a smirk on her face. "Huh, my bad. I didn't realize Kyle was just giving her a tattoo."
"Don't start with me, Gemma." As pissed as I was. I stomped off outside. I needed to get myself under control and away from them.

For an hour I sat and ponder life's mysteries. The answers I couldn't ever come up with.

"Just leave me alone."

"I wish I could, girl. Gemma told me about Ima. Sorry." Kyle came out and set down beside me.

"I walked into the clubhouse the next morning after Jax fucked her. They were still together in his room. He didn't say word to me. Not I'm sorry, I am wrong for what I did, I love you and it won't happen again, not nothing. We had a fight last night over her and you. I just couldn't take it when I saw her car when I pulled up. She's such a fucking whore. Yet every man wants that nasty bitch. I can't compete with what those kind of women give Jax. Because I don't even know what it is." It was the first time I said it out loud and no tears came any longer. I had shed my last over it all.

Kyle didn't say anything. Which was never like him. Because he had a comment to always make.

"No words of wisdom for me? Or what?"

"People always say; it'll get better. You'll get over it. I'd say it too but I know it's not true. I think my favorite is; you just need time to get over it. But you won't ever get over it completely. It carries over to every relationship you ever have. Because you are waiting for them to do it to you too. It makes you question if you're truly worthy of someone's love in the first place." He knew exactly where I was coming from. I ask myself the same all the time.

"Did you finally get past it after she left you?"

"No, not really. I just deal with it better now I guess. Because when you don't give a shit anymore, it stops mattering so much. But I do have some words of wisdom for you, girl."

"What?"

"The next time you feel the need to slap a bitch down. Could you wait until she pays me for her tattoo first?" Kyle always found a way to make me laugh and put me in a better mood. "Come on, let's go down our sorrows."

"It's a little early in the morning to drink, don't you think?"

"I'm talking about cake, girl. Gemma made me a chocolate cake."

"Gemma, our Gemma. Made you a cake?"

"Yeah. I think she is starting to warm up to me." Kyle truly was a wonderful man. Even Gemma was attached to him now.

"Kyle, would you believe me, if I said I'm sorry for the things I said to you earlier? You're really not like all the others."

"Would you believe me, girl. If I said I forgive you if you bake me a chocolate cake too?"

"Deal."

After we had our cake. Nero and I held up on our end on what we told Marcus we would do. The rest of it depended on everyone else coming through now.

There was only one more thing I had to do before I left. "I need to take your stitches out. I should
"I don't understand or get any of it. It's a maze and I can't find my way out. Or find the true meaning behind what it is I am supposed to do with all this. If I don't come up with the answers soon. I'm afraid there won't be enough of Jax left to even save anymore. I'm losing him John and I don't what to do about it. You have to give me something to go off of or at least what direction to go in."

For an hour I waited and nothing happened. The crow didn't come to me this time. My entertainment was watching a spider build its web at the bottom of his tombstone. One strand at a time. It must have traveled up and down the stone a thousand times to build its home.

It was just time for me to give up. Maybe the crows were all a coincidence and I built it all up it my mind. Or maybe I lost my mind like John did and all of it meant nothing.

By the time I finally went back to the car, I seen it. It was waiting for me. The white faced crow took flight. I had no idea where this journey would lead us to but I would see it through. Only to my surprise it took me back to where I began from, in a complete fucking circle. Just like everything else was lately. I was back at Gemma's house.

"Really? This is the sign? What the hell does it mean?"
Nothing was strange or out of place or insightful when I went inside. There were no signs here for me to find. I gathered up the boys and decided to give it up for the day.

Abel was the happy one singing on the way home. "The itsy-bitsy spider climbed up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out. Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. And the itsy-bitsy spider climbed up the spout again." He must have sung me ten verses of it on the way home.

But it was until we got home and I watched him do the motions with the song. "Abel, who taught you the song, baby?"

"Grandma."

"Every tattoo tells a story. They are art to the soul."

"You, my child, are a genius."

"I know I am." Abel said so confident and proud. "What is a genius, Mommy?"

Abel followed me and Thomas in our bedroom. I laid Thomas on the bed and took Jax's box down from the closet.

Finally, I dumped the box out to find what I was looking for. I missed it before, it was so clear too. I counted the separate pieces to Clay's web tattoo on his elbow, there were nine pieces to the web. Also nine separate layers to make up each indiviual piece of it to the center core.

Abel colored while Thomas played with his toys on the bed with me. I searched through the book several times. But still came up with no reference to what the nine pieces were of the serpent Odin slayed. There was one person who would know off the top of his head.

Although, it too was put on the back burner when Jax got home. He came in and set down on the bed and was seriously troubled. "What's wrong, Jax?"

"I told you, I tried to move the club outta guns. The Irish didn't accept my proposal of August Marks taking over our end of distribution. Since Alvarez stepped on us in Stockton and it's the only legitimate business the club has got. I lost the money we invested in the escort business, the club's money, Tara. If I don't make good on the hundred and fifty grand, we owe the Irish tomorrow. Galen said it won't be just Abel he takes to Belfast this time. I got no shipment of guns to give to Marks either if I don't pay the Irish. The streets will blow up in Charming and there won't be a damn thing I can do about it."

"Tara, please say something. Yell at me, tell me I'm a fuck up. But say something." Jax held my hand and waited for the storm to come from me. Only this time, it wouldn't.

"If you pay them, does this all go away?"

"Yeah, but the club is tapped. I can't pull that kinda money together by tomorrow."

"I can." To my secret hiding place I went to get my stash. Most of this shit landed on Jax's shoulders for decisions he made. But part of it, was on me too. I made decisions accordingly to protect him, myself and our family. When you love someone you do what is best for them first. Then worry about how you will make it right later with yourself.

The laundry room was the last place Jax ever went to except to get clean clothes. I hid the money in the panel door. I wrapped it in bubble wrap then stuck it inside plastic freezer bags to make sure
water couldn’t get to it.

"Where the hell did you get all this money, Tara?"

"I earned it, Jax. This is what I made from the Lodge. I’ve got a hundred and ten thousand dollars. It’s still short forty thousand. But I know where I can get it, maybe."

"Where?"

"Where do you think? From my partner."

This would be one ride I would take alone and I didn’t give a fuck if Jax liked it or not. Not him nor any of the prospects would be along for it. I would gravel to Nero for the money if it’s what I had to do to protect my family. I would stand up and take my responsibility for the role I played in all this shit.

It took me an hour to work the courage up to ask Nero when it was only a fifteen-minute drive there. To admit I needed someone and their help or I wouldn’t make it.

They were all in a good mood drinking when I got to Gemma’s house. I hoped the mood continued on after I talked to them too.

"You're out late. What's going on?” Gemma was the one who met me at the door.

"I came to see Nero. Can we go outside for a minute? I need to talk to you in private."

"What's going on, mama?"

"I need a favor."

"Sure, what."

"It's a really huge favor."

After I explained Jax's delicate situation and our actions were partially to blame for it. Even though eventually Marcus would have shut the Sons out anyway from Stockton. We accelerated the end game.

"I'll give you what I got. But, I need time to get the rest of it together. I can't get my hands on that kind of cash tonight. I'll need to talk to Gemma first about it too. I won't ever leave her out or behind."

"Okay. Maybe Jax can somehow come up with the rest of it or stall for more time."

We went inside to talk to Gemma. I knew she wouldn't let Jax receive the brunt end of it or let the club fall a part because of it. She agreed without even discussing terms of paying it back. She went over to the safe and got out Nero's twenty-five thousand and included her own money she had too. I was down to coming up with ten thousand more.

Money never really ruled my life before. But it sure as hell was very important to me today. "Thank you. I don't know when I can pay it back."

"We'll figure it out, partner.” Nero smiled when he stuck his hand out to me.

"Yeah, we will. But this time I am a completely silent partner in all this. Your true Madame of ecstasy can handle it and will be happy to step up to take my place.” Gemma was all smiles because
she knew I was referring to her. "I'll take a smaller percentage and until my debt is covered. You can take it out of my share. I still need to figure out how to come up with the rest of it. I have to so I can protect my family."

"No you don't. I've got it covered." Kyle went out to his truck and set the cash down on the table.

"It's okay you don't have to. It's my problem and I…"

"Just take the money, Tara. I'll see you later." Then he walked out.

"Thanks, Nero. For everything. I'll see you tomorrow." I only thought I learned life lessons from Gemma. Until now.

"Kyle, wait. I can't take the money from you."

"I gave you my word I would see this through with you and I will. I said I wouldn't ever let you fall and I won't. You need the money to take care of your boys and know they are safe. It's just money, I'll earn more."

"Thank you." I had to hug him. He had done so much for me. "If there is anything I can do for you, I will and I will pay it all back."

"If you really want to do something for me, don't go anywhere. I'll see you tomorrow, Tara."

On to my much bigger problems waiting for me at home. Jax had already put the boys to bed. He was sitting on the couch staring at the television but it wasn't on.

"I got the money. I will have to pay back Nero, Gemma and Kyle. You need to put the bullshit and how you feel aside. Make sure you show them some gratitude for what they did for you. I love you, Jax. I really do. But you need to get your shit figured out."

When I went to check on my sons and watched them sleep so peacefully without a worry. I knew the things I've done lately were right even if others seen them to be wrong.

What wasn't wrong however was when Jax picked up his cell from the coffee table. It took him forever to dial all the numbers. "Hey, Gemma. I hope I didn't wake you up. I wanted to say thank you….."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

There were so many moving parts that all had to fit together to make it work out right in the end. Jacob Hale set the bait for us because he feared the Sons or more so, Jax coming after him. It set Jacob free of the guilty charge the outlaws would end up handing out to him. He got a free pass this time. Only because we needed him.

Our girls brought our dear friend the mighty powerful judge the most afternoon delight he has ever experienced. We tape recorded the joyous occasion for him of the four girls making his fantasies come true. In exchange for his signature so we wouldn't turn the tape over to his wife. He would sign off in the end on the Lodge. Stating no criminal actives were found on the premises, it would go back to business as usual around here. Or we took him down with us too. He was now a passenger on our sinking ship as many of them were.

There was no way for me to earn the kind of money I needed to replace what I gave Jax to save his ass. Not to mention the money Nero, Gemma and Kyle loaned me too. Unless I saw this shit through to its ending we all lost something and had a stake in it.
We were truly an amazing four-person team though. Gemma convinced Lyla what role she had to take on to redeem herself with us. Or she would feel Gemma's wrath come down on her. Keep your enemies close, keep back stabbing whores, even closer to keep an eye on them.

If it all worked the way it was supposed to. Jax, the club, the Mayans MC and all of us would be spared from the clutches of the evil Madame's poisonous venom. If it didn't life would get very messy, very complicated and very twisted up for all of us involved.

"Has Lyla check in today with you, Gemma? Did she find Collette's files yet?"

"I tried her earlier and she didn't answer. I'll try her again. I going to get some smokes. Do you need anything?"

"No, I'm good. Thanks."

"I won't be gone long. Nero and Kyle should be back anytime."

The quiet was great. It was rarity anymore. I found the Lodge to be the place I ran to for my sanity lately. I could just sit and do nothing if I wanted to here. It gave me time to clear my head and think shit through.

The reflection caught my eye in the long bar mirror. "You have been a pain in my ass for the last time." Collette was standing behind me with a gun.

"If you hurt me, Jax will kill you."

"Jax is going a very busy boy. After I kill you, I am going to kill off your handsome lover, Kyle, too. When they find your two naked bodies together and this gun in Jax's saddle bag on his motorcycle. He committed the ultimate crime of passion. He will need a place to run to for consoling. Just like he runs to me now, the broken little boy he really is. But don't worry, I will there for him until I get what I want."

The bottom line, she needed the IRA gun source. Which, the only way for her to get it was to get closer to Jax. It would be in exchange for the deal she made to get her freedom back. But I got in the way of it all.

This whole time I thought I was insane for the crazy shit I've done and wrong for keeping shit from Jax. The stronger I became and advanced on with it. It was what kept Jax and all of us out the trap she set.

"You're the one who tried to blow me up."

"Not personally. But I planted the seed for it to get done. They didn't succeed with getting you out of my way. So, I am taking care of business now."

Collette looked away for just a few seconds when Gemma came in. It was long enough though. Both of us rushed her at the same time. All three of us were fighting to get control of the gun when it went off. I didn't feel anything. I even looked down to make sure it wasn't me.

Nero and Kyle came in a hurry because they heard the gun shot go off. "What the hell happened?"

Nero bent down to check her pulse. "Collette's dead."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! The web becomes more intertwined and tangled up as we go.
The next chapter will be out in a few days; John the Revelator. I hope by the end of July to have the story completed.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert!
Chapter 13, John the Revelator

PART 1 of 5

With 40,000 words it is too long to post as one chapter. I don't even know how in the hell it got to be so long to be honest. It is split in five parts, chapters 13-17.

I told you if you all liked the long chapter and let me know you are still with me I'd keep doing it. So my lovelies, let me know again and this is the way we will do it to the end of the story.

John the Revelator; communication of knowledge to man by a divine or supernatural agency. The conflicts between good and evil.

The most important sentence of all those words; "For what you break, you shall become broken from." So I want you to remember while you read it and the huge circle it really evolves around in. But mostly how the cycle of it continues on from the past, present and future. You may not get it until the end but you will.

A/N: Kyle actually does play a role in the story. Other than being all fine, adorable and stuff. Now, I know some of you are really pissed off at the fact he hangs out with Tara. Some absolutely love him. While others could careless one way or the other. When you read this a few will go WTF? Ah... but just wait for it.

The whole Ima thing in the last chapter was my own self-indulgence because I thought Tara should have kicked her ass. If you haven't read elbeewoods; 'What Should Have Been Said.' She really did say it the best between Jax and Tara. The girl is a rock star!

If you stop and think about it. I am telling you many different peoples love stories through Tara. Love isn't always patient nor kind. It can raise you up in the clouds or it can take you to hell and back. But if it's a true love and really meant to be. It will be a love that can last through anything.

This is Tara's story to be told and from her perspective of it all. Of course she doesn't see things in the manner Jax or the SOA does. If I were writing Jackson, it would be a whole different kind of story. The goal of it is to save her from the same fate she received in the show. When Donna finally surrendered to Opie's life style and the club ways. She died shortly after it. Really the same fate Tara got when she surrendered to Jax and went along with it.

A special thank you to Jess for all the inspiration you give and how fun you make it. She turned me on to the song; Georgia by Phoebe Brightner. A girl is singing to the mother of the man she loves. It's so Gemma, Jax and Tara. I included a little of it in a conversation between Gemma and Tara. BIG SMOOCHES DOLL!

With all that being said…
From the floor where the three of us were still laying, I crawled to make it to the trash can. But I
didn't get there in time before it came up on the carpet. The sick feeling from the pit of stomach made
me even weaker in so many ways.

It was her eyes, they followed me where ever I moved to around the room. Her lifeless cold eyes. I
scooted my butt on the floor until I hit the wall and could move no farther.

"Tara." Gemma kept saying my name continuously.

"I'm going to get sick again." When I tried to get up I slid back down to the floor.

It took both Gemma and Nero to get me up on my feet. They helped me to the bathroom. I don't
even know how long I set in the stall for actually.

Once the nausea subsided, the crying started. Was she someone I cared about? No, she wasn't. Did I
actually want her dead before now and wish her so? Yes, I did. Did I have the right to take a life?
No, I didn't. I killed someone. I ended a life. I was now officially a killer too.

The cold from the tile floor felt good on my face. I curled up in a ball like a child unsure of the
punishment or fate I would receive in return from what I've done.

"Tara." Gemma kept saying my name but I couldn't answer her.

"So what now, Gemma?" Nero was in the room too; I could hear him but I couldn't see him. There
wasn't much I could see closing in on me either before it all happened.

"We can't take her home like this. She can't even form a damn sentence. If she talks, we all go down
for it. I'll think of something."

They talked around me like I didn't even exist to them. I stared up at the light above me for so long
white was the only color in my vision. Her dead face with opened wide cold lifeless eyes was the
only thing on my mind.

"You need to try to do something with Tara. You're the only one she seems to listen to lately."

"Tara, come on. Sit up." When I wouldn't do it on my own. Kyle made me sit up his way. "Look at
me. You had nothing to do with tonight. You don't know shit about what happened here."

He finally took my face in his hands so I had no choice but to look at him. "Say it. Say you had
nothing to do with what happened here and you don't know shit about it." All I could do was cry
harder. Because I had everything to do with tonight and could probably never forget about it.

"We need to get Tara outta here and get the mess in there cleaned up. We gotta lot of shit to figure
out and fast. If they find out Collette is dead or missing even, it's gonna rain down a bunch of shit on
us. Fuck, we still don't know what she has told them yet about us, Jax or the club. They could have
enough information on all of us already and not even need her anymore."

Now Gemma was crying right along with me from what Nero said. "I'm sorry. I'm okay." He was
consoling her and if she thought she needed to be sorry what little emotions she showed. What the
hell should I be for totally all fucked up?

"I'll never let this blow back on you, Gemma. I'd do time for it before I let you." Even fucked up
though. I could see the love Nero has for her come through. Just like always. "Is anyone up at the
cabin?"
"It's too risky to go there. The club could just show up at any time. The combination of the four of us together and the dead cunt. Isn't exactly something we can explain to Jax. We need to go somewhere he doesn't know about until we figure shit out and get Tara back with us." Gemma was truly amazing and always together. Even in the middle of a crises she could still think shit through. Most of the time anymore I couldn't do it when things were okay in my world.

"I've got somewhere. My other house."

"I thought you were gonna sell it and get your ex old lady to sign off on it. We don't need a bunch of traffic coming in outta the place we're at. Especially until we figure out what the fuck to do with Collette."

"I gave the money to Tara I was going to use to settle with her for signing the house over to me. So it doesn't matter, Nero. It's out in the country. Nobody knows where it is and there aren't any neighbors around for a couple of miles."

They decided everything before I realized what it actually meant. "No, I'm not leaving Abel and Thomas. I won't."

"Do you really want them to see you this way? Abel is old enough to pick up on when something is wrong with you, Tara. What are you going to tell Jax is wrong? Don't you think he is going to know? I didn't pull the trigger but I am just as knee deep in this shit now by covering it up for you. I need you to trust me. Until you can pull yourself together and we figure out what the fuck we gotta do. It will only be for a couple of days. I need you to go along with this, okay?" I nodded in agreement with Kyle. I would never want my children to witness my breakdown. Or to ever know what I've done.

Gemma and I left. They stayed behind to take care of the problem we all had shared now. When she called Jax, I freaked.

"Hey, baby. It's mom. We're thinking about going to a car show this weekend. You know how Nero loves his old cars. I thought I would ask Tara if she wants to come along. There is some medical seminar near there she might enjoy. I wouldn't do anything without asking you first, Jackson. Oh, I think it would do her a world of good to get away for a few days. You know to rejuvenate and get past some old dead issues she's got going on. I do think it will help her get past a lot of shit she's going through right now. We are leaving tonight. Ninta will watch the boys for you, I'll work it out with her. We'll stay in touch with you while we're gone. Don't worry Nero will be with us the entire time, we will be fine. You don't have to spare anyone from the club to watch over her. No, I haven't seen him. Kyle said something about some military shit he was doing this weekend. Well, a mother does know best. You're welcome, stay safe, sweetheart. Remember how much I love you, son."

"If Jax finds out the truth. He might cut my heart out for doing this." It was more of statement Gemma made when she hung up the phone.

We didn't say another word to each other. I leaned my head against the window and took another ride down unclear path I've never been on before. It probably was for the best Kyle gave her direction because I couldn't have honestly found my way this time. This time, I was at a complete loss of everything in my life.

"Tara, where is the key?" Gemma even shook me. "Where is it?"

"I…I don't remember."

"Shit." Gemma picked up her cell to find out. As soon as she picked up the frog from the wrap
around porch in the front of the house, I should have known that.

"It's a nice house. But there isn't anything here. We are gonna need to get a few things." She
rummaged around in her purse until she found a scrap piece of paper and a pen. "I'm going to make a
supply run. You stay here…"

"No, please, don't leave me here alone." I'd beg her if it was what it took.

"Yeah, okay. But you will wait in the car until I am done shopping."

She was gone for a couple of hours when she came out of the store. I knew because I sat and stared
at the clock on the dash while it ticked each minute away. As I sorted through each regret, every
mistake I made and all the time I wasted in my life with each tick that passed by.

"Do you want to get something to eat before we go back, Tara?" I only shook my head no. "Let's at
least get something to drink in you so you don't get dehydrated."

A fucking liquor store is where Gemma chose to stop at. She came back with several bottles of
booze and a bottled water for me.

Her phone rang on the way back to the house. They were there waiting on us to get back. We
weren't far from it anyway.

"What did they do with her body?"

"I don't know and it's best we don't know." It was the jaded shit of Gemma. Ignore it and it didn't
ever happen. It's when I see her in Jax the most too; when he ignored what he didn't want to deal
with at the time. Only I know it did take place and I couldn't pretend to just blow it off.

By the time she parked the car, the water was ready to come back up. I basically came out through
the door to my knees on the grass.

Everything was happening in slow motion around me. They packed in all the stuff Gemma bought.
While I sat on the couch and watched them act as though it were just another normal day. Either I
was the one crazy or they all were.

They put me in an empty bedroom with just an air mattress on the floor. Along with a blanket and
pillow. There was only one bed so Nero and Gemma took it.

Gemma tossed a t-shirt and pair of shorts on the mattress for me to change in to. Hell, I must have
totally missed when she even packed up a bag for me. I felt like the room once she left me,
completely empty on the inside with no one around.

Through the window a shadow of tree limbs danced around on the wall when the wind blew in the
night. I watched it for a long time. With each gust they moved in a different way against each other.
It was never the same manner or pattern. The leaves seemed to move differently as well even though
they were just an extension swaying in the breeze.

When I did finally manage to fall asleep I woke up gasping for breath. In my dream or nightmare
blood was dripping from the walls around me. They moved inward to the center of the room until
they squeezed me up in tiny square with no place left to go. Shattering screams were still echoing in
mind and I was now completely wide awake.

The tone of a melody playing the broken cord was coming from a distance. But I could still hear it.
The different pitches were mingled together and it was hard to determine which ones were
Or I was pretty sure I wasn't dreaming anymore. I wrapped the blanket around my shoulders. It was completely dark inside the house and quiet. Since it wasn't a familiar place to me I had to feel my way around without the lights on. Occasional with the flash of lighting through the windows it lit up the path I needed to take. They were all sleeping when I went outside so I tried to not to wake them.

A storm was brewing as the thunder got louder the closer it came. The storm had already started in my life too. From the back deck I watched the wind chimes twist and twirl around. Each played a different tune while they did. Pieces from them would shine as the lighting struck in the dark sky. They were actually kind of pretty.

The rain drops fell lightly at first. I closed my eyes while they hit my face. It felt refreshing to me. It helped cleanse the dirty feeling I had. The blood stains I carried now I wasn't sure anything could ever completely wash them away. Where it came down at a steadier rate now; it become a gusher quickly. The drops turned to a pounding sting when it hit my skin. But the sear in my heart was more dominate than any other pain I could feel or felt before.

"What the fuck are you doing out here?"

He made me go inside through a sliding door in the kitchen off the deck. The floor was wet where I stood because I was drenched. When the air conditioning kicked on I stood and shook from the chill it gave me.

"Here." Kyle was just wet as I was. He went and got us towels to dry off with. He never shivered like I did and all he had on was a pair of shorts.

We both sopped up the water from the floor. The blanket was wet and I threw it in the sink until morning. I would take care of it then.

"What were you doing outside, Tara?"

"I don't know. I don't know what I'm doing at all anymore. It's like I woke up one day as another person and it all happened so fast before I even knew it. Now when I shut eyes all I see is her face and the hell I'm bound to go to for what I did. I'm scared we will get caught. I'm more scared we will get away with it. If we do, what is the next thing I will progress to become because of it? What effects will I carry over to Thomas and Abel of what I've done? They already pay enough for who their parents are."

"You did what you had to do to survive. Would you rather it went the other way? Your kids left without their mother? You need to think of it as the outcome spared the right person instead of letting the wrong one live. I know it's a hard thing to get past. But you are strong and you will get there. It's your conscience dealing with the guilt you have. Sending your mind into a mode of shock. It takes you to place you've never been because it's fear consuming you of what you haven't experienced before."

When I thought about my children being motherless and facing this world alone. I broke down. Not because of what I did tonight. But because I knew the kind of life they would eventually endure. Just like Ellie and Kenny. Just like myself growing up without a mother.

If Jax hooked up with another woman if I passed away. It wouldn't be his first priority to make sure she was the type of woman who would care for our boys. Not only would they be without me, how would he care for them? He doesn't do much for them now and I'm still here.
"Let's get you back to bed. You need to stay out of the damn rain and get some sleep. We'll figure it out tomorrow." When I went to crawl back on the air mattress, Kyle stopped me. "You need dry clothes on. Can you do it or do you want me to wake up Gemma to help you change?"

"I'm sorry. I know I'm the weak one who everyone always has to take care of. But I can change my clothes myself. I'm not a child."

"No you're not a child. You just need some help. I don't actually see how you keep doing what you have been for so long. I'd worry more about you, Tara. If you didn't feel the way you do about it all. When you feel no remorse or guilt is when you have shut out life all together. Try to get some sleep."

Panic took over when he went to go. "Please, don't leave me in here alone." I clutched on to his arm. "Please." When he took my hand off him, I felt as though I had no one left to turn to now. The reality of the walls closing in on me were coming back to me once again. I would be in here alone with all the same lonely feelings. Reliving them from my childhood to present day.

"It's not a good idea if I stay in here with you, Tara. I'm just in the living room if you need me."

After I changed my clothes, I tried to lay down. I tried to be strong, I tried to get past it and I tried to not to think about it. In the corner of the room I set on the floor for over an hour. Rocking myself like I did my children as my mother never did for me. I even brought my knees to my chest while I rocked but it didn't help me feel any more secure. The same security I made sure my boys felt every day while I held them.

There wasn't anywhere in the house left for me to go but the living room because I wandered around looking for a spot. No chairs to crash in even. I covered up on the floor with my blanket. I put my hands under my face for a pillow.

You couldn't mistake Kyle's long sigh even in the dark. Or the fact he threw back the covers off him. "Get in here."

The couch was on the small side for the both of us to fit on it well. But he moved over as much as he could to make room for me. I felt like I was about to fall off the edge. I had been walking the on the edge of the ledge in life without even realizing the fall I was taking from it.

The sobs made my body shake, fear made my emotions go haywire. My tears had soaked his chest all ready. I must have clung to him tightly for one too many times when I broke down lately. He shifted his body as far away from me as the back of the couch would allow him to. But when he finally caved and held me. I completely let it all out and fell apart. Until no more tears came and I didn't have any more emotions left to show. I felt complete frazzled from it.

When I moved my leg to get comfortable. I must have invaded his space because he was quick to grab a hold of it and push it down lower. "If you're going to stay with me, lay still and go to sleep."

But sleep didn't come for me. The only noise in the room was the light breaths he took in and let out. "Are you asleep?" I tried to say it softly so if he was I wouldn't wake him.

"No." His response was even softer than mine.

"I'm sorry I'm so needy and it's fell on you lately."

"Close your eyes." His hand rubbed my back until I must have relaxed enough to finally go out. However, it didn't last long.

"Tara. Tara." His whispers in my ear woke me up. But I wasn't ready to open my eyes and deal with
another day of it yet. "You need to get up. Nero and Gemma will be up soon, it's almost morning. Come on, get up and go back to your room before Gemma sees you out here with me." When I got up he stretched out his body on the couch to go back to sleep. It was barley daylight which meant I only slept for two or three hours at best.

Like I've seen my son do so many times when I made Abel go to bed and he didn't want to. I drug my blanket behind me on the floor down the hallway in protest. I hated to tell Kyle; Gemma would probably give me a medal if she thought I threw caution to the wind and fucked him. She could give a shit less about me just lying on the couch with him.

Wide awake I laid there and still couldn't go back to sleep. With all the jumbled up mess playing over in my head. The sun came up at some point and I didn't care if it did or not.

Gemma came in and pushed the curtains open wide. My eyes were so swollen up tight from crying all night, the bright light hurt them. I covered up my head with the blanket to make the hurt go away. But she wouldn't leave me the fuck alone as she pulled the blanket off me.

"Hey, how are you feeling? Let's get you up and in the shower. I am fixing breakfast."

Gemma was either mothering me or felt the need to be on suicide watch or something. She started the water and made me get out of bed. I stripped down in front of her and didn't even care she hadn't left the room yet. I never liked getting completely naked with anyone around.

In the tub I sat with the water running over me. Until my skin was wrinkled up from it. I washed up and got out to see what this damn day would bring my way.

"Eggs and Tequila for breakfast?"

"Well, I am Mexican." Nero stated the obvious first thing this morning.

"Dude seriously, you are? I never noticed." While the other half of the comedy act held his shot glass up for another refill.

"How can you guys eat at a time like this?"

"How can you not eat, girl?"

"Tara, do you want some coffee or something to eat?" Gemma was meandering around the kitchen. I could see she was making herself right home. By making it what she wanted it to be. I would say she was nesting almost but she's too old for it.

"I don't think I can keep anything down yet."

The phone on the small kitchen table vibrated across it. Jax's name appeared on the screen. "Is this your phone, Gemma?" I was sure it wasn't. Nero's was a flip style and let's face it, he wouldn't call Kyle.

"No, it's Collette's phone."

Jax sent her a text and I picked it up to read it. When Gemma took it out of my hands. "Jax just texted her to see if she had any of the club's money together yet." In her back pocket the phone went.

"What are you guys hiding from me? What is it you don't want me to know about."

"We're not hiding anything from you, mama. We kept her phone so we could keep tabs on who calls
her. That's all." Nero gave his explanation. Gemma wouldn't say anything.

So I looked to Kyle. He just shrugged. "I don't know anything."

"Fuck this." I put my sunglasses on and went outside to the back deck. I should have known by the way Collette said Jax ran to her. What was going on between them. I have no reason to expect any other type of behavior from him.

The sun was bright out after the storm passed. Maybe it would shine as brightly in my world someday. I laid down on the deck and let the warmth of it touch my skin.

"Are you the unlucky one they elected to come out here and take care of me today?" When I saw Kyle come out the door. I assumed Gemma pushed him out of it to find out if I was good or not.

"What makes you think I didn't volunteer to be the one, girl?"

"You promised me, you would tell me the truth no matter how much it hurts me. Do you know if Jax was with Collette?"

"I have no idea."

"You watched the place all the time with Nero. Did Jax spend a lot time there with her?"

"It really doesn't mean…"

"Just tell me, Kyle. Stop skirting around it."

"Jax was there several time. Sometimes for a few minutes. Other times for hours. I have no idea what he did. That's the truth. But it doesn't mean just because he was there he had sex with Collette."

"Is it some guy code to stick together?" It came out snappier than I actually meant for it to.

"No, it's not a guy thing. It's I slept with his wife on the couch last night and all we did was sleep code. We spend a lot of time together and don't do anything. So until you know for sure he did it, stop going there. Because all you will do is just drive yourself crazy and it won't change it now even if he did anyway."

"I'm already crazy. So what's the difference?"

"Which is it that's really tearing you apart, Tara? What you did to Collette? Or what you think Jax did to Collette?"

"Both."

"What's it going to take to snap you out of this bullshit?"

"It's my problem. You don't have to worry about it."

"Actually I do have to worry about it, Tara. It became my problem when I got involved. How you handle what happened with you and Collette affects me too. What you do about Jax and his dick wandering, is on you. You need to think about what will happen to all of us now because of it. I am trying to help you but unless you let me in to do so, I can't. I understand what you are going through, I really do. We're grownups. We suck it up and deal with shit the best way we can. The clock is ticking fast until you have to go back to Charming and handle your business. You're a strong woman I've watched do some very incredible things lately. You just lost your way of how to get back there again. Because I believe in you and I know you can do it. The problem is you don't believe in
"Maybe I just don't know how to anymore."

Kyle finally gave up trying to rationalize shit out with me. I had tuned him out already while I stared at the wind chimes.

"Those things fascinate the hell out of you don't they, Tara?"

"Sort of." I actually watched them until I felt one side of my face get extremely hot. I laid out in the sun a little too long.

Inside the house there wasn't a sole around. I found the need to find a way to rationalize everything I had done and still have left to do on my own this time. Not only that but to confess all my sins. I searched around through the drawers for some paper and a pen. Most them were as empty on the inside as I felt.

The closets were all the same way. Only with some linens, towels and clothes stacked up in them. In the bedroom night stand there were several pictures. Kyle with a pretty blonde which I would assume it was his wife and some of her with a baby. A small box with a wedding ring in it and finally a notebook to write in. I got Gemma's pen and I was all set.

To my sons; Abel and Thomas. How I lost my way.

There is no person I have ever shared the real me with for many reasons. Fear of vulnerability and being hurt always stops me. Something has always stopped me from doing so many things in life. The only time I can honestly say I've been consistently happy and been certain of my place or what I needed to do is with you boys. The joy you have brought me being your mother is nothing I can compare it to in my life.

By the time I am done writing this you will be the only ones who know about the real me as a person, woman and mother. Because everything I do, will do and have done is for you. A mother's love never withers; it endures all heartbreaks. I've been with you since your births, always worrying about your tomorrow. I will there by your sides until I take my last breath on this earth. Even then, I will still be with you in your hearts when you need me.

There are many things I've done I'm not proud of. But I will never pass judgement on you as my sons for what you do. Only be there to love you and pick up when you fall. I hope I will get the same kind of forgiveness from you. You will know all my dreams that have passed me by now because at my age they only have a shy chance at coming true. The accomplishments I have done and the failures too. All the mistakes I've made and I want you to learn from them.

Finding things that make you happy shouldn't be so hard. I know you'll face pain, suffering and a lot of hard choices. But you can't let the weight of it choke the joy out of your life. It's all I've done to myself my whole life. No matter what, you have to find the things that love you. Run to them and never stray from their path. Your family, your friends, the satisfaction of hard work. Those are the things that will keep you whole. Those are the things you hold onto when you're broken. I'm trying to hold them together because I have never been so broken before as I am right now.

Sometimes my life feels like a deadly balancing act. What I feel, slamming up against what I should do. Impulsive reactions racing to solutions miles ahead of my brain. In that kind of life, I have no future. All I have is distraction, remorse and regrets. It doesn't have to be that way for you, my sons....
For hours I wrote while I moved around in the yard with them as they were cleaning it up. But I still was more focused on what I was doing than on them. They didn't need me to be a part of their circle anyway. They were all comfortable with each other. Laughed as though it was a fun vacation we were on.

Gemma had shorts on which I never seen her in a pair before. She was definitely cute with her tank top and hair in a ponytail. Her nick name should be chameleon as well as she blended to her surroundings. She was out there with them, she worked as hard as they did too.

"Tara, aren't you hot? It's hundred out here today. There are shorts inside if you want them."

"Capri pants are about as brave as I get. But thanks, Gemma."

It was the most interaction we had for the day. Although I'll admit I enjoyed watching Nero and Kyle play basketball against each other.

"You think you can take me on?"

"Bring it on old man."

You would have thought putting the silly ball through the hoop actually meant something as hard as they played against each other to win. When it came down to the final point, Kyle lost.

"When the old cock crows, the young dick can learn something from it."

"What the hell does that even mean, Nero?" I felt Kyle's pain. Gemma was always saying off the wall stuff to me I didn't get or remotely understood.

After they finished their game I went back to what I was doing. One page at a time I was putting the pieces of my life in perspective. Letting it out where it actually mattered; to me and my sons.

The sun began to set by the time my hand cramped enough to stop writing. I looked around and hell they were all gone. But they weren't hard to find though. As much noise as they were making.

"Why don't you come in with us, Tara?" Gemma was having fun splashing around with them. I wouldn't be much fun and didn't feel like it. She wasn't shy about being in her shorts and bra around them either.

"I'll just watch." I sat down on the dock. I took my flip flops off and dangled my feet over the side. The water actually felt pretty good.

"Go with us. We're going over to the other side to see the fireworks later. Please." Mostly I found him adorable. But I found nothing happy today or anything adorable about life anymore. Not even him with his puppy dog eyes he gave me to get his way when he swam up to the dock.

"You guys ago ahead. I'll probably just go to bed."

"Do you know how to swim?"

"I can swim. I just don't…." By then I come up out of the water spitting it out of my mouth. The little shit pulled me off the dock in with them.

"Since you're wet already you might as well come with us now."

It wasn't too far away. I hadn't swum for years. The last time I remembered was in Chicago for pool
"Where did you get that tattoo? I never noticed it before." Kyle flipped up the back of my tank top when we got on land.

"I got it when I was seventeen with Jax."

"A biker chick even back in your youth."

"Not really. We got in some trouble and I was headed for bigger problems if I stay in Charming. So I left. Only to come right back here and find myself in a deeper mess of shit with more issues than I ever imagined possible. I sure as hell never thought I'd commit murder."

"It was self-defense. Collette put you in the position of kill or be killed. There is a huge difference between murder and self-defense. But I'm still unclear to what happened. Gemma said she came back and Collette was there. She's not even sure which one of you actually did it. It's pretty much all she could tell us."

"If it was self-defense then we should of called the cops and this would be all over."

"How exactly would you explain it all, Tara? The federal informant who has been notating mine and my husband's illegal actives attacked me for no good reason and I shot her to shut her up so she can't testify against us. All the information she gave you already about the brothel and on the club is bullshit. Or it's my word against all the evidence she already collected, just ask her. I'm not dumb. I don't know all the shit the club is involved in but I can guess. What Nero does is minor compared to them."

"Collette went there to kill me. She needed me to be out of the way so she could get to Jax. I wasn't the only one she planned on doing in. She was going to kill you too my handsome lover. Or so she thought we are."

Kyle sort of laughed. "Yeah, I get that a lot too. But how did Collette know anything about me and you? I only met her once. There is no way she did."

"My assumption is Jax. Collette told me he runs to her a lot and she consoles him. I know his favorite way to be consoled too. I guess I always figured it went past the crow eaters just sucking his dick. Because to them, it's not a form of cheating and its perfectly normal." Once it came out. I caught myself. Those feelings needed to be tucked away until I figured out what I had to do. My ill feelings would be just worked out on paper for now. "Who in the hell knows what all he told her. There is someone else helping her. She didn't put the bomb in my car. They did."

The fireworks started and it was a break from my talking about it too. As they burst up high in the air the cascade of colors they cast on the water was pretty. I found it better than the fireworks themselves.

Gemma and Nero were laying on the ground together holding on to each other while they watched. There was no one else around in their world but them. You couldn't help but leech off their happiness to some degree. But I guess unless you experienced where they were in life with each other, you never knew it really existed anyway or expected it.

"Do you feel like we are intruding on their moment?"

"Oh, yeah. I feel like it a lot when I'm around them. I'll race you back."

"That's a little childish don't you think?"
"Sure it is. Do you got anything else better to do? You will feel better if get some of your energy out. I'll even give you a head start." Kyle waded out in the water and waited for me to join him. "Unless you already know I'll win. It's alright, I don't want to show you up being a girl and all."

"You, cocky little shit." Of course I lost to him. I wasn't used to it. Of course he gave me a hard time about it too.

"Do you feel better though, Tara?"

"I guess. I'm still not sure I can sleep."

We laid on the floor and watched television. I wrote in my notebook while he drew in his sketch book. Until Nero and Gemma finally made it back a few hours later. From their giggly eyes they were making at each other it wasn't hard to tell what they had been doing.

We said our good nights. I wanted to put more down on paper before I went to sleep. It became therapeutic to write. Not only did it occupy my time but my mind from wandering off. I laid for hours filling in the pages and my soul. Until you put it all down from the start to the finish you don't realize all the shit you forget about or were really scared of.

By the time I closed my eyes I was too exhausted to think. Only it probably would have been better if I stayed awake and kept writing.

Crows were flying up high in the sky almost in a perfect circle and formation. When they switched directions they moved as one again, completely harmonized.

There was nothing but sand as far as I could see. It burnt my feet as I stepped on it. But the burning sensation was nothing compared to the fiery explosion I witnessed around me. It all went up in flames and so did I. They were with me to take me home with them. So my soul could finally rest. I screamed I wasn't ready. I begged them to give me more time with my children.

"Tara, stop screaming." Kyle's hands on my shoulders felt real. But I had to look around to make sure it didn't really happen.

"Is she alright?" Gemma was here with him too.

"She will be."

"Do you got this or do you want me to handle it?"

"I got it." After he answered Gemma she left the room. "Get up so we can burn off some of your energy."

"It's two in the morning what is there to do?"

"Would you rather go back to sleep Tara and have another nightmare?"

"No." Anything but witness what I just did again. When the crows came to me before in my sleep, they came to me eventually with the same dream when I was awake. Then the dream became a reality. Would this one become real too? Was it all leading up to my death?

"Now what?" I plopped down on the couch and wait to see what fun event this fucked up shit would bring next.

"We stay busy until we wear you out so you can sleep." Kyle tossed me an empty laundry basket.
"It's not going to fill itself up. Get moving."

It was insane at this time of the morning to think about doing laundry. He was right though, he had to be done either way. Since there wasn't a washer or dryer we went to a laundry mat of all things. After we stopped at the gas station to get a bunch of quarters and other junk.

The inside of it felt like a sauna. I was huffing for a breath to take in. We went and sat on the tailgate with the goodies we bought.

"I bet you wow the ladies with this kind of action. Sitting out front of a laundry mat eating a gas station hot dog and chips you bought them."

"You know it." He grabbed something else out of the plastic bag. "I bought you Skittles too. I should get extra brownie points for those."

However, when I watched him eat them. It was strange. "What the hell are you doing?"

"I separate them by color, then eat them."

"That's anal. You are supposed to eat them by the handful all mixed together." I even showed him by what I ate out of my hand.

"Says who?"

"Me."

"Maybe you're the one who is missing out, Tara. Just try it. Be a rebel and do something that isn't what someone else tells you to do and the manner to do it in."

It was the way I've lived my life. By others rules and standards of living. When I thought about it, I'd never even really acted like a kid even when I was one.

"I bet you even have a life date planner all mapped out the way it should be, don't you, Tara?"

"No I don't." Then I had to be honest with him. "Maybe a little. I think if we were somewhere else in another town. Life would be somewhat better for us and I wouldn't feel the need to write out a calendar of expectations."

"I've been somewhere else, Tara. It's pretty much all the same shit. I don't usually hang around anywhere this long."

"Are you thinking of leaving again, Kyle?"

"I think about leaving. Just long enough for you to change my mind about it."

Kyle ignored my request for an explanation of what he meant. But man he kept me up on the move doing absolutely nothing of importance. We walked Walmart and bought nothing, then walked miles more around the property when we got back. Until I thought I could pass out. Which I did as soon as my head hit the pillow.

A few hour nap, it did make me feel better. Once I was so worn out not only did my body rest but finally my mind did as well. It wasn't until I got awake I thought of all the bad shit still out in front of me.

They were all out on the deck. I grabbed a cup of coffee. I hadn't had any and actually felt like one this morning. According to the clock on the stove, make it this afternoon I was up.
"Tara, I need to talk to you, mama. Are you up to it?"

"Okay."

This was the first time we discussed Collette since it happened. Nero tried to be as gentle about the situation as he could be. I just thought the plan we had before was hard to pull off but, this one. I wasn't sure I could step up to do it or could be convincing enough.

"We are resurrecting Collette from the dead. Using you, Tara. I'm working it out with Marcus. Until we can get on the inside to find the intel we need, you gotta be a part of it. Jax will be at our meeting too. Are you good with all this? We need to know you can handle it and do it. Especially with Jax. All of our asses are on the line with this shit."

"I don't have choice but to do it. How is all this going to work out, Nero?" I looked more at Kyle than the others. There was no way in hell Jax would go along with anything he thought involved Kyle.

"Jax is down to no money and no more options. He will do what it takes to save the club. Kyle knows his role to be played out here. He is more to keep Jax busy and out of the way of what we're doing. The goal is for all of us to stay outta prison and save everyone's ass in the end. Shit head can do it if you step up too. It's totally believable, Tara. Grand opening night I stay with you and Kyle will stay with Gemma at ours. Then we pull the switch. It's only for a couple of days until we deal with Charlie too. He's just as guilty as Collette is in all of this. After it's all over, I set Jax down and tell him some of the truth. Then it's back to business as usual."

"What if Jax doesn't go along with it?"

"He will. The club is in some serious trouble, Tara. Jackson is down to do it or it's over. He knows what needs to be done." With Gemma's input I knew how serious it had become for all of us. Including Jax and the club. If it destroyed the club would it completely destroy Jax along with me too? Or any existing chance there was of our survival?

"Can you make the connection with them all today, Kyle?"

"They are home on leave for a while. They always call me when they come back to hang out. But I never usually do with them. All they need to know is I need a favor from them and nothing else that we've done or about to do."

"Are you gonna handle this okay, Kyle? If it's too much for you. We can look for a different solution. The more distractions from me and Tara we have the better while we handle our shit."

"I'll be fine." When the cocky little smile crossed Kyle's face, lord help us all. "Besides, I can't wait to see the look on the bikers faces when they come for the grand opening to an all-male stud show instead of pussy. Most of the guys are bigger than I am. They can handle their business."

Gemma pulled down her sunglasses just a touch on her face so her eyes could be seen when she looked at Kyle. "Just where are they bigger at, sweetheart?"

"Not there, Gemma."

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John the Revelator, Chapter 14, PART 2, Chapter 15, PART 3, Chapter 16, PART 4 and Chapter 17, PART 5 has already been posted for you! Forward on my lovelies to read the rest of it.
BTW...We have a brand new SOA author among us today. Alice1290; Lost Until You Found Me. It's under my favorites on my profile page.

It is a Juice story I am all excited about. I'm a prereader for her and give her all the love I can to continue on with the story. Give it a read and send her some love while you're there!
Most of the afternoon I sat on the couch and wrote. Until there was so much noise coming from outside, I couldn't think anymore.

Nero and Gemma were coming back from where Kyle was still at. He was off from the house in the back. Sitting in one of the lawn chairs they took out there. With the truck door wide open and the radio blaring loud. Of course, he had a beer in his hand.

"What is Kyle doing?"

"He is getting past it. You should go out there." Gemma stopped to talk to me but Nero went on inside the house.

"I can't, Gemma. I don't even know what to say to him."

"I hate to tell you, sweetheart. But you're already out there with him."

"What does that even mean?" Gemma had already gone inside and shut the sliding door. "Hello, doesn't anybody ever listen to me?"

"What are you doing out here all by your lonesome?"

"Hanging out with all my friends." Kyle leaned over from his chair and grabbed two beers then offered me one.

"Are you drunk?"

"Nah." Then he smiled. "Maybe a little."

"This song is kind of sad."

"I hate to tell you, girl. This sad ass country song is our life."

After I listened to all the words I had to agree with him. "Son of a bitch it is."

"Yep."

"Yep."

We clanked the long necks of our bottles together and had another beer. Then had another and another until it was dark outside. The combination of drinking and thinking were never good ones for anyone.

"I got pregnant with Thomas. I married Jax because I love him though. In a brothel, no less. So I guess it's kind of fitting I'm a part of one now."

"Damn, won't even ask about the honeymoon."
"There wasn't one. Jax was picked up that same night and taken to jail. He already served time before that. He missed Thomas' birth because he was on the inside of a prison cell. I just got used to being on my own with the boys and it's why it doesn't affect me much now. You can get used to a lot of things if you have to. So let's see you top that one."

"We all have a metaphorical prison we've built up around us and serve time in. It's the walls you put up to keep everyone out so you don't make the same mistakes. If they can't get to you, they can't hurt you. Because I'm a dumbass and hope to never make those mistakes again. She got pregnant and I did the right thing, I married her. Everything I did for the right reasons, turned out to be wrong anyway. It had the same fucked up outcome so I don't know why the hell I did it for now."

"Do you still love her?"

"I don't know who I love anymore, Tara. Or if I even can. You can't even really have a normal relationship after you go through it, because nobody wants to deal with a heart they didn't break. I'm tired, I'm going to bed."

"I'm going too."

But Kyle didn't stop drinking when we got inside either. I only had three and it was beyond my limit. I felt bad I couldn't help with him with his problems like he does me. When I can't get him to talk to me at all, he has got some serious shit going on.

"We can watch television, take a walk to burn off your energy like you did for me or you can come in my room so we can talk. I'm kind of afraid to shut my eyes so I wouldn't mind some company if you want to stay with me for a while. We can hang out like we always do." Since he wouldn't budge. I did to him what he does to me. "Please. Come on, stay with me and I'll cheer you up. You know you can't tell me no."

"It's not that I don't want to stay with you, Tara. I can't. It's been a month or so for me and I'm having a hard time being around you, literally hard. I've been drinking and it's not a good idea."

"A month or so? Well, I guess at least Jax's money didn't go to waste then."

"What about Jax's money?"

"Jax paid Lyla to fuck you. She told me. He thought she would distract you and you would stay away me. It's too bad Jax worries more about that than making sure Opie's kids have a good home. I found it sad how those kids live with her."

"That upsets me. I thought she wanted me for my body. But it wasn't Lyla. It's a just a girl Nicole works with. We went out, I bought her dinner and she thanked me. Then I went home."

"Here I thought you were this gallant gentleman." I was razzing Kyle to get him in a better mood. But he took me very seriously. Which, it was a rarity he got serious about anything.

"We're not kids anymore, Tara. It's what grown up do. It was just two people having sex that were need at the time. Really, I don't even know why I am explaining this to you. I'm going to go handle my problem now. Goodnight." He stopped in front of me as I followed him down the hallway and I didn't stop in enough time when I walked into him. "Do you wanna watch or what?"

"I'm just going to the bathroom."

Tonight I would be an adult and handle my shit on my own. After I brushed my teeth and did my business. I return to the empty room. I left the door open but I would see the night through by myself.
I would see a lot of things through from here forward by myself as well.

"Tara." When I didn't answer him he got louder from the living room. "Tara."

"What, Kyle?"

"I'm really not opposed to the whole watching thing if you're not, girl." I couldn't help to at least laugh a little. It was a start for me and him. Since we both didn't have much to laugh at today.

"Go to sleep, John Boy."

"Good night, John Girl."

"Jesus Christ, Jonnie loves fucking Chichi. Both of you go to sleep."

We laughed and it almost came out in unison. "Goodnight, Nero."

"Hey, what about me?"

"Goodnight, Gemma."

As much as I wanted to not like the fact he was attracted to me, it did make me feel good about myself. There weren't exactly men ever beating my door down even when I was young girl. I had been with two men and that's it sexually. No one would consider me to be a beautiful woman who could have any man she wanted. I never understood why Jax wanted to be with me either when he could have any woman he wants. The fact of it gets thrown in my face almost daily too.

I smiled as I wrote a different kind of entry down in my notebook. "Dear Diary. I am a fucked up thirty-four-year-old woman and never wrote to you before. Who feels like a young girl again, a pretty girl for once. He's a fucked up goofball but really sweet..." After I got the silly one wrote out I went back to the task at hand. Getting out my feelings on paper for no one to judge me on it. Then yawned a few times before giving it up for the night.

When I first woke up I thought something was coming through the damn wall at me with the loud banging noises. With "Oh, god and Oh, baby." Thrown in too. I covered up my head with my pillow to drown them out.

But it didn't work. "Oh, shit." I finally just got up.

"Jesus Christ, can the you two give it a break already?" At least he wasn't getting any sleep either. The screen door banged on his way outside.

"Sorry." Nero and Gemma said it while they were giggling like two goofy teenagers in love. Then went right back at it again. Since they weren't going to stop anytime soon. I went outside too.

Kyle was setting out on the front steps token away. Only stopping long enough to take another swig from whatever bottle he had in hand.

"Are me and you good now?"

"Yeah, we're good, Tara. I was having moment, sorry about earlier."

"Nothing to be sorry for as you always tell me. But wow, weed and booze for a midnight snack."

"I need something. I can't sleep and I don't know how the hell you slept through it for so long. You'd think as old is Nero is, he couldn't keep it up this long. Fuck, they've been at it for an hour. Since
Gemma has kept me up, I'm smoking her bud. Want some?"

"Well, that should teach Gemma a lesson by us smoking her weed. From what she says, Nero is a stud and has a huge dick. I'd expect them to be awhile." It wasn't until I got it all the way. I smiled because I sounded more like Gemma than I ever have before. Maybe she was starting to teach me something about this life after all. Or really was influencing me in a bad way.

"I don't want to hear anything else about Nero's dick. Please don't tell me anymore."

We laid watching the stars from the front porch. We didn't talk much but Kyle kept on drinking and token. It was so quiet out here the silence was sort of pleasant. The crickets were chirping all around us. I couldn't remember the last time I heard the particular sound. It was mesmerizing to watch the lighting bugs move in the dark. They were bright to dim depending on where they floated around in the air from. I held out my hand and one landed on it. It lit up before it flew on to its next destination.

"You've drank most of the bottle already. Are you okay?"

"A wise man told me; booze is for a good man feeling bad over the woman he cares about."

"Who gave you those famous words of wisdom?"

"My step dad. It was the only time he drank, when he missed my mom and was having a tough time dealing with it. He never got over her or moved on after she died. I only remember a couple of women he dated but they couldn't compare to her in his eyes. He always said she gave him the best crazy love he ever knew. They didn't love by most people's standard rules more by what they felt at the time. I didn't get what he meant by it until I got older."

"It must be hard for you to be here and deal with it all over again. I'm sure it makes you miss your ex-wife even more staying in the house you had together. You can talk to me about it if you want to."

"Who said it's her I'm having a hard time dealing with, Tara? You know what, fuck it. Now is as good as time as any. I've already made an ass out of myself tonight so what's the difference now. Nothing about any of shit is right anyway." He just kept mumbling on which I couldn't hear well what he was saying. Kyle just shook his head before he took another swig from the bottle. Which now I could actually hear what he was saying.

"Since I met you everything has changed. I never needed anybody. I made it just fine on my own and I like it that way. Only now, I find myself wanting to be around you. You've become my best friend I share everything with. Even shit I shouldn't share with you. When I open up my mouth, it just comes out. Sort of like now. I've never had that kind of a relationship with a woman before and I don't know how to handle it. I know you're married to Jax and I'd never do anything. But the more distance I put between us the closer we end up. Every single thing I do, leads me back to you some way."

This left me speechless. Maybe quiet a little too long actually. Because he was quick to get up and away from me.

"Yeah, by the look on your face, Tara. Is exactly why I should have kept my fucking mouth shut and never said anything about it. Because now it will just be weird between us. Fucking, Nero. I never should have listened…"

Almost on my tip toes to reach my arms around Kyle's neck. It stopped him in mid-sentence. Now, I waited to see if he reached out to me in the same way back. Neither one of us had our breathing
under control at this point nor really cared. Our blood flowed quicker when the excited adrenaline rush came. I could feel his hard excitement pressed against me. Mine came by his touch.

The light night breeze was the only thing that kept me cool from the feel of the warmth coming from his skin by being so close to his bare muscular chest. For it to do nothing for me when his hands moved around on my back and left a burning trail behind.

At first we took our time to explore each other's mouths like the dance we shared. One rhythmic movement at a time until we moved them together as one. Gentle to start with, lustful as we went and longing when we parted from each other.

"You've become by best friend too. I've never had a best friend before, male or female and have I been a loner most of my life as well. I think it's because when I have trusted someone enough to let them in they always let me down or just leave me in the end. You're right though, I am married to Jax and I love him. But I had to do that at least once with you, boy. No one has ever gone out of their way to make me feel special like you do."

Well, it did seem a little awkward and strange between us now. It was extremely quiet. "Aren't you coming in? I'm going to try to get some sleep."

"I'm going to stay out here for a while. Goodnight, Tara."

"Goodnight."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

The next morning, I laughed when I went outside. They were sitting at the table out on the deck. Poor Kyle looked terrible. He had his head down and I'm sure it was pounding like hell from how much he drank last night.

"Are you alright, sweetheart? Do you want some coffee? It might make you feel better." Gemma was making her rounds with the pot for all us.

"I have a headache. No thanks, Gemma."

"More like a hangover." He didn't even comment back to me nor raise his head up. Which was unusual for him. "Do you want some aspirin? I have some inside." Again, he wouldn't answer me or look at me even.

"No better way to get the hangover gone than getting your ass up and moving around. Let's go shit head." Nero was already up and ready by the time Kyle managed to get his head up from the table.

He refused to ask me to move so he could get his shirt off the back of my chair. If I hadn't felt him tugging at it, I wouldn't have known it was there. "Would you like me to move?" And I got nothing out of him. So, I finally did it so he could get to his shirt.

"What's his problem?" Gemma just shrugged at my question.

"Have you talked to Jackson? He called me this morning. He said he tried you a couple of times and you didn't answer him. I told him you were still asleep and I'd have you call him today."

"I'm not ready to talk to him yet."

"You can't keep avoiding him, Tara. The longer you put it off, the worse it will be. He's just lost and broken. He needs you to help keep him together."
"Who do I have to help keep me together, Gemma? Where the fuck is Jax when I'm lost and broken? Let me tell you where he is, off with someone else doing whatever he wants to at the time. Nothing new about that shit though. He's so twisted up inside until he broke himself. Maybe Collette helped to untwist him. How do you handle it? Just pretend they don't fuck anything that moves and any bitch who will lay down for them."

"I don't have to worry about it anymore. I don't have that life now. I'm with Nero and I honestly don't think he would ever be with another woman. He runs pussy and had access to all of it he wanted before he met me. Yet he never did anything with them. That's how I know I can trust him not to."

"And before when you were with John and Clay?"

"John couldn't be trusted with other women. He loved them all. Clay was different. We had a mutual understanding. What happened on a run, stayed on a run. What happened in Charming, would get his dick cut off if I found out about it. He tried his best to honor it too and show respect to me in ways John never did. This is the life you chose when you became Jax's old lady. You knew what to expect from it."

"I never expected it to be this much bullshit to go along with it."

"A little too late now, sweetheart. You have to deal with it the best you can and keep your family together. No matter what you gotta do." Gemma's phone went off. I ignored her and thought about what fate I really threw myself in by the choices I've made.

"Tara." She said my name again while she held her phone out to me. I already knew who was on the other end of the line. I finally took it to get it over with.

"Hello."

"I miss you, Mommy."

"Hey, baby. I miss you too. What are you doing?"

"Daddy took me to feed the birds. We walked around and threw bread at them." Jax actually spent time with Abel without me telling him to do it. It was what John had done with him. I got a giggle out of my son's version of it though. He sounded so excited and happy. Maybe, my absence did all of us some good.

"That's great, baby. I'm glad you and daddy had fun. You know I'll be home soon because I miss my babies. Do you know how much I miss you? Can you tell me what I always say to you, do you remember?"

"You miss me as much as all the ants on the sidewalk and all the leafs on the trees. Do you want to talk to Daddy?"

"I…I've gotta to go baby. Kiss your brother for me. I love you and I'll be home soon."

"Bye, Mommy. Have fun with at your medicine thingy. I love you." It did me good to hear the little voice on the other end and him to be so happy for once. The other one I heard, not so much. "Tara, are you still there?" I closed the phone and handed it back to Gemma.

"Having a little harder time feeling the love for Jackson? Or is there any love still there?" Gemma was so coy and it was one time, I would not play this game with her. So I let her know exactly how I felt about it and I would not hold back either.
"I love your son, Gemma. When Jax grows up someday I think he is the one. But there are these moments when he looks at me; all he really sees is you. He needs a woman who will take care of him like a mother and treat him like the broken little boy he really is inside to keep him happy. I think it was part of his fascination with Collette. She probably let him nurse on her tit while he fucked her. Hell, she could even have powered his ass when they were done for all I know. Well, I can't be a mommy to Jax because I am Abel and Thomas' mother. When Jax starts treating me like his wife, then I will start acting like one."

Gemma grabbed a hold of me roughly as I went to walk away because I was fucking done with this conversation. When she spun me around I thought she was going to act like my mother and spank my ass for what I said to her. Instead she lifted up my shirt. "When you own this tattoo and not just wear it. You will own Jackson. It's not about making him happy. It's about making yourself happy. Because until you find some happiness in your life, you can't give any to others. While you find the balance of it to still force him to stand up and be man. It's a long damn road to go down, sweetheart. I've been down it twice already. You'll find it ain't easy being the queen without stepping on the king once in a while."

"I've tried to make Jax stand up to do things with me and his family. But it never works. He always goes right back to the same old shit. So, what else can I do about it?"

"You can't even handle the mild mannered pussy cat Kyle is. How in the hell are you ever gonna handle a man like Jackson? Kyle set there and totally ignored you. Do you think for one second, I would have let him get away with it? You need to grow up too Tara and handle your shit like a strong woman."

"I'm not you, Gemma."

"No you are not. Not yet anyway. But we love the exact same kind of man; John, Clay and Jackson. Our paths are bound crossover someday."

"I don't understand a damn thing you just said to me, Gemma."

Gemma was getting pissed off at me, I could tell. She now had the authority stance with her hand on her hip going on with me too now. "They control you with emotions. If you would call Kyle out on his little cutesy shit he does, you will see him cave too. Like last night. If he would have asked me if I wanted to watch him jerk off, I would have gone right in there to see if he had the balls to do it or not. Because deep down all men are little boys who need a strong woman in their life. Especially at times they need you to be stronger than they are even if they don't admit it. Then you will be the one who determines if spanking their ass is for a scolding or pleasure."

"What if Kyle would have whipped out? Then I'm encouraging him to do it."

"That's what will make you own your tattoo, sweetheart. When you step up and handle your shit, your way. So what if Kyle does whip his dick out. Do you really think men have to be encouraged to do so? You are a grown woman who has seen a man's penis before. Not a little girl, who just closes your eyes and runs away from it. You shoot his ass down or handle your business. But either way, you put him in his place and let him know exactly where he stands with you. Just like Jackson. Once you put his dick in place a few times, you'll own it. No matter how pissed off he really gets because of it. Now, I think I am going to pick some peaches and make a cobbler." Gemma put on her sunglasses and went to gather up peaches from the tree. She could confuse the fuck out of me and not even try to.

"Sure, let's make a damn cobbler while people are whipping their dicks out everywhere. Everybody tells me to handle my shit when I don't even know what the hell it is I am supposed be handling. I
don't know why I have to handle my shit because other people don't handle their shit. They seem to make it through life just fine." Perhaps it was a conversation I should have only had in my head with myself. Because I had already made it across the field to where Kyle and Nero were standing. Neither one of them knew what to say to me in return. So, this time I actually addressed what I came for.

"You can't keep ignoring me, Kyle."

"I'm not. I'm just busy. I should have sold this place a long time ago and have to get all this done."

"Yes you are. You have gone out of your way to. Instead of just talking it through like adults. Isn't that what you told me, be an adult and handle my own shit. So, now I'm telling you. Be an adult and handle your shit."

We had to walk away from Nero before I could get him to say anything else to me. "It's the last thing I expected from a girl like you. I thought you'd say; you're a dick, fuck off or a maybe even a go hell and get away from me."

"Oh, really. What exactly what is a girl like me mean? Huh? What are you trying to say?" When my hand went automatically to my hip. Gemma crossed my mind. So, I took it off quickly.

"You're like the sweet girl next door. Who has a dark side twisted in of the sexy Madame. The good doctor who could be so fucking bad if you wanted to be. I never know which one is coming out that day either. I sure as the hell didn't think you would kiss me. I don't know what to do with all this, Tara. But I'm not avoiding you."

This is where I had to choose to step up and handle my shit or be the little girl just like Gemma said I was. When I thought about it. Maybe I did sometimes regress to the reverted, unsocial, shy and the damaged child I always have been. But damn it, not today.

"Well, technically, you kissed me." I gave his shoulder a little shove with my hand before I crossed my arms in front of me.

"No, I didn't. Technically, you started it, Tara." Kyle wasn't shy about giving me a little shove right back.

"If I started it, then technically you brought it the rest of the way." Only this time when I finished what I had to say, I shoved his chest. But just a little harder.

Nero broke up our little conversation. "Technically, did you forget I'm standing over here holding this together? While I'm waiting on you shit head to do this already."

"I'm not ignoring anything, Tara. But I gotta get this done. We'll talk later. Okay?"

"Okay."

Gemma was smiling as I went past her picking peaches. "Technically, I think I know what I'm talking about. Even if you don't think so, Tara."

"Don't start with me, Gemma."

"Oh no, sweetie. I technically, wouldn't do that." I just rolled my eyes and let it go. You have to know when you won't win and it's a waste of your time to even try.

It wasn't long when Gemma made it back to the house too. She handed me a knife and we peeled
peaches together. But no damn talking was done this time.

Honestly, I enjoyed times like these we spent together. When she was a just a person and another woman to hang out with. I didn't notice how reverted from life I had actually been until now. I never did fun stuff or acted out against anything. Socializing wasn't something I really did much with people other than my children. Which, I missed dearly.

Once we got the dough made and it in the oven. Gemma went through a door off the kitchen. I wasn't even sure where it went to. "Are you coming?"

"Where are you going?"

"To the basement. Kyle said we can take whatever we want from it. He is going to throw it all away."

There were boxes stacked up everywhere. I found a few books and Gemma liked a mantel clock. I felt sort of bad just going through their stuff. She had no problems with it at all.

"This will look cute on you. Try it on." I looked at the size and had a good laugh. But not only that, it was obviously things his ex-left behind. He was having a hard enough time without any reminders of her.

"It's not for me."

"When are you really going to step up, Tara? If you look the part, it will help you to start feeling it and before you know it, you will be the part."

"First, I don't what you just said to me. But I don't feel right walking around in her clothes, Gemma. They won't fit anyway."

"Then let's get out of here and go shopping for you."

"I don't have any money with me to go shopping and I'm not in the mood." Most women jumped at the chance to shop. Me, no. I hated to.

One would have thought what I said would have been enough to stopped the notion she had. But, hell no. "Okay, let's go. Are you ready, Tara?"

Kyle and Nero were watching us as we left. Because let's face it, I was along for this ride if I liked it or not. It was definitely going to be on Gemma's terms as well.

"Where do you think Thelma and Louise is going?"

"Beats the hell outta me." Nero caught her attention before she got in the car. "Gem." He blew her a kiss and she returned his affection with one back. They have the sweetest love between them.

Gemma cranked up the radio and never said a word all the way there. But, silence was never her thing and it didn't last for very long.

"I like this. What do you think, Tara?"

"It's okay for you. It's not something I would ever wear."

"Okay. Go try it on."

"For the love of fuck." I did it just to shut her up. I couldn't believe what she chose for me. Leather
"I look like a trashy whore in this."

"Good, now let me see it." Gemma was relentless when she wanted her way. I threw back the door to the dressing room so she could have a look. There was no way in hell I was coming out of it.

"It shows off your tattoo. I like it." Of course she did. It was more her speed than mine. "I'll buy it for you."

"You're just wasting your money, Gemma. I will never wear this out in public."

"It's for your meeting with Nero, Marcus and Jackson." If she thought I was doing it in a leather tank top and leather skirt, she had lost her mind. "You need to own the room when you walk in there. In this you will. Don't forget the real purpose behind all of this shit. It's to confuse the situation so we can save our asses. I bet it will confuse the hell outta Jackson. So, suck it up and start owning your tattoo. You'll need boots to go with it." I wanted to scream out loud at her because she either completely ignored me when I talked or simply never heard a word I said to begin with.

"This is what you will wear tonight. Go try it on." I now knew how Abel felt when I made him do things he didn't want to do either. I pretty much raised myself so I didn't have the problem growing up.

It took forever to get Gemma to leave so we could go back to the house. I just quit saying I wanted to go. The more I did, the more determined she became to make sure we didn't. I couldn't wait to get out of the car and away from her when we finally did make it back.

Only I had to step up once again on arrival. It was time for us to have our little chat. We didn't want there to be any tension between us nor to take it somewhere it should be taken too. I apologized for my actions and so did he. The part about Kyle, was he never held anything I did against me. Or used it on me later to make me feel bad about it. I could tell him what was really on my mind and he could so the same with me.

Somewhere in our long conversation, we found a mutual respect. I also shared things with him about my life, I had not told anyone before. He was truly my friend with a big heart and I trusted him with what I told him.

"Can I have one?" Kyle had picked strawberries from the patch we walked by. He was had a handful and they looked really good.

"Oh no, you just told me you don't want to be babied or get any special treatment. Shivery is dead, girl. So, walk your little ass over there and get your own."

"That's not what I meant and you know it. You're so mean. Just give me one."

"No. Go get your own." He shoved me away when I tried to snatch one from him. I didn't find it cute when held them up high in the air from me. Way out of my reach. "Come on shorty. What are you going to do about it?"

We were both laughing by the time we were done wrestling for them. "You win, Tara." He gave me a couple for the walk back to the house.

Gemma was token on the front steps. "Huh?"

"Don't start with me, Gemma."
Only you know she did. I didn't feel like going anywhere but she was hell bent we were. The little chocolate ribbed tank top dress she brought for me earlier was hanging up in my room. Along with the heels setting by my air mattress. "You need to get a shower in and get ready to go."

"Yippy." When I slammed the door shut.

"It looks good on you with your hair color." I just shook my head at her comment as I went to get in the car. Why in the fuck fight it because she was going to win anyway.

"Where are we going?"

"Out to have some fun. Nero and Kyle will meet us there. They had something to do."

"Did it involve Collette?" Gemma cranked up the radio and ignored me. "Of course it did." None of them would tell me what they did with her still.

They were already there by the time we made it. Gemma wanted to go to a bar of all places. I didn't know what the hell she thought I was going to get out of it. But, I was stuck until whatever lesson was learned she thought I need to know. She bought Nero, herself and me a beer. Kyle was sitting this one out tonight.

For an hour I sipped on my first one while they were already buying their third. Gemma sat a full one down in front of me. "You need to finish it, Tara. I just bought you another one and it will get hot if you don't get to drinking. So suck it down already."

"I can't drink them fast; I might gag from it."

"Jesus Christ, Tara. You're chugging a beer. Not taking down a horse cock." Then Gemma gave him a little wink. "Unless you're think about Kyle."

They continued on the conversation in the same manner. Only she wasn't going to let Kyle out do her by any means. "I'm older. It takes more than just knocking on my door to make my panties wet, sweetheart. You can tell a lot by the way a man dances, it's how he fucks. So you better bring your best game on with me." And there it was; Gemma put it out there for Kyle. She wouldn't ever back down from any man or woman either.

"Well, shit. I didn't know I am getting graded on it. Do I get spanked too if I do it wrong?" He was cocky right back at Gemma. I knew their banter really meant nothing. Maybe if I lightened up in life and quit taking very so literal and serious. I wouldn't be so emotional all the time. Or pissed off or hell a lot of other things too.

"Gemma grades on everything." Nero threw his two cents worth in on the subject while they went to dance. I'm sure he's been graded on a lot by her already.

"Do you wanna dance, mama?"

"It' okay. I'm not really comfortable or know how to dance. So, don't feel like you have to ask me, Nero."

"It makes an old man like me happy to dance with a young pretty girl."

Nero was a great dancer. He and Gemma would still look at each other across the dance floor and smile. It was so sweet to watch them. It almost made my heart pitter patter when they were together.

When Nero went to twirl me, I didn't know what to do. So, he slowed down and showed me a
couple of times. I finally got the hang of it. "You know I can't let that young stud show me up around you girls." He too had a cocky essence about him as well. But a lot more mellow than the other two did.

We all went to the bar to get a drink once the dance was over. I just wanted a beer. But they got shots as well. Liquor was never my thing. I've never even been drunk. A couple of drinks and I was done with it already.

Gemma handed a shot glass to me. I sat it back down on the bar and she handed it right to me. "Why? Can't own up to the tattoo you wear? It's about time you start. Don't you think, sweetheart? Bottoms up."

"Son of a bitch." I took a sip and about gagged from it. "Oh my god that's nasty. It burns all the way down."

Kyle tipped up the glass up. "It's not meant for sipping. Swallow it all like a good girl. It's better if you have salt and lime with it."

"How do you drink this stuff?"

"After two, seven or so. It doesn't burn anymore." I'll be damned if he wasn't right. I had a couple more with them.

"You need to move around, Tara. Let's go work off the alcohol." Gemma grabbed me so I followed after her. But I couldn't even come close to it on the dance floor.

The way she moved her body should have been considered a sin. She displayed so much confidence when she did it to. I was a little dizzy when we were done. I held on to the wall to go to the bathroom. She was right behind me pushing me along.

"Where did you learn to dance like that, Gemma?"

"John taught me. The first bar I ever went to was with him. That man could convenience me to do almost anything. He always knew how to sweep me off my feet and leave me completely breathless. He was the most passionate man I've ever met." There were times when she talked about him I got the impression she was still in love with him after all these years. Other times, she hated him for what he did to her and what he really was. Even semi intoxicated I could tell he still brought a smile to her face with certain thoughts she had about him.

Gemma set another shot on the table. "You need to learn how to do a shot the proper way, Tara. I bet Kyle can help you out with it."

"I bet I'm not going to help her out with it."

"What's a matter, sweetheart? Are you all shy now or what?" She reached in her back pocket and threw money down on the table. "I got a twenty says you can't do it, Kyle."

"I got fifty that says you're right about that shit, Gemma."

"Since Kyle backed down like a little boy. How about you, Tara? Do you own your tattoo or is it just something you wear?" Gemma threw the conversation we had earlier about Jax back in my face to prove a point to me. Or maybe it was to prove a point about Kyle and Jax. Hell, I didn't even know at this point which one of us she was getting at.

"You know what, Gemma. It's just a shot and I own my damn tattoo."
"I don't think you get how you're supposed to drink it, Tara." Once Kyle actually explained it to me, how I took it and from where. I sat back down in my chair.

"That's what I thought." Gemma smiled so big at me from across the table.

"Give me the goddamn thing. Once I take the shot we are cutting the cheerleader off and getting some food in you. So you can sober up."

Kyle stuck the shot glass down the front of my dress between my breast. Licked slowly on my neck then shook the salt shaker. Rubbed the lime across my lips until I took it from him. Now licking up the salt, he used his mouth to drink the shot of tequila from me. With his tongue he took the lime out of my mouth.

Slammed the shot the turned over shot glass down on the table. "And that girl, is how you do a shot the right way." He waited for Gemma to comment but she didn't. "Well, how did I do? What grade are you gonna give me for it?"

"You get an A-, it needed more tongue." Kyle just shook his head at her.

Nero and Gemma were going to stay and dance together while we went to get something to eat. Kyle was extremely quiet and kept pushing me over as we walked because this time I was leaning a little, a lot.

"So, why so quiet all of a sudden?"

"I don't know. I like Nero and Gemma and like hanging out with them. But Jax is her kid and I don't want to piss her off about being around you."

"Oh, don't even worry about it. Gemma wants me to fuck you."

"I'm sorry, what did you say?"

It was another long conversation of the reasons and why Gemma told me do it. The liquor helped free up my mouth a lot too. It just all came out when I opened it.

"You can't fuck the pain away, Tara. So, don't listen to Gemma. I've tried and it doesn't work. I banged my way to just more misery in the long run. By trying to prove I was still man and I seriously thought it would give me the validation of it. But, it didn't. It also won't make them care anymore about you just by fucking someone else. Because they if they did really care, they wouldn't have done it in the first place."

We didn't need to talk anymore, like at all actually. What he said was the truth. If they loved you, they won't fuck around. I sat as I ate and went down the list of things Jax wouldn't do if he really loved me.

"Do you think you'll ever get married again?"

"Nope." His answer was brief. But he said it in a stern manner.

"I guess life is hard on a marriage, huh?"

"Marriage is hard on marriage. Especially when it's with the wrong person. If you're done Tara, I'll pay so we can go."

"Thanks, Kyle for dinner and everything."
It was so different here than in Charming. A lot more night life, a bigger town and a lot different kinds of people too. But the sky seemed clearer for some reason. The stars were out so bright tonight and hung so low you could almost reach out and touch them. We even stopped to listen to musicians as they played on the street corners. You sure wouldn't find it where I was from.

"Starting to sober up now?"

"A little."

"Good. Then dance with me."

"Here?"

"Yeah, right here, Tara. If you thought sunshine warms you, you've never danced a waltz under the stars. In place where you weren't meant to."

"Won't people think we're crazy to dance on the lawn along the side of a street?"

"So, who cares if they do. When you get older it won't be the failures in your life. Or the times you make a complete ass out of yourself you will regret. It will be all those times you did nothing and wasted it. I don't know about you, Tara. But I've wasted enough time already."

It didn't take much for Kyle to convince me to give it a try. Although I was all over the place and couldn't keep up with him.

"Why are you fighting me? I'm the guy, let me lead you. Just follow with me." Kyle didn't take the normal dance position this time. He joined his hand with mine, left space between us and verbally instructed me the movements to make with him.

"Hang on." I kicked my shoes off. "I got this."

Now, I could follow along with his movements. It was basically the same steps repeated all to a count. "You got something going on, girl." At the end he even dipped me. I got a little light headed from it or how much booze I drank. Upside down I seen Nero and Gemma.

"What are those two doing?"

"Tara is owning her place." Gemma grabbed a hold of Nero's arm. "Come on, baby. Let me show you how I own mine."

Kyle didn't turn loose of me when the song was over. With his arm tightly gripped around my waist, his other hand brushed against my cheek as it slid down to hold on to my neck. The things he could with his tongue because his overpowered mine. Even when I tried to gained some kind of composure back, he'd just take it away from me again. With a final tender kiss to my lips he let go.

"You can say I started it, I brought it and I finished it. I had to do it at least once on my terms. And now girl, we're even." With what he said he walked away and left me standing. "Come on, Tara. Don't just stand there being all captivated and hot after my body." He thought he was hilarious.

When I finally caught up with Kyle down the street. "By the way, I wasn't captivated at all."

"Oh, really. Then where is your shoes?"

"Shit." I had to walk all the way back to get them.

"Don't say anything and I mean it, Kyle." He only smiled.
We made our way back to the truck. It was time for this fun night to be over with. I'd never experienced anything like it before. So, this turned out to be a unique thing for me to do.

They had an ice cream shop we passed but he wanted to go inside. "Fuck it." Kyle put his arm around me as we walked down the street and shared the ice cream cone. "We're probably going hell anyway."

"I'm sure we are."

We still hadn't even made it to the truck yet, we got side tracked a couple of times. There were tons of different places here and various types of stores.

"What is it?"

"A dream catcher. According to Native Americans, dreams that humans have while they sleep, are sent by sacred spirits as messages. Their legend says in the center of the dream catcher there is a hole. Good dreams are permitted to reach you through this hole in the web. As for the bad dreams, the web traps them and they disappear at dawn with the first light. This is the best part, the feathers. These are from crows because they believed them to be magical and a powerful healer. The male feather is for courage and the female is for wisdom."

"How do you know all of this stuff?"

"I like to know things for no other reason other than to just know. Try it, maybe the bad dreams will go away now, Tara."

"Do you think it's even possible it really works, Kyle?"

"I think a lot of impossible things are true, if you believe in them."

"Thank you. It's really sweet you bought for me."

It was silence all the way home and when I went to my room to crash for the night. I laid my dream catcher beside me and just hoped it actually worked.

As I woke up refreshed without one nightmare, maybe it did work. Or I was a little drunk it didn't matter if I had it or not. But I didn't have a headache or anything from it.

They were all packing up and it was time for me to back and have to face it all. And I do mean of all of it. Gemma gave me what she wanted me to wear at our little meeting. She kept enforcing if I looked the part, I would be the part. Stand up and own my shit.

"Why are you out here looking all sad for, girl? You should be happy. You're going home now."

One more time before I left I wanted to just sit in peace on the dock and enjoy no bad shit coming my way. It would come around soon enough for me.

"I don't know if I can pull it off, this time. I also have to see Jax. I'm sure he won't be happy with what I've done since I've been gone."

Kyle had uncanny way of knowing what the real problem was without my coming out and saying it. "What do you have to be really sorry for? We kissed and had fun. That's it. You go back to your life and I go back to mine. If all you ever do is just kiss another man. Jax should consider himself lucky. He can't stick his dick in someone else then get all pissy over a kiss. Life doesn't work that way. No matter how much he wants to twist it up to."
"It still won't be the way Jax sees it. I don't even know where my place is anymore to own it. I thought I could do all this and I have to be crazy or I wouldn't even have tried it. Sometimes, I feel like running away. Taking my boys and never be found by anyone ever again. When we go back, are we still friends and you'll be there? I'm not sure I can do it on my own."

"I like having you here with me, Tara. A little too much actually. But you have to stop playing house with me and go home. Face it and do what you gotta do to survive. Fix your family or whatever the hell it is you need to do. Nothing changes between us. We're still friends."

"Thank you for everything and I seriously mean it. I don't know what I would do without you." I gave him a peck on the cheek. "This time, I'll give you a head start since you lost to me yesterday. I'll race ya across the water and back. Unless you're scared a girl will beat you again."

"You're on, girl."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"Look the part, be the part." I kept telling myself as we got out of the car. I was so damn nervous because I had to make this shit work. I pulled on my necklace harder than I ever had.

"Stop fidgeting, Tara. Go in there and handle your business. They are all here already." Gemma prodded me along. It was a good thing she was here. Or I might not of had the courage to walk through the door. If she could do it, so could I.

They set at a table when Gemma and I went in the Lodge. Jax had his back to us and he never knew we were even here. He did when we both went to set down with him.

But not before he looked me up and down several times. "Hey, babe. I'll be done here in a minute and we can go. I've got business to discuss with them."

"So, do I, Jax." Gemma and I both joined them and they were right. It was enough to confuse the hell out of Jax. With us being here and especially how I was dressed.

"What is this shit? My mother and old lady have nothing to do with this or my business in the club."

"They do now, esse. I've tried to keep the peace with the Sons just for you to shit on it, Jax. You've burned me and my MC one to many times." Marcus initiated the meeting with his opening statement.

"I gave you my word, Marcus. This time it will be different. There is money to be made for all of us."

"Your word don't mean shit to me and neither do the Sons. I trust Nero and we go back a long way. He trusts Tara completely, so I am willing to give her the benefit of doubt until I know different. But you, you're only here as a courtesy to them. I call the shots who does business in Stockton and who doesn't."

What Jax failed to realize is every time he broke his so called word to them. Their trust or belief he would follow through became less each time. You can only shit on the old faithful dog on the porch who gives you nothing but their love and loyalty so much, until it even gets tired of it and turns on you.

"Yeah, well, the Mayans might wanna remember Charlie has a lot to do with it too. His cops will shut the shit down anyway."

"Not for much longer he won't. I'm taking over the port, Jax and shutting his ass down. Charlie and
his whore are on their way out. Nero, his new partner, his old lady and your old lady, that's where
the money is. Money is why we do what we do, isn't it?" Marcus had a hardness to him but in the
end. Just like Nero told me; it was all about the money and how much of it he could make.

"Who is the new partner?"

What perfect timing he had too. "Sorry, I'm a little late."

"Did you handle what I asked you to?"

"It's done, Marcus." Kyle seemed different. I had no idea what he handled for the Mayans.
Something else I would assume they kept away from me.

"Fuck no, there is no in way in hell he will be a part of it." Jax was on cue with it. As I thought he
would be when we discussed the plan. If he actually went along with all this, I would be amazed.

"We're taking back what's ours, Jax. Charlie and Collette took it away from us. All the ideas that
made big money were Tara's and they are our clients who will pay whatever necessary for the
fantasy. Kyle is going to be a part of it because we say so. The question is will you be? You will get
your cut of the business along with the money they took from you too. But you have no say in it
what so ever this time. The decisions will be made by me and Tara." Nero stood firm on it. My time
to do the same with it was coming soon.

"I've gotta call Charlie and Collette first. I made deals with them already."

"Then call them, Jax. On your way out the door. You need to decide where your loyalty falls and
fast. You will not sway with it this time either. You will stand with me and Nero. Or you might as
well go live with the whore you seem to like so much. Because I sure as hell don't get this much
consideration in the decisions you make and neither does your family. So, are you in or are you out?"

Gemma gave me a slight nod when I was done in approval. The speech to him wasn't even
rehearsed, it was how I felt. Only I knew for certain this time Jax had no one left to run to. He might
find another to console him in his time of need but it wouldn't be that bitch. If he made the wrong
decision, he was fucked.

"I'll take it to the table. What's the percentage of the cut?"

What they were discussing now. Had nothing to do with me. Nero took it over while they were
talking dollars and what was expected from Jax's end to earn it. Marcus made it clear what he wanted
out of it as well. The only one who couldn't say for sure what they wanted out of it all or what Jax
had to do for them, was me. It would get determined as I went along.

Marcus held out his hand to Jax. This would be their bond of business made and if it was broken this
time, Jax nor the Sons would get the opportunity again with him. After they shook on it. Marcus
slapped Jax on the back. "I've had my ass handed to me before too, son. We all need a reminder of
who we really are. Stick with your old lady, she will help you go far."

Before Marcus made his exit he took my hand as well. "Ms. Tara, I'm looking forward to doing
business with you and Nero."

Now came the hardest part. The negotiations we had left to discuss among us. Kyle stuck his hand out
to Jax too. "Don't worry Jax, we can go back to hating each other once we get everything up and
running. But for now, let's call it a truce until business gets handled between us."

"For now." Jax hesitated but finally shook on it in agreement. "But it doesn't mean you will spend
more time with Tara because of it."

"Tara is the only reason I'm even doing it. Wise up man and see what you have in front of you before it's too late." Kyle took my hand just as Marcus did. "I'll see you later and my new buddy Jax." He was all smiles. I think to some degree he enjoyed it a little too much.

"Where are you going, Jackson?"

"To talk to king Nero. Stay out of it, Gemma."

It wasn't a talk between them really. More of a screaming match. "You couldn't give me a heads up on this shit with Alverez?"

"I'm not the one who crossed him, Jax. This is on you. I'm giving you the opportunity to make shit right and do business again. We just set out there and talked it through like men should."

"You brought Gemma and Tara in it. You got no right to do that shit, Nero. Especially without talking to me first. It was a bullshit move to call me out like that. Now, you wanna bring in that little prick in the middle of our business. I don't trust him."

"You brought them in the middle of the shit a long time ago just like you do your family. Gemma is my wife and we make those decisions together. You should try doing it with yours the same way too. I trust Kyle more at this point, than I do you, Jax. Again, Tara and I call the shots and you need to get it through your head we are in control of it. We talked about an end game before this kinda life takes it all away from you. You still got it all today; a beautiful wife, two great kids and people who care if you live or die at the end of the day. When you lose it, you got nothing left in this world. I've been there myself and lost it all. I'm not gonna ever go back to that place again. So, you need to stop and think it through."

"I warned you, Nero to stay the fuck outta my family life."

The crashing sounds from the kitchen were a brawl between them in process. Gemma went running to break it up. "Stop it, Jackson." Jax was blind if he thought for one second she would choose him over Nero ever again.

Me, I just set down and waited for it all to be over with. "Fuck my life and this bullshit."

"You come at me again, Jax. I'll put your ass down next time. I won't let how much I care about Gemma or Tara stop me either. You better get your shit together." King Nero had spoken. He wasn't a violent man by nature but it could be brought out in him when necessary.

Jax rode off alone once it was all done and over. Without anything being said to me at all. Which, I found uncommon the other club members weren't with him. He always had at least one of them by his side at all times. You would think I had enough of his bullshit already for the day. But I hadn't because I went to TM behind him.

Gemma was right about one thing so far. This outfit definitely got all of their attention when I walked across the parking lot in it. They pretty much never noticed I was alive before now.

"Where's, Jax?"

"I don't know, doll. He went into the clubhouse. Nice leather by the way." Tig actually smiled at me. Well, wasn't that a switch.

"Thanks."
"Hey." Happy called for me so I turned around to see what he wanted. "Tara? Shit, my bad. I didn't know it was you."

My outfit didn't get the same response from Jax at all. "Taking fashion tips from Gemma now? Because that shit it not you, Tara. Or is it you like all the attention you're getting from it?"

"What is really going on with you, Jax?" I reached out to him and made the attempt to hear what he had to say. See what his side of the story was. The connection I tried to make with him was severed quickly though.

"You wouldn't get it. So, why don't you go back to Nero and do whatever in the hell it is you're doing with him. Because my opinion or what I want doesn't obviously matter to you anymore, Tara."

"If it didn't matter to me. Do you think I'd be standing here right now? I love you Jax, I truly do. But you have to put forth some effort too. Talk to me."

"The more I talk to you. The less you listen. You're not the same person anymore. I feel like you have out grown me and left me behind. You're always out doing your own thing. I'm trying my hardest to make everything work even if you don't see. To just keep my head above water with you and the club. But, I'm drowning in it. Every time I come up for air to catch my breath, someone pushes me down even deeper."

"So do I, Jax. The feeling of the life being choked out of me only gets worse every day. If we really are drowning, we are doing it together, I guess."

When he did finally reach out to hold me it was interrupted just like always. "Jax, we gotta go, man." As soon as Tig came in. He went back to being the President of the club first.

"I'll be home later. I love you, Tara. I meant what I said. I will never give up on us or let you go." It was repeated over and over by Jax. The question was when did I stop believing it by just his words and not the actions he showed me?

My phone was going off when I got in the car to leave. "Hey, Ellie. I've been thinking about you lately. Do you want to go see your mom?" She was hysterical and I couldn't make out what she was saying. "Stop crying, I can't understand you."

"Lyla won't wake up. I didn't know who else to call."

"I'll be right there." Gemma was the first person I called to meet me. Hopefully we wouldn't be too late.

Those kids had been put through so much already. But today was something new even for them to experience. Gemma and Nero were inside by the time I made it. They were trying to make her throw it up. There were so many pills strung out in her bedroom, one could only guess what she took for sure.

"Get them out of here." Ellie and Kenny were witnesses all this shit. Gemma and I both agreed it would damage them later on in life, if it hadn't already.

"Go in the living room and turn on the television." Kenny did as I asked but not Ellie. She was frozen to the wall and never took her eyes off of Lyla. "Look at me Ellie." When she wouldn't I took her little scared face gently in my hands. "It will be okay. I won't leave you, I promise. But you have to take care of your little brother for me so we can make Lyla better. Okay?" She finally nodded and left the room.
What they were doing for Lyla wasn't helping at all. I checked her pulse and I couldn't find one. I started CPR on her. "Call an ambulance."

"No. This is not how we handle shit."

"She is going to die, Gemma. Call the fucking ambulance."

The few minutes it took for them to get here, was long enough for Lyla's body to have some serious damage done to it with the oxygen supply cut off. It wouldn't be the only damage done from it either. The cops showed up and now so would child services.

They carted Lyla away after they worked on her and gave her the shot so she could get it out of her system. Her life might have been saved but she was far from being saved in life. Really, so was I.

"Dr. Knowles." The paramedic probably needed me to sign the paper work for him.

"Yes."

"You did a great job with Lyla. She probably wouldn't have made it. I was wondering if you would like to maybe get some dinner sometime?"

This was a cute guy asking me out? He couldn't have been any older than in his late twenties at best. Not only did it surprise me but, made me even blush a little bit.

"Thanks, but I'm married." As soon as I turned around Gemma was in my face.

"Huh? Do you think it's the outfit? Or it's the fact you're starting to own that bitch you wear?" Of course, it was why he asked me out. He probably thought I was an easy lay the way I was still dressed. I just ignored her little comments. "We gotta do something with Kenny and Ellie."

"I'll help out with them as much as I can, Gemma. You go with Nero tonight to meet Marcus. They can go home with me and you'll have to watch them while I work tomorrow."

Home wasn't a place I'd been myself in a while. I'm sure the they felt the same way living with the Lyla the way they did. But I couldn't be happier when Abel jumped on me as soon as I came through the door. Thomas wasn't as excited as Abel was. But I was excited enough for all of us being with my boys again.

The rest of the day I spent with the kids. Kenny and Ellie felt out of place here but I tried to make sure they knew they were included too. Abel and Kenny were several years apart but they managed to find stuff to do together.

But not Ellie, she sat quietly most of the time and said nothing. While staring off at whatever it was in her world she seen. "Do you want to help me fix dinner?"

We did simple tacos. I turned on the radio while I showed her what to do. It broke the up the silence in the room. So there wasn't a need for us to talk if she didn't want to. I turned it up a little louder when a familiar song came on.

There was nothing left when we were finished eating. They had eaten it all. Ellie helped with the dishes without my asking her to. She asked if she could turn on the radio while we cleaned up the kitchen. "Sure." It seemed to make her happy.

It all went well until Jax got home that was. Ellie wouldn't look at him when he tried to talk to her. It went as far when Jax got close to her, tears were coming down her face.
"Hey, it's okay. Jax would never hurt you."

Then I realized what it was about him that really scared her. I followed him to the bathroom. "Jax, take off your leather."

"What?"

"Ellie is scared of it, take it off."

"She is not. Op wore his all the time around her."

"I think it's exactly what she is associating it with."

Ellie seen the simple piece of leather as her life's destruction. With Donna's death, the violent way she died. Her dad abandoned her went he served time in prison for the club to the point she didn't even know him anymore. Then it brought the final blow to her by having no parents, or even a grandfather left from it.

"Bullshit. It's your guilty about the club bleeding all over her, Tara."

"This isn't about me, Jax. It's for Ellie."

"Every woman I reach out to in my life seems to treat me the same way Ellie did. They push me away and try to make me feel bad because they hate what I really am." Slam went the bedroom door after Jax went through it.

"Oh, you, son of a bitch. It is on now. This is one damn time it will not be about you." So, I went in the bedroom after him.

"I blame you, Jax for the fucked up mess Kenny and Ellie are in. You should have had more concern how Opie's kids were being taken care of. You talked to Lyla all the time and were going around her. Did you once ask how they were doing? Or were your little visits just to pay Lyla to keep Kyle away from me? Because she told me about the money you gave her to fuck him. Your priorities are a little fucked up don't you think?" Jax wouldn't say anything to me so I knew I was right. He only avoided it when I was. "Nothing to say? Are you denying it?"

"Yeah, I paid Lyla to keep Kyle the fuck away from you. I would have given her the money anyway because she needed it for the kids. But it didn't work did it. The fucker is closer to you now than he was before. Do you know how fucked up it is, I gotta pay to have my wife at home where she belongs?"

"I've got four kids I need to go take care of. I suggest you pull your head out of your ass, Jax and start thinking about what is truly important in life." This time I slammed the door when I left. If I didn't have Ellie's crises to deal with I would have slammed the damn thing a couple of more times.

Once I got the kids down for the night I made my final rounds. Thomas was asleep in his crib. Kenny bunked with Abel and they were on their way out too. Ellie was awake on the couch. "I'm here if you need me. I'll leave the light on for you."

After I dug my dream catcher out of my bag, I hung it from the post on my side of the bed. With all the shit from today, I closed my eyes hoping it would do its job.

Only it never got a chance to do anything. Three hours passed by and I was still wide awake. I slipped quietly in the house to not wake them up. To find Ellie just sitting on the couch doing nothing at all, wide awake herself.
"Let's find something to do, Ellie."

"I am allowed to get out of bed this late here?"

"Tonight you are. We have a lot of energy to burn off obviously before we can sleep."

There wasn't much we could do here and be quiet about it. While searching through the cabinets I found a bag of chocolate chips. "Let's make cookies. I haven't done it in a very long time. The last time I made them was with my mother."

"Me too."

It was healing for both us in so many ways. Something we hadn't done with another person since our mothers and filled up the time of the night.

"Cheers." We clanked our milk glasses together and enjoyed warm out of the oven chocolate chip cookies. "Don't ever tell Abel I let you get up in the middle of the night and eat cookies. Because he will be mad at me."

"I won't."

"We should try to get some sleep. I have to work tomorrow."

"I'll try but I keep having bad dreams." Well, I could definitely relate to her in that aspect. With what she went through today. She needed it worse than I did.

"This is a dream catcher. It lets the good dreams come through and keeps all the bad ones out."

"Does it work? Because every time I close my eyes, they are there. Sometimes, they even chase me."

"What's there, Ellie? What is chasing you?"

"The crows."

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Forward on to Chapter 15, PART3 to keep reading my lovelies!
The next morning's headlines in the newspaper definitely got my attention. "Well played my partners in crime."

It was no longer a mystery what they did with Collette's body. Charlie and her were found naked in his home. Shot numerous times in bed together during what was expected to be a robbery.

When Jax came in the kitchen I poured him a cup of coffee and laid the paper down in front of him. He read every word of it.

"It's such a shame isn't it? Collette must have been fucking numerous dumb ass men."

"I gotta go." Jax gave me a kiss on the cheek before he left.

Now it was time to put the second part of the plan in motion. Gemma kept all the kids for me. Ellie was a really nervous when I went to leave.

"I bought you something. When you feel the need write down what you feel in it, you can. Only you have the key to it and no one else ever needs to know. I promise, I'm not leaving you and I will be back." I handed her the Hello Kitty Diary I got for her. It had a tiny little lock on it so she felt safe doing it. There wasn't a big enough lock to give me that kind of safety.

"Do you really think this will work?"

"I've got no idea, Tara. If it will or not."

"You seem really nervous. You never do."

"I haven't been around them in a couple of years. It's a life I left behind me and it where it needs to stay." Kyle wasn't exactly talkative on the way there. He was in some deep thought process.

We pulled up to a very nice, large house with cars and trucks parked everywhere. It wasn't too far from his out in the country.

After several minutes Kyle finally put the truck in park. He hadn't shut of the ignition yet. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, let's just get this done. So we can get out of here already."

An older guy met us at the door with salt and pepper hair color. But for his age, he was very nicely built. "I hear you want to take my Marines on a missions."

"It's not a mission. They are just doing me a favor. That's it."

"When a favor of love is involved, it is the most dangerous mission of all. So therefore, they are my Marines. Which, we both know don't do anything without my say so. I'm glad to see you're back with us, Kyle."
"I'm not back."

"I hate to tell you son, but you never really left."

An older lady joined him at the door. "At least let them in before you start in on the poor boy. How are you, sweetie?" She gave Kyle a kiss on the cheek. "Who's your friend?"

"This is Tara."

She made me feel right at home. Talked continuously as she introduced me to a bunch of women. Gave me a tour of the house and offered me something to drink.

By the time we made it outside to the cabana area, Kyle was explaining to a few of them what we actually wanted them to do. They were all in great physically shape. Hell, you could have been blind and still wanted to just feel their bodies for a thrill.

"Are these some bad asses or what? Please tell me I at least get to kill somebody."

"No killing anybody. Couple of hours is all I need from you. I got to have someone I can trust there because there are too many of them for me and Nero to watch and to make sure Tara is okay. This is not a shoot them up thing."

"Can I beat the shit outta them then? Come on man, there has to be some fun in it for us." This guy was cute and funny. His personality was a cross between hot sex a gram and a massive bull which could gore you without a specific reason.

"We will that one optional. Except for Jax, none of you touch him."

"Why?" Another one of them spoke up this time. He smaller in the muscle department than some of the others. Possibly younger too. But still very handsome with his dark hair, skin tone and flirty eyes.

"Because he's Tara's husband. We just keep him busy, no more, no less." They all stared at me when Kyle said it.

"And if comes down to it with him?"

"Then Jax becomes my problem to deal with."

They stood and discussed it a while longer. But I noticed they all had the same dagger tattoo as Kyle wore on his bicep. Some had it other arms too, forearms, necks and one who had shorts on, it was on his calf.

"What do the daggers mean?"

"They are our unity; purpose, fearless, defiance and overcome. We each serve a purpose to each other while being fearless and never back down until death. We defy the rules while we always overcome all. Only I'm not like that anymore."

"Are you sure? It's kind of how I see you, Kyle. I think there is a side to you, you never let anyone in to really know."

"That's funny coming from you, Tara. You know exactly why I don't let anyone in or let them get close to me. It's for the same reasons you don't do it. I'm going to have one beer with them and we'll get out of here."

Really, I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do here. So, I hung out at the kitchen bar.
"You can come set with us sweetie, if you want to." I looked around to make sure she was talking to me. "Yeah, you. Aren't you Kyle's little honey?"

"We're just friends."

"Grab a drink and come on."

They were outside all in group with their kids playing around them. It amazed me how well they all got along with each other considering each woman was so different.

"You can come set by me." She was sweet and really pregnant. We made small talk for a long time. I liked her a lot.

A hand came around on my shoulder. "Are you doing okay with them?"

"Yeah, I'm actually enjoying it. Are you okay?"

Kyle only nodded on his way back in the house. He messed up one of the blonde girl's hair. "You gotta watch her, she's mean and mouthy."

"I'm not mean, Kyle, I'm brassy." She had the cutest little southern accent.

We talked along enough, the girl and I exchanged names finally. It was her second baby and her husband was the sex a gram himself. He came out to make sure she didn't need a water or anything. For being so big he seemed so sweet when it came to her.

"I still don't know much about what you and your husbands do actually."

"Ladies, what do our men do?" She got the other women's attention. They all clapped their hands together twice and said it in unison. "And look good."

"Is it like a secret handshake or something?"

"You haven't been with Kyle long enough to understand. But you will."

"We're just friends." I found myself saying that same sentence a lot tonight.

From what she said they did a lot of interesting shit; airborne operations, counter terrorism and covert operations.

The man I seen when we got here and the man I saw now; were definitely two different ones. He was in a little bar off from the study. I sat on the bar stool beside him and whichever guy he was talking to left.

"The girls filled me in on some of the stuff you used to do. Why didn't you tell me?"

"I'm not one of them anymore. I don't really have anything in common with them. But I am opening myself up and its huge problem for me. By letting them back in my life again. If I can't trust them, I really can't trust anybody and I know that. I just have to convince myself of it. I blame you for it, Tara. I've not trusted for a long time, not even myself with the choices I've made. Until you came along. You're not the only one who has a lot of shit to overcome still."

Since he was battling his own thing. I tried to change the subject with him. "Did you really jump out planes?"

"It was a long time ago. You can't ever really go back home again. I'm ready to go if you are."
"At least tell me why you got out."

"When you can kill without blinking an eye or without any remorse. It's time to stop doing it and I was really good at it. Violence only promotes more violent acts when you get good at it. After Cody's dad died, all I seen was how truly the bad the spiral was I got sucked down in. It was my fault they all died and something I will have to live with for the rest of my life."

We said our goodbyes and I didn't push Kyle any farther about anything. "After you, Ma'am." The younger guy with dark hair opened the truck door for me. I was a little confused when he got in to.

"Boomer is going to hang out with me tonight, the others will be there tomorrow."

On the drive back my head kept bobbing around because I was sleepy from no damn sleep. I woke up quick when my head hit something hard.

"It's okay, you can put your head on my shoulder if you want to, Tara." It wasn't long enough though because he was already waking me up because we already made it back to Gemma's house. "I'll see you tomorrow. We will all meet up in the morning."

Meet up with them was exactly what we did too. Gemma pulled her sunglasses down as soon as she spotted the guys. "Goddamn, that's a whole lot of hot sex on legs walking in there."

"Uh, huh."

"Tara and Ma'am. They call me Meat." It was Mr. Sex a Gram himself. His massive arms were shown off by the white tank top he had on.

"Holy shit, I bet they do, sweetheart. I'm Gemma." She locked her arm in his. "Let me show you around."

But before we went inside the diner to eat, some of the Sons rode by. Then immediately came back. From the looks on their faces they didn't appreciate the scenery as much as Gemma and I did.

"I know you're not giving me any lip, mother fucker." They were saying shit to Meat about Gemma. When they didn't stop doing it. He grabbed his crotch. "If you're gonna keep flapping that mouth, bring it on over here."

"Hey, we're not looking for any trouble. Let's go inside and just eat." Kyle tried to keep the peace and not have a fight about it. It reminded me of what Nero would have done in this situation.

"What the fuck? Since when do you take shit like that, Kyle? Have you forgotten where you came from?"

"I haven't forgot shit. I'm like that anymore. You're here to do as I asked. So do it."

"I am going to the car to get Thomas' car seat. So I can show you all of this."

"I'll hold Thomas while you get your stuff out. Hey, kiddo. You look like your mommy." It made my heart stop for a second when I witnessed Thomas put his little head against Kyle's chest just like he does me. While Kyle rubbed his head gently, Thomas made the same cooing sound he only does with me. It was the exact mirrored image.

"What?" I must have stared at them too long and Kyle noticed. Which I was quick to take Thomas
back from him. Once I got everything out of my bag.

"Nothing. Tell me what are the nine pieces to make up the serpent because I couldn't find it in the book."

"It doesn't specifically state what it is. You have to put yourself in Odin's world and feel his emotions. See it through his eyes to know where he is coming from. You can't just read the words of the page. The parts of the serpent are; love, hate, loyalty, betrayal and so on that make up the nine pieces of the evil."

"How can love and loyalty be considered evil?"

"You learn it through Odin's knowledge and the philosophy he wrote. It's why you can't just read the words on the page and find what you're looking for. You have to be trustworthy enough to receive their loyalty before betrayal can ever exist. Without carrying love in your heart, hate can't find its way in. So you need it all in there somewhere to make the serpent whole again. There is a thin line between; love and hate, right and wrong, sin and pleasure. One of Odin's greatest words of wisdom to his disciples was; for all things you break, you shall become broken from." It wasn't only Odin who posed the power of knowledge. Kyle had so much of it I could fuel off of for hours. I've never met anyone who just like to know about stuff to just know about it.

"So it takes both good and bad to make the evil?"

"Without good and bad. Evil cannot lurk in the shadows until it comes to the surface." He always had the way of putting words in a great perspective. I would have never tied them together to make it up.

There were a lot of things I couldn't explain in full details to Kyle about the club or how John and Clay died. I tiptoed around rumor has it, it's speculated as and that's just what I've been told. I did it so we could talk about the spider's web. Actually more like try to convince him I wasn't completely insane.

Hell, I don't know even know what I was worried about it though. My theory seemed to fascinate Kyle as well. Along with throwing in his input on it but there was never a moment he doubted what I was saying to him.

"I get where you are coming from with the Original 9 of the club and the serpents nine pieces. But who is still feeding the web now? All of them are dead but one member. So there wouldn't be enough good versus evil to keep it going. Unless it's when Jax took over the club is what restarted the history again."

For a long time, Kyle steady the pattern of the web over and over. "It's never been John or Clay. Do you have a pen?"

Kyle flipped the paper over and drew out what looked like a complexed web to me. Complete with a spider in it. Well, he could draw perfectly and I couldn't so mine was more like a connect the dots picture. "It's Gemma. She has been feeding them from the start of it." At the top of the web he wrote John/Good Brother at the bottom of the web he put Clay/Evil Brother.

"There is only nine pieces to Clay's tattoo. So, what does Gemma have to do with it?"

"Gemma is not a piece of the web, she is the core of it and what keeps feeding it."

"Okay, Kyle. Don't take this the wrong way. But now, you're sounding like me, a little crazy."
"When the female builds the web. Her eggs go directly in the center of it, the core. She protects her eggs and gives them nutrients no matter what she has to do. Even if she has to kill her male lover to feed herself or the eggs, the protective mother. She will always choose her children over the male. Which goes back to Oden and Frigg from what you just told me about John, Gemma and Clay."

"What? I'm not understanding what you're trying to say at all."

"I told you the ending of the book already, Tara. Odin and his evil brother shared the fair goddess, Frigg, between them. His realm fell down around him. They stoned him and he became an outcast in what he created. His wife, Frigg and his evil brother, Ymir, killed Oden. I'm only going off what you told me and what I read in John's manuscript but it's the same damn story. John the good brother who wanted to shut the club down and his evil brother Clay who wanted to keep the bad going with the club. Both shared the fair goddess, Gemma between them. When the club fell down around John and he had no place left to turn. His evil brother Clay and his fair goddess wife, Gemma, killed John Teller. Therefore, John is Oden, Gemma is Frigg and Clay is Ymir, Oden's evil brother. It's history repeating itself all over again hundreds of years later."

It was incredible what we learned and Kyle taught me. There were still a lot of unanswered questions and a lot of the pieces of riddle still missing. Maybe it wasn't even any closer than the point we started from. But, damn what a tale it spun to be just like the spider's web. I listened to him tell me about so many things while the kids played.

"I never really read much or got in to the history of Frigg. All I know about her is what I learned from researching Oden. Frigg was the goddess of fertility, love, marriage and motherhood. She was portrayed as more of the wife and mother. But she had special powers just like Oden did. One of the powers she had was of knowledge. Which she would not share with anyone including Oden. Although he shared all of his with her. In essence it made her more powerful than even him and it's why he was no match for her to take down. The most questioned and biggest power she had was to bring a man to ecstasy like he has never known before with just her touch and not actually by having sex with them. She was the only other person who was allowed to sit on his throne with him and look down on the universe. After Oden died, his brother, Ymir was next in line for the throne and she then shared it with him too. Basically, she was a bad ass bitch and the most dangerous woman ever recorded back in those times."

When I heard the roar and rattle of their motors. I turned around. They were all here. Not just Jax, the whole club rode up. "Oh, shit."

"Cody, go wait in the truck for me. I'll be right there." Kyle must have suspected it was all about to turn bad too.

No understood my husband better by the look he had on his face than I did. "No, Jax. You're not taking my babies away from me." He tried to lift Thomas out of my arms and I only held on tighter to my son while backing away. The others members went to where my other son stood. "Abel, come to mommy, baby." He couldn't get by my side fast enough as he took a hold of my hand.

"You can stop harassing Tara. I'm standing right here, Jax. I'm guessing our little truce is over with. Since you got your way now."

"I'll get to you in a minute." Jax completely ignored the fact Kyle got between us, Jax went on past him to get to me.

"I'm not taking them away from you, Tara. But you sure as the hell won't ever take them away from me either. They are just putting the boys in the car for you while we have a talk. Let go of my son. I finally let him take Thomas out of my arms. Jax gave Thomas a kiss before Tig took him away."
"Come here little man." Abel let go of my hand when Jax called for him and I still had his tightly in my grip. "Daddy needs to talk to mommy for a minute. Go with Happy." I still couldn't make myself turn Abel loose.

"Tara, let go of him." Tig did put Thomas in his car seat in my car. So I did as Jax asked me to do. But I kept an eye on where Happy went with my son.

"Say what you came here to say Jax and let's get on with it."

Jax took a brown paper bag out of his leather. "The debt you're owed is paid in full. That's the money you gave to Tara." Jax glanced over at me briefly while he said it. "I think all my debts and sins have been paid in full now. There is no reason for you to stay in Charming anymore. Whatever it is you got going on with Tara, is over. I'm done watching you be with my wife and family. Some bad shit will happen if I find you with them again. Witness around or not."

"You like the fear you instill in Tara by intimidating her. I won't be intimidated. Fuck off, Jax." Kyle tossed the money back to Jax before he walked away.

"I thought you might actually puss out solider boy. Looks like I'm gonna get to kill you after all."

"Jax, please don't take it out on Kyle. It's my fault. I asked him to come here. There isn't anything going on, we talked about mythology while the kids played."

"I love you, Tara. No matter how much of a bad man you think I am. I will never hurt you or my sons. Or bail on my family. You protect our family your way. I'm gonna protect it my way now. But from here forward, you need to understand, you determine the way it all goes down too. Don't force me to do horrible things to him because I will. I'll be home in a couple of hours and we will talk about it then." Jax gave me a kiss on the cheek before he rode away with the rest of the club. Kyle followed them out too.

Home I went with my boys. There was so much shit running through my mind. All the things with the club and the spider web. What Jax would do to Kyle if thought I was around him again. I knew he was a killer and wouldn't hesitate doing it either.

After I bathed the boys I went to put them down for the night. I made a pot of coffee and went through all the stuff from earlier. If Gemma was truly feeding the web, she was about to turn on her young instead of lover Nero. Then what the hell would happen?

When I saw the headlight in the kitchen window, he was home. I put everything in my bag and waited for the storm to come. Although nothing did when he came inside.

"I have asked you nicely, begged and now I am telling you, Tara. If I find you or my family with Kyle again. I will hurt him." Jax kept his tone even and low. I knew he was serious about it too.

It didn't catch my attention until Jax extended his arm across the table to grab the ashtray. "Oh my god. Why do have a spider web in the tattoo?" At the bottom of his fallen brother tattoo, to remember John by. Was a web down in the corner of it with exactly nine pieces to it hanging off John's tombstone. The same exact location where I sat and watched the spider build its web when I sat graveside waiting for the crow to come.

"The tattoo represents JT's passing and the web is for the Original 9 and club to live on. Clay was the new leader at the time and it joined him with JT on the other side."

"No, it can't be possible."
"What the hell is wrong with you, Tara? You've seen my tattoo a million times."

"It's too late." My chest had a huge hole in it. I was drowning in my own tears. "It's always been too late, Jax. I never seen it coming. I should have seen it. How could I have not known it before now?"

"Tara, what are you babbling about?"

"I need to lay down." Jax kept saying my name. I just stared up at the ceiling in complete amazement at what a fool I've been. How stupid I was to buy in to all of this shit. The rest of the night I laid wide awake as it ran through my mind over and over. Only pausing once in a while to curse myself for being so blind. Sleep hadn't exactly been my friend lately and tonight was no different. I saw the light of day come in the same spot on the bed as I laid in it hours ago.

Jax had business in Stockton with Nero early this morning. He gave me a kiss before he left. I wasn't even sure how I lost control over the business we agreed he wouldn't take over and all the money that went along with too. But hell, it was the least of my worries now. If being part of the brothels made him happy, go for it.

It was pointless for me to stay in bed. So I got up showered and got the boys ready to go. We stopped and ate breakfast but I couldn't stomach it either.

The lack of sleep made me move like a turtle. It took me forever to unload the boys stuff and get them to daycare. I kissed them both goodbye and went to start my day.

"How did you get in here?" I had a surprise visitor in my office.

"Margret let me in."

"Did she get you coffee too?" Kyle smiled and nodded. "Of course she did."

"Is Jax still pissed off? I was worried he gave you a hard time last night?"

"Jax is pissed. But not at me. He will hurt you, Kyle. If you're lucky enough he doesn't kill you first."

"So. I gotta die sometime from something. If you want me to stay away, Tara. I will. But not because Jax tells me to. I just don't want him to hurt you."

"Jax would never hurt me."

"When a man thinks he is losing everything; he is capable of anything."

"What's the book?" There was a book about five inches thick laying on my desk.

"It about Frigg. I read it most of the night. I'm having trouble seeing it through her. Since she is a woman and I am a man, I don't always grasp the concept of her words. You need to read it. At least some parts of it and tell me what your opinion of it truly is."

"Are you not sleeping either?" His eyes were blood shot and puffy.

"Not much the last week. I was up all night and found nothing to make me sleep. I'm going to go out to the truck maybe catch a nap before I go do tattoos in a bit."

"Lay down on the couch. I have rounds to make. No will bother you and I'll wake you up when I get back." I twisted the lock behind me so one would disturb him.
My rounds were grueling today for some reason. I couldn't keep my mind clear long enough to stay focused on it. After the last one was made, I let out a breath of relief.

Kyle was a sleep with the heavy booked laid down on his chest. When I touched his arm he went to get up. "It's okay you don't have to get up, move over. I'm exhausted too. Just read to me because my eyes hurt."

It was so damn comfortable laying on the couch with him and this one was even smaller. When I moved my leg, I thought better of it and moved it back down. Without missing a word, losing his place or stopping. His hand moved my leg back up to where it was.

We must have got some peaceful rest together because Margret woke us up. "Tara." She used her key to get in my office.

"Oh shit."

"Your appointment is here. They paged you a couple of times. So, I let myself in to make sure you are alright. I'm not trying to intrude."

"I'm late. I gotta go. I'll see you later, Tara. Thanks for the coffee, Margret."

Once Kyle left Margret just kept smiling at me. "It's not what you think, trust me."

"I'm not thinking anything. You better hurry, they are waiting on you."

The routine today set in motion became ridiculous. We literally got no sleep or rest unless we were with each. He always looked as bad as I did every time I seen him from the lack of sleep. If I would have told someone the truth of the matter, they would have called me a liar.

We took naps like a child with our head down in the library. Sometimes in my office. Other times, even in the truck in parking lots. We never touched each other, not as much as a kiss happened.

But, there was something there we channeled from the other. Or was it? There were times it was more a spiritual guide of some sort reaching out and touching us when we were at a tranquil state of mind. Because we started having the same dreams or nightmares even. We actually could tell the other exactly what happened.

When I had a completely free afternoon, I couldn't wait to sleep. He had read me most of the book already. "Honestly, Tara. I'm too tired to fuck even if you wanted to. So lay down already." I finally laid down on his bed while he read more to me.

"Do you think we're crazy? Or maybe it's a fucked up sex thing we feel for each other? Because I can't come up with a reasonable explanation for any of it, Kyle. Why we have to be together. It's not like we ever do anything sexually. It's almost like we have the same visions of the crows too now. How is it even possible?"

"It not sexual." With a small grin he continued on. "Not all of it anyway. I don't just hear your heart beat anymore. I feel it when you come in a room. I know exactly where you are without having to look. Now, I know how crazy I must sound. But it's true. I gotta get some sleep. Close your eyes."

We slept for a few hours when I woke up and checked my phone. "Hey." I smacked his arm a few times and he didn't move. "Hey, I got to get back to work."

Kyle finally grabbed my hand. "Stay."
"Okay. You talked me in to it." I fell back over on my side of the bed and went right back to sleep. Until the alarm went off on my phone. Then I had no choice but to get up and move my ass.

Only when a connection is made with another person. You don't know what to do without them when they are not around. Kyle went to finish up his house to sell. I thought I was losing my mind in his absences.

The white faced crow convinced me of it. I followed it every day and it always took me to the same damn places. John's grave, Donna's grave, Kyle's house in Charming and his two shops. It called every single time loudly at me. With its beasty little eyes locked with mine.

"I know what I have to do. Stop it already."

Jax was on another club run this weekend and I had the house to myself. I called Nitta to see if she could stay with the boys for me.

I showered and put on the white shorts Ellie loved so much. Along with the sheer blue top she picked out for me. This wasn't something like I ever wore before nor a place I've ever gone to. But like I told her; you have to free yourself and become your own person and don't let others determine what it is for you.

But fate really does play a major role in your life. Sometimes It's a good thing and others not so much. Just before I made it to his house he passed me on the gravel road. If I had been a couple of minutes sooner, my fate changed because he would have been there. When I saw his brake lights come on and he turned around. It was the same scenario. A couple of minutes later and he would have been gone, it would have changed my fate as well.

"I guess; I should have called first to make sure you weren't busy or had plans for tonight. I'm not sure why I'm here to be honest." I shifted my body around and played with my fingers.

"You're here because you can't make yourself stay away. Even though you know it's wrong, something inside you tells you it will be okay. Just a simple touch gives you more pleasure than you ever have felt before. You'll do almost anything to get five more minutes to feel the way you do. While at the same time it scares the hell out of you. To have a connection with someone that runs so deep you almost need it to survive. I was on my way back to Charming to you because it was drove me nuts being here."

"Actually, that was well put, Kyle."

We didn't even make it in the house before Nero and Gemma pulled up. "Why the hell haven't you been answering your phones? I've been calling the both of you."

"Mine is in the truck. I didn't even know you called, Gemma."

"Shit, I left mine laying on the bed at home. What's wrong? Are the boys okay?"

"Juice got shot. They have been out looking for you, Tara. Including Jackson. So, you need to move your ass."

"Kyle, I love you, sweetheart. You're a good man with a huge heart. But make no mistake, my son will kill you if finds you with Tara. It's time to make choices for the both of you. Make them wise choices."

"I have to go." Kyle only nodded then gave me a kiss in front of them. I guess she got what his choice was.
"I need to tell Jax the truth. It wasn't like I actually done anything with Kyle. Come clean with it all; killing Collette, Kyle, the crows, all of it." It wasn't something I said to Gemma for a debate. It was the way I really felt.

"That shit, will not happen. Baby, can you give us a minute?" Nero only smiled when he went to the car to wait for Gemma. "Do you know who your husband is and what he is really capable of doing?"

"Yes, I do."

"Clearly, you don't. Jackson is on a path of destruction. You are on that path now and you took Kyle with you. Because you didn't listen."

"You pushed me to be with Kyle. So what's with the righteous bullshit now, Gemma?"

"What I told you was fuck Kyle then get past it. The guilt would have chewed you up on the inside and you would have made shit right with Jax by now. But you didn't listen to me. You strung this shit out until you think you're in love with Kyle. Just like I did Clay. So this is on you. Now, I suggest you come up with a goddamn iron clad excuse of where you have been and what you have been doing. Before you get back to the clubhouse and face Jackson."

Forward on my to Chapter 16, PART 4 to read more my lovelies!
Most of them were outside when we got to TM. Jax was sitting on the table smoking. He never took his eyes off me after I got out of the car. I couldn't stand to look at him in his.

Although the time came when I could no longer avoid him or the fact I had to face him now. I walked my green mile up to where he sat. I still avoid his glare as much as possible. "I was at…"

"I don't know where you were, Tara. But I do know who you were with." Jax looked me up and down with disgust. "I can guess the rest. Just patch Juice up before I lose my patients with you."

Juice's life depended on me keeping my shit together. I was certain the issue wouldn't go away anytime soon between me and Jax. So, I tried to get everything together I needed.

So many times I've been in this clubhouse removing bullets, and now I was sweating them too. When I cut Juice's shirt away from his body, I seen his tattoos. The bullet hit near one of them.

"Just breath."

When I looked up Jax was standing in the doorway staring at me smoking a cigarette. It made me more nervous than anything else. My hands were shaking so badly as I went to give Juice a local shot.

"I'm going to be sick." I went and found a trashcan quickly.

"I'll help you, doc."

The kind of help I needed, wasn't the kind Chibs could give me but I was grateful he was here beside me. When my hands started shaking he would try to compensate for me.

Finally, I dug the damn slug out and didn't let Juice bleed to death while I did it. It was a win, win for both of us tonight. But I had to step out and get some air because I felt like I could pass out.

Gemma was laid out on the picnic table smoking a joint when I went outside. "How's Juice?"

"He will live."

"And you, sweetheart? Will you live through it?"

"What am I supposed to do now, Gemma?"

"Play it out the best you can. Jackson will get past it and forgive you."

"Do you know that for sure? Jax knows who I was with tonight and I haven't even told him yet."

"Jax has no choice but to forgive you. Just like I always did with John and Clay. I'm going home to Nero now where I belong. It's time for the new queen to step up and earn her spot."

"Yeah, I'll be all over that. Is this one of those things. If it doesn't kill you, it only makes you
"What doesn't usually kill me, only pisses me off." With that Gemma twisted her ass to the car. She got the luxury now of leaving this place behind her and going home to the man she loves.

"Do you want some company, doll?" Gemma no more than left when they came out to the picnic table too.

"I'm not sure how good of company I'll be. But you can join me if you want to Tig."

"Jax is going through some shit right now. He does love you. It's killing him at the thought you might not love him anymore. He'd expect this from Wendy or a crow eater. But not you, Tara. You'll always be the sweet girl he fell in love with all those years ago and his rock he can lean on. I'm not trying to make you feel bad or say Jax doesn't deserve some of the treatment he gets from you. We're hard men to hold on to by any woman. We're even harder men to love once you know who we really are. It almost takes an outlaw woman to keep us in line and remind us sometimes we are just like every other man. I think you are that strong woman Jax needs sometimes to remind him."

"Thanks, Tig."

"Anytime, doc." Tig never talked to me much in the past. Only a few words spoken here and there. He even gave me a kiss on the forehead before he walked away.

A true woman of an outlaw would not be hiding outside away from her problems. So, I wouldn't either. I knocked on the door to his office before I went in. Jax was sitting on the couch with his arm propped up resting his head against it.

"Is it okay, if I sit down?"

"Yeah. How's Juice?"

"I got the slug out and the shards from it. I don't think he will have any permanent damage. But he needs to be watched closely the next twenty-four hours for infection."

Jax put his hand on mine. "Will you do that for me?"

"Sure. I can call Ninta and see if she can stay with the boys tonight. I'll stay here with Juice."

"I sent Bobby and Happy to get the boys already. They should be back soon. I know they miss you when you're gone from them." He gave a slight smile after he said it.

"Jax, there is something I have to tell you…"

"No, please don't." He squeezed my hand tighter in his. "Just sit here with me." We sat quietly together for the first time in a long time.

Chibs came through the door holding up a cell phone. "Jackie it's for you."

"Not now bro."

Jax never stopped club business for anything and I do mean anything. He was so calm and spoke so softly with his words. His hand didn't move from mine until Abel came through the door with Happy holding Thomas.

"Mommy."
"There's my babies."

Abel was the first one I hugged for dear life. Jax took Thomas, held him for a minute then kissed him. Jax gave him to without a hesitation.

It relieved me actually Jax didn't try to keep them away from me. Next he picked up Abel and did the same with him.

"I'm going to put them bed."

Jax brought Abel behind me to the room. I got them laid down finally. Jax only watched and never said a word. He gave me a kiss on the cheek before he disappeared again.

Thomas laid next to me in the middle of the bed. While I held on to Abel's leg. It wasn't as though I could really sleep anyway. But it startled the hell out of me when I felt a hand on my face.

"I didn't mean to wake you up. I'll go." Jax was sitting on the side of the bed. I didn't feel it when he sat down.

"Jax."

"Yeah."

"I'm sorry."

"Yeah, me too, Tara."

There wasn't much of any type of conversation between me and Jax for the next couple of days. We purposely moved around each other gently. I watched over Juice like I said I would. He was already back up and ready to fight again.

Most of the time I spent with Gemma when she was here. The rest of the time, I actually enjoyed Tig's company. For the most part, we really didn't talk a lot. But just sort of hung out with each other.

The club left early this morning for something. They were all quiet with what the plan was. I tried to be of some help to Gemma since there wasn't anything else to do. I filed her paperwork, swept the floors and she kept me busy with other random stuff that needed to be done.

"Oh shit." Gemma was out the door of the office before I even knew what was going on. When I got up to look out the window, I was out the door quickly too.

"Where is he?"

"I don't know where Jackson is."

"I'm not playing, Gemma. Where the fuck is he?" Something bad had to of happened for Kyle to scream at Gemma the way he did.

"They left earlier. Honestly, Kyle, I don't know where he is."

"Then I'll be back." Kyle slammed the door shut on his truck and he was fuming.

He didn't end up having to come back to find Jax. Because they rode in past him before he made it out the gate.

"I had an interesting chat with your ex old lady and Zac. I made her a deal she couldn't refuse. It's
sucks when somebody fucks with your family doesn't it?"

There was a lot of screaming between them. Then it turned physical. I went to at least try to break it up. Gemma grabbed me by the arm. She didn't speak a word only shook her head no.

"They will hurt each other, Gemma."

"They need to feel that pain. Let's go inside now." She was so casual about it all. Just shut the door and don't watch. Pretend like it just didn't happen. The same way she does everything else.

Only once again, I know it did happen. The damage was done and it was because of me. Jax wouldn't tell me what he actual did. Other than he warned me he would protect his family, his way and I didn't listen. The other one, he wouldn't pick up the phone to tell me either.

It wasn't like I didn't have enough shit already in my life and around me going on. I caused even more for all those lives I touched. So, I figured I had to do something, even if it was wrong.

After a couple of days, I caught him at his tattoo shop working. He had a customer he doing one for. I waited at the counter to not disturb him. Let's face it, I had already done enough to him.

"What do you want, Tara?" He never stopped working on the guy in the chair. Or maybe he just didn't want to see my face.

"I came to say I'm sorry. I don't even know all of what Jax did. But you don't deserve any of this."

Kyle let out a long sigh before he stopped, turned around to look at me.

"Jesus Christ. The gash on your cheek probably needs stiches."

"Well, I did want to fuck his wife. So I figured I had some of it coming to me. I don't care about my face, it's my kid. That scar won't ever heal."

"It's my fault. I…"

"I don't blame you, Tara. I should have known better because I let you get to me. I threw all the rules I've lived by out when it came to you. I knew it would fuck me over letting someone get close to me. But you made me believe maybe it was actually possible. There is always a price to be paid for trusting and I've paid for it now. I gave up everything I got to protect my kid. Just to turn around and hurt him with all this. The one person I'd never do anything to. I can't come back from that shit."

"Maybe you can talk to Zac and explain everything to him."

"I tried already. It was a two-minute phone call at best. Long enough for Zac to tell me he never wants to see and how much he hates me for abandoning him for my new family in Charming. Tell me what goddamn family I got here, Tara? The one Jax told him I have? I made my son feel the way I felt. My father didn't want me over his other family. It's not even true what told Jax told him. I'd give anything to spend the time with my son Jax just pisses away with his. Imagine if it were Abel or Thomas telling you how much they hate you. I'm busy and you need to go."

"Can't your ex-wife tell Zac the truth?"

"This is my favorite part of the fucked mess I got myself in. Jax gave that bitch my ten thousand dollars to go along with what he said. He used my money against me. Now, I am completely broke and probably stuck with the house forever. I'll have to keep paying for it because until I come up with the money again, she'll never sign off on it."
The more I tried to apologize the less Kyle listened to what I had to say. "Can we at least talk after you get done here?"

"Come on man, she pouring her heart out to you. At least listen to what she's got to say." The customer commented on our conversation but it really wasn't one Kyle liked.

"Did I ask for your fucking opinion?"

Once the guy raised his head out of the chair, then I recognized him. "Hey, Tara."

"Hey, Boomer."

"You know you care about her…"

"Head down, mouth shut." Kyle shoved his head back to the chair. Then he went and opened the door for me to leave.

"If I weren't married, Kyle…"

"To many goddamn ifs in that sentence, Tara. Go home and do whatever it is you actually do with Jax. Everybody wants the violent and mean mother fucker I can be back; well, now I am. If he comes out me again, I will fuck him up no mercy this time. And that, is a promise because I will not let you interfere with the way I handle it anymore."

"When you calm down later. Maybe we can meet and talk this through."

"No we can't meet later. I've got a date and moving on with life. You need to do the same." The door slammed loudly as soon as I hit the sidewalk.

Shortly after that my world fell completely apart. They always say honesty was the best policy. Those motherfuckers were idiots who said it. I came clean on everything with Jax. It was supposed to be a cleansing of my soul to get right with myself.

There were only a few minor details I left out to Jax. I told him how it all started with the crows. All the things I kept from him. The time I spent Kyle and even the kisses we shared between us. How I manipulated people for the Lodge to get my way to earn the kind of money we did. Confession of how I lied to protect him, the club, our family and myself. Basically, I turned into the female version of Jax. I was no longer just living among the chaos and mayhem, I was a part of it. With one simple act I committed at a time.

There were only two people I protected in secret; Nero and Gemma. I didn't nark them out because they never did me. I took the blunt end of the blame on everything.

"Do you really expect me to believe a crow told you to do all this shit? That JT came back from the grave? Jesus Christ, Tara. How stupid do you think I am?"

"I'm telling you the truth, Jax."

"That fucker has got you all twisted up inside until he's brainwashed you. Are strung out on drugs or what? Because if you truly believe any of this shit, we need to get you some help."

"I can prove it to you."

For hours we set out at John's grave and nothing. Absolutely not a fucking thing happened. Not one single crow came in sight around us. Jax was even more convinced I lost my mind and maybe I
actually had. He helped me to the car as I cried all the way home.

But my crying times didn't stop there nor did my heart bleeding out on the inside. Every time I held Thomas and he cried, I cried right along with him. I cried at sad commercials. I cried because we were out of milk even.

"I'm afraid to leave Tara alone with the boys. Will you stay with them, Gemma just until I can get something figured out?"

"Sure, baby. I'm here."

It got so bad I was no longer trusted with my children alone. I thought having a constant babysitter was a horrible experience. But, nothing was worse than a mother who was considered harmful to her own children.

Since Jax and Gemma didn't include me in their conversation like all of them anymore. I went to get the mail. Surely they wouldn't think I could hurt myself doing it. But hell, I was wrong once again.

The white faced crow landed in my yard. "You, traitorous son of a bitch." I threw each piece of mail at him I had in my hand and missed. Then picked up rocks to hurl at him.

It was the final straw for Jax. He and Gemma witnessed my anger I displayed towards the crow from the porch. He picked me up from the ground where I had thrown my fit and carried me to bed.

"You gotta get some help, Tara. I love you and we'll figure it out. Gemma is here with the boys so stay in bed and get some rest." Jax kissed my forehead before he left.

Rest wouldn't come to me though. I hadn't slept more than a few hours in days. It was due to my body finally giving out enough to pass out from the shit world I was a part of.

The last time I passed by a mirror; I was a real mess too. The dark circles under my eyes only complimented the blood shot red they showed. Even my cheeks looked sunken in from all the weight I lost.

Gemma was in the kitchen cleaning off the table from breakfast for the boys.

"You could have told Jax the truth about the crows, Gemma. Then he wouldn't think I'm crazy."

"Which truth is it you would like for me to share with, Jackson? Because I can drown him in truth, Tara. I warned you to stop chasing dead men and crows. You're the one who wouldn't listen to me. Now, pull your shit together and get back to taking care of your family. I know my son. He has reached his tolerance level with it. If you don't make shit right soon, this will end very badly."

"Is this the same shit John went through before he died too? Was it how everyone treated him?"

"John became delusional about life. He lost the will to live because he let guilt chew him up on the inside. At the end, he was just a shell of a person without a sign of life left in him. I honestly didn't even recognize the strong man I once loved and adored. Nor did anyone else. After we lost Thomas, the grief made John loose his mind."

"John wasn't crazy or delusional, Gemma. And neither am I. I'm just pissed off." I slammed my bedroom door shut. But the reality was, I had shut more than just the door in life to keep things out.

The same four wall I stared at. Now were the metaphorical prison I was captured in with no way out. The one I built up around me because of my actions.
"Fuck my life." I threw myself back on the pile of pillows on the bed and tried to shut my eyes. I could hear Gemma talking to someone, a male voice.

"How's he doing?"

"Not good. I made him get up to eat and at least take a shower. Hey, Tara." Nero noticed me before Gemma did. "Well, I'm going to confession. I'll see ya later."

"Can I go too?" Nero waited to see what Gemma thought first before he would answer me.

"Maybe it will do you some good to get out of the house for a while. I'll stay here with the boys."

Nero waited for me to take a quick shower and get dressed. I combed my hair today, it was an improvement if anyone was counting or even noticed.

It was pretty much silent on the way there between us. It wasn't as if I felt like talking much anyway. The church was huge and really pretty on the outside when we pulled up. The stain glass windows reflected off the sunshine. You could smell some of the different flowers in bloom around it.

"I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do, Nero." The last time I remembered being in a church. My mother took me with her on a Sunday morning and was completely gone from life by Tuesday.

"You confess your sins inside the private confessional where no one else can hear you but the priest and god. Then they forgive them and you."

"The last time I confessed my sins to Jax. It didn't work out so well for me. I'll sit here and wait for you."

The long wooden pew was centered in front of the large cross on the wall. I pulled at my necklace as I looked at it. I wasn't sure I had anything left to believe in. But I gave it a shot. "Forgive me because I have sinned and it's a very long list…"

Did it make me feel better once I finished? Not really because if you don't have faith in what you're doing, it wasn't important to you to begin with.

Although it did remind me of my mother being here. She dressed herself and me up every Sunday. It was just our time together. After we got home she would cook a large meal in the afternoon. She always listened to the same song while she did it. I quietly sang it to myself.

"I wandered so aimless life filed with sin. I wouldn't let my dear savior in. Then Jesus came like a stranger in the night. Praise the Lord I saw the light." Nero joined me with his hand on mine and we finished it quietly together. "I saw the light; I saw the light. No more darkness, no more night. Now I'm so happy no sorrow in sight. Praise the Lord I saw the light."

Perhaps the light my mother seen wasn't the one in the song. It was the light of life again. The one she couldn't have staying with my father, being my mother. The one by having a family made the light totally go out in her. The tears were coming for a different reason this time.

Nero put his arm around me and I leaned my head over on his shoulder. "I know, mama. It hurts." He wasn't joking about that shit.

"I'm ready to go home."

"Okay."
Only it would have been better to stayed in the church rather than face what was waiting for me in the parking lot.

"What are you doing here?"

"I don't know, ask it." The white faced crow was here. But I didn't remember seeing it when we came in. "It's brought me to you several times the last few days, Tara. I'm seeing it all the time now. When I am awake and what little I do sleep. I set outside your house for almost thirty minutes last night trying to figure out what I was supposed to do. Since I didn't know if I should come up to the door or not, I did nothing and went home. I don't want to cause any more problems for you."

"The feeling is mutual, Kyle. I never meant to cause you a bunch of problems because of me. Are you not sleeping either? You look bad but not as bad as I do. I feel even worse on the inside."

"Are you happy? Nero told me you are working out things with Jax." Nero had been in contact with him at some point. They don't even mention Kyle's name in my presence anymore.

"I'm trying to work it out; do the right thing and put my life back together."

"Take care of yourself, girl." He gave me a kiss on the forehead and that was the last he had to say to me.

My mind must be running on empty because I wasn't thinking clearly. "Hey, wait. You said the crow brought you to me." By then he was driving away. "Fuck, it probably doesn't matter anyway now."

Jax was at home when we got back. It was the middle of the afternoon and he wasn't usually here this early.

"I talked to Margret. She scheduled you some time off and she got you a spot for an evaluation."

"You mean psychiatric evaluation to see how crazy I am."

"Tara, I'm trying to get you some help. It's only for a couple of day. Gemma will stay here with the boys. It's for the best. I do love you and want you to get better."

My bag was already packed and sitting by the door. I just thought I had been down some difficult paths before on my own. This one would make it all better or completely break me beyond recognition.

At the locked doors Jax stood by my side until they buzzed them open. He stayed until I finished all the paper work and it was time for them to take me to my room. I'll give him, he still showed me loyalty after all I had done.

"I love you, Tara. I'll never let you go. Or give up on us."

"I love you too."

"I'll be here tomorrow to see you, I promise." Jax didn't disappear from my sight until I stood in the doorway of my room. I gave him a little wave and a halfhearted smile. He gave me a smile back before I went inside.

The first thing they did was hook me up to feed something intravenously through my veins. "What is this?"

"It will help you sleep."
The nurse wouldn't give up any information to me. So I got up from the bed and looked for myself. I grabbed my chart too. The medication regiment for me was an upper to start the morning, a downer to slow the other in the afternoon and one to knock my ass out at night. This was no more than a way to keep me quiet, dazed, confused and asleep.

"I want to see the doctor on staff."

"They have already left for the day. The doctor will make his rounds in the morning. You can speak to him then."

"Then page his ass because I'm not taking this medication. I'm a doctor too and I know what it does to you. It controls your brain and what you can and can't process anymore."

"Sure you are." She was just pacifying me by the tone in her voice.

"I'm not crazy. I am a doctor."

For sure she was when she came back in with an orderly and shot me up with something. Every muscle in my body was in a relaxed state. I could still see and hear what was going on. But I couldn't move at all.

It changed too with the more medication I was given. I could hear monitors going off. Sometimes people would make noise while moving in the room. The only comfort I had was a warm hand I felt in mine. They rubbed small little soft circles around on top of it with what felt like a thumb. I was certain I wasn't dreaming. Every time I could get myself out of the groggy state, there was never anyone around me.

Unfortunately, I couldn't get awake enough when I had another nightmare to bring myself out of it either. This was the same reoccurring one I had when the crows came to take me home with them and it ended in a fiery explosion of my death. Only this time, I felt the hand holding mine again, they were with me through it. There was also a soft touch to my face a few times when I felt my body jerking involuntary on the bed.

A loud bang finally brought me out of the sweaty nightmare. My gown felt soaked and stuck to my skin. A nurse was in here changing me like a child.

"Was somebody here?" It was all I could manage to get out and make sense.

"Your husband just left. He comes in two or three times a day and sits with you."

That was the last day they had me heavily medicated. I understood why once I was put in with the other resident patients. Most of them had no reality left in them. Or were so badly damaged from what they were going through, they looked as bad as I did. It was to force my mind in a relaxation mode. They said I had no dreams or nightmares while I was out. But they were wrong because I still did. My body actually felt rested for the first time in weeks. So, I guess it did do something for me.

The next wonderful event they scheduled was an appointment with the psychiatric. It didn't go any better than I expected it to when I told him what was going on.

"I'm not crazy. It really happened."

"Tara, I never once have said you are crazy. But crows cannot speak, they cannot communicate through the dead and they cannot navigate you to different locations."

The doctor diagnosed me as delusions with an acute case of schizophrenia. Which he thought was
completely curable with time and medication. He felt I lost touch with reality. The delusional part came because I believed in the crows while creating a world where they fit in. Even more so, I built a world around Kyle with the crows to justify my bad behavior.

The doctor was full of shit because it did happen and it was real. There was still enough of me left inside to know so. But if it got me out of here, I would play along with him.

A large window in the recreational room was where I spent my time. The bars were large that covered it all the way across so you couldn’t jump through it and escape. I stared outside most of the day. Wondering what John went through just before they killed him. Did he start to believe he really was crazy too? What condition did they tell him he had? Did he find a moment’s peace with what he went through? Which sins did he not even get past he had done? Would he have caved to do what I was doing to save his family?

There were still many sins I had left to repent. I even started a list of them and who I did them too. With nothing but time on my hands and medicated. Now was the time to deal with it.

"All the times you’ve been around me and you didn’t think to mention you’re sleeping with my husband. The divorce isn’t final yet, Jax is still my husband. Abel is our son. And just where will you be while I’m gone, with Jax? The two women who love Jackson Teller. If you don’t see the differences between us, you don’t get me at all."

"I’m sorry Wendy. For all things you break, you shall be broken from."

Never had I thought of myself as the possible other woman, until now that was. Their marriage was probably doomed without my interference. But still, did I play a part of their final fate? Or did I become broken myself because of what I did then?

The days changed to nights as I set in front of the window. My chair spun in as many circles as my head and sins did. While I set perfectly still each time it turned to a different side of the wall showing me another thing I did wrong. I went through them all and made sure I mentally noted what got me to where I am today. Today was the day for a new start, a fresh beginning. I was going home.

Jax was so wonderful, attentive and loving. All the things I pushed so hard to get from him before. He gave me freely this time. I got all the allowance he felt I needed, patients about everything and he gave me his understanding.

On everything except one subject, the crows. I had to admit out loud they never truly existed. I made it all up. He let me be the one who packed up any books, notes or drawings I had on it. I threw it all in the trash can. It was now a closed chapter in my life. I had to move on from it.

One would think it was an easy task to do. Since I did admit it. But my heart still told me it was all true. When I got up to make coffee the next morning. It stared me in the face when I opened the lid to the trash can. I took it out of trash before I poured the old grounds in it. I tucked it all in my bag to take with me to the hospital. Where I locked it up in my desk drawer. I referred to it as my drawer of madness to stay locked away.

Old behavior dies hard though. I went right back to not sleeping or eating again and the lonely feelings came back as well. Still having the desire to know what the crow was trying to tell me. But I refrained. I would stay busy, walk it off or sometimes even eat chocolate as a reward of not going back there.

Until one day the boys and I were out and about. The white faced crow made his long absent appearance to me. I slammed on the brakes when he went left and I was going right. "Hold on
babies. We're going for a ride."

The bastard took me all over town before he finally landed. When he could have taken me from point A to point B in half the amount of time. I wasn't surprised to see who was there.

But I was surprised by his appearance though. He had lost so much weight his pants literally hung off of him. By his eyes he hadn't slept for days. His dark circles were with the blood shot red color too. With his ball cap turned around backwards on his head he stood with Nicole. I barely even recognized him. He wasn't any longer the way I remembered him or the strong man I once knew.

When I spoke to him, he ignored me. But when Abel did it, Kyle couldn't do it to him. They talked about George until Kyle went to leave.

"Ask your mom if it's okay to leave George so you can play with him. I'll pick him up from Nicole later."

"I'm standing right here. Abel doesn't need to ask me because I hear what you're saying. So don't even pretend like you don't see me."

Abel looked back and forth between us. I forgot what a smart little boy he was for his age and all the shit he has already been put through. "It's okay, baby. You can go play with George."

"I'll take care of George while you're gone, Kyle. I promise."

"I know you will. I'll see you later, buddy." It was the first time Kyle ever hugged Abel and he was the one who initiated it too. I waited until Abel left so I could say what I wanted to.

"How much longer are you going to keep this shit up? You can't even speak to me or look at me anymore. I know it's effecting you the same way it is me. Your eyes give you away too."

"I won't have to do any of this for much longer, Tara. I'm selling everything off and leaving here. So I can get off this fucking ride at crazy town. You know it's better for you this way. Nicole will keep George. Anytime Abel wants to see him, you can work it out with her."

"So, that's it. You're just going to run away from it?"

"I am not running away. I am doing what's best. You need to see it too, Tara. This has to end and you need to agree with me on it." When I refused to do so he continued on. "Then I will do it for you. I'll be the dick and you can blame it all on me. It's my fault I let things go this far with us. I knew it couldn't end anyway but bad and I did it anyway. So from now on. If you call me when you need me, I won't answer it or be there for you this time. It can be another reason for you hate me and feel like I abandoned you just like everyone else has. Because as of today, I am abandoning you. When I see you, I won't even acknowledge your presences anymore. To push away any good thoughts, you might have of the time we spent together. If you even have any. Because you no longer matter to me in my world so why should I in yours. I'll even go as far to be so cruel to you, I'll make you cry right now. If it's what you need from me. So you don't have to feel anything for me anymore."

"Don't push me away, Kyle. Everyone else thinks I'm crazy and I'm not sure they're not right. You're pretty much the only reality I have left because I know it all happened. I can't explain the connection I feel with you or why it's even there. But it is there. You even told me you feel it too."

"I saw what they did to you, Tara. They stuck you in a room and doped you up to the point you didn't even know your own name. Now they are all saying you're crazy. I think you somewhat believe it too. How much longer do you have before Jax gets tired of all this bullshit? If you become
too much of a problem for him to handle, he will lock your ass away. Or worse, just like John was to
Gemma and you receive his final fate. This is what is best. For me not to be around you anymore and
for you not to be around me. Please, don't make me be mean to you. I don't want to but I will. Just
agree with me." Kyle took my hand and when I felt his thumb rubbing circles around on top of it, I
knew.

"You were there with me. You're the one who set by my bed every day and held my hand. You
couldn't stay away from me then and you won't be able to do it now either."

"Obviously you are not hearing what I am saying to you. You were nothing but pussy to me I
thought I could get. I never really felt anything for you. I just thought I did. The connection you think
we have is no more than what you needed from me at the time to get past it with Jax. Now you need
to get past it too. Because I already have and this is over. Jax will be there when you get home so I
suggest it's where you go to."

"You're lying. It's not how you really feel."

"I guess you won't ever know for sure. Now will you? I know you, Tara. You can handle anything
but doubt. It eats you alive."

"Kyle, how can you say such hurtful things to her?"

"Stay out of it Nicole. This is between me and Tara."

It was finally done and over. It was true, doubts were my worst enemy and along with being
abandoned. I've doubted so many things. Pretty much everything in my life at one point or another.
Nicole tried to get me to talk to her. I had no more to say. But she did.

"I like you, Tara. I owe you so much for what you did for Cody, you saved his life. It's a debt I can
never repay to you actually. But I love my brother. I don't know exactly what all is going on with the
two of you and it's none of my business really. I don't pry in Kyle's life and he tells me every little
about anything these days. I do know when she left and took everything he had it completely
crushed him. But whatever is it between the two of you, goes beyond that. All he does is lay around
and drink most of the day away. I don't even know the last time he went to work, got out of the
house or even ate for that matter. I called him for three days straight before he would even pick up
the phone. I used Cody to coax him out of the house tonight. Because I know Kyle can't ever tell
him no."

Nicole's phone kept ringing. She ignored it several times before she answered it. "You, don't tell me
what to do, Kyle. I'll talk to whoever I want to." After she hung up on him she gave the sweetest
smile. "Brothers, you gotta love them. Because you can't always beat the shit out of them when they
are being stupid. Do you know we need, Tara?"

"A tranquiler, booze, weed, a new life?"

"Well, I was thinking more along the lines of ice cream. Let's get the boys and go get some."

John the Revelator, Chapter 17, Part 5 has already been posted. Forward on to keep reading
my lovelies.
Kyle kept his promise too. Everything he owned had a for sale signs on it. What little I seen him out and about, I was invisible to him. He walked on past me without a word spoken. There was nothing left to say between us, we had said it all. He only looked worse each time I seen him. I wonder if he even felt one once of the weight I did?

So, as with a child. You can only hear something be told to you for so long until you believe it yourself. Or have it demonstrated so many times until it stuck with you. I felt his harsh feeling towards me were a true reality. He didn't ever really care for me at all. The connection I thought we had dwindled away to never was to begin with. Which I became more disconnected from life because of it. If it was even possible.

Other things changed around me as well. Jax and the club had pretty much taken over my part of both brothels. I didn't even fight it nor cared how it got ran either. Nero was pissed off about it. But until I could function as a person, what good was I to him? What good was I to anyone really?

Everything I did, what I fought so hard for. All the progress I made when I was stronger and stood my ground. Just pushed Jax deeper in the club. On the instance of trying to do right, I turned it upside down to all wrong. It made him even more determined he could make it work. Once he was certain I would do it his way, he foraged from my strength to overpower me. I was on this ride on his terms or else. But, I had no one to blame but myself for it. Jax wasn't the who played the game and lost. It was all on me this time.

My home life went to worse than it was before I started this crusade. I had less say in anything than I used to. When I was told what to do by Jax, I just did it without conflict or butting heads with him. I had to do it so I could get along with them all and to still belong to this family as a part of it. He was extremely happy and I was miserable as hell. Again, it was my own fault too.

The biggest change that came through, was the change in me. It all crept up on me over time. But it hit me hard today. I was now just like all of them. I lied to everyone and pretend to be what I really wasn't. To add to it I had kept secrets like Gemma without any remorse and become jaded as she was. Once you kill, you are a killer no matter what suit you have on at the time. Violence coursed through my veins as well like all of theirs. I've committed criminal acts for money and got good enough at it to do them again. All the things I hated in life, I became. Not just became either; but all thing I broke, I was broken from in the most complexioned ways from now.

There was a good part of me still in there somewhere trying to fight its way back to the surface. I just lost my way to it. Or maybe he took it with him when he left. I know he wouldn't let me wallow in self-pity or allow me to give up especially on myself. When everyone else encouraged it along. The obvious abandonment I felt and the traces of it were everywhere. I was so lost without anyone who believed in me. It was apparent everywhere I looked too.

The only truth or reality left was what I wrote down and read daily so I could make sure yesterday truly did happen. But more so to make sure I was still alive today.
When I look up at the stars and can almost reach out to touch them I still believe. The dance we shared under them I hold on to as not a figment of my imagination because I am unsure if it is or not anymore.

On the memory of it, was when my world was right and I knew what I was half ass doing. But I didn't know the way it would all end. Life is better left to chance without knowing your fate or destiny. But what chance is there it would bring this kind of pain for me. I almost welcome the pain I have and flourish on it just to know I am still alive on the inside.

You were actually right. It' never the failures you have or when you make a complete ass out of yourself you end up regretting. It's those times you missed out on and wasted by not trying at all. I don't have much time left to even have a new regret now as I feel my time has expired.

I stepped up too because of all of it and handled my shit. Wasn't I the queen. But as all queens do eventually; they fall to ruins at some point. You caught me when I fell before. If you could do one more thing for me. I promise, I will let you go then.

So, if you could tell me when you feel my heart stop beating because you're the only who'd know. There is a possibility it already has and I don't even know. Tell me when my crying has stopped and I will sob no more. There is the possibility the silence it is just my heart bleeding out and I don't even know. Tell me when you hear me fall without the chance of recovery from it. There is the possibility I already have and I don't even know.

With the last sentence wrote, I closed the book. I needed to get some air. On way out the door to set on the step, Abel came out with me. "Where are you going, Mommy?"

"Mommy is going crazy, baby."

"Can I come too? I miss you taking me and Tommy with you."

The one thing I prided myself on was being a good mother to my boys. It was the only true accomplishment of my life I had left. Abel needed me and I now failed him by not even existing with him anymore in the same house. How was I any better than Jax? I broke down worse than I ever had before. I let my babies down.

Until my son pulled my hair away from my tear stained face and placed a gentle kiss on my cheek. "Don't cry Mommy. I'll kiss it and make it feel better." He stuck his little cheek out to me as far as he could. "It's your turn to give me one back. I promise, I will make you giggle this time."

There was a turning point you reached in life when it all went to shit fast. There had to be the same point somewhere to turn it back around too. My sons were mine.

We watch our children progress and get older. All the things they learn to grow. But if you just watched them and never do the same things yourself, you stop growing. You stop moving forward and you stop living beyond that point in your life.

With the new day's dawn, came a brand new me. I would not make the same mistakes John Teller did. I would not continue to live in the same hell he went through either. But most of all, I would not allow them to break me any farther.

The cunning spider had nothing on me now. Gemma taught me too damn well. Because I even had her convinced. I put the pills in my mouth every morning just like a good, kept in line, ill crazed person would as she gave them to me. To hide them under my tongue until I spit them out and put them in my pocket. Later I flushed them down the toilet or threw them away at work.
But there was a price to pay for everything you did in life. I went cold turkey on all of it. I felt like a junkie trying to recover. I finally knew what Wendy's heartbreak was. The jitters, at times I had no control over my mood swings and I would have cold sweats that turned to all night binges of a miserable hell. With a strong woman's determination and the love of a mother's heart, I got past it.

It wasn't only Gemma I had to convince though. The answers were always in front of me as most truly are in life. If I had been smart enough to stop and think it though I would have known what I should have done long before now. The good doctor was on my list next. I researched every ailment, every cure and every downfall of what he diagnosed me with.

"Tara, you have made remarkable progress. Do you feel like we just need to do maintenance visits now and possibly cut back the dosage a bit?"

"Yes, I do."

"You have come to the conclusion on your own crows really can't talk nor ever have. It is the depression causing your sketches of paranoia. If all my patients were this easy to cure. I am going to step out and talk to Jax for a moment to get his feelings on it as well."

Their talk went well. Instead of coming three times a week, I would come once a week to start. Then cut it again if I did well down to every other week and so on.

"We should celebrate, babe."

"What do you have in mind?"

"Let's grab an early lunch. Just me and you before we pick up the boys."

"Sounds great, Jax."

We had never done it before. Actually gone out anywhere to eat together. It was a shamed it took a tragedy of my mind to bring us closer. But beggars couldn't be choosy and I should just be grateful Jax had any patients left with me what so ever.

The true test came as we walked down the street to the diner. Fate always had a way of intervening at the perfect moment or not so much at the time. It was one of those not so much times.

Nicole was helping Kyle load up everything from his shop in Charming. What little this town left him anyway. My eyes stayed forward and I didn't see a damn thing.

"I'm glad to see you finally took my advice. It's past time for you to move on from Charming now. Maybe I won't have to kill you after all."

The tailgate on his truck slammed loudly after we passed by. It wasn't his voice I heard respond to Jax's comment. It was Nicole's. "Kyle, don't." I never turned around to see what was taking place because I didn't want to know. It must have not been too bad. Jax put his arm around me and gave me a kiss as went to have lunch.

It was the nicest time we had lately. The conversation was kept on the light side. Jax even shared some of his thoughts on the future and he included me too in it.

"We need to pick the boys up so I can get back to TM."

"I can do it. I should put sometime in at the hospital. I need to get back into a normal routine."
"Are you sure, babe it's not too soon?"

"I feel great today."

"I'm really proud of you. I'll have Unser come by to make sure you get home okay. I love you."

"I love you too."

Jax gave me a kiss. He rode off in one direction and I drove off in a complete another. We had been doing it so much in life as well. Only the direction I was going in would make life easier or so much harder for the both of us.

Somethings were always better off left alone. Unfortunately, I still couldn't even if I was completely on my own with it now. Once I got to the hospital I unlocked my drawer of madness.

There was only one member of the Original 9 still alive. He was the only person left to talk to. All the information he knew about John was locked away from my reach. So I dialed the only person I thought could send me in a direction I needed to go in.

"Lowen, this is Tara. Is there any way you can get a message to Lenny Janowitz in prison for me? When I went there, he is not allowed any visitors."

"Lenny is on death row without any chance of parole. I have no access to him. I can file an appeal. Which it will be denied and a waste of money. It will take a month to get the paperwork in motion for me to even get a five-minute consultation with him."

"Never mind then. I was just trying to see what he knows about John Teller. No one is really left who will talk about him. I can't even find out when the time frame when he and Gemma got married. Of course she, is no assistance in the matter either. She won't tell me anything else about him."

"You can always go to the archives in the library to find out when they were married. Any of type of public record paperwork is kept there. Back then they weren't actually systems in place to keep track of the information."

"Thanks."

Another dead end of chasing dead men and crows as they all seemed to be. I came to the crossroad in my life. I had to choose to stop this and let myself believe none of it ever really existed. Or to progress forward and put it all on the line.

"Fuck it. They think I'm crazy already. So it doesn't matter now."

Once I went outside to leave, it was waiting for me on the post by my car. I ignored the white faced crow totally. This was one journey he would have to take with me. Not the other way around.

The crow stayed up with me on the way to the library. Maybe I still had someone left in my life who was with me. It might be just my imagination playing tricks on me. But it at least I could honestly say, I wasn't completely alone on this.

It perched itself on the pole with the flag blowing enough the stars were displayed on the red, white and blue. "I'm still holding on to nothing." I shook it off.

"Excuse me, how can I found out what information you have on someone?"

The lady took me in a room off to itself from library. She indicated where to look. Each section had
to be search through by dates and names. The books were so large I had a tough time picking them up. She took down some and I took the others. I found the dates of John's arrest records but no detailed information about what it was for. I jotted down as much about it as I could on a piece of paper so I could research it all later.

"I think I have what you are looking for. John Thomas Teller and Gemma Louise Madock applied for a marriage license on August 9, 1975." The lady kept searching through the book on other pages until she found more. "They were wed September 17, 1975."

'Thank you."

"There is an indication on the page there is more information continuing. I just need to find it." What I didn't get before when I searched through the books were the symbols. They each meant something. "Here is the date for when delusion of marriage was filed for them."

"There must be some mistake. They were never divorced."

"It shows John Thomas Teller filed for divorce with the custody of a minor, Jackson Andrew Teller against Gemma Louise Teller."

It was the most shocking piece I've stumbled on so far. John filed for divorce a couple of weeks before he died. Almost to the day even. I wrote down what little it showed along with the dates.

"Is there any way I can see the actual documents?"

"We don't keep any of the old archived records here. I can order them for you at three dollars a page and it takes a couple of weeks to get them." She wrote up the order form and I couldn't get my money out fast enough to pay for it.

On my way out I passed by the Mythology section. Like a child I held out my hand and let it touch the books as I went down the aisle. "You don't want to help me do this. Then, I'll do it on my own as I have all my life."

It took me an hour with a card catalog to find all the books with any reference to Frigg in them and there were several too. I checked them out and went of my merry way.

The crow was nowhere around when I came outside. I had more questions about and for John than I ever had before.

Tightly I held on to my bag with the books in it. I even looked around to see if there were any familiar faces watching me. I uncovered the storage compartment in the back where the spare tire was and stuck the books in there. "Jesus Christ, I am paranoid. You'd think I am hiding drugs or something of value."

On the way back to the hospital all I could think about was John. Everyone thought he was a coward. But he was far from it. He did this shit for a long time before they finally wore him out and put him out of his misery. Now, I just wished I could find something to put me out of mine.

"I will not let them break me the way they did you, John. I need you to stay strong with me and help me see this shit through. You're all I've got left."

Of course, I had to ask myself was the real reason they killed John because he was going to divorce Gemma? She would never have allowed him to take Jax away from her or Charming. I've seen that shit in action. She gave up Clay even to hold on to her young. The vicious spider killed her lover, Clay, to keep Jax going. It only pushed Jax deeper down in hell with the rest of them. So the tangled,
deceitful web could live on.

Since I made my choice by taking the next step to continue on, there was no stopping it now. I went to the lecture room at the hospital and got a giant board to use. I pushed it down the hallway and hoped no one asked me what the hell I was doing with it.

But what to use to fit it all together with? I got push pins to hang it up with but found nothing to connect the pieces yet. I went to the lounge and grabbed a coke to drink to take a break. One of the nurses was knitting.

"Can you spare a few pieces of yarn?"

"Do you knit, Tara?"

"Not yet. I am spinning the idea around in my head though."

She gave me a brand new unopened roll of it. Unfortunately, after I put all the stuff up and used the yarn to connect it. I had a tangled up mess going on and still wasn't done. "Damn, I'm going to need a lot more yarn for this."

For hours I arranged and rearranged it over until I lost track of time and Wayne came in. I flipped the board around to face the wall so I didn't have to hear a bunch of bullshit over it from him too.

"Tara, what are you doing?"

"Nothing."

Wayne flipped the board back and looked at the disorganized mess I had going on.

"Please, don't say anything to Jax. He might lock me up for good this time."

Wayne seemed to only have one concern and it wasn't the one I expected at all. "You can't tell Gemma. It will crush her."

"How can Gemma not already know John filed for divorce?"

He turned white and sat down on the couch. "Wayne?"

"She didn't know and you can't tell her because it will tear her apart."

When I questioned Wayne, he refused to answer me about anything. If I did learn one thing from Gemma, it was how to be a strong assertive female with a man.

"Fine, if you're not going to tell me, Wayne. Let's see how much information Gemma can tell me about it." I took out my cell and put it on speaker. "Hi, Gemma. It's Tara. There…"

Wayne interrupted our conversation when it came out of him quietly. "Hang up."

"I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate you being there for me and the boys, Gemma. I'll talk to you later."

Everyone held secrets in their lives. Some small and others larger with meaning. But the secret Wayne shared with me was deadly venomous and dangerous for many people.

"Oh my god, you were with Gemma back then too. You're still in love with her after all these years."
"What I did protected Gemma and Jax. It was better for everyone involved. Nobody got hurt from it this way."

"Jesus Christ, Wayne. Everybody got hurt from it and more still will."

We stopped and picked up the boys from daycare. Wayne had no choice but to go along with me on it. We were both know knee deep in lies, deception and the shit storm of life from what the club became.

"Here’s some money to feed Abel with. You do not go back to TM or talk to Jax until I call you." He took my car and I took his truck because it was easier than taking the car seats out for the boys.

"Tara, where are you going?"

"To find the crow. John will not have died in vain. He was not crazy or delusional and neither am I."

After I drove around so much looking for it. I had to stop and get gas in the truck. Usually when you give up looking for something or believing in it, it shows up when least expected it to in the most unlikely places. Maybe it wasn't part of your life plan but it didn't necessarily make it wrong either.

The son of a bitch was perched up on top of the sign displaying the gas prices after I came out from paying. "It's about damn time. If you want my help anymore, then I need yours now."

This was the most important flight the crow would take. The journey it took me on would change everything from here forward for a lot of us. It's path and mine had now crossed over to one.

It was an unfamiliar road I went down with no houses in site. I didn't know where the hell it led to like so many times lately in my life. It was almost dark and if I didn't find where I was going soon, I might not find it.

The place was a conservation of wild life with woods areas and a lake for fishing I didn't know existed. But I still didn't see what I came for around.

My breathing was erratic. By it about beating out of my chest; told me I went in the right direction in the woods. It should have worried me as my heart squeezed so hard inside it felt like it cut off my blood supply. But, it didn't because I knew it meant he was nearby.

At the bottom of the hill there he laid with a bottle in his hand looking up at the star show which would begin soon. He knew I was with him; he didn't even have to look to know I was coming up behind him.

"What does it take to get you to stay away, Tara? I have like I said I would. As soon as I get some money together again, I'm out of here. This fucking town has broken me in every way you can think of. Until then, you need to go the fuck away. It's better for the both of us and you know it. Once I'm gone, you won't have to worry about it anymore."

"The crow brought me here. Just as the crow has brought me to you so many times. If you are honest; it keeps pushing you towards me too and it hasn't stopped either. I need you to tell me how you've felt the last few weeks when you weren't around me. I have to know because it's probably the same way I felt. The connection we have is real even if no one else believes it, I know you do. You promised, you will never lie to me, Kyle. No bullshit this time because it's not better for me or you and you know it." This was one argument I would win. This was one time I would not back down until I got what I wanted. This was once in my life, I had to do it for me and only me to heal myself.

Kyle must have felt the same because he was on his feet and ready to fight with me about it.
"Seriously, you want me to tell you how I feel without you? Are you just here to rip my heart out or what?"

"Please, just tell me how you feel? I have to know."

"Fuck this." He just thought he wasn't going to hear me out. He just thought he was the one to walk away again. He just thought he was done with this shit.

By his t-shirt I grabbed two handfuls of it and made him come to me. He held out much longer than I expected him to before he responded back. "Please, tell me."

"I miss you and the boys so much. Nothing makes any damn sense to me unless I'm with you. I just barley fucking exist to make it through the day. I can't even think clearly anymore because I can't get you off my mind no matter what I do. I am completely numb and don't really feel much of anything. I'm starting to doubt my own sanity now because I think I am loosing my fucking mind. That's how I really I am and I can't keep doing it with you, Tara."

"The night I met you. I followed the crow to your tattoo shop. The crow wanted us to be together then. The crow still wants us together for a reason. I'm still not sure why and for what. I think it's some of the connection we feel for each other. All those thing you felt by not being around me, I felt them too since you've been gone. I just don't hear your heart beat anymore. I felt it as soon as I got out of the car. I knew exactly where to find you out here. Everything I do always leads me back to you. But I have figured out what a bigger piece of the puzzle is that ties me and you together. So what I am about to say is probably going to sound crazy. I've been told by many just how crazy I am lately. Actually it's certified by a doctor now. You're the only part of reality and sanity I can still hold on to. I'm afraid once I tell you, I will lose you completely. I need you to give me your word you won't just disappear."

"Tara, this needs to end. Look at what it's doing to us."

"Please, just promise me. If you ever truly felt anything for me, you will. You told me if you believe in it, a lot of impossible things are true."

It took him along time to do it. After several attempts he put it out there. "I won't just disappear."

"I found out today. Your mother had an affair with John Teller. You are his son."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! And…. there you have it. Now click on his picture at the top of the page ladies so it's larger and tell me who he reminds you of ; ) Can you imagine those two hotties together? Be still my foolish heart. John Teller has a lot of wrongs to still rectify in his life. We are about half way through the story now.

Not all things in life are as simple as black and white. You have to read between the lines to find the answers. Put yourself in the character's perspective of it. A reader told me; if you follow the mythology and the circles the crow leads you in. The answers are all there. She is very correct and very wise. Some of you knew who Kyle was a few chapters back.

Btw… Those are all true facts of Odin, Frigg and the crows in the mythology I have given you. It just fit in the story line well. The spider web, I twisted it up and made it my own theory.

The next chapter, Mothers Daughters; Fathers Sons will be out in a few days.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as an alert or your favorite!
PART 1 of 4

(There is over 35,000 words for the three parts. I am still editing PART 2 and 3. I will have those posted later tonight or sometime tomorrow.) I've looked at Part 1 so many times, my eyes are crossed. I'll come back to fix mistakes later.

A/N: I know some are upset by Jax's actions. But he is straight up SOA and I do my best to stay true to it. By theory when something becomes a problem to them; they kill it, run it off or bury that shit down deep and forget about it. But he didn't with Tara. No, he didn't exactly handle it with kid gloves nor do it in the right manner. At least he did something by trying to get her some help.

The same with how Jackson protected his family against Kyle with Zac. It was pure retaliation; you hurt me with my kids so, now I will hurt you with yours. Of course it isn't right but it's how they live.

There are two sides to every coin; one is Tara and the other side is Jackson. I have been giving them both to you throughout the story.

Also, I found a great Jax/Tara story. It starts out with them as a young version. I absoulty love it! It is by cinbur; A Fork in the Road. She also started a new story of them as well. Read her stories and of course make sure to send her some love. Keeping writing on them babe!

"No, I'm not."

"Your mother's name is Julia Anderson. Or at least it used to be. She was with Clay Morrow who I told you was one of the original nine members, the evil brother. Then she had an affair with John Teller. Gemma found out about it. But he kept seeing your mother after that. He rented her a house and she stayed here in Charming to be near him."

"I don't want to hear anymore." There was still so much more of this story to tell Kyle. But he was in the same denial of life I had been in lately. In which sometimes it makes you walk away from what you have to know and need to know. It's exactly what he was doing too.

"Kyle, wait. You can't just ignore it. It's part of the reason the crow is so strong in both our worlds now. John is not just talking to me alone anymore. There is something he needs you to know or do. I don't know why or what we're supposed to do with any of it. But it's there and we have to deal with it. There will be no rest or peace for either of us until we do it."

"I am not John's son. If what you're saying is true, he was no more than a sperm donor just like me to mine. I will never acknowledge any of it either. I don't want to hear anymore. I've already got enough bad shit floating around in my head with what you told me. Without hearing how my mother was shared by a bunch of bikers. If she was with any more of them, please just keep it to yourself. Would you want Abel or Thomas to hear something like that about you?"

The answer of course was no I didn't want my sons to know all the bad things there were to know about me. It was fear they would look at me differently than the way they should a mother. The same way Kyle had to cope to see the true woman she was verses the sweet loving mother he remembers.
He wasn't dealing well with it either. As he had his head propped up by his hands on the hood of his truck. I wasn't sure to console him or just let him be. I knew what he would do if the roles were reversed between us.

"Are you okay?"

"Oh, I'm just wonderful. I wanted to fuck my brother's wife. A brother I never knew I had or wanted. To a father that never existed in my world. I can't even start to make that shit right in my head."

My approach was gentle when I held onto his arm with my hand. I didn't know if he would shove me away or not. But he didn't. "I'm here for you and we will figure all of this out together."

"Who else did you tell, Tara?"

"No one other than you."

"You have to promise me, you won't ever tell anyone, especially Gemma. I'm sure she wouldn't be exactly thrilled to know I am the little bastard John had on the side." The truth would affect their relationship now too. It was a terrible feeling the way he said it and how much all of this was already tearing him up.

"Gemma wasn't thrilled about Trinity either but she got past it with time."

"Who is the hell is Trinity?"

"You sort of have a half sister from Ireland too." Perhaps it all should have been given to Kyle in smaller doses. But I wasn't holding anything back from him. He needed to know the truth and unfortunately she was part of it.

"How many more fucking kids does John have?"

"Just her and you I know of." After the many talks I've had with Gemma about John. If they were his only extra kids he had when he was with her, I'd be amazed. From what she said; John had so many different women she couldn't even keep track of all of them either.

In the long run of all the shit John put her through. Gemma had two extra martial affairs I knew of, Clay and Wayne. Not that it made it right but when your husband is laying down with anything that has a heartbeat, what is a girl to do? To some degree, I was sure some of John's wandering ways played a role in why she no longer cared if Clay killed him or not. But if she knew the truth of John divorcing her, Gemma would have probably killed him herself. That part, I was almost sure of.

"Promise me, Tara. You will not tell anyone else about this."

"I promise; I won't tell anyone."

"Since they are moving I won't have to be around them much longer anyway. I'll avoid Nero and Gemma as much as I can."

"Who is moving?"

"Nero and Gemma."

"Gemma will never leave Charming, Jax or the boys behind." There had to be a mistake on Kyle's part. Any time I brought up leaving or even hinted to move away from here she went ballistic on me.
"They already bought a house about an hour from mine out in the country. Didn't anyone tell you? Hasn't Jax filled you in on the last couple of months?"

"Couple of months?" Had there truly been so much time I lost in between all of this mess? I really had to stop to think. Months of my life were missing from my memory. What the hell else did I miss out on while I took a bad trip to hell and back?

"Of course Jax didn't tell you anything, Tara. The blinder he keeps you, the easier it is to control you. It was two months ago you came to my house and I haven't seen you much since then."

"I honestly don't remember much of anything. I... I don't know what happened during that time."

"It's not surprising considering how many pills they were shoving down your throat. I really thought you wouldn't make it through it. Or Jax would get tired of it and end it one way or the other. Just like he does everything else; kill it, fuck it or lock it away. It is exactly what he does too."

"I do remember all the things you said to me though. It's okay, I get it, Kyle. You were only pretending to care and do things for me so... I did come to the realization during that time. I know most of our connection and what we feel for each other is only because of the crow and the pull of it. You were going to abandon me just like everyone else always has. If I hadn't come here tonight; you would have walked away from me and left me too. You knew how much it would hurt me when you said it and you did that part on purpose."

"You don't get it, Tara and never will. Do you really think I...you know what? I'm not even going there with you. I'll see you later."

"You promised you wouldn't just disappear on me, Kyle."

"And I won't. I need some time to process it all. Okay?" He had a lot of shit to process to get past. But I still had so much more to tell him too he would have to deal with as we went.

"Okay. I've gotta go and pick up the boys."

Apparently Kyle wasn't the only one who had a life's unexpected surprise blow today. We didn't know what to say to each other at this point. Maybe we were back to the reality of it had all been said already between us now.

On my way back to Charming, I called Wayne to meet me with the boys. I hustled my ass to get home before Jax did. When I was honest with him the last time, he turned on me because of it. There was no way in hell I would tell him where I was tonight or any other night from now on either. Maybe it was a secret which would tear me a part later and wrong of me to keep it from him. But I preferred to not go back to the place with iron bars on the windows guarding across them, where I set for days examining my life. Which caused the same bars across my heart guarding it as well.

Jax's bike was parked in the driveway by the time we made it home. I checked my watch and decided what the story would be if he asked me where I had been. I helped Abel out of the car and grabbed Thomas to take them inside.

The shower was running when we went in the house and I got the boys ready for bed. I kissed and hugged my boys as I laid them down for the night. As I passed Jax in the hallway, I was awed. How it escaped me before, I didn't know.

They were really similar by comparison in looks. Kyle was physically larger with his height and body frame than Jax was. It was when Jax ran his hand through his wet hair. They both did the same thing in the exact same way. Man, I shook that thought out of my head and I did it rather quickly.
But everything else about them, set them worlds apart from each other. If John had lived to raise them together how would they have turned out to be then? Was it more important who your birth parents were or the ones who raised you and was there with you for every step of your life?

Those were questions I had to ask myself about Abel. I set down on his bed to watch my son sleep. Did he stand a chance at a better life with Jax and Wendy being his actual birth parents? Would he follow in his father's footsteps and become what I've fought so hard against? Or would he be more like Wendy; weak with dependencies just to cope with what surrounded him in this world. "No. I won't allow it, baby. You will have a chance and I'll make sure of it no matter what the fuck I got to do to get you there. I am your mother and no one will ever take your choices away from you. Because I will always be here with you and fight to make sure of it."

After I kissed Abel, I set on the day bed to watch Thomas. Was there enough good from me in Thomas to out weight the bad things from his father? Did his fate get decided by us? Or was his fate different from his brothers just because I was the one who gave birth to him? The conclusion I came to was Thomas and Abel were equal in every way with each question I asked myself. They could still determine their own futures because I would continue to fight for both of them until I took my last breath. "Mommy is here, baby. I will always be here for you."

Then I had to ask myself even more questions as I went to the bedroom to get ready for bed. Was it truly Jax's destiny to be part of the club? Was it written in stone when he was born due to being John’s son? It couldn't be because Kyle would have been sent in the same direction then too.

There was so much good in one of them and bad in the other that protruded so boldly, no one could miss it. The biggest difference between them was the kind of man they were raised by and who influenced their lives the most. Unfortunately, it wasn't John Teller for Jax. It was the evil bastard Clay.

As upset as Kyle was to learn John was his father. He came out of it all the lucky one even if he didn't see it. His step father taught him morals, values but most of all how to love others with all of his heart. Not put anything else above them. His loyalty and faithfulness is what made him the kind of man he was today. Which only confirmed my suspensions; they were the ones who influenced your life the most rather than just whose blood coursed through your veins that made the biggest differences in your life.

Love does make you somewhat blind to what you wish not to see or acknowledge. Clay was the one who taught Jax to be the way he was. All the killing, the chaos and lies of the club. To live with the torment just to keep the evil alive until it completely took over life as he knew it to be.

It was killing Jax a little more on the inside every day until the man I once knew and loved so dearly would be completely gone from me. He pushed me and the boys out as he progressed to a darker side of himself. It really wasn't his fault though and I didn't know how to stop it from happening either.

Jax was laying on side away from me when I got in bed. There had been so many barriers there between us. Some of them were his doing and some them were mine. But I couldn't help to hold on to the man I knew he could be someday if he got away from here and left it all behind us. I just needed to touch him and know he was still real to me. I put my arm over his body to try to be close to him. He didn't respond the way I thought he would.

With Jax's kiss he felt more real to me than he had in such a long time. I knew sex couldn't mend the miles it seemed we were apart from each other and it definitely wouldn't fix all of our problems. But, I held on to him while he loved me anyway. Held on to a wing and prayer time would heal what was wrong.
Since I couldn't honestly remember what occurred over the last couple of months, I got down a calendar and wrote on it the events I knew happened for sure. There were still so many gaping holes in the time period though. After I made my morning rounds, I went to confront one of the things I obviously missed and no one told me about.

Gemma was sitting at her desk at TM. All the useless hell she had been put through with Clay and the club. When John was going to let her go free from it years ago. Even Clay put himself and the club above her, she just didn't know it. I actually felt sad for her and the life she wasted. She found Nero and was truly happy now. She could have found happiness so many damn years ago if they would have loosened the death grip they had upon her.

"Just when were you going to tell me, you and Nero are leaving Charming?"

"The timing was off. You've been a little out of it lately. I thought you'd happy to finally get rid of me."

"I can't…I can't do it without you, Gemma. You have no idea how off the timing is."

"It's not like I won't come back to visit. Until Nero finds a place closer for Lucius, we'll be back every couple of days. He can't stay away from that little boy for very long. You know I can't for very long from Abel or Thomas either. I'm just a phone call away if you wanna talk."

"It won't be the same." Now I was just sad for myself. She was the only female I had in my life and to talk to.

"My being here is no longer a help to you. It's now a hindrance to what you need to become. I've been on the outside of the club for so long now. They don't have the respect for me they once used to. It's time, Tara. For you to take over without my being here in the way. I see you doing it more every day anyway with the guys, the club and Jackson. You just don't realize it yet. This is your calling. To be honest, I never thought you'd make it this far. But since you have, live on the new Queen of Anarchy."

"I don't even know how to be the queen. I'm not like you, Gemma."

"When you can stand as strong by Jackson's side through those times you hate him. As much as when you love him. That's when you are truly the queen and nothing will ever tear you two apart. By then, it won't matter how many other women he has either."

"It tore apart you and Clay. I won't ever be okay with Jax having as many women as he wants."

"Clay was too far gone already to be saved anymore, he had no redemption left in him. He turned against me, my family and the club. All the important things in life. Once he did, he couldn't come back from it in my eyes. I had to choose, Clay lost. But the Sons will live on forever. With Jackson sitting at the head of the table. He will pass on the gavel someday to Abel or Thomas. It's where a Teller belongs just the way it was meant to be."

"That's where you're wrong. Jax will never pass the gavel on to my sons."

"Oh, that's where you have no say, sweetheart. It's in their genetic makeup and a part of them already. You can't stop it from happening. It was set in motion the day they were born."

This was where Gemma and my paths would never crossover, my sons. They would not be a member of the club. They would not ever hold the gavel in their hand. They would not follow in
their father's footsteps to a slow living hell no matter what I had to do to protect them from it.

There was no point to argue it with her. For once it was one argument Gemma would not win with me. When it came to my sons, I would mow her ass over to protect them if I had to as well.

A mother's love for a child was different from that of a father. A son will likely feel a closer bond with his mother when he's younger and deepens with his father as he gets older. When a son sees how his father interacts with his mother. He will attempt to model his father's behavior. "Son of a bitch. I can't keep letting Jax show them this kind of way of life. At least not when it comes to women or Abel and Thomas will not learn the right way to love either."

The crow landed in the parking lot at TM. "Really? Now?" There was obviously something it needed me to see. I didn't even attempt to fight it once. I just went along for the ride with it. I was leaving town again to another new place and another untraveled road I was going down.

When I saw where it took me to this time, it was more stuff I had apparently missed out on or needed to address for the day. "Yeah, I know already. You can fly away now."

It was empty inside expect for a couple of people already drinking their breakfast down and possibly working on lunch too. I sucked it up and went to handle business with him. If he would let me anyway.

"Hanging out with all of your friends?"

"Yeah, they are pretty much the only ones I got left now." Kyle kept drinking whatever in hell he had in front of him. By his tone he wasn't in the best of moods either.

"It's only eleven o'clock in the morning and you're already shit faced. A little early don't you think?"

"I never sobered up from yesterday so it's not early to me at all."

"You know with your cap turned around backwards on your head. You look a lot like…"

"If the words are about to come out of your mouth. I look like Jax, I'd rethink them." Well, that halted what I was about to say. It wasn't meant to be derogatory but they wouldn't come out of my mouth now.

This was a bad road Kyle was going down. I had been there and done that shit but with pills instead of booze. I wasn't coherent enough at times to even tell you my phone number and address. "You're done. Let's go."

"You think you can waltz your little ass in here, girl and tell me what to do?"

"Yes I do. You need to sober up and start coping with life again. I know how hard it is to do. I am here for you and we will get through this shit together. The crow brought me here today. So, obviously we still have things we need to do together."

"Just how long are you here for me, Tara? An hour, a day until Jax decides it's a problem again?"

There wasn't going to be an argument about this either. I took his keys off the bar and cut his ass off. He was reluctant to get in the truck with me. But I told him get in or I would leave him stranded here without wheels. It wasn't exactly like he needed to be behind the wheel driving anywhere.

The goal was to take him home, let him pass out and then help him get back on track again. I didn't bring up John, his mother, Jax or anything at all really. But Kyle was saying things to me I didn't
really understand when I helped him to bed.

"You can't be here, Tara. Do you know what Jax will do to you?"

"It'll be fine."

"No, it won't be fine. I talked to Jax. You and the boys are the only good things he has got left in his life. He will hurt you if he finds you with me. You can only fight the monster for so long, until you become the monster and he is one. Even when it comes to you. His solution to a problem will always be a club solution. It's how he's wired."

By the time I got him to lay down and asked what the fuck he meant about Jax. Kyle grabbed his pillow and wrapped his arms around it. He stretched out on his bed and I covered him up. I'd just let him be and would ask later.

The rest of the house was a mess. I knew that routine all too well. You only did enough just to survive the moment and nothing more. I picked up the couple of loads of laundry scattered around and stuck one in the washer.

While the clothes were washing, I did the dishes and cleanup up the counters. When I looked in the frig, there wasn't much to eat in it but a shit load of liquor bottles. Most were less than half full. But it didn't matter much when I poured them all down the sink. I gathered up the bottles in a trash bag and put them in the trash can out in the garage. Kyle could be pissed off later at me if he wanted to be about it. For now, this was what I felt was best for him.

When I heard the knock on the door. "Fuck." I peeked out the window to see who was here and if I wanted to answer the door or not. Since it was Nero, I let him in.

Neither he nor Gemma had been able to reach Kyle by phone for a few days. I knew why but I didn't tell his secret. Nero and Gemma had been by several times to check on Kyle and they couldn't ever catch him at home. Nero was a good man and worried about all of us. I know because he has done it with me several times too. But his concern for Kyle went deeper than I had seen Nero reach out to another person before, other than Gemma.

"I am a little surprised to see you here, Tara."

"Kyle is just going through a rough patch and I'm trying to help him. He came to the hospital when I was in there and set by my bed many times."

"He told you that? How much did Kyle tell you about what happened over the last couple of months?"

Nero seemed a little on the surprised side I knew anything and I repeated what Kyle said earlier about Jax. Even more shocked what I said about that part of it. But Nero wasn't on the things Kyle had said to me at the park. When he wanted to stay away from him. Nero already knew it too.

"I missed a lot apparently."

"You need to know the whole truth, mama. Kyle said those shitty things to you because he is trying to protect you."

"Protect me from what? Nero, just tell me. Kyle said he talked to Jax."

"Kyle swallowed his pride even though Jax hurt his blood, his son, and put it all aside for you. He went to Jax after they put you in the hospital. Kyle was willing to leave Charming if Jax would just
let you out. Jax told him; you were under control now and you didn't care about Kyle anymore. You never really did care about him either. The only reason you were hanging around Kyle was to make Jax jealous and supposedly this what you told to Jax. Jax didn't give a shit if Kyle left then or not because he wouldn't be causing problems for you all anymore. You need to know that what boy did you for you and went through. Kyle ripped his own heart out to save yours. If it's not love, then I don't know what is. I'm not just taking Kyle's word on this either because I was there when it went down."

"Why are you doing this to me, Nero?"

"I love you like a daughter, Tara. But, you can't have the partial truth only when you want it. I didn't try to save my son when his mother was shooting up every day and hurt him. It's why Lucius suffers from it now and there is no way I'll ever make it right. Because I was too fucked up back then to even save myself, let alone my son. I'm not telling what you should or shouldn't do. Jax is at the same point I was back then, to fucked up to save himself or see the damage that goes on around him. It's not always the good things in life you learn the most from. Sometimes, it's the bad things that makes you the better person you become from it."

Nero was going to give me a ride to the bar to pick my car up. Then he was going to go see Lyla. She had no one else either in this world that truly cared about her. No matter what she had done in the past, Nero was going to be there for her. Since, I needed to talk to her anyway about Kenny and Ellie. I went with him.

They were to finish out the school year where they were. Mary agreed to take care of them until summer, which theirs would start two days from now and it was time to make decisions. Then Gemma and I were to have them while Lyla did her recovery time. Only, I wasn't sure Lyla would ever make it there. Now, with Gemma leaving. The kids would have to stay at my house with us. I hadn't even talked to Jax about it yet but I was certain he wouldn't say no. I lost so much time in my life lately to know what the hell I was supposed to do or still needed to do.

While we were riding around I kept asking Nero more questions as they came to my mind. He wouldn't answer any more of them. My biggest one was how they thought Jax would hurt me? Nero's response to it was always the same. "You should talk to Kyle about it. They had a private conversation when I wasn't around and he would never tell me the details. But I know he's worried about you."

When we pulled up to the rehab center to visit Lyla, I had to take in several deep breaths, it seemed so familiar to a place I went to before. A place of despair on your life and where you stopped living for a while as soon as you passed through the doors of it.

The inside was just about the same as the place still fresh in my memory. Most of them were going through the detox and in the major with drawl stages. I had been there myself not to along a go as well.

Lyla didn't look well at all. She had lost more weight if that was even possible for her small size. I saw no light of life in her eyes either. The little hot body I used to see her as, wasn't the person who sat before us today.

"Why are you here, Tara?" She was very direct and not as much as a hello, how are you first.

"I came to talk to you about Kenny and Ellie. I am taking them for the summer until you get yourself under control again. I need to ask you; do you even want the kids back?"

"It's not that I don't want the kids. I can't even take care of myself as you can clearly see. I feel like I
failed them and Opie. Just like I usually do and let everyone down. My mom is keeping Piper for me. I really can't answer your question right now."

"Ellie and Kenny will become an award of the state, Lyla. Mary has already said she can't keep them full time. I want to do what is best for them. So, for now. I will take them for the summer and we will figure it out as we go."

Lyla was at a bad place in life. I understood, I had been there and decided I had to make changes to get myself out of it. Until she did the same thing, she would never progress past a porn junkie destined to die young from it.

The regrets she spoke about with Opie, broke my heart. Their marriage was doomed from the start. He was looking for a good loving wife like Donna. Lyla was looking for a home and stability she could never have with him no matter what. Opie was on the same path of self-destruction at the time and Lyla was on a different path of the same.

We said our goodbyes to Lyla and I honestly wished her well. "Tara."

"Yes."

"I'm really sorry for the things I did to you. You didn't deserve them. I was strung out at the time and…"

"Yeah, I'm sure you are, Lyla. I'm sorry for a lot things I've done in my life too. I really hope you get better soon."

Lyla and I were so different. In every way you could possibly think of. From our social circle, upbringing, education and our feelings on men. But I had one huge damn thing in common with her. We both loved the same kind of man and therefore I got why she was broken from it. There was no need to kick her while she was down. I just hugged her and hoped she lived through it too.

Nero was taking me to pick up my car. I called Gemma to talk about Kenny and Ellie. She still planned on helping out with them. She would take them for a week at a time to spend time out in the country at their new house. She even wanted to take Abel and Thomas too when she did. I worried four kids might be a bit much for her to deal with. But, I knew Nero would be there to help her like he always does.

"Thanks, Nero for the ride. I'll be by to talk to you later."

The grocery store was the first place I hit. I didn't buy a lot of stuff with it just being him. But I smiled when I put a gallon of strawberry ice cream in the cart. It was his favorite. Once I paid and got it all put in the car. I went back to his house. Packed it all in and put it away.

Kyle was still passed out when I checked on him. I held his hand for a couple of minutes like he had mine before I had to go. "I'm here." I wrote a note that I left on the kitchen table for him and went to get the boys.

We stopped to eat because Abel was hungry and even I ate tonight. I wasn't back to my normal self yet but I was starting to get better and stronger again. We stopped by TM because I promised Gemma I would if I had time on the way home so she could see the boys. She had already left for the day by the time we made it there.

Abel wanted to swing. So, I set with Thomas in my lap on the other one while he did. Tig came out and pushed Abel for me. I was starting to get somewhat attached to Tig too. There weren't many conversations between us but he and I had a comfortable silence. He gave me and Thomas a little
push too. Once Abel was done, Tig asked if he could hold Thomas. The boys seemed to have a calming effect on him and he was getting more attached to them, as well.

From the picnic table we watched each of them ride their Harleys in and out of the parking lot. They too were little boys once upon a time with a mother I'm sure who didn't want their destiny to be a club member either. Then came in the one whose mother insisted upon it being his destiny, Jax.

"What are you doing with Tara?"

"We were just hanging out, Jax until you got here." Tig handed me back my son then gave me a wave goodbye.

"What's going on?" Jax plopped down on top of the table and lit up a smoke.

"Just trying to figure out life. What will their lives hold if we stay in Charming?"

"The boys will be fine, Tara. Stop worrying about them. I'll be ready to go in a minute and I'll follow you guys home."

"Why didn't you tell me Gemma is leaving? You didn't think it was important enough to mention it to me, Jax?"

"It been time for Gemma to leave. She doesn't mean anything here anymore. You used to hate her and want her gone. So, what's the problem?"

"The problem is; I don't want my sons to grow up to hate me too like you do Gemma. I don't want them to be a member of the club. Most of all, I don't want to lose my family because we didn't ever leave here."

"It'll be fine, babe. Give me a minute then we'll go." As much as I wanted to believe it was true. I couldn't ignore the feeling way down in my gut. It kept telling me something bad was about to happen.

We followed behind Jax on his bike. When I watched him ride it, he was always so free it seemed from the world around him. At least to the outsiders but I knew he was shackled and chained to it along with the club.

We put the boys down together. It had been awhile since we done it. I brought up Ellie and Kenny to Jax. He was all for it and promised he would help out with them as much as he could. But I knew he wouldn't be around much to do anything for our boys or them.

Only it wasn't as easy as I thought keeping up with four children. It had only been two days; the laundry piled up quickly, it took extra time in the mornings to get them all ready and at night to end the day. I found myself cooking, washing something or trying to love them all around the clock.

This morning was a rough one though. Ellie was still quiet and very distant. But Kenny, he was totally withdrawn from all of us, even his sister. After I got Thomas and Abel ready to go. I tried to approach Kenny and he wasn't going to have anything to do with it.

"You're a girl. You won't understand."

"How do you know I won't unless you tell me what's wrong? You can tell me anything, honey. I'm here."

Since I couldn't get him to open up to me, I would try later on when I got home. Nitta kept Kenny
and Ellie at the house. They were too old for the young aged daycare at the hospital. I took the boys with me and was already running behind. It was quick kisses to them so I could make my first appointment on time.

Hell as many appointments and patients I had already today, I couldn't believe I made it through to lunch time. I hadn't slept much and with having the kids, I was worn out. As I approached my office, there he sat in a chair in the waiting room.

"You look better, Kyle."

"I'm trying."

"Couldn't stay away any longer?"

"Something like that. I need the truth, Tara on all of it. Not just the parts you want to tell me or think I need to know either. The club, Jax and everything that goes with it. Or I can't do this with you anymore. No more hiding anything. We have to be completely honest with each other or this won't work."

"Does honesty go for you too, Kyle?"

"Yeah, you can ask me anything and I will tell you. Most of the time I tell you before you even ask me. I have nothing to hide from you, Tara. When I open my mouth it just all comes out even if I don't want it to."

This would be a long ass discussion. One not be done at the hospital. We went down the street to get some lunch. I used to frequent there with other doctors and nurses just to take a break during the day. Now it was a rarity I got a break from anything in life.

Kyle seemed worried about us being seen in public together. But, I wasn't because I wasn't afraid of life anymore or what it held for me. When you fear nothing; you have nothing left to fear. The only thing I worried about was Jax being cruel or doing something to Kyle because of me. I didn't want that to happen. Everything else, I would deal with as it came.

This was where I tried to give Kyle as much truth in an hour as I could. It could have been a twenty-four marathon of truth and I would still have things left to tell him.

They came by to take our order. I got a burger and fries, he got two of them. It had been a while since he ate. His appetite coming back was a good sign he was on the road to recovery. So was the fact he finally shaved and wasn't shit faced today. You had to start somewhere and even the small stuff counted.

The waitress brought a tall frosted glass full of vanilla and strawberry ice cream swirled together with pieces of fruit blended in with it. Inches of whip cream piled around on top of it and a large red berry on top for garnishment. "That looks really good. I haven't had a strawberry shake in years."

Kyle handed me straw too so we could share it across the table. When I hesitated to use it he started laughing. "Tara, I've had my tongue in your mouth. Do you really think it is going to matter if we drink out of the same glass now?"

"I guess not." He dipped the strawberry in the whip cream and offered me the first bite.

We started our talk off with his mother. I knew it was going to be a hard conversation to have with him no matter how delicately I tried to put things.
"Clay found out John was going to divorce Gemma and he couldn't let it happen. If John left Charming and shut down the club, there would have been nothing for Clay to take over. I always thought it was over the club selling guns. John wanted to stop it and Clay wanted it to continue on. But it wasn't over that. John's full intention was to divorce Gemma, take Jax away from Charming and stop the evil in the club by dismembering it. John wanted a life with your mother and he was in love with her. From what Wayne told me; John completely lost his mind after she left and he still looked for her so he could find out where she went to. Most believed it was because John lost his son, Thomas, is why he almost went crazy. I can actually sympathize with him from what I went through."

"How does Wayne know all of this?"

"Wayne was new on the force then. He was just getting in with Clay and the Sons. Clay would only let him in for a split of the profit if Wayne did something to prove his loyalty to the club first. While they held church, Wayne was supposed to kill your mother so it couldn't land on Clay. He had the perfect alibi, he was setting at the table with his club brothers while it happened. Only Wayne couldn't go through with it when it came time to do it. So he told your mother if she didn't leave town or if she ever came back again they would kill her and you. He also faked a couple of false records to show she called for help and lost the baby, well you actually. So Clay wouldn't track her down and hurt her later."

"Does Wayne know who I am?"

"No. I didn't tell anyone else. But Wayne hurt a lot of people with what he did other than you and your mother. Gemma believes Clay protected her and her family. Only he didn't do it for those reasons at all. He did it because of greed and power he wanted to take from John and he used Gemma to get it. I'm not sure Clay ever really loved Gemma. Of course, Wayne I think is in love with Gemma still today. Apparently they had an affair at some point too. Wayne did what he did out of his love for Gemma. But in the end all he really did was make her a prisoner of the club as well for all these years. When she could have gotten out a long time ago."

"Yeah, I know someone else who is a prisoner of the club too, Tara."

"That's not fair."

"Why, because it's the truth and you don't want to hear it? Jax would rather drag you and the boys down to hell with him. He'll never let you go. If you stay much longer, I don't think you'll survive it all either."

"Exactly what did you talk to Jax about? What did you…oh shit."

"What?" Kyle turned around and seen exactly what I was referring to. He just shook his head when he seen Tig coming our way.

"Go on, get out here."

"It's not Kyle's fault, I asked him here. Tig I…"

"Go out the back, Tara. Jax is coming in. Go already."

It confused me as why Tig would do anything to protect me. Especially when it went against Jax or the club. But I grabbed my bag and got the hell out of here. Through the kitchen doors I went. I peek out the hole to see what was going on out there before I left.

Jax, Happy, Tig and Bobby set down at table not too far from where Kyle and I were sitting. Since
when did the club ever come here to eat? Or go out anywhere for that fact? They said nothing to each other though. Once I seen Kyle throw down money on the table to leave. I figured it was safe now at least for him this time.

It didn't seem to faze him at all, Jax being here. It scared the hell out of me what Jax would do to Kyle if he thought I as much as spoke to him. What was even more baffling; Kyle actually talked to Jax when I was gone. If they had nothing but a simple conversation between them, it was a miracle.

By the time I walked back to the hospital, I had another visitor. Lately I had all kinds of visitors and today was no different either. "Tara, do you have a minute?"

"Um…sure, Nicole. I've got a few minutes before my next appointment, come in my office and we talk in there."

"Are you having an affair with my brother?"

"No, I am not having an affair with Kyle. Maybe you should talk to him about this."

"I have and he tells me nothing. For the last month I worry about him every day because he just gets worse. He is not right, there is something going on and he won't say anything. It's like he's lost touch with reality almost and lives in some little world of his own. I've never seen him like this either and even Boomer is worried about his well being now. But, the one thing I am sure of, it has something to do with you."

"Kyle is not crazy, Nicole. Nor has he lost touch with reality. That much, I can reassure you of."

"Then what the hell is this shit?" Nicole dumped wadded up pieces of paper from her purse on my desk. "I couldn't get him to answer the phone for days now. I have a spare key so I let myself in to make sure he is okay. These are all over the place and your name is on them all. If you're not having an affair with him, then what is really going on? When he says he will watch Cody for me, then doesn't show up. Something is wrong because Kyle is always there for him without fail and I know you are a part of it."

Those pieces of paper were different webs he had drawn. Some had a bunch of names, dates and places on them. The other stuff, I didn't have a clue at was he was trying to do with it. But she was correct, my name was on all them. Kyle was driving himself crazy just like I had with it. It had consumed him, taken over his thought process and he couldn't leave it alone now.

"I honestly don't know what all of it is. The best I can do is try to call Kyle. But, if he won't answer you. He may not answer me either."

"Hello."

"Hey, people are worried about you. Nicole is here in my office."

Nicole was pissed when he answered me with the first call I made. I could understand where she was coming from, she had love and concern for her brother. But, I better understood him. He was at the same place and going down the same road I've already been on.

"It's none of Nicole's business. I can't believe she came to see you. Tell her I'm fine and I'll talk to her later. I think I finally figured it out, Tara. Can you meet me later when you get off work?"

"I'll call you later about it, okay?"

"Yeah, okay. But you'll never believe what I have to tell you either, girl. We're not crazy. We're all
telling the same damn story. I wish I could have told you when we went to lunch. It's why I came to see you today."

"Well, that's a relief to know. At least give your sister a call because she cares about you. Thanks for lunch too. I'll talk to you later."

Nicole agreed to tell me some about his mother if I was willing to try to help out with Kyle. To get him past what he was going through. She didn't understand it, as most wouldn't anyway. Also why I would want to know anything about Julia. I was very careful with the words I used to not throw him under the bus to make her think he was remotely crazy, lost his mind or really just fucked up.

After I finished my rounds, I went to Nicole's house to meet like we talked about. But the damn surprises just kept coming at me today. I heard her screaming as soon as I reached the front door. Since, I was considered crazy now. Jax took my gun out of my purse. So, I had nothing to use for protection. I didn't let it stop me though from trying to help her.

The front door was unlocked and when I got inside, she really didn't need my help after all. There was Boomer banging the hell out of Nicole on the living room floor. Apparently he was good enough at it to make her scream at the top of her lungs in pleasure. I sure as hell wasn't getting it lately until I screamed out anything.

"Oh shit, I'm sorry." It was a little too late now to pretend like I wasn't standing here witnessing it all. Obviously, I ruined their moment of fun.

"Tara." Boomer had a couch pillow covering up his shit when he walked by to go to the bedroom. Then reversed it to his butt as he got closer to me. No matter which way I turned I seemed to be right in the wrong view of him. Finally, I looked at the wall and waited to make sure he was gone.

"You can't tell Kyle." Nicole seemed a little frantic about it as she was trying to get a t-shirt on to cover herself up with. Hell, now I was staring up at the ceiling until she got dressed because there wasn't any other place left for me to look.

"I thought Kyle liked him."

"Kyle does like him. But he won't care for the fact I am getting involved with another Marine who may not make it back home alive each time he goes off. It's really none of my brother's business what I do. He's just overly protective with me and Cody. I don't want to fight with Kyle about it and he has been so messed up lately already. It's not a seriously relationship or anything, we're just having fun. I like David's company. I haven't had a man in my life in a really long time. I am always Cody's mom first but I am a woman too. So, promise me." I couldn't make myself do it. Hell, I've made so many promises lately to so many different people. Carrying secrets around only weigh you down on your soul. My soul was hanging low from it. "Tara."

"I understand where you are coming from Nicole, trust me, I really do. I don't like keeping it from Kyle but I won't tell him either."

A dressed Boomer came back out this time. He seemed a little nervous around me and I was just trying not to stare in his direction. "You can't tell Kyle. He will be pissed off."

"We've already been over it and Tara is not going to say anything to him. Right?" I nodded in agreement with Nicole. But I was certain I would be sorry for doing it somehow later.

"I better go. I'll see you later, Nicole. Bye, Tara." He gave her a quick little kiss before he hurried out the door.
"What are you doing tonight? Do you have any plans, Tara?"

"Jax is going to be gone tonight. I'm going to pick up the kids and just go home."

She wanted to have a sleep over. I'd never slept over at a friend's house even when I was younger. I wasn't even sure what girls done when they hung out so much with each other. I didn't feel comfortable with people and I wasn't exactly outgoing or popular back then either. Actually, I never had a lot of friends or people to even talk to when I thought about it. The only ones I've ever had were Jax, Gemma and the club around me consistently. But I was afraid all of my kids might be a bit much but Nicole didn't care if I had four of them or not with me.

"It'll be fun. I feel like having a little girl time. We can stuff our faces, give each other manicures and talk about boys. The kids can play and I know Cody will love having Abel here with him." This was a different Nicole than I've ever seen. She was almost on the giddy side and sort of giggly. Definitely on the carefree side after her rendezvous with Boomer.

"What the hell. I have to let Jax know and I'm not exactly sure how he will feel about you, and well, you know."

"Don't worry girlfriend, I got your back too. I know your husband hates my brother. It's not like, I'll bring up the fact I'm his sister if you don't. I only seen him the one time when you all were walking down the street together. But, Kyle let me know how your husband feels about him. I have to pick up Cody and go to the store for some snacks. We can ride together if you want to."

"I think it will be good for Ellie to be around another girl other than me and the boys can play together." A thirty-four-year-old woman having her first sleep over was totally ridiculous but I was excited about doing it for some reason. All my kids needed to have a good time because life had been rough on them lately too.

"I need to get Cody. Aren't you coming in, Tara?"

"I'll just wait here."

A knock came on the window while I was making a list of things to grab from the house and at the store. It wasn't like he needed to for me to know he was close by. "You're hanging out with my sister now, perfect."

"Would like for me to hang out with your brother instead, Kyle?"

"Tara, that shit ain't even right joking about it."

"What's not right?" Nicole was back with Cody and she only heard the end of it. But Kyle instantly changed the subject.

"Have you seen Boomer? I called him earlier and he didn't answer."

"No, I haven't seen David. Why would I see him? It's not like he'd be at my house for any reason. He's your friend. You should keep better tabs on your friends. I hope you don't do this with all of them." Poor Nicole was on the defense and a little rattled. I didn't even comment until Kyle asked me again.

"No, I can honestly say. I've seen a lot less of him since he's been in Charming than Nicole has."

"Have you two been drinking?" We both shook our heads no to his question. Which was actually the truth.
"We gotta go Kyle. Thanks, for watching Cody for me." After Nicole left my office, Kyle called her and spent a few hours with Cody. He missed his fun loving uncle around. I understood how you sometimes let people down you love when you can't even function.

"What are you girls doing tonight?"

"We are having a sleep over at my house. No guys allowed either. Bye, Kyle." Poor Nicole just wanted to get away from him badly.

"Call me later, Tara. I have a lot to tell you."

"Okay, I will."

Once we were out of ear shot of Kyle. I had to ask. "So, why do they call David, Boomer?"

"David likes to blow things up. He does arsenal."

The first stop we made was TM. No point in getting the kids hopes up if Jax axed the idea of us being around Nicole tonight. Although, she really grabbed their attention when she got out of the car and went to meet Jax with me. Chibs and Tig especially liked the pretty blonde girl with nice sized breast.

"I am taking the kids to her house for a sleep over since you're going to be gone anyway tonight. I thought Ellie would enjoy a little girl time and doing something fun."

"You should go babe and have fun. It'll be a late one for me and maybe an all-nighter even. I know it's a lot of stress on you taking on Ellie and Kenny too. Sometimes, I forget to thank you for everything you do. It does mean a lot to me you care about Op's kids. How did you two meet and become friends anyway? Tara has never talked about you before."

Jax's mind never rested for a moment even. He wasn't highly educated but his thought process only compared to a few. He wasn't ever easily fooled; I was the dumb one for thinking so. John might have been a complicated man but his son, was complexed from many different angles. I thought maybe Jax had caught on to who Nicole really was for a moment.

"Tara, operated on my son and saved his life." Nicole was better under pressure than I was at it. She smiled so sweetly when she spoke to Jax too. I think she confused him a little with her hot looks, mannerism and the loving way she had about her. Like sister, like brother I say.

"I love you, have fun." Jax gave me a quick kiss then went on his way to his bike. The rest were getting impatient waiting on him.

"Love you too."

"Don't take this the wrong way. But damn, your husband is fine." Nicole was stating the obvious to me and the rest of the women he meets daily. Only she said it a little too loudly.

"Hey." We both turned around when Jax said it. "You can hang out with my old lady anytime you want." From the smile on his face she made his day by what she said.

"I bet it's hard to keep the women off of him."

"If you only knew how hard it actually is." It was another understatement. Because hell, all of them bitches tried to lay under him whenever they could get the chance to.
But, I wasn't going there today. It was going to be a fun filled time for me and the kids to enjoy. Not to worry about what Jax did or didn't do while he was away from me anymore.

Before we picked up all my kids. We went to the store. I bought all kinds of snacks for the night. It was going to be grilled hotdogs and chips for dinner. I also picked up Ellie and me; nail polish, some new flip flops and all kinds of girly stuff. I wasn't exactly a girly, girl. But I was really excited about this for some reason. I also threw stuff in for the boys too; new shorts and t-shirts, videos, games and a football for Kenny. Maybe he would like it.

Well, there went my small fortune when I checked out. Hell, I didn't care. I was back to square one of being broke again anyway. At least this time, I had an actual paycheck I could count on. Surely they couldn't take that away from me too.

We did have a little trouble trying to shove us and all the kids inside. Ellie set in the back compartment of Nicole's jeep since she was the oldest. We packed in the sacks from our shopping adventure around her. She didn't seem to mind it though. There was only a little way to go to Nicole's house.

There was so much laughter from our children once we got there. They built a fort with the kitchen chairs and a large bed sheet in the living room. I've never seen little boys enjoy crawling through a set of chairs so much. Or make so much noise doing it either.

Ellie stayed with me and Nicole. The boys told her no girls were allowed inside their fort. She just rolled her eyes at them and could have cared less about it.

She helped us carry in all the bags and put the stuff away. I was amazed at how excited she got over nail polish and flip flops. Of course, I would have to if someone would have bought those things for me when I was her age. My father tried to do things. But it wasn't the same without a woman there to understand what a little girl needed to have and do things with them.

Nicole fired up the grill out back while Ellie and I got the rest of the condiments ready to go. I went out to see if she needed help but she had it under control. I'd never grilled before really. To me it was what the man was supposed to do.

We did have a small talk about Kenny and Ellie without giving her the club details of it. "How horrible they have no parents. At least Cody has me left and it's hard enough to raise him on my own. There are just somethings a boy needs a father for. I think it's why it upset me so much when Kyle didn't come around. He is the only male really in my son's life."

"Yeah, I know how you feel."

We made idle chit chat until she took the hotdogs off the grill. Then we had to force the boys to stop playing long enough to come and eat dinner. It had been so long since I saw Abel this happy and occupied with fun stuff. Thomas was still too small to really enjoy it.

Once we got dinner all cleaned up the boys watched a video while we girls started our night of beauty. It was called paradise in a jar. A sea bluish green color facial. We looked so funny when we had little green faces from it. But it smelled so wonderful. We all three squeezed together to take a picture. Nicole used her phone and I used mine too. I would print one out later from it for Ellie.

The blood red color was our choice of the evening to paint our fingernails and toes up with. We took turns doing each other's. It was a lot of fun as we laughed and had a good time with it. I snapped more pictures of Ellie and Nicole together. Then the boys playing around in their fort. Even Ellie seemed more at ease this evening and actually wore a smile on her face.
Ellie went to watch her video on Nicole's bed while the boys watched theirs in the living room. It gave me and Nicole a chance to talk about Julia.

She tried to make something out of her life. After she graduated from college she went on to be an English Literature Professor. It was easy to see why their son was so good at it. Nicole had a trunk full of things she had written. Everything from poetry to fiction books or so Nicole thought they were all just fiction. I flipped through most of it until I came to; *The Love I Lost.*

Just after reading three pages of it. There was no doubt in my mind Julia wrote it about John. She could really write. I tried to skim over the sexual encounter trysts she went in to full details about. Several of them actually. John must have been one hell of a lover according to her in a mighty amount of different positions as well.

There were several other areas she wrote similar to John. With the same heart and familiar lingo, they used. But when I came to certain parts. I knew exactly what she was talking about. Because I was experiencing the same things.

---

*You may be out of sight, but not out of my heart. I still feel your heart beating every day. As though you are in the room with me.*

*You may be out of my reach, but not out of my mind. Because I still feel the connection we have every day. When I am awake and asleep.*

*You may be out of my touch, but not out of my soul. I have lost the will to live in reality. If it weren't for the love I have inside me for you, I wouldn't be able to function without you at my side.*

*You may be out of my life, but I carry a reminder of you with me every day. Someday their knowledge and wisdom will change the world. Just as yours has.*

---

*When a connection is real, it simply never dies. The connection can be buried, ignored or walked away from. But never is actually broken.*

*If you've deeply resonated with another person. The connection remains despite any; distance, time, situation, lack of presences or circumstance.*

*If it was truly real. You'll be instantly swept back into the exact moment it was before it left. During the same year, place, same wonder of it all, hope, comfort and heartbeat.*

*Real connections live on forever. When I look at his sweet little face. I am always taken back to you at the exact place and time.*

---

"John Teller was her Kyle. Unbelievable."

But there was so much more inside this little book than most could ever comprehend as the truth. She wrote it out almost verbatim as it was being played out in my life now. There was no way in hell I could mistake the events as they predicted them to be in the future. My damn future.

It wasn't until I seen Abel and Cody waking side by side. "How old is Cody? He and Abel are almost the exact same size." If you didn't know better, they could have passed for brothers complete with blonde hair and blue eyes.

Abel was born on the same day I operated on Cody. They were in the hospital at the exact same time.
frame. All of us were there together then and didn't even realize it. Was it the hidden message for me in Julia's book?

"I am the one who fucked it all up. They were together at the same time and I never even noticed it until now. I brought myself and my children into the mist of all the chaos by the choices I made back then. Even Donna was killed back then too. I am so blind."

"Honey, you're not making any sense to me."

"It makes perfect sense, Nicole. I couldn't see anything but the past coming around again for a second chance and what I thought I missed out on with him. I had the opportunity back then but didn't see it."

"What, Tara?"

"Nothing. I'm just rambling about nothing."

All of our fates were written by others many years ago. By others actions and interferences as well it all changed. What would have today held for me if I went down a different path? Would life have held the same outcome anyway? Was I truly a prisoner of my past to never break free from it?

The things you thought about later, after the fact. They always came back around to haunt you sometimes. But the choices you've made couldn't always be undone and you had to play them out until the end the best way you could.

The boys and Ellie were still going strong. Thomas went out an hour ago. I put her book down and stopped reading it for now. We made beds on the floor for all of us. It was like camping inside. I would keep Thomas close to me. Ellie made her spot in the middle of me and Nicole. The boys were lined up in front of the television. They all went to sleep first and then Ellie gave it up for the night too.

Nicole and I had a little girl talk. She was a happier person than I had ever seen her be. In return she said even Cody noticed and her happiness flowed over to him too.

It wasn't the sex part that made Nicole happy. By having David around, it made her feel like a fun, alive and desirable woman again. Even though she stated she didn't have any feeling for him, she always smiled when she said his name. It was kind of cute actually.

A soft pecking noise was made on the back screen door. It was her male friend making a late midnight call. She told Boomer to go away and not tonight because we were her.

"Go ahead Nicole. I am just going to set here and read some more. I'll watch the kids."

"I love you, Tara." She hugged me before they went to her room to do whatever. A single mom had a rough life of balancing motherhood and a booty call.

Nicole could live it up for the rest of the night as far as I cared. I had more reading to do while I watched the kids sleep.

Our love created someone special. The crows all but disappeared from my life once I lost your love. But, now they are stronger than ever because of him. It always takes me back to the times we shared together; our hopes and dreams of the future.

He carries your gift of talking to the crows. It does seem to confuse him at times, I always pretend it
is not real and means nothing. I never told him the truth, nor ever will I. I protect our son from the same fate we will receive because of it.

"Son of a bitch. The crows are because of Kyle." I couldn't finish the rest of it without knowing what the last page contained. I flipped to it with trembling hands to see what their fate truly was.

A dark angel crow that follows you around. Waiting for your last breath to be taken. That is the final clue to the mystery of love.

It swoops down to take your soul with it to the promise land of peace. Dragging you away from the fiery hell you live on earth in the club. The one thing you regret creating the most in your life. The one thing you will never completely escape from.

Your life is over now…

This must be the end…

I must say goodbye…

Only until we find our love and peace once again together…

But our son will live on to change the world with his gifts, knowledge, words and some of your wisdom…

Although, within about fifteen minutes. Nicole had another visitor at the back door. At first I thought she was a damn popular girl late at night. Until I seen who it was.

"Where's Nicole?"

"Nicole? Where's Nicole?"

"Yeah, Tara. That's what I said. Where is Nicole?"

"I think she went to get something out of her bedroom." I propped myself up against the wall with my elbow sort of while hanging out in the middle of the hallway blocking it too. I might have also banged on the wall a couple of times to warn her as well.

"Tara, you are a terrible liar. What is it I am not supposed to know about?"

Thankfully, I didn't have to answer his question because she came out. "What are you doing here, Kyle? I am just appalled at your behavior. Appalled I say. I told you to stay away tonight." I noticed Nicole was blocking the other side of the hallway from him too.

"What in the hell have you two been doing?"

"Nothing." Nicole and I had this down well enough because we tried to sound really convincing at the same time.

"Hey. What are you guys doing?" An out of breath Boomer magically showed up now through the front door. He made his disappearing act out of Nicole's bedroom window just in the nick of time. The things you'd did to hide what you didn't what others to know, the depth of some lies went on and on. It was a good thing they had a system in place of him parking his car a street over from her house or they would have been busted for sure.
"Where did you go? I followed you through town and lost you somewhere."

"I went back to your house, Kyle. You weren't there, So, I drove by here." Boomer was sweating it to see if his alibi was bought or not. If Kyle's mind hadn't been so distracted with everything else, they probably wouldn't have remotely gotten away with it.

"I'm sure you're here to see Tara anyway." Nicole whispered it in my ear before she gave me a little shove in his direction. "Take one for the team, girlfriend."

"Why don't we set outside on the deck, Kyle and talk. I haven't seen much of you lately. Are you feeling better?"

"I get a little better every day. I don't feel so restless anymore. What is that smell?" Kyle took a whiff in my direction.

"You'll have to pick one of the many I got going on; nail polish, peppermint foot oil and the coconut lime fascial I had."

"It's the coconut. I like it. How about you, Tara. Are you better and doing okay?"

"I get stronger every day now and I'm not so restless either. There is something I want you to read. Your mother wrote this about John Teller. But I will warn you, it's a little on the sexual graphic side."

Kyle dropped the notebook immediately from his hands. "Fuck no, I will not read it. I don't want to know that shit about my mother."

"At least read page thirty two. If you read it and don't at least skim over the rest of it. You are not the man I think you are. You're special and it's why you and I are so connected together. By the way, I have a very strange question for you. Were you here when I operated on Cody?"

"Yeah, why?"

"Cody was in there the day Abel was born. They are exactly six months a part in age. I don't remember you being there though, Kyle."

"I just got back. I came to the hospital several times and just set in Cody's room with him. I knew Nicole wouldn't ever survive if she lost him too. She was so frightened and I tried to be there as much as I could for her. She didn't want to leave him but she had been up for days. I made her go home to sleep, eat and get some clothes. You came in several times to check on Cody while I was there and that's how I knew who you were, Tara. When I gave you a tattoo, I remembered you."

"Son of bitch. I know why now. I thought you were Cody's dad and I didn't even give it a second thought. You and Nicole were always together; I guess I just assumed. Once when I came in you were asleep in the chair. You looked so cramped up and had a coat pulled up around your shoulders. It gets really cold in there sometimes, especially at night. I got a blanket out of the warmer and covered you up with it. It was so sweet to see a loving father who never left his son's side and wouldn't give up on the little boy no matter what the odds are. You stayed for a couple of days and never left the hospital until he was stable. Only you weren't his father like I originally thought you were. Were you still married back then?"

"No, I wasn't. I came back a few weeks before that and she was gone already." A smile crossed his face. "I thought it was the nurse who covered me up sometime in the middle of the night. I didn't know it was you."
"If I had only known back then what I do now."

"Known what, Tara?"

"Nothing. Tell me what you found out and wanted to tell me earlier."

We were interrupted by little feet coming our way across the kitchen floor. I left the door open so I could know if one of the kids woke up. We waited to see which one of them it was.

"What are you doing up, bud?"

"I'm thirsty Uncle Kyle. I want you to get it for me and not mommy."

"Let me get Cody something to drink and put him back to bed. I'll be back." Kyle carried him inside like a football under his arm and Cody giggled the whole time. He was gone maybe a whole five minutes before he came back outside.

"I should probably go before they all get up?"

"Kyle, do you think it's possible my and Ellie's path have somehow connected? Because she dreams of the crows now. I'm not exactly sure of what her dreams entail because she won't talk about it. I haven't seen you enough lately to even tell you all the stuff that's happened."

"Who is Ellie?"

There was a lot explaining about Opie, Donna, Piney and the club. The more I talked the sadder even I became for Ellie. I gave Kyle the rundown of what I knew. How the clubs true spiral started when Donna was killed. It started separating brothers but mostly Clay and Jax. It was a pivotal point really of Jax fighting harder to take more control of the club. Kyle had a theory on it as well.

"The crows can signify darkness and doom or the light and hope. Maybe Ellie is our light, Tara. We need to know what she dreams about."

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I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Parts 2 and 3 of this chapter will be posted tonight or tomorrow. It will cover; why Ellie sees the crows and the tie to Donna, Jax and Tara sweet moment, why Jackson did what he did by locking Tara up, Tara discovers the truth of what really happened to her mother, little Tara steps up to be the new queen with a whole new set of rules for the king, a fun night out for Nicole, Gemma, Tara and Tig, the explanation of the web; the good and bad along with the importance of it with Kyle and Tara, along with what it will hold for everyone's futures. And a whole bunch of other stuff I really can't remember right now.

Thank you for leaving a review and marking this story as an alert or favorite.
Chapter 19

Mothers, Daughters; Fathers, Sons

PART 2 of 5

There are going to be 5 parts of this instead of only 3. It's a lot longer than I originally thought. Please keep in mind it might not all make sense until I get the rest posted (another 20,000 words to go). Since I did Camp Nano and wrote like crazy for it. I am a little behind on this my lovelies.

For those who are confused on the mythology or crows. Send me a PM and I am more than happy to answer any of your questions. Thank you lovelies for staying with me on this!

The smell of something delicious is what I woke up to. I stretched from laying on the floor all night. I came to the realization quickly; I was too old for this shit. When I looked over Thomas and all the kids were gone from their beds we made them last night.

It relieved my stress when I rounded the corner to see Nicole playing with Thomas in the kitchen.

"Where are the kids?"

"Kyle and David came over this morning. They went out back with David and are blowing stuff up. They saw it on Myth Busters and just had to do the experiment for themselves."

The heat was already brutal this morning when I stepped out on the deck. I laughed at the two big boys playing like they were children too. They were shoving Mentos in a Diet Coke bottle to watch it erupt like a volcano of soda everywhere. It wasn't just once they did it either. There must have been ten plastic bottles laying on the ground.

"Men are so easily entertained, I swear." But at least all the boys were having a good time with it. Even Kenny seemed happy to be out there with them. He was my biggest worry out of all the kids at the moment.

"Good morning, Tara. Did you know Kenny has a problem? He said he couldn't tell you about it."

"Yes, I am aware he has one. But I don't know what it is or how to help him because he won't talk to me about it."

"He is having erections already. Especially in the mornings and he thought something is wrong with his thing. We noticed him off to himself. When we tried to get him to come out and play with the other kids. He refused to stand up while keeping his lap covered up. Well, you know, me and Boomer caught on pretty quick to what it is."

"Kenny is too young isn't he?"

"He's almost twelve and it's a normal thing boys go through. They will get more frequent the older he gets. I didn't know how much you want me to tell him about it. We sort of talked in general and
he said he missed his grandpa. They did a lot together and he could talk to him about anything."

"Shit. I don't suppose I could get lucky enough for Kenny to grow out of it in a month or two. Can I?"

"I'm thirty one, girl. I still haven't grown out of it yet. The wind blows too hard and I get a one. I'll talk to him if you want me to. I didn't know if you wanted Jax to do it or not."

Kenny felt the effects of losing everyone in his life too. I wasn't as keen on his needs like I was Ellie. The simple boy verse girl stuff and my boys were still young. What was even sadder. Kenny didn't bring up missing Opie either. Both them had no true love for their father. It was Piney that was his constant male role model in Kenny's life, his father figure. Another effect of what the club does to their children over time.

The kids probably didn't have many friends to talk with because they've been shuffled around to so many new schools after Opie and Donna passed away. They were hit from every side of life's problems.

Since, I wasn't much help in the area and Kenny obviously wasn't comfortable talking to me about it. Kyle done it. They went for a walk and I just hoped it helped this messed up little boy get better.

When they came back outside with the football I bought for Kenny to toss around. Their talk must have gone somewhat well. Of course Cody and Abel had to get in on the action too. Nicole set by me and Ellie while we watched the boys play.

My son was the most adorable little thing ever. While the others yelled hut when they hiked the ball. It came out. "Hop." From Abel's mouth.

"Hey, girl. Come here our teams are uneven." It was David, Cody and Kenny versing Kyle and Abel.

"I can't, I'm holding Thomas."

Kyle winked at me. "Wrong girl. I meant the little one."

Ellie didn't move when he said it. Not a word from her either until Kenny made a comment. "Girls can't play football."

"I'll play." All it took to motivate her was her brother telling her she couldn't do something.

"We'll cheer you on Ellie. Kick theirs butts." Nicole was the encouragement Ellie needed. I was loving but not very competitive or outgoing like her.

"You're Little G from now on, Okay?" Ellie smiled and nodded to Kyle. He whispered something to her and Abel, their next play I would assume.

"Hop one, hop two..." That was my sweet son. His little legs weren't really big enough to hike the ball through. So he just turned around and handed the ball to Kyle after he picked it up from the ground. Which he passed it to Ellie once she got by the boys on the other side of the yard. She was doing the happy dance when she caught it, bless her heart. It was a true happy emotion she expressed.

But Ellie was done with it then. She followed behind Nicole and the boys to go inside the house. Except for Kyle and Kenny. He was showing Kenny how to pass the ball the right way. I let them be and went inside too.
Thomas had been so good when I put him in his carrier to help slice up strawberries and put blueberries in a bowl. To go on the French bread Nicole made. It was a new way for me to make it. She made loaves of banana nut bread. Cut it up in slices then dipped them in an egg and sprinkled them cinnamon sugar.

When it came time to put the powder sugar on it, Kyle and Nicole did not see it the same way. "Kyle you better get the hell out of my kitchen, boy before I whip your ass."

"You don't put enough on it, Nicole. Let go of the sifter and you couldn't whip my ass with ten of your friends helping you."

David and I looked just looked on. This was a true sibling squabble between them. It should have stayed that way but, it didn't. They were fighting over it and neither one would give in. Poor David, he should have moved out of the way when I did because he was wearing some of it now. By the time it was done all four of us and the floor was covered in powdered sugar.

We heard this little clearing of a throat. "I hope you will get this mess cleaned up. Or you all will be in big trouble, right Mom?"

"That's correct Cody. They will have to clean up their mess. I am so upset in you guys." Nicole could barely keep a straight face while she said it to her son. She was just as guilty as we were.

"Oh brother." Abel expressed his disapproval too. "This is just bad, Mommy." Fuck, I was the one who got busted with the sifter in my hands. Because the others bailed and left me holding it.

"Come on, Abel. Let's go play in my room until breakfast."

"Okay."

The boys went right back to being playful children. We all had a good laugh at it while we started cleaning up the kitchen. When it was done we finally set down to eat.

Kyle had several pieces piled up on his plate. I noticed Nicole paying attention to his every movement. He went into the living room to eat with the kids when he finished.

"It's amazing at Kyle's turn around in just a couple of days. I couldn't get him to eat anything and he seems happy again. Are you positive there isn't something going on between the two of you, Tara? Just being around you, he is completely different."

"Um…I'm glad he is better. We're just friends and I really don't want anything to happen to him." It was where I left that shit at. If I told her about the crows and John she would have thought, we flipped our last cookies too just like everyone else had already.

But there were still a lot of issues we had to work out and to talk about. One of them was getting closer to Kyle without him even trying. Ellie set near him but not right beside him. She strayed away from men in general. She did avoid David though. When he set on the floor by them, she was at my feet by the couch.

This behavior would affect every relationship she tried to have in the future with anyone. You had to address it and break the cycle somehow. Hell, it was my same behavior of the past as well. I avoided men and ignored them as much as possible. For the fear they would hurt me in some way. Maybe men coming to me was never the problem, maybe it was my never accepting any of them.

"Ellie, will you hold my plate for me, for a second?" She was such a good little girl. She did it and never asked why. I picked up Thomas' carrier so we could set on the floor. I held out my hand for
the plate to see what she would do.

Kyle scooted over and patted the floor between us. "I made room for you Little G." She set down without a fuss. But still stayed closer to me. It was a small step for her she accomplished and she didn't even know it yet.

After we finished eating Kyle gave Ellie a book. Of course the theme was crows. She didn't say anything about it as she flipped through the pages one at a time. It was almost the same expression of confusion, excitement and uncertainty I had when he gave me my first book on them.

Julia must have known Kyle's love for the crows back then and it was as strong as John's was. The things she wrote about her child carried over to when he became a man too.

"My mom used to take to me and Nicole to the park every weekend so we could feed bread to the birds. The crows are fascinating and really smart birds with the problem solving intelligence of a seven year old child. They have done studies on them…"

It was when I stopped listen to their conversation. Both John and Julia took Jax and Kyle to do the same with the birds. It was the only thing Jax could remember John ever doing with him. Was it another connection they had with their children by random chance or does it actually mean something? There was no way in hell it could have been an accidental thing. Did it possibly provide a link from Jax to Kyle? Or could Jax do the same with the crows but had no idea yet?

"Can we, Tara?"

"Can we what?" Maybe I should have been paying better attention to what they were talking about. I had no clue what Ellie just asked me.

"Can we go by the park to feed the birds on the way back to your house?"

"I don't see why not. Let's help Nicole get everything picked up first."

They didn't want to leave even though we had the house put back to where it was before we started our stay. I hugged Nicole and so did all the kids, even Ellie.

"We will have to do this again. I had a blast."

"Yes we will. I had fun too. Thanks, Nicole." She was kind and even threw in a half a loaf of bread for our adventure.

Nicole handed me something when the kids were outside loading up the car. "Take this, Kyle can't resist it. Play number five." It was a cd by Van Morrison; Crazy Love was the song.

"I don't have a need to get to Kyle."

"I'm sure you don't but take it anyway. Just in case. Our parents used to dance to that song almost every weekend. Sometimes it was in the kitchen. Other times it was by themselves in the front yard. The neighbors thought they were crazy until they got to know them. Then they only wished they had a love like theirs." I stuck it in my purse and she followed me out to say goodbye to the kids again.

When Kyle took Cody with him and David had something else he had to do today. I knew the important thing he was going to do was Nicole later. I laughed at them because they didn't even look at each other while David talked about it. But they both wore the same smile on their faces though.

The kids were extremely happy on the drive to the park. Perhaps it was true, if I could get myself to a
better place in life. It would bring happiness in their lives as well. It would seep from me over to them. When I thought it through; I gained joy from watching them have fun and just enjoy themselves. I really had nothing going on to be thrilled about but nothing to be sad over either at this point. So, I rolled with my crew of children down the road with the radio on.

When we got to the park. I let Ellie, Kenny and Abel go play first. Thomas set with me on the park bench while I watched my babies just be kids. Like they were meant to be without fears or worries.

It wasn't long until I had this furry animal rubbing on my legs. "Look at how big George is."

"He is five months old."

"No way it hasn't been that long. He was just a tiny puppy the last time I seen her, him, it."

"You haven't been around much, Tara. I've been in Charming for almost eight months now." Kyle threw a tennis ball which she ran to get and laid it down at his feet to do it again.

"Did you read your mother's book?"

"Yeah, I read it. I don't know what to say about it. There is a lot of shit in there I can relate to. It's almost like the past has come around again and we are playing it out the same way. Until their fate takes us down with it too."

"Me and you both, Kyle. I don't know what to say either. I didn't even finish it all before I gave it to you to read. Are you ever going to tell me what you and Jax talked about? Nero told me some of it already. I know what you did for me while I was in the hospital."

"Nero shouldn't have told you shit. What is between me and Jax will stay there. It is one thing, Tara. I will never tell you or share with you either. You can ask me a thousand time and I won't do it."

"What happened to we need to be completely honest with each other or this won't work, Kyle?"

"I can't. If I would have known about John and all the other shit. I would have killed Jax then and got it over with it."

"Why would say such a thing, Kyle?"

"I am the good brother after all. As the prophecy is written; bad will always outweigh over good so the evil can live on. Jax will come at me eventually and I won't hesitate to do it then either."

"What the hell are you taking about?" Kyle stood up to walk away from me and wouldn't give me any farther information on what he meant. When I noticed his t-shirt was pushed up over it and it was stuck down the back of his pants. "Are you packing a gun on you?"

"Damn straight I am, day and night now. It's registered and I have the right to carry. I'm not a felon. Jax is a criminal. When it comes down to it, who do you think they will believe me or him?"

There was so much shit I missed out on and had piled up around me over the months I knew nothing about. With what Kyle just said, I couldn't even fathom what was coming our way now.

Since he wouldn't listen to reason or stay near me. I took Thomas and went to him. "You need to tell me what the hell you are talking about, Kyle."

"I will later." Ellie was standing by us and was ready to feed the birds. She went with Kyle to do it. The boys wanted to do it with them as well.
They all threw bread pieces on the ground. Even some ducks waddled up to get their share of it. Kyle took Ellie away from the others to feed another group of birds. She seemed okayed with him because I would have interfered if she hadn't been. They set on the ground and were in a conversation. When it was over she went to play.

"Ellie sees a white crow in her dreams. Do you know what that means?"

Of course I didn't know what the hell it meant. Her dreams started off being with black crows and them invading her little head at night when she laid down. She couldn't recall many of the other details. Until the white crow appeared to fight them all away. The white crow was most prominent in her dreams and life apparently.

"The white crow is a rarity; it only has come to handfuls over the years. It's more like having a vision rather than receiving an omen from it. They guard the dreamer from danger. Whatever is going on in Ellie's head, was some bad shit for it to feel the need to protect her from it. It symbolizes time; the past, present and future to come. For some reason, she needs protection from something evil and bad. Ellie is a special little girl. She is very confused and conflicted for her age. We need to watch over her, Tara."

"We, Kyle?"

"Yeah, we. That little girl is tied to all this shit in some way. I just don't know what it is or how yet."

My cell went off and it was Jax to let me know he would be back in a couple of hours. "I should go. Jax will be home soon and I need to get the kids around. Maybe we can finish this talk tomorrow, if you want to?"

"If he's near, you should go home. I'll see you tomorrow."

The connection we had to our special little girl was proven the next morning when I got ready to go to work. Ellie came in and set down on the bed with a bible in her hand. "What are you doing with that, honey?"

"It's Mommy's bible. Can I go with you to see Kyle today?"

"I'm going to work. I'm not going to see him right now."

"He will be there." Ellie kept insisting upon it too. She repeated it a few times throughout my telling her no.

"Be where, Ellie?"

"Waiting for you at the hospital."

"Why do you think that?"

"The crow told me so."

Talk about giving me goose bumps and slight shiver that went all the way up my spine. It wasn't just what Ellie said, it was the way she spoke it. The confidence in her voice of it and she had an agenda all of her own. Unknown to me and Kyle of course.

"Nitta, I am taking Ellie with me today." I gave her money to buy Kenny lunch somewhere so he didn't feel as though he was being left behind. Stuck at the house all day. It got difficult at times trying to juggle their schedules around.
On the drive there, I thought about calling Kyle to see if she was right and it was his intentions. But I decided not to. Let's test Ellie's ability and what she does know. If she was wrong, it would be a long boring day of her hanging around with me.

We dropped Abel and Thomas off at daycare. I gave them their kisses goodbye just like I did every day. When Ellie and I got off the elevator, I seen nothing and no one around.

Just as I was about to give up on her being right, there was a knock on my office door. I just shook my head when I opened it and seen who was standing there.

"You're late, Kyle."

"What?"

He was surprised to see Ellie with me too. We weren't sure what to make of this little girl. She took Kyle's hand and mine as she was ready to go somewhere.

"What, Ellie?"

"The church opens their doors at nine o'clock. It will be open by the time we get there."

Donna had taken the kids with her to church out of Charming on a regular basis. Probably out of prying eyes or so no one else would know she did it. The name of it and address was on a revival paper stuck inside her bible.

Ellie climbed in the middle of us when we got in the truck. Also from the bible was a delicate gold cross necklace. Ellie took it out and handed it to me. "I want you to have it, Tara."

"Oh honey, I can't take this. It's Donna's and you should keep it."

"It will help protect you from evil." It's all Ellie would say about it. Even Kyle was intrigued by what was transpiring between us. He never said anything as he kept driving towards the church.

Where we turned off on was an old dirt road. Dusty as hell as went drove down it. We found the tiny white church in a country setting of trees and flowers. Mostly little purple flowers planted everywhere near it. It was kept up and the property had been well maintained surrounding it.

Once again, Ellie took a hold of both our hands to lead the way. Kyle was the one who hesitated to go inside. "Ellie, go sit down. We will be right there, honey."

From the door I watched her sit down at the pew in front. There were a lot of older people already here this morning. "What's wrong, Kyle?"

"I'm a sinner and I don't pretend I'm not. I don't worship or go to church. But that's not the problem. When we got here, I just got this bad feeling something horrible is going happen." The breaths Kyle was taking in were deep ones. He also had to wipe the sweat away from his brow. "I thought about it last night. I can't let myself get closer to the kids and have them banned from my life too. It's not good for them or me. Ellie and Kenny don't need to feel like one more person has been taken away from them. As soon as Jax finds out, it's exactly what he will do too."

"I won't let that happen. You are important to Ellie. I don't know why or all the reasons. But you are and you make a difference in her life."

"You act like you have a choice, Tara. We both know you really don't."
"We will figure it out." I held out my hand and Kyle finally took it. We crossed over the holy threshold together. Where this journey would lead us to, neither one of us had a clue.

We set on each side of Ellie and waited to see what would or wouldn't happen now. She took Kyle's hand and went up where the preacher stood with a long line of people waiting to talk to him. I had no idea what they were going to do when it was their turn. But whatever it was she needed him to be with her for it.

My true belief was; Ellie was our light of good. There was a time I could have walked only on that side same side with her without a shadow of doubt. But I drew the line between good and bad with some of the recent things I had done in the past. My good was still there and I knew it. Even though I had grip on my corrupt side and I felt it was under control. Maybe it would only raise its ugly head when I needed it to now. I've become everything that I hated and fought so hard against. Every day I fight to make sure to get myself back to where I once was. I was still trying to correct all those wrongs I've done in my life.

Everything was affecting me right now. The low music playing about rejoicing and letting god into your heart. By letting him in they say you will spend the afterlife in the promise land. I wondered where outlaw women go other than straight to hell when it's all over.

They were all saying prayers that god would have mercy on their souls. Even the slightest whispers they were doing sounded like they were screaming it in my ears.

My body felt sticky clammy and I got that sinking feeling down in the pit of my stomach. It was making me so nauseated like I was about to throw up from it. When I went to stand up, I was as dizzy as hell trying to make the few steps to get to the door to get out of here. My feet seemed like they were miles away from my body. With every step I tried to take it was an eternity to make another one.

If I didn't get away from this and get some air I thought, I was going pass out. The breeze blowing on my face was like air conditioning to me when I walked outside and felt it. Even though it was hot as blue blazes today.

"Hello, Tara."

The sun was at his back shining so brightly in my eyes. But the closer I got to him the more I was sure I knew who he was. His image was a little distorted to me but it was the same old man I had seen before. Around town and in my dreams with the crows.

"Who are you?"

"You begged me to come and save him." It was the same thing the old man repeated once again. As the last time I seen him sitting on top of my tombstone with the crows. "Thank you for taking care of my daughter. Don't let my children forget me."

"Tara?" I turned around when Kyle called my name. But when I turned back around, the old man was gone from my sight.

The most beautiful small white crow flew beside the large pitch black one. They formed a perfect circle up high in the sky as they flew around us a couple of times before their flight left us. We all three stood there in complete fascination of what we witnessed.

The tears fell from me. It was Opie and Donna. No one would ever convince me otherwise either. The good and the bad of their love coming together. She died because she surrendered to Opie's way
of life only because she loved him so much. He died because he hated his way of life after it took Donna away from him and he couldn't stand to be without her anymore. Were they joined together once again in the afterlife? Did they come to us with a purpose? What was the real meaning of the message we were just given? Was the white crow indeed Ellie's mother still fighting the evil to care for her children even after death?

"Tara, are you okay?" Tightly I held on to Kyle.

"I will be and so will you."

"So will you, Little G. We will make sure of it somehow." Ellie joined in our hug circle.

Before we got in the truck. Ellie picked one of the small purple flowers. "Mommy loved these." She sniffed it before she pressed it in Donna's bible.

There was always more to the story. When I walked in the library this morning, I would find out the rest of it. Kyle was sitting at a table with several books opened up. Pieces of paper strung about on it as well.

"What is all of this?"

"We are all telling the same exact story, Tara. John got Gemma pregnant and married her. I got Jenny pregnant and I married her. Jax got you pregnant and he married you. Odin got Frigg pregnant first too. When is your anniversary?"

"September seventeenth."

"It's when John and Gemma got married too. Also the same day I married Jenny. Just all done in different years. I couldn't find an actual date when Odin and Frig were married. Back then it wasn't really recorded on paper. It was just a spoken bond between them."

It was remarkable everything about all of us mirrored the other's story. It was very creepy when you set and compared our lives out on paper. All the same cycle repeating itself over in one giant circle of events in time, just different times in history. The past and present were tied together just like how the spider web was built by one stand leading to another. What was still undecided was how it affected our futures together.

"Odin was a god and he did as he damn well please. He slept with so many woman and fathered so many children. No one knew for certain how many. But Frigg knew the things he did and allowed it to happen. She was just the only woman he couldn't leave alone. Like Gemma with John. John did who he pleased as well. Jax does the…"

"Yeah, I get it, Kyle."

Kyle laid three spider webs down in front of me. None of which I understood with all the names on them and the lines he had drawn in red connecting them up. The one was split perfectly in half with a giant space between the same reflected equal drawn sides. Within each layer of it; John/Gemma, Clay/Gemma, Kyle/Jenny, Jax/Abel's birth mother, Jax/Tara, Kyle/Tara.

"Okay. Why does this one have my name on the web in the middle?"

"Because you have been feeding both me and Jax. When I am at my weakest point; is when you get to me the most. I can almost bet it's the same with Jax. When he is at his weakest point, it's when you
have the most control over him. I've changed since I've met you for the better. Which means you feed my good side. Jax is just getting worse. So, you are feeding his bad side. The good brother and the bad brother."

"No. Gemma is the core of the web. We already talked about it. And why is my name with yours?"

"Gemma was but she stepped down from her throne. You are the new queen and have accepted it now. So, therefore it is you, Tara. You are the one who brought me in to the web with you because no one knew about me before. I didn't exist in their world until I met you and found out I was John's son."

"No, it can't be me, Kyle."

"Who is now the new queen of the club of evil since Gemma stepped down?"

"I guess I am."

"Who feeds off my knowledge constantly like Frigg did Odin? Gemma did the same with John."

"I do."

"Who rarely shares her knowledge with me just like Frigg never did with Odin? I can damn well bet Gemma possess knowledge and secrets John never knew about."

"I really don't have any knowledge to share to be honest." Kyle gave me that look. "Okay, for the sake of argument, I will say its me."

"Who is the fierce mother who protects her young sons no matter what she has to do?"

"Me again when it comes to my boys, Ellie and Kenny."

"Who can bring a man to ecstasy with just her touch just like Frigg?"

"That one, doesn't sound like me at all, Kyle."

"You are so wrong about that one, Tara. Do you know why it's Frigg's biggest questioned power?" I only shrugged my shoulders this time at his question as I had no answer to it. "Because Frigg only held the power over Odin. It's why he was so weak when it came to her. It's probably a lot of the reasons Gemma is like she is today about sex too, so unprohibited with it all. They were taught by the good brother. As it transitions over to please every other man they are with after that. There are times when you touch me, it's an unbelievable experience. Like nothing I've ever experienced before."

"This is just your theory, right Kyle?"

"I have about a hundred ways to test the theory, Tara. None of which I'm sure Jax will like. Take my hands." We joined hands across the table. "Your heart races and palms get sweaty almost immediately when I touch you. Now, tell me you don't feel anything."

"I don't feel anything."

"Then you're lying to me or to yourself. In time, you won't be able to deny it either. You will feel the effects of all this just like I do. You haven't even noticed the changes in yourself already. When I first met you, you were so quiet and reserved. Then it all changed, Tara."

"Are you making this shit up, Kyle?"
"Seriously, you think we both have been to hell and back. I hurt my son by being here and I am fucking miserable all the time. Just so I can get in your panties?"

"No, I guess not. It just doesn't make any sense to me. What happens now, Kyle?"

"The best I can tell it's gets played out until the end. Then the cycle of history will repeat itself with Abel, Thomas or Zac. Now, that he knows he's my son. He is a part of it too because I brought him in it as descents of John Teller. One of them will be the good brother and one of them will be the bad brother. Which one? I have no clue. When their new queen takes over, she will continue to feed the web when you step down. Unless because you did things in a backwards order, it somehow messes it all up. I'm guessing really at best on that part, it will do anything at all."

"How does it get played out until the end?"

"As the prophecy is written; evil sarcomas all. The bad takes over the good so evil can live on. The bad brother kills the good brother and revels in the evil."

"Maybe, Kyle. You should leave Charming so nothing happens to you. I couldn't handle that."

"It's a little too late now, girl. If Jax needs to keep the evil alive in the club by trying to kill me. It won't matter if it's here or in another state. Besides, I can't leave yet."

"Why can't you leave, Kyle?"

He seemed to be searching for the right words at first. Then he dropped his head and wouldn't even look at me. "I can't tell you."

"Why can't you?"

"It's between me and Jax. It's where it needs to stay. I'll see you later, girl." Kyle gave me a kiss on the forehead before he just left me sitting at the table alone. It wasn't like him at all. This was totally out of his character. So, I wasn't going to let him get away with it and I went after him.

"Hey, Kyle. You need to tell me the truth and stop this bullshit. Nero told me you said all those hurtful things to me. So you could protect me. What the hell are you protecting me from?"

"I'm sorry for what I said to you, I really am. I did it to make you stay away from me, Tara. I don't want you to get hurt because of me."

"Hurt from what? Do you want me to stay away from you? Are you scared of what Jax will do? Just tell me something."

"No I am not scared of Jax. No I don't want you to stay away from me. I've gotta do a tattoo. I will see you tomorrow."

Well, Kyle really didn't tell me any damn thing before he drove away. But I knew one person who couldn't resist running her mouth. So, I went to see Gemma. She just couldn't help herself and I knew it.

"What happened between Jax and Kyle while I was locked up?"

"I don't know."

"Bullshit, Gemma. You know because if Nero does, you do. He doesn't keep a damn thing away from you. So let's not play this little game."
"You should thank Kyle for what he did. I love my son with all my heart. But Jackson isn't thinking clearly and hasn't for a while now. I think you've earned a free pass to do as you please. I would take my advice for once, sweetheart."

"A free pass for what?"

Gemma was so coded when she spoke. Just like always when she meant one thing it came out a completely other way than that. "The queen is expected to hold everyone together even when shit is falling apart around her. You cannot be the one to ever fall apart especially in front of Jackson. He will see you as weak and when he does, he will have complete control of you then. It's time Tara for you to stand strong and stay that way now. If you don't like the rules I wrote for the old ladies, then change them."

"What damn rules are you talking about, Gemma? For fucking once, just tell me exactly what the fuck you mean by it." I caught myself afterwards. I was standing in front of her desk yelling at her. I've never yelled at her before. Most of the time she intimated me enough I barely raised my voice to her.

Gemma went over to the file cabinet and threw a black book down in front of me. "Son of a bitch. There are actually goddamn written old lady rules." Hell, no one ever shared them with me until now.

The one I couldn't even start to believe she was in approval of; if the members got their dicks sucked off it wasn't considered cheating on their old ladies. "Seriously? Why would you do this?"

"You still have a lot to learn, sweetheart. I didn't just write those rules, I lived them. Played each one of them out at a damn time. If I hadn't given them something, they would fuck around all the time behind our backs. If it was approved by me or not. This is a compromise with the guys. It's better to know their dicks were only in someone's mouth rather than fifty other pussies. The same rules go for the old ladies too. You can suck someone off or have them go down on you and it's not cheating. There is nothing the guys can say about it either."

Hell, Gemma was a crazy bitch just like I thought for all these years. I stuck the damn book in my purse to finish reading it later on when I had time. "This isn't over. I have to go pick up the kids and I will be back."

"It's over for me, Tara. This is yours now. You change whatever you want to. But just remember the repercussions some of those changes can bring."

Those damn rules ran through my head as I stopped to pick up Ellie and Kenny. They still did as I picked up the boys too. I stopped at a drive thru and bought them all dinner. I hustled it back to TM but she was already gone. "Damn you, Gemma."

The kids and I set outside at the picnic table while they ate their dinner. Except Ellie, she wouldn't eat and eyed each of them as they went past us. I couldn't ask them all to take their leathers off. I already knew they wouldn't do it anyway.

To my complete amazement, it was Tig who reached out to her. At first, she refused to talk or look at him. She had inched her way to me across the bench until she was practically in my lap like Thomas was.

"I have pictures of your mom and dad if you want to see them." She nodded but wasn't going anywhere with him by herself. Tig went in the clubhouse and brought out a box. He told her the story behind each photo he showed her.
The boys were getting tired of sitting and wanted to swing. "I'll just be right over there, honey. Are you okay to sit here with Tig?" Ellie only nodded.

"I'll take care of her, Tara." Tig seemed offended by my comment. It wasn't aimed directly at him; it was the piece of leather on his back that scared the hell out of her.

It wasn't like I couldn't see her from across the parking lot while I was with the boys. Ellie seemed better when she came to show me the picture Tig let her have. It was Opie and Donna with Ellie when she was a toddler. "Go put it in the car so it doesn't get bent, honey."

The kids went on to play in the giant sand box. I set down on the swing to watch them with Thomas.

"Do you care if I hang out with you?"

"No not all, Tig."

We talked about nothing really in general. Thomas went to sleep while we swung. I got up to put him in his carrier when I heard a loud thud. "Oh shit. Are you okay, Tig?"

The swing chain broke from the one he was swing on. "I think I broke my ass." I tried hard not laugh at him just a little.

"Let me see."

"It's okay doc. You don't have to."

"I'm a doctor, just let me see it already." He landed on his lower back and just below his belt line.

"Tara, what the fuck are you doing?"

"We were just swinging and I fell, Jax. Tara offered...

"I'm not talking to you, asshole. I am talking to my wife."

Jax was seriously pissed off at me and Tig. So much he just walked away before I could say a damn thing. I got the giggles when I shouldn't have obviously because they infected Tig too. We were both laughing while I tried to look down in his pants at his ass.

Every time Jax would turn around and look at us, we would stop laughing. We did a couple of times before the kids decided to play dog pile on top of Tig. Jax just shook his head at us and went inside the clubhouse.

"This is for you, Tara." Margret handed me a white box with a big red bow tied around it. "Your friend dropped it off this morning and I told him I would make sure you got it."

"Thanks." Before I went to my office. I grabbed a cup of coffee. I needed something to help me with the lack of sleep. I was back to only doing it when I was exhausted again.

Inside the box laid a card; *Happy Birthday, girl.* When I took the tissue paper out I found a wind chime with colorful butterflies on it.

It made me smile Kyle remembered my birthday when I had forgotten my own. I flipped the calendar
on my desk and sure enough it was today. I called to say thank you. He didn’t answer so I left him a message.

It wasn’t my only birthday surprise though. As the boys and I got ready to leave I seen Jax parked on his bike smoking. Even Gemma was here with him.

"I'm keeping the boys so you and Jackson can have some time alone. I'll pick up Kenny and Ellie on my way home."

"Take a ride with me?" Jax held out a helmet after he had already climbed on his bike.

"Okay. Let me put my bag in the car."

We were leaving the direction from town. I wasn't certain where Jax intended on taking me to. The smell riding around was of fresh cut grass and at times I got a whiff of various wild flowers too.

The road he turned off on was of one not traveled much anymore. There wasn't much more than a path we drove down until he came to a complete stop. His bike wouldn't go any farther.

"You don't remember this place do you, Tara?"

"No."

Jax took my hand because we had to walk to wherever it was he wanted to go to. When we came across a stream of water, he helped me across it. I stepped on a few rocks when I could and he lifted me over to them the other times.

Once we got up a giant hill he stopped. "Do you remember now?"

"This is where we used to come to when we were kids."

"Yeah it is. It's all grown up around here now. No one ever comes out here anymore." Jax took my gold bracelet out of his leather I had lent to Gemma for her wedding. "This was hanging around the mirror of my Harley. With a note from Gemma to stop being a dumb ass. She's kind of right."

Jax hooked the bracelet clasp around my wrist. I took it off after I left Charming all those years ago. When he gave it to me, he vowed nothing would ever separate us. It was so much easier back then when our future was just hanging out on a Friday night. Now those simple days were gone.

"I know I've broken a lot of promises to you over the years. It was because I was scared, I'm not anymore. Every promise I made, I wanna work on keeping them to you now. Even when you wanna run Tara; I won't let you go or give up on us. I wake up most of the time feeling like you are going to leave me just any day now."

Jax made me freeze in place when he pulled me so tightly to his body. His hands roamed to the familiar places he loved to go with me. While his lips captured mine in a fiercely possessive kiss. It was the first time in years he needed to own his pussy; know it and feel it. He was working hard for it too by every gesture and act of love he did.

There was barely enough time to get my pants off but not my tank top. He already had my bra pushed up under it and his hands moved to cup my breasts. His mouth flicked over my nipple ring a few times before it got sucked in his mouth.

"Are you mine, Tara?"
"Yes. I always have been."

Jax lifted me up by my ass and I felt how hard he was through his jeans when I wrapped my legs around him. His skin rubbing against mine, set me a blaze. We were burning down the bridges that were between us.

"I won't survive if you ever leave me." It was the soft words spoken until he laid me down on the same ground we loved on so many years ago. The grass felt wet and cool on my back as he entered me.

My nails raked down his body as he bent down to give me a kiss. My head went back without hesitation as he sucked on my neck and bit it just as hard as moved inside me.

From my hands and knees, Jax took me from behind. I pressed myself back against him as much as my body allowed. He was as deep inside me as he possibly could be. We loved like we use to in the same spot from so many years ago.

We laid on the ground together. Not really saying much to each other. Until the sun had almost but all disappeared from the sky above us. We watched it set from here a thousand times before.

"Happy Birthday, Tara."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! I will have parts 3 and 4 out by tomorrow. Which will tell you all the rest of it ; )

Thank you for leaving a review. Marking this story as your favorite or alert.
Chapter 20

Mothers, Daughters; Fathers, Sons

PART 3 of 5

I converse with a lot of you on the story and just to chat sometimes. This one I had with a reader I wanted to throw out there. Everything I write in this story has a meaning no matter how trivial or crazy it might seem at the time. It is all one giant evolving circle; of the characters, the past, the present and the future. Those who went back and read it again after they found out certain reveals were like; oh yeah, I clearly see it now.

Some think I hate Jackson, so not true. I've wrote him in many different ways over the last four years. I truly loved him up to season 5. He didn't always do the right things but he still had good intentions of making things right and enough good left in him to know he did wrong. Once Tara married him and he got the gavel. He sort of checked out on her and became more evil than Clay in some ways.

We don't want Tara to receive the same fate she did in the show. We don't want Jackson to receive the same fate he did in the show. But most of all we don't want to leave Abel and Thomas parent less like Ellie and Kenny.

It slightly twisted around in the wind. Thomas was jabbering as the bright colors caught his eye. The clanking noise of the glass butterflies striking against the brass bar made him reach out to touch it. We stood for a few minutes with him in my arms to let him enjoy the wind chime I hung by the front door.

The older kids didn't seem thrilled by it at all but he sure was. Just like the tiny motorcycle charm Jax added to my gold bracelet. Thomas was fascinated by it as well. He tried to play with the dangling charm every time my wrist got near his little hands.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time this morning to stay outside for too long. I still had to get ready and get the kids moving for the day. As much as I loved them all it took forever sometimes.

Mary wanted Kenny and Ellie for a few days. She had already planned a mini vacation for them before I agreed to take them for the summer. Kenny was fine with it but Ellie wasn't and already expressed several times she didn't want to go. I still had to buy them some summer clothes and other stuff before they went. I was trying to sort through what they couldn't really wear anymore and get rid of it.

"Maybe this weekend we can spend some girl time and go shopping together?"

"Okay." There was a little excitement in Ellie's voice from it at least.

While I finished up emptying her bag, I came across a dance invitation. "What is this Ellie?" She wouldn't comment to even acknowledge it. According to the paper it was a coming of age dance from a youth group she belonged to. "Ellie?"
"I'm not going."

"Why, honey? You might have fun."

"I don't have a dad. It's a father and daughter dance. Some of the mothers told me I shouldn't come to the group anymore because of who my dad is. Since Mommy has been gone, they are mean to me sometimes. I don't even want to belong to the group anymore."

"Oh really. Tell me what they said to you."

Donna had enrolled Ellie in an extra activity group for girls from the age thirteen to fifteen to make friends. I could see her mother standing up against anyone who spoke out against her family. Donna sure as hell wouldn't put up with someone talking shit to Ellie and neither would I.

It wasn't uncommon for people to punish the member's family for being associated with the club. That was exactly what those bitches were doing too. They didn't feel Ellie fit in with their social circle. So with Donna gone, they pushed her out and made her feel like she was less than. The only reason she got an invitation was because it was mailed to her from a list. Well, that shit wasn't going to fly with me. I had been treated the same way when I was young by having a lush for a father. Not just for that reason either. The day would come when my boys were bound to face the same kind of treatment by someone.

"You should go and we can get you a new dress for it." Ellie was hesitant about it and I understood. But she didn't realize she still had someone here with her that would fight for her just as her mother had done.

Jax hadn't left for the day yet. I explained what they had done to Ellie. "Those bitches should have their asses kicked for it. I can't take her though and she wouldn't want me to anyway. I got club stuff all weekend."

Disappointment crossed my face. He was probably right. Ellie would just be scared and miserable if she did go with Jax. But I still wasn't going to let them treat her like that. I stuck the invitation in my purse and would attend their dance committee meeting.

"Hey, babe. Do you think we can do a club breakfast or dinner sometime? Gemma used to do them. I was thinking maybe you could do one if you have time."

"I can do that. Sure, why not. It sounds like fun."

This would be my first real involvement with the club on my own. I thought of Gemma a lot lately. She would always really be the queen. I gave her a call to see if she wanted to help me one more time before she and Nero left to start a new life together.

"I'd love to, sweetheart. I'm glad you're stepping up and taking care of the guys. When do you want to do it?"

"They have a run on Saturday. I thought we can have breakfast before they go."

"Sounds good. Nero and I will be there."

"How is Nero doing? I haven't seen him lately?"

"He's fine. Come by TM today and we will discuss the details."

Once I got off the phone with Gemma I had to hustle to work. Ellie hugged me goodbye like she
does every morning. Kenny, I got nothing from that little boy. There wasn't a connection between me and him of any kind. I'd have to work on it.

For most of the day I only had rounds to make and a few appointments. When I got those finished up I headed over to TM to talk to Gemma. We came up with the list pretty quickly in fact.

"I've got to go before I pick the boys up. Some women were being mean to Ellie in her youth group over the club. Their meeting starts in about thirty minutes."

Gemma grabbed her purse. "We will see about that shit." Even though she kept saying she was done and out. Someone talked shit about the club and she wasn't going to have it either.

Before we went inside of the building I wanted to make it clear to Gemma. "This needs to be kept low key. We just want to talk and express our feeling on what has happened. No banging heads off the counter, or pulling out your gun to shoot them or calling them a cunt. No crazy shit, Gemma."

"Since when have you known me to do any crazy shit?"

"All the time since I've known you."

We took a folding chair in the back. There were four women setting at a long table and five or six setting on chairs with us. By just listening to them talk, I got it. They were snooty women who traveled in a certain circle. If you weren't in their circle, you meant nothing to them.

After the called it officially over. I approached the one who did most of the talking. "I wanted to know if you can give me a minute about Ellie Winston."

"Ellie doesn't belong to the group anymore. She hasn't attended a meeting in months. Besides, she's really not Sunshine Girl material."

"She does belong to this group. I'm sure you can understand her missing a few meetings with the situation."

"Oh right, her father got killed in prison from what I heard. His porn star girlfriend brought her once after that. Again, Ellie just doesn't belong here." The bitch just wasn't going to listen to reason. She finally walked away as I was in midsentence talking to her. She must have felt I didn't belong here either.

"Are you gonna take that shit, Tara?"

"Fuck no. I'm not."

Gemma and I followed her to the bathroom. Gemma stood against the door and she actually was going to let me handle it for once.

Once again, I tried to be nice until she basically called us all biker trash. Then I got pissed off. By her throat I shoved her up against the wall. "Ellie will be attending the dance. If I as much as find out you or the fucking twats, you run with. Make one rude comment to her, make her feel bad for being there or even look at her the wrong way. The trashy biker bitch you just referred to me as. Will come back here and beat your fucking ass until you bleed." Before I turned her lose I banged the back of her head of the wall as hard as I could. "Don't make me come back here."

"I'm glad to see you handled it without any crazy shit."

"Don't start with me, Gemma." I put my sunglasses on when we reached the outside steps. "Besides,
I learned it from the best crazy bitch there is."

"Damn straight about that, sweetheart."

Gemma went with me to pick up the boys. I dropped her off at TM and headed to my house. Once I got Ellie and Kenny I wanted to address the dance. "I really think you should go Ellie. I went to the meeting and they are looking forward to you being there."

"Really?"

"Yes. We need to get a dress for you. How about we see if Nicole and Cody wants to grab dinner with us? Then we will look for you a dress. There is only a couple of days until the dance Saturday night." Ellie never said yes or no to it. So, I rolled on with it.

We stopped at Nicole's house and she wanted to go along with us. The boys didn't as soon as Kyle came over. They fussed and moaned about it.

Nicole and I seemed more enthused about everything than Ellie did. We were trying to decide how she should get her hair done and the whole ten yards.

"Tara." Kyle motioned is head towards the back door. So I followed after him outside. "Is Jax taking Ellie to the dance?" He overheard what I told Nicole about those women and all of it.

"Jax can't take her. He has club stuff to do. She isn't really comfortable with him anyway. His leather only reminds her of what she has lost."

"Is it okay if I ask Ellie to go with me? Or do you think it will be a problem?"

"I think she will love it. You're so sweet." When I hugged Kyle I let out an instant gasp. I felt so warm inside. An intense amount of emotions rushed me all at once. It was an overpowering sensation.

"Feeling it, aren't you, girl?"

"No."

"Uh huh. Keep telling yourself that, Tara." The longer I was close to him. The more intense the feeling got to be. I had to get away from him and quickly. When I loosened my hold on him, he tightened his on me.

"Are you ready to go, Tara?" I think Nicole surprised us both a little because we didn't even notice her out here with us.

"Yeah, I am." Kyle still held on to me. His sister being here didn't bother him. "You should let go of me."

"I know I should."

"I'll be inside whenever you're ready to go, Tara." Nicole didn't say anything. But I was sure she would to me later about it.

"It is not sexual feelings I get by touching you. It's like you take me to my happy place, girl. I'm dangling on the edge you've lead me to but you always leave just before I can completely fall."

"Well now. What are you guys doing?" Boomer was standing at the back door observing us hugging each other.
"Nothing asshole. What do you want?" It was time to go back inside and stop this shit.

"Little G, I hear you have a dance coming up this weekend. I'll go with you if you want me to."

"I don't know if you can. You're not my dad."

This was where it got complicated to explain it to Ellie. Kyle told her about his step dad raising him. Nicole expressed to her family is by the heart and not always by blood; like her and Kyle. Boomer threw in his dad died when he was young and he helped his mom with his three younger sisters. Then I added to it about Wendy. Ellie knew my true motherly love for Abel because he was my son and no one would ever take that away.

"I want you to go, Kyle. But I don't know how to dance."

"It's easy, Little G. I can show you. If Tara can do it anybody can." For some fucking reason they all thought that was funny, even Ellie.

It was finally time to go and the boys were protesting because they were playing a video game. "Let them stay here and play with Cody. We will watch them. You can spend some time with just Ellie."

"I haven't feed them yet."

"I think I can figure out to feed them, Tara."

"Are you sure you want to watch Thomas too?"

"I think I'm big enough to take him if he gives me a problem. Go do whatever the hell girls do."

"Thank you." I set Thomas carrier down by them on the floor. He seemed content to just watch them having fun and make a lot of noise.

Kenny and Cody already had down the race car video game. "Come here, buddy." Abel set on Kyle's lap while he helped Abel with what buttons to push. They were crashing in to the other boy's cars on purpose and running them off the road. Abel and Kyle laughed the whole time when they done it. Kenny and Cody, not so much.

"Tara." Nicole finally stepped in my view when I didn't answer her after she said my name a couple of times. "Are you in there, girlfriend?"

"Yeah, let's go." I had to look back at all of them one more time before we left out the door.

There never had been a time when I had so much damn fun shopping. We tried on clothes just for the hell of it even. I came across a pair of red cowgirl boots, I splurged and bought those babies. They were more me than the high heel black boots Gemma got for me.

Nicole picked out the tight ass pair of jean I bought to go with them and Ellie found a sleeveless red blouse to go with it. If I had much cleavage it would have shown. I couldn't wait to slip those red boots over my jeans and wear them somewhere.

We turned our focus to sweet Ellie. With eight dresses in hand she went to the dressing room to try them on. When she came out in a white and pink silk dress with tank top sleeves, it was the one. Not only did it look good on her, she looked like a pretty teenage girl in it. A much older girl but still gorgeous.

The accessories were finished with a pair of low heeled white shoes and a silver heart necklace. Her
ears weren't pierced though for earrings yet. Donna had promised her when she turned thirteen to take her to get it done. Her mother didn't live long enough to keep her promise to her daughter. So, Nicole and I rectified it for them. We each held one of Ellie's hands while the lady put a tiny silver stud in her ears. It brought our shopping adventure to a close for the night.

The boys were still playing the same video game when we got back a couple of hours later. Boomer was down there racing his car with them too. Kyle was on the couch with Thomas laying on his chest out like a light.

"The boys ate dinner already. Thomas has been asleep for about twenty minutes. Is that for me?"

"Of course it is. It's your strawberry shake fix for the day. Thank you for watching them."

"You're welcome."

We went through the drive thru and bought them all ice cream on the way back. The boys were already at the table eating theirs with Boomer. They must have inhaled it because they were right back to playing their game quickly.

Thomas didn't wake up when I put him in his carrier and took him with me to Nicole's bedroom. She and I went through her nail polish and found the perfect pink shade to go with Ellie's dress. Even Ellie was starting to show some excitement too.

"I need to get the kids home and get them ready for bed."

There was so much for me to do over the next week. After I got the kids bathed and put to bed. I began a list for the club's breakfast, Ellie's dance and Gemma's going away party.

It was the first thing I worked on when I got up too. Until I had to get the kids moving for the day. For the most part the kid was really good for me. I was getting myself back in the grove of life again and it was all because of them.

Work was just as busy. I performed three operations, kept all of my appointments on time even. The scurrying schedule I had kept made the days fly by quickly too. It was already time for me and Gemma to make their breakfast.

It was early on a Saturday morning when we invaded the clubhouse. The boys played outside with Wayne. He was already up having coffee when we got here. I invited him to eat as well. Ellie was a big help. I've gotten used to her not being far from my side.

"Smells good."

"Morning, Tiggy." He gave Gemma a kiss on the cheek. Then me for absolutely no reason at all. It surprised me a little actually I got the same treatment she did from him.

They all started to filter out of their rooms when they smelled food cooking. I poured Jax a cup of coffee and took it outside to him. He was out on the picnic table with Chibs. I set it down so I could get back to finish things up.

"Thank you for doing this, babe."

"You're welcome. It's really kind of fun." I gave him a kiss then went back to the kitchen to help out.

Within an hour we had put together a pretty good buffet for them to choose from. They all lined up to get a plate. I made all four of the kids theirs and then my big kid one too. Jax gave me another kiss
when I set his plate down I, fixed for him.

"Gemma, where is Nero?"

"He wasn't feeling well and decided to stay home."

The guys ate and got their stuff together. I walked out with Jax to see him off.

"Do you got any plans for tonight?"

"Just Ellie's dance. Why?"

"No reason. Thank you for being a good old lady and doing this for me. I love you."

"Be safe baby. I love you too."

Gemma helped me out to the car with all the stuff and my many children.

"Have fun tonight, sweetheart." Gemma hugged Ellie and we took off to get all the stuff done I need to today.

We ran around town and I bought a lot of stuff Gemma's going away party. Now it was time to get the little princess ready for her big night.

Kenny need a haircut. Abel, he just wanted one. "Do you want to get your hair cut, Ellie? You don't have to cut it short. Just get it trimmed up and put a few layers in it."

The stylist was fantastic. After she cut Ellie's hair, she curled it too. She pinned one side up with little pearl pins. Ellie could have passed for sixteen easy.

Doing the rest of her stuff was simple. Nicole did a light makeup job on her after she got dressed. By the time we got her finished, it was time for her to go.

"Don't you look handsome all dressed up." Kyle did look cute in black dress pants, dark blue shirt and his black tie.

"This is for you Little G." He bought her a delicate wrist corsage. The band was cover in white lace with two tiny pink roses and a white one in the middle of them.

"I didn't forget my other girl either." He handed me a single pink rose. I wasn't even sure what to say.

"Let's get some pictures before you leave." Nicole snapped a couple of them and it was so sweet.

"Tara, take one with us." Ellie was just a beautiful child on the inside and outside.

"This is your night, honey." It chocked me up watching her blossom right before my eyes.

"Come on, Tara." Ellie got tired of asking me finally and was dragging me by my hand over for a picture. Nicole took a couple of all of us when Ellie went over to stand by her.

Nicole snapped a couple of us just me and Kyle. "Do you think Ellie is pushing us together, Kyle?"

"Oh yeah she is."

Kyle suck his arm out to Ellie for her to take so they could leave. It was the sweetest thing to watch
her feel like a princess. He even opened her door to get in the truck. I felt like I was sending my little girl out into the world for the first time.

The experience she would receive from tonight would carry over for her. I never went to one single dance because no one ever asked me to go and my father never would have done anything like this for me. I missed out on so many of those experiences when I was growing up. But my children would not. I'd make sure of it.

"Come on girlfriend. Let's go get the boys something to eat." Nicole saw what a blubbering idiot I was acting like and she hugged me.

We rounded up our children and took them to eat. Then to play at the park. My cell went off. It was a picture from Kyle. Ellie was dancing with some boy just about her height. She looked so happy too. "Aw." It came from both me and Nicole at the same time.

When we got back Ellie couldn't wait to leave. She wanted to write about her night in her diary before she forgot. It was precious.

The boys were so tired I had to wake Kenny and Abel up to put them to bed. Thomas was the easiest to get down for the night. Then there was Ellie. She wrote away with a happy face while she did it. I even noticed within a couple of hours she was in a peaceful sleep.

Since, the house was so quiet. I worked on Nero and Gemma's going away party next. Only, I was interrupted by a surprise. Jax was supposed to be gone until Sunday night and he was home already.

"We got done early. So we headed back home."

"Good. I'm glad you came home early. There is something I want to talk about with you. I want to have a going away party for Nero and Gemma at the clubhouse."

The more I talked about doing a going away party for Gemma to Jax. The more he balked at the idea of it. He wasn't going to hear of it being at the clubhouse for her either.

"Okay. Then I will throw the party at her house because it's bigger than ours." Jax continued on how it was a waste of time to do it. But I disagreed with him. As much shit as Gemma had been through, this little bullshit party was nothing. I didn't get mad until he kept making rude comments about her too.

"You are just like Gemma so I don't why you're talking shit about her. Like mother, like son. So, what does it matter if I do it or not?"

"And so are you, Tara. You're just like your mother, headed down the same path she took. It's why I locked you up so you didn't hurt yourself. Do you think I want our sons to grow up without their mother?"

"What are you talking about?"

"She couldn't handle life. She bailed on her family by killing herself after she went crazy. It was where you were headed if you didn't get some help."

Those were words spoken, I could never come back from. All this time I thought she had run away in the middle of the night from us because she didn't love me or my father anymore.

"I got to get out of here."
“Tara, where the hell are you going?”

“I honestly didn't know she killed herself. I need some time to deal with it. I don't even know what happened to her. Take care of the kids. They are already asleep all you have to do is keep an eye on them. If you can't do it call Gemma. Your mother might be a bitch in your eyes. But she always is there for you when you need her. It's more than what I have. So you might be grateful for what you have instead of pushing her away before it's too late.”

For an hour I drove around trying to put all the pieces of it together. But I couldn't. Until I figured out it wasn't Collette's cold lifeless eyes that haunted me so badly, it was my mothers.

When he answered the door finally, I pushed past him. "Hello to you too."

There wasn't time for socializing. This was a full blown melt down to hell I was on. I held my hands on each side of the wall going down the hallway. Just like I used to do it when I was a child.

When I got to my old bedroom I had to crawl over his exercise equipment and move around some boxes to open the closet door. Before me set a small child hiding in the closet. Holding her knees to her chest rocking herself to calm down. It was me when I was about five years old. Reliving all the pain and insecurities from the past.

"Tara?” Kyle kept saying my name but I closed my eyes trying to bring that day back in mind. To play it over again to know what really happened to her.

There were echoing screams I heard from my room. I was sitting on my bed when it came. With my doll in hand I walked towards it down the hallway of doom. The sounds had subsided but the fear when you are a child couldn't be until it was consoled away. Usually by their mother. My mother wasn’t ever going to comfort me again, hold me in her arms or tell me she loved me either.

The house looked completely different back then. Everything changed in my life after she was gone too. Their bedroom smelled like her sunflower lotion she always wore. In the summer time the fragrance lingered whenever she walked in the room like a bouquet of fresh flowers were in it.

In the corner was a rocking chair directly in front of the window. I spent hours with her in it. If I was afraid or sick, she would hold me until I felt better. Once she left, I didn't know what it actually meant to feel good anymore.

The bathroom door was closed back then but standing wide open for me now. It was why I felt like I squeezed into a tiny square by the walls after Collette died. The same walls I dreamt dripped with blood before. It was my mother's blood. I witnessed it coming from her lifeless body.

In the bathtub she floated in the water of red. She had slashed herself up until she was gone. It was her only way out or so she felt at the time it was. It was the floor I remembered the most. A pool of her blood was dripping from her wrist and arm down to it.

For hours I cried and hid in my closet because I was alone with her when it happened. Until someone found me in there and I believe it was my father who did. It was just some of the reasons I would literally beg to not be left alone today.

All I heard from the bedroom window was the sweet music of those damn wind chimes playing in my head. The ones that hung by the front door back then as we set on the steps in the evening time waiting for my dad to get home. The rest of what happened after that I had no clue.

"I'm going to be sick."
Kyle held my hair back for me. Then he held on to me while I had my emotional breakdown on the bathroom floor. As I told him about my mother.

My father never mentioned any of it to me when I was growing up. Maybe it's why he drank so damn much and drank himself to death. It was his way of coping with it all. I blamed him for so many things over the years. There were times I hated being around him.

Once I left for Chicago, I never looked back. I didn't come back to Charming to even visit him. I left everything from here behind me. What little he did call me. I always let the answering machine pick it up and erased it without an inkling to return the call to him. I shoved him out of my life and wrote him off. Just like I preached to Jax about doing to Gemma.

Looking back now, I wished I had done things differently. Maybe if I had of I would have made a difference in my father's life and he could have made a difference in mine. We could have had a better life and helped heal each other. Maybe I would even be a different kind of person today from it.

"Are you okay now?"

"Yeah."

Kyle wet a wash rag and handed it to me to wash my face with. There were so many damn things from my past that couldn't be washed away and forgotten. Other things; it wasn't too late for me try to fix them, put them to rest finally and make a better life.

"Apparently there are things about our mothers neither one of us knew about them. I found a couple of boxes when I cleaned out the house with pictures and stuff in them. I put them in the closet for you so if you wanted to keep any of it."

"Apparently." I used his toothpaste with my finger and then mouth wash after that before I left the bathroom.

The top shelf had several boxes stacked on top of them. Kyle reached over my head to get them because I was too short without getting a chair or something to stand on.

This stuff must have been tucked away by my dad sometime time ago after she passed. There were tons of pictures, old papers and I found her bible. The same one she carried with us every Sunday morning. Even a small container marked with her cremated remains in it.

"My mom's is just like it."

"What?"

Kyle went into his bedroom and I followed after him. He took out of the nightstand beside his bed the exact same bible. "Ellie had one just like this the other day when we took her to church. I didn't even think about it then." He set down on the bed and had it gripped tightly in his hand.

"Do you think it's coincidental?"

"Probably not. Nothing else about us seems to be. But it will be okay. We will figure it out."

When he touched my hand I felt so many things all at the same time; warmth, joy, courage, relaxation, closeness and so many others.

Kyle was a little surprised by my reaction to all of it. My lips seemed to have a mind all of their own
and didn't think shit through either. As it was a slow, soft and deep kiss I gave him. But when it turned to a lingering and passionate one, he was the one who stopped.

"It can't ever go there, Tara."

"I just…I'm sorry."

Kyle brushed my hair out of my face with his hand. "Don't be sorry, I'm not. We just can't. We probably shouldn't stay here either. Do you want to go get some coffee or something with me? Or are you going home now?"

"Coffee sounds good. It's not like I am going to sleep anyway."

He threw on a pair of jeans and t-shirt. I handed him my keys so we could go. We were once again leaving Charming without any idea of what would happen to our futures, the now or even tomorrow for that matter.

To the same place we had coffee at before. Kyle opened the same door for me this time too. "I'm not a cheap ho, you know. I want pie too, Kyle." Those were the same words he spoke to me when we came here. He just smiled.

We caught up on all the other stuff we still had to cover. There was so much I hadn't told him yet. "Jax has a web tattoo on his arm just like Clay's. I never noticed it before."

"Oh shit, Jax is what ties them all to the afterlife. That's why."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"Why did you want to meet here, Gemma?"

"This was Daddy's parish. I listened to him give sermons in there that could lift you up to heaven just on his words. He was all I really had growing up. Even he wrote me off when I came back to Charming with a baby and outlaw motorcycle club. You said you wanted to talk to me and I wanted to come here one more time before I left town. So, what's up?"

"What do you know about my mother and what happened to her?"

"I didn't know your mom that well. Your father was a sweet and handsome man. I only know from the rumors I heard around town. They were having some troubles and she killed herself. Other than that, I really don't know much else."

"Do you think Jax was trying to protect me from becoming my mother?"

"Yes, in some ways I really do. If Jackson didn't love you, he wouldn't have cared enough to do anything about it at all. But in other ways, no."

We talked about real life things on the run down church steps. Gemma almost seemed vulnerable by the way she spoke. Especially when it came to the subject of our mothers.

"Rose hated me and let me know it every day of my life. Once my brother died so did she on the inside. The grief and hate turned her bitter, it was all aimed at me. Because she felt the wrong child died and my brother was her favorite. As soon as I turned sixteen, I couldn't take it anymore living in her self righteous shadow. She had a miserable life and she passed it on to those around her. So, I packed a bag and hit the road. I met John shortly after that and the rest is history. But, I made sure Jackson always knew how much I loved him without fail. Sometimes, I think I tried too hard to over
compensate my love for him after Thomas died. We can screw up our children and not know it at the time."

Gemma and I went to have a cup of coffee while I listened to her life story. There were so many new things I found out about her. She was such a hard surface on the outside to crack. On the inside was a brave woman who had a shitty life but still tried to make the most of it. She wouldn't let anyone keep her down. There was a very important lesson I just learned too.

We spent so much time talking we had to hustle back to her house after I picked up the kids. Or I would have missed the meeting with Nero we already had scheduled. Ellie was ready when Kyle came by so we could go while Gemma watched the boys for me. We had to wait for a few minutes for him to get there even.

But Nero met us like he said he would. "Do I even wanna know what this is about?" Kyle and I looked at each other before we shook our heads no.

"Alright, I won't ask then."

Kyle, Ellie and I set down at the pew. All three with the exact same bible in hand which belonged to each of our mothers. Opened to the same page even.

**John 1:7-9** But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

"Do you really think this will help?"

"I've got no idea. But Little G thinks so."

The persist came out to visit with Ellie. The belief was if we were forgiven. It would cleanse us from all wickedness. It was her idea to do it and for some reason it had to be done at this church. For two days in a row she asked Kyle and I to do it with her.

Nero was the one who talked to the priest since he had come here regularly for years. Ellie came back to get Kyle to go with her.

"You and Kyle doing okay, Tara?"

"We're fine, Nero."

It didn't take Kyle long to come back out and set back down with us. "What's wrong with you? Is Ellie okay?"

"I'll tell you later." Was all I could get out of him.

"Nero, would you mind waiting for Ellie to come out? We're going outside for a minute."

"Sure."

We set down on the steps and Kyle still hadn't said a word. "Are you going to tell me what's wrong?"

"Ellie told him we are like her parents."

"That isn't a bad thing, Kyle. Ellie loves you a lot. She has no one else in her life."
"It is a bad thing, Tara. How screwed up will it make her when I can't come around anymore? It's only a matter of time and you know it before I won't be allowed to be a part of her life. Then what? Will she think I abandoned her too? It will break my heart when it happens."

There were no words I could give Kyle to make him feel any better about the situation. So, I gave him the truth of how I seen it to be. "I don't know how much longer I will be allowed to be a part of Ellie or Kenny's life either. Mary can't handle them full time. Lyla is not sure she will take them back or not yet. They will become an award of the state. All I can do is love them as much as I can right now. Give them a stable home where they know I care about them until then. The rest of it, I'll figure it out as I go."

"I'm here. I just don't know for how long."

It wasn't long until Ellie came out of the church with Nero. She was all smiles too. It was like a weight had been lifted off of her little shoulders. Maybe this was the best thing to do.

On the way to the truck. She picked three coral flowers. Took a whiff of them. "Mommy loved these." Then gave us one to press in our mother's bibles just like she did Donna's.

The page Ellie put both flowers in passage caught my eye. I looked it up in my mother's bible.

Exodus 34:67- Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, compassion, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth. Yet He will by no means leave the guilty and sin unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

It was about a father's sins and how their children would be punished for it right along with them. If that were the truth; my children had a lot of suffering to come. But what did it really mean? Was it why Ellie insisted to come here, Opie? Did the crow know something we didn't yet? Or was there no message at all in it?

"Ellie, do you want to go visit your dad's gave with us?"

"If you want to." That was better than the response I got from her the last time I talked about Opie.

Ellie and I got out but Kyle didn't to visit Opie. "I guess we need to do it, Ellie."

"I guess so."

We opened his door and both stuck our hands out for Kyle. "You know you can't resist us. So, let's go already."

It would take a long time to even begin a relationship between Ellie and her father. She really knew nothing about him. Especially anything good. To many people spent time telling her all the bad things about Opie. I tried to give her some of the good things I could remember about him. We even took a turn telling her about my father and Kyle told her about his step dad.

Ellie took it all in. She did mention a time Opie took them to school one morning and they stopped for breakfast with her and Kenny. It was a small thing but we would work on it together to get there. "I am going to go see Mommy."

"Okay, honey. We will be right here."

Since Kyle had been on the quiet side. I struck up a conversation. "So, what was your step dad like?"
"He was a real hard ass, strict as hell. It was constantly; get that done boy, don't make me tell you twice and don't be mean to your sister. He was the same with Nicole, it was just how he was. But, he made me stand up and be man. He taught me a lot. My uncle you met, looks a lot like."

"When did I meet your uncle?"

"The house I took you to when you met all the guys. That is my uncle and aunt's house."

Ellie was ready to go. I sort of took a detour by John's grave. It was where it all began. "Come on Ellie. Let's go to the truck, honey and wait for Kyle."

"I don't know if I can, Tara."

"Yes you can." Ellie and I both gave him a kiss on the cheek before we walked away. It was a moment he need to have with just John.

Today was a revelation for all of us in some way or another. There was still a lot of closure needed but it would all come with time. Kyle dropped us off at Gemma's house. I knew he wouldn't come inside. Ellie was telling Gemma about her day. I kissed Abel as soon he ran to me and grabbed a hold of my legs.

"Tara, I got some of your stuff from the lodge."

"Thanks, Nero."

It was my bag I carried with all the lodge information stuff in. Most of it would get burnt. There was no need for me to keep it any longer now. But, there was one thing I forgot about in it. Just before everything happened. We found Collette's files. I was supposed to burned it that night.

**Jax says Tara is weak minded. Naïve to the ways of the world he lives in. Marveled at the attention she receives from Kyle. No choices really when it comes to men other than Jax until now. I used the insecurities Jax feels to plant the notion of the possible affair she is having with Kyle. I am still having a hard time trying to convince Jax of it because men are not exactly captivated by her beauty. Nor does she have many other options other than to stay with Jax. Working on coming between them to start the conflict I need to create with Jax.**

Those were some of the nicer things I read in that damn file. There was no mention of any sexual activity between them that I had found yet. But I honestly didn't give a fuck at this point. "Oh, you are in for it now. You would have been better off to have fucked that bitch rather than talked shit about Gemma, me and your family."

Gemma was at the kitchen table when I tossed the file down in front of her. "What the fuck, Tara. You were supposed to have burnt this shit already."

"Well, I was a little busy being crazy and all. Locked up and forgotten about. Read and see what your son really thinks about me and you. Can you believe that shit?"

The pissed off look she read with, she was just as unhappy about it as I was. "No, I can't." She grabbed her purse off the counter, stuck the file inside it and waited. "Let's go."

"Where are we going?"

"If you let Jackson get away with what he said without doing anything about it. The damage he
caused his family because he poured his heart out to some whore. Until Collette knew exactly how to get to you and your family. You learned nothing from me at all."

"Gem, what are you doing?" Nero always the calm, rational one. I wish I could be more like him sometimes.

"I love you, baby. Watch the kids, we'll be back soon."

Nero kept calling Gemma's name but he couldn't control her. Deep down, I think he already knew it too before he made the attempt. She was a determined bitch when she wanted to be.

Gemma was even more determined once we reached TM. Some blonde bitch was setting at her old desk. I wouldn't call what she had on even clothes. They didn't even cover her ass let alone anything else. This was more news no one shared with me.

"She's my replacement. Jackson hired her."

"Well, I'm firing her." I picked up the wooden baseball bat that had set by the office door for years.

"That's my girl." Gemma always the encouraging soul. Or the instigating one at times as well.

"Bitch, get out."

"I don't work for you. I don't even know who you are."

"I've really had a hard day and you are just pissing me off more. I'm the one who will shove this baseball bat up your ass if you don't get to stepping."

Well, I did warn her and she didn't listen to me. So I brought bat down hard on the computer she sat at. A couple more times to just give her a little more reinforcement I meant business. It didn't take her long to take the hint and leave then.

"You gotta take what is precious to Jackson away. Something he won't forget anytime soon either."

A huge smile crossed my face as Gemma said it. I flipped my hair over my shoulder and went to handle my business. "Jax's Harley."

"It's where I'd start, sweetheart." Gemma lit up smoke and set down on the curb while I did my thing.

Jax bike was parked conveniently for me in front of the office away from all the others. The bat didn't have any problem crashing through tail light of it. "You called me crazy and locked me up."

Then I went to the front of it and beat of both mirror off with a single swing to them. "Fuck around with whores while I'm home taking care of your sons." Shattered the windshield on my first try even. "Never at home always on club business and put it above your family." Then I went to his precious painted gas tank.

"What the fuck?"

"It's okay, Tiggy. Tara is just working out some aggressions she has today."

"I can see that." Tig didn't try to stop me or even come near me.

The rest of them came out to join in the fun to. "If you come near me, you get some too. While I'm at it. There is going to be a whole new set of old lady rules once Gemma leaves. There will be no more damn dick sucking rule acceptable. So, you better live it up now because change is coming soon
"boys." I pointed the end of the bat at them and dared them to say anything to me or try to stop me. "No one is going to hold it against me for what I'm doing either. Haven't you all heard. I am fucking insane. A doctor even told me so." With that I went back to the task at hand, beating the shit out of his bike with the bat. Once I was certain I had done a satisfactory job, I threw the bat down on the ground. "Now, I'm done and now I am fucking over it."

"Not just yet, sweetheart." Gemma threw down the file from Collette on the ground by the bat. She dowsed it in light fluid and handed me her lighter. "Come out here and call me a see bitch to my face. I fucking dare you to. Do you hear me, Jackson?" She was screaming it too. She wanted Jax to come out and see it for himself.

"Don't light that." Tig was yelling at me. But I had already lit the file and it was too late.

"Jax's bike has gotta gas leak. Move."

Tig was behind us pushing us away from it. It was probably a good thing since Jax's bike exploded. It flew over our heads clear across the parking lot by the time Tig got us away from it and had pushed us down to the ground.

"Oh, this is very bad." Tig was stating the obvious to us. "Here is the part, I just know you ladies are going to love. Jax isn't even here. Roosevelt picked him up a couple of hours ago because AFT is questioning him. I don't think this is going help his mood out any today."

Unfortunately, with the fire departments quick response to the little fire we started. Came the police with it. Gemma had the lighter fluid still in her hand and I was the dumb ass busted with the lighter by Roosevelt. We tried to be nonchalant by throwing it down and pretending like we knew nothing about it.

"Don't you people get tired of this sort of behavior?"

Gemma and I just looked at each other and shrugged it off. We weren't just shrugging anymore when Roosevelt brought out the hand cuffs for us though.

Since we had nothing better to do while he made us lean on the police car's hood while he searched us for weapons. "Maybe, we should have thought this shit through a little better, Gemma."

"Maybe."

It was another ride in the back of the squad car for me. Gemma seemed fine. She made idle chit chat with Roosevelt even on the way to the police station. At least Collette's file got destroyed, it was the positive note of the day anyway.

We had a clear view of Jax setting at the table in the integration room with the blind pulled up. It was the same two agents who had already questioned me and Nero before. When Jax seen us in hand cuff, he was at the door.

"What the hell are they doing here?"

Roosevelt was truly enjoying his job today. Even more when he got to spring the news to Jax personally. "It seems your wife and mother may have some problems with you, Jax. They are under arrest for destroying property, possible arson, setting a fire inside city limits without a permit and I bet if I search long enough. I can find more things to charge them with too."

"What did they set on fire?"
"Your bike, it's charcoal now." Roosevelt even laughed.

"You blew up my fucking bike?"

"Maybe." Gemma shrugged her shoulders at Jax.

"Could be." So, I owned up to my part of it too.

When Jax turned his back to us. We couldn't contain ourselves any longer. "We so did." We were sitting on the bench laughing our asses off and couldn't stop doing it either.

"Mr. Teller, you are not free to go yet. Set back down." The AFT agent was at the door with Jax. Not looking any happier they were interrupted than we were to be detained.

"This shit is not over. I'll deal with you two when I get outta here."

"Yeah, but Jax won't be dealing with us while he rides his Harley." Gemma made me bust out again. We laughed so damn hard I had tears coming down my face. Since we were in hand cuffs we couldn't even wipe our faces. Roosevelt just shook his head and went in his office.

It wasn't so funny however when they put us together in a jail cell. I'd never actually been in one before. It didn't take us long to get out of it as well.

"It seems the bike had a gas leak to it. It's what everyone down at TM is swearing to anyway. They even have a work order so they could get it fixed immediately. Now, they are telling me a cigarette got threw down and it was an accident. That you two had absolutely nothing to do with it. Can you imagine that story being true? Let me hear your version of it."

"If that's what they said, I'm sure it's what happened. I am smoker after all. I have a bad habit of throwing lit cigarettes down all the time."

"Yeah, I'm sure it's what happened too." I backed up everyone's story along with Gemma. If it got us out of here I was all for it.

"This will be the last break; I give any of you. Get the hell out of my police station." Roosevelt opened the cell door and we were sprung free. "Tara, will you give me a minute?" Gemma left and I waited to hear what he had to say to me.

"I expect this behavior from the others. But I don't from you. I'm a little surprised actually."

"Yeah, me too. Thanks for letting us go because you wouldn't believe the shit I let go of today."

"You know, if you continue to hang out with outlaws. Eventually, you will be in as deep as they are."

"I already am Chief. But I appreciate your concern."

This was a hell of a messed up life I had created for myself. By the choices I made so long ago. I had no other option but to play them out. See it through to the end. Only now, it would be played out more on my terms instead of everyone else.

When I finished Jax's bike. I finished the past and let everything go. All of it; the cheating, my reservations, the past history, the hate, Jax's mistakes, my mistakes, the neglect and the fear of everything. But most all, I let the old Tara go. We would proceed from today forward. Not from years ago to the present any longer.
Only maybe the better plan was to stay inside the jail cell when we saw the action in the parking lot. It was actually probably a lot safer in there too. Jax had several of the club members with him. "The lovely ladies decided to blow the fuck out of my bike and this idiot helped them."

"Technically, Jax. I didn't help them. I just sort of watched." Tig was under his microscope now. I felt bad for making him a part of it. I knew how Jax would handle it eventually with him.

"Dick head." Jax was pissed off. Boy, whew, smoke could have been coming out of his ears as mad as he was. "We'll talk about this shit when I get home tomorrow, Tara. I've gotta go try to earn some money but it ain't over."

"I'm sure it's not yet either, Jax."

Tig got in the middle of me and Gemma. He put one arm around each of us. "So, ladies. Where to? I'm in no big hurry to go back to the clubhouse to get my ass kicked."

"A bar. I need a drink." It was Gemma's suggestion at least.

"I'm in no big hurry to have Jax yell at me either. I say a bar."

"Then a bar it is my two lovelies."

Gemma called Nero. He was just relieved to hear all she did was blow up the bike and did no bodily damage to Jax. Nor none was done to her in return. I knew the boys were in the best hands when it came to Nero watching them. I trusted him with most things too.

My freedom days were all but over once Gemma left. There was no way in hell Jax would babysit so I could have any time to myself ever again. So, this was my last night out basically. With the kind of day I had. I better make this evening a good one to make it last for a while.

Nicole called me to see if I wanted to hang out with her tonight since Cody was doing a sleep over at the neighbor's house. She seemed a little on the down side. So I asked her what was wrong.

"David thinks it's getting to serious between us because we see each other all the time. I'm not upset he broke it off with me. But I am pissed he let me blow before he did it."

"Damn men. I've had a really bad day too. We're going to a bar. Why don't you meet us?" I didn't have to ask her twice before she was all in for it. It was great to have a female friend that had at least some sense to them, basically nothing like Gemma at all.

"I will drink your little asses under the table, girls." I only laughed at Gemma because hell yeah she would me. It was no contest there for her.

"Bring it on, Gemma." Nicole took two shots down easily. She slammed the shot glasses down after each one she did on the table. "I can hang drinking with the guys."

"Damn, I think I am like lusting all over you, Nicole." Tig actually was too. He wasn't sneaking looks down her shirt for nothing. He took two shots as well to keep up with her.

"Lust on me baby, I like it."

They all got along very well. I tried to not get shit faced because it really wasn't my thing. Until they brought out jello shots. They didn't taste like alcohol and I had a few of those. When they went back to hard liquor, I was out.
"Here is to you, here is to me. Fuck you if we ever disagree and here's to me." It was the toast Nicole made before they did even more shots together.

"I'll have to remember that one, sweetheart. I like it." Even Gemma was starting to feel the alcohol a little bit.

It was Tig that helped the party along. He brought a tray of shot over to the table. Hell, I already had more than I needed to drink. He held his shot glass up. "To outlaw women." I couldn't refuse to drink to that one even though it was whiskey.

Nicole held hers up now. "To outlaw women who are just looking for a little fun." They all looked at me to go next.

"To married outlaw women. Who sometimes just needs a little more."

Gemma smirked as she made her toast "To the Queen of Anarchy. You'll be just fine, sweetheart."

The toasting got sillier the more we drank. "Here is to a man being like the floor. If you lay him right, you can walk on him years."

Tig had to ponder Gemma's toast for a moment before he would take his shot with us. "Okay, I'll go with that one cause it's true."

"Goddamn, will you look at that." Gemma caught all of our attention with her comment.

There were three fine ass guys walking in the door. They were strutting their shit for us too with all the whistles coming from our table at them. I might have even given one or two of them out. It was all in the name of fun. I'm sure because hell even Tig did it too.

"Dr. Knowles."

"Oh shit." Here I was completely shitted faced and acting like a dumb ass to one of my patient, colleagues or fuck just someone I knew. I tried to set up straight and act like I was a professional. "Yes, may I help you."

"I met you a couple of months ago on a call, I was the paramedic at the scene." He stuck out his hand to me. "My name is Joe."

So I did same back. "My name is Tara."

"My name is goddamn, you got a nice ass." He was uncertain how to take Gemma's comment.

"I'll second that." Nicole wasn't shy or sly about having a look at his goods either.

"I just wanted to come over and say hello. Maybe I'll see you around later."

"Bye."

"I think my ass is just as good as his is."

"Show me, Tig." Nicole was all smiles at him. "I'll give you ten dollars." She was counting up what money she had on the table left from buying drinks.

"Hell, I'll do it for free." Tig did just that too, he gave the whole bar a butt shot. We each stuck a dollar in his pants.
Sure we made a spectacle out of ourselves. But it was so much damn fun. As the night progressed on we decided, more like Gemma and Nicole decided. We needed to go see the male strippers.

"There is no way in hell I am taking you girls to see dicks swing. It's not gonna happen and I don't care how much you beg me either."

Gemma and I pointed to Nicole. She lifted up her shirt and bra at the same time for Tig. "Do you girls wanna leave now or when?" All it took was a tit shot to change Tig's mind.

But, having four drunk people trying to drive a car probably wasn't one of the better ideas of the day. Hell, most them were just bad to begin with really.

"I got this. Take your hands off the wheel Gemma."

"Tig, you're over the white line. You need to come back more this way."

For sure it wasn't a good idea when Gemma's car went upon the side walk and we hit a mailbox. We still hadn't even made it out of town yet.

"Maybe we should have just got a ride from somebody."

"Do ya think, Tiggy?"

"Fuck it, I got this." Tig backed off the sidewalk and just kept driving on. I wasn't even sure where this place was they were talking about. I never saw a man strip before. They were excited so fuck it, so was I.

The music blared so damn loudly when we got inside. It was dark except where it was lit up around the stage. I couldn't really see the stage because there were so many women packed around it yelling and jumping up and down. Throwing money at those guys from every side of it.

"Tara."

"Holy shit." Joe the paramedic was fucking Joe the smoking hot fine ass stripping Fireman now.

"I do this a couple of nights a week for extra money to finish getting my degree. Make sure to catch my act."

"I don't think we will be able to get near the stage with all the women up there."

"Come on. I will sit you guys at one of the tables down in the front. If anyone asks just tell them you're my guest."

What a table with a great view of it all too. I had never seen men shake their things like that before. Each one of them came out in some kind of costume before stripping it off and showing their goodies.

Gemma was waving at Joe a twenty when it was his turn. I think he gave her a little extra for her money. He gave her a special dance right in her chair and she fucking loved it.

"I'll give you a twenty if you let me spank your ass. I'm an ass girl." Nicole was having a great time spanking him, groping him and pulling on his tiny fire red thong.

Joe offered but I was going to need a lot more liquor before I did any of that crazy shit. "I'll take a picture of you two." Gemma snapped a photo of me and Joe before he went back up on stage to finish his act. Maybe I would when he came back out later.
"I think my dick is just as big as his is."

"Let me see, Tig." Tig showed Nicole his dick inches from her face. "Oh, that is a nice one."

The alcohol continued to flow freely the rest of the night. I could barely stand up and say a complete sentence. Gemma got grabby with all the guys as they came out and they didn't seem to mind. Nicole got one of the dancers to even smack her ass once. Followed by Tig doing the same to her ass. It was like a three way smack down.

Joe had to say my name a couple of times before I even realized it was him dancing around in front of me. I stuck a twenty down in his thong. But when he went up to the stage, my hand went along with him. My bracelet charm got caught on his thong but it didn't look like it. More like I was sticking my hand down on dick and wouldn't let go of it.

"You gotta pay extra for that, Tara." That was Gemma's wonderful advice to me.

"Hell ya baby, rip his stud panties off." My cheering section Nicole was for it.

"I would have let you stuck your hand down my underwear and tore them off for free." Tig was still throwing it out there for us girls.

After I retrieved my Harley charm for my bracelet out of his thong. The bouncers escorted us out of the building. It's not like we really cared anyway. They were getting ready to close for the night. We continued the party out in the parking lot. That's when shit got really bad and my memory gets a little fuzzy from there.

Forward on my lovelies, Chapter 21, PART 4/Chapter 22, PART 5 has already been posted for you. I say that but I had a hell of time getting this to post. I've been trying since yesterday.
The morning after was not starting off in a good place. I tried to blow my hair off my face with my mouth. But it was stuck to my face for some damn reason. Only one eye would open up when I swiped it away so I could actually see. The sun light was making my head throb already. This was not a familiar bedroom to me. "Oh shit. This is very bad."

Once I finally managed to move. I had a t-shirt on and just my panties. The covers were bunched up over a huge lump in the bed beside me. "Oh fuck. This is even worse."

When I got both eyes opened and to focus finally on my surroundings. I actually knew where I was. Carefully, I moved the covers back and expected to see his naked body underneath them. "What the fuck?" Tig and Nicole were snuggled up together with me, in Kyle's bed.

One would have thought this was the worst part of it. But, oh no, not even close. Nicole was dressed in just a t-shirt and panties too. It was Tig that worried me. He had on a black Zorro cape, mask and a pair of women's pink ruffled panties. "This is just fucked up."

People who drank on a regular bases had to be crazy to do it. Knowing the next day would come eventually and they would feel like shit. My mouth was so dry, my head hurt so bad it made my hair hurt too. Even the slightest movement made my body ached in pain.

"I see one of the lushes made it up."

"How did we get here, Kyle?"

"Nicole called me drunk at four o'clock this morning and needed a ride from the strip club. In exchange for the ride she offered a tit shot from you. Which she did text it to my phone because apparently all of you were doing it all night with someone, even Tig. When I got there I found my sister riding on Tig's back like a horse in the parking lot and his cape was the saddle. I think she was yelling; if you let me ride you, I'll let you ride me. I'm not real sure of that one."

"I don't remember any of that."

Kyle pushed a button on his phone and showed me all the pictures we had sent him. I was as embarrassed as hell. He had tit shots on there from me, Gemma and even one of Tig.

"You all closed down several bars before closing down the strip club. It's probably why Gemma was a getting a private dance from two of the four strippers in the parking lot she was smoking weed and drinking with. Then there was you, Tara. You had your tongue stuck down the throat of Joe the Fireman."

"Paramedic, actually he is a paramedic."
Nicole and Tig felt no better than I did. Tig looked the worst actually as they came crawling in the kitchen on their hands and knees. "Somebody fucking shoot me, man."

"How did Nicole and I get your t-shirts on?"

"It was a beautiful thing. I got this one." Tig shot a video of me and Nicole on his phone. We had gotten sick in Kyle's truck and had it all over our clothes. We sort of took each others clothes off in his front yard while we hosed the other down outside. "I treasure our time together, girls."

"Thanks for ruining that fantasy for me by doing it with my sister, Tara. By the way, Joe the Fireman wants you to call him."

"Paramedic." Tig, Nicole and I all three corrected Kyle this time.

"Whatever."

My hands where a mess from touching my face. "What is stuck to my face?"

"Syrup and butter from face planting in your stack of pancakes, girl. You all just had to stop for breakfast and then threw up in my truck. Just so you know, it wasn't Joe the Fireman who pulled you out of the pancakes and took care of your drunk ass either."

"He is a paramedic, Kyle. He only dances as a fireman. Who has a smokin hot ass too. Joe asked Tara out again after what happened and he signed his thong for her. You should have seen it. Tara went down in his pretty little fire red thong to get her bracelet back and his dick flopped out on stage for all of us to see. It was the funniest..." Kyle shot Nicole a hateful look. "Maybe, I'll finish the story later on."

"Yeah, doll. You've been bringing the sexy on lately and having more fun than I've ever seen you have. Seriously, you oozed sexy last night, Tara."

"Yeah, Tara. You've been sexier lately and feeling it more than you ever have. Any particular reason for it? Who makes you feel that way?" I stuck my tongue out at Kyle. I knew what he meant by it. "Don't stick that tongue out at me, girl. Unless you're going to use it."

"Does anybody know what the hell happened to my pants?"

"Yeah, Tig, I do. They are in the back of the truck with the rest of your stuff because you bet the gay Zorro dancer your dick was bigger than his. I won't even repeat what you had to do because it was a tie."

"Oh yeah, now I remember that Kyle. Man, that was sort of fun."

"Nobody gets to leave here until my truck gets cleaned up." Not a one of us said a word. Kyle seemed sort of pissy about that too. "Get your asses moving." Well, he wasn't exactly soft spoken about it either. As loud as he yelled; Nicole and I both grabbed our heads.

"Yes drill Sargent." His sister gave him the one finger solute with it.

While Tig got to set in the lawn chair under a shade tree and eat a burrito. Kyle stood over us with his arms crossed. He was of sort mad today.

The smell alone was terrible when we opened the doors. It had set and baked in the hot sun. It
gagged us from it. I couldn't wait to get this job over with.

Nicole in protest threw her rag down in the bucket of bleach water. "Why doesn't Tig have to help?"

"Because I didn't hurl in it ten times like you girls did."

"You missed a spot on the door, Nicole."

"Thank you for pointing that out to me, Kyle."

At a turtle's speed we finished it finally. Before Tig got in the truck to leave he yelled at Nicole. "Next time baby, I get to ride you."

"You're on, Tigger."

Since Gemma got dropped off at her house. Kyle took Tig to get her car so he could go back to the clubhouse in it. It was a damn good thing Jax was off on club business. Tig gave me his word he would never tell Jax anything about our night out. Somehow, I believed Tig really wouldn't.

While they were gone Nicole and I showered. I felt like warmed over dog shit. I took aspirins to help with the headache and drank a couple of glasses of water. "Shit, I gotta do Gemma's going away party tonight."

As soon as Kyle got back. He dropped off Nicole first. He hadn't spoken a word to me on the way to Gemma's house. "Thanks for picking us up."

"Are you just purposely trying to enrage, push his buttons to piss off Jax? You blew up his bike."

"It was an accident."

Nero came down the stairs as soon as he seen us pull up. "I wanna talk to both of you." Gemma had already taken the kids to my house to Nitta. She was supposed to watch them for me while we had the party.

"You guys know Gemma and I are leaving soon. I'm worried about the two of you. I love you like you are my own children. Where is this going between you? What is really going on? I don't wanna hear any bullshit because I am about to lock you in a room together until you work this shit out." Silence is all Nero got from the both of us.

"Kyle, do got anything you wanna say?"

"You know I can't, Nero. I don't have a choice or say in it. I'm not going to let Tara get hurt because of me."

"Tara, how about you?"

"I don't want to see anything happen to Kyle either. Because Jax will do horrible things to him. Kyle is still willing to help out with the kids for me and we will always be friends. I still have a lot to do before the party. I'll see you guys later."

"I think you are missing the point to this conversation. When you're a part is when even worse shit seems to happen. The last time it almost did you both in by trying to stay away from each other. You have until tomorrow to work it out on your own together or Gemma and I will work it out for you."

A kiss on the cheek to Nero and Kyle before I left. I had get home and get everything done before tonight for their party. Only when I got home, it was going to be hard to avoid a fight with Jax.
"I get it. You are pissed off about your bike. Well, I am pissed off about everything you told Collette. Yeah, I know I am weak minded, naïve and not exactly hot to the opposite sex. But do you really want to know what pisses me off more than anything? What you told her, hurt our family. The one goddamn thing you are supposed to protect. So, I need to get ready for the party. You can take the cost of a new bike out of my share of the Lodge money I will never see because it all went to the club."

What I said was enough to shut him up for at least the moment. It was true; when I stood strong with Jax. It was when I had the most control. There wouldn't be any more weak little Tara for him to see. I was going to be the strongest old lady. A king was nothing without his queen and vice versa. Until he seen it, there was nothing I could do to help him.

Once I got dressed in my new red boots, jeans and blouse. I did my hair and put some makeup on. I went to say goodbye to the kids. I got them new videos for tonight to entertain them and left pizza money with Nitta.

Of course the guys discussed my changing the old lady rules and they didn't think it was fair of me because Jax brought it up too. He picked up now to discuss it when I had to leave. "Why not? Because you can't legally get your dick sucked off without feeling guilty?" Jax wouldn't answer me.

"I'll take your silence as you probably still let those bitches blow you once in a while. You like to have women you've never had, Jax. It makes you feel like a king because you conquered another woman. Like another notch on your leather you can claim stardom on. It's the power of it I think you love more than sex itself. Now, normally I would be fucking livid with you and screaming, having a pissed off hissy fit. But here is the thing you conveniently forgot to mention to me. According to the outlaw rule; I can give and receive oral sex as well without it considered to be cheating either. You wanted a strong old lady. Well, now baby, you got one. There is a new set of the old rules coming on because now I am the new damn queen."

"You wouldn't do that shit anyway. There is no way in hell it will ever change either and it doesn't matter what you say. I don't know what you're so upset about. You knew all of this when we got together."

"Yeah, I get it, Jax. You're not the only one who lacks shit at home. I am going to Gemma's house to get things ready for the party because I made a commitment to do it and I try to keep my word. I am also going to ignore what you just said to me because as the queen. I don't give a shit what the king thinks about it. No more than you care what I think or want. So, I will expect you there around seven with your best party face on to tell Gemma goodbye. I love you."

At this damn moment Jax thought he was going to confuse me, shame me, intimidate me or shake me up. He was sadly mistaken. The invisible line had been drawn in the sand. It was time for him to accept what was in front of him too and deal with it the same way I had to.

It was a good thing Gemma was token when I got there. I grabbed it from her hand and she didn't even know what to think about it either. But she didn't ask for it back so I finished the bitch off.

Hell, Tig and I shared another joint after he came. We turned up the radio while setting the tables up in the garage and driveway. This was Gemma's last night to have them all with her and I wanted to make sure she had a good time.

"Is Jax coming?"

"He better if he knows what is good for him."
"How about a beer, doll?"

"I think I'll just have water. I've had more alcohol than I can handle."

Tig and I had become good friends. I wasn't certain how far he could be trusted where Jax was concerned and where his loyalty fell. But for now, he and I were cool with each other. I enjoyed his company and we talked about a lot of stuff he didn't feel comfortable doing with the guys.

"You're rocking those red boots, doll."

"Thanks, Tig. Do you want to go with me to pick up the food?"

"Sure."

We went to the store and picked up all the trays I ordered. I did; small sandwiches, vegetables, fruits, cookies, brownies and a huge cake with we will miss you on it. Down the chip isle we went and Tig grabbed several bags of those. Once I got plates, napkins and cups. We were set to check out.

Tig had been a big help loading everything up in the car. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure doll what?"

"This morning you seemed very comfortable around Kyle. Almost too comfortable."

"We're good. He and I worked our shit out when he did the club a favor."

"What favor did Kyle do for the club?"

"I thought he told you."

"No, he didn't. What happened between him and Jax while I was locked up?"

"I don't know all the details. You should probably ask Kyle or Jax that question."

There was the same damn type of answer they all gave me. I put it aside for now. I had to turn my focus on Gemma and Nero for the evening.

We set up the food table, iced down the drink and set the bottles of various alcohol around. I was sure none of it would go to waste either.

"Thanks for your help."

"You're welcome, doll. Seriously loving them boots."

"Me too, sweetheart." The woman of the hour. Gemma didn't look to bad considering the kind of night out we had. But I noticed she was drinking ice tea instead of alcohol tonight.

"Thanks for doing this for us, mama."

"You're welcome, Nero. You know I love you guys. But, can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Sure."

"Tig told me Kyle did a favor for the club. What was it?"

"A favor of love. Kyle did it for you and me. I don't know exactly what is going on between the two of you. But I know it's more than either one of you will say. I should get back to Gemma and talk to
the guest coming in." Nero gave me a kiss on the cheek before he left.

Jax and other club members had already arrived. Even some of the other charter members came to Charming to see Gemma off. She was a legendary outlaw woman in her own rights.

"I love you." I set down a cold beer in front of Jax and gave him a quick kiss. It was a peace offering of sorts. I didn't want to fight with him. But I didn't want to be too much of a push over either.

They all seemed to be enjoying themselves. Gemma and Jax still hadn't made up over his bike yet as they kept their distance from each other. Hell, I wasn't sure he and I had either really. But as the hostesses of this party, I did my job of making sure the food tables and drinks were stocked at all times. I made my rounds of trying to visit with everyone too.

"How about that dance, doll?"

"Okay, Tig."

People were strung out everywhere; at the tables, inside the house, sitting on the steps and in the back. In the back yard there were other couples dancing together. They had a party going on all of their own. Dancing with Tig was a lot different than dancing with Kyle. Tig didn't move much and held me with about a foot in between us. But it was still fun.

"I haven't danced like this with a woman in years. Thank you, Tara."

"It was fun. I appreciate all your help tonight too."

We no more than rounded the corner to go back to the front. Tig grabbed a beer and I got a bottled water. When Jax met us both. "Tig, you pulled warehouse duty tonight."

"Come on man, get a prospect to do it. I wanna hang out so I can say goodbye to Gemma."

"You heard me." Jax lit up a smoke and dared Tig to challenge him on it. Which we all know, Tig didn't. Jax's word was their outlaw code to follow. It might take me a little longer to get them to respect mine as well. But hell, I'd get there eventually.

"Duty calls. I'll come by sometime tomorrow to see you." Tig set his beer down and kissed Gemma goodbye. "See ya, doll." He gave me a fair well when he went to his bike.

"Bye, Tig."

It irritated me to no end what he did. "Was that really necessary Jax? To punish Tig for dance with me."

"Why do you care what I do to Tig? Are you sweet on him too?"

"You are unfucking believable. So, am I doing Tig now? Do you even hear yourself, Jax?"

Jax was staring around me. Not paying attention to one single word I spoke to him. When I turned around to see what had captivated his attention, I seen why Jax was pissed off. They did the stare down as Kyle went up the front steps.

Gemma and Nero had invited Kyle to the party. She probably asked me fifty times last night if I had seen him and why he didn't come around her anymore. She took it personally. I was actually surprised he came. It was hard for him to be around Gemma since he found out the truth about John.

Kyle was talking to her and I could tell it was breaking his heart when Gemma hugged him tightly.
He truly missed her and Nero being a part of his life. I didn't intrude on their moment. Nor look his way again so there wouldn't be any problems with Jax.

Only of course, there still had to be one. I went to clean up the empties on the tables. I tried to keep the trash picked up so it wouldn't take so long once everyone was gone.

Jax came up behind me and gave me a hug with his arms wrapped around my waist. As I welcomed his embrace, I seen the only reason he did it. I let out a long sigh at his immaturity. He had been here for a couple of hours and not once had he given me the time of day. Not one ounce of affection. He only wanted to prove a point to Kyle of who I belonged too.

"I love you, Jax. When you want to touch me because I am your wife and it's what you feel. I'm here, baby. You should love me the way you used to instead of the way you think you have to. But I will not be the toy you take down from the shelf only when you want to and let you ignore me the rest of the time."

It was the first time I could remember; he didn't woo me with his touch or sexy smile. It was the first time; he knew what it felt like to not be so accepted from his wife. Like I've felt before.

Gemma pushed my hair back from my shoulder and gave me a hug. "You'll be just fine, sweetheart. After I'm gone. Jackson needs to remember who his queen is and do the things it takes to make you happy. I agree, it was a dick move to show Kyle. Jax is in control of you. You just remember, only you are in control of you. No one will ever make you happy until you bring some happiness into your life on your own. I love you, Tara, like my daughter. So, stand strong with my son and you will make it." With a kiss on the cheek she went to visit with her other guest.

It took Tig being the picture for me to see it the way it was. Jax was just as controlling when it came to him as he was with Kyle. It wouldn't matter who it was around me. It could be a midget riding a purple unicorn and I would have been doing him too. My full attention was supposed to go to Jax only. While his could be turned on and off with me. According to his day and whatever women he deemed fit to have it at the moment. Well, no damn more of it was acceptable to me.

It was early in the morning when the last bike pulled away from Gemma's house. One more time they came here to see their queen before she rode off in to the sunset with her gangster man.

Clean up was half way done when Gemma and Nero joined me outside. I was down to washing the tables off. Then putting them a way and the chairs.

"I haven't heard this song in years. John and I used to sing it to each other all the time." I went over turned it up for Gemma. She and I sang it for her neighbors in the early morning hours.

"I didn't think about my lady; I know that sounds kinda mean. But me and my old lady had fallen into the same old dull routine. If you like Piña Coladas, getting caught in the rain. If you're not into yoga, if you have half a brain. If you like making love at midnight in the dunes on the cape. I'm the love that you've looked for write to me and escape." Hell I was even dancing around to it now. My boots were just made for dancing I say.

Gemma popped me on the butt with the kitchen towel she was wiping the tables down with. "This new found carefree attitude you got and happiness. Comes from being around Kyle again, I am assuming."

"Maybe, I found my happy place, Gemma. Just dance with me woman." I snapped her butt back with my kitchen towel. While we danced around singing the rest of our song through cleaning up the mess. Before we knew it. Even Nero was a part of the fun with us.
"I am going to miss you guys so much."

"We're going to miss you too, sweetheart."

With only a few hours of sleep the next morning, I got all the kids packed up and ready to go. Only I got a lot of resistance from Ellie. Even when Mary came to pick them up.

"I don't want to go."

"Ellie, your grandma planned a trip for you and Kenny. It's only for a few days. I'll be here when you get back, I promise." I handed her my burner cell phone after I programmed my cell number in it. "Call me every day and tell me about your trip."

"Okay. Can I call Kyle while I'm gone too?"

"Yes, you can."

She wasn't exactly thrilled but went along with it finally. I waved goodbye to them and really hoped they had a good time with their grandma.

"Come on, baby. It's time to go see your grandma and grandpa."

Abel ran down the list of stuff on the way he was going to do with Gemma and Nero. This would be the last time he and Thomas got to spend time with them before they left here.

Nero could hardly wait to hold Thomas because he met us at the door to take him. Abel took grandpa's hand to go watch his video after I gave him a kiss goodbye. "I love you babies. Mommy will be back tomorrow to pick you up."

"Tara." Gemma followed me out to the car and handed me a little box.

"You bought me a present? Shouldn't it be the other way around since you're the one leaving?" Once I got the little white box open, I didn't know what to say. "Seriously?"

"Think of it as a belated birthday present. Or a free pass, for tonight only. You won't get another one, Tara. You should use it wisely."

"I don't see getting one this time either from Jax."

"I am talking to you as a woman now. Not as Jackson's mother, but as yours should. Go out and just be Tara for once. Get completely lost until you find yourself. Bring some happiness in your life before I leave so you will survive it all after I'm gone. Be the woman you want to be. He has the other one, I'm sure he'll find his way there sometime tonight. It might be your last chance to ever feel the way you do again. This is one piece of motherly advice you should listen to, sweetheart."

"Gemma…" She went in the house while I was still talking to her. "I don't even know why I bother." I tossed the box in the seat and headed for home. This was once I would not listen to her fucked up advice. It had gotten me in enough trouble lately.

Only what I planned to be a quiet night at home with my husband wasn't going to turn out to be that way at all. He was packing up his back pack when I went inside. He had plans of his own he hadn't shared with me yet no doubt.

"Going somewhere?"

"There's an independent club in trouble. They have assets we can use. We are patching them in
tonight as Sons."

"So, it's a patch over party?"

"Tara, we've been over this shit. I have to be there."

"No, you don't, Jax. Just for once, stay home with me because you want to. Let the rest of them handle club business."

Jax's cell was going off. Before he could flip it open to answer it. I took it out of his hand. "The clock is ticking. You need to decide what you want the most; your family or your club. Because you need to understand from here forward, you determine as well how this relationship goes down from now on too." I gave him back his phone and waited to see what he did.

"Yeah. I'm on my way."

"Then so be it, Jax. You just made your decision and mine."

We made our way to the front door to say our goodbyes. "You go and have fun tonight, baby. Because when you get home tomorrow. There is gonna a whole brand new set of rules for the king to follow or else." I gave him a long and lingering kiss.

"What did you say, Tara?"

"I said, I love you, Jax." As I went down the hallway to go take a shower. I turned on the water and waited for it to heat up. "Have a great time, baby. Because it ain't going to be no damn fun tomorrow when you get home."

"Damn you, Gemma. You already knew where Jax was going tonight." I cursed her with several different rants while I soaped up my body and washed my hair.

__________________________________________________________________________

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Forward on my lovelies to Chapter 22, Part 5 it has already been posted for you.

BTW… Clay really does have a spider web tattoo on his elbow in the show. The web is on Jackson's forearm at the bottom of John's tombstone.

LET ME KNOW YOU ARE STILL WITH ME MY LOVELIES!
Chapter 22,
Mothers, Daughters; Fathers, Sons

PART 5 of 5

(MAKE SURE TO READ PART 3 and 4 first!)

For an hour I waited at the bar. I only took a few sips from the wine glass I held in my hand. I looked at my phone one more time before I set the glass down and pushed it away from me. This was just another one of my bad ideas and crazy shit I actually listened to Gemma on. But I should have known better than to do it in the first place.

The bartender put down another fresh glass of wine down in front of me. "I'm done actually. I don't want anymore. But, thanks."

"This came from the gentlemen sitting at the end of the bar. He bought it for you."

He was such a cutie sitting there staring at me. A little wave came from him to attract my attention and I only smiled back. "What the hell." I picked up the wine glass and took another sip from it. Just because he bought me a drink, didn't mean he got anything for it in return.

Every time I causally glanced in his direction, he was still sitting there staring at me and smiling. Only a woman had her little heart set on him tonight already and did the same come on without buying him a drink. When she couldn't get his attention with a flirty smile and staring at him, she finally made her way over there.

She took the bar chair by him and set down. Eventually she played with the top button on his shirt as a tease to him. The lean in was to show off her tits while she casually brushed them on his arm occasionally by accident but totally on purpose. But my favorite part was the fake laugh to give just a hint of flirty. I shook my head as I watched her basically throw herself at him with the next set of advancements to see if it worked or not. Gemma would have given her a C- at best. She used to much body and not enough heart with it.

"Love is a fickle bitch." I had another sip of wine while I continued to watch them. To see what the girl might be willing to do next for him. Just to get him to return some of her affection.

What makes us need love so badly? We put ourselves out there for it just to get our hearts tromped on so many times too. Was it really worth the heartache you get from finding it or trying to keep it alive in a relationship? If true love does exist in this world. How do you know if it really was or not until you found out the hard way? There were some things I would not give up for it anymore; myself esteem, self-worth or losing the person I was on the inside. Not even for my husband.

Love made you do crazy things, even crazier ones to hold on to it. Jax and I had to come to a meeting of the minds and a mutual respect for one another. I would no longer fight to receive his love. He needed to start giving it to me freely as it was meant to be.

"Can I sit down? Are you here with anybody?"

He must have gotten tired of her advances and made his way over to the other side of the bar to me.
Although I'll admit, he did look really good in those tight ass jeans with the button down black and grey pinstripe shirt he had on. It clung tightly across his chest in all the right places to highlight the masculine physic he has. His pretty little smile was just an added bonus. The cherry on top of the delicious sundae he was.

"Sure, why not, sit down. I'm waiting on a friend to get here. From the glares your fan club over there is giving me. I think she is a little upset you left her setting there by herself."

"She's alright but not my type. I am sort of hoping I can talk a pretty girl like you in to going home with me tonight."

"Then you'd be the only guy who finds a big boobed blonde, not their type. Thanks, but I'm married."

"Lucky guy, does he know where you are?"

"Not exactly. Jax went to a patch over party."

"What is a patch over party?"

"It doesn't matter. He made his choice where he wanted to be tonight and so did I. From here forward it is on Jax too what kind of relationship we have. I will no longer take full responsibility for it all like I have in the past. I didn't think you were going to show up. I almost gave up on you, Kyle."

"I almost didn't. I didn't think you would show up either. Fucking, Nero. He never gives up. I don't know if I should hate him or love him like a brother." I started laughing at him and his comment. "No pun or funny intended, smart ass."

"What words of wisdom did Nero give you? I can guess Gemma's were a lot worse she gave me."

"Are you sure you wanna know, girl? They might be things you don't really want to hear."

"You know what, then don't tell me. I just need to have fun tonight and not feel bad about anything. I've never acted out or been rebellious. But with you, I find myself doing things I never thought about before. You bring out a side in me, Kyle, I didn't even know existed."

"You're no angel, and I'm no saint or we wouldn't even be here. We've both been pretty lost, lonely, scared and confused a lot lately. The scars from the hell we've been through are at least apparent to each other. Even if no one else gives a shit or sees it. Somebody's gotta win in the end, somebody's gotta lose. I'm tired of being on the losing end of it. Just for tonight Tara, let's get lost and have some fun together."

"So, one more time my friend. Risk it all, lay it on the line. Let our skeletons fight for life instead of us. Tonight, let's just get lost and have some fun."

"Then let's get out of here already." He finished his drink and waited on me to give him my answer.

"One more time, Kyle."

"One more time, Tara."

We walked outside, I had been in there so long the sun had already set. "There is something I want to show you before we leave." I wasn't sure what it was but I followed along with him.
The surrounding water gave off a cool breeze and it felt good from the hot sunny days of the summer to come. We went past where all the boats were docked and walked around to the other side of the marina. Down a long wooden bridge was another journey we took together.

"What is this place?" A large concrete tunnel stood alone. A metal plaque was at the entrance way.

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*Alexandria's Dream*

*The Dream*

One night, within a dream deformed.

The cawing of a crow informed.

...a ship was stripped where winter stormed.

Midst winds and waves the thunder boomed.

The ship of death was surely doomed.

...the sea engulfed, the sea entombed.

His spirit gone, his flesh and bones.

...are resting now amongst the stones.

She did not allow him to be alone.

....as their love still lives on.

---

"Walk through the tunnel with me and you will see." Kyle took my hand as we went down in the dimly lit stairs. "Better hold my hand so you don't fall. The steps are steep." We must have gone down two flights of them before we made it to the bottom.

Inside of it was encased in thick walls of glass. Water lapped up against it with small sea creatures floating around in it. The made their way up to the light, touched the glass then swam back out again. While some hovered there. They didn't seem frightened at all.

"Feel the glass." It felt like ice to the touch. We went to the end of the long tunnel, he stopped again. "Now, feel it."

"How is it even possible? This is end of it is so warm." There weren't any little creatures to be found down on this end of it. They all shied away for a reason.

"You have to see the rest of it to understand."

There were just a few stairs to go up this time to reach the outside. A long wooden pier went across a beach where no one could get to. It was beautiful, so untouched by civilization.

"The legend says; Alexandria would come out early on the morning her beloved was due to come back from the sea. She would set in the light house and waited for his return. If he was late with his arrival, she came down to the beach and set on the big rock over there until he made it home safely. Only he didn't ever make it home on his last voyage made. They all thought she lost her mind because she refused to leave here without him. For days you could find her in the light house, setting
on the rock or walking this beach at night with a broken heart still waiting for him to come back to her. She just disappeared and was never seen again. They believe she walked in to the sea until she was joined with him and their love was joined together again. It's why the unexplained phenomenon of the temperature change in the water. Only for a few hours every night in just the small section, it changes to warmth; it's when they were joined together forever."

There weren't words for all of this. We went up in the lighthouse and you could see for miles on the water. Many boats would blow there horn several times when they came close to where we were. "Why do they do that?"

"It's why it's called Alexandria's dream. She dreamed of him every day to keep him alive in her heart while he was away, she believed they would be together forever. If there is a life after death; she knew their love would continue on, then too. Because the crow told her so. Just like the crow cawed to warn her love not to leave that day but he didn't listen. The crow set with her in the lighthouse, on the rock where she waited for her love and it walked the beach with her throughout the nights. Some believe the crow really was her love waiting to take her home with him. Because he believed in her, their love and the dream too. So, those who do believe in Alexandria's dream honk their boat horns as they approach to celebrate love. It will keep their love alive in the hearts of the living forever as well."

"How did you know this is here?"

"I found it one of my many nights of roaming around with nothing to do and no place to go. Just because, I wasn't with you, Tara. Doesn't mean I didn't think about you. The crow brought me here. It set out on the rock and sometimes would fly around the beach in a full circle only to go right back to the rock. It did it for over an hour. Don't ask me what the hell it's supposed to mean because I have no idea."

"If you found it. How did Nero and Gemma know all of this is here then? They are the ones who bought the motel room and arraigned our little night out adventure."

"It's a longer story. I was at bad place while you were gone. I owe Nero and Gemma a lot, especially Nero. For what they've done for me. I'm sure they wouldn't have if they knew who I really am though." There was so much sadness in voice when he spoke Gemma's name. He lost her because of John. They had become close and I think possibly he even missed being around her.

"Do you want to talk about it? Kyle, you know you can tell me anything."

"I know, but not tonight. Let's go find something to do."

Kyle was taken off guard when I slid across the seat and was by his side when he got in the truck. "Did I say you can come over here and sit by me?"

"At this point, do you think it's going to matter if I sit by you or not, Kyle? Drive already."

"Yes, Ma'am."

His actions were just as much of a surprise to me too. I looked down twice before I said anything. "Did I say you can put your hand on my leg?"

"You didn't ask me, girl. So, I'm not asking you. I figure you wore those little white short for me, I might as well get to enjoy them."

"Well okay, fair enough."
"This is the last time, Tara. We meet in like this anyway. Jax made it very clear to me how it will go down if I don't leave you alone. I said I would never do anything to hurt you or get you hurt either. This will get you hurt if he finds out and I won't let it happen because of me. But, I'll always be there for you no matter what when you need me and I don't care if he likes that or not. As long as he just takes it out on me, it's no big deal."

Kyle left out a lot of the details of what went down with him and Jax while I was in la, la land. Which, Nero filled me in on most of those. Except how they thought I would get hurt by Jax. Neither one of them would go any farther about it. At this point, it wasn't even important to me anymore.

"I know, Kyle. For now, let's just have fun for the rest of the night."

He turned up the radio and we drove around looking for somewhere to go. There wasn't a need for more words to be exchanged. We were adults and knew the consequences of our actions. When they reached your soul there was way more to lose and at stake. A huge difference from a broken heart than a shattered soul in the end beyond repair.

The glitz and glamor of a casino was nothing that ever interested me. But Kyle made it fun. He talked me in to going inside and gambling the odds with him. Hell, I took a big enough gamble just getting out of bed in the mornings.

We even won a little money too. When I went to pick it up so we could leave, he stopped me.

"Let it ride, Tara."

"You already said it's a suckers bet to keep rolling them. We've won a few hundred dollars and we'll lose it."

"If we win, we sin, girl. Let the dice decide our fate tonight."

"If we win, we sin, boy."

He held out his hand. "Blow on it for good luck."

Never once I had I considered myself flirty or seductive. But I was going to give it hell tonight. My fingers rubbed across the top of his chest and played with the button on his shirt. Close to his ear.

"Are you talking about me blowing on the dice or something else?"

"Oh, you are getting so much better at the flirting thing. You better blow on the dice, at least for now. We'll talk about what I want you to blow on later." We both laughed a little before I did it and I gave him a kiss for good luck.

"Ms. Tara." The sound of familiar voice came from behind us. It ended our kiss rather quickly.

"I'll take some of their action." Marcus threw down several one hundred dollar bills down on the table. With a young girl dressed up by his side. A couple of his crew members were hanging back from him. They were his guards for the evening no doubt.

It wasn't as much of fun win for us after Marcus came. "Why don't the two of you join us for a drink?" We were reluctant of course but he kind of insisted and wanted to talk about business with us.

"Let's just get this out on the table between us. I already know you are bedding Teller's old lady. So there is no need to hide it."
"I haven't been with Tara just so we are clear on it." Kyle was defensive. Everyone accused us of it all the time, hell might as well do it now.

"Kyle, I could give a shit less if you are. But I do care about business. It has been run in the ground and now I have some of the Sons enemies knocking at my door because of it. Jax cannot keep lodge business and his gun business separated. It's starting to bleed all over my club. That's when I'll do what I gotta do to make the bleeding stop. It would be a wise thing for you to do Ms. Tara, talk Jax in to selling out his part to me before we lose it all."

"I don't have any say in the lodge anymore or club business for that matter. The odds are Jax won't listen to me, Marcus. I can try when he gets back tomorrow, it's the best I can do for you."

"Well, he better listen to someone soon. Cause the shit is coming down hard now. You two have a nice evening."

"Hey, Marcus can I ask you something?"

"What is it, Ms. Tara?"

"What makes you so certain Kyle and I have been together?"

"It's the way you look at each other, it's a private world all of your own. Have a good night."

Kyle and I avoided making eye contact with each other all the way to the elevator to get the hell out of here. Not even a single glance in the others direction was made.

Once the elevator doors closed Kyle went to hand me some of the money we won. "I don't want it. But it was fun. This is just another thing I've done before."

He shoved some of it down in my front pocket anyway. "You earned it, it's your part. You did blow me, I mean on my dice so we could win."

"You're such a little shit sometimes." I couldn't help to smile and laugh at him. But our smiles turned to something else rather quickly as close as we were standing to each other.

Kyle pushed the stop button on the elevator. It came to an abrupt one too. As it rocked under our feet when it did. "Admit it, Tara."

"Admit what?"

"You feel it too."

"I don't feel anything."

"The fuck you don't."

Kyle pushed my body to the back of the elevator. Mine was trapped by his against the wall as close as they touched. Pinning my arms above my head to the same wall with his hands. His lips brushed mine. Not innocently or tenderly either as normally; hot, fiery, passionate and teasing me with them.

This was a demanding side of him that never came to the surface with me before. I wanted to pull away from him before I lost myself but I couldn't seem to. He seduced my senses and I could no longer think straight about anything but the here and what was in front of me right now. "Tell me, Tara." He whispered it so slowly, prolonging each letter of my name as if to savor them.

Kyle unexpectedly let go of my arms and his hand drifted down to my hips. They settled there as he
pulled me in even closer to him. I inhaled sharply as I felt his warm chest heaving for a breath against mine. "Say it."

"I am starting to feel all the things we talked about and what you told me I would."

The elevator was moving on its own again as our mouths and tongues did as well. We didn't stop the long kiss until the door came open for us to get out. People were staring at us standing in the middle of the elevator holding on to each other when they wanted to get on. But we didn't care if they did.

We collided in the elevator on the outside and inside by what I admitted. We seek shelter from the world and what hurts us by being with each other. There was no a longer a shelter we could run to from each other anymore now.

It was really quiet between us as we walked around. Until we came to a wishing fountain. Kyle gave me a coin. "Make a wish with it."

"I'll need more than one coin for this shit to work."

"Well, you only get one wish, girl. So you better make it count."

It wasn't like it was magic genie to make our three wishes come true anyway. So we shared a couple of wishes with the other. I liked his the best. "It's my dying wish actually. To know there is something real in this world before I go. That it really is possible."

Since we agree to be totally honesty about everything on our minds. We tried something new. Letting old skeletons out of their closets so they could vanish from our lives as well.

"On the count of three we say what we are scared of together…one, two, three." We laughed at the others answers and possible at own even. Because they were a bunch of crap and we knew it.

"Let's say what we're really scared of this time." Kyle and I joined hands. It was time for some brutal honesty for the both of us. "Ready Tara, one, two, three." It wasn't an extremely long list. Some of our answers were the same while others were our own independent ghosts and demons we still had to deal with. "Now, we are equally vulnerable by the other knowing what our true fears are. I trust you with them and a lot of things actually."

It was a healing of our lives, scars and old wounds with one small admission at a time. I've never been honest about a lot of things even with myself. I found it so easy to do it with him though. But when we came to a place that sold ice cream he had something else on his mind now. He asked if I wanted anything and I didn't. I would just have some of his.

"You are really in to those things aren't you?"

"I am. We can share it if you want some?" Like we ate the ice cream cone before. His arm went around me and we shared the strawberry shake between us. We didn't hurry to go anywhere. Meandered with no particular place to be at. A teenage boy and girl were hand in hand as they passed us by.

"Aw, I love it when old people are sweet with each other. I want to be that way when I get old." As the girl made the comment we looked around to see who she was talking about. The boy agreed with her too about the old people. Then it became a reality of what she meant.

"Are those little shits calling us old?" Kyle seemed offended by them.

"Yes, I believe they are." But actually, I wasn't offended at all. It was nice to be the one envied
instead of envying others for once.

We found an empty bench to sit down on. Where we worked out all of our others problem at. The last time I checked my phone three hours had passed by already of us just talking and caring about what the other had to say.

"She was fucking around with him before I ever left the last time. I didn't see it. Or maybe I didn't want to. The day after I deployed she filed for divorce. It's not uncommon when you're gone as long as we are to give your wife power of attorney, we all did it. It wasn't like I could come back even if I wanted to because something had to be done here. You're supposed to trust them with your everything and I did. Only I couldn't trust her. By the time I got back; I was divorced, she was remarried, he adopted my son and I had nothing left. My son doesn't even have my last name anymore. But it was too late to do anything about by then. It was already done and over with. Jax gave her the perfect excuse for when Zac gets older and he finds out. She can blame it all on me, I ran off and left them."

"I am so sorry for what Jax did to your son. If I could do something about it or change it, I would. You have taught me so much about life and caring about other people."

"You've taught me a lot to, Tara. Maybe it was I just left her lonely for too long while I was gone. I've watched you with Jax and how unhappy he makes you by him never being around. As far as I know, she is actually happy now. I could have just been the wrong person for her and he was the one who she is supposed to be with. It doesn't make me hate her any less because she couldn't have just told me she was done and wanted out. But I didn't even see those things until I met you. I didn't see a lot of things until I've been around you. It's getting late we should head back now."

"Before we go Kyle, are you going to ever tell me what happened between you and Jax? What exactly do you think he going to do to hurt me?"

"It stays between me and Jax. After tonight, he won't hurt you because I will not do this with you anymore. I can't take the risk he will find out and do something stupid." No matter how many more questions I asked about the subject he refused to give out any information. So, I gave up and went on.

The air had been cleared around us. We got out what bothered us the most, mistakes we've made in the past, our fears and the beliefs of what the good brother held for me.

So to be playful back to him for what he did to me in the elevator. I wanted to test his little theory when we got back in the truck. I needed to know for sure if just my touch took him to that place or not.

Slowly up Kyle's leg I ran my hand to where it ended. I might have casually brushed against a place I wasn't necessarily was aiming for, a couple of times. I saw his grip become harder on the steering wheel as I did it a few times more.

"You are not getting to me at all, girl. So, don't even think you are."

"Kyle."

"Yeah."

"You're driving the wrong way down a one way street, boy. I was just waiting to see if you even noticed."

"Shit." He slammed on the brakes and tried to get us turned around to go in the right direction. Of
course it was with another illegal you turn to do so. "Don't say anything, girl."

"Anything."

"You're definitely getting better at the smart ass part too, Tara."

The direction he went in was leaving anything nearby. More open spaces and not many houses. With less lights on anywhere as we passed by. "Where are we going?"

"To a place we've never gone before, for the both of us." It didn't take him long to find the place either.

"Seriously, this is where you picked?"

"Why, not. It's quiet, no one around."

He parked outside of town. Like a couple of teenagers trying to locate a spot to make out. It was he actually had in mind for us too.

The more we kissed and touched, the more I actually wanted to. It was so hot in here, the condensation built up on the widows.

"Are you sure, Tara?"

"Maybe I just need to know what your touch will do to me, if anything. I want to know if it's true or not. I can get excited by just your touch and you get excited by mine. I'm sure of that much." Kyle reached in the back seat and got a blanket. "Seriously? You got a Mickey Mouse blanket you carry around with you?"

"It's Cody's. I won't tell him if you don't." Kyle got out and waited. "Are you coming with me?"

"This is the last time I am going to ask you, girl. Are you sure you want to do this?" My answer to him was a kiss. There wasn't wasted words between us nor space either as tight as the embrace was we were in.

We laid together on the blanket with Kyle only touching me and nothing more. His hand found its way through my hair, playing with the ends of it. On to my face, he gently felt it with his fingertips as our eyes were locked only on each other and there wasn't anything else around us in the moment. Down to my sides and his hands roamed to my legs too. He was in no hurry either to do it. There was no grabbing or groping, just simple caresses. He liked to touch my hair and face the most because he always went back to do it again and again.

He didn't linger in one area long either or only picked the couple of spots men like to find. So far he hadn't touched me in those spots as of yet. When his mouth made its way to mine, I began touching his body as well. My fingertips grazed the side of his face while our kiss deepened. The buttons came undone on his shirt to easily. His bare chest called out for my attention. As he went to reciprocate the same, I hesitated.

"What?"

"I'm not really comfortable with anyone seeing my body."

Kyle ran his thumb over my nipple ring through my shirt. "I put it there. I've already seen you. You never have to hold back with me; what you want, like, need or don't want to do. If you don't want me to, I won't take it off."
Somehow he eased an insecurity I've had for so damn long with the sensual and desirable way I felt around him. How he was aroused at thought of seeing my body once again since he had seen it before. Because he seen me and only me. I knew there wasn't another woman on his mind I had to compete with or was remotely compared to.

Instead of admitting it to him, I put his hand back on the hem of my shirt. He only ran his hand up the bottom of it. Over my stomach on to my sides and he loved to give slight squeezes to my skin as he went. Even though I gave permission, he still didn't try to take my shirt off.

Our tongues slid and moved with the others. He liked to do it inside and outside of my mouth. While we kissed and afterwards. His tongue also trailed down to the top of my shirt after feeling it on my neck. He only kisses where bare skin was exposed. What I liked the most was he never stopped wanting to touch my body, all of it. Nor left my mouth lonely for too long before he made his way back to it for another kiss before continuing on.

Most got right down to the business at hand and never took the time to leave you breathless with just their touch. There was a very strong possibility it was only his touch that could do this to me and he was right all along.

But once Kyle did help me wiggle out of the shirt from where I laid. His gripping hold on me became much stronger than I would ever admit either. Our skin was slick from the sweaty rhythm our bodies moved in. There wasn't a question to the other what the next move would be as we just seemed to know. By the arm his one hand held on to me, while his other went under my head. As the full weight of him was felt on top me.

He pushed my bra strap down off my shoulder but didn't attempt to remove it, kissed my body some more. I felt a nip or two with his teeth at my nipple ring through the cup of my bra. My hands went to his hair and it was drenched in sweat, just like I was.

The small amount rocking he did with his body on mine, left me drenched in other places as well. I put my arms around him and felt his back under his shirt while his movements became more dominantly apparent.

"Yeah?" Kyle waited to see what I wanted to do. How much farther it should be taken.

"Oh, yeah."

When Kyle brought my legs up to his hips and moved; I was done for and a goner. My back arched involuntarily as though I was following his lead to a forbidden place. I couldn't help to moan loudly wanting more and he wasn't even inside me. The sensational way our bodies responded to each other was explainable.

I could feel his abs contracting against my bare skin when he raised up and back down with each movement he made. The longer and harder he pushed on top of me, the more I desired it, wanted it and needed it. Our rhythm was in perfect sync with one another. "I gotta stop."

Just as I was really getting in to it and felt all the sensations he had been talking about, he was done. He gave me another kiss before he rolled over on to his back and stared up at the night's sky beside me on the blanket.

Since, I wasn't sure why he quit. I didn't want to push the issue with him because perhaps the answer wasn't what I wanted to hear. He finally rolled over to his side to face me. "I didn't want to stop, Tara, I had to. Or it would have gone past just us touching. It's my fault, I'm the one who got carried away." We laid for a few minutes kissing and just touching each other tenderly once more. "If you
only knew what you do to me, girl." With another couple slow kisses, he let go of me.

"I know this is totally insane. I can't even really express it well to you, Kyle. I actually had to check several times, because I knew you couldn't be. You're still clothed and I am too. I could have sworn if felt like...hell, I don't even...I...

"It was a heightened pleasure you never felt before. Yeah, I know it's why I had to stop. You're just now feeling it. What I've felt for a while now. Just your simple touch sometimes does it for me. I've fought it but it's always there." He grabbed both of my hands to help me up from the ground to my feet. "We should probably go."

Kyle blasted the air conditioning on high when we got back in the front of the truck. I had to agree it was hotter than it ever was before between us. He opened his unbuttoned shirt up and let the cool air hit his sweaty skin as he leaned in closer to the vents. "We steamed up the windows earlier. I haven't done that since I was a teenager."

"I've never done it before."

"Now you have, Tara. It's more thing, you can say you know how it feels because you experienced it."

"What about you, how do feel, Kyle?"

"Are we still on honesty, girl. Or do you want me to lie to you?"

"Honesty is good."

"I was afraid that's the one you would pick." He took his phone off the dash to check the clock. "It's four in the morning."

"Kyle, stop ignoring it. Give me honesty. I'm a big girl and I can handle it."

"I feel like laying you down on a bed of sweet surrender. Where we can work it all out. I feel like letting go of everything. I wanna touch you and let it wash all the hurt away for both of us; until we feel whole again. Feel every inch of you against my skin. Until we feel so close to each other, there isn't anything between us anymore. How's that for honesty?"

"What are you waiting on? Drive already, boy."

"Yes, Ma'am."

My head leaned on his shoulder and with Kyle's hand back on my leg as we went on our way. The grip he had my leg was about the same he had on my body from earlier. He rubbed it up and down with a slight squeeze of excitement on the occasion. We kissed a couple of times and he gave me several to my forehead while he drove.

There were those precise moments you knew exactly what you wanted, needed and desired. You had to find the dividing line of wanted pleasure, needed breaths and desired bodily heaven. Pleasure entwined with sin; as wrongs weren't always mistakes and sometimes you hated the fact of what you loved. But timing was everything. Time had elapsed since I felt those things and when we arrived in front of the motel. If it hadn't of, I wasn't sure any longer.

"You don't need to say anything, Tara. I already know." Time had elapsed for Kyle too. I almost smiled because I was certain the same had ran through his mind as well on the drive back here. "What we want to do isn't what we should do. The worst battle is between what you know and what
you feel.” He picked up his matching motel room key and handed me mine. "Are you ready to do this with me, girl?"

"Yes, I am." I took his hand and we took our time walking up the steps together. We passed by so many doors which lead to the rooms of sweet sinful pleasure on a bed of forbidden surrender. Then came to place we both knew the way it had to end.

"It can't ever go there between us. I'm not sure I can separate the differences with you. It's not the physical act I'd have trouble with, it's all the other things that go along with it. Because I care about you more than I have a right to. If you weren't married it would be different. You have two little boys to think about first and I wouldn't do anything to hurt them either. But, I don't give a shit who Jax's father is because it means nothing to me. Just like he doesn't." Kyle dropped his motel key in the night drop off box at the motel's office when he was done. Now it was my turn to for honesty and to put it behind me.

"I'm not sure I can ever actually go through with cheating on Jax. No matter how much of an ass he is or how many times he's cheated on me. I've fought hard to keep us together until I am just worn out from it now. Everything is so different with you, I am so different when I'm around you. But, if this were another place and time. You'd be the one I'd take a chance with. Even if it didn't go past sharing just one night with you. I've never felt so much passion and... And, I don't give a shit who your father is either." Once I let the key leave my fingers to slip down in the slot. I let a lot of things go as well. "I haven't decided what I am going to tell Gemma yet. Probably nothing. Tonight did really help me get past a lot of things."

"Well, when I tell the story to Nero. You couldn't keep your hands off me, girl. It was best wild sex I ever had." Kyle took me by surprise with what he said. "I'm kidding, Tara. I wouldn't ever tell him that. Maybe just the wild sex part though."

"You're such a goofball."

"It's part of my charm, girl. You know we did the right thing by not going there. Even if we would have just slept together all night and not done anything but sleep. It would have just been another reason to want more and do it again. Another thing we have to hide when we're around other people. I'm not so good at these days either."

"I have something for you." Kyle went to his truck and handed me what looked like a scroll neatly rolled up with a red ribbon tied around it. "Don't open it until you get home or around Jax either."

"So, this really is it with us, isn't it? I feel like you have told me goodbye forever." There was no way I could hide my emotions from him on the subject. I couldn't really hide much from him as it was.

"Don't do this to me, Tara, don't cry. Nothing will change, we are still friends and I will see you all the time. It's not like I can stay away from you for very long. There isn't anything I can do about the situation. You know it's not what I want. But, I won't let Jax hurt you because of me." Kyle hugged me for a long time. When he finally let go of me, he totally let me go for good. Even I wasn't blind enough not to see it or feel it. "Besides, being in love with a married woman leads to the road of nowhere for everyone involved."

"Are you saying you love me?"

"Don't flatter yourself, girl." With one final tender kiss he walked away. More than just walked away from me though in the end.

"Hey, Kyle." I was hoping he hadn't heard me as quietly as I said it. But of course he did and since I
had his attention. "I sort of don't love you either."

"Yeah, that's what I thought. You better get home before Jax does."

It was truly a cleansing of the soul tonight for me. I wasn't sure either if I should love Gemma like my mother or hate her for making me even go there to such a place. I've never been truly brutally honest with even myself in life. But damn, if I wasn't now.

This was another new ride I took down a road to a completely different outlook on life. The next time I remotely thought Jax was fucking around on me; it wouldn't be a Harley I took it out on with a baseball bat. It would be his favorite body part.

If I could pass up what I did tonight with Kyle for Jax, he'd better work hard to do the same for me from now on. I would break the cycle of it one way or the other. Or he wouldn't be able to use his dick anymore period. If the others seen it, they too would take the hint of it eventually too. It ain't easy being the queen without slapping the king's dick in the dirt once in a while. There were a lot of things I found myself agreeing with Gemma on these days.

After we reached Charming, Kyle honked as he went his way and I went mine to go home. I did the same back. I let him go tonight and as well he did me. This time it was a mutual agreement between us. We've healed each other in so many ways and I couldn't find one bad thing with it. No matter what anyone else thought.

There didn't seem to any longer be a force pushing us in each other's direction as of today. In a matter of hours, it almost all but went away. The choices we made tonight were of our own doing. For once, the chaos and drama wasn't there among us either to push even closer together. Telling us we needed each other more than ever. It actually felt good to have a pleasant time instead of feeling lonely and miserable. I haven't had one in so long now.

Maybe John just needed Kyle to know he didn't abandon him and how much he really loved his mother. The rest of it, we both were still unclear on. Or what we should actually do about it. Only time would tell us what direction to go in next with it all.

The only direction I had on my mind now was to go home and either accept my fate for where I had been tonight. Or to get over the fact Jax hadn't come home all night because he stayed at the patch over party.

It was dark and empty inside the house. But I wasn't on the inside any longer. The red ribbon it was wrapped in untied with a single pull. When I unrolled the paper. Kyle gave me the drawing he had done of Abel, Thomas and myself. It was completed with a room drawn in around it. It wasn't a place I recognized but it was beautiful with the shades of light reflected through the window surrounding us. A small piece of paper was rolled up inside of it too.

Tara,

You have the face of an angel; the pretty eyes that shine when you're happy. This drawing is to remind you of it. When I see you with Abel and Thomas, you touch my heart so much. I find you to be the happiest while you hold them and it always shows. I see you the most beautiful, when you smile that smile.

Whenever you come around me. I get weak in the knees; and I lose my breath because you always take it away. And when you smile that smile, it turns my world upside down. There has never been another woman to have this effect on me other than you. I've tried to tell you so many times but the
words won't come out. I'm scared to death, to actually speak them out loud. If I do, I can't pretend it's not how I feel about you anymore.

Don't ever expect me to say this to you because I won't. Not that it really matters much now because I had no choice but to let you go. I just want you to be happy and I needed you to know how I really see you.

Kyle

For twenty minutes I debated if I should or not. I was certain he wasn't asleep yet. So, fuck it. I called him.

"Hello."

"Thank you. I love the picture."

"You're welcome."

"I really want you to be happy too because no one deserves it more than you do. There are so many things I want to say to you. I…"

"Don't go there. Please, don't make it any harder than it already is. You have a way of always changing my mind, don't do it this time. Goodnight, Tara."

"Goodnight."

One would have thought all of this would have made me sad and weak. But it didn't because I knew he was right. When you never had an experience so great; you held on to those five special minutes for a lifetime. Especially through the tough and rough spots in your life. "Damn you, Gemma. You just had to prove me wrong."

To the freezer I went. I would taste at least one guilty sweet sinful pleasure tonight. I dipped out a huge spoon full of my favorite ice cream. "You better love me Jax. You got no idea what I give up for you and us."

But with each new dawn brought, it was a new day. That was still unwritten for the way you wanted it to be. It was true if you stop carrying so much hate in your heart, love was more dominate. It took over your heart, soul and life. I set out on the step while I had my coffee and enjoyed the warm rays of the sun on my face. The wind was low today. It barley blew the wind chime to make a noise. The sweet clank it made against the slow melody it played made me smile. "Yeah."

Jax would no longer hear anything about the past from me. Everything about us would be based from today forward. We all make mistakes, did things or didn't do things we regretted and wish we could do them over. This was his do over without my saying so.

But help his ass if he fucked it up again. I never thought I could get right with knowing he had cheated. Honestly, it didn't matter anymore if had a hundred women. It would only take one from now on to make his life a living hell at home. Just like with me.

When I tried his cell he didn't answer it. Nothing new about it either. There were times when he rode on his bike he couldn't actually hear it and wasn't just ignoring me. So, he got a free pass on it too today. "Hey, baby. I'm taking the kids for some fun today. I'll see you when you get home. I love you, Jax. I can honestly say I do. Bye."
As I got dressed and put my makeup on, I noticed the same smile I wore on my face now. If you were truly happy you passed it on to the people who you surrounded. It was remarkable the differences you made in our own life without knowing so. It also worked in the adverse effect as well. If you were miserable, you passed on the misery to those around you and your love ones without trying to.

With love, sunshine and a healthier heart I went to get my babies. I would make sure I passed on a lot of things to them as well and reminded them of what lasted a lifetime when they needed it. Especially when they got older. When you couldn't find any happiness in your life, sometimes you have to just make your own.

Gemma was outside smoking when I pulled up. I laughed at that woman's timing. She didn't even let me get up the steps until she was on me. "Well, don't you have a pretty glow to you, sweetheart. You look extremely happy today."

"Yeah, I really am."

"And?" Gemma wanted full detail but she would never get them from me. No one else ever needed to know what did or did not take place between us. But more so what didn't actually happen.

"Thank you, Gemma. For everything. I still can't believe you're leaving here."

At first Gemma didn't expect me to hug her so tightly or with so much love. Nor did she want me to see a tear escape her when I did. I now understood exactly why to, love and emotions only make you weak on the inside and the outside when you show them to someone. So I let her go from my life too when I let her out of my grasp. It was time for me to sink on the ship I was going down on or to reach out for a life rafter to seek safety from it. But do it on my own this time.

"Why don't you leave Thomas here with us since he is asleep? Grandma and Grandpa will be gone soon you know and you can spend some time with just Abel."

"Are you ready to go, baby? We are going to have fun with Nicole and Cody." Abel was so excited he tried to tie his own shoes. He got it mostly right but I had to redo them so he wouldn't trip and fall down.

Cody was just as excited when I stopped to pick him and Nicole up. He and Abel were talking way in the back seat about everything they were going to do when they got there. It was so adorable to listen to them. They were little adults, our little sweet men.

Nicole handed me a disk to put in. It was the one the boys were singing when we all slept over. They sang it loudly, like at the top of their lungs. Nicole and I laughed for a while then joined in with them too.


With everything going so great today. I would have never expected it to go to shit in a matter of seconds. But fuck if it didn't. A van went flying by us then slammed on the brakes in the middle of the road. They say the worst part was always still to come, it was coming at a vengeance for me too. I didn't see the other van until it came crashing into the side of us. I only had a short time to react as we went off the side of the road.

When I finally could manage to get the car under control again. Where we were headed was not a good place. In a split second I had to choose to possible keep tumbling down the hill of no return or
without knowing where we would hit once we reached the bottom. If there were a such a possibility I hadn't hit rock bottom already. Or to proceed to the course of knowing the rocky road we'd take in the end. The one I probably couldn't ever come back from, the road to nowhere. I turned the wheel as hard as I could.

But still we collided with a tree in the front on my side of the car. The rocky road we went down wasn't as bad as I original expected, sometimes they aren't in life either. Only my head bounced off the window and blood already began to trickle down my face when we hit on impact. I tried to get my senses back to me but I felt so woozy. Everything was fuzzy around me at best. The jar to my head had my vision seeing little sparks of light when I would close my eyes and open them up again.

It was the striking blow I felt down on the back of my head after we finally came to a stop which started to make everything go completely black around me.

"Which one is Teller's kid?"

"I don't know, they look alike. Take them both."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

The next chapter; Brother Hoods will be out in a few days. I'm sure by the name some of you will guess what ride we are going on next in the story.

A reader liked the song I included so much in the story the last time. They issued me a little challenge of putting a couple of their favorites in the story too. While writing a scene around it and making flow in with the story line. Let me know how I did, darlin. See what you started, Jess lol Smooches!

I hoped to have the story completed by the end of July. Since I wrote a murder mystery for Camp Nano this month. It will probably be the end of August when it is finished.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert.
The white lights were flickering in and out of my sight. They were coruscating with brilliant sparkle flashes on the occasion. With a dappled marked spots against the darkness of a black surface. It was partly shaded grey against the radiant glow of the white.

Suddenly around me everything was pitch black. My body felt as though it was zooming at the speed of light when I thought I was laying perfectly still. But I gradually became aware of a long, dark passage that was stretched out in front of me. Strange thoughts kept recurring in my head seeing this passage, this tunnel. I was spiraling down it and I couldn’t stop.

The start of it was meandering down its narrow path. I noticed side passages branching off to the left and right, their destinations were unknown. All of the side paths appeared the same as the main tunnel: murky and foreboding with evil. As endless in their black expanse as the main passage. Their openings seemingly invited me in from my present path. To take a sojourn, a temporary journey, within their confines.

The struggle began when the white light broke through once more. It was now calling my name to come towards it. Follow its path and don’t stray away from it. The elation took over my emotions and I felt incredibly happy and peacefully at home. More happiness and higher spirits than I ever felt before actually.

The white, purple, yellow and coral flowers were swaying in a unison movement in the meadow I was standing in. They were almost performing a beautiful dance as they were surrounding me on the ground. Up above my head appeared as clouds of paradise. Had I died when we went off the road? Was this the promise land of the afterlife?

I knew it wasn’t because at a high speed rate my memories replayed continuously like a movie before my eyes. But then, I seen things, I didn’t know what they were. A young woman in a long white dress running on a beach. She was being chased by a young man. They were laughing while the waves of water occasionally came in on their bare feet. Once he caught up to her, they stood together with the blue waves lapping against them as they kissed.

But they weren’t what had my attention. It was the crow perched on a huge rock cawing. The burning sensation started under my feet as the sand I was standing on turned to fire and brimstone consuming me.

"Dr. Knowles, do you know where you are? I’m Dr. Williams." The shadow of the doctor hoovering over my bed. Was all I could see with the bright white lights shinning down in my eyes.

"My son. Where is my son and Cody?"
"You suffered a head trauma in the accident. I have given you a few stitches. We have already taken you down for x-rays and performed test. I am waiting or all the results to come back to see if you have a concussion or not. You need to stay in bed until then."

The doctor left the room. I shook off the light headed feeling I had when I set up. "Doll, you need to stay in bed." Tig caught me when I tried to stand up.

"I got to get Abel. They took him and Cody."

"Who took them?"

Tig was the first to arrive here. Jax wasn't back to the clubhouse when Margret called there. I explained everything to Tig that happened. The news he shared with me, brought more motherly hurt in the picture.

"Nicole was six weeks pregnant. She lost the baby. I've been running back and forth between the two of you. I'll call Jax again and tell him about Abel. I already called Kyle to let him know about Nicole. But stay in bed, Tara, until I get back. I need to check on Nicole now."

It took me five minutes or more to get my bearing on my feet. I held on to the wall to make it out of the room. I found David setting on the hallway floor.

"Are you okay, David? The baby's yours?"

"Yeah, it's mine or was mine I guess now since she lost it. Nicole won't talk to me or even look at me now. I should have never told her I didn't want to see her anymore. I'm getting ready to deploy again and I didn't want to leave her hanging for months waiting on me. I swear I didn't know she was pregnant."

"I'm sorry this happened. Nicole is just upset. It's a lot to handle. Give her some time then try again is the best advice I can give you. You need to be there for her because she doesn't even know about Cody yet."

"Back at you Tara with Kyle. No matter what he says, he needs you."

"Yeah." It was really all I could say at the moment to his comment. There wasn't much I would be able to do once Jax got here and knew what happened to our son.

"Nicole is back in her room now if you wanna see her, Tara. Are you okay being up?" David just looked at Tig but didn't say anything. When they brought Nicole back up from downstairs. Tig was holding her hand when they took her in her room. David most certainly took notice of it. "What? Why are you all looking at me that way? The kid isn't mine. I just slept with her last night."

There was about to be a huge problem between them. So I stopped it the best I could. "Tig, can you get me a glass of water please?"

"Sure, doll. I'll be right back."

"Nicole hooked up with that shit. Are you serious?" As loud as David was about it. I was surprised if Tig didn't hear what he had said.

"I don't know, David. I truly don't. I wasn't around last night."

"Right. Neither was Kyle. He didn't come home until after I crashed somewhere around three this morning on his couch. He won't tell me where he was either. You wouldn't happen to know. Would
"Maybe Kyle hooked up with some girl last night and was just late getting home."

"Bullshit. My guess is, he was with you all night. He's hiding it because you're married to the biker."

This place was like a circus with everyone being around, pissed off and the chaos going on with the boys. It only got worse too. At least I slipped away from David before he asked anymore question which I would not answer.

"Where the hell is my grandson?" Gemma had arrived and the scene was about to get completely out of control. The more they tried to keep her quiet the louder she got. "Don't tell me to calm down. Where is Jackson?"

"Jax is on his way, Gem." Tig stated in passing as he handed me a plastic cup of ice water.

"What is everyone screaming about?" They must have released Nicole because she came out in the hallway dressed already.

Gemma was nothing to deal with though once Jax and Kyle got here. They got the basic information the boys were gone and now all the Sons were involved with it. The club members were strung down the hall and some sitting with Gemma and Thomas in the waiting room.

"Where's Abel?"

"I don't know. They took them."

"Who took him?" It came from Jax.

"Who took them?" It came from Kyle.

"Two black vans ran us off the road. The windows were tented and I couldn't see inside of it. I never seen their faces because once the car stopped, they hit me and Nicole in the back of the head according to the matching gashes we have. But when they spoke, they had a Mexican accent. I heard them just before I must have passed out."

"Marcus?" Once again, Kyle.

"Alvarez?" Once again, Jax.

After every time asking the same type of question in a simultaneously pattern Jax and Kyle would look at each other. It finally pissed Jax off. "Why the fuck, are you even here? Abel is my son and I will handle it."

"Cody is my nephew and the fuck you will." Tig called Kyle too once I told him what happened to Cody and Abel. Jax would really be pissed off if he found out about Tig was hanging out with him too.

"What? Someone took my baby? They said my son was fine when I asked them. Cody wasn't hurt." Nicole now knew the truth. When she asked the doctor about Cody. He looked at who was admitted from the accident and didn't see Cody's name. So, he said Cody must not have been hurt.

Tig had Nicole in a tight embrace. "It's okay baby we will get him back."

"I gotta get out of here before I kill him." David was off for the elevator. I don't think anyone even noticed but me with all the commotion going on.
"You've been hanging out with his sister?" Well, Jax figured out who Nicole was now. Once he was done reading me the riot act, he started on Kyle. "You need to get the fuck out of my sight before I do some serious damage to you."

"I don't give shit what you want, Jax. This is about the boys and I'm not going anywhere. It's just more bullshit you probably caused."

With round three in progress between them. I went back to my room and just shut the door. All I could think of was my baby boy and where Abel was. If he was okay. How scared he must be without me there to protect him with a bunch of strangers around him. If they were mean to him and Cody.

"Tara, I need to get your statement." Chief Roosevelt was already here. It's probably why it got quiet all of a sudden out there. I told him the same thing I told them. I truly knew no details to find my son.

"You and I had a discussion a few months back when your car mysteriously blew up about what happens with the enemies of the club. I need to know who the enemies are to help find your son. I'm sorry you're going through this but I can't help you if you don't help me."

"The club has no enemies. We've been over this. We're just mechanics."

"I'm taking to Tara. Not you Jax." At some point Jax had joined us in the room and Roosevelt continued to ask me things I didn't have any answers to.

"If you can think of anything, Tara. That will help in this investigation call me. Or if you feel threatened and need police protection, call me then too." I think Roosevelt threw the last part in just for Jax. "I want to talk to you next, Jax."

They weren't gone long when I had another visitor and he was just as furious as Jax was. "Where did Boomer go? I saw you were talking to him when I came in."

"I don't know where he went to. He is upset Nicole lost the baby."

"Baby?" From the shocked sound in Kyle's voice. He knew nothing about it. I was the dumb ass that just told him.

"I guess you haven't talked to Nicole yet. She was six weeks pregnant."

"Why would Boomer be upset about Nicole's baby?"

"Um…I…"

"Tara."

"They were seeing each other and it's his."

"You knew and you kept it from me? What the fuck else have you not told me about?" When I didn't say anything Kyle only got louder. "Tara."

"Get the fuck out of my wife's room."

They were going back and forth and I had enough of it. "Both of you shut the fuck up so I can think." Once I realized how loud I was. I tried to calm down so we could rationally talk about it. "We have to find Abel. He could die without his medication. All this trauma could set off one his attacks."
"We will find him, babe. Do you remember anything else?"

"They weren't sure who to take. After they said which one is Teller's kid. The other guy was the one who said take them both."

"We got to find them fast. If they find out who Cody is and he has no value to Jax. They might…"

"We will find them both." Nero came in and until he spoke I didn't even realize he was here in the room with us. "Can I talk to you, Jax?"

"Later."

"Not later, Jax, now. Or I will say it here in front of Tara and I don't think you want that shit to happen."

Kyle sat down in the chair beside my bed in defeat. "Out of all the places I could have landed. I came to this f*cked up town. Look at all the damage it's done around me. They will kill Cody once they know for sure which one is the right kid. I hate to even think what they might do to Abel once they figure out he is Jax's son. I should have never stayed in Charming and started any of this with you, Tara. The blame goes on me for all of it. Now, I've made my family suffer from it too."

"Kyle..." He slammed the door on his way out of my room and wouldn't even talk about it.

The blame didn't only fall on Kyle for what transpired. It landed on all of us because there were so many people who were a part of it. Mostly, on me. By the choices I've made over the years, this was how it all ended up being.

"I had no right asking you for any of this, Tara. Wanting you to stay and be a part of what I am. I didn't think it through. Obviously, it's what I do. I don't think shit through. What I do to other people and those around me. You should have gone back to Chicago. The shit that happened with Kohn, that should have been the end. This has to be the end. You gotta get out of Charming away from me. It's simple, you don't belong here. Are you mine, Tara? I won't survive if you ever leave me. I know I've broken a lot of promises to you over the years. It was because I was scared, I'm not anymore. Every promise I made, I wanna work on keeping them to you now. Even when you wanna run Tara; I won't let you go or give up on us. I wake up most of the time feeling like you are going to leave me just any day now."

"You think I should get an abortion Margret because the father is a criminal, an outlaw. I think you should get an abortion because the mother is unsure, Tara. The bond you have with Jax is one from your adolescent youth. Nothing that will last."

"I'm scared to leave, scared to stay here, scared to be a mother. I'm always looking at it, Jax. All of this shit is always staring at me or slapping me in my face. We don't know who we are until we are connected with someone else. We are better human beings when we're with the person we're meant to be with. Mommy will always be here fighting for you, baby. No matter what I gotta do son. Abel, you will have the right to choose your own decisions. I love you, baby."

"We'll find Abel, babe."

"You need to find them, Jax. Cody is with them too."

"I know and we will."

"I'm sorry…"
"I don't even care about why you were with his sister and her kid. I'm sure you've still been seeing Kyle and lying to me. Especially since you're such good friends with Nicole and he wasn't shocked at all that you are. So, I know he is aware of it and probably has known the entire time. We will talk about it but not now. I've gotta focus on finding Abel first and my rage will get settled later with Kyle. I do want to know one thing though."

"What?"

"Do you still love me, Tara?"

"Yes, I do love you. More than I think you will ever know."

"That's all I need to know for now." Jax gave me a kiss and hugged me. This was one time I could actual sense love coming from him back for me. There were times in the past I just couldn't feel it from him anymore. "I promised you, I am going to make shit right with you. I'm working towards it but I can't do it on my own. I will never let you go or give up on us. I love you."

Another weak breakdown on my part came once again. I clutched Jax's leather in my hands as he held me while I cried. I cried for so many people I love. For my sons who had no true choices in their lives. My husband who got drug to hell and back by all those around him. Nicole, the innocent by standard who was with me at the wrong place and at the wrong time. Her son, Cody because he was with us, just along for the ride. Kyle for all the burdens he took on because of me.

"Jax, I got him on the phone." Bobby handed Jax one of the prepay's and he went to take the call.

Jax officially called a lock down at the clubhouse for all the member's families. They took Thomas back there to be safe. While Jax went to chase down a lead on the boys. I was waiting on the doctor to bring in my results so I could get released too. Rat stayed behind posted at my door and so did Gemma. The rest, who knew where the hell they went to.

It was a couple more hours of my pacing and staring at the walls reliving all the shit from the past. Before the doctor finally gave me the go ahead to leave. The twelve stitches I received to my head was the least of my worries.

Even more worries came when we got outside of the hospital. Gemma lit up a smoke because she seen who was waiting for me too. "I'll give you a minute."

Rat wasn't so compensating with the situation. "Jax will be pissed off if he finds out you talk to Kyle. You should keep moving, Tara."

"You better step the fuck away from me before I get seriously pissed off." It was the warning Kyle gave to Rat. From the coldness in Kyle's eyes I think he would have carried through on it too. Standing before me was a different man than I had seen in the past. One who could be as mean as others I know.

"I'm here with Tara. Nothing is gonna happen to her. Just give her a minute, Rat." Nero took Rat off to the side. I had no idea what they were talking about.

"Jax knows I've been seeing you still. You need to be careful, Kyle."

"I don't give a shit what Jax knows. Did you tell him that too? You told him everything else we've done and left us all knee deep in shit because of it. He knew it all; the Lodge, Collette, Charlie. Also about me and you. I didn't want to believe you would do that, Tara."

"What the hell are you talking about, Kyle? I never told Jax you guys did any of that."
"It doesn't even matter now how Jax found out. The damage is already done from it. I asked you to tell me the truth about everything. You conveniently forgot to mention Abel had been kidnapped before. Didn't you think it might be something important you should have mentioned? It's not something you just toss off and forget about. I'm such a stupid fucker. I just keep getting sucked right back in with this shit."

"Kyle…"

"I don't want to hear it, Tara. You know, I might be slow to catch on sometimes. But I am really starting to see how Odin and John were taken out so easily. They were only blinded by one thing and it's why the women were no match against them. You stayed here even after your child was put through this shit before. What the fuck is wrong with you? I don't think I even really know you at all."

"Will you just let me explain?"

"No, I won't. There is no explanation you could possibly give me to make any of this shit okay. I have done everything I can to make sure you and the boys are alright. You got no idea what I've done to protect you. Just to find out you're as fucked up as they are by staying."

"You're right Kyle. I have no idea what you have done to protect me because no one will tell me anything."

"I have…"

"Kyle, enough. Tara, you should go now. We will do what we gotta do to get the boys back." Nero interfered with what Kyle was about to say because he was in the middle of our conversation now with Gemma. He kissed Gemma goodbye and she seemed as frazzled and unglued along with upset too.

"I'll take you to the clubhouse, Tara. I already went by the house and packed some bags for all of you. I will meet you at home, Nero."

"Everyone is on lock down at the clubhouse. Aren't you and Nero coming too?"

She and Nero exchanged a long glance with one another before she would say anything. "No, we're not." Then that is all she would throw out there.

"Why? What is it no one wants to tell me?"

"We've all done a lot of shit to protect you and the boys. You should get in the car, sweetheart and stop asking question you don't really want answers to."

"Maybe it's time you did know some truths, Mama." Gemma shook her head no to Nero. She overruled him once again. With just a glance from her, she held the power of persuasions over him.

At least I wasn't the only one who was getting it today. Boomer was coming back from the parking lot and it was now his turn.

"You, son of a bitch." Kyle was up in his face. "Is there something you need to tell me about my sister?" Poor David, he was faced with same issues. Of what he done coming back to bite him in ass. Just like me.

Gemma took me to the clubhouse with Rat following behind us. She was unusually quiet. I knew she was just as worried about Abel. But there was something going on. More than I could get her to
say.

"I'll be by to check on things here tomorrow. I love you, sweetheart."

"Gemma…"

"There isn't any more that can be said. Kiss Thomas for me and tell him I love him." She pulled away as soon as I shut the door to the car. Not even a glance in the rearview mirror came from her. They opened up the gate and she was gone.

"I'll help you with your bags, doll."

"What the hell happened to your face, Tig?"

"Jax and I had discussion."

"Just a discussion?"

Tig shrugged it off like it was nothing to be concerned about. "It was a loud discussion."

The first thing I did was take my son. I held on to Thomas tighter than I needed to. I set down on the couch with Tig and Nicole. He was comforting her. I could tell by how puffy her eyes were, she had cried herself out for the moment.

"What's she doing here?"

"Nicole is with me, Jax."

Jax didn't say any more about her. But I could tell he didn't want her to be here because of who she was related to. I sure as the hell wasn't going to bring it up either.

It surprised me though Jax took Thomas from me and wanted to hold him. I needed to get away from everyone and all this shit to catch my breath.

There wasn't a crib in Jax's room. I went in Gemma and Clay's old one. They had a crib Abel used to sleep in when he stayed here. On top of the blanket was his tiny blue Sons hat.

With it held to my chest like I had done to Abel thousands of times, I broke down. I couldn't contain the tears any longer. I leaned my head back against the crib as I set on the floor and tried to remember those moments when my son was in my arms. Safe from the world with his mother who loves him more than anything.

"Let's go lay down, babe."

With me on one side of Jax and Thomas laying on the other. He held us both tighter than he had in a long time.

For the rest of the day and night after we got up. Jax had Thomas. He fed him, actually changed diapers and took Thomas with him where ever he went in the clubhouse. Now, if Jax would just keep this up and show Abel the same attention and love when he comes home.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~

"Yeah, well, I reinstated myself until Tara is feeling better and the boys are home safe. If that's a problem, Jackson. Talk to your queen. You know the rules. Sorry, if you don't like it. But, I don't really give a damn. The old queen is here to stay for a while."
Nicole and I heard the loud commotion from the bar. Although we didn't budge from our room or the bed. The whole club heard and knew the great Gemma had returned. This was how our morning started off.

Gemma threw her bag down on the floor in our room. "Looks like, I'm bunking with you girls."

"Where's Nero?"

"He's got things to do. Don't you worry about him, sweetheart. He will be just fine. It's you girls I'm worried about. It's time to pull shit together and I am here to make sure that happens. No one understands better than I do what you're going through."

Nicole and I just looked at each other. After I rolled my eyes, I laid my head back down on the pillow. She followed my lead and did the same. Our heads, hearts and souls was weary with our boys. Nothing us mattered to us but them.

"Perhaps you didn't fucking hear me." Gemma yanked the covers off both us and went on with her little speech she was preaching to us. "I don't give a shit how bad you feel. Or how much you're hurting. If the two of you give up on the boys, they won't ever come home. You are all they got. Now, get your sad asses up and start fighting for your children. Either they are gone and you want to take revenge on the bastards that did it by cutting their hearts out. Or they are alive and you'll do anything you gotta do to find them."

Gemma left the room. In some ways I was sure her heart was in the right place. But, in others I knew how fucked up and twisted she could be. I picked up the blanket off the floor and covered back up. Why was it so hard for her to understand, I needed to be left the fuck alone right now?

Only Gemma wouldn't do that shit. We felt the tub of cold ice water, cubes and all she dumped on top of us. She drowned me and Nicole in it. Soaking the bed and us. We moved rather quickly to get up out of it now.

"If you are not showered and dressed when I come back. You will find out just how much of a cunt I can be. So, don't push me girls. You'll find, I push back." Gemma slammed the door shut behind her. If I could just find a door strong enough to keep her on the outside sometimes.

"Are you doing what Gemma's said, Tara?"

"Do we really have a choice?" Nicole and both knew the answer to it. It would be simpler to just get the fuck up and do it.

Together two distraught and messed up mothers went to face the day and what it brought. The clubhouse had more guest than it did last night.

"Do you want some coffee? I made coffee cakes to go with it. You should eat something, girls." Gemma was all smiles holding a glass pan with blueberries swirled on top and glaze drizzled on top of the cake.

Nicole and I both agreed with her because let's face it. If we didn't, force feeding might come next. At barley a whisper, Nicole said it coming out of the kitchen. "Jesus Christ. Gemma really is craze isn't she?"

"Oh yeah."

Mary had called I told her to drop the kids off at the clubhouse. She wouldn't stay here even though Gemma invited her in. There was just too much damage done to Mary's family by the club to be
around them again.

It wasn't just Mary either. Ellie didn't want to be here. But, we had no choice in the matter. She finally surrendered to the fact and went to Jax's room to watch television. Kenny, he didn't say word about anything.

Gemma, Nicole and I stayed together most of the day. I put Thomas in his carrier to keep him with me when he fell asleep. I checked on Ellie and Kenny when I made more coffee.

With everyone here, the pot was almost always empty. I took cups out to Nicole and Gemma. Then filled mine up again too.

"Kyle, you shouldn't come in here, man."

"Oh shit." All three of us said it at the same time from the table we sat at. When we heard Tig say it.

"The fuck I can't be here. All I want is my sister."

He didn't come alone though. Boomer and Nero was with him. They didn't pull their guns out but, they were readily available when they came in. They were stuck down the front of their pants. Visible for what would come and for all to see.

"What is this shit?" Jax appeared from the chapel.

Nero slammed his gun down on the pool table. "Just doing the right thing, Jax. We don't want any trouble. We're just here to get Nicole, that's all. Then we will leave."

"So, take her already. I didn't want her here to begin with."

"Let's go." Nicole hugged me and Gemma before she got her stuff together. "I'll see you later, Tara."

"Why do you gotta be such a dick for, Jax? This is the last time I am going to say it to you. It will be easier if you work with me on getting the boys back. I want that sit down with you for the information."

"You'll never get it, solider boy. Now get the fuck outta my clubhouse before I decide you leave in a body bag."

"Then so be it. We will do this shit the hard way." Kyle's statement didn't seem to make Jax budge at all.

"Kyle, please, don't leave me here. Please." Ellie must have heard him. She was almost hysterical, half crying and pleading with him.

"I can't take you Little G. I can't…"

"Ellie." As soon as Jax touched her shoulder she started screaming even louder. "What's wrong with you? I didn't hurt you. You belong with us."

"No I don't. Don't touch me."

"Kyle, it's time to go." Nero almost had to practically push Kyle out the door. This was the separation and heartbreak he knew would come where Ellie was concerned. But, there was nothing I could do about it today for either one of them. Any action I would take would only make things worse for the both of them.
Ellie went running after Kyle to the parking lot and she didn't care what Jax thought about it. She got out of the door before Gemma and I could get to her.

Kyle took his dog tags from around his neck and put them around hers. I was confused why he would even be wearing them again. "I'm coming back for those you know that right?" She couldn't stop crying long enough to answer him. "Right?" She finally nodded.

When Jax went out there to them, so did I. Ellie was one of my babies now too. I failed when it came to protecting Abel and I would not fail her. As she seen us coming she repeated the same thing several times to Kyle. "John three, twenty."

"I don't know what that this, Little G. You have to tell me." Only there wasn't time for her to speak again. Kyle hugged her tightly and had no choice but to walk away or to fight with Jax now. It was a fight that would have only hurt Ellie more if it happened in front of her. "Listen to what Tara tells you to do. Go back with her and I will see you later, I promise."

"The fuck you will see Ellie or any of my family again."

The other Sons came out of the clubhouse and this was going to end badly if it wasn't stopped soon. For everyone involved. "You should go, Kyle. Ellie and I belong here with Jax."

"Yeah, I guess you do belong here." Kyle voice dripped in sarcasm and hate when he spoke those words.

With Ellie's hand in mine we got away from them and the chaos of danger that went along with it. Some choices in life were hard. It meant hurting others to protect those you loved. This was one of those decisions I had to make quickly. Ellie needed me more and she was just a child stuck in the middle of this shit. In the long run I was trying to save Kyle as well because he didn't care about saving himself at this point.

Before Kyle got in his truck to leave. He made his intentions clear. "If anything happens to Ellie. I will put a bullet in you, Jax and no one will stop me this time. Not even Tara. You know how good I am at it."

It was more than I wanted Ellie to hear. I took her back inside with me. I got my mother's bible out of my purse to find out what she was talking about.

**John 3:20** Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

"Jesus Christ. Ellie knows."

This little girl couldn't possibly possess the knowledge she does on her own. Something, someone or the crows were feeding it to her. There was so much that was unexplained. But, I had to find out.

"What are you talking about? We are all family here. The club is your family now." The loud sound of Jax carried down the hallway. Kenny was playing his hand held game and content. I checked on Thomas one more time in his crib before I left the room.

"You are just like him. All he ever did was make Mommy sad and cry all the time. Just like you do Tara. I will never think of you as my family because you don't even take care of your own family any more than he did. You and this club is the reason Mommy is dead and I hate you."

The way Ellie spoke of her father was horrible. The way she thought of Jax, broke my heart. It didn't do him any good either. He ran his hand over his face a couple of times. His eyes glazed over with
tears. But he would not allow anyone to ever witness it as he fought them back. He disappeared to the chapel before anyone knew just how torn up he really was inside. Only I already knew she reached him.

There were few times I could ever remember Jax being weakened or brought to his knees with anything this life threw at him. But the words of a little girl did just that.

Before I made it to the chapel doors. Tig grabbed ahold of my arm. "You should let Jax sit on it a minute before you go in there." Tig sniffed a couple of times and I swore I saw a glimpse of a tear trying to escape him too. "He's not the only one who failed Opie and his kids." Without any farther elaboration Tig went out the front door.

So, I went to Ellie. She was setting on the bed, back in the same condition she came to me in. Staring at the wall reverting back from life around her. No emotions shown from her what so ever now.

"How do know these things, Ellie? Does the crow tell you?"

"Sometimes it does. When I'm asleep I dream about it. Other times it flashes in my mind like John three, twenty along with the white crow. That's how I know it's important."

"You'll be okay, honey. No one will ever hurt you. I'm here."

We sat together. Both confused of what would come and why. Gemma came in sat and hugged Ellie from the other side. "I'm here too, sweetheart."

"Will you keep an eye on them, Gemma? I want to talk to Jax."

"Sure."

Kenny was the easy one to watch. He went with the flow of what came and never said much to no one. That too worried me about just how messed up he really was and I didn't know because he was so quiet about it.

"Bobby, where's Jax?"

"He's up on the roof."

Up the damn ladder I went to find him. He was smoking just watching life pass him by.

"Hey, want some company?"

"Hey, babe."

"Do you want to talk about earlier, Jax?"

"I felt like I was back in the box looking through the glass again. Locked behind it with no way out. No way to stop it from happening. Completely helpless, weak and dying on the inside watching the ones I love being taken away from me. Screaming no at Opie; no, don't do it. No don't make the sacrifice of yourself for me. No don't leave me. But, no one ever listens and they do it anyways. I don't know how much longer I can hold all this shit together, Tara. It's all crumbling down around me."

Jax was reliving Opie's nightmare tonight just like he does every other day and night. We talked for over an hour about a lot of things. Once he lost Opie, I think Jax lost a piece of himself and buried it inside the box with best friend.
Jax felt crying in front of me made him weak. When I truly found it to be a good man still left in there somewhere fighting its way to get out again. I held on to him this time. It was all just too much for one person to take on alone. "I love you, Tara."

Jax answered his cell after it went off several times. "Yeah. Do you know where my kid is?" It was too brief of a call. Within seconds, he hung up. He clutched his phone and his face was emotionless. Just like I witnessed Ellie's being.

"What is it, Jax?"

"I'm not sure yet. I need to check it out. I love you, Tara and our boys."

"I love you too."

Jax took Chibs and Happy with him. He wouldn't tell me what was going on. Tig was setting outside at the picnic table by the boxing ring when I watched them ride away.

"Are you okay, Tig?"

"Not really. My shit is so upside down I don't think I'll ever get right again."

"What are you talking about?"

Confession of the soul was a dangerous thing depending on whom you did it with. I'd been there and done that shit. When he was done talking I was speechless by the things I heard come out of his mouth. But I would not treat him like I had been. I listened and tried to be supportive. Not to tear him down and judge him. Like I had been judged. When he cried I just hugged him without words being thrown back at him to rip his heart out. Like mine had been.

"My payback came around for what I did to Donna. I watched my baby girl be burned alive in front of me. I couldn't save her. There was nothing I could do. My daughter died for my sins. I see it all the time in my head. When I'm awake, when I'm asleep and at times I still her hear calling my name for help. Sometimes, I hear Dawn and Donna's screams echoing in the quiet of the night. Their pain is always a reminder of what I've done and become."

"Tig, do you want to repent your sins? I have a lot of sins to repent too. Then help me, to help the kids. I need you to get me out here for just a couple of hours in the morning. No one can know about it either."

Sure it was getting us both in deeper if we got caught. But, I had to know and there was only one place I could find out how Ellie knew all of these things. Or I thought it was a good place to start at. There seemed to be a connection there with Donna and Opie.

Gemma knew I was leaving but even she wouldn't be told exactly where we were going. She was watching the kids for me and we had a plan. If we were seen by anyone who shouldn't see us. Or if Jax found out, Tig took me to buy things for the kids. It was one free pass I was certain I could get from Jax in light of what Ellie had done to him.

"How is this going to help out the kids? Why are we at a church?"

"I can't tell you why. But you have to trust me on this, Tig. I won't be long."

Inside was only a couple of people sitting in pews. The doors were open all day to anyone who wanted to come here to pray or to be forgiven for their sins. Donna must have believed because she frequented here with her children.
"Welcome." The preacher was up in front like he was the day I came with Ellie and Kyle.

"This is probably going to sound strange. A woman, Donna Winston, used to attend this church with her children. I am wondering if you knew her or maybe ever talked her. Anything you can tell me about her would be helpful."

"I knew Donna very well. She was very conflicted about her family and what was the right thing to do for them. We had many conversations about it actually. Then one day she just coming here. I didn't learn of her death until after that."

"Did her husband, Opie, ever come with her?"

"No. I never met him. Donna talked about him frequently though. She spoke of the evil inside him and it freighted her. She was especially scared for her children. I see you are wearing the cross now."

"Ellie gave this to me the last time we were here."

"I gave it to Donna. She prayed a lot for her family and battled the evil. The cross was something for her to hold on to keep her faith with."

"What do mean, she battled the evil?"

"Without a grasp on what evil truly is. How can you be expected to fight it? This is what Donna couldn't really understand. Is it a real thing with substance and power or is it a negation of light? When she turned to God, she couldn't understand how he allowed evil to continue on. How is it even possible for darkness to defy the light? It is not a simple solution, because we have already nurtured evil to the point that it thrives and grows each day. That is why it is so important today for us to create more light. Even a little light pushes away a lot of darkness. For every shadow of darkness, we have seen, we must produce megawatts of blinding light. Against that light, evil melts in surrender, having fulfilled its purpose of being. Fight evil with beauty. Defy darkness with infinite light."

"That's what Donna has been trying to tell me the whole time. She has been sending it through Ellie because she is the light."

"I'm sorry, Miss. I don't understand what you're saying."

"Thank you. You have been a big help."

Since, I wasn't a true believer in the past. I had to get right with all of this and pray for my son. I felt so empty on the inside with Abel gone and I was riddled with guilt and worry for the boys. So, I got down on my knees and begged with my hands tightly clasped together.

"I know you have no reason to listen to me. I have done so many wrong things in the past. But, my son hasn't. He is just a baby and they took him from me. Please, don't let them hurt my son. If you will just do this and bring him back safely to me. I will try to reform my life in many ways. Most of all I will do everything in my power to believe in you again and carry out what Donna tried to do before she was killed."

"Abel will be brought home. But not without consequences."

It startled the hell out of me the voice which came from behind me. The old man I'd seen so many times was standing halfway down the aisle. There was no way with the distance between us he could have heard the whispers I just made. Let alone know Abel's name. When I looked around the church everyone was gone that was just here.
"Opie? Do you know where Abel is at? Is he alright?"

"For every decision made. You suffer the consequences of those actions."

"No, please don't leave. I need to know about my son."

The old man made it through the doors just before I got to him. "Did you see anyone come out of here, Tig?" The old man all of disappeared once again before my eyes.

"No."

My question was answered where he went to when I saw them flying in perfect harmony together. The beautiful white crow was with the black once again. After they made a couple of circles in the air. They drifted lazily around with each other. Almost like a dance in the sky as skimmed through it by letting their wings guide them to the next movement.

Where they made a landing though, freaked me the fuck out. There was only one white bush in the middle of all of the purple flowers surrounding the church. I knew for certain. It wasn't there the last time I was here. It couldn't have grown up with the others in that amount of time either. It was the same place Ellie went to pick the purple flowers.

The musical noises they made from cawing was mesmerizing to some degree to listen to. Those turned in to deeper sounds as I approached them slowly. Before I made it to the bush though, they flew away.

"I wish I knew what these flowers meant."

"They mean; innocence, purity, to honor and remembrance of someone."

"How do you know that shit, Tig?" When he wouldn't answer me. I grabbed two handfuls of his shirt. "Tell me damn it."

"Hey, you got hold of my chest hairs in there." Tig gently removed my grasp from him. "My mother used to have a white rose bush when I was young. She would always give them out to people and tell me about them. She loved flowers and raised a bunch of different types. That's how I know."

"Son of a bitch." I picked several of the white roses. I put aside one for Ellie, Kyle and myself for our mother's bibles. Then put the other roses with the small purple flowers in a bouquet. "Give these to Ellie. Make sure she never forgets Opie. She will forgive you, Tig."

"I think it's gonna take more than flowers for that shit to happen."

"Trust me. She will."

We made one stop before we went back. I left it on his doorstep along with a note.

 Kyle,  

_I know you probably don't want to see me. I get why and I'm sorry for all of it. This is for your mother's bible. I really believe it will help you find forgiveness in your heart someday. Don't do it for me. Do it for Ellie and yourself._

_Tara_
"Do you got feelings for Kyle? I mean I know it's none of my business, doll."

"Today, Tig to be honest. I don't really feel much of anything except despair and torment. With the huge gaping hole that's been ripped out of my chest; there is mostly emptiness and pain. Until Abel is home and I know my son is safe. I don't think anything else will ever repair it either."

"We will find them."

"Yeah." It was all I could bring myself to say now. If I went on I would break down again. Gemma was right. I had to hold on to hope and my inner strength for my son's sake.

When we went to pull away from the curb, Kyle picked up the note and the flower I left for him. I held on to the forgiveness in my heart too as I hoped he would eventually.

Tig wasn't sure of it at all but he never asked me anything else. Once we made it back to the clubhouse he still didn't know how to approach Ellie. He held those flowers in one hand while he paced the floor with his other hand shoved down in his pocket.

Ellie eyed him when she came in the room. More so those little purple flowers Donna loved so much. She sat down beside me, Thomas and Kenny on the couch and just watched Tig.

"This is for you kid." Tig held out all of the flowers. He swallowed down a couple of lumps in his throat while he waited to see if she accepted them or not. It took Ellie a minute to reach out to take them.

"Thank you." Was all she would give Tig. Not really any emotional bond or forgiveness from her like I had hoped for.

"Yeah, sure."

"Can I put these in water?" I went to get off the couch to search for something to put them in for her. But Tig handled it.

"We will find something, Ellie. Let's go look in the kitchen." She still wouldn't get very close to him. At least she took the leap of faith to start the healing process. Of course she knew I wasn't far from her either and I would never let anyone hurt her.

Ellie placed the vase of flowers on the desk in our room. She opened Donna's bible up and pressed the white rose in it. I did the same with my mother's to the page Ellie opened hers to.

**John 12:36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light.**

"We need to get supplies. Why don't you come with me, Tara?"

"I don't want to leave Thomas."

"I'll keep an eye on him, Ellie and Kenny until you get back, doll. Maybe it will do you some good to get some air."

"Maybe it will. Thanks, Tig."

It had only been two days of lock down so far. The clubhouse bar was almost empty and the food supply was about the same way. Gemma went through everything and made an extremely long list
of things we needed to buy.

"Did Jax approve of this trip? He didn't say it was okay for you to leave the clubhouse."

"Are you challenging my authority, Phil?" Gemma put her hand on her hip and she was all biker mama today. She moved back in to the head position so easily. I still couldn't master any of it yet like she done it.

Phil looked around nervously. "Um… no Ma'am."

"Good. That means you know where your place is. Now, let's go."

Phil followed behind us to town. When we pulled up to the grocery store there was already a crowd gathered around it.

"What are you doing, Kyle?"

"What I should have done a long time ago, Gemma. I always back down from Jax to keep the peace. I won't do that anymore because I've got nothing left to lose now."

"You need to try to talk some sense in to Kyle. You know what Jackson will do to him, Tara." Gemma took out her cell and called the one she hoped could handle him. "Nero, we got a problem, baby…"

"Should I call Jax?" Gemma shook her head no to Phil while she continued her conversation with Nero.

"Kyle, please don't do this. Jax will kill you."

"I won't back down this time. Not even for you, Tara."

"Is this why you came to get Nicole out of the clubhouse? So you can start shit with Jax? I'm sorry for what I said to you. I…"

"I know exactly how Jax works. He would hurt Nicole just to spite me. He has to find her before he can hurt her now. Don't turn this into a me and you thing, Tara. It's gone way past that shit. I've wracked my brain trying to figure out why you keep doing it. You should want out for your children if nothing else. You are either the most determined, loyal or fucked up woman I have ever met."

"It's not that simple to walk away. Please, don't do this, Kyle."

"I'll get my sit down with Jax one way or fucking another. I'm starting right here and right now."

"Kyle, don't you do it man. Not here." Boomer finally turned his hat around backwards on his head and followed after him across the street. "Shit."

"Jesus Christ."

"And then some, Gemma."

Rat came crashing through the store front window of the grocery store. He laid on the street with all the broken pieces of glass. It wasn't enough for Kyle to have just done that to get Jax's attention. He reached in Rat's leather after a few more punches he received to the face and took out a wad of cash from it along with his gun.

"Tell Jax he is still short on what the fucker owes me. But I'll take this for now." Rat went around to
the different stores collecting protection money. It wouldn't only be him Jax took it out on. It would be Kyle too because he just took club money.

Boomer drew on Phil before he got his gun out of his leather. "Put it down on the ground. We don't have a problem with you. So, let's not make one. We want your boss. So, why don't you call him up and tell him that?" It was exactly what Phil done. He made a call to Jax and hell was coming down soon on everyone involved.

Gemma knew what was coming just like I did. She screaming at Kyle. "Do you got any idea of what you've just done? Jackson will come at you hard now and he won't stop."

"I know exactly what I did, Gemma. Let Jax come. I'll even stand here and wait for him."

The roar of their engines was hard to miss. For a couple of blocks, you could hear that familiar rattle of the pipes. The vibration from their bikes got greater the closer they came.

"Tara, let's go. We don't want to be anywhere near this shit." Gemma was dragging me down the street. Until she thought we were a safe distance away. I didn't think there was anywhere that it was safe to be in this town.

Jax was furious when he got off his bike. We could hear him from even where we were. "You're a disgrace to your goddamn patch. Get the fuck outta my sight. Go back to clubhouse and I'll deal with you two when I get back there."

Phil and Rat stared only at the ground the entire time Jax was yelling at them. I actually felt sorry for them and what was to come later. They rode away on their bikes just like they were told to do.

It was hard to hear what was taking place between Jax and Kyle. It was a heated conversation for sure. But we were unable to hear what they were saying to each other. We kept taking steps closer to them until it went to the place I was afraid of.

"Jesus Christ."

"And then some, Gemma."

Jax and Kyle drew on each other at the same precise moment. They were just as fast as the other and just as deadly. Out in the middle of Main Street and neither one would back down.

Cars were slamming on their brakes and honking their horns without prevail. It didn't distract them one bit from what they were doing. People were rushing to get off the streets to safety and shying away from the problem. When the Sons were involved, they knew how it would go down.

"Do you remember that promise I made you?"

"I'm done with your bullshit threats, Jax. Let's get on with it. I know whatever you took of theirs is why they want the boys. They want their shit back. We can either do this together to get the boys or I will make your life a living hell until then."

"Maybe, they took the boys for what you did, solider boy. You're not innocent in all this shit even though you'd like to think so. We're not that different. Or maybe, I'll have a little talk with your sister and tell her what you did that caused her son to be taken."

"The fuck we're not different, Jax. You don't want to go there with me. Or maybe, I'll tell Tara the whole truth about what a piece of shit you really are."
Nero's pimp daddy car came speeding down the street. He showed no fear stepping in the middle of them either, directly in the line of fire. Only he wasn't alone. His crew was right behind him. Now everyone had their guns drawn on each other.

"It doesn't have to go down like this. Think this shit through, Jax. Let's just all put our guns down and talk about it. If Kyle can help get the kids back. Why wouldn't you want him to help?"

"This is not the agreement we made, Nero. You're supposed to be gone from Charming. He's blowing smoke up your ass. He can't help do anything to get the boys back. Get the fuck out of my way before I lose my patients."

It flipped some switch in Nero's head obviously because he was no longer the rational one either. A few feet away he was screaming at Jax. "Do it. Pull the fucking trigger cause I'm not leaving until the boys are safe."

Tig was trying to hold Gemma back from going out to where they were. "Nero." She kept screaming his name over and over. She finally punched Tig in the chest. "Get off me." She was now in between Nero and Jax.

"Put it down, Jackson."

"Get outta the way, Gemma."

"No, not this time, son. You'll have to kill me first."

The chaos just continued to grow on as more of them accompanied us on Main Street. Marcus and his crew rolled up in here like he owned the place. There must have been twenty bikes parked down the middle of the street. With more guns drawn and waiting to kill. Only, he was just causing a bigger war to breakout by being on the SAMCRO's territory.

"Brown protecting brown." Jax finally lowered his gun and so did the other Sons. "You got no business being here, Alvarez."

"Consider this one a friendly visit. Because the next the time you piss on my club, it won't be. I'm just here to help get the boys back. Look at your old lady's face. The heartbreak the mother of your child is going through. We got shit to talk about. Where ever Nero lands on this, has my full support now. So, we can do this any way you wanna do it. But, if you want my help. I'm gonna need something in return for it."

"Marcus, do you know where the boys are?"

"What the hell are you doing? Get off the street, Tara." Kyle was screaming at me. He tried to make sure I stayed behind him. But I didn't care. If Marcus knew something about Abel. I would take a bullet to find out.

"I'm working on getting intel. Maybe should ask your old man why they were taken in the first place."

"Jax." He wouldn't even look at me. "Please, just tell me."

"I got shit to work out with Alvarez. Get off the street, Tara," He and Jax went to talk privately.

"Don't you ever do that shit again. You are going to get hurt. Don't you ever think shit through, Tara?"
"I don't have anything without my children. So, it doesn't really matter what happens to me if they are gone. Please, tell me what you were just talking about with Jax. I know he won't. Please, Kyle."

"I can't tell you. I…Tig, come get her."

Kyle handed me off to Tig where they met half way in the street. Neither one crossing over to the other side because they knew they were enemies by circumstances. Tig was true SOA through and through.

Jax went to talk in private with Chibs after he finished his conversation with Marcus. I caught him before he went to go back to his bike. "I don't care what Jax told you. I own everything and if giving you the Lodge gets the children back. Then I'll sign it over to you, Marcus. Please, just help me to find my son and Cody."

"I'm doing what I can to help Nero and Kyle get the children back. I'm sorry for what you're going through, I really am."

Just when you thought the street could hold no more. Truckloads of them pulled up to too. I already knew most of their faces.

"I got brothers too, Jax. It's not going to be any fun to be an outlaw in this town until I get what I want. This time, it ends the way it should."

"How's that?"

"The good brothers win this one."

Flashlight's probably stopped another fight from breaking out again. Now, the cops were here to try to keep some order of the peace. Which, I don't think they possibly could do. It was too late for any peace to be left in this town.

"What the hell is going on here?" Roosevelt was now up in the middle of all the shit.

"I think I can answer your question, Sheriff." It was Kyle's uncle with papers in hand. "We are here for a special ops recon mission. When my boys pulled out their weapons, it was a big misunderstanding. We have the right to be armed at all times and display our weapons if we feel it is a hostile or threatening situation. I'll make sure it doesn't happen again."

"You are here for an information recon intelligence mission in Charming?"

"Yes, Sir. If you have any questions. You can contact the General listed on the orders. He is my commanding officer and the only one who overrules my decisions."

"Just what mission are you here on in my town? Let me guess, it somehow involves Mr. Brandon."

"That is classified information, Sheriff. I work for the United States Government which supersedes any local town or state laws in place. By the time we are called in, the rule book gets thrown out the window. Again, feel free to contact the General with your questions."

"I want everyone off the streets now. Anyone who remains will be visiting one of my jail cells. As the local law enforcement, I have the right to be advised of any threatening problems which arise. I expect that to happen to."

"Yes, Sir. We always corporate with the law enforcement."
They all started to clear out. Marcus rode away with his crew. Nero’s crew left too. But Nero and Gemma both stayed.

"Kyle. Did you hear me boy? You will stand down." His uncle told him to do it. But hell, he wasn't listening to him either. After saying it several more times. Kyle finally went over with the rest of them. "You want to run with us, you will be one of us. That includes listening to what I say. Have I made myself clear?" Kyle once again refused to acknowledge what he said. "Did you fucking hear me?"

"Yes."

"Yes what?"

"Yes, Sir. I heard every word you said. Nero give me your cell phone."

Nero tossed his phone to Kyle. Another one of the guys plugged it to some small hand held devise. "What the hell is he doing to my phone?"

"He's turning it in to a walkie talkie so you can communicate with us, Nero. Don't ask me how he does it because I don't know. He's a techno nerd."

"That's Central Communication Development Intelligence Strategy Chief Officer to you, Kyle. You'd be amazed at what I can do with a tampon, peanut butter and duct tape."

"Pops, are we ready to roll out of here now?" It must be his uncle’s name or what they referred to him as at least.

"Yeah, let's get out of here." Then Pops seen the direction the large green truck was being drove in. "Meat, don’t you fucking do it."

"Do it. I heard you, Sir. I'm on it." You could hear their laughter coming from the truck as loud as all the guys were. "Pussies." Along with about eight different hands coming out it flipping the bird to the Sons. After the large truck rolled over the bikes they had parked out in the street.

"Goddamn it, Meat. You're a good solider but a shitty listener. The rest of you, let's go now." Pops commanded them and the rest listened to him. Including Kyle this time. He pulled away as they did.

"You are fucking dead. All of you bastards." Chibs was more pissed off about the bikes than Jax seemed to be.

Jax calmly light up a smoke. "Call in the other charters. They want a war; we will give them one. Nobody comes to Charming and fucks with SAMCRO."

________________________

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

We will be covering a lot of things in the rest of the parts to Brotherhoods; our outlaw women go rouge with Gemma back in command, more about Donna and Opie, of course working to get Abel and Cody back, the consequences Opie spoke about to Tara, some of those truths will come out to Tara no wanted to tell her and we will be introduced to a new gods and goddess which all play a part of the story as well. Some of you have already got where that is going ;)

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert!
Brotherhoods, PART 2

PART 2 of 5

I'm behind on posting lovelies. I'll try to have PART 3 done by tomorrow. Then 4 and 5 in a couple of days. Also I've read it so many times with it being so long, I can't see straight anymore. I will fix any errors tomorrow.

A special thank you to my sweet Vera. She came up with a couple of songs for me to write in the story line. Not only is she a wonderful friend and an SOA sister. The girl is a genius. Smooches lovely! (Here Without You by Three Doors Down and Demons by Imagine Dragons. They are throughout PARTS 2 & 3)

Some were confused about Pops and Kyle's Marine brothers, who they are. I introduced them to you in chapter 15. When Kyle took Tara to the house to meet them and they helped out at the Lodge. Now they are here to help get the kids back.

The buzz around town had already begun. The Sons were being chased out and phased out. Or so residents of Charming thought. Other store owners questioned why they were still paying protection money. The club was not held as in high of regards as they were used to being. With a simple display of them being vulnerable as a common man would be. It brought a lot more controversy than anyone expected it to.

Jax wasn't going to have any part of it though. The club needed others to fear them when they walked down the street. Respect them with authority of anything they said to do or the way it was. Without it his authority over the club meant nothing either.

A few nomads had already come to help out. Along with six more charter members from Indian Hills. With more of them on the way. Just a couple of Presidents from various charter that I'd never seen before showed up as well. Only I didn't think they necessarily came to help. From the gathering they all had and the yelling I heard. Jax was pissed off they weren't following his lead on a decision the mother charter had made.

"I'm sorry, Jax. I took it to the table for a vote and it didn't pass."

"Then vote the shit again."

"It's not how it works, brother. I'm sorry to hear about your kid. I'm here to help if I can."

"If you really wanna help. Get your charter on board with this. Before none of us have a table left to sit at anymore."

Tempers were flaring with the intense situation surrounding us all and being in such close quarters. Most of all, Kyle was just really pissing Jax off with everything he done against the club. No one would give me the details of it but they had been going at it for the last couple of days. Along with everyone else today going at it with Jax, including Chibs. They were having an argument as I rounded the corner to Jax's office to make sure he was alright.

"Jackie, is this about the private chats you've had with Galen and the other charters behind the tables back? What promises did you make them exactly?"
"The Irish is never gonna let us walk away without another pipeline. We gotta give them something for their cause. You already know that."

"You're making decisions, big decisions and not bringing them to the table. That's not how this works. Not doing shit the right way. Makes it all crumble down around us. You know that already too. What did the little solider prick mean by, this is part of the reason they took Abel? What the fuck have you done we don't know about? Did you make deals with Kyle without club knowledge?"

"Look at this goddamn charter. We've become the whipping post for the cartel and the IRA. Everyone is just waiting for us to make the next bad move. Brother, nothing here works anymore. It hasn't worked for a long time and that's how we got so upside down to begin with. I'm trying to change it. Give us a future. Yes, if it means I step outta the lines to do it or make a couple of phone calls without saying anything. Then that's exactly what I'm gonna do. What's between me and Kyle is personal now. It's none of your business or the club's business. When I think it is something you need to know about, you'll be the first one I let know."

"Wow Jackie, do you know who you sound like? The guy who used to sit in your seat. The one you hated the most. The one who you were gonna save the club from."

"Everything I do in this club is for this club. I'm not Clay and I won't ever be. So, don't play that bullshit with me, Chibs. We took a vote and we play the shit out now. No matter how deep it gets. It's what we fucking do."

"I won't keep backing this shit. You just set a very bloody war in motion, brother."

"Then don't back it, Chibs. But, do not tell me how to run my club."

They kept going on with other crap but I had already heard enough. To many damn people were keeping secrets from me about what happened to my son and why. Everyone knew except his mother. I finally had to walk away from it so I didn't blow up. After I poured a cup of coffee, I set down to feed Thomas and thought about what Abel was doing. Where he was at, if he had eaten today and if he remembered what I always said to him. "I love you more than all the leaves on the trees and the ants on the sidewalk."

As I rocked one of my babies, tears came for my other one. I felt a hand on my shoulder. "Are you okay, doll?" Yes, came out of my mouth to Tig but no was dominate in my heart.

"What is your dog's name, Tig?" Ellie spoke to him on her own. It brought different kinds of tears from me. It wasn't as though a miracle had been performed. But for Ellie and Tig it was a huge step.

"I usually just call her dog. What do you think I should name her?"

"Sophie."

"I like it. Do you want to help me feed Sophie?" Ellie went with Tig to the kitchen. She still kept her distance from him and had more interest in the dog than she did Tig. Yet I felt it was good for the both of them.

"Juice, I need that intel. We're waiting for it." Jax had repeated it several times to him for the last hour. He got everyone's attention as loud as he was. The doors were closed with only the presidents invited to sit in on it and church was about to come to an end. I'd say Jax's patients were just about to reach their ends too.

"I don't know how to tell you this, Jax. But you're not gonna get it."
"Why?"

"Our system has been hacked."

They all formed around Juice to see what was going on. Their computer system was all locked up, nothing happened no matter what buttons Juice pushed. The only thing flashing on the screen was a giant yellow hand giving the finger.

"Not only that, but they downloaded all the intel on here." Juices words only enraged Jax worse. Which, I didn't even think that was possible until now. The computer was smashed to the floor.

"Jax, they are all up on main street raising hell. I just got off the phone with Jacob Hale. They convinced him to end all our leases. Some bullshit about it being his patriotic duty. He is bringing by eviction notices tomorrow. That's some bad shit, brother. It shuts down our business transactions from happening. With all the eyes on us, it might cripple us." Even I was smart enough to decipher the code Bobby spoke in. The warehouse with the guns in them wouldn't offer shelter for them anymore. The Sons had too much attention on them right now as it was already.

"Let's go." Jax was out the door before the others were.

"I should probably do a ride along, Gem. To make sure Jax and Kyle don't kill each other." Nero had stayed away from her as long as he could. His visits weren't long here but he started making them more frequently.

"Okay, baby be careful. Take Tara with you. I'll watch the kids." Gemma kissed Nero before we left. I wasn't sure why the hell I had to go but she insisted upon it. She even hired Nitta to help out with all the kids from club members while we were on lock down. So, I couldn't use that excuse anymore.

Nero followed along behind all the bikes. He wasn't very talkative on the way there. When we got to town I noticed they actually parked them at the curb this time instead of out in the street. For those to get ran over like the last time we were here, it was probably a wise choice.

Roosevelt was leaned up against a building drinking a cup of coffee. With several of his deputies hanging out around him with cups in their hands too. It meant trouble was brewing for someone.

Jax wasn't any less furious than the last time we were on this street either. "What is this shit, Nero?"

"It looks like to me a bunch of shirtless white guys in very small black shorts running in a couple of lines down the street. In my hood, we call it a drug deal that probably went bad and it's why the white boys are running to make their getaway. But I don't that's what this is, Jax."

"Fuck you, Nero."

After Jax left I waited for Nero to step up and handle it between them. But he didn't do anything but brace himself against the car and watch. "Aren't you going to stop them?"

"Nah, not yet. It's not time. Let's see where Kyle is going with this first." Nero pushed his shades up on his head because we were about to find out as they all approached closer.

Pops lead them out in front. For being an older man, he still had a nice body and was in great psychical shape. They crossed over in the middle of the street just to get closer to the club members. He screamed it out in a song to the guys while they continued run. "See the woman dressed in brown?"
The guys all answered him back in the same manner. "She makes her living going down."

"See the woman dressed in black?"

"She makes her living on her back."

"See the bikers with a bone to pick?"

"They can all suck our dicks." The guys weren't shy about singing it loudly for the club either. Or by the motion of grabbing theirs through those tiny shorts they all had on for all to see.

As their lyrics and gestures only got to be ruder as they went on. Meat even turned around at the end of the line and blew Jax a kiss for more irritation as they ran by him. That huge muscled up bastard feared nothing. But honestly, he should.

There wasn't a woman within a two mile radius walking down the street, driving by or in a store that didn't take notice of those men. Not a one of them even noticed the SOA members, not even Jax for once. It might have been a strange assessment on my part at this given time. However, it did bring a giant smile to my face.

"What's so funny, mama?"

"Oh, nothing."

The club wasn't laughing about it though. For the first time they felt less than adequate in their town. The world they built and made all the decisions in. It was a provoke tactic by calling them out in public. With irritation, embarrassment and semi bullying them into doing something stupid in front of the cops. Making a mistake that would cost them in the end.

Roosevelt didn't find anything about Jax screaming at him very funny either. "What would like for me to do about it, Jax? I can't exactly arrest them for running and singing cadence during their PT time. If they have violated any laws you are aware of, I'll be happy to address it with them. Did you happen to hear the last part of their lyrics? It was kind of catchy. Wasn't it something about bikers and sucking dick? It all comes around." Roosevelt wore the same kind of smile I did except his was for different reasons. He pulled his shades out of his pocket and stuck them on his face. "I think that time is coming around for SAMCRO. You have a nice day now." He was laughing as he drove his squad car away.

"Fine, then I'll handle this shit my way. Hey, asshole." They ignored Jax until the next part came. "Kyle, I'm talking to you, pussy." Every single one of them came to a complete halt, including Kyle.

Nero pulled down his shades back down on his face. Pushed his body off the side of the car where he had been leaning. "Now it's time. I should probably go get my boy."

Both Pops and Nero were trying to run interference with Kyle. Jax wanted a fight but he didn't get one. Kyle was pretty calm when he addressed Jax. "When you wake up in the morning, Jax. Think of me. You're just going to love what comes next, buddy."

When I walked in the bar to find out what was going on and what all the ruckus was about. I almost turned around and walked right back out again. Jax threw a couple of liquor bottles against the bar mirror. Shattering everything around it.

"Get that little prick on the phone. This shit gets settled today." Jax was screaming at all of them. I sat
down quietly with Nero and Gemma at the table where she held Thomas in her lap. What a way for this damn day to start.

"Nero, is the little prick Jax is talking about Kyle?" It was definitely low when it came out of me.

"Oh yeah, Kyle went Rambo on their asses last night. After they tied up the Prospects, Kyle left a love note for Jax. So there wasn't any mistaking he did it. I warned Jax it was coming and none of this was necessary but we won't listen to me." Nero didn't give me any farther explanation. But gave a little nod of his head and when I looked over Jax was coming up quickly on us with a very unhappy look on his face.

"You're gonna have to pick a side in this fight, Nero. You're tight with Kyle and I get that. Just because you are tapping my mother, it doesn't buy you forgiveness anymore. Make no mistake, you get in my way and I will hurt you."

"I'm neutral. I'm too old and tired to fight in this shit anymore. Just because you are Gemma's son, it doesn't buy forgiveness with me either. Don't worry Jax, I don't make mistakes. Not like you do."

Jax pulled me aside from everyone and he was still raging with anger. "How did Kyle know where the guns were?"

"I have no idea. I don't even know where you keep them at."

"Do you know what happens if we don't pay the Irish for the shipment? A lot of bad shit, Tara. Unless we get them back to sell to the Niners for the money we owe, I'm fucked. Call him."

"Call who?" Of course I had a pretty good clue who Jax meant. But I wasn't offering up the fact I had Kyle's number.

"I bet, Kyle will answer your phone call cause he's not answering any of ours on the number we have for him. Call him and don't play that shit you don't got his number either. I'm not in the mood for it."

With my cell in hand. I debated every single number I dialed. Jax stood over me until I did it too. When my finger had the last digit done. I pressed the call button and handed it to Jax.

"Surprise, it's not Tara. Where are my fucking guns? I want..." Jax slammed the chapel door shut. I waited and waited for him to come back out. Although, at least there wasn't any yelling with him in there. But I should have known it was to come eventually.

"Tara, come in here." Jax called me in the chapel from the doors. Gemma came with me from behind. "Just Tara. This doesn't concern you." Jax slammed the door in her face when she didn't go away like he wanted her to.

Jax sat down slowly in the chair at the head of the table as he always does. He lit up a smoke and played with my phone. There was something he wanted to say but he couldn't seem to get it out. It was killing me sitting before him like a child waiting for my punishment. For what, I didn't even know yet.

He spun my phone around on the table as a toy a couple of times. Then finally pushed a button on it. "What is this?" My heart about stopped when he flashed pictures of my boobs across the screen. "You texted them to Kyle."

But Jax was far from done yet with it. He scrolled down through my pictures and brought up ones I should have taken the time to erase. If I had even known, they were on my damn phone. "Kyle's
dick I am assuming?"

This was where it was going to be a touchy situation and conversation with Jax. Not only was telling him the truth better in this case. It would take the heat off of Kyle for something he didn’t even do or was a part of.

"It's actually a stripper's dick. But I can explain it all."

A knock on the door saved my ass or I wanted to believe so. Chibs only stuck his head in. "He's here."

Jax picked up my phone from the table and stuck it inside his leather as he went outside. By the time I made it out of the chapel, everyone had gathered out there.

"Where are my fucking guns?"

Before Kyle would do anything with Jax. He hugged Ellie and asked her to take Kenny inside with her. Since he didn't want the kids to witness it. I figured it was heading in a very bad direction between them.

"I don't know anything about any illegal AKs, KG9s and glocks. Which, I'm sure your Irish hookup is going to be a little pissed off about. They probably will kill you, Jax when they find out you can't pay for them. That would be a real shame if that shit happened. I also know you and most of the other members are on parole release. Those guns will get you back on the inside pretty fast serving a lot of years being someone's prison bitch." Kyle wore a smile through all of it coming out of his mouth too. "However, we are willing to help you get them back for the information I want from you. Does the name Carlos Sandoval mean anything to you? I'm real close to putting it together on my own. Then I won't need you all."

As soon as Jax reached inside his leather, I knew where he was going with it. His gun came out pointed at Kyle. "What's to stop me from blowing your head off right here?"

"That Jax." Two red laser dots popped up out of nowhere. They were in the center of Jax's chest. Followed up by one to his forehead. "You didn't think I would walk in here without some reassurance I'm walking out, did you? If you kill me, they kill you. I get the satisfaction of knowing I'm taking you to hell with me."

Jax lowered his gun down finally. But he wasn't done with it just yet either. "You don't hate me because I'm a bad man. You hate me, Kyle because I am familiar. You see the same broken reflection in the mirror as I do. Only you won't admit it."

"I hate you because you're selfish, arrogant and totally out of touch with the reality of life. You are going to get Tara and your sons killed because of the life you lead and you don't care. You'd rather hold on to them than do the decent thing and let them go."

They had a private quiet conversation for a few minutes. When I saw Jax bring out my phone from his leather, I couldn't even believe he would do that. Not now with the boys being gone. He wanted to play the game of guess whose dick was on my phone.

The cocky little smile crossed Kyle's face. "Nope, it's not mine. My dick is bigger and I've got a gold stud pierced through the head of it. Would like to see it?" Kyle went as far to unzip his jeans willing to actually do it. Jax was cussing as he walked away. I wasn't sure if it was at Kyle, me or the stripper's dick. It could have been all three of us at this point.

"Would you think it's gay if I did wanna see your piercing, man?"
"Tig, you are one sick mother fucker."

"I know, Kyle. I sort of pride myself on it actually."

Needless to say Kyle didn't show Tig before he left. I wasn't sure what the game plan was because obviously no one thought I was privy to it. Anytime I asked any questions I was just ignored anyway.

They all stayed outside and I didn't know why they did but I went to check on Ellie and Kenny. Kenny was playing his game and Ellie seemed okay. She didn't say much as she was entertained writing in her diary.

When I came back out in the bar Jax was on Tig's ass now because there was picture of him from our night out too. "You can call me out about all the shit I do and I don't gotta problems with it. But don't question my loyalty to this club, Jax. Not with all the shit I do for it. I didn't say anything to you because there is nothing to say. Tara wasn't with Kyle. She was with us all night. All she did was have a few drinks and a little fun. You need to show your wife and mother a little respect man."

"I don't need to hear how to treat my old lady or Gemma. Just answer my question."

"It's true Jackson. We just drank and had fun. Kyle wasn't with Tara. I'm the one who took the pictures and Nicole texted them to Kyle." Gemma even tried to defend me too. Sometimes she completely amazed me by the loyalty she showed. Other times, I just couldn't get where she was coming from with it all.

"I knew you'd have something to do with it, Gemma. You're always stirring shit up between me and Tara."

"Honestly Jax, those pictures meant nothing. I think I even sent Kyle a nipple and cock shot, man. We were all loaded." Tig gave it hell hanging in there too. But I found this a waste of valuable time.

"Instead of trying to find out about what is on my phone or what I did or didn't do. You should be trying to find our son, Jax." I walked out because I was done listen to this shit.

Nero was setting alone on the picnic table when I went back outside. "How did Kyle know where the guns were? Jax thinks I told him."

"I didn't have anything to do with it. But I've heard a lot about it from both sides. Kyle knew everything was in your name, Tara. So, they chased it all down one place at a time until they found the stash. He figured it was only fair to use some knowledge he got from you. Since Jax used the knowledge of what you told him against Kyle."

"What are you talking about? I never told Jax anything. Why do you and Kyle keep saying that shit to me?"

"Because you did tell Jax, mama. Don't expect the sting of that betrayal to go away anytime soon with Kyle. That wound is a little fresh still." Nero left the table and left me completely baffled at what exactly they thought I told Jax. What betrayal I had done to them.

It got more baffling as the night went on too. The guys came back with Kyle this time. Kyle was to get his sit down with Jax as soon as the truck delivered the guns back to the warehouse. Only Jax threw in something else he wanted along with it.

"Before we get down to business. It needs to get settled." Jax took off his leather and tossed it down on one of the picnic tables, followed by his shirt. Then one by one pulled his rings off his fingers and
put them in his pocket. "Unless, you're too much of a pussy to do it."

As Kyle went to pull off his shirt. Pops stopped him. "I'm the commanding officer. I'll throw down with you Jax."

"Why not him?"

"You'll get your shot at Kyle soon enough. But for now, let's handle this so we can move on from it."

"I'll feel bad about beating on a senior citizen. I'd rather take Kyle on so I don't hurt you, old man."

"Your tough guy persona will get you nowhere with me. Since I'm so old, you shouldn't have any problem whipping my old ass then."

This was the wrong time for it and definitely the wrong place but I did it anyway. "Kyle don't let him fight Jax. Jax will hurt him."

"Jax only knows how to street fight. He won't ever get the opportunity to touch Pops. He can take care of himself, he taught us what we know."

It shocked me Kyle responded that much to me. When he was through he moved very far away from me. All the guys were watching the fight and I had enough fighting to last me for a really long time.

Gemma must have felt the same way. She was setting at the table with a beer in her hand smoking. With a very faraway look in her eyes. I joined her in the clubhouse and waited for the dumb asses to be done beating the shit out of each other.

Jax came in first with the rest of them following after him. I let out a long sigh when I saw his face. The violence had taken him over to some degree. He strived on it and used it to express the burdens with the sorrow he felt on the inside.

Above his eye was split open and blood was trickling down from the corner of his mouth. What he thought all of this actually proved was at a loss to me. I grabbed a bar towel and wet it with cold water for him.

"Thanks, babe." Jax went to the back and yelled at Kyle. "Give me a minute."

Kyle looked at the wall of member's arrest photos they proudly displayed. Only one had his attention, John Teller. It was probably the first time Kyle seen what he actually looked like. He went a little farther down to see John's bike they kept in the clubhouse.

"It was John's. He loved this bike and the road was truly his home. The man couldn't stand being in one place for too long. You would have liked him." Gemma joined Kyle and he only nodded at her. I somehow thought Kyle would have liked John too. There were similarities of their hearts I could see.

"We will talk in here." Jax and Kyle went behind the chapel doors. It was scary to think what they do alone besides kill each other.

When almost an hour had passed by, I was getting a little nervous. I know Tig was only trying to help but really he wasn't. "There hasn't been any gun shots. That's always a good sign." Apparently it wasn't helping to easy Gemma's mind either with the look she gave him. "What? I'm just saying lovelies. It's all good."
The doors opened and they both walked out together. Gemma and I both found some relief from it.
Jax lit up a smoke and halfway set on top of the pool table. "Once you get your sister's kid back. It's
time for you to go away. If you don't leave Charming, I will do exactly what I said I would do."

"You are so fucked up, Jax. I already told you I will leave once the boys are safe. You finally get
what you want; me gone. I'm doing it for her not because of you. So, let's get this done already."
Kyle was finished with their meeting and discussion. He walked out of the clubhouse with the other
guys that hung back to stay with him. They didn't trust what the SOA might do to him if they left
him here alone.

"How did it go, Jackson?"

"It went." Was all Jax said to Gemma about it. It was a closed conversation as far as he was
concerned.

But it picked up quickly the next morning where they left off from. They were all talking in a group
when I went outside to drink my coffee. I didn't want to start anything. I only smiled at Kyle when
he was standing alone and he turned his head away from my direction. "I guess I deserve that."
Thomas and I joined David on the picnic table until they were done talking.

"I think you and I are on the same shit list from brother and sister, Boomer."

"That's no lie. Nicole still won't talk to me. She's too busy talking to your biker friend. I'm trying to
figure out how my life went from great to shit in a day or two."

"Yeah, me too."

"I really thought I was doing the right thing for Nicole. I've seen it to many times with the other guys
and their women. You can't have a relationship with a woman and always be gone. Sure, they miss
you at first. Then life goes on when you're not there. Before you know it, they got a whole new life
that doesn't involve you anymore."

"Doesn't it work with some couples?"

"It takes a special relationship to make it work. I have two more years to serve, then I'm out. I want
to do something different for a while. Maybe, then I can be normal again."

"How's Kyle doing through all this? I haven't seen or talked to him."

"He doesn't talk to me about any of it. I know he misses you, Tara. He won't come out and say it.
But you can tell. You don't know how hard it is for him to come here and be civil to Jax."

"Kyle is doing the right thing so we can get my son and Cody back."

"He's not just doing it for the boys' sake." Kyle called him over to where they were talking and he
excused himself. "I'll see you later, Tara."

They had a location for whoever in the hell they were searching for. Again no one would tell me
anything. The club was shedding their leathers and putting dark clothes on. They were about to go
off the grid to not be recognized.

"Kyle, who are you guys looking for?"

"Ask your husband. Jax always tells you the truth." Was all he said while they went to do whatever
with the club.
"I guess I deserve that as well."

When I heard Jax say Abel might be there, I was going too. "No, you stay put here, Tara."

"Abel is my son too."

"Jax is right, sweetheart. We should wait here like we're told to."

"Gem, what are you doing? You're agreeing to this way to easily." Nero pulled down his sunglasses while he stared at her. Maybe so he could get a read on her face.

"I know how to do what I'm told to do."

"No you don't." He gave Gemma a kiss while the rest were getting ready to go. Nero and I thought the same way, she didn't ever give up like this. But, since she did. I stopped fighting Jax to go along with them.

"Tig, watch them. Don't let them out of your sight."

"Will do, boss. Let's go inside ladies."

We no more than walked in the clubhouse when Gemma grabbed my arm very aggressively. "I gotta pee. Come with me, Tara."

"I don't have to go but thanks anyway."

"Yes you do." Gemma drug me into the bathroom with her. It made me a little leery when she locked the door behinds us too.

"Well, don't just stand there, Tara. Help me up."

"Why the hell are you crawling out of the window for?"

"I'm going to where Abel is. I heard them say the address." That was coming out of Gemma's front side while I shoved her ass through the window. But she did return the favor by pulling me outside once I climbed up in it.

We made it to her car before anyone noticed we were gone. But not out of the parking lot. Tig caught on rather quickly. "Goddamn it, don't you do it, Gemma." He was screaming after us. But it was what was in front of us that had me a little worried.

"Gemma, the gate is locked. Gemma…" She wasn't listening to a damn thing I said because we crashed through it. It was a good thing the club members got the hell out of the way that was guarding it before she ran them over too.

"Now, it's not. You might wanna put on your seatbelt, sweetheart."

"No shit."

The built in car phone was ringing. Tig's name flashed in the rearview mirror. Gemma reached over and pushed ignore. "He'll call back." He did just that, like ten more times before she put it on speaker to answer it.

"Why are you doing this to me, Gemma? You two are gonna get me killed. I'm already on Jax's shit list."
"Oh Tig don't be so dramatic, we're all on Jax's shit list. So, what difference does it make really? I love you, sweetheart."

"That love, is gonna kill me yet."

It didn't take Tig long to catch up to us. His bike was flying up behind us. It also didn't take Jax long to get seriously pissed off either when he seen us pull up to an old abandoned looking place.

"I asked you to do one thing. Keep them at TM and you brought them here, asshole."

"Technically Jax, I didn't bring them here. I sort of followed them here."

"Idiot. Take them back."

But there wasn't time for it. The garage door came open for the car to leave. With all the gun fire it didn't make it out of the drive way. Tig pushed me and Gemma down to the ground while he fired his weapon at them too. I saw a woman take off running around the house to getaway. I knew how she felt.

They already had the guy they yanked out of the car down on the ground held by several of the guys. It was the woman they had to catch. When I heard Nero yelling, I went to see what the hell was happening too. "No Jax, don't do it. Kyle get to him."

By the time I made it around back with Tig and Gemma. Kyle had tackled Jax to ground. Because Jax was standing over the woman with his gun drawn and ready to kill her.

"We don't hurt women, Jax." Kyle reinforced that measure with a couple of punches to his face. Of course Jax didn't take that well at all. Their brawl didn't end until Pops fired a few round up in the air.

"Both of you put your dicks away already. We need to remember why we are here. When she sees what we do to him, she won't talk to anybody about it."

"What the hell are you gonna to do to him?" Jax questioned Pops as he made his way up from the ground.

"Water torture."

"Water torture? I'm in." Happy wanted to know all about it.

Pops poured a big gob of dish soap in the center of a dishrag with a good size portion of cooking oil. Then twisted the rag up and stuck it in the guy's mouth where they had already tied him to a chair.

"What the hell is this supposed to do?"

"He can't breathe once he sucks in the soap and oil. It clings to his lungs while it burns them like hell and they will explode eventually after they fill up with water. Just watch, Jax. There isn't always a need to draw blood to get what you want."

Meat tipped the chair back while Pops laid a dry dishrag over the guy's face. The more water he dumped on the rag over his nose and mouth; it made the guy squirm around and his muffled screams were even loud.

"Can I try?" Happy acted like it was a new toy they had to share among them instead of performing torture.
"Tig, you should take them out of here. Tara and Gemma doesn't need to see this." Tig followed Kyle's suggestion and we sat in the car just waiting to see what came next.

After a gunshot rang out the guys came out of the house. They had the name and location just down the road of who they were chasing down.

"Kyle, you're with me." Jax opened the back door to Gemma's SUV. She and I just looked at each other. Not knowing where the hell he was going with this one.

Kyle never hesitated to get in the car with us. He laid his gun on his lap and was going with the flow of things. Jax gave Gemma directions and where to turn off at. The place we pulled into looked as abandoned as the last one we were just at.

"Gemma, you and Tara should go back to the clubhouse. It really isn't safe for you to be a part of this."

"They are my family. I decided what they do, Kyle not you. Wait here for us." Again Gemma and I just looked at each other. Only you know, she didn't wait like she was told to either. She got out of the car right after they did. Then so did I.

"I'll handle it, if you don't mind? I'll try to enforce proper etiquettes with killing shit this time." Kyle just rolled his eyes at Jax and never said a word back.

They chose one of the five guys to question. I wasn't sure how they picked him because by the time I got inside with Gemma. Jax already had him down on the floor dumping out a bag.

"Taking a little trip somewhere? No, you're not. You're carrying a transport of drugs for him. Where's Sandoval or where can I find his guys at?"

The guy's silence only got his face shoved down on to a wooden crate by Jax. "You're just doing your job. Hey, I get it. Let's not make this any bloodier than it needs to be. Tell me where he is."

"I got no idea."

Jax shoved his long knife through the guy's hand down in the wood of the crate. "Any ideas coming to you? No, okay. We will try it again." Jax grinded the knife in his hand until you could hear it tearing on bone. Jax continued to do it until he screamed out in agony. "How about now? Do you know a location? If not, I'm starting on the other hand."

Once the guy told Jax the address. Gemma spun me around with her in the opposite direction from what was going on. "Trust me, you don't wanna see what comes next." Her telling me I didn't want to, just meant I had to know.

The silencer was what Jax put on the end of his gun. The smile that crossed his face when he looked at Kyle was purely twisted. An evil smile that betrays all innocence, as he squeezed the trigger repeatedly. Jax put three bullets in the guy's head. Gemma was right I would have better off never to have seen it. If the demons came to the surface was there any true way to save the soul?

The rest of the club killed only three of them and left one alive. Jax loaded up the bundles of drug in the bag. The one guy that was still alive Jax squatted down in front of him. "You're my messenger to Sandoval. Until I get the boys back, I'm going to stop his deliveries from being made. I'm taking this and every other shipment I can find of his. He needs to reach out to me and soon."

"What the fuck are you doing, Jax? This is what started this shit to begin with."
Nero ran interference between them. He had done it a lot lately. "Let it go, Kyle. This is on Jax not us." After Nero took in a couple of deep breaths he tried to rationalize with Jax now. "These bad karma clouds you got hanging over your head. Is what you cause for everyone around you. Just standing to close to you, gets everyone hurt. There is a better way to do this than what you're doing, Jax."

It didn't do any good though. The drugs went in Jax's saddle bag of his Harley when we dropped him off. They had the next location of where to look for this guys at.

"We don't need to spook them off. Just send a few of your guys with mine, Pops. Kyle, you're with me at the warehouse bro."

"Perfect." It was the only response Jax got from out of Kyle.

Pops pulled him to the side before Kyle left with Jax. "You're not buying into this Kumbaya comradery bullshit are you?"

"Not for a second. I don't trust Jax."

"Meat, Boomer and Eric, you go with Kyle. Watch his back."

Some rode with us. It was very quiet not much conversation going on at all. The bikes lead the way to this place we were going. It was a huge ran down building out in the middle of nowhere.

"Tara." Kyle spoke to me on his own this time. "You shouldn't be here you're going to get hurt. I don't give a shit what Jax says, this is no place for you or Gemma to be at." He even opened my door for me. But that was it from him. He went on to argue with Jax about something else.

"This doesn't feel right to me, Jax. There is no one around for it being a distribution center for a drug warehouse. This place should be heavily guarded."

"Maybe you should sit out on the side lines with Gemma and Tara. Keep the women company while I handle our business, Kyle. We do this and there is no turning back now. You can't demand to be a part of it then pick and choose what you wanna do."

"This is such a bad fucking idea." Kyle and the others went with Jax to go inside the building.

"Oh shit." Was all Tig said before the gun fire started. "Get inside." He tried to give us time and cover to get away from it. There were truckloads of pissed off looking men shooting at us already.

Once we did make it on the inside unharmed, shit just got worse then. The doors locked behind us when they were closed. Bars slammed down over the windows. "Don't touch them." Boomer yelled it just before Happy went to put his hand on the bars.

Boomer was doing something by going from the different windows. "They are wired. Nobody touch the windows or doors. They will blow us all the fuck up."

"Get it deactivated."

"I've gotta chase down the source first." I had no idea what Kyle and Boomer were talking about. But from the sounds of it. I hope it happened and fast.

"You just couldn't listen would you, Jax? I told you we shouldn't do this. It's a trap. You're a loose cannon just waiting to explode."
Kyle and Jax never got the chance to argue about it when bullets started riddling from every direction in the building. We all dived for cover in different places.

Boomer was sweating over a box of wires where Gemma and I huddled together. "I'm pretty sure it's the yellow one."

"Pretty sure? You better be damn sure it is."

"Do you want to do this shit, Kyle?" When Boomer didn't get a response from him. "Yeah, that's what I thought then shut the fuck up." He fiddled between the blue and yellow wire then chose to cut the yellow one. After he wiped the sweat off his forehead with his arm and tried to catch his breath. "See, I told you it was the yellow one."

Kyle took out his cellphone and pushed a bunch of buttons. It started blinking with a red dot on the screen. "Tech nerd, get us the fuck out of here. It's all locked down and we're boxed in."

"Hold on Kyle, let me take this call."

"He put me hold. The little son of a bitch put me on hold."

Meat ripped the phone out of Kyle's hand and he was pissed. "If you value your tiny dick, you better get on it now."

"Relax you no neck muscled up bastard. Daddy's got you. Get to the third floor then find the door with the key pad. I'll have it decoded before you make it there. A set of stairs still should be there from the schematic I brought up. I've already called in the others."

There was plenty of gun fire around us to even make it to a set of stairs. They all tried to shield me and Gemma as much as possible from it. At times she and I were doing the low crawl between empty crates to follow along with them all.

Tig gave Gemma his spare gun and it was a good thing. When I saw a pair of feet stop in front of me. I followed his legs up. "Tara." Gemma screamed my name just before she shot him in face.

"Goddamn Gemma. You excite me woman, nice shot." She actually took time out to smile at Meat before they got the guy's dead body off the top of me. Seriously she thought it was the most important thing?

"You really need to start listening, girl. Get them to the stairs." Kyle was out of breath when he finally caught up with us.

"Jax." Kyle's loud scream of his name made us all turn around on the stairs no more than we got on them. He had his gun pointed at Jax. He froze in place when Kyle said it and Jax had nowhere he could run to in enough time to get out of the way. With each second of time that clicked away my heart beat even faster.

With every beat of my heart. Jax took in a breath of life and let one out. His gaze came to me. Standing before me was the vulnerable man I'd never seen before. "I love you." I couldn't hear the words as loud as the commotion was surrounding me but I saw them come from his lips. He closed his eyes once more before looking directly at Kyle. His face turned hard as stone; as though Jax had accepted his fate of what was to come. The fearless outlaw that never backed down from the reaper he wore and worshiped.

"Oh shit." Tig pushed me and Gemma out of his way. "Put it down, Kyle. Don't make me kill you man."
"I'm ready to die for my brother are you, Tig?" All three of them had their guns in Tig's face now. Until he lowered his weapon down.

"Above Jax, look up there are four of them." Kyle finally got their attention. In the rafters four guys had entered down from the roof. We were being attacked by them and another round of gun fire. My ears were ringing from the loud discharges of their guns so close by me. Bodies were falling down around Jax on the concrete floor.

"I wasn't sure where you were going with that bullet for a second, Kyle."

"I need Jax alive until he makes the deal for the boys. Then his ass is fair game."

"I hear that shit, brother. I can't stand Jax, he's such an arrogant fucker. I'll help you take his ass if you want." Meat saw the terrified look on mine and Gemma's faces. "I'm just kidding ladies." Even though we knew he wasn't.

The called them the Calvary and they had arrived to save us. The gun play outside was as loud as it was on the inside. But not before lit bottles came in from the roof top. The smoke cloud was already filling up the area.

Everyone was diving for cover on the last round of bullets coming at us once again. I crawled as far away from it as I could. I put my back against a crate and just wanted it to be over with. I heard three of them speaking Spanish as they were coming near the crates I was hiding behind.

When I made it past them, I had even bigger problems to face then. There were flames coming up out of the floor, going up the walls and everywhere I needed to step to get out. As much smoke as there was lingering, I couldn't see anything or any of them anymore either.

Opening a window and it was risky because it could cause a back draft. If it did the flames would engulf where I stood. I wasn't still sure if it would blow up or not either. "Fuck it." I only opened it enough I could squeeze through it and it didn't explode. I considered it a good day so far with everything else happening around me. Where the hell I thought I was going from here, I didn't know.

The ledge of the building offered little comfort for me. But it was better than the alternative fire I was facing at the moment. I held on to the window as I climbed out and sat down on it. I called for help but no one answered me. Had my life really came down to a balancing act on the ledge with flames to take me out? When I looked around me, I was pretty sure it had.

"Tara."

After I looked down to the ground to see who called my name, I wished I hadn't. The fear of heights took over and I was about to hyperventilate. I was slipping off the side and I wasn't moving at all. As light headed as I felt, I could have been floating through the air.

"Tara." One more time Kyle called my name.

"Where are the others? Where is Jax?"

"I don't know. Some of the guys went back in the building to find them. You have to jump. There is no way I can get to you from the inside this whole side is on fire."

"I can't."

"Yes you can. I'll catch you, I'll never let you fall."
"I'm afraid of heights. I can't do it." For dear life I held on to the ledge. The window frame already felt hot to my touch. I knew the flames were coming for me. They were knocking on the door at heaven's stairway telling me it's time to let them in.

"Then I'm staying too. I'm not leaving you." Kyle slumped down against the building to the ground.

"You can't stay. You have to help save the boys. I'm not sure I can be saved from this. Even if I make it out of this one. There will only be more to come for me and I don't think I will escape it forever. Promise me, you will save my son. Tell Abel and Thomas how much I love them."

"Then you better jump soon and help me save them. We're running out of time."

The others came around the side of the building. "Oh shit." Gemma seen me just sitting on the ledge with a long way to fall. I wasn't sure where they escaped from or how.

"Get Gemma out of here, Tig. The building is going to go anytime."

"What about Tara?"

"We got her. You jump or we both go, girl." Tig took Gemma away from the building and couple of the guys stayed.

Every corner you went around had another corridor of choices to decide upon. The long way down I had to take was nothing compared to the long way I would have to go if I actually lived through it. I closed my eyes, turned loose of it all. You had to take a blind leap of faith someone would catch you when you fell. They would be your safety net of life.

The three of them didn't fail me, at least this time. Once my feet touched the ground we were running. Away from the explosive blast that was coming. Away from the possible death toll of chaos. Away from what would land at my doorstep soon enough because I could not find my way to escape from it.

When it did blow up it was a massive shock wave you felt in the ground. It knocked the air out of me from the weight of his body covering mine. The broken glass and debris surrounded us.

"You should really listen to me next time, girl." After the initial shock wore off of us. Kyle helped me up from the ground.

"I probably will."

"Probably? Don't scare me like that again, Tara." Kyle hugged me to him. When I looked up I seen Jax just standing at a distance watching us.

Jax never said a word, never really blinked or never made an attempt to approach us. I moved away from Kyle so it wouldn't cause any more problems as he did the same from me. Under the circumstances I would think it was understandable why. But it didn't seem to be to Jax. He turned away and went to his bike.

Without a word more said to anyone I went with Gemma to the car. Not even so much as a glance in my direction came when I passed by Jax. He fired up his bike and lead the others just like he had always done.

It didn't get any better when we got back to the clubhouse either. "Tara, come in here." I was being called back in to the chapel. I was really starting to hate going in there to be perfectly honest. "Shut the door." I did as Jax asked when I got inside.
The gavel occupied his hands. He shifted it back and forth between them. Before he looked up at me and finally put it down on the table. "I saw the way you looked at Kyle today. It was the way you used to look at me. When did you stop loving me?"

With a plea from me because I had little emotions left to show after everything to anyone. All I wanted to do was not have a fight with him and find our son. "Please, do not do this, Jax."

"For my own sanity. Just tell me."

"I didn't know I had stopped loving you. Today was a bad day. I was almost shot, burned and I jumped off the side of a damn building. All of that and I still don't know where Abel is or if he is alright. So I'm sorry if you're not feeling loved and adored by me today. I've been a little busy trying to stay alive and worried about our son. It was nothing with Kyle more than I'm glad to still be alive. I am asking you again, please do not do this shit."

"Kyle plays this out better than you do. He at least tries to deny he's in love with you. He's pretty convincing actually, I'll give him that. I've been watching you with Kyle and I know more than you think I do. My old man lost his wife, his family and his club. I will not let that happen. After Abel gets home we got some getting right to do with each other. Not just on your part but mine too." Jax kissed my forehead then Thomas on the top of the head before he walked out.

It wasn't just me getting put on the spot either. Chibs did the same with Jax. When I went outside the role was reversed with Jax in the hot seat by him.

"I'm trying to put us on the right side of shit. But it's gonna take a minute for it to happen."

"We're going to fix this, brother. Do you hear me? This isn't just your club, Jackie."

"Yeah, Chibs. I hear you."

"I need to get right with you being my President and doing shit behind my back. I love you, kid. But this is gotta happen so we can get past it." Chibs took off his leather and Jax did the same. When the rings came off his fingers, it was going to a bad place for both of them.

"Yeah, I guess it does need to happen." Chibs lowered the garage doors down after Jax said it.

"No, doll. Don't get in the middle of it. They're having a discussion." I almost made to the garage to see what was happening between them. But Tig got in the way.

"You mean a fight."

"It's a loud discussion." Once again he shrugged off their internal fights as nothing.

"I'm not sure which is more messed up. The violence getting worse or my ability to keep taking it in stride. It can make you like…"

"Gemma."

"Yeah, Tig. It makes you tough and crazy like Gemma."

Crazy Gemma wasn't looking to well. She toked stronger on the bud she held in her hand. I joined her on the picnic table while Chibs and Jax beat the crap out of each other in the garage. It wasn't like we all couldn't hear it and it was some big secret.

"I can't go through this shit again. The table is already dividing. Brother fighting brother. I worked
for thirty years to build this. I gave up my whole life for this place. I will not allow Jackson to destroy it."

Gemma had nothing else to say. She slowly strolled over to Nero and put her arms around his neck. "It's time baby. You know I can't let this shit happen."

"Yeah, I know, Gem. I know. I'm here baby to the end and I got nothing but love for you." Nero held her to his chest and kissed her so sweetly. They were speaking too low for me to hear the rest of their conversation. After he wiped away her tears he went and opened his car door for me.

"It's time for me and you to go to confession, Mama."

"Thanks for the offer, Nero. I've been to enough churches lately."

"I'll watch the kids while you're gone, Tara." Strong Gemma appeared from nowhere once again. She had the ability to pull it out of her ass when she needed to.

"I really don't have a choice here do I?"

"No, sweetheart. You don't." There were times, I felt Gemma's kiss on the cheek. Was the kiss of death, maybe even mine?

Nero began this long ass discussion when we left the parking lot. "Why did you tell Jax, Tara?"

"I didn't tell Jax anything. How many more times do I have to say it to you and Kyle?"

"You did tell Jax everything, Tara when you confessed your sins to him. After he locked you up he used it against me. He and I were butting heads all the time over the business and he used it as leverage over me."

At first I had to think back to what I actually had confessed to Jax. I told him about the Lodge and all those I persuaded with coercion to get it going. Used along the way to keep it up and running. The time I spent with Kyle and I kissed him. I was certain I never mentioned his name again to Jax other than about the crows. I did take all the blame for Collette's death and everything else we did. But I never brought up Nero or Gemma's name once. I made sure I protected them like they had me.

"I never told Jax you guys did anything. I took all the blame for everything, Nero. I would never rat you guys out."

"I'm sure you did, Mama. But Jax is smart enough to figure out you didn't do all those things on your own. He thought I was the one who killed Collette and Charlie. I couldn't let you, Gemma and Kyle take the blame. So, I did."

"I get why you did it for me and Gemma. But why Kyle? He had nothing to do with those murders."

"Charlie would have kept coming at you once he found about Collette being dead. It would have brought more killing and chaos to all of us than needed to be. You and the boys were just collateral damage of what Jax and the club did. Kyle knew did what he had to do. What we all knew had to be done in the end to Charlie. I couldn't let Kyle go down that way when he killed Charlie for all our sakes. So, I took the rap for it all. Kyle didn't fail me with his loyalty in return either."

It completely upset me Kyle killed Charlie to protect me. He did it the day we met with Jax and Marcus at the Lodge about business. It was why Kyle was late getting there and what Marcus had asked him was it done yet. It bought Marcus' loyalty to us so he could take over the port and not be responsible for their deaths. Then Kyle staged Charlie and Collette's kill. Kyle did it all for me, the
boys, Nero and Gemma. But I was still a little confused who Jax was going to tell all this shit to. "Jax would never rat to the cops, Nero. That I am sure of."

"It wasn't the cops Jax was gonna tell. The favor Kyle did for the club. Gave me forgiveness of all my past sin of my crew, Marcus and Jax. It wiped the slate clean for me and Gemma to leave. I wanted to get to end game eventually and Jax accelerated it for me by all the deals he made."

"And that's why you and Gemma are leaving Charming?"

"It's the agreement we all made. Gemma and I are getting too old for this shit. We don't got many years left for a piece of the good life. It was honestly easier to agree to leave then stay and keep this fight going. It rips her heart apart to know her son doesn't give a shit about her anymore. I won't ever let anything happen to Gemma. You need to understand that, Tara. It doesn't matter if I gotta hurt Jax, he will not hurt his mother."

"What did Kyle do for the club and how is it tied to the boys?"

"Jax told us it would get the Sons outta drug hauling for Romeo, he wanted to turn the club legit by stopping the guns and to protect your family. The Sons need to make sure the kill didn't blow back on them. Kyle killed two men at a meeting Jax setup. The club was present and all accounted for so blame didn't land on them. Kyle made it look like an ambush. Only it was all based on lie from Jax and the under hand bullshit he always does. He took some precious cargo of theirs and they want it back."

The simplest solution was a trade; the boys for the drugs. But, they were gone. In the middle of some bullshit street beef with August Marks, the drug all but disappeared into thin air. There was nothing left to trade with for the lives of our innocent children. It all came down to price tag on their little heads to get them back alive. None of us could pull that much illegal cash together.

"I caused this. I caused my son to be taken. If I hadn't trusted Jax, then none of this would have happened. I am so sorry Nero. I would never do anything to hurt you, Gemma or Kyle. What else did Jax do? Why does Kyle believe he is going to hurt me?"

"I can't answer that, mama. Kyle won't tell me either. All I know is one second after we found out the truth about the lie Jax told us. I was pulling Kyle off of him so he didn't kill Jax. To the next second after their private talk, Kyle totally backed off from Jax and the club. Then you got out of the hospital shortly afterwards."

"I did all of that too. Where is Kyle? I never meant for him to get hurt. I can't believe he did all this shit."

"I don't know, that's the truth. I thought it was better not to know where he is."

When I looked out the window and seen it. I knew we were headed in the right direction. "Never mind, I know where he is."

"Where?"

"I don't know yet. But just keep driving." Nero gave me a strange look but did what I asked him to do.

The direction the white crow flew in, I already knew the end location. His truck was parked by the marina. Nero seen it too. "What is so damn special about this place for you two?"

"I don't know that part yet either, Nero. But I won't be long."
This journey I made alone across the long bridge, down the stairs and into the tunnel. I still stopped to touch the glass as I walked through it. "Déjà vu."

When I climbed the last step out to the top. I inhaled a deep cleansing breath. You could almost taste the salt of the sea from here. It assaulted my nose as a fresh summer rain would.

"How did I just know you would be here?"

"Probably the same way I did you. I followed the white faced crow. How did you manage to get away from the lockdown?"

"I'm with Nero. He told me what you did for me and the club. I'm so sorry for everything, Kyle."

"Nero shouldn't have told you anything. I don't want to talk about it."

"Fine, you don't have to talk, I will. I tried to do the right thing with Jax and get our relationship back on track. By telling my husband the truth I never thought he would use it against you guys. I took the blame for everything and I never told him what you guys did. I didn't betray you intentionally or with my loyalty."

"I know exactly who your loyalty goes to, you keep showing me repeatedly. Jax is your husband and it's the way it should be. While his goes to everyone but you. He knew things only you and I could have known. I didn't tell him so you had to of told him, Tara."

"I guess I deserve that too. I swear, the only thing I told him was I spent time with you and we kissed a couple of times. That's all I said and about the crows. But other than that, I never said anything else."

"Well, someone told him then. I don't want to talk about this shit anymore."

"When I walked closer to Kyle he kept moving away from me. He even took steps backwards to avoid me. "There will be no damn touching me."

"What?"

"I'm serious, Tara. You will not convince me to change my mind this time or get your way. You fuck with my head with your touch and you know it." I couldn't believe he wouldn't get within so many feet of me. When I tried again he moved away. "No."

"This is ridiculous. You act like I am some voodoo woman or something."

"You are to me."

"Okay, I will keep my distance from you. But can we talk about it at least?"

It wasn't much like talk. More yelling than anything. He was frustrated with me, the situation and I understood why. Until I could get him to talk it through with me, it wouldn't ever get any better. The last part that came out of his mouth, it wasn't what he did that was killing. It was what he feared he would become from it that was tearing him apart on the inside. When I questioned him about it, he came from left field and spoke in riddles to me.

"It comes from when the days are cold and the saints we see are all made of gold. When your dreams all fail and the ones we hail, are the worst of all. Then the demon's blood runs stale."

"You're not making any sense to me, Kyle."
"I'm sure I don't. I don't even know if I make sense to myself anymore. But I won't ever tell you, Tara. You can ask me a thousand more times and I won't do it." Kyle held both of my hands in his when I could finally get him to even be near me. "I wanna hide the truth. I wanna shelter you from it. But with the beast inside. There's nowhere we can hide now. This is my kingdom come. It's the end of time. When the lights fade out it will come calling out at the mess we've made. Informally it is only death that can come from it. The next world, the afterlife."

"Kyle, will you wait a minute." He wasn't going to talk about it anymore and he was trying to get away from me as fast as he could. "Will you stop already." I finally managed to grab ahold of his arm to slow him down. I had to take three steps to his one just to catch up with him. "Please, just talk to me."

"They say it's what you make of life. I say it's up to fate. It's woven in my soul. I need to let you go but every time I do, you come right back to me. Your eyes, they shine so bright. I wanna save that light. I can't escape this now. There are only two people who reach me anymore. Who can bring me back from that place. It's you and Ellie. Do you know what scares me the most? I am just like John and Jax. At what point will the darkness take me down with it and I won't ever make it out?"

"You have darkness inside you just like everyone else does in them. So do I. But you use it for good. Ellie knows it too it's why she loves you so much, Kyle."

"You just don't get it. I don't wanna let you down. But I am, hell bound. When you feel my heat, look into my eyes. It's where my demons hide just like his. Don't get too close to me. It's really dark inside. I know it's there. I would never do anything to hurt you, Tara. I will have to do some horrible things before this is over and I don't want to take you to hell with me. Please, just turn loose of me."

My grip on Kyle only became stronger when I saw all three of them land on the huge rock together for the first time. The white faced crow sat taller by the dark black one. It was the white crow; she took longer to make her appearance. She was at a peaceful state sitting between the two of them while they cawed loudly at us.

"I'm following my heart like the crows are telling me to. I won't ever let go or let you fall. I don't know how yet but you will make it through this, Kyle. Now you need to follow yours."

"Why are you doing this to me, Tara?" Once he hugged me back. Over our heads the crows flew away as quickly as the three came, they disappeared from our site. Our hug didn't last for very much longer after that either. "I have to distance myself from you so I can do what I gotta do. I need to feel the rage and I can't do that if I'm around you. If it seems like I'm being mean, I probably am. But I do care about you. I just can't let you mess with my head right now."

The calming effect of maybe getting out what we had to say helped out a bunch. It could have been seeing all three crows together even. It was what weighed heavily on my mind. What sign was it supposed to actually indicate to us?

"The crows are the past, present and future of the club. As Ellie, you and I represent it along with the light and the darkness now."

"What are you talking about, Kyle?"

"Didn't Ellie tell you? She has called me several times and I think she is right. After I thought about it. John is the past of the club for what he wanted it to be and it took his life. The corrupt chaotic darkness is what killed Opie and it's what the present of it still is. Donna was trying to change the future of it by fighting the evil with good and it killed her too. You have to keep Ellie away from Jax."
"Jax would never hurt her. I understand why she hates the club and what it stands for."

"Jax will do just about anything to anyone because he feels no remorse. He justifies all the bad actions with more lies and death. While the darkness inside him only continues to grow stronger. He will eventually figure it out; what Ellie is and what she is doing. He won't have any choice then."

"Any choice of what?" He wouldn't answer me and I got enough of this shit back at the clubhouse. "Kyle."

"If you don't want me to kill him. Just keep Ellie away from Jax. I meant what I said, Tara. She's only a child and doesn't have any choice in all this shit. Just like Abel and Cody didn't get the luxury of making their choice of what happened to them." Kyle climbed over the fence of the pier. He jumped down to the sand.

"Won't we get into trouble for going down there?"

"Seriously, Tara? After everything we've done you are worried about a trespassing charge?" He helped me down from the pier. I'd jumped off enough stuff lately. We walked along the edge of the beach while we talked about it.

The vibration in my body became overwhelming. The colors of white and black raced around me once more. Intensely the color of grey was made with the two. So similar of a hue yet so shaded differently from each other. "I saw a young girl and guy running on this beach…"

"She had long dark hair and wore a white dress. When he caught her, he kissed her right about here in this spot. When he kisses her the storm rises beneath her skin. For she is his ocean and he is her moon."

"How the hell do you know that, Kyle?"

"I've had the same dream for the last few nights. I always wake up before it all changes to fire."

"I wish I knew what the fire meant."

"If the fire is encircling you and someone else, then it signifies your bond to that person. The two of you share something significant. Alternatively, the dream may be warning you of some dangerous act to come or something risky. It goes to the term; you are playing with fire. Which I have been for some time with you, girl."

"Do you hate me for what I've done?"

"No, I don't. It would be easier if I did, Tara. But I don't."

"I'm sorry for everything believe me, you don't know just how sorry. I screwed us all over. This is just as much my fault as it Jax. I should have never trusted him with any of it. I fucked myself and have no one else to blame for it."

"I've been there and done that too, girl with my own life. Jax isn't stupid and he knows. Or he's pretty sure of it."

"Jax knows what?"

"It doesn't really matter anymore now. The dreams we have only connect us deeper with each other. I dream of a lot of things lately that don't make sense. Maybe they never will. Being here with you on this beach, I feel like we've done all of this together already. When all of this shit is over with the
boys. We got some unfinished business to handle between us, Tara."

"Yeah, I guess we do have some business to finish. I feel the same vibe from being here. We've done this before too."

"I have something for you. I had Nicole find it for me and I carry it with me for the next time I see you. My mother always wore this. I didn't know at the time it had any meaning to it. I'm pretty sure John gave it to her and now I'm giving it to you." Kyle took a gold bracelet out of his pocket. With three separate gold strands hooked together by a gold crow in the center of it. After he clasped it around my wrist he touched each strand separately. "The past, the present and the future. Don't forget me."

"What does that mean and where are you going? I heard you tell Jax you're leaving."

"Not this time. You don't get to feed off my knowledge. You have to figure it out on your own. Just don't forget me. You'll always be my girl. Not distance between us or Jax will ever change that."

"What the hell are you two doing now?"

Nero was on the long pier. He must have gotten tired waiting for me in the car. With the heavy heart conversation, we were having, it was past time for us to go. Kyle gave me a boost up while Nero helped pull me back up there with him on the pier from the beach.

"Are you ever gonna tell me what's going on with you all? At first, I thought you were screwing around and you were just trying to keep it quiet from everyone. Whatever it is, it's more than that. I can see it and it gets clearer to me every time I'm around the both of you. You can trust me with the truth. I'd never do anything to hurt either one of you."

"I believe Tara and I loved each other many years ago. I'm pretty sure in the same spot we were just at. It feels like we've been there a million times together. The spirit of it can be felt of how familiar we are with each other by a shared look or a touch. Her simple touch can alter my decisions, fuck with my head and the pleasure I feel from it is more than any words can ever describe. The crows actually told us so and they brought us here tonight. Just like they are always bringing us together. We were about to get down and dirty in the sand when you came up, Nero. Is there anything else you want to know?" My mouth was opened because of what Kyle told Nero. Did he not learn what happens from telling others the truth yet? Could Nero really be trusted with all of our secrets? Would he believe we were insane too?

The Spanish flying out of Nero's mouth wasn't very nice. I didn't have a clue at what he was actually saying but, he didn't believe a word of what Kyle said. I think there might have been a few insults thrown in there for good measure.

"How about this one, Nero? We were abducted by aliens and they mind probed us. Then Tara let me probe her…"

"If you don't wanna tell me the truth, Kyle. You don't gotta be an asshole about it and make up stories, shithead." Nero wasn't buying into any of it. I almost laughed because part of it, was the actual truth. Hell, in reality if someone told me any of this shit. I would have thought the same thing, crazy fuckers.

"Promise me, you won't confront Jax about any of this. He will assume I'm the one who told you and then he will know for sure you've been around me." When I couldn't make that promise, Kyle took my face in his hands. "Promise me, Tara. It's not a wise thing to do."
"I promise."

"Take this with you and keep it on you. It's registered to me. They can't ever trace it back to you." It was a smaller handgun than I seen Kyle carry before. He pressed it in my hands and wouldn't let go of it until I took it from him.

"What else are you not telling me, Kyle?" Of course he completely ignored what I asked him.

"There is a bullet in the chamber. Take the safety off and it's ready to shoot. It will automatically load another bullet after it's fired. The clip is full. For fuck sakes, don't shoot anyone you don't mean to. Don't aim it unless you are going to kill them." Kyle gave me a kiss on the cheek. Then a huge smile came. "I'll see you later, voodoo woman. Take care of her, Nero."

"Always. Got anything for me before we leave?"

"Only why the fuck you told Tara about it. Why do it now and rip her apart?"

"It's time and it had to happen. Tara and the boys are not your call. Gemma and I made it very clear to you. Tara clouts your better judgment and decisions. I need you to stay strong with me, Kyle and finish this shit."

"And Jax?"

"That time will come too. Jax is his own demise. He does worse shit to himself than you or I could do to him."

"Hey, I'm still standing here while you guys talk about me as though I'm invisible and I can't hear you. You might as well tell me the rest of it, Kyle. Why did you give me a gun to carry and why do you think Jax will hurt me?"

Nero's phone went off and it was Gemma and an emergency was in place. "We gotta get back to TM. Sandoval reached out to Jax the hard way."

"Are my babies okay?"

"Yeah, the kids are fine. But Jax won't be when I get there." The old gangster came out in Nero while I listened to him talk on the way back to the clubhouse. His actions were those I'd witnessed so many times from others. He placed his gun on the front seat beside him and drove like a bat of hell.

"You left your bag at the house, Tara." He reached from the back seat and handed me what I carried around for the lodge.

"You can toss it or burn it. I don't care I don't need anything in there."

"You should really take the bag, Tara." Nero finally tossed it on my lap.

When I opened it I didn't know what to say. "Jesus Christ, how much is here?" There were bundles of hundred dollar bills and twenties.

"Enough. It's a safety plan just in case you need it. Nobody knows about the money except me and Gemma. You should listen to Kyle. Do not confront Jax. At least not until this shit is over with the boys."

"Then why did you even tell me?"

"Here's what I know. It's as true on the streets as much as it is with my family. If I stay in truth and
give it to people straight. With no lies, no spins on it and no games. I always know whatever happens is going to be the right thing. If I like it or not. You gotta be loyal to something in this world or you got nothing. Make wise choices. There is recourse for every decision made. Some consequences can be devastating." I found the more time Nero and Gemma were together. The more they sounded alike sometimes. But, actually I thought of Opie and when I saw him in the church. His words kept ringing in my head while we drove back to TM.

"For every decision made. You suffer the consequences of those actions."

Was Opie referring to himself and the decisions he made? Was it the decisions Donna made? The club took his family away from him. He made the decision to give his life up so Jax could live on to lead it. Was it a warning to me of what was still to come? Or was it due to the decisions I already made?

The entrance to TM was blocked off by the police. Lights were flashing everywhere. It was all moving so fast yet in slow motion around me. The fire department, police cars and ambulances became background in the scenery. A stretcher passed us by with a zipped up body bag on it. I feared who it was. Then another stretcher will the same on it.

First, I found Gemma and the kids. All I could do was hug Thomas, Kenny and Ellie to me. I had to set down. With Thomas on my lap and them on each side of me. I tried to reassure myself it was fine, this really didn't happen, it was all a bad dream. But none of that was actually the truth.

Sandoval found out the club took his drugs today and he was pissed. For that sin he made them pay for it. He blew up the members who guarded the gate with a bomb. He had my baby and I fear what the hell he would to Abel and Cody because of it too.

For hours, people moved all around me but I was setting perfectly still. I was back out on the ledge just waiting to fall, to take the plunge from it and hoped to survive it all. I had set in the same spot until the parking lot had cleared out.

After I put the kids to bed. I went to sit in the bar. My head snapped up from the table I set and stared at. I heard them. The boys were crying and calling out for mommy, for me and Nicole. Gemma must have heard it to because she headed to the door the same time I did.

They stood in a group; Jax, Nero, Tig, Kyle, Chibs and Pops. Jax held a small screen in his hand and it was my son's voice calling for me.

"Abel."

Jax turned it off before I could see anything. "They are fine, babe."

"Then why can't I see it?"

"No."

"Please, just let me see him."

Jax handed the small screen off. He wrapped me tightly in his arms while I cried for my baby who calls out my name. Only I'm not there to hold him, comfort him, protect him and let him know how much I love him.

"We know where they are. We just don't know the exact location yet. But, we should have it by tomorrow. Then we're all leaving to go get them."
"Where are they?"

"Mexico."

Our children were in the middle of a Mexican cartel war. Deep in the heart of killing, drug manufacturing, human trafficking and where the pipeline led down to it. They all had finally came to grips with the fact they needed each other to get the boys back.

Because of the mistrust and bad blood between them. Kyle had half the information and Jax had the other half. Neither one of them could honestly do it without the other. It kept all parties honest and made them be a team to bring home our boys.

When I just sat and watched them, I was in awe by it. The maps in the center of Jax and Kyle stretched out on the picnic table. They did it alone, without one single argument or any harsh words spoken. Sometimes, it took a child to hold life together for everyone involved.

"Babe, can you grab us a cup of coffee, please?"

They actually took their coffee the same exact way, black with two sugars. When I approached the table with cups in my hands. I overheard what Jax said.

"We kill them all and burn it to the ground. So, none of this shit ever comes back on any of us."

"Agreed, Jax."

Pops joined them at the table with a pieces of paper he laid down over the maps. "I'll have the General's signature by morning. My guys will take the plane from the Marine base once I get the orders in my hands. I can't get you on base, to many eyes would see it. Jax, you and your guys will have to get across the border on your own. Kyle will call you with the drop location of where to meet up. You got three days to get in and get out. There will be a plane waiting at a secure location to get you all out of there. As far as anyone else will know, this is just another special ops mission they are on."

Before they would continue on with their conversation they waited. Hell, I crossed my arms and waited too because I wasn't leaving. They were talking about what was going to happen. Which, their plan involved my child.

"Babe. We gotta get this done."

"Fine." Under protest I left but I wasn't happy about it at all. Nor any of the events that led up to all this fucking shit. But I took Kyle and Nero's advice. I would wait it out until I had Abel in my arms again before I addressed it with Jax. Everything that transpired before my son was ripped away from because of the things he did. That would be one thing that would happened no matter what came from it.

Juice was watching everything he did on the computer while they set at the bar. "How do you do that shit man?"

"It's hacking for beginners, Juice. If I told you how I do it, I would have to kill you."

"Oh." Juice was so sweet and adorable. But there were times, I worried about that boy. He had a serious look on his face while took another swig of his beer.

"I'm just kidding man."
Their loud screaming match took me back to the door. Only it wasn't the ones engaged it I expected.

"Come on, little green gay army man."

"Put your arm up here or shut the fuck up you long haired biker freak."

Quinn and Meat were having their own little strength war in an arm wrestling match. They were portioned with size well but Meat had twice the muscle mass as he did. I didn't even want to watch the rest of it nor cared who won.

"What about our bikes? That needs to get handled."

"That is a casualty of war of, Jax. If it makes you feel better. Meat get over here." Pops was trying his best to make them all play nice with each other. "Is there something you would like to say?"

"I'm sorry I ran over your little scooters you like to ride." Pops gave him a stern look. "And if you don't piss me off, it won't happen again." Kyle found a lot of humor with it. He was trying not laugh. Jax sure as the hell wasn't laughing about it.

They wrapped up the meeting with Jax and Kyle. Everyone was putting their asses on the line to save our children by doing things they really weren't supposed to do.

Even Nero was back in the game by making deals with Marcus for help in Mexico with his connections. That's after Nero raised hell with Jax after we got back. It was another loud discussion as Tig puts it.

"I gave you my word." It was the last thing Jax said before leaving the picnic table.

"Your word doesn't mean shit to me, Jax. If you cross me this time. I won't have any remorse about killing you or any of Sons." Kyle walked away with the rest of the guys after he had his say in the matter.

Betrayal was always bitter to swallow down. There had been so much of it, even on my part. It was never the intent it's just how it ended up being. I thought of many times how I could have done things differently, handled it a little better and chose my options well. None of it mattered now though. Tomorrow would be the start of a new day, bringing my baby home.

Once they left and it quieted down. I rounded up the kids to take a bath. I thought of Abel. Sometimes he would throw a fit about it, he would give me every excuse to why he shouldn't take a bath. What I wouldn't give for him to be here to scream at the top of his lungs he didn't want to do it.

Ellie and Kenny went right to sleep tonight after they got cleaned up. Thomas was fussy so I took him out into the bar to not wake them up. I found Jax setting alone in the corner. Everyone was moving around him but he was in perfect still mode, ignoring all. I wanted to reach out and comfort him, I truly did. But I couldn't bring myself to do it. Not this time.

The kind of comfort Gemma gave him; he didn't want either. "I'm going Jackson. I will be there when you find Abel."

"You are not going. That's the end of it."

"We will see about that shit because I am going." Gemma was screaming when she left the bar. She was pretty determined it was going to happen.

"Tara, can you talk to me for a minute?" Jax called me over and I went even. "I get why you did
those things with Kyle. I know being with a man like me isn't easy on you. My decisions have ended up hurting those I love the most. I'm sorry I keep making mistakes that put you and the kids at risk. Some of my decisions probably even pushed you farther away from me and to him. I feel farther from you than I ever have. I know it's my fault too."

It was almost a half ass confession of what I already knew took place the more he talked. Without me being given full disclosure of it. A definite confession of guilty on his part of all that happened. "I want us back, Tara." All I could see was Abel's little sad face, alone without me. Scared as any child would be. There was no way this time he wouldn't remember all of it and it would scar him for the rest of his life.

Even when we got the boys back; they still had so much to overcome from it. Maybe they totally could never rid themselves of the whole nightmare they went through. I almost had to refrain myself to not confront Jax here and now. But I went in another direction with it.

"What happens now, Jax?"

"You need to pack a bag for you and the kids."

"Where the hell am I going?"

"Straight into the arms of the enemy. I'm trying to keep everyone whole and get Abel back. I'm running out of options. I need all the guys to go with us. There won't be enough left behind to protect Gemma, you and the kids. I love you, Tara. I'll never let you go or give up on us. Even if you've already given up on me."

Jax kissed me before he took Thomas out of my arms. He set back down in the chair and held on to his son for a long time.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Thank you for leaving a review, marking the story as your favorite or alert!
Brotherhood~ A group or organization who have the same interest joined together as one.

PART 3 of 6

BTW... Because this became extremely long. There are PART 1-PART6. My sweet Vera's song got moved to PART 4. Smooches my lovely!

The noise of the lighter lid shutting when he lit up a smoke is what woke me up. Jax set in the chair from across the room and just stared at me. Kenny and Ellie was still asleep lying beside me. From the soft glow of the night light I could see Thomas was out too in the crib.

The silence was awkward between us as I positioned my body to the side of the bed to sit up. With the study look in my eyes, it never stopped coming from him. It was what I felt I could say without anything being read into it or starting an argument with him.

"Did you sleep at all?"

"No."

"Are you going to lay down?"

"No."

Once Jax finished his smoke and snubbed it out in the ashtray. He immediately lit up another. It was a stress signal he gave out. Excessive smoking for excessive burdens weighing on him.

"Is there something you want to talk about, Jax?"

"No."

It was the finally word he spoke to me before rising up from the chair. He didn't make any sudden moments while he approached me. More casual and slowed down. By my chin he lifted my head up with his hand to meet his look once again. With a soft touch of the back of his hand to my cheek he walked away from me and out of the room.

Since I was wide awake now. I started a bag for me and each one of the kids. I unzipped the lining away from Thomas' diaper bag stuck the money down in there for safe keeping. As much stuff as I had piled on top of it, no one would guess to look in there. Then came the handgun. I put in my purse just in case I needed it.

After it was done I showered and started my day to damn early. There wasn't anyone stirring yet in the bar. Some had passed out in it though. I headed up to the roof to see what was going on there when I didn't see Jax in the chapel. The door was left open and it seemed to be his favorite spot lately to go.

Apparently not many had slept much last night. With the sun just beginning to send a cascade of light out I found Gemma at the edge of the building. Looking on with her morning smoke in her hand. She inhaled it deeply in her lungs before she acknowledged me back. "Good morning. Do you got the kids ready to go?"
"I do. Where are we going?"

"To bring Abel and Cody home."

"That's it? You knew the truth about what Jax did and you said nothing to me. Is this one of those times too, Gemma? When you wait until you think I need to know to tell me."

"It don't matter what I know. What matters is you know the truth and what you do with it now. It's what will change things. There are many shades of grey being an old lady. Do not allow Jackson to hide in those shades or push you farther into them. The truth doesn't always come in convenient black and white or at the best time. Vulnerability is a liability. There is no place for it in this life."

"That isn't very comforting, Gemma."

"It isn't meant to be, sweetheart. Blood is what makes you related. But loyalty is what makes you family. John knew that. It's what he used to always say. His legacy and the club will continue to live on no matter what I gotta do."

"What the hell are you talking about? Jesus Christ just when I think I know where you're coming from and what you are actually saying. That wasn't it at all."

"I love Nero and he is a good man. I've been shown a new way of life by him and what love is really meant to be like. But we are too old to do it all over again. He just doesn't have the strength or the heart for it anymore just like me. But Kyle does and you had to know that truth. He is young and still has fight left in him. He will do what he's gotta do to protect the ones he loves. It's the kind of man he is like."

The cigarette was let go between Gemma's fingers. It tumbled its way to down on the roof top. Her boot mashed it out until the fire from it was completely gone. She was done with our little conversation.

"You have no idea what kind of man Kyle is like." It was a smart ass comment. I thought for once I would give Gemma back what she gave me. Part of nothing that made any damn sense without knowing all of it.

My face was lifted up by her hand as her son had done to me earlier. Gemma wanted me to see her eyes and facial expression when she said it. "That's where you are wrong, sweetheart. I know exactly what man Kyle is like."

There wasn't any shaking the eerie feeling I got from Gemma. Did Kyle tell her the truth? I didn't believe he really would do that. Maybe I was making something out of nothing. She was always coming up with crazy shit I never got the meaning of. Either way, I would keep it to myself for now.

Down the ladder we both went back in the bar. I said it low when we reached the bottom. "Thank you for the money."

"Nero and I didn't give you shit." Hard core bitch Gemma had already come out this morning. I wasn't sure if it was for my safety of having the money or her safety of giving it to me.

There was still no sign of Jax around until I went outside.

"He's totally gone."

"Jackie, has been struggling. I don't know how much longer he can hold it together."
Bobby and Chibs were setting alone watching Jax. From their comments I wasn't sure if they were referring to the club or him personally. There was so much turmoil with all of them and every day brought something new their way. But it wasn't just them any longer experiencing it. It flowed over to his family now. Especially to our children. Abel got the blunt end of it.

From the looks of Jax he was tired, worn and very weary. His eyes were blood shot while he just stared at nothing. He set at the picnic table smoking and not paying any attention to what was around him. What I found odd was he didn't have his leather on yet either. It was always the first thing he did every morning. I went and poured two cups of coffee and set one down in front of him.

"Thanks."

"Are you going to tell me what's wrong?"

"I've tried so hard to juggle what's right for my family and patch. But no matter what I do it ends up being in a worse place than it was the day before. The more I hold on to it, the farther it gets away from me. I just get in deeper Tara until I can't find my way out anymore."

"Can't find your way out of what?"

"Do you really care anyway?"

"If I didn't care, Jax. Do you think I would still be here?"

"For how much longer are you going to be here with me? I didn't want to do this now but I got theses last night. It's why I couldn't sleep." Jax opened a large brown envelope up and held it in front me so there was no way I could miss it. "This one is my favorite. Would you like to see the rest of them?"

"You had me followed."

"Actually, I had Kyle followed for a couple of days. Precious had her old man do me a favor and he brought me the photos last night. I would have gotten them sooner but he's been out of town on a job. I wasn't gonna say a word until I seen them first. I couldn't have a club member do it. They would have been recognized. You've both grown too smart for that. Is there anything you need to tell me?"

"Kyle took Ellie to the dance that night. I did ask you first and you said no. You had club things to do. So, don't be mad me about him taking her instead you making the time do it. It was for Ellie, not me. I get now why you came home early that weekend and why you asked what my plans were. If you would put as much effort in our relationship as you do this, we probably would have a better one."

"I noticed you're leaving out the sweet tight embrace you have with Kyle in the photo."

"He gave me a hug before we left as you can clearly see it is out in the street by my car. It was just a hug. I've seen you hug and kiss hundreds of women both in my presences along with when you didn't know I was watching. Can we move on from it now?"

"When does it end? Or more so, where has it already went with you and Kyle?"

"I don't expect you to believe this, Jax. Before Abel was taken from me. I wanted to wipe the slate clean and start over with you. Not continue to ruin what we have left but for both of us move on from it all and find some common ground with each other. There has to be a mutual respect not just on my part but on yours as well. We need to stop playing the blame game. You and I have both
made mistakes in this relationship. Some are just costlier than others."

Once again the Queen of Denial reached out to her King. I thought of Nero and his favorite bible quote; *Love is patient, love is kind. It keeps no records of wrongs.* Even when they rip your heart out and shatter your world a part.

Jax didn't say anymore as he seemed deep in thought now. We all had a list of sins we could run down daily we've committed. For months I examined, reviewed dissected mine many times over. Then there were ones we could remind the other of what they had done to us. But did it really matter in the long run? Would it change anything at all? Did it truly mean it wouldn't be done again? Was it only pushing out the one you love farther away because of it?

The longer I set across the table from Jax. I saw my son. Abel looked so much like him. Although if you went off of their actions, you couldn't even tell they were remotely related. I let out a couple of breaths thinking of what my poor child had already went through in the short time he has been on earth. He had already survived what most adults wouldn't.

My head was swimming when I got up from the table. The surroundings were foggy as I tried to move. A haze heat rising from the ground was felt. Sweat reached my forehead and palms before the other parts of my body. The fast beating of my heart reached out to each nerve ending I had and it made me feel the pain from it. Pain was supposed to be a reminder you were still alive. To me it was just a painful reminder.

"Are you okay, babe?"

Nothing came out when I tried to answer Jax. He had me sit back down at the table. I hadn't felt this way for a long time. My head was so cloudy and my heart so heavy.

"Do you want some water?" I nodded at his question.

Bless my little girl's heart. Ellie came to hug me after she was certain Jax went inside the clubhouse. She laid Donna's bible down to an opened page. Her timing was perfection lately.

**Psalm 104:29** When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take their breath away. They die and return to their dust.

It made no sense either just like the rest of them at the time anyway. I was sure soon it would be brought to light for me in one way or another. Most of them had been the hard way and I saw this one no differently. I closed it up and handed it back to Ellie.

"Are you okay now?" Jax returned and set down a glass of ice water on the table.

"Yes. I feel better." This time getting up was easy. If only everything else I had to still face was.

"Tara." Jax held on to my arm as I went to leave. "Tell me you love me and mean it."

"I love you, Jackson. I always have."

*SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA*

Our bags were packed. I set outside with Gemma and the kids waiting to see what the hell was going to happen today. I finally just quit asking questions because when you got no answers for them it made you tired.

All the trucks came together through the gate. Gemma put her smoke out and grabbed her bag. "Our
ride is here."

"I'm glad they filled you in, Gemma." I was being sarcastic with it of course. "Maybe someone can me before we actually get there."

It instantly started as soon as Jax seen him. I just shook my head as I was disheartened. The conversation we had meant nothing.

"So." Kyle tossed the photo down on the picnic table. He wasn't making the attempt to play this game with Jax. Or defend it either.

"You're still gonna stand there and tell me nothing is going on between you and Tara."

"This doesn't mean anything, I hug Gemma too but I'm not doing her either. You're reaching Jax because if you thought it was something real. You and I wouldn't just be standing here talking about it right now. I told you I will leave once this is done and I don't know what more you want from me."

Ellie waited until Kyle and Jax were done. She couldn't wait until we left here though and I couldn't even tell her where in the hell we were going to. The excitement didn't change from once she seen him either. "I told you I would be back for those, Little G. I'll trade you." Kyle took a set of dog tags out of his pocket that had her name stamped on it.

"What about me?"

"I thought you might want to make your own. Go see the big guy over there he will help you."

"Cool." Kenny was excited. It was nice to see this little boy actually be happy about something for a change. Ellie went with her brother over to the guys. They seemed to do okay with the kids.

They didn't come back empty handed. "We made one for Cody, Abel and Thomas too." All three were on the same long silver chain. I could hardly wait until the boys were near so they could see them. I wrapped the chain several times around the handle of the diaper bag before I clasped it on to it.

"Can we ride with Kyle?"

"I don't care if he doesn't."

"He doesn't care. He said to ask you if it was okay." Kenny and Ellie didn't waste any time making it back to the big truck with all the guys. I waited for Jax to say something about it but he didn't. He seemed so busy, I don't even think he noticed.

Jax gave Boomer the car seat to strap in for me. It was time for me to take another unknown journey through this shitty thing we called life. With no sense of what direction to go in or what the outcome of it would bring for me or my sweet children.

Jax carried Thomas and my bag to the truck. He gave him a kiss and strapped him in the car seat. Then it came our turn to say goodbye. "I love you, Tara."

"I love you too." Even when I let go of Jax he didn't me. If anything, his grip on me became even stronger. He squeezed me so hard, it was about to cut off my air flow.

"Jesus Christ, Jax. Why don't you piss down Tara's other leg to make sure you've marked her enough? Maybe that will keep Kyle away from her while we're gone."
"Meat, shut up." Pop stuck his hand out to Jax and he finally shook it. "You got my word, Jax. Your family will be safe. The kids will stay on base with my wife and guarded twenty four, seven there. No one can get to them not even by plane. If they invade our air space, they get shot down. Gemma, Tara and Nicole will come with me to Washington. When the guys meet up with you in Mexico. I can only get them a visitors pass for a couple of days without anyone asking to many questions. A plane will be sent to get you all out of there once you got the boys. Then, I'll send them all back to Charming once it's over."

"Thank you for watching over my family. But I need to hear it from Kyle before they leave here."

"What do you need to hear from me, Jax? We already have been over everything and we stick to the plan."

"Don't make me come for them because you know I will. I'll kill any shit that gets in my way of it."

"Okay and exactly what part of that has to do with me?"

"You know what it has to do with you. After this is over with. The way you did shit with my wife. I'm gonna make sure you feel my pain. Don't even think about keeping Tara or my sons away from me." Jax lit up a smoke and had no more comments for Kyle.

"Do you just spend time dreaming up new ways to annoy me? Just stick to the plan, Jax."

"You heard me."

"You know what, I'm not the reason Tara…"

Kyle." Pops stopped it all. He once again reassured Jax it was what would happen. We would be safe there with him. My biggest concern was for my children. Until this was over I still had to fear the worst for all of them. Then afterwards too. "Tara, you and your son will ride with Boomer and Derrick. It is the most comfortable place for you."

"Don't worry, Ma'am. You are as safe with us as you are in your mother's arm. We should get going." He closed the door for me once I climbed up inside. I hadn't met him yet and he looked really young compared to the rest of them.

"Oh God, I hope not. I hope I'm a lot safer than that shit."

Pops moved on to the next problem, Gemma. He grabbed the cigarette out of her mouth before she went to get in the truck. "There is no smoking in the vehicles. You can during rest stops." This was like the second or third time I heard him give her this bit of information. He tossed it down then stomped out the smoke.

"Come on hot mama. You're with me." Meat opened the door for her again after she got the lecture. She took another smoke from the pack and gave Meat a sweet smile. He gave her a quick wink. I saw the new smoke already back in her mouth. If Pops thought she wouldn't defy him or challenge him every step of the way. He was sadly mistaken.

"Kyle and Tara sitting in a tree, K.I.S.S.I.N.G." When Meat was done singing his torturing little ditty. He blew Jax a kiss out the window on our way out of the parking lot.

"Meat." It was amazing their voices carried from truck to truck. You could hear Pops already yelling at him.

"I already know, Sir. Shut the fuck up or you will kick my ass from here to Texas and back. Don't
you make me tell you again, boy or else. I reprimanded myself so you don't have to do it." He had all of them laughing at him. I sort of saw him as a male Gemma all most. But he still had a lot to learn to keep up her.

"What does Meat actually do?"

"Anything he can to get in trouble and us along with him. He isn't smart enough to know when to shut up or back down. I remember this one time when we were in Tijuana. He brought a goat in the bar and bet a Nun…"

"Don't tell Tara about that." Boomer stopped the guy from telling me. I almost had to laugh because I could only imagine the rest of it.

"Oh yeah, sorry Ma'am. I guess it's not exactly a female friendly story."

"You can call me Tara. You don't have to call me Ma'am."

He smiled and turned back around in his seat. They were having a conversation and I paid no attention to it. Thomas was already halfway asleep and I just stared out the window. They pulled off on a dirt road as we passed the welcome to Charming sign.

"Where are we going?"

"To get Nicole."

Nero's car was parked along the old dirt road. I expected her to be with him. They all got out as though they were waiting. I opened the door and stayed inside the cab with Thomas. The roar of the engine got louder and I looked for it. But I sure as hell didn't expect to see him come riding up with her.

"Perfect, the turned my sister into a biker bitch." The tone Kyle took about it told me he was less than happy with the situation.

In all fairness to Nicole, she was one hell of a hot biker mama riding behind Tig. Those shiny blonde curls of hers were cascading down around the helmet. Dark sunglasses on her pretty face with tight jeans accenting her attributes and high heeled black boots. She pulled off the look much better than I ever could.

"Oh, hell no." Boomer threw the gearshift into park and he was out of the truck quickly. Apparently I wasn't the only one kept in the dark on things. He had no idea Nicole was with Tig this whole time by all the bad things he had to say about it.

"Here we go again." The kid didn't move from the front seat but did opened his door too so he could hear what was going on with them.

"Have you had a hard time with Tig and Boomer?"

"The last time we had to separate them it was Kyle and your husband."

"Let it go. You're fighting a losing battle, trust me on this one. You know how high in demand biker dick is around here." Kyle was trying to stop Boomer from starting anything with Tig. While slamming me a little in the process. I ignored it because there were so many other things for me to pissed off about at the moment.

Tig didn't seem out of place with them. If anything he blended in well or just didn't give a shit what
they thought. I was pretty sure he didn't really give a shit. After he kissed Nicole goodbye. He gave Gemma a kiss on the cheek too.

"Bye, doll. Stay safe." He gave me one as well. "I didn't betray the club by watching over Nicole. Gemma knew about it." It was something that came out of nowhere from him as if he needed to justify it.

"I didn't think you did, Tig."

"Nicole can't hurt the club. She doesn't know anything. She sees all the shit I try to hide from everyone and we can talk about it. She knows everything I hate about myself. But she doesn't judge me on any of it. I sort of like her. I really love hanging out with her. I haven't liked someone in a very long time or myself."

"Yeah, I get where you're coming from, Tig. Believe me I do."

Tig gave me another kiss on the cheek before he went around the truck to give Nicole another one. "I'm bring back two sombreros from Mexico. I'll be the naked guy with it on and bottle of Tequila in my hand waiting for you baby. So, look for me."

"You're on Tigger."

"Fucking bikers. I don't know what the hell women see in them." That was Boomers sentiment on it. "No offense, Tara."

"Sure."

Their conversation didn't get much better from here either once we got back on the road. You could tell he was irritated and pissed off about Tig being around her. She just kept ignoring everything Boomer had to say to her.

"Aw, look what Tig just texted me." She handed the phone over to me and damn he was a creative soul. I couldn't even imagine where he found a sombrero small enough to go on top of his penis.

"Let me see it, Nicole." She hesitated for a moment. When Boomer asked again she gave it to him. But it was a silent transaction of handing it over. He hurled her phone out the window. "Opps, I dropped your phone. I guess Tig won't be texting you anytime soon."

"Asshole."

Nicole wailed on him. I would say her aggressive manner she expressed wasn't just over the phone. I grabbed on to the door and Thomas' carrier because the truck was swerving on the road a little. As she didn't stop smacking him.

"Here we go again." I never caught the name of the kid in the passanger seat but he seemed to say the phrase a lot.

We were all in trouble once we pulled off to the side of the road. "Are you done now?" Pops didn't ask Nicole nicely either. He separated them and Boomer went somewhere else while we got a new driver. "This is exactly why no women are ever allowed to travel with us."

"How about you, are you going to give me any trouble?" I didn't say a word but with a shake of my head indicated no. "Then you'll be the only one." When Pops shut the door I heard him move on to the next problem. "Gemma, you are already wearing me out."
Once we finally made it back on the road I tried to talk to Nicole. At this rate it was going to take forever to get there. "So, you and Tig, huh?"

"I like Tig. He makes me laugh. We just hang out without any pressure of anything. It's not serious because let's face it he can't have a real relationship with anyone being in the club. I also don't think Jax will allow it anyway. He doesn't care for me very much because of Kyle. Tig came over and we had pizza with Cody. Tig took him for ride on his bike and my son adores him. He is the only man other than Kyle my son has even made an attempt to get close to."

Then mention of Cody had her upset and it was a lonely mother's love peeking through the cloud of hurt.

Obviously Nicole noticed my wrist and what was on it. "So, you and my brother, huh? I just knew it was you he wanted it for. It was Julia's bracelet and you mean something to Kyle. Or he wouldn't have given it to you."

"We're just friends."

"Really girlfriend, are you still sticking with that story? Kyle tries to tell me the same thing but I think we all know better. Now don't we, Tara?"

"So, what is up with you and Boomer?" There was no way in hell I was explaining it all to Nicole. She wouldn't understand any better than anyone else does. Not that even Kyle and I understood it all.

"I didn't know I was pregnant and honestly I'm not sure I could handle two kids on my own. I do well with Cody but to start over with another baby would be rough. David made his choice and walked away from me not the other way around. I don't want his pity just because of what happened. If he really wanted to be with me, he wouldn't have left in the first place."

The rest of the way to the next stop we didn't talk anymore. We both had a lot if issues to address in our lives along with the worry we had for our little boys.

It was a restaurant where we parked. They were all hungry and I could have cared less about food. I got Thomas out of his carrier and grabbed his bag. I shoved my purse down inside of it to take with me. He needed to be changed and fed.

"Do you need help, Tara?"

"I'm good but I feel funny calling you Meat. What is your real name?"

"My name is Chris. Do you want to know how I got the name Meat?"

"Um… I'll pass. But thanks anyway."

His arm went around me and he was yelling it across the parking lot. "Kyle, I got your woman. Oh, Tara. That feels so good baby, don't stop." Everyone was looking at us and I hadn't touched him at all.

"That's Jax's problem, not mine."

It only made Meat laugh at his comment. "Kyle's just got his little girl panties on today. He'll come around."

"I really think we should probably leave him alone."

"What fun is there in that, Tara? Come on, work with me here. I do it because I know it irritates
Kyle. When he caught up with Kyle his arm went around his shoulder too. "You know you miss me when I'm not around." Somehow, I didn't think Kyle missed him at all. Nor was he in a joking mood either.

The first stop was the restroom. After I went I changed Thomas. He hadn't fussed at all once today. He was such a good boy. We went and got in the long line in front of us.

"Do you want some money to feed Kenny and Ellie with?" Kyle only shook his head no and that was as much as I was going to get from him. I gave each of the kids some money to put in their pockets for later. So they could buy their own stuff and he wouldn't have to.

With a heavy shoulder bag weighing my arm down. I shifted Thomas from side to side so I could help Ellie and Kenny make their plates. When I felt it slip down I grabbed on to it only Kyle was taking it from me. He took Thomas too once he held his hands out and I let him. Gemma had Thomas on her lap when I set the kids down to eat finally.

Food wasn't doing much for me today. I chose a piece of chicken and macaroni and cheese. Mostly I was thirsty. After I got myself situated I set at a table alone. I didn't even want to hear what they were all talking about. From here I could keep an eye on all the kids.

"Is there room for me at the outcast table with you, Tara? Since you're not feeling the love either."

"Sure, Boomer have a seat. Misery loves company. Not any better with Nicole I'm taking it?"

"No. I probably shouldn't have thrown her phone out the window. I should have thought it through better but it just pisses me off she keeps ignoring me. At least yell at me or something."

"Yeah, I know the feeling all too well."

We ate without much conversation between us. When Kenny wanted more I was amazed he came to me first to ask if it was okay. He didn't want my help this time so I let him do it on his own. Ellie, she asked Kyle. I guess I should have known she would.

"If you want to talk to Tara. Call her phone and stop bothering me." The meal was interrupted as loud as Kyle was when he answered and slammed his phone back down on the table. We all knew who was calling by the way the conversation went.

Thomas' diaper bag was ringing on the back of Gemma's chair. I searched through it until I found my cellphone. I couldn't tell Jax where we were at until I asked Boomer. "Because I am not with him we stopped to eat. We will be there by tonight. I'll call you later. I love you too."

"Catching hell from the other side now, Tara?"

"Always. There wasn't any better way to explain it to Boomer than that. Jax just wanted to know where we were along with who was nearby. Part of me wanted to ask him the same question but I didn't. Maybe because I didn't want to know or maybe because it wasn't going to change much now.

The thing today that remotely put a smile on my face was seeing Thomas be happy. While Gemma held him Kyle scooped a small bit of ice cream on the end of the spoon. As my baby got a tiny taste of it he was kicking his legs and trying to follow it to get more. His little tongue was in overdrive. Gemma wiped his mouth before she handed him back to me.

"I'm going to smoke. Do you got him?"

"Of course, I have my baby."
"What about him?" She motioned her head and I knew who she meant.

"I don't think anything is going to make that boy happy today. Not with me anyway."

They finished up eating and Gemma was still outside smoking along with a couple of the other guys. She paced while she talked on her phone to Nero.

"I made this for you." Kenny handed me a picture of flowers he drew. It was actually pretty good.

"Thank you, honey. You did a great job on it." He didn't stick around after he handed it to me. This was pretty much the most interaction he and I had together.

On the road again after everyone got in the vehicles. It was almost dark when we came to a military base. There were three different guarded gates we had to go through just to make it on the inside. Each time we had to produce identifications and show the visitor's passes Pops gave us. While we waited outside the trucks so they could search them.

The story was Gemma was his sister and Nicole and I were his nieces coming for a two day visit. His wife met us at another guarded gate area. On the inside it looked like a mini community with houses, stores and a park. That's as far as I could see anyway.

"You have to say goodbye to the kids here, Tara. My aunt will take care of them. We are not allowed in there. It's for officers and their family on base only." Kyle hugged Ellie goodbye. "You're the oldest. So, you need to watch over Kenny and Thomas. Tara will be back to get you soon."

Kyle's aunt seemed sweet. She was willing to take on my three children to protect them. "Don't worry sweetie. They will be alright. Here is my phone number so you can call to check on them."

"Thank you for doing this for me."

"I'm a mother too. I can't imagine what you and Nicole are going through. But my thoughts are with you." Before we left I had to hug each one of them a couple more times.

The truck went forward from here to another designated area. They all piled out with their bags in hand. Nicole and I did the same.

One by one they walked before a concrete wall that must have extended twenty feet long. Fallen brothers were honored there. A gold plaque was fastened to it for each individual name of someone who never made it home. As the guys touched one or several of them before they went on. From what I heard them say it was a tradition upon arrival and departure from here.

It was Nicole I was worried about. She stood in one small area and tears were trickling down her face. I hadn't even noticed Gemma and Kyle were standing beside me.

"Is that Nicole's old man?" Kyle only nodded at Gemma. "I've got her. No one knows more about burring husbands than I do." Gemma tried to soothe her pain. Nicole had so many painful things to deal with lately. They walked away together. Gemma was talking to her when they set down on a bench.

Next it was Kyle's turn. I knew he was reliving it all again in his head. The pain of watching it happen, the horror from losing his brothers and the guilt of being the one who survived from it. It was something he had to do though. I gave his arm a squeeze as went I by to let him know I was here. Then went to join Gemma and Nicole because we weren't allowed to go where the guys went to.
We didn't sit long until Pops came to take us to the visitors' center. It was more like a dorm than
anything. We were also assigned a personal guard to make sure nothing happened to us or we didn't
cause any trouble. He ran down the list of conduct rules we were expected to act by. When I
questioned what he was talking about on one of them, he made sure I understood it.

"Don't diddle my Marines. Emotions make them weak and women distract them. You won't as much
as flash them a pretty little smile while the three of you are here. That is counting but not limited to
Kyle. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I got it. Don't diddle your soldiers."

"They are not soldiers. They are Marines; my fight machines. That's the way they need to stay to not
get themselves killed. Now, I'll have them set you up with a wet hooch." When I asked what the hell
that was. He spun around quickly on his heels. "That is quarters with a shower. Unless you prefer a
dry one." He looked Gemma up and down. "I bet you don't prefer a dry one."

"You got that shit right."

Our room had three beds to it and a bathroom. That was it. Gemma wanted a smoke. Only there was
a specific area for it too. Pops and our new guard friend walked us to it. It was the place where the
guys hung out at. There was a bar, a huge television, a bunch of couches and a pool table.

"Gentlemen, put away your dicks, porn and skin magazines. There are ladies present. Anyone who
steps out of line with them. Will answer to me."

Gemma set down by Meat on the couch and immediately lit up. "Don't put it away on my account.
She's got a nice rack." Pops just shook at Gemma head. "What? I didn't give one little smile his
way."

"Don't let them out of your sight. Return them to their quarters in an hour." Pops told our guard
before he disappeared out the door.

"Yes, Sir."

Nicole and Gemma fit right in here. Me, not so much. I already missed my children and didn't talk to
anyone. Those two, however, were the social butterflies of the room. They offered me a drink but I
had nothing good to drink to. I got myself a glass of water and looked out the giant window at the
world passing me by.

When I looked up Kyle was watching me. But went back to reading the book he had in his hands. I
didn't know what to say to him either. Or how to mend what I had broken between us even though it
was not intentional. Most of the time when I was in doubt, I done nothing at all. I chose to take a
different approach this time.

"What is the book about?"

"Do you really want to know about the book or are you trying to get me to talk to, Tara?"

"Both."

"I'm reading about Morrigan. She is the goddess of war, fertility and the keeper of the crows. The
circle was complete by her; life and death. She also taught Odin some of his magical powers before
he married Frigg. She could shape shift into the form of a crow and then walk the earth as a human
too."
"Are you making this up? Some of the other guys are reading naked chick magazines. Or I guess looking at the pictures anyway and you are reading mythology?"

"No, I'm not making it up." Kyle handed me the book as proof of it I thought. At the beginning there was a picture of a woman with long dark hair adorned in red garb. A crow rested on each arm she held out. With more crows encircling her body and flying above her. The phrase was in bold print underneath it.

"I call upon thee, great Morrigan. Theehold goddess of power. From the depths of the life, from the world of man, from the reaches of the magic.

I call on thee to descend on my body. Thy servant and priested. And lend your energies to me this day. As I walk in the human world. Ever seeking balance of evil."

"What else do you know about her?"

"Don't think I don't know you're trying to suck me in, Tara. It won't work this time. I'm learning to pick my battles because I have so many of them now. Fighting with you isn't one of them. It should be us against the world. Not us against each other. Let me know when you got that part figured out too." Kyle closed the book and left without another word to me.

"I guess, I deserve that."

Our hour went by quickly. Gemma chain smoked as many as she could too. Our guard walked us back to our room. I changed and fell on the bed. I was tired and it was only nine o'clock.

"Tara." I no more than dozed off when Gemma was shaking me. "We're busting out of here."

"Won't we get in trouble if we leave?"

"What are you, the damn hall monitor? I need a smoke." As cranky as she was. She really did need a smoke.

"Seriously? We're going out the window again?"

"Yes we are. I know where to go. Kyle and I basically grew up here. Just follow me girls." Nicole knew exactly where to go too. We were bobbing and weaving our way around without anyone noticing us or getting caught. A locked gate wasn't a problem either. She entered the code and we passed through it too.

"It's about damn time, Nicole. I almost gave up and went back to my room."

When the hell I missed Nicole and Gemma setting this all up, escaped me. I really needed to pay more attention. Gemma alone was bad enough but with Nicole, they were a combination of trouble.

We piled into the green jeep with Kyle. The roll bar became our friend to hold on to because of the wild ride we were on. The giant grassy hill he took us up felt unstable and we were going to tip over or roll over. I was never so happy to be parked. Unlike Nicole and Gemma who seemed to actually enjoy it.

The guys were all there with a fire on the beach. They had the radio cranked up and were drinking. It was their private hide way they came to on a frequent basis.

"Can't you get in trouble for this?"
"They can't do anything to me. I'm a civilian. The only thing I'm doing wrong is; trespassing on government property and impersonating a Marine. Which are federal offenses. Pops knows they all come out here at night. He just acts like he doesn't. They get leniency because they are the best at what they do."

"Aren't you the best at what you do, Kyle?"

"Don't suck up to me now, Tara." It was the only smile he gave me since we left.

They were loud and there was a lot of laughter around me going on. I set a log alone and only watched them all interact with each other.

"Take a walk with me, please?" I let out a long sigh and said it again. "Please."

"Okay." Kyle finally agreed to go. He seemed reluctant at first but I wasn't going to quit asking until he went along with it.

Along the sandy beach we walked in silence. The wind was gentle and the water lapped up on the shore against us at times. It actually felt good when the combination of water and air hit my skin. Since the sun fell it gave me a slight shiver from the cool sensation of it.

"Since we didn't get to finish our conversation the other night. I really want to fix this. I'm so sorry for everything you went through for me and my children. I know you didn't have to do any of it. Now I get why you were so messed up when I got out of the hospital. You should have never been put in that kind of position by Jax or had to feel the guilt of it. I still don't know everything but I know you've shown me nothing but loyalty and kindness. I swear, I never meant to do anything to hurt you, Nero or Gemma. It doesn't excuse it even though it wasn't intentional."

Kyle still wouldn't budge there wasn't anything back from him. So I continued on as if I were talking to myself. "I know you don't owe me anything. But please talk to me, yell at me or something."
Since he wasn't going to do that. I plopped down in the wet sand and I would wait it out or enjoy the feeling of the cool water if nothing else.

It was relaxing just sitting on the sandy seashore. If I could only bottle this moment for those rocky times ahead of me. The foamy mist from the ocean lightly sprayed onto my face softly as a feather. The moonlight glistened on the water with shiny diamond ring waves moving about. Some of those waves crashed against the rocks farther down from us. As they came in on the sand around where we set. My shorts and legs were wet from it.

"Are you going to say anything to me at all, Kyle?"

"Anything."

"Really, smart ass?"

"I don't know what you want me to say, Tara. I'm trying to keep my distance from you because you know once this is over. I won't be around anymore. It has to be goodbye at some point."

"What about John, the crows and Ellie? Are you going to just leave her too? I know you play a role in the past, present and the future of what will happen. I just haven't figured it out yet."

"What choice do I have?" When I went to intervene with my opinion Kyle halted it. "Please don't stop me until I'm through, Tara. This is something I hate to do but there isn't many options left anymore. We've been doing this together for months now. So many months have passed by I lose track sometimes. We meet just like this, every single time. Away from everyone so no one knows.
It's almost gotten to be normal to me. I guess what we've done is wrong or we wouldn't hide it. Although it's not how I feel. I did all those thing for you and I would do them again. I have no regrets about the time we've spent together. It's going to hurt me to not see you anymore and I will miss you. I can't lie about that part. This is what has to be done. I'll leave and you will go back to the life you had before we met. Don't forget me because I won't ever forget you."

"Where are you going?" There were many other things I wanted to say. But he had said most of them for me.

"I'm hopping a plane to nowhere. Somewhere warm and tropical; sun, fun and whatever comes. I just have to worry about getting Nicole and Cody out of Charming first. Then I'm gone."

"Nicole and Cody are leaving too? So, everyone is leaving me. I've become really good friends with her. Abel will be crushed when finds out Cody is leaving."

"What did you think was going happen? They can't stay there anymore. Jax and I cannot peacefully co-exist in the same place. I can't leave them there to get hurt again or even worse next time. You will always choose Jax, Abel and Thomas over me. Just like I have to do what is best for Nicole and Cody over you. It's not how I want things to be. It's the way they have to be. I can't stay and you will never leave."

"It's doesn't have to be that way, Kyle."

"Unfortunately, it does. You had to of known it would come down to Jax or me eventually. I prefer it to be me left standing in the end. Leaving will slow it down for a while but that time will come. It's clear he is not going to have it any other way."

"So, what now?"

"Just kiss me and say goodbye, Tara."

His hand wiped away my tears before he took me in his arms and gave me a such a sweet kiss. The water came in around our feet where we stood but it didn't stop the moment.

"Kyle." One of the guys was yelling for him down the beach.

"Yeah."

"Sorry to interrupt. We're heading back."

"We will be there in a minute."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Chapter 26, PART 4. I should have posted by this evening. I am editing it today.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert!
Chapter 26, Brotherhoods PART4

My sweet Vera gave me an idea for this part with her song. Smooches my lovely sister!

You guys know the drill. It's late and I will fix errors in the morning...

The blaring trumpet played loudly as though it were right in our ears sounding off. I fumbled around until I found my cellphone to see the time; 4:45 a.m. "What the hell?"

Gemma didn't take it as well as I did. "Shit." She grabbed her head and set straight up in her bed. She lifted the window and screamed out it. "Shut the fuck up already."

"Gemma, it's a recording. Rise and shine ladies. This is our official wakeup call." Nicole bounced out of bed and went to the bathroom.

"Yeah, well. They need to come back around seven and see me then." Gemma went back to bed and covered up her head.

A loud knock on the door came. Since Nicole was disposed and Gemma wouldn't move, I answered it. "Good morning ladies." Pops was all perky for it being so early. He tossed a t-shirt, a hooded sweatshirt and a black pair of shorts on each of our beds. "You've got thirty minutes and I will be back for you."

"Come back at seven. That's more convenient for me." Gemma still wasn't going to get up.

"You're in my world now, Gemma. If you are not dressed when I come back, you will wish you had been. I will not say it again."

"Gemma, I would do it. He isn't kidding."

Nicole gave her advice as she was getting ready to go. I almost had to laugh. For once Gemma got a dose of her own medicine. It wasn't that long ago she did something very similar to Nicole and I.

Gemma and I didn't have any shoes to wear for it. Nicole opened the door and told our new guard what we needed. It wasn't long until he came back with a pairs of plain white leather Nikes in our sizes.

"This is bullshit."

"You can think of it however you need to, Gemma. But you do as I say while you are here." Pops was very adamant about it.

From her sweatshirt pocket, Gemma pulled out a smoke as soon as we reached outside. "No." She rolled her eyes at Pops and put it away back in the pack.

"I will break you yet."

From the smirk on Gemma's face, he had his hands full. "Yeah, I've heard that shit before."

Pops left us setting on the grass while the guys all came out to the field. Once again that damn trumpet sounded off. It was even louder sitting out here. There were speakers playing it everywhere, cranked up with it. "It's 5:45." Nicole seemed to just know the drill.
The second it went off again. The guys were lining up. Some of them had on their sweatshirts like we did while others only wore the t-shirt. "Stand up ladies."

We followed Nicole's lead. It was complete silence while the American flag started rising up the pole. Everyone on base took a moment to honor and embrace it. Once it was flying at full mass. Life returned to their normal.

Pops stood before them all with his hands behind his back. "What do we do?"

"We fight because we believe." When the guys shouted it back to him. I remembered the same saying being chiseled into John's headstone.

"We fight with?"

"Honor."

"Until?"

"Death."

There was something to what they said, it had a specific meaning to it. I couldn't remember the exact entry John had made from it. It was bugging me not knowing what it was. He spoke of his military brothers not the SOA like I originally thought. I would have to pull it out and look later.

"Get down here and count them out with us pussy."

They did a set of ten one armed pushups before they switched to the other arm with a loud whoop they let out in between. Kyle did them too. But he was a lot slower than they were. The rest of them all moved together as one and didn't miss a beat. Without even looking up they just knew what the others were doing. Even when they thought they were done, they got over ruled.

"Did I tell you to stop yet." Pops put his foot in the middle of Kyle's back then leaned his arms on top of his leg. Applying his weight to make it even more of a difficult task to do. "Pick up the pace, Brandon. Your ass is lagging behind."

After watching the vigorous and grueling routine these guys were put through. No wonder they all had such fabulous and muscled up bodies. The moto was a strong sound body made a strong sound mind. But sometimes, that really wasn't the case.

We passed Kyle standing doubled over trying to catch his breath. While the rest of the guys went on to the next thing they had to do.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm in terrible shape."

"You think you are in bad physical condition? I don't even know what the hell that would make me then."

"I am compared to them. They do it every day."

"Brandon, move your ass." Pops was yelling at him once again. Just like he had been all morning to keep up, go faster, try harder and don't stop doing it.

"I gotta go."
We followed Pops into a large building. There was an office area for authorized personnel only. "Stay right here in this spot. Do not move or even think about moving until I return. Is that clear ladies?" Nicole and I both nodded. "Gemma, do you understand?"

"Why are you picking on me for?"

"Because you have a definite listening problem. Do you understand my request of not moving from this spot?"

"I'm not slow. I get what you are saying to me."

Pops was mumbling to himself when he opened the door to go inside the office. Gemma just had that effect on people.

The guys were all wrapped in towels while we walked down the hallway. They definitely kept a scheduled routine all day including when to shower. But, Gemma just couldn't help herself. You could see it coming from a mile away as she eyed each one of them. Her hand grabbed Meat's towel and she took it with her.

Gemma tossed the towel over her shoulder. "Goddamn, what an ass you've got, sweetheart."

It didn't seem to bother Meat at all. He just kept walking with them completely naked. "If you think it's good, Gemma. You should see my front."

"Well, I'm waiting. Don't hold out on me."

Before anything happened farther. We heard Pops behind us clearing his voice. He took the towel and tossed it back to Meat.

"If this comes off again, you and I will spend time rehashing appropriate behavior."

"Yes, Sir." Meat wrapped himself up and gave Gemma a quick wink before he went to catch up with the others.

"I totally see why they call you Meat now." Hell, I think it was a clear statement as to why by seeing him naked. She didn't need even make a comment on it.

"You are starting to get on my nerves. I do not tolerate being defied, Gemma."

"Yeah, I get that a lot. But, I didn't flash him one pretty little smile. You should be proud of me."

"You're the poster child for why no women are allowed past the gate."

"Yeah, I get that shit a lot too."

"You just have to get the last word in don't you?" She only smiled at him with nothing spoken back. Then waited until he walked ahead of us.

"No I don't."

Pops was quick to get past me and Nicole. He stood inches facing Gemma. "You should be glad you are not a man. Or I'd..."

"You'd what? Don't let that shit stop you, sweetheart. I can hold my own with any man."

"Get them out of my sight."
"Yes, Sir."

We got a new guard. I had a feeling we would go through many of them before it was all said and done. He took us to an area where Gemma could have a smoke. Maybe it would calmer her shit down a little. No, not even, who was I kidding.

"Where are we going now?"

"To eat breakfast."

You could have heard a pin drop when we walked in because all noise and conversations subsided then. All eyes were on us and I felt like the last pork chop left on the plater.

"Just keep walking girls." Nicole went around us leading the way to what the hell we were supposed to do here. "Some of them haven't seen a woman in months. All they have is their memories, imagination and a hand. So, don't get them riled up, Gemma." We both knew if anyone could get to them, it was her. I don't think there was a man here from twenty one to older who wouldn't have taken her on by the looks they gave as we passed by.

Once we went through the food line and set down with the guys at their table, it returned to a noisy room full of chatter. Pops was eying Gemma with scrutiny the entire time. He found her to be trouble, imagine that shit. She usually was no matter where she went.

"What? I didn't do anything this time."

"I am going to put you in fatigues and combat boots. Maybe that will help tone it down a little."

"Probably not, Sir. Gemma will look hot in boots too. She's like the hot naughty mommy I never had. I think we should keep her around for a while." Meat thought he was funny. So did the guys. But Pops, not so much.

"Maybe running a few extra miles will take the funny out of you guys."

The other guys didn't like Pops solution to the problem. Those near Meat smacked him on the back of the head. One even threw something at him off their tray. "Asshole, shut up already."

It was exactly what he made them do too. A five mile run was where they went. Pops fired up a jeep. "You three are with me." I didn't care very much for the way he said it either. I felt a punishment coming our way.

Before a giant rock wall, we stood. He hooked a harness around each of our waist. "Getting going ladies."

"What the hell is this supposed to prove?"

"You said and I quote, Gemma. You can hold your own with any man. Are you backing down from it now? Tell me you can't do it and this stops here."

"You know I'll never do that shit."

"Then start climbing and prove it."

"What about you? Are you gonna do it too?" Gemma put her hand on her hip and she wouldn't back down from him. Which, she was taking Nicole and I right along with her on this one.

Pops didn't even wear a harness. He was half way up the giant wall before we even began. I had a
hard time even getting my footing on this tiny rocks that stuck out from it. My legs just didn't part and move that way.

"I'll see you at the bottom, Gemma." Pops taunted her when he reached the top of it and was on his way back down.

"Asshole."

"Ladies, what is taking so long?" He was having a good laugh at our expense.

Nicole had gotten farther than any of us. My foot slipped off when I reached for the next rock. I grabbed for another rock to hold on to but I couldn't any longer. The harness stopped my fall by banging me off the wall. It made my side burn where I hit.

"You're done, Tara." Pops helped me down by lowering me on the harness with the rope. I was never so happy to see the ground. I unzipped my sweatshirt and shed it. I was hot as hell after doing it.

Nicole huffed and puffed her way to the top. "Free fall down." I didn't know what he meant but she did. She planted her feet against the wall and pushed off from it. It didn't take her long to get down that way.

"Are you ready to give up yet, Gemma?"

"Fuck you."

"Okay. We will do this your way then."

It took her forever but she did it. She didn't have as good of luck coming down like Nicole did. He had to help her out of the tangled up rope.

The next exercise was shooting. We were each standing before a table with a gun and safety head gear laying on it. With a large silhouette target out from us.

Gemma aced it with him. Pops didn't seem surprised at all she did. Nicole went after her. She wasn't a bad shot just not hitting the target like he thought she should. So, she had to do it all over again. Then came me. I couldn't hit shit. When the gun was empty he tossed down a box of bullets.

"It won't reload itself."

"I don't know how to do it."

"Then, it's time you learned, Tara. I'm not Kyle and I will not baby you. Do you think the enemy will ask if you know how to before they shoot and kill you? No, they don't. Get to it."

There was always one remedial student in a group. It was obviously me. Because I was the same when we moved to hand combat as he called it. I had no instinct to be mean or fight back. Hell, I couldn't even keep up with Nicole and Gemma.

At least the next place we went to. It wasn't us Pops was after to do it. It was the obstacle course each Marine had to complete within a certain amount of time allowed.

"Nicole and Tara, you get to sit this one out. You're up Gemma."

She truly was a tough old bitch that never gave up. Almost as tough as the man she went up against today. She didn't give up either until it came to the muddy low crawl under barbwire. If her hair
hadn't got tangled up in it. I don't think she would have then either.

"Are you ready to call it a truce with me?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

We were about as muddy as Gemma once we got her freed from underneath it. Pops pulled her pack of smokes out of the sweatshirt she tossed up on the hood of the jeep.

"Can I bum one?"

"Yeah."

Before he lit his up, he lit Gemma's up with her lighter. They came to mutual respect with one another. Maybe not a friendship or complete understanding. But it was the lesson I thought we were to get from it all.

"What the hell happened to you three?"

"Don't ask."

It was what all the guys asked when we came back. It was our response to the same question too. All but Kyle. He had a different type to ask us.

"Which one of you pissed him off?"

We pointed to the culprit as we made our way past them to our room. He only laughed and didn't comment back.

After we got cleaned up it was dinner time. Our guard was taking us to eat. I was personally too damn tired to chew even. My side ached from the huge bruise it left behind.

Kyle must not have been in the mood to eat either. He had his huge book in his hands propped up against a tree reading it. But when I saw the other thing he had. I wanted to know why he had Julia's stuff out with it.

"Hey."

"Hey."

"Ma'am you need to stay with us. I have a direct order to make sure you do."

"It's okay. I'll stay with Tara while you eat." He seemed reluctant but finally went on with Gemma and Nicole.

He went back to reading his book after they left. "Do you want me to go, Kyle?"

"No, I don't."

"For someone who is leaving and doesn't have any interest in this anymore. You are putting a lot of effort in it."

"I still have to know what the truth really is. They are connected just like we are, Tara."

"What?"
"I don't remember when I was a kid about the crows like my mom spoke about in her book. Honestly, they didn't come to me until I met you. I've always had a fascination with them. But, it was you who brought it out. Everything, evolves around you, Tara. All of it does. I didn't really get that part until now."

"That doesn't make any sense to me."

"I can't tell you. If I do, it can possibly change the outcome of it. Read this again. Don't read the words on the page. Feel my mother's emotions. Then I think you will understand it better. All of her words are not just about John. It is believed whenever a large flock of crows are seen in flight. The looker is being watch over by the goddess, Morrigan."

While Kyle read his book. I started at the beginning of Julia's again. I was so tired from the day, I yawned a few times. I rubbed my side too because it continued to hurt.

He stretched out on the ground and I accepted him as a pillow for my head to lay down on. Even though he never extended me an invitation to do so. If I stayed like this for long, I would be out like a light.

Kyle laughed when he answered his cell. "Yes, Tara is with me. Do you want to talk to her?" At first I froze because I instantly thought it was someone else. I left my phone in the room. "It's Ellie." As he handed it to me.

"Hey, honey. How are you and the boys? What did you do today?"

They all went swimming at the pool. Then played at the park. It wore Thomas out because went to sleep early. Kenny was watching television. She was waiting for the cake she baked with Kyle's aunt to cool so she could frost it.

"It sounds like you had a fun day. Kiss the boys for me."

"Do I have to kiss Kenny?"

"Just kiss Thomas for me then. I love you guys and I will see you soon. Be good." I handed it back to Kyle once Ellie said her goodbye. From her voice I could tell the kids were fine where they were.

"Your abs are rock hard." I shifted my head around trying to get back to a comfortable spot to read again.

"You're not laying on my abs, girl." When I turned my head Kyle started laughing. "You actually looked. I can't believe I got you to do it."

"That just wrong you little shit." It was the most playful he had been in a long time with me. I wanted to play back so I started tickling him.

"Oh, that's how you want to play, Tara." He had me overpowered in seconds. I was on the ground on my back with my arms pinned. "Do you surrender to me?"

"If I said yes?"

"It is the inevitable too. It's just a matter of when you do it."

"I really wish you two would just get it over with and do the nasty already. You are killing the rest of us." They were done eating. As Meat stood over us.
Our morning started off just like the day before. The loud trumpet played for us at approximately 4:45 a.m. We didn't even fight it today. Not even Gemma. We put on the clean t-shirt and shorts we were given when we turned in the muddy ones from yesterday.

The guard lead us outside to the same field. We all set on the grass waiting for the guys to come out. But they never did. The same routine at 5:45 and at 6:00 a.m. happened too. We stood as they raised the flag up high.

"Pops said to tell you. He is very proud of you ladies for getting up and out here like you are supposed to. Although, it wasn't necessary today. But since you are up and out of bed already. Let's go get some breakfast." Even the guard found humor in this shit. We could have stayed in bed longer.

The mess hall wasn't as full yet as early as it was. There were only a couple of guys at their table when we set down at it.

"Why are you up so early when you don't have to be?"

"I couldn't sleep. We're leaving at noon. I've already called Jax and gave him the location of where to meet us at and when. You need to be packed and ready to go."

"How are they getting into Mexico?"

"Marcus set it up and is helping them get across the border. I didn't ask how and I don't even want to know."

"Hey, Kyle. We want to go to Mexico too. We should be there when you get the boys." There it was from Gemma. It took her a while to approach it. But it finally came up just like I knew it would.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it's no place for the three of you to be. This is not a fun vacation spot we are going to. You're not going."

"Yes, we are. I'd like to see you stop me." Once again Gemma expressed the same thing to him she had Jax.

"Gemma, I promised Nero I would not let anything happen to you. You're wasting your time because you are not going."

"Sure." Was then end of the debate they were having. But I had heard the same type of sure come out of her mouth before. It was nowhere near over with.

It was quiet through the rest of the meal. We went back to the room to shower and pack up our stuff. They did the same thing of touching the fallen brothers wall while we boarded a huge bus this time.

Gemma set with Meat. He was already planning all the ways they could get in trouble on this trip. Nicole and I set together far away from them. Boomer took the seat behind us. He was messing with her and we hadn't even left yet. "You better stop it." He didn't heed her warning as he kept messing up her hair and playing with her ears.
He finally got her attention. Although I don't think it was the kind he actually wanted from her. She was once again smacking the shit out of him. "Damn it woman. Why are you being so hostile for?"

No one expected her to break down crying. It became quite quickly.

There was only one person Nicole wanted to be near her. It wasn't me or her brother. She went straight to Gemma. "It's okay, sweetheart." They formed a bond I wasn't aware of until now.

"Nicole, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry." Boomer was hurting too. He leaned his head back against the seat and closed his eyes. I'd been there and done that shit. I leaned over the seat gave the bill of his cap a friendly smack to get his attention.

"It will be okay. Nicole cares about you. She is just having trouble dealing with things. Give her some time." I finally got a slight smile from him.

The noise level exceeded before when a guy I hadn't seen yet got on the bus. "What the hell? You guys are having a party and didn't invite me?" They all seemed to know him as he was welcomed on by many of them.

"When did you get back?"

"A couple of weeks ago." He took the seat with Kyle in front of me. "Who might you be, honey?"

"Tara."

He was more than leaning over the seat. If he came back any farther he would have been in my lap. He took my hand and kissed the back of it. "It's a pleasure to meet you. It can be an extreme pleasure for the both of us."

"Sit your ass down and leave Tara alone." He got turned around in the seat by Kyle.

"Aw, are you sweet on that little girl, Kyle?"

"Shut up." That was the end of it as Kyle went back to reading his book.

This was going to be another long trip to where ever in the hell we were going now. I put my head against the window and must have drifted off.

"Tara." Nicole woke me to let me know we were taking a rest stop. I had to go to the restroom anyway and I wanted something to drink.

As soon as I did my business I got back on the bus and read more of Julia's book.

*When an inner situation is not made conscious, it appears as fate.*

*We are spinning our own fates. Good or evil never to be undone.*

"Never to be undone. Son of a bitch…." I went and set right beside him. "Ha, you're not as sly as you thought, you little shit. I figured it out on my own."

"What did you figure out, Tara?"

It reminded me of Abel when he got something right. I boasted a little while I beamed spitting out those words out to Kyle.

"Okay."
"That's all you got to say is okay?"

"Good job. But that's not it, girl."

"Damn it." Again, I reminded myself of my son. I might have pouted just a little while I went back to my own seat. Because obviously I was wrong about it.

"What does love mean to you?" Kyle turned around to talk to me. This was a first on this trip. Him approaching me.

"I know it must be a choice you make. If you're going to make it work out with the person you love."

"Oh my sweet Tara. Love is rarely a choice. Not the best kind anyway."

"Is Kyle bothering you?" The guy before returned to set in front of me. "Here, I got all the ladies a package." He handed me a packet of Pop Rocks.

"No thanks. I don't really eat much candy."

"Don't you know what these are for, honey?"

"What?"

He basically told Kyle if he didn't show me, the guy would. Kyle's argument back was I was too sweet for it, blah, blah, blah. It irritated me I was once again not included in anyone's conversation they had about me.

"Kyle, will you just show me already damn it."

"Okay, I will."

Kyle shook some from the packet into his mouth. Came back to set by me and pressed his tongue against mine. He held his mouth to me until the popping sensation had stopped going off in our mouths. He then went to my ear said it softly. "Imagine those on your clit popping while it gets licked." I got a little lick to the ear too before he moved back to his seat.

"Tara. Are you okay, girlfriend?" Nicole waved her hand in front of my face when I didn't answer her.

"Yeah, I'm good."

"Are you doing okay back there, Tara?"

"I'm fine, Kyle. But your time will come too." He laughed at me and went back to reading his book. I don't think he took me seriously. So, I went back to reading as well.

For the hours we drove while I tried to tie the pieces together. The puzzle had gotten so huge; I wasn't sure what I had missed anymore. Then I found another one of her entries. After I read it twice. I thought of what Kyle had told me.

"Did you read your mother's book? Yeah, I read it. I don't know what to say about it. There is a lot of shit in there I can relate to. It's almost like the past has come around again and we are playing it out the same way. Until their fate takes us down with it too. They say it's what you make of life. I say it's up to fate. It's woven in my soul."
"We are playing it out the same exact way." I was over the seat swiftly shaking on Kyle's shoulder. "It's because we never change the way it gets played. So, the course of fate never changes."

"It took you long enough. Keep going, Tara. You are getting real close."

"Can't you just tell me the rest of it, Kyle?"

"No. I won't tell you."

"Fuck it." I went back to Julia's book again. Trying to find something else I had missed previously. But I hadn't by the time we stopped.

"Tara is going back to Charming with her husband."

"Husband." His head snapped around to look at me. Then went back to talking with Kyle. "I must have missed a lot of this story, brother."

As we gathered our bags they kept on with their little conversation. "She is going to break your heart, man."

"Yes she will. But it will be damn fun until then."

"I can hear you, you know."

"I know you can, girl. It comes down to what you do about it now."

We all wanted to move around and stretch our legs while Pops went to buy us all hotel rooms for the night. Nicole and Gemma were my roommates. We threw our stuff inside and they went off somewhere together. They asked if I wanted to go but I had reading to do.

As I came to the section I hadn't read before it all fell in place. Well, maybe not all of it. But most of it. I grabbed my room key and purse on my way out the door.

"Hey, which room is Kyle's?"

First I knocked on the door. When he wouldn't answer me, I beat on it. "I'm not going away. So you might as well let me in."

"Tara, what are you doing?" His voice made me turn around to see him standing behind me.

"Oh, I thought you were ignoring me."

Kyle inserted his key in the door. "You can come in if you want to."

He set down on the bed with his food sack in hand. "Do you want some?"

"No thanks. I know you are the past because you are like the good John. The John that could walk the line between good and evil. Who still wanted to do the right thing. I get Ellie is the future of where it will go. I'm the present but I don't understand my role in it. Or what I am supposed to do."

"Okay."

"Stop saying that to me. Will you just tell me damn it?"

"I can't. You have to figure it out on your own, Tara. It won't mean anything to you, if I tell you." Kyle opened the door for me to show me the way out. "When you want me, you know where to find
"I'm glad you're taking pleasure in this."

"Not yet baby. But that's coming too." Those were his last words to me before he closed the door.

"Fine, be like Jax and not tell me anything. See if I care."

The door came back open rather swiftly. "Who did you say I was like? Say it again I dare you to."

"Don't make me take extreme measures, Kyle."

"Don't even start with me, Tara."

"You two are obviously feeling the effects of sexual tension. I don't know why you don't do something about it already."

"Shut up, Meat." We both said to him as Kyle slammed his door shut and I went to some damn place around here.

There really weren't many places in this town to go. A few places to eat and a couple of bars. With that, you pretty much seen it all.

It wasn't until I passed around the third or fourth old couple, I even noticed them. They were all dressed up. Some so feeble they held on to the other just to walk. It was an invasion of the blue haired people. They all went in the same direction too.

Curiosity and killing time I guess was why I followed after them to see where they went to. It was a simple lot with a lattice gate all the way around it. It was the honor system of putting fifty cents into a wooden box for a movie. I didn't have any change so I stuck in a dollar bill. While waiting my turn to go inside.

Everyone single one of them were old. Weathered wood benches in a line were the seating. Beautiful flowers were planted along the fence and around the huge projector screen in the front. I've never seen anything like this before. It was their social gathering on a steamy Saturday night. Yet the gentlemen had on suits and ties. The ladies were in dresses and some with adorable matching hats.

When it began playing it was a black and white motion picture flashed on the grey screen. It was a classic film; Casablanca. I heard the name of it a million times but never watched it. Several couples set so close together while they held hands. It was the sweetest thing ever.

"I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." That line in the movie made me start blubbery as a diehard romantic. It was a tender bittersweet love story. It was about a man and a woman who were in love, and who sacrificed their love for a higher purpose.

"Here dear."

"Thank you."

The little old woman who could barely move on her own. Handed me a Kleenex as she rested her frail body down on the bench beside me.

"This is my husband's favorite movie. No matter how many times I watch it, it never seems familiar to me. We had our first date right here fifty six years ago."

"How sweet. I can't believe it's still here."
"We bought it after we got married. Never made a penny on the investment other than the joy it brings to others. I come here every Saturday night. Since I lost him, this is where I still feel like he is close by me."

She was ripping my heart out listening to their love story she told me. All the things they did together, the years they spent in love. How lonely she was without him now.

"What does love mean to you? If you don't mind me asking." She probably found it to be an odd question coming from a stranger she just met. But, you know I asked anyway.

"I feel love is when you touch each other's soul in a way no other can ever do. Love has to be trusting along with respectful to the other person. When you have differences you work them out with love in your heart. So many these days don't love for eternity. They only are in love for the moment. When you find a connection of two true hearts. You will know it." The look on my face must have clued her in. "Did I say something wrong?"

"I love my husband. I really do. But I don't trust him anymore. Not that I am more trustworthy than he is really. I've hid things from him and lied to him. It was when it involved our son. I'm not sure I can ever get past it. He is an innocent child and I am always going to protect him."

Her withered and wrinkled hand covered mine. A kind smile was what she brought forward. "We all have to make decisions in this life. If you really love your husband. You will find forgiveness in your heart."

"And if I can't?"

"Then maybe you should ask yourself. What does love mean to you? What can you live with and live without?"

"I feel so much guilt. I don't think I can answer those questions honestly today."

We were the last ones to walk out. She went the opposite direction as I did. After I checked my phone I missed several call. They were looking for me because I had been gone so long off on my own. I called Gemma to let her know I was fine.

On the way back to the hotel. I stopped to get a bottle of Coke. I was thirsty as hell. Then I realized what I still had in my purse. I'd been carrying it around. "I told you not to make me take extreme measures."

They were setting out in chairs in front of our motel room doors. "Chris...I mean Meat. Can you do me a favor?" Once I told him what I actually wanted he had someone else do it for me. Sure it was playing dirty with Kyle. But I did warn him.

As soon as Crazy Love by Van Morrison started blaring he came outside. "You think you can give me your pretty little smile and play me a song. Then it's all good now."

"Maybe not make it all good. But maybe a little better." I took his face in my hands like he had done with me so many times before. "Just breathe with me, boy and let's dance. In a place where we are not supposed to under the stars. When you get older it won't be those times you made a complete ass out of yourself you will regret. It will be those times you wasted by doing it nothing at all. I think that's really close to what you told me."

"I wonder, how Tara knew about it, Nicole?"

She smiled so sweetly at her brother. "A lucky guess."
They all watched us make complete asses out of ourselves but cheered us on to do so anyway. Kyle kept space between us and that was fine with me. I knew he had to. But it didn't mean I had to also. I let go of his hand and put my arms around his neck.

"Really? This is not us keeping our distance from each other, Tara."

"I know. This isn't what I am supposed to do next either. But I am going to do it anyway. I don't want to be an old woman sitting on a bench watching a movie by myself."

"What?"

Kyle didn't stand a chance and he knew it too. Before I had time to think about it, I acted on it. I pushed my tongue against the inside of his mouth. Loving the way his body tensed up as the pressure between us only increased. He moaned, putting his arms around my waist without an inch of space between us now. I could almost believe his heartbeat was my own as his tongue danced with mine. While we kept moving to the music more perfectly than our bodies ever had before.

"I can hear her heart beat for a thousand miles. And the heavens open every time she smiles. Take away my trouble, take away my grief. Take away my heartache, in the night like a thief. She give me love, love, love, crazy love. She give me love, love, love, love, crazy love."

The song was officially over and I let go of him. "Oh, hell no. That isn't how this dance ends this time, girl."

"I thought you respected the fact I am married and this couldn't ever go there. Kyle, you are the one who keeps telling me this repeatedly."

"I do respect it. It's just right now, I respectfully don't give a shit anymore."

They were all saying things to us as we walked to his room together; that a boy, go claim your woman, it's about damn time, wrap your shit up man, be gentle with him and fuck this is going to be bad when her old man finds out. I ignored it all too.

Kyle stuck the key in the door and Boomer was surprised we were together. Even more surprised by Kyle's demand as he tossed the key on the night stand between the beds.

"Get out."

"Where the hell am I supposed to go for the night?"

"Don't care." Kyle slammed the door in Boomer's face after he shoved him out the door.

"This is bullshit, Kyle. It's bros before…Tara." Poor Boomer he was screaming it through the door. But Kyle had a rebuttal for him.

"You don't want to go there with me. It wasn't brothers before you did my sister."

"Okay, I'll give you that one."

"Maybe I should go Kyle so he can have a place to stay."

"He will be fine. Someone will let him stay with them."

Kyle kept walking me backwards until my back was against the wall and I had nowhere left to go. "I was wrong Tara. I can't just walk away from you. Not yet." The rising of his chest pushed against me with every hard breath he took in and let out.
"Why?"

"Maybe, I like you."

"You like me."

"Maybe, I like you a lot, Tara. I don't care what is right or wrong anymore. I've tried to get you out of my head. It always says; who cares. Then my heart whispers; you do stupid." He lifted me up until my legs were wrapped around him. "If you tell me you don't feel the same way, I will walk away right now and never bring it up again. But if you can't."

Of course, I couldn't force those words to come out of my mouth. It was hell being fucked up. I knew what the right thing to do was. My head told me so. But other body parts were screaming something totally different out to me.

So hard his body was pressed against mine. I felt the ridges of the wall in my back through my shirt. His hands rested on my hips as my arms held on around his neck. The fiery kiss was felt by more than just my lips. He finally let me slide down his body until my feet reached the floor.

Our kisses only deepened and I was dizzy with the fight we had to take over dominance of one another. We moved off the wall in several different places switching whose body was against it as we went. The small table held my weight when I somehow ended up on top of it.

"If you want to stop. Tell me now."

Since I didn't, Kyle stuck his hand down in the glass of ice water. The cube went in his mouth halfway sticking out to tease me with it.

The buttons were undone quickly on my shirt. He grazed the cold piece of ice around on my stomach. Then up on top of the flesh of my breast that peeked from my bra. Until the cube was melted. The trail of water it left wasn't wasted. His tongued followed the same path up to my mouth where we kissed some more.

Again we were moving our bodies so quickly around the room I could have gotten completely lost in this small space. His shirt had come off I think after mine did. Hell, I didn't know or really cared at this point.

"After everything has happened. I can't look at this the same. I don't look at us the same way either."

"Look at it this or us the same?"

"A hundred days have made me older since the last time that I saw your pretty face when you were gone. A thousand lies have made me colder. And I don't think I can look at this the same. But all the miles that separate us. Disappear now when I'm dreaming of your face. I'm here without you. But you're still on my lonely mind

I think about you, baby. And I dream about you all the time. When it's all said and done. Everything I know, and anywhere I go. It will just get harder between us but it still won't take away my love. And tonight, girl, its only you and me."

Kyle pulled me by the band of jeans to where he sat on the bed. "It's just you and me here, no one else. I'll burn in hell for it later. When tomorrow comes, I may not get to see you again for a very long time. Stay with me tonight, Tara."

Kyle made me find my wilder side I never knew existed before. I definitely always felt wanton and wickedly sexy with him. I couldn't deny it. Was it part of the connection we have? I wasn't sure. Did I care? Not at this particular moment. With my burning need for his gentle loving touch.
Even with all my fears on the surface and out there. My anger with the world riding high. There was a good chance I was falling victim to lust, the lust of him I carried around.

My hand stroked Kyle's face as his arms went around my waist. They didn't stay around me for long. Neither did my jeans because he undid the button and pushed them down to the floor around my feet.

The position of being on top of man wasn't something I felt I could ever enjoy. It was where I ended up when he took me to the bed with him. He let his hands roam from my back down to my thighs and still wanted to keep kissing as we went.

Kyle whispered it in my ear. It brought a smile to my face but still. "That's not going to happen."

"Never say never, Tara. Every time I do, it comes back to bite me in the ass."

With a couple of alternate kisses from him to my nose to my lips. We both laughed. But it just turned back to the hot heat between us quickly.

"You better tell me no soon, girl. If you don't."

When I said nothing Kyle pushed my hand down to his jeans and left the decision up to me while we still kissed. But, timing was never one of the things we had on our side since we've known each other.

Loud banging came on the door followed by. "I know Tara is in there with you, Kyle because she is not in her room. I caught Nicole and Boomer together. So open the door."

"Fuck, I just can't catch a break."

"If you don't open the door before I count to three. I will kick it in."

"Pops is bluffing right?"

"No, he is not." Kyle gave me one more quick kiss before tossed me my clothes and he went to open the door. "Sorry."

"You in there." Boomer got shoved in the room by Pops. "Tara, let's go."

"I'm really starting to hate you, Boomer."

"Well, I'm sorry, Kyle. It's not my fault you were in here getting your freak on with Tara. I brought tacos, want some?"

"No, I don't want no damn tacos." A loud scrunching noise came followed by a white bag bouncing out in the parking lot.

"That was my dinner damn it." Shortly after all that. Their door slammed shut.

"I swear it's like taking care of children sometimes. Goodnight, Nicole. Tara, I want to talk to you." Nicole told Pops the same and went inside our room.

"I know you probably think I am being hard on Kyle. You distract him and you're going to get him killed. If not by that, by your fucked up biker husband. I'm not preaching to you about what you should or shouldn't do. You are both grown adults. All I am saying is give it a rest until this shit is over. Stay in your room and away from him for the rest of the night, okay?"
"Okay, sorry."

We both witnessed four of his Marines coming back to the hotel with Gemma along with a shit load of liquor bottles in their hands. "Son of a bitch." Maybe Pops was right. He did have a huge babysitting job on his hands tonight.

Kyle came on the bus after we did. He dropped off a cup of coffee to Gemma on his way back to his seat. He handed one to Nicole and then one to me.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Nicole was in a serious conversation with Gemma from the looks of things. Since they didn't invite me to be a part of it. I stayed in my seat.

Kyle set by me and handed me a small sealed white envelope. "Will you do me a favor and make sure Zac gets this for me?"

"Why can't you give it to him?"

"Just case. Will you do it?"

"I'll take it. But when you get back you can give it to Zac yourself. While you're here. About last night…"

"I'd like to tell you I am sorry about what happened, Tara. But I'm not. That it's alright even though we both know it isn't. Sometimes doing the wrong thing, is the right thing at the time." He gave me a kiss on the cheek before going back to his seat.

When the bus made the next stop it was time for Gemma, Nicole and myself to leave with Pops. We got our bags and we said our goodbyes.

"This is where you kiss me and tell me goodbye, Tara."

"I'll just say until you come back with the boys."

It was seconds until they were giving him hell. "You should leave Tara's tongue here, Kyle."

We stood with Pops until the bus was on its way to the make the plane to Mexico.

"We have fifteen minutes before we depart. If you want to use the restroom, now is the time to do it."

"Well, you are the boss, sweetheart and in control."

"Good. I'm glad we finally have that established, Gemma." Pops seemed pleased with her comments.

"Sure." There was that damn sure that was so fucking unsure coming out of her again. "Let's go to the bathroom girls."

"I don't have to go."

"Yes you do, Tara." Gemma was on one side of me and Nicole on the other practically dragging me along with them.
"Did you get it?" We no more made inside and shut the door.

Nicole took a blue folded up piece of paper out of her back pocket. "I lifted it off Kyle and he never knew."

"Good job, sweetheart."

"What the hell did you take from Kyle?"

"His orders so we can get on base."

"Why didn't you or Gemma tell me and clue me in on it?"

"I love you, girlfriend. But you don't exactly have a poker face when it comes to Kyle. If we had told you my brother would have known something was going on. I'm sorry I didn't. Do you want to know what we are going to do now?"

After we all climbed up on the back of the toilet and went out the damn window again. They clued me in on the next part of the plan.

"Gemma, we can't steal a car."

"We're not stealing it. We're just borrowing it. If it makes you feel any better, we can bring it back later on." She didn't listen to one word I said as she got behind the wheel. Although, she was having trouble hot wiring it.

"Let me, Gemma." Nicole had it going within a couple of times trying. "I used to do this with the jeeps when I was younger. So I could drive them around the base at night."

It wasn't the only thing stolen. When I obviously wasn't looking or simply not paying attention anyway. They stole uniforms from some damn place to get us on base with.

"Take off all your jewelry and put it in your pocket. Make sure to tuck your hair up under the cap with none of it left out in the back. You will have to wipe off some of your makeup too, Gemma. Or they will know we are frauds."

We pulled up to a Marine airport in a stolen vehicle with fake orders for us. Pretending to be other people. What the hell could possible go wrong?

"Let me handle this."

Nicole was fucking amazing. She definitely could talk the bullshit and had some badge to prove it. She threw around terms such as; the gate of departure and plane number, a general's name, don't question her authority, some code to get inside here and I think she made herself an officer. If I wasn't mistaken. I kept waiting for them to pull us all out of the car and handcuff our asses. But, when the gate rose up for us to pass through it. I let out a little relief from not getting caught.

The plan was to stow away. They would never know we were on the plane until it landed. By then, it would be too late for them to do anything about it. It was actually pretty easy. They were in some bullshit debriefing when we snuck on and went to the back where all their bag was stored.

The take off wasn't the smoothest on this small cargo plane as I would have like for it to be. I kept clutching on to the small piece of carpet we set on. I took deep breaths because my fear of heights wasn't any better while being up in the air.
"Oh shit." One of the guys came back to what Nicole referred to as the hole to get something. Since we were discovered. I thought our plan of getting to Mexico was foiled and they would make us go back now.

"Kyle, man you gotta see this shit."

"Why? Why?" Each time Kyle said it, he only got louder. "Why didn't you listen to me, Tara?"

"Because Abel is my son and I will not be left behind. I can take whatever the hell comes with it."

"Oh really." He was literally dragging me by the hand behind him across the plane. When he opened the side door I panicked and freaked out. "Look, do you see how far down it is to reach land. The plane doesn't make another stop until Cuba. Do you really wanna go there illegally? Trust me, you don't."

Kyle threw three huge packs at Gemma, Nicole and myself. "Suit up baby, you're in it now. There is only one way off this plane. You gotta jump, girl."

As the three of us were putting on the camo jumpsuits they gave us. I made a very good observation. "Maybe, we should have thought this shit through a little better, Gemma."

"Maybe."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

I'll try to get the other parts out soon. Our outlaw women are just beginning their dangerous and outlandish journey to get the boys back.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert!
Chapter 27, Brotherhoods, PART 5

Chapter 27

Brotherhoods

Brotherhood - A group or organization who have the same interest joined together as one.

There will be seven parts to this instead of only six because it's gotten to be so long. I am editing PART 6 today and will post it later on this evening. So, keep in mind until I get it all posted some of it might not make total sense yet.

My lovely Laura had a sweet song for this story. It really fits it well. I enjoy you all giving them to me. Smooches to you babe! I also worked in the picture you sent me. It's funny, you know it is.

PART 5 of 7

"No, we can't just land for a few minutes so you can get off. We are here illegally in this country. If we get caught, we all get put in a Mexican prison and forgotten about. They are putting their asses and careers on the line to help get the boys back. So, you will jump."

"It was just a suggestion."

Gemma played it off because Kyle was pissed we were here. As they gathered and hooked on to the line extended to their parachute packs. She was getting as nervous as I was about it. Even though she wouldn't admit it. It was considered her strength but often the unspoken was a weakness as well.

"Think of it as bend over baby and let me drive. I need you to relax your body against me. Enjoy the ride down. But let me control all the movements and the fall. I've done this a hundred times with my wife. So, don't worry." Meat was hooking all kinds of things from him up to Gemma. She was going with him.

"I get you Nicole. I know you've done this before." She did have the advantage over us. With Cody's dad she had done it once. She didn't like it much but she knew what to expect at least.

"I'm going to try not to kill us, break our necks or any other important body parts. I've never done it with another person before. Tie your hair up, here is your helmet and put theses goggles on."

Kyle wasn't gentle when he was strapping me to him either. What held us together was tight and binding. One of the other guys' double checked each one of us girls to make sure all harnesses were intact and properly secured. When he hooked up to the line I started to panic. It was getting closer to being our turn.

The giant gaping hole was sucking the wind in and out of me with every breath I took as everyone went through the door. It taunted me only four more and it would be our turn. "I can't do it." The shaking only progressed too worse with each step forward I took. As I tried to find the floor of the plane to sit down on before I passed out. I took him with me. All the harness was yanking on him and he finally took control because I was certain he had enough. Hell, I had enough of this already myself.
"You are doing this if I have to throw your little ass off this plane." Kyle wrapped his arms around my waist. My feet could no longer touch the floor. He squeezed me to him until I couldn't move other than the squirming around I was doing. The struggle to break free but I was going if I liked it or not.

"You two have the strangest ritual of foreplay I've ever seen." Pop rocks daddy, since I didn't know his name, kept talking about other shit I couldn't even comprehend. Probably because my begging and pleading to just let me go to Cuba came out very loudly.

"Let go already." Kyle was prying my fingers off the sliding door I was holding on to it. He might have made my grip loosen up. But I had feet too. I planted them firmly on the door and I wasn't budging. I still lost the fight though.

At the high altitude the instant we exited the plane my goggles fogged up with colder patch of air we hit. I couldn't see anything. It didn't stop me from screaming my head off though. It felt like a windstorm in my mouth and my lips vibrated as we were plunging rapidly in the atmosphere towards the hard dirt of the earth.

The plane was flying farther away from us and it was a cold hard shock to the heart. Our tandem session of joining in the sky together spiraled us downward as the accelerated rate only increased. Until we plateaued out and I felt as though I were merely floating hundreds of feet high in the air. Suspended in time and space, caught in just that moment. Hanging on to the balance of life with it in someone else's control other than my own. Most of my life had been in reality. More than I would ever openly admit to.

Everything appeared as tiny ants on earth below us from what I seen. We would easily smash them if we landed on top of them. We did truly see what was only in our sight and not what was there before our eyes in many ways. I braced myself for what was coming, what would be the outcome and what would be the ending of it.

With my head back and arms out as far as they could stretch. I was falling; flying as free as the crows were. I no longer felt compromised to the overpowering I experienced throughout my life. If this were the destiny I would receive, I would no longer resist it.

Just when my body relaxed enough to accept the fate in store for me. What I had earned in this life. I got another jolt to my system. We were jerked back up from the falling state we were in when the parachute opened up. This would be a more controlled fall now. More of a precise spot to crash land at. More of a destined ending than I expected.

"That was the shittiest landing I've ever seen, brother."

"Get us out of here. Are you okay?" I only slightly nodded to his question. My throat felt raw from screaming where the wind made it almost burn.

It wasn't as if we could move around much wrapped up like mummies in this crap. They had to cut us out of the parachute and harness because we became so tangled up. From tumbling around on the ground we were rolled up in it and couldn't get out. The tangled web had caught their prey and it wouldn't release us. No matter how much we struggled to break free from it.

When they got it off from around my body I was crawling out on my hands and knees to get away from it all. "You are killing me Tara. Slowly but surely." Kyle was out now and not very happy at the moment. "You just had to fight me on the way down didn't you? As hard as we hit the ground, we are lucky we didn't break something."
Every single cellphone around me started dinging, chiming and ringing as the guys turned them back on. They were checking their messages and I still hadn't made it to my feet yet.

"Pops is pissed. I elect you to call him back Kyle."

"Second it."

"I third it. You better call him."

The conversation went about as expected. At least from what I could hear on my end. "I didn't know they were on the plane. What else am I supposed to do with them? I will deal with Jax when he gets here."

Kyle handed the phone to Gemma. Of course she was a little on the reluctant side to take it. But she did. "Hello." That was the extent of the conversation too when she hung up. "Must be bad reception out here."

"You can tell Pops that when he gets here. He's pissed off enough to come to Mexico just so he can yell at you Gemma."

"Pops just likes to pick on me. I don't know what his problem is." Both Nicole and I eyed her when she said it. Was Gemma truly clueless or just in denial.

"What are we going to with them, Kyle?"

"We stay near here just like we planned until Jax and the club gets across the border. We'll find a place until then."

When the hell I missed a heavy wooden crate being tossed from the plane with its own landing gear on, I wasn't sure. All their stuff and our bags were inside of it. Once they got everything out of it. It was stuffed again with the parachutes and put in the nearby trees out of sight.

Each of the guys had several bags to carry with them. I grabbed mine only for Kyle to take it too. The others took Gemma and Nicole's with them. We followed after them with no idea where in the hell we were going or what would come out of this trip.

There was one thing for certain I knew. Jax would be here soon and I would have to face him eventually with everything I'd done. I was positive he wouldn't be happy to see the three of us either.

The longer we walked, the hotter the sun beamed down on us. The air was dryer than I was used to and the humidity was high. It was mostly sand or dirt. You found a few wooded areas which shaded very few spots of green land.

My skin was already feeling the effects of the environment around us. But we girls continued on this journey without a word said about it or a complaint made. It was Gemma who had the hardest time.

They stopped so we could rest because they didn't need it after we walked for a couple of hours or more. Now I completely understood why they were put through those grueling exercises they done. It was so they could push their bodies to continue on when they were given an assignment. This was an assignment of love for children, our children.

"I'm fine now." Gemma drank water from the canteen one of them gave her. She really wasn't fine but insisted she was capable to keep going. Another one of her strengths; dying on the inside but projecting sunshine and rainbows on the outside.
We didn't go but a little longer until we stopped again. "These are your accommodations for the night ladies. Find a spot."

"I don't care what Kyle says. You girls make everything more fun." Meat was on our side. Or well, Gemma's anyway. It didn't seem to bother him at all we tagged along.

Gemma was all smiles when she found a log to park it on. The first thing she did was lit up a smoke. "It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. John would have loved today."

"Why would John liked it so much?"

"It's what he used to do. He was in the airborne division and he told me a lot of stories of jumping out of a plane in the middle of enemy gunfire. From what he said it was amazing they made it out alive. His belief was he had a guardian angel with him the whole time looking out for him. They went into the war boys and came out men. It was when he discovered his love for guns. His squad was the fire team. I thought about him when I was up in the sky and Nero the closer we got to land."

Gemma finished her smoke and pushed the cigarette hard against the log to put it out. Before I could ask her anything else she went on to where the guys had gathered. She defiantly never had a problem finding where the men were.

"Are you okay, girlfriend? You have a bad sunburn. Your skin is bright pink."

With my light complexion I never fared well in the sun. When I pulled the strap on my tank top away from my shoulder, I had a white spot where it rested.

"I have some lotion if you want it. I notice you are keeping your distance from Kyle. So am I until the little vein in his forehead stops sticking out. It's how you know he is really pissed off. But don't worry he won't yell or take it out on you. Sleeping with him; I'd say your safe, Tara."

"We haven't."

"You mean you and Kyle didn't..."

"No."

"Not even once?"

"No."

"Then what the hell have you been doing all this time?"

"You wouldn't believe me even if I told you."

Nicole just gave me a weird look before she joined Gemma with the guys. But she did stay away from her brother, far away. We sort of put him in a bad position by coming.

For the most part I tried to stay far away from everyone and just watched them all. The guys had a definitely routine in place as they set up a little camp site for us. I guess when you do it all the time it becomes a normal for you.

The great outdoors was never personally my thing or something I enjoyed much. They all managed just fine with it, including Gemma and Nicole as they helped out. Their bond only grew stronger as time went on too. For hours they never left each other's sides.

"Why are you just sitting here, sweetheart?"
"I'm just trying to stay out of the way. I'm not as outgoing as you and Nicole are."

"Nicole will make one hell of an old lady. She will be a help to you once you take back over as queen and I'm gone."

"Kyle is taking her and Cody out of Charming. She won't be around long enough to become anybody's old lady."

"That shit will not happen. Kyle is not going anywhere."

"He has to Gemma. Jax will kill him if he stays. No one will change Kyle's mind because he needs to protect his family."

"Obviously, you underestimate my power of persuasion."

Which, obviously I had underestimated Gemma. She went straight to Kyle and probably repeated everything I just said. I don't know what all she went on about but it was a lot. She lifted his face by his chin to make sure she had his complete attention. After she finished whatever spiel she gave him, Came the kiss on the cheek from her, the kiss of death sometimes. As I like to refer to it.

Kyle had the same shocked and confused look on his face when Gemma was done as I always did. He shook off whatever she told him and went back to what he was doing prior to her interrupting.

"Tara, come help us."

We gathered up fire wood like they told us to do. They used it at night to see by and keep the animals away. I truly hoped the animal part was to put a little scare into us and not a real problem.

Gemma was just about ready to put her hands down in the water to splash on her face. The heat was brutal on her. When one of the guys stopped her. "Do not get in the water around here or drink it unless we say it's safe from contamination."

"Okay."

The comfort of turning on a tap for a glass of water was not a reality out here. The harsh facts of the territory were, they had a lot of run off from filth and it ruined the water supply in many areas. Even the crops had been infected with the plague because of it.

We sat quietly and watched as he stuck a silver rod down in the water. Turned on a machine and waited for the readout it gave. It was fascinating what they did know about though. Each of them had several areas of expertise.

"The water is alright. I'll take a couple of buckets of it to boil for drinking from where it comes in at. This might be the only chance you get to bathe for days. I'd do it before the sun goes down and it gets cool out here."

We gathered up our toiletries and stuff to go back down to the water hole we found. The idea of not having a shower for days did not thrill me any. Just from the short period of time we had been here my clothes were already soaked with perspiration.

"Here." Kyle handed me his towel and it was the extent of our conversation. Gemma and Nicole got one from the guys too. They came prepared for everything like boy scouts. Us, not so much.

"Come on perverts and give them some privacy."
"You wouldn't say that shit Kyle if it wasn't your sister and your woman. I don't see why we can't at least watch…"

"Go."

Gemma nor Nicole was shy about stripping off their clothes and they jumped in. "What the hell." I followed after them sort of like I had been following behind them this entire trip so far anyway.

The water felt good on my hot skin. I was certain to blister and peel with my sunburn. I did my business and got out. I wrapped up in the towel and sat on a rock while I watched them splash around and have fun.

While I waited on them to be done. I brushed out my hair and put the lotion on Nicole left for me. Only it didn't take them long to get out of the water when we heard them coming back. I hadn't even got my clothes on yet. Gemma and Nicole just got on their towels barley in enough time. When they came down the hill on the dirt path.

"Gemma, don't hold out on me hot mama." Meat turned the tables on her. Hell, she never batted an eye to it either. Before him she stood and opened her towel for his viewing pleasure. "Damn. I'm sure we need to keep you around now."

"Nicole, you gotta pay the toll to pass through honey." Pops rocks daddy was in rare form today. He stuck his leg across the narrow dirt path to a tree. He was playing as the get through on a free pass bridge now.

"The hell I do. Get out of my way dick." She punched him in the thigh and he dropped his leg down to let her pass by without another word spoken about it.

"It's your turn, Tara. Show us your goodies honey." He repeated the same actions with me.

"I really don't have anything to show like they do."

"Sure you do honey and we want to see it." I didn't have to say anything to him because he dropped his arm quickly from around me before I did. "Or not is okay too." When I looked up, at the top of the long hill stood the reason why, Kyle. "I'm just playing with Tara."

"Uh huh. I'm walking the girls back." We followed after Kyle because he wasn't going to leave us alone with them. "I couldn't keep the guys away from there. They are like a pack of dogs in heat around you girls."

"Speaking of being in heat. What is taking you so long to close the deal with Tara? Have you lost your sexual touch, Kyle? You didn't seem to have this much of a problem getting a woman when we were younger." I wanted to shove something in Nicole's mouth when she said it to her brother. It came out of nowhere from her.

Kyle of course knew where she got her information from. As he stopped in front of me with his arms crossed. I looked at the sky then down at the ground to my nails next. Pretty much anywhere I didn't have to look at him directly.

"Wait a minute. You mean to tell me, you two haven't fucked yet."

"Sure Gemma, that's what I want to talk about with the mother of Tara's husband. If we have fucked or not."

Gemma was in the glorious mother mode she was so fucked up with displaying. She took Kyle's arm
and was holding on to him tightly to her so he couldn't get away. She was giving him some wonderful advice like she had me in the past. "It's okay, sweetheart. If you are sexually challenged, we can get you some books or videos to help out. I'll have Nero give you the talk if you want."

"Yeah, Kyle. We can get you the book; Fucking for Dummies. They pretty much have one for everything now." Nicole thought she was funny at first. Now, not so much. He was towering over his sister this time. "I'm just saying."

"Will you girls please stop talking to me? You are killing me." Hell, I was as red as he was. He couldn't take long enough strides from us as rapidly as he walked a head.

"Kyle, is there a place I can plug in my blow dryer?"

"Do you see one?"

"What about this thingy?"

"The power pack is for charging radios and cellphones. Sure, Nicole. We just won't communicate with each other so you can look good."

"You don't have to be an ass about it."

"And the three of you shouldn't even be here."

With our clothes in hand we went in the small tree area from the camp to change into some clean ones. I kept looking around waiting for one of them to jump out at us. But not Nicole and Gemma. They leisurely gabbed while they got dressed.

Once we finished, we hung up the wet towels on tree branches so they could dry. We found our log we three girls called our spot and set down together.

"I do not want to hear that shit. She is my sister. Get the fuck away from me." Kyle had enough of the razzing pop rocks daddy was giving him. He said it loudly enough even we girls started paying attention to their conversation.

"Nicole is not my sister. How about Tara or Gemma then?"

"I don't want to hear anything about them either."

"Are you talking shit about us? Why don't you be man enough to get your ass over here and say it." Gemma was never the shy one. She always made her presences very well known during the good and bad times.

The moves of pop rocks daddy were very smooth. He kissed the back of Gemma's hand and gave her several compliments. I lost track of how many times he tried to seduce each of us today.

"You girls are Charlie's Angels; the sexy sultry provocative brunette, the busty bubbly voluptuous blonde and the sweet seductive sensual raven haired beauty. They like to defy authority and do things their way. We'll start calling them Kyle's Angels." The guys all laughed and agreed to our new names. Except one, he wasn't finding it funny at all. Really he wasn't about us being here either.

"We're still not gonna give you any, sweetheart."

"Damn, it was worth a shot."

After he got the silliness out he set down by us and had a normal conversation. Or I guess as normal
as he could be anyway.

"I am staying over here. Kyle is still a little upset we came on this trip."

"He is just wound too tight; he's been this way since I've known him. He will get over it and he can't stay mad at you. You saved Kyle. Don't let him play as such a hard ass; he is an ole softy on the inside. You actually saved me too. I should be thanking you, Tara."

"What are you talking about?" This guy was more confusing than even Gemma when he spoke. At least I understood part of what she said to me at times.

"He is just running his mouth about nothing like usual. Are you ready to go shoot now?" Kyle joined in our conversation. Although I was really curious to hear what the other one had to say on matter.

"You read and believe in all that gay shit. About witches, potions and frogs. Yet you don't tell Tara the life changing miracle she did."

"It's mythology, gods and crows dumb ass. It is just a coincidence it doesn't mean anything."

"If it doesn't mean anything. Why didn't you tell her? Huh, Kyle?"

"That's my question too. Why doesn't anybody tell me anything? It's as if I don't even exist in your eyes. Everybody knows everything that concerns me but me." My frustration was showing through. It wasn't with just what was going on now. It was everything happening in my life. The things I seemed to longer have any control over because everyone else decided for me.

"I'll tell you anything you want to know honey for a kiss. You know once she kisses me, Kyle. Tara won't want anything to do with you anymore."

"I'm going to go shoot and sight in my gun." Kyle wasn't going to comment back to him or tell me anything either. He left us sitting here talking to ourselves.

"Come on, Tara. You can go with us so I can torture Kyle some more."

They all truly seemed to enjoy giving Kyle a hard time. Even when I said I shouldn't go, he looped his arm with mine and I was going anyway.

All I could do was watch them. I really didn't understand anything they were talking about. They laid on the ground and both of their hats immediately were turned around backwards. Almost simultaneously in fact.

He looked through something and gave Kyle a set of numbers. I covered by ears but the shots were silent. They didn't let out anything but a slight clicking noise. With the naked eye as far away as it was, I couldn't even see what the hell he was shooting at.

"Kyle, I'm starting to think you couldn't hit a five hundred pound pussy with a big red mark on it. Your range is only four hundred and sixty yards at best. You're pulling to the left too much."

"Give it to me again."

"Aw, is your little girlfriend distracting you, Kyle?" It was when he looked over his shoulder and gave me a wink when he said it. The cocky smile. They had the same large body frame. Their facial profiles when I took a long hard look at both of them side by side was uncanny.

"Shut up and give it to me again."
"What are you even shooting at?" The longer I watched the less my eyes could focus on anything.

"Come down here and lay beside me. I will show you how I use it. In fact, I use it much better than Kyle ever thought about." I didn't move an inch from the spot I was standing in. "I don't bite not unless you want me to, honey." I only smiled but still didn't move a muscle. "You really need to learn how to take a joke, Tara. If you're going to hang out with us."

He let me look through the range finder. I didn't realize the distance the bullet was traveling. Five hundred yards was equivalent to almost a third of mile. It's how they surprised the enemy. They waited it out to the perfect moment to attack. No one ever seen them coming because they were so far away and completely out of sight.

"I'm done. Mine is sighted in. Are you going to do yours?"

It was sort of fun to watch them do this. Kyle gave him a bunch of numbers now. He hit is target fast too. "That's why I'm the best at this Kyle."

"Yeah, you keep telling yourself that. I'm going back."

"Are you going to leave me out here alone with your little girlfriend? You know Tara won't be able to resist my charm." This guy was something else. So full of himself. He was very confident I would give him. He reached over and placed his hand on my leg. I slapped his hand a couple of times before he took the hint and moved it away.

"It's not me you have to worry about. She has a husband, remember? Besides, I don't think Tara finds you that charming. If she hadn't got you to move your hand, I would have."

The three of us walked back together. Kyle went on to do something else. But the other one, he kept following me around. He really was like a dog in heat. If he kept it up I would need a rolled newspaper to smack him on the nose with like one too.

"You are driving me crazy."

"I like my women a little on the crazy side. Sleep with one eye open sort of crazy. Steals your wallet kinda crazy. I'm not too much into those crazy bitches that likes to super glue your dick or anything. Although I have dated them too."

"Has anyone ever told you, you and Kyle look a lot a like? Except you have dark hair."

"We used to hear it a lot when we were kids. Our mothers are second cousins or some shit. Kyle has always been the smart one and I'm the fun charming one."

"How old are you?"

"I'm thirty five, why?"

"I never caught what your name is."

"Thomas."

"David, what are you doing?"

"I'm making these for tomorrow. Do you want to help me? Cut this into eight inch strips."
Boomer tossed me a roll of duct tape and laid his knife at my feet. Since I had nothing better to do. I cut up the tape until it was gone. I even wrapped up the stuff like he did with it.

"What is this?"

"Explosives."

"Oh shit." As gently as I could be, I laid it down on the ground.

"Don't worry. You can't get hurt. They aren't live yet. I'll wait until in the morning. Right now they are just fun little go bot trucks to play with. Let's make sure they work."

We were racing them out in the sand. It was fun. I couldn't keep mine going as fast as he did his. After we tried out about ten of them we were finally done.

"How are things going with you and Nicole?"

"She will say a few words to me now and is no longer smacking the crap out of me. So, hell she is warming up to me again."

"Hang in there, Boomer. She will come around."

"The same for you. Kyle does care about you."

"How do you know for sure? I've stayed away from him. The vein in his forehead still is visually protruding."

"The way Kyle looks at you. Like you are always the only woman around him in the world or at least his world. Enough about them. Let's go play with our trucks some more."

At one point we had several of them going at the same time. Some even got stuck in the sand. My fun quickly turned to other emotions. Abel and Cody would love this. They would be out here wanting to race them and making all kinds of noise while they did it. How I missed all the noise my son made. It was the empty silence of a mother's son that would kill you on the inside.

"Are you okay?"

"I miss Abel and all my children."

"Come tomorrow, you will have your son back."

"I really hope so."

The more I thought of my son and what awful things he was experiencing. The more I wanted to breakdown. But I would not do that. I would stay strong until he was in my arms again. Then I would be completely melted from it.

"You have been playing with the same stick in the fire for an hour. Put this on it." Meat gave me a marshmallow to roast. He took some with him everywhere they went to. It had been such a long time since I had one so I stuck it in the fire.

"Thank you." I hadn't really paid much to him before but on his arm was the name; Beth. "Is that your wife's name? I met her when Kyle took me to Popp's house. But I don't think she ever told me what it is."

"Elizabeth is my little girl. She is seven and from my first marriage. My wife raises my daughter just
like her own child. I don't know what I'd do without my wife. I bet her she wouldn't jump out of an airplane with me the first day I met her and she did. She just had to prove me wrong. I knew I was going to marry that girl right then."

"That's a sweet story. A little scary, but still sweet."

We talked over marshmallows. Meat really didn't seem like the marrying kind. He was on his third marriage now. They found him to be a flirt and I wasn't really shocked by it. His hormone level only matched one other person I knew, Gemma.

"I am no different around my wife than I am when I'm away from her. I'm the biggest flirt in the world but it doesn't mean I would do anything."

"She doesn't get mad about it?"

"I didn't say that. She gets so mad sometimes she won't talk to me for days. But she loves me no matter what. I learned the hard way if they really love you, they accept you as you are. If they don't, it will never work."

Kyle handed me and Meat a brown sealed pouch. He had been passing them around to the others too.

"What is it?"

"Dinner."

"I'll catch you later, Tara." Meat gave me a handful of marshmallows before he left. He was truly a nice guy but you had to get past all the things that came out of his mouth. Again, sort of like Gemma.

"Kyle, I know you're still mad at me."

"I'm not mad but you shouldn't be here."

It was all I could get him to say. So, I opened my dinner to see what I got. There was canned chicken with mayo and crackers. It even had a tiny wooden spatula for spreading it. A granola bar, a juice box, a tea bag and a piece of caffeinated gum.

"This isn't so bad."

"These are okay. They are better than the instant just add water stuff. But when you're out here. You don't get a lot of choices." I only smiled because he couldn't help himself but to talk to me. At least a little. "What?"

"Nothing."

His cellphone rang. Jax and the club were getting ready to cross the border soon. It would all be over with one way or the other once they got here. Kyle had his own opinion of how things would go down once they did make it. I already knew some of the things he was saying and I knew they were true.

"I am not delusional about Jax. I know what he is and what he is capable of doing. I see a different man than everyone else does. The one without the leather on his back and feels like he has to be always tough and strong. I used to only see the struggle and torture he lives with. Then I started feeling his pain every day. When I see him with our sons just being a common man and a father. It's when I love him the most. I've never been able to shake my love for him. Not even when we were
apart for years from each other."

"It's obvious you love Jax. He will be here by morning."

"It doesn't mean I will betray you again because I do."

"Yes it does, Tara. You will betray me again and I will forgive you again. It's sort of what we do."

How can you follow something like what he just said to me? There was no good come back for it. Or an argument to be made. All he had to go off of was what I had already done. So, I asked the thing that was safe to talk about. "Does he know we are here?"

"No. I didn't tell Jax. It will be another reason for him to be pissed off. He will blame me anyway so it really doesn't matter. It's never what he does or his fault. It's always what you made him to do to you is how he excuses it. I try to think like him and rationalize what he will do next. But I can't. He is all over the place and only lives for the moment. You have a plan of action and five minutes later he is off doing something completely different. With his own personal agenda in mind. You can't count on someone like him and it makes him dangerous."

They threw more wood on the fire. The flames burst when fed to an elevated level. It's what I had been doing for a while now. Fanning the flames until they reached a burning level I couldn't any longer contain. If you played with fire eventually you got burned by it.

"What is up with Gemma and Nicole?" Once Kyle said something to me I stopped watching the fire so intensely. They sat on the log across from us laughing and having one hell of a conversation between them.

"They like to play a game they made up. They watch people having a conversation then try to guess what they are talking about. I don't really get it but they seem to love it."

"Nicole gets a little stranger the more she hangs around them, especially Tig."

"I am actually surprised you let your sister be around him."

"I trust Tig farther than Jax. Which, doesn't say much. He'd slit my throat if Jax told him to."

"It's because you hate Jax so much, Kyle. It is why you feel the way you do."

"I don't hate Jax. I don't particularly like him either. He shook me down for money in my shop the first time I met him. Like I would just pay him because he said so. The people in Charming are raised and taught to fear the club. They would never make it in the real world outside the comfortable walls they built in their town. You should get some sleep. I'll give you my blanket."

"You don't have to, Kyle. I'm fine."

But he did it anyway. We three girls were given one and we put them together by our log and the fire. It was our bed for the night.

"Make sure to shake out everything before you put it on in the morning."

"Why?"

"Scorpions, rattle snakes and tarantulas are the biggest reasons."

It was enough incentive for us girls to be as close to each other as possible. I hoped Boomer was just kidding but I don't think he was.
For a long time, I stared up at the stars. Until I finally got tired enough to drift off. When I felt Nicole stir beside me I rolled over to see what was going on. The light of day was barley dawning through the night. Gemma was already setting up and was wide awake. It was what they were watching that had me worried.

He was thrashed around on the ground before he finally got up. I had been there before and knew he experienced something horrible in his dreams. Not only from the body movements he made but the sounds of slight scream that woke him up completely from a slumber state. He splashed some water on his face to douse the fire he had on the inside from the nightmare sweating he had done.

"One of us should go talk to Kyle."

"Yes, one of us should do that." Nicole agreed with Gemma while they both looked directly at me.

"Why don't you just say it's me and let's be done with this shit already?"

Before I made my way to Kyle. He went off to be by himself. It was a crossroad I had to face. Let him handle his own shit his way. Or be there for him like he had me and risk him being angry with me. "Oh hell, we all know what I am going to do."

"Now is not a good time, Tara." He didn't wander to far away. He went down to the water hole and found a rock to set on.

"It never is a good time. What's wrong?"

"What isn't wrong? I would have to make you a list. I always have my emotions under control unless I am around you. Then they are all over the place. It's one of those times, they are really all over the place."

"As you always tell me, we will do it together." After I set on the rock beside him. I put my hand on his. There were so many times I could remember him comforting me.

"Our togetherness is almost over. Jax will be here. I know it has to come to an end and I've known it's needed to for a while. Maybe, I'm just not ready for it to be over yet. Every time I let you go, it just gets harder the next time I have do it." His hand found the way on top of mine and he gave it a squeeze.

Timing was everything in this world. It no more than came out of Kyle's mouth when his phone rang. It was Jax looking for the place to meet up at. They were here and very nearby.

With the things Kyle had already told me. I went straight to what I felt the problem really was. "You don't think you are going to survive this do you? It's why you gave me the letter for Zac?"

"I saw the end of the dream and how it's supposed to be played out. I've seen it a couple of times and it always ends the same way. Mine and your path crossed for a reason. The one thing John searched for all of his life so many times but couldn't ever find. I know what it is now. The higher purpose of its meaning. If you ever need a friend, when you're in doubt or in danger. If you look hard enough for me; you know I'll always be there. You should go before Jax gets here. It will cause more problems if you're with me."

"Aren't you coming?"

"Jax will come to me soon enough I'm sure."

From around my neck I took off the gold cross. When I took a hold of his dog tags he grabbed my
hand and wouldn't let me take them off.

"Ellie gave it to you. You are a smart girl. To damn smart to let this happen. You know what you need to do and will have to do. In the end, it's the only way to save them. This is just another reason I find you so sweet, you are selfless and loving. Thank you for thinking of me, but I can't take it."

There were times in my life others forced things on me. Sometimes it was for my own good and other times it was for their benefit. So, I did what I felt was right. I pressed the cross in his hand and closed it up around it. "If there is anyone in this world Ellie would want to have it. It's you. I want you to have it too."

It didn't take long for an old farm truck with a flatbed on the back of it to come pulling up. Jax and Nero were in the front and the rest of the club was riding in the back of it.

"What are you doing here?" Jax began with Gemma because she was the closest one to him when he got out of the truck. She clung to Nero tighter and didn't answer Jax.

While the rest of the club welcomed Gemma to be around them, they missed her and was basically nice. But not her son. Jax would never get it at this rate.

When it came to me. I didn't even try to defend my actions, any of them I had done. "I'm sorry. I…I am sorry for a lot of things. I guess, I am not exactly the best old lady or wife." With that I went and set by Nicole and waited for Jax to explode. But he didn't.

"Where is he?"

"Where's who?" Thomas was only aggravating the problem at hand. The little game he was playing with Jax would not end well and only angered him farther.

"Kyle."

"I don't know anybody by that name. Do you guys know anyone by that name?" They all went along with Thomas too. It was only pissing Jax off more.

"I'm right here. They are not to blame, Jax."

"I could have brought Tara and Gemma here myself. It was the whole reason for them leaving with you in the first place. You were supposed to protect them not drag them in the middle of this shit."

"You're right. I should have done things differently and paid more attention. It's on me and it's all my fault."

"If you weren't paying so much attention to my wife and paid attention to what is happening around you. Maybe they wouldn't be here. You want to get in the middle of my shit about how I do things. Yet, you can't even keep three women safe or under control."

"Seriously, you want to go there already? Maybe if you paid more attention to your wife like you should. You wouldn't have to be so worried about it. If it weren't for your bullshit none of us would be in this mess to begin with."

"Don't twist this shit around, Kyle. You're the one who fucked it up."

Nero already had to intervene and stop it between them. "They're here and we deal with it. But don't think, Gemma. We're not gonna talk about it."
"Whatever you say, baby." Of course Gemma worked her magic on her man. Nero went from stern to jello at her touch. If only I knew that secret to use on Jax.

"You're right, Nero. I've had enough of this shit already." Kyle surrendered and went to walk away from the situation. Only Jax wouldn't allow it. He roughly shoved Kyle in the back and it was the start of just more shit to come.

"Don't walk away from me. We're not done yet."

"Let's go talk about it your way then, Jax."

"Jesus Christ, we haven't even been here for five minutes yet and they are already at each other's throats. I gotta go stop that shit." Poor Nero had his hands full. More than likely though the guys and the club would either break it up or encouraged it even more by now.

The log had become my spot and the place I went to the most. I set beside Nicole and waited it out. They would have to come back here eventually.

Thomas was the first one back. Then the rest followed in suit. Jax along with Kyle were both brewing and I wasn't even going to ask what the hell happened.

The funny man himself, Thomas. Took out a package of pop rocks. I just knew this was going to be bad. He poured some in his mouth and put his arm around me. "So, Tara. Do you know what these are for honey?"

It was now his turn to butt heads with Jax. Where Kyle most of the time backed down in the end, Thomas didn't. "I don't give a shit what you like. I am talking to Tara, not you."

Nero tried to end it peacefully but we all know that shit was not possible. But it finally came to a close when Jax and the club were given their weapons. Little boys with toys tend to be quiet while they played with them.

"Do you got clips and ammo for them?" Kyle gave Jax another bag full of it. "Let's go try them out."

"What do I need to go for?"

"I insist you come, Kyle."

A couple of the guys tagged along as well. My thought on it was to make sure nothing happened to Kyle. Thomas grabbed me and I was going along if I wanted to or not. This guy didn't understand the word no.

They all stood in a line and fired off several rounds. I covered my ears because these were on the loud side. This was a first for me; watching the club do their thing. Jax seemed to be pleased with the gun and they were all sharing their opinions on them.

"You shouldn't be out here, babe. You need to go back."

"Why can't Tara be out here? She watched me and Kyle shoot. It doesn't hurt anything." It was obvious by his comments Thomas didn't care much for Jax. Or what he thought either.

"Because I said so dickhead."

"Tara can think for herself. She doesn't need you to tell her every single move to make." Now Kyle was chiming in on it too.
"She is my wife, Kyle. So, why don't you shut the fuck up and stay out of it?"

"Why don't you make me, Jax?"

Their bickering got on even my nerves. I walked away from them and they were still at it. I don't even think they noticed I was gone from them and they had nothing left to argue about.

"There are two little boys who are depending on both of you to come through for them. You need to think about them and stop this bullshit."

Nero made them at least think about their actions. His words reached Kyle because he walked away with nothing else said and made Thomas leave with him. It was probably the one thing that still reached Jax, our son. As he went on to discuss their rescue now.

With everyone playing a role in the rescue. There was no one to leave behind to watch over us girls and they didn't want to leave us here alone. They were reluctant to take us along but had no other choice.

Traveling in the back of the trucked packed like sardines wasn't the most pleasant thing. The dust was kicked up as we drove. You could feel the layers of it attaching to your skin. They threw the vehicle in as part of the package the club paid for to get illegally across the border.

The first task at hand was to get more transportation. You couldn't exactly make a fast getaway in this damn thing. Or drive around unnoticed in it.

Once we got to town it was very similar to where we were staying at. A lot of sand and dirt. Most people who lived here were poor. Only the powerful elite were considered wealthy. The middle class was something that didn't exist. The things we took for granted having on a daily basis were a luxury most never got the chance of experiencing.

They dropped off Jax, Kyle, Gemma, Nicole and myself in town. While the others had specific duties to accomplish. Even though I didn't know what they were.

A meeting was to take place with Jax and someone. We entered in a bar. Nothing like you would see where we were from. It was grimy and hot inside. No air conditioning or anything special about it really.

"Sit here and don't move. Don't talk to anyone. I mean it, Gemma." Jax gave us orders of what he wanted us to do. After I used a napkin to wipe off the seat in the booth I set down.

A woman with long dark hair and a red rose tucked behind her ear approached Jax and Kyle. The peasant top she had on exposed herself when she bent over the table to talk with them. She only spoke Spanish by language but her body spoke a universal one, pussy.

"Gemma, how do you think that conversation is going down?" Nicole started off their little game. I might not of understood a word the woman said but I knew for sure what she was offering them.

"I think she is telling Jackson what a connection she feels between them. How special it is and what she finds appealing about him. Him on the other hand. Is thinking, no bitch you just got a pussy I can fuck."

"Damn, that is sort of harsh." Nicole was taken back by Gemma and how she seen it to be.

Me, not so much. So I put it out there and meant it. "It's probably true."
"I call it like I see it girls."

Through the door came a group of shady looking characters. You could always tell the leader he walked ahead of the others and almost strutted while he did it. He shook Jax's hand and set down with them. The three other guys stayed close by but gave them room to have a private conversation.

Jax took an envelope out of his sweatshirt and slid it across the table. Everyone in here knew the contents of it, cash. The price of doing business as my husband always says.

When they stood up, they were done. But we could hear Jax and he was very serious with every word he spoke. "If you're lying to me. I will cut your heart out. Then, I will let him take a turn to finish it."

"No need for dramatics. It's where they are holding the children."

While we waited for the guys to come back for us. There were a couple of young boys walking down the street. Maybe fifteen years old at the most. They didn't behave their age when they pulled a knife on us. It was a robbery in broad daylight. People seen it too as they passed us by but did nothing to help. If anything they shied away from it and avoided it.

Jax lifted up his shirt and so did Kyle to show the boys their weapons tucked down in their jeans. "Do you really wanna do this with us? Don't think we won't shoot your dumb asses. The best thing you can do is get the fuck away from me."

It didn't take the boys long to come to the conclusion bringing a knife to a gun fight. Was an instant loss and they took off running in the other direction.

After all that drama was finally over. We got to the place we were directed to go. It didn't make any sense they would keep our boys here.

"It's a damn laundry service. You don't really know where the boys are, do you, Jax?"

"This is the distribution for the drugs. If they are not inside here. They moved them somewhere else. We follow the pipeline until we find them and we take one of their trucks to make sure we have some security of getting them back."

"What if it only pisses Sandoval off more and he hurts Abel or Cody? Can you live with that? I can't."

"The kids are here in this town. Sandoval wants his drugs back. His greed will exceed the need to take revenge. He won't hurt them. They are the only bargaining chip he's got to recover almost a half of a million dollars in product. I think I know how it works in the streets better than you do, Kyle."

"You better not be playing me this time. If anything happens to Cody because of it. Whatever they do to him, I will do something ten times more horrible to you. I have that dark side too and you bring it out with a vengeance."

Jax completely blew off what Kyle said to him and never took an ounce of it seriously. They had a plan in motion of what to do to find where the boys were. Who knew if it would work or not. I just prayed for their safety. Really it was all I could do at this point.

"Do you get anything?"

He had his computer out and was smoking the key board as swiftly as his fingers moved. "I can't find anything on this place. Or hack into a security system because I don't find one. The only way to
know is get on the inside to plant bugs so I can see and hear."

"We start with taking the truck and go from there. If you follow the pipeline north, it's drugs and illegals. If you follow it south it's human trafficking and laundering money." Jax lit up a smoke and came up with the next step they needed to take.

Since no one was certain how efficient the police were here or if they were in the bad guys' pockets. They planned on creating a diversion to keep them busy while they stole the truck.

"Thomas, are you good with it?"

"Yeah, I'm on it."

"Tig, are you brother?"

"You know it boss." As Tig walked by Boomer. Tig purposely hit his shoulder into him. It was a little check to let Boomer know of his presences. They been making comments to each other since the club arrived.

"You are such a prick." Boomer never reminded me of the violent or outspoken type. But he wasn't holding back.

"Did you say you wanna suck my dick? I thought I would save it for Nicole for later but okay man. I'll let ya." Of course Tig was always violent and the very outspoken type.

"Tig, stay focused and don't get caught." Jax put an end to their little disagreement. Which I found funny the same circle they all took when the others needed to be reined in.

It was amazing Thomas seemed okay with Tig. There weren't any ill feelings between them at all. "You and Boomer are almost as good at this shit over women as Kyle and Jax are. So, how do you want to do this?"

"We find the biggest assholes in the bar. Start a fight with them and beat their asses."

"Simple plan, I like it, Tig."

Now on to them stealing the laundry's transportation truck. They hoped were full of drugs. Happy, Meat and Juice took it on.

As everything else in my life. It didn't come off without a glitch. I believed Jax was correct of his assessment of this being the right place when about six guys came out of the laundry place with their guns blazing at them. He had spent most of his life in the streets and no one knew them better than he did. It was where he was truly king.

We were hidden in a parking lot across the street. The guys didn't want us to get in the way or to get hurt. "Nicole, do your thing, sweetheart. The faster the better." Gemma would be the only mother who encouraged other people's children to steal a car, another car in fact.

But hey, Nicole had us a ride pretty damn quick. Jax got behind the wheel of the tiny old car and we left after whoever just came out chasing after the truck they stole. Since no one was supposed to know yet Jax and the club were here it was important they didn't get away to inform anyone.

"Your sister has got skills. Apparently, it's not a family trait."

"Do you always have to be an asshole, Jax?"
"Do you always gotta be a prick, Kyle?"

They found so many things they agreed to completely disagree on. If I didn't know each of them, I would have thought them both to be a little out there today.

"Speed up, Jax. We are going to lose them."

"Don't tell me how to drive. It's a fucking old Fiat. How fast do you think we can go? Have a smoke and just relax. You're making me nervous with all this talking shit."

"I don't smoke."

"Then you should start."

"Fine."

Kyle took the pack of cigarettes from Jax. Then threw them out the window of the car. In return Jax did the same with Kyle's hat. It went out the window as well.

"Asshole."

"Prick."

Nicole wasn't the only one with skills. From some damn place Tig and Thomas had gotten a very nice new car. They must have completed their mission because they were speeding up beside us.

It was a Chinese fire drill when the five of us piled into the new car with them. They wanted to keep the element of surprise or so they said. By Sandoval not knowing about them being here or expecting Kyle and the guys to be along with them. They stood a better chance at their attack on him.

"Let's go." Jax was already crawling out the window. I thought my heart was going to stop when he made a leap to the bad guys' car at the high speed we were flying down the road.

"Somebody remind me why I am jumping on the hood of a moving car with Jax."

"Bad life choices, brother." Thomas gave out his scenario of the situation at hand to Kyle. We girls never uttered one word about it either.

"Yeah, that's gotta be it."

We lost them somewhere. All the traffic started to slow down as we came to a town. By the time we made it around the corner to catch up with them, chaos had already struck. An over turned vegetable truck was in the middle of the road with produce everywhere. A car had broadsided another one. Vehicles were parked all over the damn dirt road as no one could pass by.

"Did someone call 9-1-Holy-Shit?" I had to agree with Thomas on this one. This was not the way stay incognito. The car went through the side of the old transportation bus they collided with. People were scurrying to get off of it in a hurry. Especially those who were safely setting up on the open top part of the bus. A few were crawling out of the enormous hole in the side of it even. If they were the lucky ones who weren't injured from it. Then came out the two who caused it all.

"What the hell was that move?"

"You said, stop the car. I shot the fucker and stopped the car. So, I don't know what you're bitching about, Kyle. It worked didn't it?"
"This is the way you stay off their radar, Jax? Why don't you just send up a fucking flare we are here?"

They just continued to stand there and argue about it in the middle of all this mess surrounding us. Most weren't paying any attention to them because frankly I don't think they understood a damn thing they said.

"I hate to break this up. I really do because I was hoping Kyle would just beat your ass. But we got to get the hell out of here. There will be time to kill each other later."

Thomas had a valid point of leaving before we all ended up in a Mexican prison cell and forgotten about. But it didn't stop them from the bickering on the way back to pick up our little car we left behind. They kept going and even argued about who was going to drive the damn thing. Jax won because he finally just got in on the driver's side.

"If I get taken out it is going to be by a fucking bullet. Not by a fucking bus. So, drive the fucking car already. I need to get the fuck away from you before I hurt you."

"You have a very fucking limited vocabulary, Kyle."

"Fuck you, Jax."

Our heads followed the conversation from the back seat. We moved as a tennis match back and forth between them as they didn't shut up either. If they were on the same side, they would be unstoppable together by what we witnessed today. It was almost scary to think if John had lived and Kyle was a member of the club with Jax. All the damage they could really do.

Out of this mess. They all came to the same conclusion. There was only one way in to see if the boys were on the inside of the place. It was the women workers they picked up and dropped off on the bus outside of town daily. We three made it clear, it would be all three of us that went in together or none of us. Of course, they didn't like the idea but at this point, we were their only option left to get in and out unnoticed.

The only problem was we had to appear to be one of them. We owned nothing like the women we seen had dressed in. Nero and Kyle took us to get something to wear. I was a little surprised Jax let it happen without a fuss.

But Jax was in take charge mode. He was making plans for what would go down in the morning. The route they would take and he was busy chasing down the other stops of the drug pipeline.

While we looked for a clothing store. A very strange old woman passed us on the street and continued to follow us down through the alleyway. She was instantly drawn to Kyle. She put her hands together and rambled on in a language only one of us understood.

"What the hell is she saying to me, Nero?"

"The nature of good and evil is more than black and white. They are the darkness in our souls, likewise they are the light. Within the hearts of men; they fuel our greed and selfishness, our pride and vanity. They fan the flames of bigotry, inciting enmity. This struggle between right and wrong determines who survives. It will bring life to those who learn and death to those who fail. Without them there would be no light or darkness in our souls." Nero translated what she had repeated numerous times. But she kept talking and he wouldn't any longer. He laid his hand on Kyle's shoulder. "You need to tell me the truth."

"I have no idea what she is talking about."
From a rawhide bag she brought out a small glass vial. High in the air she held it up and continued on speaking what none of us understood but Nero. She held it out until Kyle finally took it from her. Then she made a cross over his heart with her finger.

"Is she going to bite the head off of a chicken now, Nero?"

"How in the hell should I know. I like my chicken done the Cornel Sanders way."

"You're Mexican, you should know the ritual she is performing. I bet she does eat a chicken. I saw it on the Discovery Channel before. She's a voodoo woman." Kyle and I both looked at Nicole with the words she chose to call the lady. Then to each other.

"White girl, you're really starting to wear on me." Poor Nero, he spent most of his time with us being questioned like that by Nicole. She naturally assumed he knew everything.

"Thanks."

"That's not a compliment, Nicole. Why don't you take her somewhere Gemma and give us a minute?" I went to go with them because I thought Nero wanted to talk to only Kyle. "Not you, Tara. You need to stay here."

They walked out to the street and Gemma was having a smoke but kept looking back to see what was happen. I was sort of curious myself as to what would happen from all of this.

"Gracias." Nero thanked the woman before she disappeared through the alley.

"She said to wash in the dandelions roots. It is a very powerful protective flower. They will clear out your negative energy and form a white light shield. Whatever secret you two share is a dangerous one. Kyle, I need you to tell me the truth. From a brother to a brother, you know you can trust me."

"I don't know what she is talking about."

"Why do you insist on lying to me? Tara, are you gonna tell me?"

"I don't know what she is talking about."

"The time is gonna come when the truth all comes out. It always does. According to what she saw; it's a huge secret you share between the two of you. Just don't dismiss her words. She apparently knows more about what is going on with you than I do because you won't tell me." Nero didn't ask us anything farther about it. He must have felt it was getting him nowhere and it really was. His sunglasses went down on his face and he went to Gemma. Just like he always does.

We made our way back to the camp site after we got the plain clothing we would dress in for tomorrow. There were stolen vehicles parked everywhere. Even a Mexican food truck. Happy and Meat were in full swing with it.

Meat stuck his head out of the sliding glass window. Dinged a bell and set a Styrofoam plate of tacos out of it. "Juice, your order is done."

We did eat well from it though. Happy made me chicken tacos and they were yummy. After everyone was fed, we had depleted the food supply on it.

We girls did the cleanup from there cooking expedition they did. They prepared food well but made one hell of a mess while doing it.
Back to our log we went. It was the center of everything where you could observe. There was an invisible line drawn in the sand between Jax and the club then Kyle and the guys. If they wanted something from the other side they went up to where we set to get it. Then back to their own side.

Until Kyle and Jax met in the middle. They were talking among themselves without an argument actually. When it went past half an hour and they were still getting along. We all wanted to know what was going on.

"How do you think that conversation is going?" Gemma started their little game off by asking Nicole the question.

"I think it going something like this. Don't you touch my sweet untainted Tara, Kyle. Don't you tell me what to do, Jax. You're such a prick, no, you're such an asshole. Then they talk about manly shit we don't care about."

"That's pretty good, sweetheart."

They weren't even close to what Jax and Kyle were discussing. The curious kitty in me just had to get myself a cup of coffee. Which, the water was near enough to them I could hear some of it.

"I'm the scumbag outlaw while you're the pillar of the community. But we both don't like looking in the mirror much. Afraid of what we might see looking back at us. We're not that different as you like to pretend we are. So, don't give me your self righteous bullshit. If you got something to say, just say it already."

To set on the log was where I went back to. They talked for a while more. Then there talk and kindness was over with each other.

"Get back on your own side poetic injustice."

"I really get to you. Don't I Jax? Or is it you're afraid I get to Tara?"

Nero stepped up again and reminded them why they had come together in the first place. Our children's lives depended upon them. They had to get along for only one more day to save the boys.

"I think it's best we call it a night. Everybody get some sleep because tomorrow will be a long one. Are you coming Gem?"

It wasn't hard to guess the decision Gemma made. The decision we girls would have to make of which side to be on. Nero was with Kyle and it was the side she chose to go to. Even Nicole went to Kyle over Tig and Boomer. They only stopped long enough to look over their shoulders to see what I was going to do.

"Oh hell, we all know where I am going."

Jax was busy talking to Chibs and Bobby. I didn't interrupt their conversation. I set closer to the fire and played with my stick again for a long time. Since the sun went down I felt cold. The slightest whisper of a breeze on my skin made me shiver.

Jax took off his sweatshirt and wrapped it around my shoulders. Then joined me by the fire side. I poured myself another cup of coffee and made him one as well. "I noticed you haven't had much to say to me since I got here. Are you staring to regret coming back to me?"

"I am just trying to stay out of everyone's way and no I don't regret it. I'd probably do somethings differently though. Everything has always happened so fast around me. One day I came back too
Charming; the next day I was a mother. It's the one thing I will never regret, being a mother to our sons. But I hate how all the bad shit of the club finds its way to my door step. No matter how much I try to get past it. Before I can get over one thing, something else even worse happens. I can't catch my breath because there is always more. When I look at my sons' faces though, I'd do it all again for them. Even if it was for only one more day I'd get to spend with them.

"I know you're doing what you gotta do by putting distance between us. I get it. I haven't always been the best husband either. I guess, I don't have to look at you as being perfect anymore. Compared to me, you're still a fucking saint. You're just as human as I am and we all make mistakes. My biggest mistake is keeping you on the outside of it all and not being completely honest with you. I've been trying to protect you from it and clearly it's not working at all. I can't take that part back now, Tara. But I can try to make it better if you'll let me."

"Then be honest with me now, Jax. I'm not perfect or a saint. I've done…I have done…"

"I already know what you have done. I'm not stupid or blind. When you first came back to town. I worried all the time and just waited for you to leave me. I got over it for a while. I really thought you'd stay forever. Now, I'm right back to just waiting and wondering when you'll leave me again. I won't make it through it this time. You completely crushed me when you left as though I meant nothing to you. It took me a long time to get past it. There is no way in hell, I'll let it happen this time. You can say a lot of bad shit about me. But you can't ever say I abandoned you. I love you, Tara. I'll never let you go or give up on us."

It wasn't exactly what I wanted Jax to share with me. I had high hopes he would tell me what happened with our son and his part he played in it. Although, I didn't realize how much animosity he still carried about the first time I left all those year ago. Nor did I really know it affected him much. He always acted tough as though he could survive anything. It was hard to recall a time when he stated how much needed me to be with him like he just did.

"I feel like this is our last chance to get out and get our boys out of Charming. We will lose them if we don't leave soon. They won't stand a chance at any kind of life if we don't Jax. You promised me we would leave and you would leave the club behind. I need you to tell me you will keep that promise."

"I promise as soon as I can, we will leave." It was as much of a comment as I could out of him. I even tried a few more times to reach him using our sons.

While I laid my head down in his lap. Jax softly stroked my hair. As good as it felt coming from him. I still needed more. "Tell me you love me, Jackson and mean it."

"I love you, Tara. I'll never let you go."

The dream state took me shortly after I closed my eyes. It stopped at the same exact spot again with no ending. I uncovered from Jax's sweatshirt. I moved away from him carefully not to wake him up and went to make a cup of instant coffee. There wasn't any water left in the bucket.

"Great."

Juice and Meat were the only ones up. I knew it was late or early morning but I wasn't sure of the time.

"I'll walk Tara down there to get water."

"Are you good with it, Tara?"
"Yes. I'll be fine with him. Thank you, Juice."

By a flash light I stepped on the big rock to dip the bucket where the water flowed in from. I got a scare that almost made me fall off the rock. A wet hand had taken a hold of my ankle when he came up from the water.

"Holy shit. What are you doing out in here in the middle of the night?"

"Well, I'm leaving now. I think it's under control here. I'm sure Kyle will help you find or feel your way around out here in the dark. The mice will play when her old man is asleep. Don't do anything I wouldn't do. Or get caught at anyway."

"I didn't know Kyle was out here. I swear." Meat only laughed as he went up the hill. I don't think he believed me either. But it was the truth.

Out of the water he came. The moonlight made his wet skin glisten. I looked away because it was obvious I was watching his naked body. Only for him to stand clearly in my view to pick up his towel from the ground. So, once again, I looked the other way.

"You'd better go away, little girl. I'm not supposed to be alone with you. Daddy won't like it."

At least by wrapping the towel around him, he had covered himself up. I no longer had to pretend I wasn't looking. As close as he got to me, I could feel his chest taking in a breath and let it out against me. His lips were practically on mine when he spoke.

"When you are near me like this. You are much too hard to resist. I know how sweet your lips are, Tara." A little lick of his tongue on them was the way he finished the sentence. "So, you better go away, little girl."

"Jesus Christ, you're out here playing romper room with each other."

"I'm just taking a bath."

"I'm just getting some water."

"I'm just out here to make sure when Jax wakes up, he doesn't kill you."

"Well, it is the worst thing Jax can do to me. But he can only kill me once, Nero. So, I guess he better make it a good one."

"Let me tell you a little story. I met this crazy married biker chick. I couldn't get her outta my head. It's the Godfather's paradox; the more distance I tried to put between me and Gemma. The closer we got. The more I didn't want to love her. The more I did. Then I met her kid. Jax is more fucked in the head than she is even. I got so tangled up in their lives and now, I can't get out."

"What is the moral of the story? Are you telling me to stay away from Tara?"

"No, it's not what I am telling you, Kyle. They carry around so many secrets it strangles the life out of them. They spin the truth so much until they start to believe it themselves. Everything they touch feels the effects of it. I see what it does to Gemma and Jax. I see what it is doing to you too. You are beginning to go down the same path they are. The secrets you and Tara have will crush you. You are becoming bolder with it every day. Eventually the darkness, it will take you down and you won't make it out either." Nero took the glass vial Kyle had of the dandelions out of his hand. "You obviously understood and believed something the lady said. Or you wouldn't have bathed in it. I am asking you both, one more time to tell me the truth. Before it comes to the surface and I can't help
"The truth doesn't always set you free, Nero. Sometimes it just makes things worse." Kyle wasn't giving any more information than that out on the subject. I had been there and done that shit myself.

When I actually told the truth it only boxed me in the corner with no way out. Made me more vulnerable than I had ever been before. Hurt those around me and my family. Set in motion where I stood today; without my son.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert!
A/N: There is some graphic violence in this chapter. It's not extremely bad, this is just a heads up to let you know. Not a shocker I'm sure since this is an SOA story ;)

PART 6 of 7

There are lessons to be learned here. I do this mostly so you can know me. Lately as I write these, I realize these are as much for me as they are for you. This is the one place I can be completely open. The pen and paper has no judgement, no vote. It simply receives my truth then allows me to turn the page.

Today, this is my truth. I am terrified a great deal of the time. I'm afraid of what I've done, what I'm doing and what I might have to do. It's not a crippling fear. In fact, it's just the opposite. I thrive on it, I crave it. I need that rush of terror to get me out of bed in the morning. It's in my DNA.

I have tremendous remorse for the acts of violence I've committed. Both planned and spontaneous. But I think what brings me the most sorrow is I've learned to justify this behavior. I always find a reason, a cause, a need that allows me the karmic lubrication to stuff this guilt into a savage compartment. With it, I've become like the one I hate the most.

With that awareness come periods of days sometimes weeks. I have to avoid looking into a mirror. My self-hate is so deep, so palpable, I fear I will lunge at my own image. Shatter the glass and cut myself with shards of broken reflection.

Since my best friend was killed I lost my center. Op was always my pull back to true north. Now my sense of doubts and fraudulent front I put on barks so loudly in my head most of the time I can't hear anything else.

Love, comradery, freedom all the things I want from this life are lost in the den. Forgive my indulgence sons. Today maybe a day we both remember. A defining day. I want you to look back at this entry and know at the very least your father was completely honest. You know I speak the truth as you are the most important thing to me. I will never hurt you, never abandon you.

I love you Abel. I love you Thomas. More than anything or anyone. I always will. Everything I do is for my sons.

When I went to get water for coffee. I found a small notepad in the pocket of Jax's sweatshirt. It made me sad and weary after I read the last page he wrote and that's all I read. "Everything I do is for my sons too, Jax."

It distracted me and I didn't know I wasn't alone. It freighted me when I felt two hands slide down my sides to my hips from behind. "Good morning, honey."

"Shit. You scared me, Thomas." I quickly closed it up and shoved it back in Jax's sweatshirt pocket. Then moved the hell away from him.

"There is just something about you, Tara. Most women can't resist me. The fact you do, only turns me on more."
"Well, you know. I am married and all. Regardless of what you may think about me. I am not a trashy woman. Who will take up with just anyone."

"I like my women a little on the trashy side. The kind who ties me up with their pantyhose until I spent all my paycheck sort of trashy. Excites me with…Ouch. Let go." Thomas didn't get to finish what he was saying. As he felt the tight grip on the back of his neck by Kyle.

"Back off Romeo and let her through."

"Morning, Kyle. I am just talking to Tara."

"Uh huh."

"I'm going to get that kiss from you yet honey. You will come to me for it too."

"No, I won't." I left them both there and headed back. Thomas was crazy if he thought I would ever let him touch me. But my mind went to someone else when I put my hand in Jax's sweatshirt pocket.

You would have expected me to seen the writing on the wall a long time ago. But love did truly make you blind. The walk back didn't help to clear my head much either. Jax was still asleep. I gently laid his sweatshirt over him. While I watched the restful state he seemed to be in. But yet, I knew it was a tortured one. He lived with it every day of his life. Nothing brought him any true peace in this world.

"When did things go so wrong?" It wasn't just a question for him, it was a question for myself too. You were on top of the world one day. Then seconds later buried six feet deep in it.

It startled me as I was deep in thought when I felt arms going around my waist. "Good morning." Jax pulled me down to the ground with him and gave me a kiss.

"Good morning. Do you want some coffee?"

"Yeah. Thank you." Jax set up and stretched his body around to work out the stiffness of the night. The ground was a hard bed. Almost as hard as the road still in front of us. He lit up a smoke as I made us an instant cup of coffee to start the day. The way his cell continuously rang, it was had already begun for him.

"Are you sure? Why would they want to hurt my kid? Thanks, I owe you one." Jax took his cup of coffee to go with him as soon as he hung up. He crossed over the line to the enemy's side without a second thought. "Kyle." Jax motioned his head to come for a private conversation between them.

Since they didn't seem hostile towards each other at the moment. Nero just stayed casually back to see where it went. I was getting good at guessing what they were doing. As much as they did it.

Then came another shocker of the morning. Tig and Nicole came back from somewhere strolling hand in hand. Tig was holding her hand while they just causally walked and talked. I've never seen him be affectionate with any woman past getting them to suck his dick. Once they did he was done with them and tossed them aside afterwards. Whatever he had going on with Nicole, it was different. He was completely different around her too.

When you've never witnessed someone being truly happy and in a normal life or relationship they never experienced before. You couldn't help but to be happy for them. Except, when I saw David's face from it. He wasn't happy at all. "Love is a fickle bitch."

"Nicole will be a real asset to the club."
"You are just not giving up are you, Gemma? They are leaving Charming."

"I don't ever give up, sweetheart. It's not in my nature."

"Sure." I gave her back one of her famous words and left it at that.

The morning truly was full of surprises. Nicole had joined us on our log. But she wasn't the only one who came over with something snappy to say.

The dark haired, blue eyed, totally buffed boy came over to greet us. He flicked open his lighter lid and lit up Gemma's smoke before he fired up one of his own. "Good morning ladies. How are you on this beautiful day?" Once we told Thomas we were fine. It still didn't end there though. The conversation escalated to a whole new level. How it got there? I hadn't a clue.

"Thomas, you really need to behave."

"I always behave; just not necessary well. I'm serious, Tara. I have your name tattooed on my cock."

"No you don't."

"Yes I do. Do you want to see it?" He slowly was pulling down his zipper. He was directly standing in front me, at my face level, how in the hell could I miss it. "I'll show you for a kiss, honey."

"No thanks."

"I want to see it." Nicole piped up. I somehow didn't find it a newsflash she wanted to either. As she did the same on our night out with every dick around.

"I gotta roll with Nicole on this one. I wanna see it too. If it's really there, I will give you a kiss Thomas. Tongue and all, sweetheart."

Thomas did in fact have a tattoo on his dick. It read in cursive; your name. So when he said it to any female technically it was the truth he spoke. Now, it came time to pay off. Only I couldn't let it happen. I knocked over my coffee cup on the ground to get up and in between them.

"You don't want to kiss Gemma. With, you know, tongue and all."

"Aw, are you jealous, Tara? Do you want to kiss me instead?"

"Not really." Thomas was a very strong boy. Larger than Kyle, in the muscle department anyway. I kept pushing my arm towards him to have distance between us. I was practically halfway to the ground to stay away from him. My hand even covered his mouth. Let's face it, who knew where those lips had been. All I could think of was on crazy trashy bitches that's where they've been.

"Get the fuck away from her." Jax blindside Thomas. Of course he didn't back down from a fight either.

"Thomas, stop it. We need to get the boys. There isn't time for this shit." It was the poor referee who got the blunt end of their pushing and scraping match. Kyle wiped the blood away from his mouth on the back of his hand. While he tried to contain their fight from progressing to out of control. A blow from Jax connected with his face. Intentional or not, it still angered Kyle. "I'm going hurt you now."

While they were going at it. Thomas seemed aggravated. "Damn it, Kyle. I wanted to hit Jax."

"Jesus Christ, I can't tell who is fight against who anymore." Nero, Chibs and Thomas broke it up.
After everyone calmed down a bit. The plan had changed from yesterday. Imagine that shit. They wouldn't tell me anything even if I asked. So, I didn't and I rolled with the flow of it.

According to the phone call. There was some backstabbing going on, again imagine that shit. In Mexico, Sandoval was the beginning and the end of all illegal business transactions. They did nothing he didn't get a piece of the pie from their end of it. The cost of survival around here. The information was bogus we got yesterday. It was where Jax started at.

"You're good at running your mouth. How good are you at handling business?"

"I can handle my shit biker boy. Just take care of your end of it."

Thomas and Jax were already butting heads with each other and we hadn't even made it inside the bar yet. He sought Thomas out this time to go along with us. Why? I wasn't really sure why Jax would. While the others went to complete the tasks they were given.

Of course, Jax gave us girls the same instructions as yesterday. Be seen and not heard. Sit quietly and don't speak to anyone. It felt very familiar to the normal life I led at home too.

As soon as the guy Jax paid off seen us walk in. The guy took a seat at a table. But not his cronies, his crew, was ready to fight and defend their leader.

"You don't come up in my crib without an appointment."

"I told you what I would do if you were lying. You being tight with Alverez don't mean shit to me. Where the fuck is my kid?"

There were still parts of this kind of behavior and life I would never understand. One, why everything always had to escalate to a violent level before an agreement could be reached. Two, why Kyle took a chair and let them settle it. Perhaps, he listened to what Nero had to say last night.

"Do wanna help out here?"

"There is only three of them. Thomas doesn't need our help. He can fight better than any of us. Just wait for it, Jax."

The three bad guys had Thomas in the center of them, he was completely surrounded. They thought with it being three on one, it would be an easy fight. He would be put down and out for the count quickly. They were even telling him how they were going to beat him down.

"Why don't you come and fuck my shit up then?"

Kyle was right. Thomas didn't seem to need any help with them. He was big, mean and fucked them up all on his own. A beer bottle went across the face of one of them. While a boot to the head brought another to his knees. He fought well with his fist but better with his body and he used every part of it too. His last move was with a cue ball off the pool table. It was a weapon he used to literally beat their faces in with. Until Kyle made Thomas stop.

The bartender even got involved in the action. He brought a sawed off shotgun out from behind the bar. Jax put a stop to it because he already had pulled his weapon too. "Put it down and you go home tonight alive. If you don't, its gonna get messy." He made the correct choice when he set it down on top of the bar instead of pushing Jax.

Thomas was going to need some help now with more of them coming to join in. "You should have never come back here, Teller. This is my town and we play by my rules. If your boy can take on my
best soldier and live through it. I will think about letting you walk out of here alive."

"If he puts your soldier down. We have another sit down between us."

"Fine, but he won't."

In came a man with coal black hair in a braid down to waist. Scars on his face and a tattooed body visual from across the room. He made even Meat look on the small side. He also made Thomas look sane when he started head butting the bar mirror. Until the skin on his forehead was cut open and blood flowing down his face. From his upper lip he tasted his own blood with a crazy smile.

"That is one big ugly mother fucker. Good luck on that man. We're about to find out just how good you really are." Jax smacked Thomas on the back. Lit up a smoke and moved away to let the fight begin.

"Time out here." Thomas made the football sign to officially call one too. Don't think that didn't confuse the guy he was about ready to fight when it stopped his lunge towards Thomas in midstream. "I just want to make sure I am understanding the rules correctly. I put him down on the floor and we get the information about the kids."

"That is correct. But you will not put him down."

"Alrighty then." Thomas was as fast on the draw as Jax and Kyle were. As the gun came out of his boot. A bullet to the head only brought the big man to his knees. At close point range, Thomas fired several more rounds into him. He finally fell face first to the old dirty wooden floor of the bar. "He's down and done."

"Jesus Christ."

"And then some, Gemma."

We girls were scurrying to get on the floor of the booth trying to hide under the table. But not Thomas, Jax and Kyle. The three of them were in the center of the room with weapons drawn and used them accordingly because now they had no other options left. It was kill all those around them or be killed.

"I was thinking beat down, Thomas. But, I guess that works too." Then Jax focused his attention on the one we came to see. "Where is my kid?" Jax got nothing out of him about the boys. They took him out the back door to alleyway. It was actually about as clean as the bar was inside.

"I'm only gonna ask one more time. Where is my kid?" Jax had him pinned up against the building. He wasn't going to turn loose until he got the answer of where our son was.

"I am telling you truth. It is where they are keeping the children."

"If you're lying to me. I will shoot you. If you are double crossing them, they shoot you. I want the address of where I can find his crew at. Until we get shit straight, you're coming with me." Back talking Jax was never wise. I've seen what he had done in the past. The guy learned his lesson about it the hard way. "Shut up." Across the guy's face went the butt end of Jax's gun. He had no more to say while they stuffed him in the truck of the car.

"Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys. They'll never stay home and they are always alone even with someone they love..." Thomas was merrily singing his song as he calmly took his time to walk down the street. While he finished off the Corona beer he stole from the bar. He tossed the bottle and it shattered when it hit the side of the building.
"What the hell was that back there? You're on me about being a loose cannon. We need to keep Thomas under control."

"I didn't invite Thomas along for this one, Jax. You did. You just had to be the big shit and make a point with him. So, good luck on that." Kyle went and got in the car with Thomas then slammed his door shut. I knew the tone of that slam all too well.

Jax drove us to the outside of the town. You could tell because there were mostly sand and dirt to be found than anything else around. They opened the trunk and Jax took out a gas can. "This should work. You will tell me where I can find them or I will light you up."

Thomas immediately slammed the trunk closed but left the guy inside of it. "This whole gas thing. It doesn't feel very original or threatening enough to me."

"Do you got a better idea?" He only shrugged at Jax's question. "Then shut up."

They didn't get the chance to see if the gas would work or not. Flashing lights were coming at us. Several of them were. "Oh shit."

Thomas was the one who ended up behind the wheel this time. The chase took us around in circles for most of it. With all the dust, dirt and grime the cars kicked up it caked on the windows. It made it hard for us to see where he was going. Probably as hard for the cops to see us too.

When Thomas found an escape route away from them. It became pitch black and the air around us shifted too cooler it seemed. The deeper we drove down in it.

"What the hell is this?"

"Oh shit."

A vibration was felt inside the car. The windows shook and rattled from it. The loud whistle blew hard and streamed the noise as an echo inside the tunnel. Then came the bright blinding white light thrown in our faces.

"Get us the fuck outta here."

He threw the car in reverse and hit the gas but the train kept chugging towards us. Rolling on down the tracks to a plunging death if something didn't happen and soon. When I looked out the back window. I saw the shimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. A little hope we would make it out before thousands of pounds of twisted steel took our lives.

When Thomas finally parked the car safely. We were all taking in some cleansing breaths except him of course. "Whew, you did you guys see that shit. It was awesome. Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys…"

"We don't let Thomas drive anymore."

"I agree, Jax." There was a first time for everything. Jax and Kyle finally agreed upon something.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

Once they straightened out why they thought the guy lied. It was simple, he gave Jax the place the drugs were made and distributed from. Were the boys indeed there? No one could positively say yes or no to the question. There were only three other places left to find them at. Or we probably never would see them again.
But the biggest problem was getting those details for free. It was always one hand washes the other. A dirty deed for a dirty deed. The Mexican soldier Thomas had killed in the bar was a part of a fight club. A dirty, illegal fight club. Where a high amount of cash was wagered on him already. The one to take his place to fight, didn't stand a prayer in hell to win against the champ for the fight scheduled for tonight.

They met at various places in secret. The current champion was from the United States. He did the same as we did. In the middle of the night, sneaked across the border illegally to avoid the current pending charges against him. He would be facing twenty to life if he ever went back to the states again. His rap sheet was a mile long. His most current crimes were raping and beating two women almost to death.

"We take him outta the fight and make sure he can't fight against your guy tonight. Then you'll give me the address to these places of where my son is?"

"You got my word Jackson. Although, it is suicide to take on Sandoval. But that is your choice."

Every single person we had available was here to face whatever needed to be done. Tomorrow morning, we would go back to the plan of us girls getting on the inside of the laundry place. While the guys hit the other places. We were running out of time. There were only two days left to find the boys and make it on the plane's pit stop for fuel. If we missed it, we got left behind.

"You're up Kyle."

"What?"

"To take on the champ. He hurts women. I know how much that shit bothers you. Beating on a woman is wrong no matter what side the of the law you're on. You can talk the shit. Now, let see what you got. I do this kinda shit every day and take on whatever I gotta do to survive."

Kyle got duped by Jax into taking on the champ. You couldn't stand for something one day without taking a stand for it the next. He had fought Jax about hurting a woman. None of the others felt Kyle was the right match up for this fight. But, Jax was not going to have it any other way.

"Kyle doesn't belong in the ring with him. That guy is a professional fighter. I'll do it."

"Are you telling me Kyle is all mouth and not the badass he acts like? Are you afraid your boy might lose, Thomas?"

"If anything happens to him. I will make you bleed, Jax."

The manager of the fight tried to get in the way of Kyle. No one got near the champ without his permission. He was the simple one to go down with a couple of punches to get to fight. "My manager was just doing his job. That shit was not cool." The champ only laughed at Kyle wanting to take him on. "Armature hour."

They both stepped inside the high chain link fence they had stretched out around the ring. Kyle kissed his cross on his dog tags before he tucked it inside his t-shirt. The blows he made were hard and swift only they didn't connect or land on the champ anywhere.

But the champ, he landed blow after blow to him. He danced around the ring like the professional fighter he was. Light on his feet while his fist was mighty. "You gotta watch me, solider boy."

The beating Kyle took only got worse as they went on. The champ had him against the fence as he used his fist, feet and legs to hurt him some more. Even chocking was allowed in this no rules fight.
When he turned loose of Kyle. He went down and didn't get up this time like he had before. "Get up bitch."

It became the final blow when he kicked Kyle until he had him on the outside of the cage. The champ didn't stop then either.

"Hey Kyle, you might try to hit him with something other than your face." Jax had a smile on his while he watched the fight continue on. The others, not so much. Even most of the club members knew it was wrong. For this to take place and for them to let it happen.

"Jackie, call this shit. Have someone else take the fighter on. He will kill the little prick. Think it through, brother."

"Not yet, Chibs. I need to see what Kyle is really made of."

"Then I will." Nero went to stop it. Throw in the towel so no farther damage would happen to Kyle. But even Nero got overruled by his leader as well. We knew she was his lord and master.

"Not yet, baby. He needs to prove himself to Jackson. I say Kyle can do it."

"Gem, it's a dangerous territory to tread in. Kyle is teetering on the edge of it."

"Kyle listens and looks up to you. You keep him whole, Nero. We gotta know he is worthy. That he is capable of following through on it. Or none of this is gonna turn out well for anyone."

Since they all had lost their minds. I was going to stop it but I got halted first. Boomer had me in a gripped lock around my waist. "You can't do that, Tara. Kyle can take care of himself. He just has to find that part of him and make it alive again."

"And if he doesn't?"

"We all get our ass handed to us at some point. He chose to walk inside the ring and now he needs to see it through."

"Get up. You're a goddamn Marine. You get up and fight until you take your last breath in. If you don't do it, Kyle. I'll kick your ass when you're done here." Meat was screaming it at Kyle. You could hear him over the crowd's noise. Meat didn't stop screaming at him either.

The champ had already declared victory. As he held his hands up high as the winner of the match. It took Kyle several attempts to make it back up and on his feet again. He tapped the champ on the shoulder then gave him a right cross. "You gotta watch me." Kyle uttered the words back him from earlier.

Exhaustion had slowed down both of them. But the finally touch was when the champ threw a punch and Kyle threw up his elbow. When he connected his fist to the elbow and humerus bone. It probably shattered every small bone in the champ's hand. I knew for certain what it did when Kyle twisted the champ's middle fingers sideways until you heard them make a cracking sound. "You like hitting women, you piece of shit. You won't hurt another one anytime soon."

Nero made Kyle stop. Or he would have gone on hurting the champ. "Enough. That's enough."

Thomas was on one side of him and Meat on the other. They held Kyle's arms up. "Yeah, that's my boy, right here."

Kyle was favoring his left arm because it was tucked up close to his body. It didn't detour him from
one person on his way back to the vehicle. He spit a mouth full of blood on the ground before him. "Fuck you, Jax. Let's see what you got."

"The biker boy has got a beat down coming to him, that's what he's got. Once this is over with the kids. It's just a matter of which one of us is going to deliver it to him." Thomas never stopped following after Kyle but delivered the message loud and clear as he passed by.

"Amen to that, brother." Meat gave Jax a little nod on his way by too in agreeance with Thomas. Jax totally ignored everything the guys had to say to him. The one he was angry with and glaring at had me really confused because it was Gemma. She strongly held his glare and didn't back down as she made her way through the crowd. "Huh? Looks like there could be a new boss." She putting on her sunglasses and twisted her ass as she went to Nero. Just like she always does. It didn't stop Jax from shooting daggers in her direction until she was out of sight.

"Nothing makes sense to me anymore." It was something I said out loud before I thought. It wasn't like any of them listened to what I had to say anyway. I followed after Jax to make sure he got what he came for.

They got the addresses we needed for our children from the fight. But it still cost a price. I wanted to check Kyle over and he was being difficult about it. "I'm fine. I can move it. Nothing is broken. Stop worrying about me."

Once I got the dried blood cleaned off of his face. His left eye and that side of his face took the worst of it. A few opened lesions, a split lip and a whole lot of swelling. I scrunched the gel up before I broke the cold pack to activate it. "Put this on your eye and I'll give you a couple of pain pills. Extend your arm out." I gave him a number of exercises so I could see how much mobility he had in it. "I'll wrap it in an ace bandage. I really didn't pack anything else to put your arm in. It will help with the swelling in your elbow and forearm as it protects the inflamed tissue around it too. I think your psychological wellbeing is better than your mental one. I've never seen you be so brutal before."

"I told you I would have to do some horrible shit to get the boys back. I warned you to stay away from me, Tara. But you didn't listen and here you are. I did it for Abel and Cody. I would do it again too. I'm not going back to the place I was once at. So, stop worrying about me."

"Do you want one?" He was holding up a bottled beer. They stole cases of it from someone today. The guys and the club had some so I wasn't sure which side actually stole it.

"No thanks, Thomas."

He no more than handed a beer to Kyle when Jax swiped it out of his hands. "Thank, Kyle. I am thirsty." Jax put his arm around me and gave me a devilish grin as we went back to our side. Apparently he felt I had spent enough time tending to the patient. His attention went to his ringing phone. While mine went back to set on my log.

"Are you going to let Jax get away with that shit?" Thomas wasn't soft spoken. His voiced carried and he could be as loud as hell with it.

"It's not about Jax. I do it for her."

"There is pussy whipped and then there is you, Kyle. No woman pulls me around by my Johnson or tells me what to do." Thomas' cell rang. He was frantically trying to redial the number as quickly as he could do it. "Hey baby, sorry I missed your call. Of course, I am thinking about you. What did you say your name is again? Hello?"
Thomas wasn't the only one who was having woman problems. Boomer set on the log with me and didn't have anything to say. He was really down tonight, especially on the subject of love. It became really uncomfortable when Tig joined us while swigging on his beer.

Their direct dialog with each other wasn't exactly nice either. They kept going with comments. They slid closer to me with each one they made. Until I couldn't move out of the way if I wanted to. I was scrunched tight in the middle of their argument.

"You guys realize I'm not Nicole, right? Because you're sort of squishing me."

"Tig, know where you belong." Jax made it clear to Tig. Get the hell back on his own side.

The next astonishing thing to happen was done by Jax. "Nicole, come here darlin." He actually invited her over to their side. She was a little cautious about it and for some damn reason I felt she should be. But he kept calling her over until she went.

The one thing Jax always had and never stopped displaying; was a way with the ladies. His charms worked on most of them and he could talk them into doing things they didn't dream they would ever do.

However, her brother, didn't find anything charming about it. As soon as Jax said her name. Kyle's head sprung up and he was paying attention to every move made. He tossed down the ice pack and he was going where his sister was. He didn't move quickly and you could tell he was aching with every step he took. But it didn't stop him either.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm just following your lead, Kyle. You said I need to be nicer and consider others feelings. I thought Nicole would like to come over here and spend time with Tig."

"Kyle, really Jax was nothing but sweet to me. He said I can be over here with Tig anytime I want."

"What game are you playing, Jax? You better not do anything to Nicole. Or involve her in some bullshit."

"It's looks like your sister may become an old lady to one of my club members. I'm trying to get along with you, Kyle."

By simply setting on the log and observing. You could learn a lot of shit going on in front of you. Gemma had doted over Kyle since we got back last night. It was almost to the point of babying him. Her actions worried me more than Jax inviting Nicole over to his side.

Then there was Nero. He wouldn't let Kyle out of his sight for a second. Not even to go to the bathroom. Which, Kyle was certain he was a big boy and could do it by himself.

All the while I watched Jax seethe with jealousy over his mother. He consistently pushed Gemma away and wanted nothing to do with her. Yet, he was upset she was around Kyle.

"Morning, girlfriend."

"Good morning, Nicole."

"What are you doing?"
"Oh, just trying to decided who is fucking over who the worst."

"Huh?"

"Yeah. I am going to go check on your brother."

"How is the patient?"

"He's fine." Gemma set protectively over Kyle since I had been awake this morning. She wouldn't leave him alone with even me when I got him up to check him over. I gave him another ice pack and more pain pills. As he was one giant black and blue bruise in most places. He still favored his left arm so I rewrapped it to make the bandage tighter.

When Kyle went to do his morning business and get a cup of coffee. His shadow, Nero, wasn't far behind him. I wanted to address it with her while we were alone. "What is going on, Gemma?"

"I am just taking care of Kyle. It should make you happy someone cares enough about him to make sure he is alright."

"Somehow, I'm not buying that."

"Not buying what?"

"It's all for the good of Kyle bullshit. I don't think Jax is the only one playing games around here."

"Do you really believe Jackson will allow Kyle to just walk away without paying for his sins or the betrayal my son feels has been done to him? It's not how it works. You got no idea what's coming. Still yet, it's coming."

"Tara." Jax called me over and I didn't get to finish the conversation with Gemma. Oh, but we so would finish it later on.

Jax wanted to go over the plan with me. Make sure I understood exactly what he wanted done. They gave us each three bugs to plant at the laundry place in various spots. So they could tap in and see what was happening on the inside of it.

"Be safe and leave as soon as you get those planted. Call me, I'll have someone come and get you. I love you, babe."

"I love you too."

After the farewells were said and done among us. We went to get in line for the bus with the other workers. They didn't seem to notice any difference in us and hopefully neither did the bad guys.

It came right on schedule too. We took a seat and I tried to avoid eye contact with anyone. One woman insisted on talking to me. I didn't understand a word she was saying. I finally nodded my head. But I had no idea what I was agreeing with. It was enough for her to be quiet as we exited the bus to go in with the other workers.

The sweatshop was terrible on the inside. These women were exploited for their services and in exchange received a few dollars pay a day. They washed mounds of laundry in a hot environment with extremely bad working conditions. While the other workers sewed new clothing in another area and made alterations to customer's requests.

You could feel the steam flowing throughout the building when they would start up the washers and
throw the stuff in industrial sized dryers. The doors on them were large enough to walk through. The paint had peeled and cracked on the walls by them just from the amount of moisture they let off from the daily use.

Men walked around just watching what took place. They never stopped to mingle, talk or acknowledged the women. Most definitely they were patrolling the area for something. It made me nervous because I tried to blend in the best I could.

"Tara." Gemma got my attention to follow after her and Nicole. There really weren't places to plant bugs here. Too much traffic flow and everyone touched everything in sight.

Down a dimly lit hallway we followed workers to a door. A light was on above it. They swiped something to get inside. So, it's where we went too.

"The dye room. How fitting it's where we ended up."

Large vats of different colored dyes to make colored t-shirts with. They had carts full of white plain shirts that needed to be done. But there was another door connecting to this room we couldn't get to open up and none of the women seemed to have access to it.

A woman handed Gemma an arm full of t-shirt and spout a length conversation to her. "I don't understand a damn word you just said bitch." Of course it angered the woman when Gemma let the clean shirts fall to the dirty floor.

"I understand English, bitch and you don't work here."

"Oh shit."

"And then some Gemma."

The younger girl spoke our language and knew what we had been talking about since we came in the room with them. It was a Mexican dog pile on the poor little white girls. Until the men entered the room.

They searched us and found the bugs. Now, we were fucked. "Stop pushing me." Gemma didn't give up or stayed quiet for anyone.

The hiding place in here was obvious as we learned not all of those large walk in size dryers were operational. There was one which lead to somewhere else. A massive under the laundry place meth lab.

It extended underground the full length of the building. It was probably the biggest cook lab ever made or kept secret for that fact. Beakers were set up on tables, stainless steel hundreds of gallon drums where they made their product. Entire fifty gallon barrels of different chemicals to use set along the wall readily available.

But there was still no sign of our boys anywhere here to be found. Not one inclination they ever step inside of this lab. Today was a good day to die if I knew for certain it saved my son's life.

"I said stop pushing me asshole." We had a language barrier between them and us. They finally put Gemma in the chair when she didn't set down on her own like Nicole and I did.

But we had bigger problems when he came walking in. The large Mexican man who was strutting about and ordering the others around. He meant something to them. His cunning smile had a gold grill on his front teeth with sparkling diamonds added to it.
"What do we have here?" We were silent and said nothing in return to him. He checked over Gemma first. Her crow tattoo stuck out at the top of the plain long dress she wore. "I'd say you are with the Sons of Anarchy. They have something of mine I want back." When Gemma ignored him she got a back hand across the face. "Answer me."

"Yes," It was all she would say to him.

"Now, we are getting somewhere. Which one of you means something to Jax Teller?" Again all he got was silence. He took an extremely large knife off of his side. "Eeny, menny, miny, moe." Then he pointed the knife to Gemma. "You're too old. So, I don't think it's you." Next came my turn. "You're too prissy. So, I rule you out." It was down to the last one of us, Nicole. "So, I am banking on it being you."

He ripped Nicole up from her chair. Held her by her throat and traced the knife across it. "I will cut you into pieces and send them to him one at a time. Until I get my shit back." The cold steel slid down to in between her breast. She didn't cave and tell him the truth. She only closed her eyes and tried to not see what was coming her way.

"Leave her alone. I am Jax's wife. Not her." There were choices you had to make in life. I couldn't let Nicole suffer for choices I made. I wouldn't let her feel the pain of being associated with the club that was rightfully meant for me.

"Sandoval, Mr. Frien said wait until he gets here before you do anything with them." Well it did save us for the moment and explain who in the hell this crazy fucker was. He was Carlos Sandoval, the one who the SOA took a shipment from.

"When I get outta here. I will cut your heart out."

Sandoval stopped for a moment crushing up the meth with the end of his knife handle. He gave Gemma a smile for what she said then went back to it. A long line of the drug was scooped up on the knife blade from where he sniffed it all. Grabbed his nose hard a couple of times before he approached her.

"You got spunk bitch. I love spunk." Then did another hit of meth from his knife blade. "Whew, that's some good shit."

"Jesus Christ, he is crazier than Gemma."

"And then some, Nicole."

Sandoval went up the stairs to go back up to the top. I was about to shit myself while the other two just looked around.

"How can the two of you remain so calm?"

"Kyle and the guys will come for us. I have no doubts about my brother."

"Jackson and the club will kill any shit that gets in their way. My son never knows when to stop. He gets it from me."

They did remain calm until we seen what happened next. Sandoval wasn't exact the only boss for the cartel. Mr. Frien was his. The shot caller, the all mighty, the one who decided all the players really were and determined who lived and died in the end.

He was dressed in a three piece business suit. His appearance was neat and tidy. The lettering on his
jacket was; Los Lobos Chicken. Not only did he own this place but all the chicken franchises in Mexico too. Which, when he spoke I didn't believe he was Mexican either. He could speak their tongue, a different language to some of the others. But also perfect English as well. He wasn't a common street thug, he was well educated and articulate.

"You brought them to my establishment and still did not get the shipment returned. Now they know all about our operation and have seen our faces. You fool. I've spent a lifetime building my empire in secret."

"I didn't bring them here. They showed up with the other workers this morning."

"Then you lead them straight to me. We need to deal with this problem immediately."

Sandoval was directing his men when Mr. Frien overruled him. "No. Not them. You will do it yourself, Carlos. Your hands will be as bloody as mine are in all of this when we are through."

Now we were all sort of in a panic as Mr. Frien took off his jacket and hung it up on the back of a chair. We saw him go to the back where they had a wash station and hazmat suits for making their drugs.

One button at a time he took off his long sleeved pressed shirt and hung it up with a hanger so it wouldn't get wrinkled. Tossed his tie over his shirt when he was done. Untied his nice dress shoes and put them aside as he grabbed a yellow slick rain type suit to dress in now. He completed it with a pair of high top rubber boots. Then stood patiently and waited for Sandoval to finish dressing in the same attire.

A black velvet case was rolled out on the table with a lot of huge shiny knives inside it. Mr. Frien study a couple of them in his hand before he chose the one he wanted. Sandoval kept the first one he picked up in his hand.

"I can call my son. Jackson Teller is my son and I can get him to bring your drugs. You don't have to hurt us to get them back." Mr. Frien never spoke a word or changed his facial expression as he walked towards Gemma. "Don't do this." She kept pleading with them the closer they stepped with knives in hand.

Mr. Frien did use the knife of choice. Only he used it on Sandoval. From behind he grabbed Carlos and slit his throat from ear to ear. His blood sprayed us all as Mr. Frien held the gash open in Carlos' neck until he was finished with his kill. "I do not tolerate insubordination. Or a junkie more interested in using my product than protecting it." It was all he said before he let Carlos' lifeless body fall to our feet.

He made slashing motions with the knife while screaming something the three of us didn't understand. The rest of them did though. As they moved out of Mr. Frien's way when he passed by them. Some even dropped their heads as a gesture of respect when he talked. Then came the bloody knife stabbed down in the table where the others still laid.

While they dragged Carlos' body away. Mr. Frien removed his glasses from his face and washed the blood away in the sink. Some had the ability to wash it away and the stain of it never touched their souls.

Once he washed himself clean, he got dressed and discarded the bloody clothing. He checked his tie in the mirror to make sure it was perfectly straight. "You will call your son now. Bring them." He conversed with the men in the room in their language. Only they didn't mean all of us were going.
"Not you." I was pushed back down in the chair. They only wanted Gemma and Nicole.

"I'm not leaving without Tara."

"Neither am I."

Gemma put up the best fight but she still lost. She kicked and tried to bite to get her way. But it didn't work. They took her and Nicole away while I was left behind.

For over an hour I sat and stared at the clock on the wall. Wondering what would happen now. The four they left to watch me went on to clean up the mess that Mr. Frien had made with Carlos.

It made me nervous Mr. Frien was coming back to finish the job he started when I heard footsteps echoing up from the top of the staircase where the elevator was. Only it wasn't Mr. Frien at all.

"Holy shit."

"Do I even want to ask who the guy is they are chopping up and putting in a barrel?"

"Sandoval. Where is Gemma and Nicole?"

Since Jax couldn't come across with the drugs when Mr. Frien had Gemma call him. It was a stall tactic of the bait and switch. Jax was given one hour to produce the drugs or they killed their first hostage. Which, was me, Jax Teller's old lady.

Then if another hour went by, they killed the second one, Kyle. He had taken Gemma and Nicole's place because Mr. Frien believed he was someone important in the club.

"Honestly, Jax offered himself in exchange for you three without even thinking twice about it. They wouldn't make the deal. You are the insurance policy he will come back with their drugs. They think I am the president of another charter of the club because they knew who the rest of the members are. It's the only reason they would exchange me for Nicole and Gemma. I couldn't let them get hurt. I am the one who brought my sister into this mess."

"There are no drugs to exchange. So, what happens now?" It came out at barley a whisper. The reality of the cold hard facts was before my face and in my heart I already knew the answer.

"Jax will come back for you, Tara. One way or the other. They have a plan if they can execute it in an hour."

"And if they can't?"

"If we're lucky, they will kill us without torturing us first."

Time really wasn't on our side. If Jax and the club failed to return Kyle and I were dead. If they did return on time, we were all probably dead including them.

To take my mind off the situation we were staring at and was on the losing end of and totally flipping the fuck out. We talked about the club and some of the things they did. One subject of the club members did seem to interest Kyle.

"You mean to tell me. I could have been going down on you the entire time and it's completely acceptable. But you waited until now to mention it. Great, girl. Your timing is impeccable."

"I didn't say I found it acceptable. I said the club finds it's acceptable. It's not like we can do anything about it right now anyway."
"I don't have anything better to do at the moment if you don't. At least I'll die with a smile on my face and you might too, girl."

Needless to say. It just didn't happen. But he was right about nothing to do except kill time. We talked about so many like we always do.

"What happened to Julia?"

"She was on her way home from work. A tire blew out and her car collided with a semi. They pronounced her dead at the scene."

"John Teller collided with a semi too. How old were you Kyle?"

"I was nine years old when she died."

"Jesus Christ, so was Ellie. She was nine when Donna died. It was shortly after Abel was born. Abel and Cody would have been in the hospital during that time frame."

"Oh shit."

"Yeah, oh shit and then some, Kyle. What was Thomas talking about when he said I saved the both of you?"

"He totally blew it out of proportion. It doesn't mean anything."

"Then tell me." It took some coaxing on my end. I put my hand on his. "You know you can't keep things from me for very long." Kyle just shook his head and was having trouble either with how to put it. Or was fighting me all the way on it. But, finally came across with the information.

"Thomas and I meet up once a year at the same time and same place unless he is deployed. Only, I canceled on him at the last minute. It was the weekend we spent at my house after the Collette problem. I stayed to be with you. He was pissed off at me because we had already planned it for months and booked everything. Since I didn't go, neither did he. Then he called me the next day. The plane crashed and there were no survivors. If we had been on it, we would have both died. So, he feels you saved our lives; Kyle's angel. Thomas wasn't kidding about your name."

"How do you feel about it?"

"You saved me in a lot of ways, Tara. I was at a real low point in my life when I met you. I didn't feel much of anything then. You were so kind and sweet to me when you didn't have to be. The best part is you did just it because you are you. It's how you are. There wasn't an ulterior motive to it. The plane thing…it doesn't mean shit. It was only a coincidence."

"I have something to tell you, Kyle. I need you to keep an open mind when I do and promise me you won't just disappear."

"The last time you said this to me. You told me John is my father. So, I do not want to hear it."

"Kyle…"

It didn't end up mattering if he did or didn't want to hear it. They came to get us and there wasn't enough time to tell him anyway. The exchange had been set in motion. We were escorted up to the top by four men holding guns on us. The sunlight was bright when we went through the double doors to the parking lot.
Jax and the club was waiting for us with the large wooden crate in the back of the flatbed truck. With the transportation truck they stole parked beside it with the large door open in the back for inspection. Only I knew there weren't really any drugs in the crate for them. Five more bad guys joined us to go meet them. They checked and patted down Jax and the club members for weapons.

"Open the crate." They wanted to check for their merchandise before they killed us. It was exactly what we overheard them talking about when we set below and waited. Once they had the drugs, we would all be killed.

Jax gave Kyle a slight nod and looked off to right. Kyle gave him one back and stepped in front of me.

Before they pried off the top of the crate, Two of the bad guys had already hit the ground. It was a silent muted shot to the head. Which, only meant Thomas was hidden nearby somewhere and made the long range shot that made them fall.

The bad guys also got another surprise with what was waiting for them in the crate. Four of the guys sprang up with guns blasting everything around us. Weapons were being distributed from the crate as quickly as the guys could grab them. It wasn't only the club members here; it almost was all of them waiting to ambush the bad guys.

"Bobby, get Tara outta here. We burn this shit to the ground. Then we go get the kids."

It was exactly what they done too. While Bobby and I waited in the truck parked down the street. They came out and Jax lit up a smoke for the bonfire they started. The explosion of it could be seen for miles around and would only bring more chaos to the surface. Only the bad guy reinforcement had already shown up.

The truck was riddled with bullet holes as they fired upon us. "Bobby," He slumped over in the seat because his was the side they came in at. The blood was gushing from his body everywhere because he took several bullets. He had shielded me from it and sacrificed himself. "No. I'm so sorry."

"Tara." Jax was screaming my name. They were firing at the bad guys now. The men who took on this mission of finding our children; Jax and the club with Kyle and the guys. Were all so brave. They didn't run for shelter when they faced the bad guys, they took them head on. Let the shit fall where it may and none of them were afraid to die for the cause.

Which took their attention away me long enough to try to get away. I crawled out of the truck to my hands and knees. I seemed to spend a lot of time on them in this position lately.

"Run." It was all he said to me as he pulled me up by the waist. He grabbed Bobby's gun and knife before we took off. They didn't stop following us though or shooting at us either as we went down the street. He laid down a blanket of fire back at them just so we had a chance to make it a little farther.

We ducted into the Worship Center because no other doors were unlocked. It didn't stop them from entering behind us or leaving a trail of spilled blood behind as they went. I even said a quick prayer for Bobby to make it home safely to the promise land.

The large cross in the front drew me in, captured me when I saw it. It shined as a beacon of light and hope. The vision of him nailed to it to pay for our sins played over and over in my mind. How would I end up paying for all of mine?

"Get down." In between the pews we dived. Splinters came from the wooden chairs where people
set and prayed. They were reflecting off everything and laying around us on the floor. They continued to keep the bullets flying our way relentlessly. Over the top of them he raised up and shot back at them. It was a futile attempt though.

More than once on this trip I had been down on my knees crawling like a child instead of standing like a strong woman would. In here, I felt I should be on them saying my prayers and begging for forgiveness of the things I had done. The place we were at was an omen my time had drawn nearer. Or maybe I should have worked at keeping a stronger faith and lived a clean life while I still could.

We literally did the low crawl and weaved our way to the back. There was no exit or way out of it. The only shelter we found was a large wooden column to hide behind. It was the thing that stood between us and them. The only safe haven I had left.

"I'm out of ammo." He threw the hand gun and it smacked the wall in the back of the holy room. "Fuck."

"Jax and the guys will come for us."

"No, they won't. Jax went to get the boys or he better be by now. Or Cody and Abel won't make it out either."

"We're screwed and this is the end, isn't it? How fitting we die in a church."

"It's not looking good." Kyle held on to the knife tightly in his grip. "This is all I've got left. One of us has to live to tell this story. There is only one way out and it's the same door we came through at the side of the room. They will gun us down before we make it there. I will distract them and you run."

"I'm not leaving you, Kyle."

"There isn't time to argue about it. Abel, Thomas, Kenny and Ellie needs you." His lips crushed mine for only brief seconds. "I love you. If there really is an afterlife. I will probably still love you then too. I gotta do this and you gotta run. We do it on the count of three."

He spoke those three little, giant damn words to me. Then counted off as he was gone from my side. As I got up to run something pushed me down to the floor. The glass was shattering around me. The sharp shards of it were bouncing off my head. I covered it up because I couldn't move from the spot I was in. A crippling weight was crushing me.

The bullets continued to whiz by. The loud screams were buzzing in my head until I realized I was the one doing the screaming. A hand tried to capture me but I fought it away. "Tara, it's me. Look at me. I'm not going to hurt you." Boomer had my face held by his hands until I stopped struggling to get away from him. I grabbed on to him and held on tightly.

They had come down through the skylights in the ceiling and a couple of them through the large stained glass windows in the front. The holy place became a killing field. In the house of god souls entered hell from here.

But there was one soul I couldn't any longer see. I made my way up from the floor and walked around the large wooden column we set behind. He was holding on to his arm trying to catch his breath.

"I almost didn't shoot them to see where in the hell you were going with this. You and knife against three submachine guns. What were you planning on; them falling down laughing themselves to death because of it?" Even in a life threatening situation. Meat had a quality of humor he brought along
with him to ease some of the tension.

"I had it under control."

"The fuck you did, Kyle. It's why we came back. We never leave anyone behind."

With my arms extended I circled them around him. Lost in the feeling of calmness and serenity. Caught up in the fact we lived through it one more time. The noise in the room had all stopped. It was peaceful once again. "You were willing to die for me and you said you love me."

"Are you sure I said it, Tara? There was a lot of confusion and noise you may have misunderstood what I actually said. I'm not recalling it like that."

"It's the exact way I recall it. You said it."

"Fine, I said it. I didn't exactly plan on living long enough for us to discuss it. I needed to tell you. I know you don't feel the same way. It's okay you don't. I would rather love someone I can never have. Than have someone I can never love."

"Kyle, that's some real beautiful shit man. But we got people to kill and kids to save. Let's go already." Meat lead the way out the door for them. He was certainly a silly fucker but one hell of a fighting machine.

While we were dealing with all of that. The rest of them had located the boys. They were kept at the mansion of Mr. Frien. It was a fortress with guards everywhere protecting his life. With what they had just done at the laundry place, he had to of known by now they were coming for him and our children.

Most of the club and the guys were on their way there if they hadn't made it by now. Jax went to our son as soon as he found out. They would penetrate Frien's castle, kill all the shit around them and save our children. Or they would die trying to.

"Do not let Gemma, Nicole or Tara out of your sight. Where is Jax?"

"He went in through the gate with the others."

Boomer handed our little computer geek the detonator. "Give us ten minutes so I can get them planted. Then you blow it up. Whoever makes it out by then, makes it out alive."

The three of us girls waited with bated breath. We had no idea which one of them were doing the shooting that rang out so loudly as we watched from a distance. Or if any of them had been shot to death by it already.

"Five minutes and counting down." He gave them their notice of exactly how much time they had left to make it out over the radios.

"Three minutes' left guys. Hurry up and get the hell out of there."

"You're not detonating shit. The club, Nero, Kyle, Jackson and the boys are still inside." Gemma had a gun at his temple.

"Lady, you are fucking crazy. But I still will do exactly that. Those are my orders and I carry through on them until death. They knew the risk going into it. If I don't do it, we all die. The cartel will come out with their guns blazing."
"Then we all die because I will shoot you."

He flipped up the plastic cover and hoovered his thumb over the red button. "Sixty seconds and counting." The countdown was sent to all of them over their radios once again. With him looking straight into Gemma's eyes while he did it.

"Blow the shit. We have the boys." It was the response heard by all over the radio. Several of them had come running out of the high black iron gate already. I could tell who some of them were even from here. Gemma lowered the gun down finally.

"You were bluffing."

"Sure." It was her only response to him. But, she wasn't bluffing. I had seen that crazy look in her eyes many times before.

One would have thought it a simple process from here forward and we would be celebrating the return of our children. However, it wasn't going to be as easy as that now. It was when they cast a shadow down from the sky on the hot sand where I stood. I knew what was coming next. A complete circle was rotating around me as they flew above. "No, not now." I could see the swirl of black on the surface of the sand they caused before I looked up to see the crows. They were here with us. They were living it through us.

A blinding white light reflected from the sun in my eyes when I looked up. They didn't make a sound this time. The complete silence was the sequence of what would come next just like in my dream. They were waiting it out and never broke their flight from the same circle the four of them made repeatedly. When I shut my eyes so I could get the spots to go away to see again. Everything went completely grey around me. "Please, no."

The dark cloud had come down. It moved above my head as the crows did. It was about to rain brimstone on us all. For the sand turned to a rotating grey circle now. If the legend held true; the fourth crow was here to take a soul to the promise land. Take them home with them. It was just matter of who they were actually after. "No." I screamed it over and over. Once again, following what I had done in my dream. Never breaking free from the same path of fate. No matter how many opportunities we had been given to.

All I could see was fire before me. He detonated it just like he said he was going to do. The explosion was life blowing up in my face. Heat was rising from the ground to feel just how hot hell was going to be when I got there.

This was the dream I continuously had but never came to the end of it. Was this meant to be the ending I could never see before now? Was it what Kyle had told me he seen earlier? Were they who I had been dreaming of the entire time? Was this the chain of events that happened in the first place? Did all of our actions lead us to the damnation I was about to witness before me?

With it involving Abel, was he destined to be the good or bad brother of the future. Because we never changed the course of fate; was it now changing itself to destroy the web and unravel the evil with our children?

John may have interfered to bring it all to a halt. To shut down the club once and for all. What he couldn't accomplish while he was still alive and it's why his soul couldn't rest yet. To stop the evil completely from existence of the past, present and future; Kyle, Jax and Abel. I didn't want to believe John would do such a cruel heinous thing by using his sons and grandson to do it with though. There had to be some reason he actually brought Jax and Kyle together in one spot other than more death and chaos. The same horrible things John experienced in his life here.
Those questions went unanswered as I seen them. Side by side Jax and Kyle in the haze of the lingering black smoke carrying two blonde haired little boys out of it. It brought me to my knees. They had our children. They all survived it. They had no soul to carry with them today. The crows were wrong.

We couldn't get to them fast enough. Gemma, Nicole and I went to them. We didn't not care about the danger of it or of the consequences we may have to suffer for it either. But, it wasn't the full blessing I had hoped for.

"What is wrong with them?"

"I don't know. We found them like this."

Abel and Cody were not at all responsive. In just the short period of time they were separated from us; our healthy, happy normal boys weren't the same anymore. Their color was pail white with no reminisce left of the rosy cheeks they once had. They lost weight as they appeared so thin and frail. It felt like they were burning up with a fever when I touched each one of them.

Their bodies were soaked in sweat. Gemma, Nicole and mine quickly became soaked in tears. Cody's heart rate was low at best. It was hard to find Abel's pulse. His little heart was barley even beating now.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!
The past, present and future touched each other in so many ways. It all manipulated it into the universe it was around me today. One point in time marked another later affected by it. All the mistakes I've made in the past coming back around to haunt me. All the love I have for my children seems to rip my heart apart. All things I had planned for my family seemed pointless now.

In the quest for what the real moment meant and expectations from life. Some expect to grasp hold of the singular instant that feels like a journey between the past, present and the future. Between the land of what they know and a land they don't know of the future yet to come. In their pursuit, they hope to encounter that genuine moment. Even if it was brief not the most joyous of occasions. Mine was today, my frail son of the fleeting time left a scar in my memory. A scar on my heart that could never be totally healed or forgotten.

Although, I was no longer caught in a whirlwind in the past as of now. Of my; mistakes, dreams, fears, hopes, regrets, wants and guilt. I was no longer held as a prisoner to my past nor a slave to my future.

For the first time, ever, I threw out the rule book of life. Took the advice of someone near and dear to me. Don't try to live by a date planner or be so pretentious. Dance under the stars as often as you can while they stare at you like you lost your mind. The reality of it; I had missed so much life I could have lived so well, due to it. If something happened to Abel I couldn't see past this marked second.

A glorious future seemed like a ridiculous thing to me. Every time I try to catch it, get a grasp on the direction I want it to go in and hold it in my hand. It disappeared every time a little quicker every day. With no one to blame but myself. You must allow your past to die for your future to live on.

From the past I watched Abel be born, fight for his life and against all odds survive it. Now, in the present, I was doing the same thing. In the future, I hoped for better times to come for me and my children. No matter what I had to do to save them from the horrible fate they were destined to suffer.

My son had been put through so many horrible situations and scary events. He was facing another one ahead of him. There was nothing a mother wouldn't do to save her child. Not even give up their own life to allow their children to survive onward. In the big picture scheme your life was worthless without them; you were never capable of putting back the pieces of anything without them.

It made me believe it was part of the reason Gemma became like the woman she was. Losing her child left her bitter with life and John. The uncertainty of which direction to go in. Questioning love at every twist and turn. Why you were with them and how you could see your child's face in their eyes every time you looked at them. Which, only made you despise the man you once loved so much and who was once the center of your universe. This was as close as I ever came to understand Gemma and her decisions she made.

"Babe, are you okay?"
Jax held our son in his lap. Kyle was beside him with Cody in his in the back of the truck. With a sheet covering a dead body nearby. Death was surrounding us, calling out names of the list it was here to take.

"I'm fine." It was the only thing I could manage to say to Jax. I tried to not look at anything or anyone except Abel and Cody. Fuck death, it would have to take me first before I turned loose of those two little boys. Let it take them away from us. I watched the sky for them, but the crows were nowhere to be found. It brought relief and scared the hell out of me too when they would make their next appearance. Who they were here to take home with them.

There were so many things happening quickly around me. Just like everything else had in my life. We had suffered death of ones we loved because of all of this. Some were just wounded from it. While our little ones kept fighting to take in another breath to survive for just one more minute on this earth. But they had so many people who loved them and wouldn't let go of them easily. I would never survive losing one of my children.

Even more than getting the boys well. They still had to be protected until we got them out of this country. There was no place you could truly hide in their territory. When you done something as bad as blew up the drug lord's home and business. We still had to make the attempt to get out alive from Mexico tomorrow.

Nero was on the phone with Marcus, making deals. It would take a lot of favors and payback to get one more miracle from Marcus. One more hand extended out in kindness to give us help. Only because it was Nero and involved our children. Marcus done it. It was first of many battles and issues we still had to overcome.

There was a missionary willing to take us in for the night for a goodwill donation of under the table cash. Marcus guarantee the money until we could return to pay the debt off. The Lodge would be signed over to him in return.

It worried me Jax agreed to it and wouldn't follow through. It would mean more retaliation to come our way if he failed to do so. But I had a newsflash for him this time, the lodge was in my name and it would get done if he liked it or not. This wouldn't be a club decision where I got overruled and undermined. Maybe my consciousness had gotten to me on a lot of things lately. Somethings I couldn't get off my mind anymore. If we all pulled through this shit, I made myself a promise to build a better life for us and around my children. This was where I was going to start.

When we came up to the place Marcus arraigned for us to stay. It was a half church and half mission compound. It worried me with the surroundings and the kind of people who were here. The guys were all good with it. They feared nothing while I feared everything.

The medical resources were a minimal but better than nothing at all. Mostly outdated technology and old school health care. Even the doctor and nurses on staff were Hispanic and I couldn't communicate with them in their language. I was never more thankful Nero was here than I was right now.

The guys would take shifts on lookout because there were chances of retaliation coming from the Cartel if we were found. While we started taking care of those who were in need.

Derrick was critical with a gunshot wound to the abdomen. I took him while, the doctor, on call here tended to wounds and less critically hurt. This brave young boy was only twenty four years old. He had a high intelligence quotient, tested in early to their Marine unit and still had so much life ahead of him to live. If I had anything to say about it, he still would too.
This kid was a hero. He stepped in front of Jax and Kyle when they had the boys in their arms. To take the bullet himself. Knowing all along what would happen to him when he done it. Because of Derrick, my son was still alive to fight for his life some more. I was doing everything I could to make sure Derrick had that same option.

It was a bleak attempt though. He was barely holding on at this point. His vitals all dropped and his heart rate slowed quickly. There was no way for me to stabilize him fast enough. When he started gasping for breath, I knew I was losing him.

"Someone tell my dad I went down fighting." It completely broke me into a million pieces when Derrick had to take numerous breaths to get all those words out. The importance to him was because he followed in his successful Marine decorated officer father's footsteps. He wanted to make his father proud. Would my boys choose to do the same, follow in Jax's path and be part of the club? Not if I had anything to say about it they would not.

"Listen to my voice Derrick, this is Tara. You are going to go home to see your dad. I'm sure your parents are very proud of the fact you are their son. You are my hero because of your brave act you saved my son's life. I am so proud of you and I am indebted to you for what you did for Abel and Cody. Just stay with me." I was trying to get the bleeding to stop and kept talking to him at the same time. More so, he had to believe he would make it and not stop fighting either.

His bloody hand managed to come up to arm. "Thank you, Ma'am. Tell my mom I love her." The warning alarm went off and his end was approaching near. The sound of the squeal from the machine was like a cannon being shot through my heart. A mother's heart of gratitude. I had to save him like he did my child. It would affect another mother too, his. There was no heartache in this world that could compare to losing your baby. It didn't matter how old they were.

When I looked at Derrick's face, I seen my son lying there before me. Only a mere child who was good and done righteous things. Had a sweetness to him that couldn't be stolen away. It was a safe bet I had done more horrible things in my life than this kid. "Stay with me, Derrick."

No matter how much I kept saying it to him, pleaded, he was slipping away. When he flatlined, I still wasn't giving up. I began cardio pulmonary resuscitation. "Don't you die on me." It wasn't working but I would not surrender or let him go.

They finally came in with the defibrillator. When I had the paddles placed in the right position, I shocked him. "Come on, breathe dammit." After I did it a couple more times. Meat grabbed a hold of my arms before I could do it again.

"Tara, he's gone. You've done everything you can for him."

"Fuck." I threw those paddles and they clanked against the steel cart the machine set on. I called the time of death for Derrick. He was gone but it was far from over for me.

All the guys gathered near the cold hard table he laid on. Stuck their fists inside the circle they formed around his lifeless body. "Come on, Tara. You're one of us now." Meat asked me to join them. I had no idea what I was doing or even why. But to honor him, I done what they did. They dropped their heads and had a moment of silence just for Derrick.

"May you have a safe passage home to the promise land. If there is a heaven they will welcome a man like you there, Derrick. I will make sure I tell your mother and father personally what a great brave son they raised and how much you love them. Thank you for what you did for the boys." When I brought my head up and opened my eyes. They were all staring at me. As low as I said it, I thought no one heard me.
"Derrick will like that, Tara. It's mean a lot." Boomer gave me a little nod after he spoke and went out the door. The others followed out after him except Kyle.

Kyle was feeling his own pain over Derrick's death. Probably blaming himself as much as I was if not even more. "It's not your fault, Kyle." I took his hand and gave it a gentle squeeze. When I let go, he didn't. His eyes were glazed over and I wanted to reach out to him. To comfort him. To let him know he wasn't the only one who was feeling it. To show him I was here for him. But I couldn't as much as I wanted to.

"I need to see how the boys are."

Before Kyle let go of my hand. He gave me a kiss on the cheek. He didn't seem to care if anyone walked in and seen it or not. "You were great with Derrick. Thank you, Tara." I only nodded to him. If I had opened my mouth, I wasn't exactly sure what would come out of it.

From the doorway, I looked back at them. Derrick, who gave up his life for my son. Kyle, who would have given up his life for me. Both done it unselfishly and without getting anything from me in return. My heroes in different ways.

But my focus, care and love had to go to Abel and Cody. The doctor had already listed out their vitals with no diagnoses. Which, I couldn't read in Spanish and Nero translated it for me. None us knew for certain what was causing the problem with them. Why they were ill and becoming sicker by the minute.

The first thing I had to do was stabilize Abel's heart. With his existing condition, I would lose him if I didn't and quickly. I wasn't a heart specialist or trained for it. I could only make educated guesses at this point. I knew enough with being his mother, what they had told me in the past.

It was a gamble of the treatment I chose for my son. No medication was given to him for over a week. If I was correct, a direct shot into his iv should begin to make his heart erythema begin to beat normally again within hours. If I was wrong, I didn't want to think what would happen if I were.

As I drew it from the bottle to the needle, my hands shook like crazy. There was no else to make this call. No one else to blame for the actions I was about to take. No one would know my sorrows if I was wrong about it.

The needle was there. All I had to do was plunge it into the line. I kept pausing to catch my breath, to look at my son's face and regain my composure as a medical professional would. Only this time, I wasn't a professional. I was a broken mother brought to her knees with the love of her child.

"Tara."

Kyle said my name and I looked up. He gave me smile and a slight nod. He believed in me and my judgement. We took in deep breaths together while never breaking eye contact with the other. Until I finally pushed the plunger on the needle. I closed my eyes and said a prayer. That's what life for all of us was hanging on today; a wing of a crow and a prayer.

When it was done, relief washed over me. I somehow knew, I had done the right thing. I made the right decision. For once, no doubts of my actions nor the direction of the path I went down.

With a kiss to Abel's forehead. "Mommy failed you baby and wasn't there when you needed me. It will never happen again."

"You're not the one who failed Abel or our family." Jax was sitting in the chair on the other side of Abel's bed. Jax needed me too from the deep sorrow shown in his eyes.
Daddy hadn't let go of his son's hand since we'd been here. Doing what a real father should; loving your child unconditionally, being there for them and never giving up on them. Jax was experiencing his own guilt for his actions in all of this. As much as I wanted to reach out and comfort him, I couldn't. There wasn't time for me to waste on anything. I had to care for these two little boys.

For hours after I drew their blood while I went down a possible list of what I thought it could be. Crossing off what I was certain it wasn't. Putting a question mark by those illnesses it could be. A star went beside those that more than likely were the cause.

The wait for the blood test to come back was killing me. At Saint Thomas, I would have it back in no longer than an hour or so. Here, four hours had passed by and I had heard nothing yet. It was a reasonable guess the health care system in place lacked luster and many died in the process.

But when, the results finally came back. It was no help at all. The things their blood was tested for showed no signs of any informality. Whatever they had, was shutting down their little bodies quickly from the inside out. I missed it, I was far off and I was completely out of ideas.

They were discussing the price tag that would be put on the heads of the ones who were brave enough to attack the cartel on their home soil. As much as I wanted to know all the details myself, I had other important things to worry about now. Saving Abel and Cody, they were my top priority.

After I glanced at the simple wall clock, I had wasted time without a conclusion or solution. The elapsed time, exhaustion, fear and anxiety, got the better of me. The fit I threw by clearing off the counters, curse words coming out of my mouth at random and throwing shit around. It was worse than any temper tantrum that my son ever had.

"I don't even know what I am supposed to treat them for. I'm at a loss here. I could end up hurting them more than helping them. Or do something even worse…"

"Only you can save them. We can't do it. So, whatever you need to do to get yourself there and keep it together, you do it. I know you can. I believe in you Tara more than I even do myself most of the time. I've witnessed you do some amazing things. It's how I've always seen you as an amazing woman. I…"

The room became completely silent when everyone fell at a hush as they watched us. But it wasn't going to be for long. Kyle caught himself of how close we were standing to each other and the way he touched me. After he casually glanced around at all the faces staring at us intensely, his hands dropped quickly away from me and took a couple of step back to put space between us. Went to open his mouth to say something a couple of times but didn't. His hand went through his hair and he was on his way out the door. "I need some air."

Everyone was either directing their attention to me or Jax now. I quickly scanned his face. He didn't seem angry; more unsure and confused about what transpired between me and Kyle. If Jax only understood how many times we were just there for each other. It wasn't a sexual thing, at least not this time. Kyle was my best friend who I knew I could rely on. There were no explanations I could give to explain nor to defend what just happened or many other times. So, I didn't even try to. Abel and Cody needed me. They were what I would keep my focus on.

"I think I need some air too." With a long lingering kiss to my cheek. Jax went out the door as well.

At first I worried a bit. Jax and Kyle being together outside. But noticed some of the club and other Marines followed behind them. They expected trouble to come between them as much as I did. Even Gemma motioned her head and Nero went with her.
It's when I seen it. Nero had a large gash on his arm and hadn't put his shirt back on again. They had patched him up and I never caught on before. The spider web tattoo on his shoulder. It blew our theories out of the water. I only seen him as good and not evil.

"Is something wrong, Tara?"

Nero's voice made me pull my gawking eyes off him. "No." He gave me a strange look before left with Gemma.

My feelings were they would handle anything that came between Jax and Kyle. I was needed more here, where I could semi try to be productive. The chatter continued going on among them, I drowned it all out. Except for one conversation caught my attention.

"You're not even a real Marine pussy."

"Just because I flex my brain instead of my brawn. Doesn't make me any less of a Marine than you are. You guys aren't even smart enough to come in out of the rain unless I tell you to do so. Or not to drink the water because of contamination. So, you're welcome you muscled up dumb ass."

"The harsh facts of the territory were, they had a lot of run off from filth and it ruined the water supply in many areas. Even the crops of fruits and vegetables had been infected with the plague of a virus because of it."

"Meat, you are a genius." I gave him a little peck on the cheek.

"You're just now figuring that out." He was all smiles at me. I thought I even seen a slight blush from him. It wasn't something I thought I would ever see.

"Hey, I don't know what your real name is and I don't want to call you tech nerd."

"Eric."

"Will you help me, Eric?"

The answer was laid out for the me the entire time. As they usually were when you really look hard enough. With Eric's help and expertise in contamination. I thought I was on to something.

"There are a couple thousand viruses with names and another twenty percent on top of that which still have not been defined. The immune system must eliminate or contain them. The viruses use cell structure to multiply farther weakening the immune function as it becomes overwhelmed and then damages the body. Once they have filtrated the body, they allow a longer list of other diseases to occur."

It became more disheartening with each thing I read. My area of expertise didn't apply to any of this. If I continued to only trace down the possibilities, I would lose the boys. With each second of time that ticked away, so did another precious second of life for them.

The thought of having a complete melt down and break down appealed to me. But I would not do that. I would not stop until I heard the word mommy come out of my sweet son's mouth again.

"Some viruses attack cells of the immune system. They are attacking the very system required to kill them." Even if it were a true virus causing it. It will still be almost impossible to determine which one and how to cure it.

Eric spent an hour giving me information about it and looking up some cases in Mexico. Since, it
was the only thing I had. I went with it. I drew blood from Cody and Abel. Now, it was just to wait it out and see if I was on the right track or not. Eric kept me company as we went to drop off the samples to be tested.

"You're pretty good at this, Tara. Kyle is right you are a great doctor."

"We will find out as soon as the test results come back if we are going on the right direction or not. I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you, Eric. I don't care what anyone says, you are one hell of a Marine."

"Thank you. I don't hear that very much with what I do."

"If we are right, you're the reason the boys will be saved. You are my favorite Marine, too." This was the first reason I had to smile lately and it showed. "But, don't tell the others, okay."

"Oh, I am telling them all I am your favorite."

We heard a commotion from outside when we passed by the doors. I already knew the voices who yelling so loudly. I left out a long sigh before deciding I needed to see what the hell it was about.

"Who is the next in line to take over?" Jax was leading the circle of angry men standing around.

"Hector Juan Sandoval. His brother is Carlos. I'm guessing Hector knows by now the damage we have done to his family and their business." Thomas seemed to be in control of the Marine side or at the very least handling this.

"This is going to end badly. They will roll up in Charming and blow it off the map. Hector will want blood for what we've done." The words Kyle spoke weren't just words to me. They became etched in my mind because I knew them all too well to be the truth.

"That's my problem to deal with Kyle because you will be gone from Charming."

"It will become Tara and the kids' problem. They will get hurt and suffer from it."

Kyle was getting more aggressive as time went on; his anger wasn't in check any longer, become meaner, to the point of brutal and walked on the dark side when needed. He said he had that side was under control but it was clear he really didn't. Even I could see it coming through at times now. This ordeal was sending him down the path of self destruction. I understood he had to do bad things for the boys but once you've crossed the line. Could you ever truly find your way back from it once you went there?

Jax wasn't going to listen to anymore. He done what he normally did when he didn't want to hear something. Walked away, tuned it out and justified it his way in his mind. But Kyle didn't care what he wanted. This was a switch him starting with Jax instead of the other way around. For Kyle to not just back down and back away from a fight.

"Don't fucking ignore what I am saying to you, Jax. You need to think about them first and what will happen to them because of all of this. For all the stupid and dangerous shit, you do to get them hurt."

Kyle shoved him and we all know what happens when someone pushes Jax.

"Don't ever touch me again. Next time, I'll kill you where you stand and I don't give a shit where it is or who is around. You need to stop worrying about my family and get one of your own." Jax was facing off with Kyle. This was the SAMCRO part of him escaping from the darkness. He wanted Kyle to do something, Jax wanted him to give a reason or excuse to do it. All so he could justify any actions he took. I'd seen it too many times. You push the devil, he will send you to hell.
"Not the time or place for it. You need to keep your head, brother. That fight will come though it is the inevitable." Thomas was sensible and wouldn't let it escalate. He was sensible on this anyway most things he wasn't. In between them he stood with no fear shown to Jax. A smile on Thomas' lips when uttered the inevitable was coming to Kyle.

"Just so you understand Jax, if you take Kyle on. You got the rest of us to fight. You should consider the help you are going to need when Hector comes to find you in Charming and starts killing people you love. Because it will happen eventually. Sandoval's brother along with the cartel will come to find you and kill any shit that gets in his way of it. Not any of us, they have no idea we even exist. This will all land on you, your family and the club." The rest of the Marines had gathered around now. They were there to backup Thomas' brotherhood meaning and for their other brother, Kyle.

"Just so you understand. Anybody who threatens Jackie or another member. Gets their goddamn head cut off."

"Yeah they do. At the very least a beat down." Happy weighed in on Chibs comment. They always protected their own too. Nothing was held in higher regard than the club or its members in their eyes.

"I'm gonna be real honest with you. I could really use a good ass kicking, I haven't had one in while. Anytime you think you're big enough to give me one, bring it on. Especially you Jax, look forward to it. Because I am not Kyle. I will fuck you up and fast without any remorse. But as far as the other goes; we serve as brothers and we die as brothers. We're bad boys until the end. Whatever that ending needs to be. Now, you fuckers are harshen my mellow." There was no telling which side Thomas actually landed on; good, evil or just fucking insanely crazy. He carried on as though he didn't have a problem in the world. He lit up a smoke and sung them a song as he left. "Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys…"

Both Meat and Thomas blew Jax a kiss over their shoulder as they went on. "They will never stay home and always alone even with someone they love…"

When I tried to share the news with Jax about what I discovered with Abel. Jax was busy on club business as normal. I just shook my head and didn't bother telling him anything farther on it.

"I knew you could do it."

"Kyle…about earlier."

"I screwed up. I wasn't even thinking. Most of the time when I'm around you, girl. I… It doesn't matter."

"It is okay. This is a stressful time for all of us."

"No, it's not alright. I know where Jax is coming from. I've felt the way he does. I just never thought I would be the one to do it with someone else's wife. I'm acting just like the one I hate the most for what he did to me. I am no better than he is." That was the end our little conversation about it because he left before I could even respond.

Thomas was smoking, stood back while he listened to our conversation and took it all in. He tapped the pack of cigarettes until one stuck out and then offered it to me.

"No thanks."

"Kyle is just struggling."

"Yeah. Aren't we all. Are you married, Thomas?"
"I tried it once but I didn't care for it much. Marriage is buying a house for someone you will eventually hate. I'm a free soul. I like to stay on the move with no ties that bind me down somewhere. Now, I get to ask a question. How long have you been in love with Kyle?"

"I'm not in love in with Kyle."

"Are you sure, Tara? I think everyone sees it but you. Including your old man. It's why Jax hates him so much. By eliminating Kyle from your life, Jax eliminates all his problems or so he thinks. It's not really how it works though."

"I am not in love with Kyle nor will I ever be. I don't think of him that way."

"I can verify she doesn't feel anything for me other than a friendship."

Before you ran your mouth, you should always know who was around listening. Kyle had been standing behind me for I don't know how long. But long enough though. "I didn't mean it in a bad way. You've done so much for me and my children. I…"

"It's okay. I sort of already figured it out on my own, Tara."

"You two are the most fucked up lovers I've ever met. She won't admit she loves you. You won't do anything about it, Kyle, because you love her and are trying to protect her. So, how will it end here kids? You're just gonna walk away from Tara. I don't think you can. I know you too well, Kyle. When you get upset with even me, brother, about being around a woman. There are some real feelings there and more than just jealousy. How about you, Tara? Are you gonna keep pretending you don't have feelings for Kyle? Honey, I can see it when you look at him, even when Jax is around. I am not just the sexy super stud who is the life of the party. I pay attention too." Thomas took one more long drag from his smoke before he flicked it to the ground and left. He was great in a lot of ways but very crass in some.

"Kyle…wait." He was leaving too. I felt like I needed to say something or explain myself to him.

"I should have never said what I did to you. I've lost so many things I love. I just wanted to tell you, before I lost you too. I had a weak moment. I do it a lot when you're around me, girl. I'm not upset or mad, you don't feel the same way about me. Really, it's okay. I would rather have had one time of you in my arms, one kiss to your lips, one touch of your hand. Than an eternity of never having those feelings at all that I do when I am with you."

"Maybe, I am a little scared to tell you how…"

"Tara, don't. I don't want to know. If you tell me you care too, we will have more problems than we do right now right now, girl. I'll still be there for you and the kids whenever you need me as much as I can. Nothing changes between us."

"A little too late for that. Don't you think?"

"Maybe it is too late. I have to leave Charming and you behind. It's not that I want to do, but there are only two options left for me. I leave or I kill Jax." The thought of Kyle hurting him must have shown on my face obviously. No different than if Jax were to hurt him. "Yeah, that's what I thought. You will end up hating me for killing him. He is the father of your sons and you love him. So, I gotta leave. I'll never forget you, girl." Kyle gave me a sweet tender kiss on the forehead before he walked away from me once again. Like he walked away from me so many times now. It didn't seem to bother him who was around watching us either.

"If I weren't married and things…Jax is the father of my children. I just can't turn my back on him."
"But, you are married, Tara and it's to Jax. Chaos is an angel who fell in love with a demon. That
demon, will never let you go. Jax will end up taking you straight to hell with him and everyone who
crosses in his path."

There wasn't much more to be said between us that hadn't been already. I knew it was best for Kyle
to go away and find his happiness. Part of me was a selfish bitch and I didn't want him to leave. With
him gone, I was bound to lose a part of myself I found when I was only with him. The part of me
that never escaped out before I met him. He would take that part of me with him too.

"Are you okay, doll?"

"Yeah, Tig I'm fine."

We talked about nothing at all to kill time. It was dragging by as I sat and waited to find out the
blood results for the boys. This was the deciding factor for them. Which way it would go from here.

Nicole came outside to get some air. She set with both the boys at their bedside while I ran around
doing stuff. I watched Nicole hold on to Abel as much as Cody. While I fought just as hard to save
Cody as hard as my own son. I never had another female I felt as close to. Nicole was as close to
having a sister as I would ever get. Now, I would lose her too and Abel would lose Cody when Kyle
left. Left me far behind.

Tig was our rock right now. We sat in silence on the bench, on each side of him. Our heads leaned
on his shoulders, his arms wrapped around ours. He didn't push us to talk, only consoled us. Every
once in a while. I felt a kiss from him on the top of my head. He kissed Nicole on her forehead. I had
never felt as close to him, as I did right now. Before I started to cry. I kissed him on the top of his
head in return and said thank you for being there for me.

"Anytime, doll. You are a good woman, Tara and I think of you as my friend. I don't have many in
this life." Everyone had heartbreak, despair and emotions running wild. I wasn't certain which life
Tig spoke of, but I understood so well what he meant.

"Be well my child. Go with God and your son will be fine. But there will be consequences to suffer
because of it."

"What did you say?"

The nun who passed me in the hallway on the way back to the boys was familiar. Not only did she
say the same thing Opie had to me; consequences to be suffered from saving Abel. But she looked
exactly like the old woman I set with on the bench and watched the movie on the big grey screen.

However, she didn't move like an old woman when I tried to catch up with her. The last time I
catched a glimpse of her, she ducted into a small chapel.

She disappeared into thin air before my eyes. I was standing alone in the dim lite chapel. The book
laying on pew began to move. The pages flipped on their own. As though a wind gust had lifted
them up to do it but the air was perfectly still. I looked around for someone, anyone, but no one
could be found.

With a deep breath, I took it in, I let it out and approached the pew slowly. Each step I made with
cautions. Unsure of what this held or meant. But couldn't stop myself from doing it because I had to
know.
"The archangels and brothers, Michael and Lucifer. Which Lucifer, went on to be the Devil after he was defeated and defected from heaven by Michael. The brothers, their powers each matched the others. Only surpassed by God. Michael is seen as patient and kind, but not someone who will stand by to watch injustice happen and evil unfold. Lucifer on the other hand; dances in chaos and creates misery all around him. When the Devil wants you to do something, he doesn't lie at all. He tells you the exact, literal truth. And he lets you find your own way to hell. Oh shit, they are Jax and Kyle."

"What is me? Where did she go? I saw her come in here." Kyle startled me from behind. He was looking everywhere for her, whoever it was. But he wouldn't find her just like I wouldn't find the one I was searching for either.

"I was chasing down the old woman I met at the movies. I could have sworn it was her dressed as nun."

Our stories were similar. We only caught a glance of them. For Kyle, it was the voodoo woman from the alley way who gave him the dandelion roots to fight evil with. Was it possible two different women brought us together for a reason? Were they even real? Did we actually ever meet them to begin with? Had we lost our minds at the same time?

Once the book began to move again. I let out a gasp and stepped back. Only to feel Kyle's body so close to mine. His hands held my hips steadily away from him. He turned me loose he went to see what the book had to say.

"Revelation 20:2; He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years." After Kyle read it out loud. We said it at the same time.

"Oden."

"Revelation 20:3; And he threw him into the Abyss, shut it, and sealed it over him, so that he could not deceive the nations until the thousand years were complete. After that, he must be released for a brief period of time for evil to reappear…." Again, Kyle read it to me. "Or until the nine pieces are formed back together. It releases the devil here on earth." Again, we both answered as it softly fell from our lips in unison.

"John."

"I truly believe our paths crossed for many reasons, girl."

"I do too."

Another frozen moment in time. Our eyes relayed what we didn't or couldn't say to the other. When our hands joined, it couldn't be denied. There was something special shared.

"Well. What's going on kids?" Thomas took the back pew. "Jax is looking for you. The results came back. You should go, Tara."

Before I left Thomas of course had one more comment to make. "Aren't you forgetting something?" I shook my head no because I hadn't a clue what he meant. "Go ahead, don't be shy. Give your man a little kiss goodbye. I know you wanna kiss Kyle."

"Smart ass."

"That's sexy smart ass to you, honey." His laughter roared down the hallway.

The more I thought about Jax, Kyle and Thomas being so different and still being blood. For
brothers, it was almost like they didn't all come from John's seed. "Oh shit. That's it."

Quickly I ran back into the chapel. Thomas didn't even see it coming. I smacked his face. "That's for being a smart ass." Then I grabbed his face and planted a brief kiss on his lips. "You are so smart though and sexy as hell."

"That really turns me on, honey. When women act all sexy psycho for me. Smack my ass next and you can own me baby." They both looked at me in dismay as I rushed out the door. There was no time left to waste.

"I call upon thee, great Morrigan. Theehold goddess of power. From the depths of the life, from the world of man, from the reaches of the magic. I call on thee to descend on my body. Thy servant and priested. And lend your energies to me this day. As I walk in the human world. Ever seeking balance of evil. I can't tell you, Tara. If I do, it can possibly change the outcome of it. Read this again. Don't read the words on the page. Feel my mother's emotions. Then I think you will understand it better. All of her words are not just about John. It is believed whenever a large flock of crows are seen in flight. The looker is being watch over by the goddess, Morrigan. She is the complete circle of life and death."

"She is Morrigan. She's been with Kyle and me the whole time. Now, I get it." Breezed quickly past Jax and the other club members in the hallway and didn't stop when he continued to say my name. Almost at a full run to get to my baby.

With short breaths let out, I announced it as soon as I came into the room. "I know how to cure it and save our children."

This was going to be a needed effort on everyone's part not just mine to pull it off. They would have to participate as well. We would work as a team or hell, I would shoot the fuckers myself for lack of subordination.

Eric had the connections I needed. It didn't take him long to track down Dr. Jesse Stoff from, Cancun, Mexico. The expert who researched, wrote papers and gave lectures on different types of viruses. He was on web cam with me in the middle of the night. There wasn't anything he didn't seem to know about them or how to combat them.

"My name is Dr. Tara Knowles. I need your help." We exchanged greetings and briefly a quick rundown of what the boys faced.

"A virus is various simple submicroscopic parasites of plants, animals, and bacteria that often cause disease and that consist essentially of a core of RNA or DNA surrounded by a protein coat. Unable to replicate without a host cell. They are capable of growth and multiplication only in living cells. Simply put, it sounds like a piece of genetic material looking for a proper home where it can fit in, grow and prosper at your expense. The virus attaches to a cell, often a specific type of cell. Some viruses kill the cells they infect. Others alter the cell function." This man had years of experience. I felt he knew what he was talking about. We agreed which type of virus the boys contracted. It was through congestion of contaminated water. It was used for food crops, or cattle and they ate it or drank it while they were here.

"Dr. Stoff, how do I cure them?"

"A virus does not respond to antibiotics. Drugs used to combat viral infections are called antiviral drugs. They are far and fewer antiviral drugs than antibiotics. Antiviral drugs are more difficult to design and largely more toxic. You must go through the immune system to eliminate it and purify the blood completely. Immune system cells that figure prominently in a viral attack are B-cells and T-
helper cells. Those can only be found in healthy humans of the same genetic makeup; a mother, father, brother, sister, grandparent, aunt or uncle and their own child even. But the match must be within ninety nine percent pure. Meaning even a mother of the child sometimes will be only a fifty percent match. It will be the most dominate gene they were born with that was passed on from prior generations."

"So, I must find the purest match of the B-Cells. Which are born in the bone marrow. They make antibodies, a small protein. These antibodies are made in response to an antigen of the bacteria, virus. Something that stimulates an immune response and are an essential part of immune function. Also, the T-Cells in the thymus gland. Their job is to coordinate the attack by providing a multitude of instructions for the antibodies to be released in the body."

"Correct Dr. Knowles. Purify the blood of the child each time with something as simple as dialysis machine first before giving them the blood transfusion of the healthy match."

"Thank you, Dr. Stoff."

"You are very welcome. Please feel free to call me back if you need farther assistance."

It boiled down to genetic makeup of the body. You used it to fight off the virus against the body itself. As strange as it sounded it would work.

There was only one blood machine I could find here and it was so damn old. I only prayed it would even come on. When it did, I wasted no time hooking Cody up to it. Then it would be Abel's turn.

Nicole went first. I drew her blood. Next was Gemma and Jax. But something felt off to me about it. I got queasy and slightly dizzy holding his blood vial.

"This is ridiculous. You act like I am some voodoo woman or something. You are to me, girl. I wanna hide the truth. I wanna shelter you from it. But with the beast inside. There's nowhere we can hide now. This is my kingdom come. It's the end of time. When the lights fade out it will come calling out at the mess we've made. Informally it is only death that can come from it. The next world, the afterlife. Then the demon's blood runs stale." The conversation and the rambling words that made no sense to me. The night on the bridge at Alexandria's Dream with Kyle.

"The web feeds off blood. Tainted demon's blood."

The vial slipped through my fingertips even with the death grip I had on it. Jax's blood felt hot to the touch, it almost scorched my hand. The glass shattered just like my world did. The blood splattered on floor. All the splattered emotions took me over. "The beast inside there is nowhere we can hide. When you feel the heat. Look in their eyes. Its where the demons hide."

The invisible noose was so damn tight around my neck. It was chocking the life out of me. Cutting off my air supply and any chance we had at surviving any of this together. Sweat poured from my body and I felt alone again. More alone that ever had before. Not having no control over the movements in my body and no control over losing my family either. It was all slipping away from me again right before my eyes. I finally became coherent enough to understand what they were saying around me.

"I'm fine. I got this." It was a quick poke. I drew Jax's blood fast again and ran to drop it off to see what the result would be.

There was nothing for me to do but pace and drink coffee. Wait it out. I done it. For hours until they came back. When I opened the chart, delight filled me. Cody would be saved. Nicole was his perfect
match. But the other results were disheartening.

"You nor Gemma match Abel enough. No. Don't do this to me. This is God punishing me for what I've done. If I don't do something now, I will lose my son. I won't let that happen no matter what I have to do." It was a statement of the obvious. A comment of a mother's bleeding heart. An omission of guilt for what I was about to do. An unforgiving betrayal that had to be done. An impractical solution that probably wouldn't work but it was the only glimmer of hope I had left to hang on to.

The web held true. The cunning spider would chew up, devour and spit out any male who got in the way of her young. She would always sacrifice the man to protect and care for her babies. Nothing would ever break this cycle when my children were involved.

As usual Kyle knew the meaning of what I said and never broke the eye contact we had made with each other from across the room. It was pleading eyes with him, an expression of concern for my child and an apology for what was about to take place. He was right, I would betray him again; each time. The promise of the secret I vowed to never reveal was one I could no longer keep. He might not forgive me this time and always hold a grudge. But Abel came first and it was how it had to be.

Although, I wasn't given the chance. Kyle made the choice to come forward on his own. He laid his arm across the table then made a fist a couple of times. "See if I match Abel."

"How in the hell can you match my son?"

"Because Jax, I am John Teller's son too."

I hope you enjoyed reading me! We will be moving on to the next chapter; Crossroads. But the mythology meaning of it….

A huge thank you goes out to all you lovelies for staying with me on this story. You make it a lot of fun for me to write it.

Thank you for leaving a review, marking this story as your favorite or alert!
"Well, I didn't see that shit coming."

Thomas was the first one to break the silence. The others seemed too much in shock to speak or uncertain of what they should actually say. It even left Gemma completely speechless. But she held her head up high without making eye contact with anyone in the room and walked out the door. With Nero trailing right behind her.

Except Jax that was. He had a lot to say about it. "How long have you known?" It wasn't a question or discussion I had time for. Saving Abel and Cody was what I continued to do. I went on with drawing Kyle's blood and ignored Jax's continuous rant.

The cart with the drawn blood and supplies I had pulled up by the table went flying into the wall. When Jax kicked it there. He was up in my face screaming at me. "How long have you known, Tara?"

Some club members and Marines moved closer. To stop the action that was taking place and bound to happen. "Get the fuck out. This is between me and my wife." That was said calmly from Jax. Even the rest of it came out of his mouth that way too. "You betrayed me, Tara. The most unforgivable betrayal of all."

"Betrayal Jax, you really want to talk to me about betrayal. How deep it runs and all the shit you've done." This had to happen. It wasn't the best time for it but, it was well past time for it to come out. Time for it to get addressed and let him feel some of that pain he had inflicted on others. Without a trace of shown remorse for it by him.

By a handful of Jax's sweatshirt I dragged him to stand over our little sweet baby boy. "You look at Abel."

With a trembling jaw, Jax couldn't stand to look at our son in the face as he turned his head away. But the fuck if he was going to get away with it this time. I grabbed his chin and forced him to do it. "You look at what you've done. What you've done to all of us. You did this. This is the most unforgiving betrayal of them all, one against our children. One that cannot possible ever be forgotten or forgiving easily." I let go of him but, I had a lot more to add to it. "After I am done with the boys and do what is necessary to save their lives. You can scream at me, cuss me out and call me whatever you like. But until then Jax, stay the fuck out of my way."

Thomas gave me a nod of approval. He stood close to Kyle, because he knew what Jax could do, as we all did. At any given moment, the deadly explosion could happen and I think Thomas was ready for it. But it wasn't necessary because the outlaw was broken like the rest of us. A brief reprieve from
the devastation to come no doubt.

With the broken spirit, I knew Jax was still in there somewhere with me and the boys. He could still be somewhat reached. Which meant, he wasn't totally gone from me yet. But fucking close enough.

"Come on, Jackie." Chibs was by Jax's side like always. Lending support to his brother.

"You're dead." The final comment Jax made before he left which didn't even make Kyle flinch.

"We'll see about that shit." Thomas supported Kyle also in his sentiments on the matter.

"I want everyone out of here except for Nicole and Kyle." They didn't budge so, I fucking screamed it. "Now. Get out." Then I slammed the door shut after the last one went out of it. Sometimes you need to get rough and tough for them to listen to you or even been seen in their sight at all. Or they only heard what they wanted to and walk on you every chance they got. I was personally done with being a doormat for everyone in my life.

"Jax didn't mean it. He is just mad at me." As I pulled Kyle's blood out into another vial.

"Yes, he did, girl. We knew it would come down to this eventually; Jax or me." Kyle folded his arm up tightly around the cotton I put on it to stop the bleeding.

There were somethings I had no control over to get the blood to stop running. No concept of how to get past the blood already spilled. No way to stop the bleeding hurt we all felt. But when I looked at my son, I still done the right thing. I would take my last breath of life in knowing so if it was what it took to save him.

It was the quickest work I've ever done as a doctor. I had Nicole giving blood for Cody. So, I could administrate the transfusion. Abel was almost complete with the purification process. The only thing left now was to see how much of John Teller was passed on to Kyle and Abel. John was truly the key to everything.

Down the same long hallway, I'd walk so many times in the last twenty four hours. With Kyle's blood in hand to have it tested. I squeezed the vial tightly but could feel no heat. I even rolled it between my palms and nothing. Had I gone crazy before and just let the situation get to me. Was Jax blood truly boiling hot? The medical training, I relied upon for everything told me no. A mother's heart told me the truth.

It would be another wait to see if Abel would get the same miracle Cody received. But it was just the beginning of the recovery process and nowhere near the end. This would have to be done numerous times until they had a clean blood result come back. Even if we managed to get them out of this country alive. What level of more lies would have to be told to cover up the truth so we could continue the healing?

There was more to consider other than getting the boys well. The emotional trauma they suffered. Along with how could we explain all of this to the two little innocent boys. They see the world through a child’s perspective but now it was tainted. The scars of evil had already touched them. That would be something I would worry about later. I still had so much of the weight of it crushing down on my shoulders.

The conversation I walked up on wasn't something I expected nor had thought about yet. Chibs was straight forward too.

"I am worried brother. If Kyle decides to sit at the table, we can't stop him from it. Being the son of John Teller it is his birth right."
"I won't let that shit happen."

"Jackie, he could challenge you for your chair. Not that any of us would support him. But he could ruin what we've built."

Jax didn't respond this time. Only watched me as I walked on with a combination of a disappointed look and pure hatred on his face. That confrontation between us would happen soon enough. There was no way to avoid it.

When I returned to my baby, Kyle was sitting in a chair between the boys. He looked as I felt, horrible. "I'm sorry, Kyle. I had to…"

"It's okay girl. It would have come out eventually. I've never really had great timing and always had shitty luck too."

Leaning in I gave a sweet kiss to my son. I knew he was in there and it would be felt by him. Maybe he couldn't react or acknowledge it but I know Abel was aware I was here with him. "Mommy loves you more than all the leaves on the trees and all the ants on the sidewalk."

The emotions rose to the surface and the remembrance of all those times Abel and I bantered it back and forth. By his side, I sat down lifted his small frail body up in my arms. Held him as close to me as possible. Held on to the joy he brought into my life. Held on to my oldest son.

Through the tears, I wept the words. They came out at only above a whisper. "You are my sunshine. My only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are grey. You'll never know dear how much I love you. No one will ever take my son away from me. Nothing will ever separate us baby. Mommy won't let it."

My own wellness had been put into question more than once over the last few months. Nothing could have prepared me for the stress to the mind, body, soul and heart that I had now. But I had to pull myself together, Abel was depending on me.

With everything going on at once. I had forgotten one of the most important things we needed to discuss. "There were four crows when you and Jax rescued the boys. I can't figure out why."

"The crow is here to take a soul." It didn't come as a surprise to Kyle. It scared me to death at the thought.

"Who? Is it Abel or Cody?"

"I don't think so."

"Then who?"

Kyle wouldn't answer me. Even when I asked the same question again and again. "Oh god, it's you." The revelation hit me like a ton of bricks. I had some responsibility in this. I brought Kyle into this world. Into this life where his identity was exposed. Into his fate that would come.

When I started to cry, I felt his arms around me. "Don't you cry for me, girl. I am meant to save Abel." As my son's name came out of his mouth I stared in Kyle's eyes. There was something he hadn't told me there. A piece to this gigantic puzzle he knew, I didn't.

Before I could find out what. We were interrupted by Eric. "The results are back, Tara." This was the quickest one yet to be returned. I wiped my eyes before I headed out the door.
With a shaky hand, I ripped open the envelope. Through blurred tear stained vision I read it. It was time to face the truths now.

When I returned back to the room, I interrupted their conversation."I don't care who your father is. You will always be my brother. But you still should have told me. We're family, we love each other no matter what." Nicole had a true love for Kyle. Although she was upset with him for not trusting her. By keeping secrets from the ones, you love, you betray them in small ways. As soon as she seen me, she let go of the hug she had Kyle in.

"And you, Tara. We are supposed to be close girlfriend. You are the sister I never had and we can talk about anything. While we're on the subject of honesty, Kyle is in love with you. I can see it and I think you are just as much in love with him. I'd never tell you to cheat on or leave Jax. But you both need to deal with it and come to grips with it or just get over each other." After Nicole hugged me tightly to her, checked on her son, she left the room and shut the door behind her.

"You are almost a perfect match for Abel. You are your father's son made over. He is just like his grandfather."

Those words were said in delight that my son's life would be spared for the moment. A mother's desperate fear at the same time. If the web held true, Abel was more than likely destined to become the bad brother. The next prince of darkness. It also meant he would be the next SOA president as well. The one who would take over the club and become very evil. A fleeting thought of Thomas as the good brother. Both battling each other until death came for one of them. All the things it meant and held for each of them in the future.

The thought of my son being any of those things, made me want to cry. But I didn't have time for that now. It was save Abel, save my baby from the darkness.

"I won't allow that to happen."

Kyle didn't say much to me. I got the bag started for the transfusion to Abel. We didn't address the elephant in the room. But then again, was there really a need to. We both knew the score of things. There was another couple of major issues to be addressed I couldn't avoid forever either.

"I'll be back in a few minutes to check on you two."

There came a moment of revelation in everyone's life. When every choice you made not only effected your world but, everyone else around you as well. Some were so small it wasn't noticeable. Others were deemed life changing. Those thoughts were running a hundred miles an hour through my mind. It was always best to tell the truth. It was supposed to set you free even. The truth was always the still truth in the end. But since I knew the truths for myself. There was no way I could be ever freed from them all.

The search for him began. It didn't take me long to track him down. I was here just a few hours ago before I divulged the biggest lie I had told yet and kept secret from everyone. When I quietly set down next to Jax on the pew. The bible laying there was open and the passage was uncanny to the timing.

**John 1:14** So the word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

But which son was it referring to this time. My innocent babies who never asked to be part of this nor ever had any choices in the matter. Or their father and uncle who never really had any choices either. It was taken away from them all because they were descendants of John Teller.
"How's Abel?"

"Kyle is a match for him. I know how pissed off you are at me Jax. I'm sorry I kept it from you but I had to. I don't want to sit here and play the blame game with you. Let's just get our son well and take him home. Then we can hash it all out."

Jax never answered me about what I said to him. As a matter of fact, he never even gave a glance in my direction. He stared forward at the big cross hanging on the wall.

"I never really wanted the gavel or to set in the chair at the head of the table. Part of me knew it would happen. I always dreaded the weight of it, the responsibility. The truth is I can barely make the right choices for myself let alone the club anymore. I tried to take the club in the right direction I thought made sense at the time. Get away from all the outlaw shit, it would make everything straight again. It clearly hasn't worked. Some part of me was trying to buy back all the bad shit I've done in my life. Make it all right, to all the people I've hurt, including my family. It's just a false pardon, it's dangerous and its selfish. JT did the same thing before he died and lost it all. I just repeated all his mistakes because I thought I could make a difference. I get it now, I didn't then. I blame Gemma for the man I became. It's what she taught me to be. But I blame myself for you hating me."

"I don't hate you…"

"Yes, you do. I see it every time you look at me. That hate only grows stronger. I have to fix this."

With a kiss to my forehead, Jax seemed determined. More determined than I seen him in a while. "I love you, Tara. I will never give up on us or let you go."

"We need to catch our breath and worry about it when we can get home. When Abel is better, we can focus on all of this."

"I've never been more focused or clearer on the path I have to take. What I gotta do to fix to my family." With a halfhearted smile Jax left me sitting here. Staring at the large wooden cross. The same cross I once seen with mother every Sunday. The same cross I was taught would answer my prayers. The same cross that holds the weight of my decision, sins and all the repercussions of them.

"Shit." I had forgotten about Opie. It was coming true before my eyes.

" Abel will be brought home. But not without consequences. For every decision made you suffer the consequences of those actions."

Opie suffered for every single one of his. His family suffered even more because of them. Now, it was my turn, my families turn. A heart full of sorrows, despairs and dark emotions was what I was left with.

My head hung low while I thought of my babies. Ellie and Kenny was left with no one in this world because of their father's life with the club. My sons had a fighting chance because they still had me and I would save them. What Donna tried to do but failed. I would dance with the devil and give him my soul if it meant my children would live on in a happy life.

So many jumbled up thoughts were running in my head while I went back to the boys. So many unanswered questions. So many lies that would catch up with all of us in the end.

It was some encouragement when I checked Cody's vital signs. His transfusion was complete. His fever had dropped a few degrees, his heart beat was growing stronger but he hadn't gained conciseness yet. His body made several small movements though. This was the most life we seen from them since we found them.
In preparation, I had already started Kyle's blood before the results came back. It was coursing through Abel's veins already. I could only pray he would have the same reaction as Cody. Showing signs of life again.

"You're all done. We just have to wait and see how Abel reacts to it now." Once again, I stopped the blood flowing from Kyle. The time would come when I could no longer stop it.

"You know, I was mad at you, Gemma and Nicole for coming along. But you saved the boys. Without you, they wouldn't have stood a chance."

If Gemma taught me nothing else, defiance when it came to your family. Was what you did no matter who liked it or didn't like it. There were some motherly instincts that could never be explained at the time but was a necessary evil. You stood strongly behind them and faced what came. There was another person I still had to face the outcome of what happened.

"Nicole, I am going to step out. Abel has a couple of hours before he is done. I won't be gone long."

No one had approached Gemma from this aftermath. She set alone with Nero outside. She wouldn't acknowledge my presence when I came out either. I motioned for Nero to come over to me.

"I took Gemma's gun for your safety. I can't promise anything else mama."

"Thanks, I think."

But that didn't stop me from approaching Gemma. There were things that just had to be done. Multiple ass chewing you had to take. Feelings you couldn't spare when it came to protecting your children.

"Well, if it isn't the queen of secrets."

"I guess I deserve that, Gemma. But, I learned it from the best."

"Yeah, I guess you did. Did Kyle match Abel?"

"Almost perfectly in fact. I was certain from the things you said to Kyle and about him, you already knew he is John's son."

Gemma let out a long sigh and lit up a smoke. "I've felt John's presence more the last few months than I have in the last twenty years. Thought for while he was haunting me from the goddamn grave. When Kyle is around he brings back that love I once had for John. The feelings are stronger and I can't shake it either. John is always on my mind. Kyle reminds me of the John I loved so much all those years ago and the man I worshiped. Everything that was good about him. Very rarely she ever showed any true emotions. Or let you see a glimpse of the weak side of her. But she was completely exposed at the moment.

My arm went around Gemma's shoulder to comfort her as she had done for me so many times. As mean, cruel and conniving as she could be, the reality was. I was just as bad as her or even worse because I conned the queen herself. What Kyle and I've done along with hid from everyone proved it.

But the most difficult part of this conversation hadn't taken place yet. This was what would separate or unite me and her. "You knew about the crows. Didn't you, Gemma? John told you and you thought he was crazy. It's why you helped Clay kill him. You still see them now too and won't admit it. I saw it in your eyes when they rescued the boys. We are both very good at keeping dirty secrets and protecting our family. It's why you have been battling Jax so much lately. You seen it coming."
"I've done a lot of wrong in my life and I've tried to save you from the same fate. Done things to protect you and the boys even when I had to go against my son to do it. There was no one to fight for me. I made my own way and my own mistakes as well. You're smart sweetheart, you'll do a better job than I did. It's only a matter of time for me now. I will carry out John's wishes and make sure the club stays whole until then." It was as much of a confession as I was going to get from her. Not even sure why I expected it in the first place.

"I will do what I need to do, to save my boys from the same fate. I do not care who the hell I must fight to do it either. That includes you, Gemma. You know what will happen to them if I don't."

"You try to take Abel and Thomas away from me. I'll see you dead and in hell first and that's a promise. They are all I got left to hold on to. I'd advise you not to get in my way. Mommy or not to them."

"They are my sons. When it comes to them, I will mow your ass over if need be. I'm not afraid of you."

"No, sweetheart, you're not anymore. But, you really should be."

It came as a threat from Gemma and she was the one who decided we would stand divided from here on. No matter how difficult it was for her to talk to me. The one who stood in front of us, was the ghost of John Teller to her. I excused myself so Kyle could say what he needed to in private.

"Tara, you are not keeping any other secrets from me, are you?"

"No." It was the most convincing no I ever spoke. Of course it was a lie. But Gemma was now the enemy too until she proved otherwise. When it was all said and done, I would have a long line of enemies.

The quiet before the storm should be what was feared the most. You walked around in a protective bubble or so you thought you were. The reality was, there was nowhere really safe or to hide. When evil came out to play, it would hunt you down.

Jax was blinded by power. He thought of himself as a god like creature in the circle he has always been virtually the center of since birth. The pedestal which he has always been put up on was now crumbling down around him at his feet. Those who have always seen him in this light, no longer did. Myself included. Those effects of it were known to him as well. You could tell he longer felt worshiped or in control of it. The darkness had taken over.

He wasn't thinking clearly. This was a club solution not the way a rational person would handle it. By eliminating the source of your problem, there were no more problems. You didn't speak of it again, move on like it never existed. More death to come from him. More blood uselessly spilled. More sins from the father for my sons to pay the price for them.

"If you kill Kyle. You are killing our son, Jax. Abel cannot survive without him."

"Bullshit, he already gave his blood to Abel. He doesn't need Kyle anymore."

"It is only the beginning. There needs to be a series of transfusions given. Please do not do this, Jax. I am begging on our son's life."

Firmly I stood in between them. Jax would have to go through me to get to Kyle. My eyes never left Jax's, you never knew truly what violent point he was capable of reaching and expanding to. It was a
re occurrence of the day in the warehouse and could be my last one here on earth. Heart beat was racing along with my mind. Only I didn't whisper I love you to him. All I thought of were my children. Our babies who needed us. Along with Kenny and Ellie who had no one without us. The circle began with Jax and I; this is where it would end to save them.

Everything happening around me, had no effect, no emotions escaped my body. In slow motion, I seen Gemma in the corner of my eye. She came out of nowhere with a gun flashed in Jax's face.

"Tara is right. Put it down Jackson or else. JT was a lot of things. But he wouldn't intentionally ever hurt one of his sons and I won't allow you to either. I love you baby. Don't make me hurt me because when it comes Abel, I will."

"You're dead to me, bitch. You will never come around me or my family. My sons will never call you grandma again."

"I've been dead to you for a longtime. But it will not stop me from doing what I need to do. Or what your father would want me to do. This is who we really are. You've forgotten that somewhere along the way, Jackson."

Everyone was between us. There was no way a clean shot could have been taken by Jax to get to Kyle. The sadness felt from the only person who maintained communication in Jax's world, it was Chibs. He was the one who made Jax surrender the gun. Who could still somewhat reach him on the inside. The hate went beyond a man for a man. It was internal from brother to brother. I swear I didn't let out a breath until it was over. This time it was over but what about the next time when we weren't there to stop it?

"You are JT's son. The good part of him, I see him in you. Don't ever forget that, sweetheart." Gemma kissed Kyle's cheek. It left them both a little teary eyed from it. It was a connection moment of forgiveness between them. Almost sweet yet it wasn't. Almost cleansing of both their souls yet it didn't. Almost moving beyond the past yet there was no way in hell that would happen. Before everyone could regain their composure from this, it came. Hell was here before us.

The ground shook and fire was all you could see surrounding you. They were bombing us. We were found by the Cartel. Every step I took for cover led to another unsure place, unsure measure to take for protection. Unsure of how fate would play this one out. When the nuns and a man of God came with fire power, it was a battle of hell right here on earth for us.

They all were firing at the plane to take it out. After I managed to get back inside, I held on to the wall to walk to get back to the boys. Jax and Kyle passed me by as they went straight to Abel and Cody.

With the shattering glass, sounds of gun fire, explosions and echoing screams in the night. I could barely hear them. "Go." Nicole and I held on to each other and followed after them. We went where ever they took the boys to.

"I don't know which way to go." Jax stopped when we came to a corridor not sure if we needed to go left or right. There was an underground tunnel the priest told us to go down with the children. But which way would lead us to an escape and which way would take us straight to hell?

It was the nun. The one I saw but never found in the chapel. "Follow her."

"Follow who?" Jax said it but the rest agreed with him by the way they stared at me. They didn't see her either. Maybe it was my mind playing tricks on me, she was only a figment of my imagination. Maybe she was a spirit only I could see. Maybe I was wrong but it was a chance I'd have to take.
"Where are you going?" Jax's question wasn't answered. When I started in that direction so did Kyle and Nicole. With a long sigh Jax came with us.

This place was like a maze with all the twist and turns to it. It reminded me of my life. All the twist that came out and the turns I've taken. As the web was a tangled mess, so was this to find our way out.

When I'd stop and wasn't sure which way to go, I'd see her for brief seconds before she disappeared again. Until we could go no farther.

"It's here. This has to be it."

"This is a wall."

"It's behind the wall."

They handed the boys to us. Abel still had his bag attached to him. I held it up as high as I could and it was almost empty. Nicole was smart. She threw medical supplies in a bag as soon as the gun fire started. Although she wasn't certain what I exactly needed, she grabbed as much as she could. When your child's life was at stake it was surprising what a mother could actually do.

Kick after kick to the wall, Jax and Kyle broke through it. The tunnel lead us underground. We got the boys as far away from this place as we could. I had to get the bag from Abel. We stopped for a break so I could. Gently I pulled the needle out of his arm and pressed gauze to it.

Jax tried to use his cellphone to call the others. But had no reception to make one. He paced while I tended to our son. There was no turning back for us, I don't believe there ever really was. It was forward only with or without everyone else.

We had no idea what the end of the tunnel held for us. If there even was an end to it. What harms way it might put us in if we continued on. We knew for certain one thing, we couldn't go back. Just like I couldn't go back in life and do it all over again.

Just when you thought life couldn't take a turn for the worse, it proved you wrong. We were surrounded with about twenty men speaking a language we couldn't understand. Being held at gun point.

"Do you understand them?"

"Do I look Mexican to you?" Kyle had a smart ass answer for him.

"You're fucking worthless, I swear, Kyle."

"Oh yeah, and you so worldly, Jax. You don't understand them either."

"Will the both of you shut the fuck up already." When I screamed it at them. Even the men with guns looked confused at us.

I hope you enjoyed reading me.

My goal is to have the next two parts of Crossroads posted tomorrow. The chapters are extremely long and I have a lot of editing to still do.

There will be some new revelations come out, some that are already expected as well. At
moments, you might think I have lost my mind. But I promise by the end, it will all make sense to you.

I thought about making a key map to the story. Posting it after the last chapter has been. Every chapter gave you a piece of the puzzle. If you read it again after knowing, it will be like a new story to you since it's gotten to be so long with so much information to process. I'm not sure anyone has an interest in it but if you do let me know and I post it.

Thank you to everyone who stayed with the story. It means a lot to me to hear from you. I appreciate all your messages and reviews.
When you were standing at the crossroads in your life. You needed to realize the greatest block you could put in front of yourself was the idea there was a right choice to be made. The way we choose to see the world; creates the world we see.

The harder you try to run from your sins, the more they caught up with you. They always did. We had our children once again faced with death and more chaos because of choices we made.

"I speak English. We want to help you."

But nothing in life was free. Neither was their assistance to us. They moved dope in the underground pipeline. The same pipeline that fed the Mayan their street drugs. Marcus and the men would prosper from it or we would be left here to parish. When Jax shook on it with the man, I cringed. I knew it was a bunch of bullshit. Only a fix for the moment. A temporary reprieve from what would come our way in the future from doing it. Once again, it would put my children in danger.

"There are others too. We can't get a hold of them on the cell from down here."

"We need to get to the plane. It will land for fuel, there is only forty five minutes to an hour window of time to board it. If we are not on it, we stay here and we're on our own. They know where and when they are supposed to be there, they will meet us there if they can. They won't leave the club members behind, trust me, it's what we do. The boys must be on that plane. It's the only chance they have to make it out of here."

Both Jax and Kyle weighed in on the situation. The guy rubbed the back of his neck while he thought. "I can get you above ground to make your call. But the others need to stay down here. It's the only way we can keep you safe from the cartel is to keep you out of sight."

Once Jax agreed to the terms, we continued on with them. They lit torches so we could see where we were going. They barely lit up our way, our way of which path was the best to take. It made me nervous the deeper in the tunnel we went with them. It was hell to be paranoid of everyone around you, they could mean harm to you or your children.

The underground was a sophisticated system, hidden away from the world. We stopped when we came up upon a group of women in their bras and underwear with nothing else on, not even shoes. They were bagging a white powder. With men standing around them, fire power in their hands.

"Cover the boys nose and mouth and hold your breath." I didn't want them to inhale any of it. They eventually gave us masks to wear because it took so long. While we waited until they loaded up a cart full of drugs.

The content of those bags was the payment we had to make for a safe passage out of here. They were to be delivered back to Charming and given to Marcus. If I had to guess, there were about eighty or more bricks of cocaine in them. If we got caught with them in Mexico or the United States, we would never see daylight again.
It didn't matter at this point. It was the only way to get the boys out of here. If I had to sit and rot in prison to save them, then so be it.

"Stop here. I will take you above ground to make your call."

We needed a break, I wasn't sure how many miles we had went trudging through the darkness. They climbed up wooden slats to the top. Once the tunnel was open, the bright rays of sunlight shown through.

It instantly warmed the skin on my face. A warmth I hadn't felt for a while. Just living was not enough, you cannot survive well without the sun. It brought a serenity of peace and peace was the beauty of your life. They say keep your face towards the sunshine and the shadows would fall behind you. When I looked at Abel, I knew what my sunshine really was.

Then came the reality of the gloom when I looked at my son as well. "Maybe the crows aren't here for you after all, Kyle."

"What?"

"The first I seen it, I thought I had a nightmare. Then the next time, I was wide awake. Hundreds of crows lead me through a path in the cemetery to my own grave. Buried beside me, was my son."

It just came out before I thought of what I actually said and who I said it in front of. Nicole had her mouth open looking back and forth between us. Kyle even seemed more shocked by it.

"You never told me that before."

"Honestly, I tried to put it out of my mind. I don't think I will survive all of this. If I die, Abel is destined to without me."

"Nothing is going to happen to you, girl."

There should be no shame in our tears. They were the rain upon the blinding dust of the earth, overlaying the hardness of our hearts. In the past I felt better after I cried; sorrier, more aware of my own ingratitude and even more gentle. But, what does it mean when I shed none now? Had my heart hardened so I felt nothing inside? Was I the one who was broken past repair? Or had I just accepted my fate?

The circle of light got smaller when the hatch above us closed. My fingers reached out to touch it, to feel that warmth once more. There were no stars, no moon, only knots twisted together of shades of black, white and grey. It only left the promise of death. Drums cried out in the abyss and then fade with everything else. Even the shadows faded away.

As the darkness grew back around me, my beam of light was fading off in the distance. I was suspended in the moment. Flickering images faded as I aged, frozen thoughts hovering precariously in dead space, a whirlwind of memories that sliced through my soul.

"Are you okay?" Kyle whispered as we gathered up things to get back on the move again.

"I'm fine." I gave a smile with it to be convincing but I wasn't to him. He seen through it.

We kept moving for hours. Then we came to the end of the tunnel. An end of something should mean a new beginning of something else but, it didn't for me. Maybe it never would.

They carried the bags of drugs from the cart as we walked behind them until we got to the airstrip. It
was a beautiful sight to be seen finally.

A guy dressed in camouflage from the plane met us. He was aware of the lie we were living. Jax and Kyle tossed the bags on board the plane. While Nicole and I got the boys settled in.

There was one passenger we didn't think we would see, Pops. "Where's Gemma?"

"We don't know."

He must have gotten the hint of sorrow I said it with. He didn't ask anything else before he disappeared from our sight.

After the plane was fueled it was time for us to leave but there was no sign of the others yet. "Just five more minutes. They are on their way." Jax stood outside smoking waiting on them.

"Five more and no more than that." Pops checked his watch, grasp his hand together behind his back. He appeared stiff as he stood there. But I had a feeling, he meant exactly what he had said too.

The door was starting to close. They still weren't here. The engine started up and we began to move slowly. The plane was granted permission for takeoff. They still weren't here.

As the plane progressed forward to the runway a horn was honking loudly. It was two trucks full of the guys. They pulled up along beside the plane. Gemma was helped across first. When Derrick and Bobby's wrapped up bodies came through the door. I thought, they really leave no man behind.

All of them had made it in except Tig, he was driving the last truck. Jax held out his hand while he stood on the opened door. "Jump."

Kyle even joined him. "We will catch you, Tig."

It was a split second. The outcome could have gone either way. Somehow, someway they got in the plane just before the wheels left the ground of the runway. We were in flight finally.

"You know man, you would make a good member in the club, Kyle. I'd sponsor you." The hate in Jax's eyes shown through at Tig's comment. Tig shrugged it off. "I'm just saying."

Chibs smacked Tig on the back of the head when he passed by him. "Too soon to make that comment?" Chibs only nodded.

"Miss me Gemma?"

Gemma didn't say a word to Pop. Nero did though. He stuck out his hand. "Nero Padilla, I'm Gemma's husband. I don't think we were introduced before."

"I feel sorry for you." Pops left after he said it. He took the seat in the cockpit with the pilot.

It should have been easy from here. A clear shot back to where we came from. It was anything but that. Bullets were pinging off the plane.

"Pops, they are on the radio."

"This is Lieutenant Rodriguez, we are commanding you to land the plane. You are in foreign air without permission and harboring fugitives."

"This is Colonel Robert Brandon with the United States Marines. I am afraid I cannot and will not do that." Pops returned the mic back to the radio. "Brace yourselves against something. Nerd, come on
Eric was typing as fast as his fingers could fly on the keyboard. A long red solid line came across the screen. Making a beep noise with each tick of it that went down. "Seven minutes, Pops."

"Seven fucking minutes are you kidding me?" I felt like the pilot did. That was a long damn time to wait and I had no clue what the hell we were waiting for.

"We are confiscating the plane, passengers and the cargo. Land now, or we will shoot you down. This is your last warning." They weren't joking about it or playing around either. The bullets were release in rapid fire at us.

"Get us out of here Captain."

"I'm trying Pops. This is not a jet fighter, it's a damn cargo plane." A red light went off. "Oh shit." I didn't like the way he said it.

The plane's nose went almost straight up in the air. "Missile fire." I really hated the way he screamed that.

Suddenly, we were falling backwards. Like when we jumped out of the plane, just a slow and steady fall. Floating almost, suspended in the air. "Start you, son of a bitch." Okay, now I was at a panic at that statement.

The good thing was, the missile exploded and it didn't hit us or kill us. The bad news, when he killed the engine, it wouldn't start again. We were saved from a fiery death but we were plunging towards the ground to die.

Once the engine fired up, I think my fear of heights were cured. It wasn't my worst fear now. Because if we managed to land this bitch, I would never fly again. That problem was easily solved.

"You are engaged in unauthorized military warfare with the United States of America military personal."

"You engaged us by being in our country. We have the right to defend it."

"I repeat, you are engaged in unauthorized military warfare with the United States."

"Now Pops. It's locked in." The bar was completely gone on Eric's screen. All you could see was a red dot growing larger and larger.

"Over American soil and airspace, asshole." Pops held the mic up high and some of the guys yelled. "Alpha, Michael, Foxtrot. Adios mother fuckers." It was the last communication sent over the radio.

We felt turbulence, that was understatement when a round of missiles was fired from the helicopter they called in. As it flew over the top of us and took the helicopter head on who had been chasing us. From the blast, we were tossed around. I held on to Abel as tightly as I could. Just as when he was a tiny baby, I cuddled him to my chest and rocked him.

You would think I would be ecstatic to be out of all that shit. However, we had a new problem. Different lights and sirens were going off on the plane. "The gas tank has been hit, we have to land now. We won't make it to a military base before we crash land."

Jax made several calls until he got a hold of him. "Elliot gave us permission to land there." Jax handed over his cell to the pilot.
There never came a time when I thought I would be excited about being back in Charming. When the wheels touched down on the airstrip, I actually had a smile on my face. We made it through it alive one more time.

But the welcome home party wasn't exactly what we expected it to be. A lot of Mayans along with Marcus was parked on their bikes waiting for us. He had some serious connections to know where we were going to land at.

We didn't advertise what was in the bags but it wouldn't be hard for everyone to figure out what it was now. They threw them all in a pile for the Mayans. One of the guys unzipped each one then whispered in Marcus' ear.

"He said the load is short."

"Then he counted it wrong because it's all there." Jax lit up a smoke and you could cut the tension between him and Marcus.

Marcus counted the bricks for himself. He didn't want there to be any mistakes made. "The load is five bricks shy, esse."

"This is what they gave me. Maybe some of it fell off in the tunnel."

"You expect me to believe five bricks of blow magically disappeared."

"I don't care what you believe. We didn't take your shit." Jax stood his ground but I knew for a fact that was the exact count given to us.

They argued with each other, issued threats back and forth and basically got nowhere with it. Until I had enough of it. "I swear on my son's life. Those bags never left my sight and no one touched them. Every second is crucial to the boys' care. We have to go."

"Fine, I'll call them and see what happened to the rest of it. But if you're lying to me Jax, this one will not go unanswered. You need to come by to sign over the Lodge." Marcus was aggressive with actions when he stated it.

"I will once I get some shit settled with the club. I may need a minute before I can."

"I suggest you get your shit settled by tomorrow. If I don't see you, I will pay a visit to Charming." Alvarez motioned for his guys to load up the drugs.

It was always an escape of one fucked up event just to go to another one. But I only had one thing on my mind, get the boys to the hospital. I'd have to tell more lies to cover up the truth. For them, it was what I would do.

Wayne, Quinn and a couple of prospects were waiting with vehicles to give us a ride. It looked like Hells Angels had crossed over with Platoon when all us were going towards the hospital doors.

"Everyone needs to wait out here until Nicole and I check the boys in."

All I got was flak from them. Questing why they had to stay outside until I blew up.

"Which part would you like for me to tell them. Our children were kidnapped because an illegal drug deal that went bad. They were taken by the Mexican Cartel and held for ransom of their drugs. How we all snuck across the border and had a felony charge of a lifetime sentence of blow with us when we came back. Killed people to get them out of there. They contracted a virus that we just brought
back to the United States because we didn't go through proper customs." They were all quiet and had no response to it. "That's what I thought. Again, only Nicole and I will go in with the boys until I get them checked in. Then you can see them. Until then, all of you stay the hell out of the hospital and let me handle it."

It gave them something else to argue about. Jax basically let them all know their presences was no longer needed in Charming. They didn't need to wait around here. Thomas saw it differently. "I might take up permanent residence here just to piss you off. You will find Jax, if you push me, I push back." I only rolled my eyes and went to do the most important thing, take care of the boys.

It almost worked pushing my way through the doors and putting the boys on a gurney without questions. Until the nurse at the front desk stopped me.

"I am Dr. Knowles. I will walk them through the process."

"That isn't standard hospital procedure Doctor."

"Nurse, please understand I say this with respect to you. Not only is the patient my son but his life is in danger. I do not have time for this. Your paperwork process means nothing to me at the moment. I will get these forms back to you when I am finished checking them in. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Doctor."

The fewer people involved in the process, the better. If I had to fake a little paperwork, then so be it. The last thing that could happen is the hospital to notify the CDC. Once the Center for Disease Control got involved, the federal agency would conduct a complete investigation. They would find out where the boys had been, what really made them ill. I would lose my son because of all this shit. This way all I lost was my career. Which, had been failing for some time now because of my association with the club and other choices I made.

At this point, it didn't matter what I stated was wrong with them, Nicole would swear to it too. When I had to choose the cover story. It made sense to say it was food poisoning, hot dogs. No one could dispute it or verify it. They had similar symptoms and if no one was the wiser, I would get away with it.

In rooms side by side I put the boys on the children's floor. I gave specific orders no one in or out of their rooms without my saying it was alright. The nurse on duty I knew well. She didn't even give it a second thought. Told me she would let me know how they were after she checked their vitals.

Now came the hard part. I had to figure out how to cleanse the blood and administer the blood transfusion so no one found out about it.

After I drew three vials of their blood. I started the IV in their hands. They were badly dehydrated and had lost so much weight.

Nicole stayed with them when I dropped off the blood to the lab. I paced, fretted and worried until the results came back.

"Tara, what does it say?" Nicole was so quiet when she asked. I knew it was a mother's fear.

"It's working. The effects of the virus are being reversed. We just have to keep cleansing their blood."

We cried tears of joy together. First in Abel's room, then in Cody's.
In the middle of the night, I used my access key to open the dialyses room. I hooked the boys up to a machine and prayed no one came in. How would I explain this?

The process was a lot faster here than in Mexico, it only took an hour to complete. I stripped the machines of the dirty tubes and replaced them with new ones. I wheeled one bed at a time back to their room.

Doing it on the night shift had its advantages, less people around to witness it. I hooked up the blood bags to each of them. Paced back and forth between the rooms to head off anyone who wanted to go in. Once I gave a nurse a bullshit task to do. It kept her out of the room until the bag was finished.

My eyes were heavy and I yawned a couple of times before I pulled a chair up next to Abel's bed. I would catch a few hours of sleep then get up to make my rounds.

Just when I had relaxed my body, it was engulfed in a sensational warm feeling. When I felt a hand on my face, I was wide awake.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you." Kyle had covered me up with a heated blanket. His hand brushed the hair away from my face.

"Want to share it with me?"

He only smiled as he put a chair beside mine. I leaned my head on his shoulder. With my hand in his I drifted off. Until I heard his voice.

"Tara, the nurse is in here."

She looked at us huddled together but didn't say anything. It was time to make my rounds and get up anyway. "Tara." Nicole was in a panic when she came in or so I thought. When she came to get me.

Cody was awake. He seemed a little stiff and on the weak side. But that was normal since he hadn't really used his muscles in a while.

"Where is Abel?"

"He is in his room. Are you feeling better?"

Cody insisted he needed to see him. Kyle carried Cody in the room and pulled his IV stand beside them. Abel still hadn't woken up yet. It worried me even though all his heart test came back good. It was a miracle that they were so good.

Once Cody's little feet hit the floor, he did something we didn't understand. He searched through the drawers for something. He looked all around the room too. My metal to go coffee mug was setting on the nightstand by Abel's bed. It was empty but it still seems to fascinate him.

After Cody carefully balanced the cup in his hand, he crawled up to the foot of the bed. His attention was directed at the door. He never took his eyes away from it. "It's okay Abel. You sleep, I will protect you."

"Buddy, what are you doing?" Kyle set down next to him. It still did not defer his attention away from the door.

"Waiting for the bad people to come in."
"You are safe Cody and so is Abel. You never have to worry about someone hurting you as long as I am around."

The damage was done to those boys. There was no telling what they went through while they were separated from us. They knew what real fear meant.

Kyle continued to talk to Cody. As Kyle tried to pick him up from the bed to take him back to his room. Cody screamed his head off. He wasn't going to leave Abel without a fight. It was about as heartbreaking to watch as them being gone from us.

"You can stay a little longer, then you have to go back to your room."

Eventually, Cody calmed down and relaxed. He laid his head down at the end of the bed and held on to Abel's foot. Cody tried his best to stay awake as his little eyes were heavy. About as heavy as mine and Nicole's heart were from watching our boys go through this.

The silence in the room wasn't any comfort. Kyle went to pick him up after he was asleep but I stopped him. "It's okay let Cody stay in here. He is exhausted and needs to rest. Somehow, I think it makes Abel feel better too because he is here with him."

It was the same routine as soon as Abel woke. After I almost smothered him with kisses that was. He wanted to see Cody.

"Abel."

"Cody."

Those two little boys collide together in a tight embrace. It was the first time they seen each other since we brought them home. Something told me there was no keeping them apart either.

The day passed by rather quickly. I downed cups of coffee to keep motivated to stay on the move. Our boys were awake and doing well. I must of made ten trips by their rooms just to check on them.

When I had to go, Nicole stayed with Cody and Kyle stayed with Abel. I didn't want to leave the boys but I didn't want to miss saying goodbye to Bobby either.

They couldn't do a funeral for him. Everyone would have found out. So, they took him to his favorite place. The woods out back of the cabin.

"Juice, can you give me a minute with Bobby?"

"Sure. Come on guys."

This seemed so wrong to do it this way. Bobby was all alone out here. No family near to grieve the loss. He didn't even get a casket or a proper burial. Not as much as a headstone to put his mark on this earth. "I am so sorry."

There was nothing but a cold hole in the ground dug for him. Still wrapped up in the same white sheets. This was no way to die. No way to leave this earth. With no send off, no sermon, no family. No flowers surrounding him. "I will plant flowers out here for you to look at. You deserve so much more than this."

All that was left of Bobby was his leather they draped across him. The longer I stared at it, the reaper seemed to be taunting me. Staring through to my very soul. The human skeleton was a powerful visual symbol. It came to represent the remains; that was left to see after life has ended. After the
flesh and mind cease to function. All you had left was the soul; sometimes just a lost soul looking for their way home.

"I know you gave your life up to save mine. A simple thank you is not enough for what you did. They say the more you believe in angels, the more you see them around you. Your angels are listening and flying high around you, I just know it. Wherever you are, may God's angels be watching over you. Just talk to them Bobby, ask for their help and guidance. You can finally find the peace you always searched for."

"Nice speech, sweetheart." Gemma had been standing behind me. I didn't know how much she heard nor did I care.

"It's not a speech. I meant it."

"Right."

Gemma needed her time to say goodbye to Bobby too. I went back inside the cabin. They were going to bury him when she was done and I couldn't stand to watch.

Jax went back outside before they proceed with it. To see Bobby one more before he was covered up. Gemma and I walked out to the cars together. Not a word spoken between us. Not that I knew what I should say anyway.

The bikes pulled out behinds us. We followed each other back to town. Only we made an abrupt halt on the interstate when we drove in to an ambush. Bullets were flying ever where around me. I laid down in the seat after I pulled over. The guys were already off their bikes firing shots back at them.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes."

My car wasn't though. It was riddled with bullet holes. So was the back seat. The broken glass covered it. When I saw the holes in the car seat, I couldn't catch my breath. The queasy feeling deep in the pit of my stomach made my body hurt.

"Tara."

"I need to get out of here."

"Rat, follow Tara home for me. Stay with her until I get there."

Jax gave me a peck on the cheek before the rest of them rode off together. My hands shook when I put them on the wheel.

"Do you want me to drive?"

"No, I'm fine."

If my children had been in the car with me, they wouldn't have been fine. Nothing in the world would have been fine with what happened tonight.

Once I made it inside the house. I went to the spot I had spent so much time at. The rocking chair. In it I had rocked my sons. Held my babies in my arms pondering what would happen next.

I never made a conscious decision to have the club become one thing or another. It just happened before my eyes. Each savage event was a catalyst for the next. And by the time the violence reached
"I don't think I made a lot of conscious decisions either, John. I must now. There are not many choices left for me or my boys."

The main goal of the future was to stop the violence. Shut it all down around you. The world was addicted to it though, not just the club. Our children were the true future. Once the violence started taking them, we had nothing left. Without them, I had nothing left.

It was hard to even pack a bag for Abel. Take him away from his home again. How much more of this shit could my son endure before permanent damage was done to him? I picked up Kenny's football from the floor. I thought of him and sister too. Had they already been damaged beyond repair?

"Are you okay?" Jax brought me out of my thoughts. He leaned against the door frame waiting for me to answer. It was a rhetorical question as far as I was concerned.

"I didn't get shot tonight in the attack. So, I guess that's a plus."

"It wasn't an attack."

"We saw it and witnessed it. What the hell do you call it then?"

"Alvarez was just sending a message. They could have killed us if they wanted to but they didn't." Jax acted like we should be grateful nothing more devastating came out of it. I wasn't.

"The violence has got to stop, Jax. Give Marcus what he wants, the Lodge, you said you would."

"And I will give him the damn Lodge. Once the club gets back on its feet again. I'll work something out until then." From Jax's reply, I knew he had no intentions of doing it. He was going back on his word and we would all suffer the consequences of it.

"Until then. Jesus Christ, what does it take to get through to you? If they had been there, one of the kids could have been killed tonight. We have Abel back and I still can't shake the feeling something really bad is going to happen to them if we stay in Charming. They are destined to repeat our history, our mistakes."

"But, the kids weren't there. I will handle it." There were times Jax mirrored Gemma perfectly. Others, I had no idea where in the hell he was coming from.

"Violence kills compassion, burns your soul away and makes you live in a dark place. After you live in that place it takes you to, there is no going back. I never want our children to know that place. I am begging you one more time, to leave here with me and the kids. There is nothing to keep us here any longer. I feel like this is our last chance to get out."

"After Opie died, I feel like if I walk away now. Everything he did was for nothing. Now is not a good time. The club is moving in the right direction…"

"You need to decide what you love the most; your family or your club."

Before we could discuss it any farther, Jax's cell rang. "We got to go."

"What's wrong?"

"They found Quinn and a couple of the Prospects."
It was all the details Jax would give me. But, it didn't prepare me for the what we seen when we arrived at the clubhouse. I brought my medical bag but it was of no use. There were already gone and no one could save them now.

"Jesus Christ."

The three of them were chained up to the fence outside of the garage. Large spikes drove through their hands and feet. They were crucified for the sins of the club.

"We go to Alvarez right now and fucking kill him."

"Jackie, we can't roll up on him and kill him. We only got a few members left."

"We do this now."

"You need a club vote for that."

"You vote Chibs. Look at what he did to them."

"Jax, I got Alvarez on the prepay." Tig intervened between them.

The violence had reached the epic proportions that John spoke of. Power acquired by violence is only usurpation. Once they seize the throne from the prior king, they become even more evolved in the evil. Than the one they took it from. It would only last if the one who enforces it prevails. For the cycle to continue with the next one.

When Jax returned from talking with Marcus, it worse than we even thought. "Alvarez says the Mayans didn't do this. They popped off some rounds tonight at us, he admitted to that part because he is pissed off about the Lodge. But this shit, he swears they had nothing to do with it."

"Then who did it?"

"I don't know. But we need to find out. Nobody rides alone and we put our families on lock down to keep them safe."

"I have to get to Abel. What if they try to do something to him?"

We had only been back a day and already a new threat was among us. Which enemy was trying to wipe out the club and could hurt us now? All the shit that ran through your mind when you couldn't get past one crises before another struck.

When we finally made it to the hospital. I opened the door to Abel's room, he was fine. I let out a sigh of relief. Only to be brought out of it quickly. He was safe for the moment, just this moment for all I knew.

Those uncertain moments turned to days. About a week in fact. The boys were progressing well. Still a little weak at times, they slept a lot. We finally moved them in the same room to be together. It seemed to make them happy. They had formed a bond and it was a strong bond between them.

"Mommy."

"Yes, Abel."

"Don't forget the chicken nuggets."

"I won't, baby."
Their food order was totally ridiculous. It ranged from everything to French Fries to gummy bears and pizza. I had to go several places to get it all. But, I didn't care. Today, they would get whatever their little hearts desired.

"Cody, you moved a lot more than two purple spaces. That's cheating." Cody smacked his forehead when Uncle Kyle corrected him.

"I'm sorry, Abel." He moved Abel's blue gingerbread man up alongside his to almost the finish line.

"Hey, what about me?" What Kyle said had no effect on either one of them. They continued to giggle while they drew more cards. "We're having a hot game of Candy Land which, I'm losing."

"I see that. Come on boys, let's put the game away for now and eat." I didn't have to say it twice either. Eat, they did.

The cart I pulled over to the bed was full of food. Somethings they only took a bite of before they moved on to the next thing. Others, they finished it off. I didn't care what they ate, as long as they did. They needed to get back to a healthy weight again.

"This is the last blood transfusion you boys will get. We can take you home soon."

They seemed really excited at the news. When I was putting Abel's band aid on his arm. His little face looked puzzled.

"Kyle."

"What buddy?"

"Cody is related to his mommy. Are we related now that I have your blood? Is that why I only get your blood?"

The response wasn't nothing any of us expected. We hadn't even noticed Jax was standing at the door. "No, you are not related to him."

"Daddy."

It warmed me to watch how excited Abel was to see Jax. His little arms went around his father's neck. Abel only seen him as a man, not a SOA member. Not someone who brought danger in our lives. Still not the way a son should see their father though.

"I should go." Each time they met only became more intense. Kyle left what few times Jax came to see his son to avoid problems.

"Yeah, you should." Jax made his feelings on the subject perfectly clear and known to all in the room.

Nicole made small talk with Jax. She made a point to always ask how he was when he came. He seemed alright with her. But, I knew Kyle was worried Jax would do something to her to hurt him. The saddest part was, I couldn't argue anymore Jax wouldn't do it.

Only this time Jax ignored Nicole when she talked to him. Out the door he went after Kyle. I got tired of playing referee between them. But, I went to do it anyway. They were in front of the elevators when I caught up with them.

"That boy will grow up to hate you. He will see you for what you really are. There won't be
anything about you he doesn't hate. All the pain you cause his mother and the shit you do to her. He won't forget either. I am not the obstacle between you and Abel, you are Jax."

"What about you? We are not that different. We got the same old man. You are a killer just like me. The problem is you try to glorify it."

"The hell we're not different." Kyle finally pushed the button on the elevator door to put an end to their bickering. Until it closed they didn't stop staring at each other.

Perhaps I should have let them be. Jax turned his attention to me. "How did you find out he is JT's kid?"

"John was going to divorce Gemma and take you away from Charming. I think he felt it was the only way he could save you from the club, from the evil he created. He was in love with Kyle's mother and intended to have a life with her. Clay couldn't let John dissolve the club and just walk away. So, Clay killed him. In my opinion, it wasn't over guns."

"I am sure it was Gemma's idea to kill JT. Clay was just her puppet she used to get it done." Jax said nothing else to me when he was done. I kept saying his name. He got on the elevator and left too.

"Is everything alright?"

"No, nothing is right anymore. Will you do something for me, Margret?"

"What?"

"I need a copy of a death certificate."

"Whose?"

"Thomas Teller." Just like the crows, I couldn't leave this alone either.

"Hey, Tara." Nicole came to find me with her cellphone in hand. It was a surprise for the boys.

"There is someone here to see you." The boys were confused when I pulled open the blind to their room. "Come over here."

"George." They were beyond excited. Their little hands pressed to the glass. Talking to that silly dog like he could hear them. The dog had grown from a puppy.

The boys jabbered to each other about what they were going to do with the dog when they got out of here. Kyle led George back to Tig. They stayed in front of the window until they were gone.

"Back to bed boys."

"How much longer do we have to stay, Mommy?"

"Just a few more days then you get to go home."

"Yay. Can we have some pudding?"

"Yes, you may. I will be right back with it."

They weren't gaining weight as rapidly as I would like to see. They were making progress though. When they started getting restless and didn't want to stay in bed, I knew they were better.
At least physically they were better, emotionally we still had a long way to go with them. They would say things about certain moments they remembered while they were gone. The saddest part, the virus put them out, they were in a sleep state of mind. In the long run, it saved them from horrible memories of what they truly went through. I don't think they knew the difference; if some of it was just a bad dream and what was the truth.

Kyle handled it better than any of us when they asked questions or had a painful memory. They were telling him about some of it when I returned with their pudding.

"Um…they wore black mask. We couldn't see their face."

"Was it like a Halloween mask?"

"Abel, is it Halloween?"

"I don't know, Cody. I will have to ask Mommy."

Kyle planted the seed of doubt in their minds. Was it truly bad people under those masks or was it not real at all. I still feared those scars would surface someday for those little boys. However, all they cared about now was eating their pudding cups.

"Guess what, Mommy?"

"What baby?"

"Me and Cody decided we are brothers."

Kyle and I both froze. Unsure how to approach this one and what all they heard when they were out. We talked freely around them several times. I tried to change the subject. For Abel or Cody to go right back to the same thing.

"They asked us if were brothers. Which one of us is Jax's son. We told them we were brothers. So, now we are."

To them it was as simply as that but it really wasn't. They saved each other. The boys had no idea what could have transpired if they told the Cartel they weren't brothers. They could have killed Cody because he would have been no use to them. Abel could have gotten tortured because he was Jax's son. I hid the tears away. I excused myself to go to the bathroom.

When I came back out, I didn't understand at first. Then I understood it all. Those two little boys had a bond that could never be broken. With a small poke of the knife on their little fingers, a droplet of blood rose to the surface from each of them. Kyle pressed their fingers together in the palm of his hands. The boys didn't flinch or even acted like it hurt them.

"Repeat after me. We are brothers now shared by blood, not by the same parents. We will always watch out for each other and be family no matter how far apart we are."

The boys said it all mostly in unison. Once it was done my sweet baby boy made me smile. "Do we get a cake now?"

"Nice try buddy. But, it's not your birthday."

"How about ice cream then?"

"What flavor?" Kyle was already up and at the door when they told him what they wanted. We were
caving to these little boys every whim. It would change once they went home. But for the moment,
they were our little princes who could command us to do most anything they wanted.

"How are the boys?" Margret came in and took their charts. I got nervous as she examined them. If
anyone found out, we could all suffer serious consequences.

"Better."

"I noticed Abel doesn't have the insurance information on here. I will get that updated for you."

"That won't be necessary, we are paying cash for the stay. Thank you for your help though,
Margret."

"Why on earth would you do that?"

"Margret, can I talk to you for a moment out in the hall?"

"Certainly. Are the boys alright?"

"They are getting stronger every day. But, I need a favor from you."

"What is it?"

"The truth is, they don't have food poisoning. I need this kept off the record. No one else can know."

"What do they have?"

"Let's go in my office. This is a very long story."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SO

There always comes a point in time. Where you have to give up your whole life for one thing. Or
give up that one thing for whole another life.

"Thank you, Nero. I appreciate you going with me."

"Sure, mama."

"How is Gemma? She hasn't been to see Abel in a couple of days. That's really unlike her."

"With Gem, it takes her a while to come around. When it comes to Abel and Thomas, I know she
will. Maybe you should give her a call. Try to mend that barrier between the two of you."

"Yeah, I should call her. I'm just not sure what I should say to her, you know."

"Say what is in your heart, Tara. What you would what someone to say to you in this situation."

Nero made a lot of sense. I would give it a try. But, everything else around me, didn't make any
fucking sense at all. Including what I was about to do. It wouldn't make any sense to Jax, it made
perfect sense to me though.

I was happy Nero was with me when we walked in the Lodge. Everything had changed in it, it
looked nothing like what it once had. Yet, it was still the same, a whore house.

"We are here to see Marcus." Nero took the lead and I was grateful. They all looked me up and
down. Of course, they knew who I was and who I was married to. You never knew if they would
shoot first, then ask why I was here later.

They patted Nero down. After they took his gun, the guy let us pass by him. I knew it was a precautionary measure. How one act of violence escalated to another, then another.

"He's in the kitchen."

When I saw Marcus' attire, I wanted to laugh. He wore his normal Mayan leather and cowboy boots. Along with a long white apron that said; Kiss the Cook. A big white floppy chef's hat too.

"Nero, Tara, what brings you here?"

"I came here to give you the Lodge as Jax agreed to."

"Just like that, no strings attached."

"I only ask one thing of you, Marcus."

"What is that, Ms. Tara?"

"To stop the violence against my family. At least over this deal, you can have the Lodge free and clear. You helped get the children out of Mexico and I am in your debt for it. But, killing shit now, is just wasted blood and will bring more deaths between the Sons and Mayans. Please, no more violence in Charming where my children can get hurt."

"Does Jax see things this way too?"

"No, Jax doesn't. He doesn't even know I'm here. I'm trying to keep the deal made to bring the boys home. They made it home, now, I am keeping my word to you."

The papers were already drawn up. It only took a couple of signatures along with a notary. They witnessed me sign them and put the official stamp on it. This was done.

"I would guess Jax will be mad when he finds out you signed it over to me."

"Yes, I am sure he will be. That is my burden to bare, not yours. Just like your problems with Jax, shouldn't become mine or my children's problems."

"We didn't have anything to do with the Sons that died. But, I give you my word, no more violence about the Lodge in Charming. If Jax crosses me again or comes at me or my club. That deal, is off the table."

"Understood." I couldn't prevent the violence from happening forever. I was only kidding myself if I thought I could. At least I could sleep better now to know the Mayan wouldn't be visiting Charming again tonight. Especially over something I had the ability to change.

Marcus went over to the oven and pulled out trays of tamales. He put one on a plate, handed it to me and a plate to Nero. When Nero set his down, so did I. I wasn't sure if I should eat it or not.

A laugh came from Marcus. He unwrapped one then took a bite. "You should try it, it's really good."

Just one bite into it, my mouth was set ablaze. My eyes were watering as I chewed it. "Spicy."

"That is the mild batch."

When Nero finished off a few of them, we left. I had to get ready for Derrick's service. There
probably wouldn't be an ambush at this one. Or I hoped not.

"Thanks, Nero. You have been very kind to me and the boys."

"We're family Tara. That's what we should all do for each other."

As I got out of the car. I saw her. I wouldn't have to make that call, Gemma was here. I gave Nero a strange look.

"I called Gem when you were talking to Marcus. She just wants to be around the boys. You know how head strong she can be. It's now on you two where the relationship goes."

Kyle was talking with Gemma when I walked up. She had a big bag in her hand. From it, she brought out a white box and gave it to him. It was a silver gun with a pearl handle.

"It was John's service pistol."

"I can't take this. It should go to Jax."

"Jackson never liked it, he doesn't want it. You should have it. I think John would want you too."

"Thank you, Gemma." After Kyle hugged her. He left to get ready for Derrick's service.

We walked together to the boys' room. There wasn't much conversation between us but it was a start to mend what had been broken.

"Look what Grandma brought you."

She handed Abel a black monkey. It made monkey sounds when you pushed his belly. Then said, 'I love you' with a smack for a kiss. She took a white one out too and gave it to Cody. The boys were thrilled and kept pushing their bellies.

"Do you want to trade me, Abel?"

"Okay."

"Grandma picked out the black one special for you Abel. I got it blessed and everything. You keep him with you when I'm not around to watch over you, okay?"

"Okay, Grandma. I will."

Nicole and I were really confused by it all. How in the hell did you get a monkey blessed? But, it made our boys happy so we could care less.

"I will stay with Nicole and the boys while you're gone. If that's alright?"

"I think that's great, Gemma. Abel misses you. He asked about you." It made her smile even though she didn't comment back to me. "I will have Thomas, Ellie and Kenny back tonight. I know they will want to see you too."

"I'll come by the clubhouse tomorrow."

It made me feel better knowing Gemma was here. As crazy as she was, she loved the boys with all her heart. Crazy grandma would never let anything happen to them with her around.

Since I was running late, I had to hustle to my office and change. Dresses just weren't my thing. I
wore black pants with a nice black silk blouse. Quickly brushed my hair out and took off.

This ceremony was a scam. Derrick’s body was so badly decomposed because it wasn't properly cared for after his death. They had no choice but to cremate him. His mother was unaware of it. She believed in the closed casket was her son’s body they were laying to rest. When in fact they were burring a pile of ashes.

Most of the guys were outside dressed in their military uniforms talking with each other. Except Kyle. When I went inside he was focused on the picture setting on the American flag draped on top of the casket. It was of Derrick dressed up in his uniform.

"I should be the one in there, not him."

"I am grateful for what Derrick did. But I am also grateful it's not you, Kyle."

In Kyle's hand was a brass container. He clutched on to it when a couple of tears escaped him. He wouldn't let go when I tried to take it out of his hand but finally did. A purple heart was inside of it. On the back was; Kyle A. Brandon.

"Derrick is the real hero." Kyle stood before Derrick's parents. Saluted his father, the General. Then handed it to him. The General smiled as he put his hand on Kyle's shoulder.

Thomas stood with me until Kyle was done talking with them. "Kyle, this isn't your fault. Derrick knew the risk just like the rest of us did. There is no more honorable kind of death, than what he died from."

"Sure, tell that to his grieving mother." Kyle said it in passing. He didn't stop walking until he made it out the door.

Thomas introduced me to the parents. I kept my word to Derrick. I told them how much he loved them and how proud I was of him. As they should be.

"May I speak with you in private Mrs. Teller?"

The General went in an empty room. He shut the door behind us, let out a long sigh and set down in the chair. The wall had his complete attention when he spoke to me. It took him a while to gets his words in order.

"Derrick's mother doesn't know what really happened to him or where he was and she never will. But, I do know the truth. I took an oath to never reveal military information to a civilian. My son took that same oath. He also, took one to always put other's lives ahead of his own to serve and protect his country, along with the Americans in it. That's what he did. I couldn't be prouder of my son. The information you obtain about their mission, should be forgotten and never discussed with anyone."

"They saved my son unselfishly. I will never say anything to anyone."

"If you will excuse me, I need to begin the service."

The General tucked his hat under his left arm. Slowly took the long walk down the aisle. He stood before the casket, what was left of his son and saluted him. The others followed suit. They stood and saluted their fallen brother. As he laid the purple heart next to Derrick’s picture, then they all set down.

It didn’t last long after the preacher spoke words over Derrick for it to be over. His poor mother was
having a hard time letting go as she passed by his casket one last time. I skipped the line to go by the casket. "I know you found your way home, Derrick. I am so sorry."

The bathroom offered me a moment alone to let out my emotions. I wiped my face before I went back out to where everyone was.

"She's in labor." Meat was rattled by it. I watched him face danger and death without showing one single emotion. When it came to her, he was a blubbering mess of a man.

They were shuffling cars around to try to get him out of the parking lot. Finally, Thomas gave Meat a ride since he was parked in the front.

"I am going to hospital to support Meat. I will see you later, girl."

"I will see you later, boy."

It was true when one life ended a new one was born. A clean slate for a child brought in this world. A refreshed soul who had their whole life a head of them to still live. So much happiness came with a birth, so much sadness when their day of death came.

By the time, I made it back to the hospital and made my rounds. It was just Nicole with the boys. Gemma had left a little while ago when Nero called her.

Cody threw a card down on the bed. "I bet my monkey for your elephant." They were using animal crackers as poker chips.

It was Abel's turn. He threw down a card too. "I want two of your monkeys for my elephant because it's a bigger animal."

"Okay."

"What are they playing?"

"I have no idea. But it's entertaining them."

Nicole and I just watched them play. Being normal children without a worry around them. Since, she hadn't had a break. I told her I would stay with them while she went to get something to eat.

"Do you want me to bring you anything back?"

"No thanks."

"We do." The boys gave her several items they wanted.

While the boys played, I caught up on hospital paperwork. I signed my name to several documents. Fake documents I might add.

Kyle made his way back too after his sister returned.

"What did they have?"

"Twin boys. They named them Christopher Abel and Dwayne Cody."

In a strange way, what happened to our boys impacted the lives of others around them. It brought sorrow, death and hurt for a lot. On the good side, with them naming the newborn babies after them. Abel and Cody became brothers today. Their names would live on as that.
"Did you boys hear that? They named their babies after you."

It didn't have any effect on them at all. They glanced in my direction for a brief moment. Then went back to watching the cartoon on the television.

"I need to go. Your aunt and uncle is bringing the kids home. I can't wait to see them."

However, Kyle didn't share my excitement. This was the beginning to the end of line for him. "I will come by to say goodbye to Ellie and Kenny." Before I could say anything, Kyle gave me a kiss on the cheek and disappeared.

On the way to the clubhouse. I caught myself speeding several times. I had to breathe and let my foot relax. I couldn't wait to see my babies, it seemed like an eternity since I'd seen them.

Jax was outside talking to them when I pulled up. Both Ellie and Kenny came running to me. It was hugs all around. Then came my baby which looked like he had grown so much while he was gone.

"Hey, you, I have missed you." Thomas cuddled up to my chest, even though he didn't fit so perfectly anymore. He was my big boy now.

They were ready to leave. I hugged Kyle's aunt and thanked her for watching the kids. Pops held out his hand to Jax. "I returned your family just like I said I would."

Jax took his hand and shook it. "Thank you for what you did for them."

"Take care of yourself and your family Jax."

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

Most things had returned to normal since the kids got back. I knew the inevitable was coming. What I had done would be found out eventually. I just didn't realize it would be today.

Jax took Thomas out of my arms and handed him to Happy. With no explanation, as to why he was so angry. "Kenny and Ellie, there's ice cream in the kitchen. You guys go have some."

Ellie made her way to the door with Kenny. She stopped though and looked directly in my eyes. I saw the fear in hers. "It's okay honey, go have some ice cream." I gave her a quick smile, she gave me none back when she left.

When they were out of sight, Jax slammed the door behind them. "Did you think I wouldn't find out?"

"What are we talking about now, Jax?"

"The Lodge. I went there today and Marcus informed me I don't own it anymore."

"I gave you the opportunity to do it first. It was the right thing to do and you know it."

"It's wasn't your decision, Tara. It's a club call, not yours to make."

"It wasn't club money that bought it, it was mine. Somehow, I lost controlling interest over it to the club. I didn't even argue with you about it. But, when it comes to our children, I will do the right thing by them. If you like it or you don't."

"I don't need a lecture from you today about doing the right thing. Was hiding Kyle behind my back the right thing too?"
"No, it wasn't right. If you noticed when it came down to Abel surviving, I had no loyalty to Kyle either."

Chibs opened the door and stuck his head in. "The meet is set. We gotta go."

"This shit isn't over with Tara. I can't trust you anymore."

"It never is over, there is always more shit to come Jax."

The first thing I did was go find my children. Kenny and Ellie were sitting at a table in the bar. Some nasty bitch had my son in her arms. I immediately took him from her.

When they were done eating we went back to our room. I played with Thomas on the bed while they watched television. Until we heard a commotion from the bar. I had Ellie keep Thomas with her so I could see what was going on.

"Sorry Mom, you can't come in the clubhouse. Jax said no." Happy met Gemma at the door and escorted her out. He obviously was following direct orders of his boss, Jax.

"Seriously." Gemma was dumbfounded at the idea she was no longer welcomed to walk among them, idolized by them or accepted as a part of their world. It was set in motion before Abel was taken. Now, it was time for Jax to carry through on what he had started. I got the feeling, he would be doing that with a lot of people before it was all said and done.

"What shit are you pulling?" Gemma screamed at me when I followed them outside in the parking lot.

"I didn't have anything to do with it." It was the truth even if she didn't believe it. There were times in the past I begged Jax to not let his mother be around our boys. But I always got overruled by him.

"Take your fucking hands off me." The second round of Gemma not listening with Happy. He stepped in to stop her from going in the clubhouse again.

"What's going on? Come on Hap, don't get rough with Gemma, man." I wasn't the only one who wasn't privy to what was happening. Tig was kept on the outside of the circle by Jax too.

"I'm just doing what I was told to by Jax."

Jax came back, poor timing on his part. A few minutes more and the guys would have done his dirty work for him. A few minutes later and Gemma would have been gone already. But she wasn't and he had to face her. "Yeah, he is doing what I told him to do. You will never come near my boys again. You're just an old lady around here and not even that anymore. You and Nero need to choose. Leave Charming as we agreed to or else."

"Or else what? You should remember Jackson, just who I really am and what I am capable of."

"Yeah me too, you might wanna remember what I'm capable of. You got a choice to make of what I tell my sons. Grandma and grandpa moved away or grandma and grandpa passed away."

Gemma stood with tears running down her face while he just walked away from her. In defeat she moved slowly towards her car. It was over, all the ties were severed between her, the club and her son now. The lifeline she fed, gave herself up for and the good years of her life for the club, it was all gone and no longer existed.

"You will see the boys again, Gemma. I will not allow him to get away with this."
There were times, I didn't want Gemma to be a part of my boys lives for fear she would endanger them. But this, this was a club move by Jax. He pushed Gemma and Nero out and used the boys to do it.

"Where's Jax?"

"He's in the chapel. Now is not a good time. He doesn't wanna be disturbed."

"I don't care what he wants."

When the door swung open without my announcing myself first, they both seemed surprised by it.

"I'm in the middle of something right now."

"Will you excuse us, Chibs? I need to talk to my husband."

Jax waited until he closed the door behind him. "What?"

"Why can't Gemma see the boys?"

"Because I said so."

"They are my sons too. You didn't even discuss this with me. I know you only did it to shove Gemma and Nero out of the picture. Not because she done something to warrant it this time, because you set this shit in motion a long time ago. Yeah, that's right, I've known for a while."

"Gemma is poison. She needs to go. I am tired of explaining myself for every move I make." Jax lit up a smoke and thought he was going to get out of this conversation with me.

"Don't you walk away from me, Jax."

"I don't want the boys at St. Thomas. You need to bring them here to be watched during the day."

"What are you talking about? Have you lost your mind, leave them in the care of some crow eaters? I will take my children wherever in the hell I please."

"No Tara, you won't. I can't trust you anymore to make the right decisions. I don't want you to take them off anywhere alone. A prospect will go with you. Until Gemma, Nero and Kyle are gone from Charming and they are just a bad memory." Jax infuriated me. If he thought for a moment he would dictate about our children, he was sadly mistaken.

"You can't trust me? What about the trust you've broken? I know what told Kyle to get him to go along with your bullshit. What you did to him, Gemma and Nero while I was in the hospital. Which in the end caused our son to be taken from us by the Cartel. I knew before we found Abel. Yet, I am still here and you're worried about trusting me?"

"So, the little prick told you. I should have known he is weak." Before I could say, Kyle didn't tell me about the deals Jax made behind the club's back, he continued. "I didn't hurt you, did I? Even though he continued to see you anyway. You were the only thing he understood or seemed to care about, his own life meant nothing to him. You kept sneaking around to see him behind my back. It was just threat, Tara."

"Kyle didn't tell me that. But you just did, Jax."

Now, I knew the secret no one would tell me, what they all kept from me, shielded me away from the ugly truth. All the dots were connected. Why Kyle kept insisting he couldn't be around me
anymore. The burden of worry he had Jax would hurt me. What all took place while I was in hospital. How Jax got Kyle to go along with killing those guys. How he persuaded Gemma and Nero to move out of town in the quiet so no one would know what happened or why.

Many nights in the dark silence, I set having the same argument between my head and my heart. My head always stated the obvious to me. Now, my heart just confirmed it. It broke in so many pieces to know for certain Jax could even entertain the thought of bringing harm to me. It truly didn't mean much or bring any relief if it was only an idle threat or not.

"You probably shouldn't say anything else to me, Jax."

"What was I supposed to do? You pushed me to this point."

"You are supposed to be my husband who loves me unconditionally. You were supposed to take me and our boys away from here long ago like you promised so many times."

"I had no options left. You fucked that mother fucker and I couldn't keep you away from him. It was the only thing that worked. I am not going to lose my family and my wife to him. To the brother, you lied to me about and hid from me."

"No, Jax. I didn't fuck Kyle. As I see it even if I had you can't say shit about it. I still owe you a few for us to be on an even kilter on many things in life. According to the club you love so much; the rules you live and die by. Do what I've always done since I've been with you. Just fucking get over it and go on with life because no one cares what you want or if you like it or not."

Now, the conversation was over with. A lot of things were over. I went to the nearest bathroom and locked the door behind me. It wasn't even me staring back in the mirror. I splashed some cold water on my face. "Don't you let him see you break down or be weak."

The devil had pushed me far enough. Backed me into a corner with no way out. The lioness raised its ugly head up and wasn't taking anymore of Jax's shit. Or I just became the true SOA Queen he brought out of me and I was destined to become all of these things right all along beside him.

Fuck, Gemma had nothing on me as evil as I felt towards Jax at this moment. It's why Oden, John and Clay stood no chance going up against their queen. Until now I didn't realize the queen held the power over her king in her hands the entire time. Without us, their world would fall and they become their own demise. Was it why Gemma never backed down? Did she know she held the power over them? She knew the secret all along?

It was a proven fact from hundreds of years ago. When Oden lost Frig to his evil brother. The realm he built up around him crumbled down and no one any longer considered him to be a king anymore. Same scenario for John when he lost Gemma and then history repeated itself again with Clay.

"Son of a bitch. That's why when I am at my strongest point, Jax is at his weakest. The power was never held by the king, it's generated through the queen and the web. The children in the web, my boys. It's Abel and Thomas, they are the ones who feed the web, fresh blood. The evil lurks to take their goodness away. Making them the next Prince of Darkness."

Most would say I was insane, maybe I really was. All theories were only theories until proven facts that arrives to the truth. There was one person who might answer these questions. Even though my approach with Jax was wrong. It could prove me right.

When I went back in the bar, there was another argument in place between Jax and Chibs. The other members were standing around them, taking it all in. No one picked a side nor said a word.
"What this club needs, is a breathier. You're wrong, Jackie. We wait on retaliation. We are not ready for a bloody war. If we lose anymore members, our charter folds."

"This club has lost its way. What this club needs, is to retaliate, it's what we do. Do I need to take a vote? I'll proxy for Bobby and Quinn, they vote yes."

In the end, they all followed Jax just like they always have. I didn't want to know who they were retaliating against or why. It would only mean more worry for me. But, I already made my choice and I couldn't stop now.

"Ellie, I need for you to listen to me carefully, honey. I won't be gone long. I need you to watch the boys for me. It's time for me to finish what your mother started…"

There was nothing to stop me from going, not that Jax could even if he tried to. But, all eyes were on me when I came out to the bar. They wouldn't understand even if I told them where I went. So, I pulled a Gemma. Head held high, made no eye contact with anyone and just walked out.

The prospect assigned to me asked where I was going. "None of your fucking business. Stay here and keep my children safe."

The drive was good for me, it helped me think. Think about the level I just took things to with my husband. Think through the only choices I had left for my children. Think of all the questions I wanted to ask him while I was there.

' Everything in my life turned to shit. I got no money, no wife and no family left. My kids don't even know me or want to. I should have stayed in prison. At least Donna would still be alive. I don't have the luxury Jax does, of a good woman helping me with my kids. I'm all alone.'

"Yeah Opie, I'm all alone just like you were."

'I married Opie. I didn't marry the club.'

"Yeah Donna, I didn't marry the club either."

' When I heard, you were back, I ran through the scenarios of what this would look like between us. Nothing changed, you're wondering what bad shit I'm doing and I'm saying I'm sorry for it to you. I'm still the same guy, wearing the same leather on my back. But you, you are someone totally different.‘

"Yeah Jax, I am a totally different person now."

' I am Jackson's mother no matter how old he is. Until I am dead in the ground, I will do whatever I can to protect him.'

"Yeah Gemma, we both will protect our children no matter what it takes."

' Einstein once said; any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complexed and more violent. But it takes a touch of genius and lots of courage to move something in the opposite direction. I'm realizing my touch of genius and courage are coming a little too late. I fear for SAMCRO, there may be no opposite direction.'

"Yeah John, most of us realized it a little too late. But, it's not too late for my boys."

You swallowed your pride, made the choices in life you had to and done things that didn't always make sense at the time. "Gemma, we need to talk. We need each other now, it's time…"
In times of uncertainty. There were those moments we found ourselves at the crossroads; afraid, confused and without a road map of which direction to go in. Those choices we made in those moments could define the rest of our days. Or end them all together very quickly.

Decisions were the hardest move to make. Especially when it was the choice between where you should be and where you wanted to be.

Sometimes, you needed to hold on to something. Sometimes, you need to let go. Sometimes, it was just hard to decide what to do. I've cried for the memories. I've cried for the pain. I've cried for love.

The sounds were blaring from the outside as I pulled up and got out. When I walked up the steps I waited for a sign, any sign I was moving in the right direction. But, I received none as I went forward.

"Welcome. Please, come in and join us."

He didn't seem to mind the interruption I made going inside. If anything, he gave me encouragement and I felt as though, I belonged here. I took the pew in the back of the church so he could continue his sermon.

"The demon finally confronted the hunter in the woods, he was ready to fight the man for his soul. Nothing the demon did made the man succumb to temptation, made him fall from his beliefs. This wasn't what the demon is accustomed to. But, Mathew is no ordinary man. When the devil made one final attempt to persuade Mathew, it didn't work. Mathew got down on his knees and prayed. No one could test his fate nor make him fall from grace. It was when the devil knew, he was defeated. All his strength was being drained from him the more Mathew prayed. The demon needed an escape before evil no longer existed in him, he had to stop the prayer. He spits blood in Mathew's face to make his getaway. Scorching Mathew severely with his boiling Lucifer's blood. But, even a blind man can still see God. Mathew only continued to pray louder and shout his forgiveness to the demon…"

At certain points, you became deaf to words. Numb, to it all. But, your heart kept speaking to you relentlessly. Mine, was screaming it at me.

When the sermon was over. I purposely waited until most had left the church before I approached him. "Do you remember me, I brought Ellie Winston to see you?"

"I do remember you. How is Ellie doing?"

"She is okay. If you have a moment I would like to talk to you."

"Of course, what do you wish to talk about?"

"I need to know what you spoke to Ellie about that day."

"I'm afraid I can't tell you that."

"It could be a matter of life and death. I'm a doctor. When I took blood from someone, the vial of it was so hot. It almost scorched my hand before I dropped it. Please, I have no one else or nowhere else to turn to."

"I won't tell you the specifics of our conversation. But I can tell you, Ellie asked me to pray for your soul. God took her mother away from her. She fears he will do the same with you. When Kyle joined us, they talked about something I didn't understand, perhaps you can help me with it. They
spoke of casting evil out because the crow told her to. Kyle promised her he will not let anything happen to you. What evil are they referring to?"

"I don't know for sure what they were talking about. In your sermon, the beast, he had boiling hot blood. Why?"

"We all carry the same amount of Lucifer's blood in our bodies, we are born with it. It is determined by the person which father they follow. The seed is always there and planted. When someone has chosen the life of Satin, the blood turns hot. The evil has evolved to the surface and taken over the soul. They have become the son of Satin, do his work and spread his word. It is said some have no control over the evil in them. It is predetermined what they will become when they are born."

"Do you believe sons have a choice over what their father has become and the man they will become? I don't understand how brothers can be so different with the same father and same seed."

"The father I am referencing is not their earthly father but God or Satin. Each man has a choice in life, which father's footsteps to follow. Maybe these passages will help you understand better."

**Abraham's Seed and Satan's. John 8:41, 8:42 & 8:44.**

41 You do the deeds of your father. 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

"Ellie has brought up John 3:20 a lot. I need to know how to see the evil in the real light and expose it for what it is." When I flipped to the passage he didn't need to read it. Of course, he knew what it said already.

**John 3:20**, Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

"That is the exact same thing Donna asked me. I couldn't help her either. You must find the answer for yourself. Find your truth and the light will shine your way. I hope you will attend our service again, Tara. I enjoyed our talk."

"Ellie is the light. But I think you know that already. Donna died trying to save her children, please, help me. I am willing to die to save mine."

"The Bible entertains no thought that darkness is equal in power to God's light. God is the absolute sovereign who rules over the darkness and the powers of evil. Darkness evokes everything that is anti-God: the wicked, judgment, death. While light is not itself divine, it is often used metaphorically; as salvation, the commandments, the truth and the divine presence of God. The light signifies the presence of God is with you. I can only preach his word, you must believe it. But, be cautious who you trust, the devil was once an angel. Some angels are destined to fall. Black hearts are not born black, they are burned."

These days, I could believe most anything. The normal wasn't something I'd followed for a long time. However, it would be a true test of my fate to find his word as my guide. Maybe all this time, Ellie was on to something she didn't even realize yet.

There was a revelation, the truth before Ellie when I returned to the clubhouse she must face. I should have told her it was coming but, I couldn't bring myself to break her heart. Kyle had come to
tell her goodbye. Jax was outside smoking, watching every move they made.

"You made me believe family takes care of each other. We can be a real family without being my parents or blood. Now, you're leaving me. Don't leave me here, Kyle."

"I have to go and you have to stay here with Tara. I would change it if I could but, I can't."

"You are just like all the rest of them. Leave then, it's what men do." Ellie jerked on the gold chain around her neck, it broke. She tossed the dog tag down on the ground at Kyle's feet.

"Little G, it's complicated. You won't understand."

"It's not that complicated. You love us or you don't. You will fight for us or you won't. You are just like him. Made promises you won't keep."

"I don't know your father or what promises he made to you but…"

"I'm not talking about my father, you are just like Jax."

It was the final blow to Kyle. He hung his head and couldn't even look at her face anymore. She was done with too because she just shook her head and walked away.

The surprise came from Kenny. He took off his dog tag as well and laid it down by his sister's. "Bye Kyle." Then ran to catch up with her.

Kyle bent down to the ground and picked them up. Shifting them from hand to hand. Once he started in Jax's direction, I knew it was about to get worse for all of us.

"Please Jax, just let me see Ellie. I'll do whatever you want. I won't go near Tara again. Please, I'm begging you."

"The boys get released from the hospital tomorrow. You got three days to pack your shit, get your sister and her kid and leave Charming."

"And if I don't leave?"

"Then you will find out just how evil I really can be."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

A lot has expressed interest in the key to the story. It will be posted shortly after the last chapter.

Tara learned a lot of new things. She is at that crossroad of dancing with the devil no matter which way she turns. He always gets paid his dues for it. I will leave you with the most important paragraph of the story from Tara in Chapter 1.

'I've always been told that a good old lady was strong at all times and never lets anything bother her. I totally disagree with that scenario. You must be somewhat weak to learn to live this kind of life. You must be torn down, rebuilt to become accustom to what they do in the club and the way they live to survive it all.'

Thank you for marking this story as your favorite or alert and the reviews!
Crossroads~ Two realms touch a place literally. Neither here nor there; linked in between them. Used to summon a demon. In order to broker a supernatural deal with the devil.

Part 3 of 4

"It's impossible."

"You can see the results for yourself, Dr. Knowles."

"It is medically impossible for Abel's heart to be self healing."

"We call it a miracle. I will still want Abel to come to my office every three months for a checkup until I am certain he is headed in the right direction. Here is a prescription of a lower dosage of his medication if he needs it."

"Thank you, Dr. Ryan."

To my office, I went with my head in medial books. I found nothing that could explain the turn around my son had. In only a couple of days it went from devastation of the heart to perfect health almost.

Since I couldn't explain it medically. I looked up the medication I gave him on a hunch when I had no choice in Mexico. Searched through group study records, no one had that kind of improvement or reaction from it.

"Thomas."

If he truly was Thomas Teller, the son of John and Gemma, he was healed from the same heart condition that Abel was. But what could have changed so drastically for the both them.

"Is this the sign you are giving me to believe in you and keep my faith you are with me?"

Of course, I felt sort of silly talking to myself and hoped God would answer me somehow. So many times, when I was young, I talked to him and I never once knew he was even listening. But then again, I had talked to fucking crows and believed it. Really this wasn't that farfetched to believe.

"Come in Dr. Knowles. Is a patient in need of my services?"

"I'm sorry for just dropping by without an appointment. Actually, I am the one in need of your services. I have a strange question for you, Father. It will show my ignorance in the bible and I apologize for it."

"There is never a need to apologize. What would like to know?"

When I explained it without a full explanation why I was in search of the information. His answer was astonishing. "Thomas was one of the twelve disciples, he was considered an apostle. They scribe and preached God's word. He spoke the first time in the Gospel of John. When they attempted to stone Jesus. Thomas said; Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then, he spoke again in this passage."
**John 14:5** There, Jesus had just explained that he was going away to prepare a heavenly home for his followers, and that one day they would join him there. Thomas reacted by saying, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

"Thomas was doubting his faith, the words of his Lord. Skeptical from the first when he heard Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared to the other apostles by saying: Except, I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side. I will not believe until then."

**John 20:28,** *But when Jesus appeared later and invited Thomas to touch his wounds and behold him, Thomas showed his belief by saying, "My Lord and my God".*

**John 20:29,** *Jesus then said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."*

"I have to go. Thank you, Father."

"I hoped I answered your question."

"You gave me a new outlook. Thank you."

This sent so many mixed signals and messages. It also sent me off on another mission. One I had to get answers to. I would not stop nor allow anyone to get in the way of me from doing it either.

"Come in." Margret was sitting at her desk typing away when I went in her office.

"Have you had a chance to get the death certificate yet?"

"It got here this morning. Is everything alright? You seem upset or maybe different somehow."

"I don't know what I am anymore. Abel and Cody can't get released from the hospital today."

"Why?"

"If I tell you, you will be as guilty as I am for what I'm about to do. It's best you don't know the truth Margret. I am just giving you a heads up, they need to stay here tonight."

"Alright. Is there anything I can do to help?"

"You can't help me. Nobody can help me now."

The piece of paper was folded up and put in my pocket. I had one stop to make before I left. Nicole and Kyle were with the boys. Just like they always were.

"The boys are not getting released today. I just wanted to let you know."

"What's wrong?" Nicole was in an instant panic.

"Nothing. It's a precautionary measure. They can go home tomorrow." Nicole seemed relieved from it. Kyle didn't. He even followed me out of the room.

"What are you doing, girl?"

"What I have to. Can I get a cellphone number for Thomas?"

"I guess so. Are you going to tell me what is going on?"
"Have you ever noticed anything strange about Thomas?"

"You will have to be more specific. Thomas is a whole lot of strange." Kyle gave me his number and I had to go. "Hey, what is wrong and where are you going?"

"I know what you wouldn't tell me. Jax told you he would hurt me if he caught me with you again. I also understand why you didn't tell me. I want to know exactly what he said."

"How did you find out? Did Jax do something to you? Has he threatened you?"

"Kyle, I want to know."

"Well, I won't tell you. I'm sorry Tara, I can't. It will only hurt you and I don't want to do that. Where are you going?"

"Watch over Abel. You are the only one I can really trust." The elevator door closed to end the conversation. Yet the journey had just begun for me.

Once I got to the car I made calls that had to be done. "Gemma, you can see Abel. He will be here for another day." It was the easy I had to make. The other one was the most important for all.

"Are you busy?"

"No. What's going on?"

"Abel and Cody are running a fever. I am very worried about them having a relapse. They are going to stay here tonight. I just wanted to let you know so if you want to you can come by to see him, Jax, I'm afraid for our son."

"I'll come by later. We will get through this. No matter what you think of me. I love you, Tara and our boys. I will never give up on us or let you go."

"Me too." Quickly I closed the phone before I lost my nerve to carry on with the plan. Honestly, I wasn't sure where to find the person or if he was still alive now. So, I started with the last known address the hospital had on file for him.

"Can I help you?"

"Does Dr. Michaels still live here?"

"No, he doesn't. I am his daughter. Can I help you with something?"

She was very helpful. Her father had suffered a series of strokes. With the constant care he needed, she put him in a retirement home.

"I am here to see Dr. Michaels. I mean Robert Michaels."

"He is the activity room. I will show you the way."

"Jesus Christ." When I saw his face, it was deja vu. The old man that I saw in the cemetery sitting on my grave surrounded by the crows. The same one who spoke to me at the park then disappeared in the woods. With the crow flying high in the sky afterwards. The same man at the church I had associated with being Opie Winston.

Only he sat in a wheel chair. Unable to move about without it. Frail and ill from his health problems. The nurse reassured me many times Robert could not standup on his own anymore.
"Dr. Michaels."

"No one has called me that in a long time."

"You signed a death certificate for Thomas Teller. I am wondering if you can tell me what happened to him." I took the paper out my pocket to hand him. Refresh his memory from the past. The old man's face turned cold and sour.

"I don't remember."

"Will you at least look at it and try?"

"No. Now, if you will excuse me. I'm not feeling well and need to return to my room."

He pushed on the wheels of the chair with all his might to make them turn slightly. But, he wasn't going to get away from me that easily. I blocked the doorway and he was going to hear me out.

"I'm a doctor at St. Thomas. Here is what I think happened to Thomas Teller. You signed a fake death certificate so John, his father, could get him out of Charming away from his mother. John was going to divorce Gemma, he had you do it."

"You're wrong."

"Then tell me what happened."

"I will take the truth to my grave. Now leave me alone. Nurse, nurse. I need a damn nurse in here."

Of course, the nurse came in and I would have to leave without the answers I came for. At least for now. Then I thought about, it was worth a shot.

"Dr. Michaels, I found Thomas Teller. I know it's him. He is in Charming. My husband is the President of the Sons of Anarchy, Jackson Teller, his brother."

With no more resistance or defense left, the doctor admitted guilt when he invited me to come to his room with him.

"I will tell you the truth but you won't believe it anyway."

"Try me."

"Thomas was on his death bed, knocking on death's door. Barley registered a heartbeat when I left him that night. I got a call I needed to get to the hospital because he went in to cardiac arrest. When I arrived, John Teller was with him at his bed side. There was a woman there too. They were praying over his body. According to the nurse Thomas had died. The life support machine he was on was already unplugged. He had no pulse or heartbeat. I checked for myself. I signed the death certificate based on that fact. After I signed it I went in to talk with John. Only they weren't alone when I returned. Nine crows flew above his bed in a circle while they continued to pray. I witnessed that little boy come back to life. He set up in the bed like a healthy normal child would. His heart had healed itself overnight with no explanation."

The good doctor answered many questions for me. John had made his way home before Thomas ever died and Gemma never knew. Also the reasons Dr. Michaels went along with the lie. But were both baffled and dumbfounded at the healing of the heart.

"When is your husband coming to kill me for what I've done?"
"If he finds out, I won't be the one who tells him you did it."

"I don't have that much longer on this earth anyway. It doesn't really matter now."

"I may not either Dr. Michaels. I know how you feel."

When one door closed another one was supposed to open. But this time I hit the mother lode of opened doors. The questions were, what was hidden behind each one that would come our way. Once a secret was unlocked the beast from it was released and hard to put it back in its cage.

On the way back to the hospital, the thumping on the highway just played another part of this crappy day. I pulled over to the side of the road. I called the garage and Jax wasn't there. One of the prospects were coming to change my tire for me.

When I opened the back door to the car, I flipped up the carpet and there they were. In the same spot, I hid them in months ago. "I bet I owe a small fortune in late fines to the library."

They were tucked away like gold inside the tire. I had nothing but time on my hands. I flipped through one while I waited on the Prospect. But, what I came across was priceless.

Oh, Crow Goddess come!

"Lady of the reaping, lady of the ravens and crows.

Light of darkness, giver of rebirth.

She who walks the warrior path,

Great Morrigan, Red Queen!

I greet your beauty, your shadowed jewel.

At the height of your powers.

I greet you with a rite in your honor,

Lady of many forms."

"I end so that I may begin. Life and death go full circle." What Kyle and I had read before about Morrigan. Was nothing compared to what this book contained.

The Goddess Morrigan is a Priestess of the old ways, a healer with knowledge of herbal medicines. She is a shape shifter and sorceress as well as a Priestess of the enchanted Isle of Avalon where she presides over a sisterhood of nine healers. Morrigan is a triple Goddess, she is a Goddess of battle, fertility and sexuality. Her name represents healing magic.

The Goddess Morgana (also known as Morrigan). She was a half sister to King Arthur whom she hated from the day of his birth. There are many legends telling of her attempts to bring his downfall. Like Arthur, she was also a student of Merlin and an accomplished sorceress. She is a goddess whose origins seem to reach directly back to the megalithic cult of the Mothers. The Mothers usually appeared as triple goddesses and their cult was expressed through battle ecstasy and regenerative ecstasy. They used magic and incantation in warfare rather than physical strength. To the Irish Celts she was Morrigan the Phantom Queen. If a warrior saw her before battle, he knew that he would be killed that day. Another guise of the Morrigan is "the Washer at the Ford". The Washer is usually found washing the clothes of men about to die in battle. In effect, she is choosing who will die.
Offerings to all aspects of this powerful Goddess can include blood mixed with brine, crow or raven feathers, and red ribbon to represent the Washer at the Ford. She is truly a shape shifter, who was transformed from a dark warrior Goddess to an Arthurian witch to the Queen of the faeries. Her animal form is the Raven/Crow and when she arises from her fairy mound she sings.

I have a secret that you shall learn.

The grasses wave. The flowers glow golden.

The Goddesses three, low like a kine.

The Crow Morrigan herself is wild for blood.

Out of all that information I just took in. What stood out was blood mixed with brine. It was used in the old days for meat soaked in salt water to preserve it. Was this a way to preserve the human blood? Also, it would draw out the blood while the meat cured. Was it a way to draw out blood for a reason? In essence, she could preserve and cure human blood with her magic. The knock on the window made me jump like I'd been shot.

"Sorry Tara, I didn't mean to scare you."

"It's okay. Thanks for coming, Phil." He went to work on the tire. I went back to work on reading about her.

Morrigan, is the transporter between life and death; a birth Goddess and a death Goddess in that she moved the soul through these cycles. Parts of her seems hidden, then appearing, so as one looks at the pottery artifacts there is more and more of her to piece together. She is a bird goddess, an earth goddess, and her breasts not only nourish the living, they also regenerate the dead. On vessels depicting her there is a symbol for the number three. Sometimes three lines are connected and depict a triple energy that flows from her body, as she is giver and sustainer of life. In Newgrange, Ireland, is her grand megalithic tomb-shrine. Within it are three stone cells, three stone basins, engravings of triple snake spirals, coils, arcs and brow ridges. Her signs appear on spindle whirls, altars, sacrificial vessels, vases, pebbles, and pendants. She is the inverted triangle, the earth element. She is the triple source of power needed to regenerate cycles, to take one from life to death and from death to life. Figurines often pair sprouting seed and vulvas, fish in the ocean, and the female body as a passageway. Her circles transmit energy by the increased powers of stone, water, and a mound of circling motion.

The roles of women at the time depicted in the Arthurian Cycle have become less universal. When men and women defended their land together as they did earlier, strong survival bonds probably existed between men and women. By the time of courtly King Arthur, tales only of men who went to war, sometimes for years, so those strong bonds formed in war existed only among men. Women are more likely seen as someone to protect, and admire for innocence and youth. Arthurian times are idealistic and inward, but they are more patriarchal. Often, Morrigan is seen through the eyes of frightened men. It has been theorized by some that it is men who most fear and sometimes disrespect older women. She represents the loss of power and finitude of lifespan, a realization not easy even for men to see. She represents her own power, reincarnation, rebirth and a point of view from wisdom in age. Which can't be banished by any man.

"Gemma."

Phil stopped my thought process when he interrupted my reading. "Come by the garage. The tire looks a little low, I'll put air in it for you."
"Yeah, I should do that. Thanks."

In fact, it was what I should have done. But it wasn't what I did. I had to get to Gemma. It was history repeating itself from another angle, another realm and another time.

Out of breath I ran up her stairs beating on the door. "Hey Tara. Come in."

"Where's Gemma?"

"She went back to sleep. Is something wrong?"

"Everything is wrong in this world."

Gemma was on their bed in a gown of fine black silk. Her arms near her sides and no movement came from her. The Queen was stretched out and more vulnerable than she ever had been before. In the silence, she laid in a peaceful sleep. But peace wouldn't be hers for much longer.

"I need a knife." To the kitchen I went until I found one.

"Tara, what are you going with that?"

There was no time to spare. I ignored what Nero said as I rummaged through my bag. When I found it I was met by an awake Gemma in the hallway.

"This is going to sound strange, but I need for you to let me cut you."

"You come at me with that knife and an ass kicking is all you're gonna get, sweetheart."

"I thought you might feel that way." The surprise was on her. I had the needle in her neck and it plunged in her vein before she knew what was going on. She became weak as expected. I helped her limp body down to the floor.

"I don't wanna hurt you, mama. You need to step away from Gemma now."

"I'm trying to save us both. I know you don't understand but you have to trust me. If you don't, then pull the trigger now."

It was a serious gamble to see if Nero would carry through or not. I cut my own finger glanced over my shoulder and grabbed her hand. With a slice of her skin, I joined them together.

"We bleed in the name of the sacred Mothers, in the name of the great Goddess Morrigan and in the name of our savior Jesus Christ. And whomever in the hell us we need to." The last part I just threw in the for good measure, a just in case.

Quickly I put a band aid on her finger and on mine. "I can't tell you what you should do, Nero. But I would tell Gemma she passed out and hurt her finger in the process. Whatever you do, do not leave her alone with Jax. If you love her, you won't."

"Are you gonna tell me what the hell is going on?"

"I can't. You just have to trust me. I love you and Gemma. I mean you no harm. You have to believe that. Don't look at the obvious to be a believer; be blessed to have not seen it and still know."

There was more than one person who would get the trust speech today from me. Only, some wouldn't be as easily convinced. I started where I needed to first.
"I need one more favor from you, Margret."

"What?"

"I have to get all of Thomas Teller's medical files. They are so old they are not in the hospital system."

"You are asking me to evade patient privacy laws. I can't take part in it."

"I understand. I will get them one way or another way. But I will get them."

"However, if you should steal my pass and do it on your own. I can't stop you. But I will not have anything to do with it." Before she opened the door of my office to leave. "Oops, I think I dropped it somewhere. I will have to report my pass lost this afternoon if I don't find it soon."

With her pass in my hand I headed to the basement of the hospital. Scanned it to open the door. No one used this area much. I found the section I needed. Although it was a huge disappointment. There was nothing in there for me to compare with except Thomas' blood type. It wasn't as if I could prove anything with it. I grabbed all his files and left.

I made a stop by the cafeteria to get a cup of coffee on the way back to see the boys. But not before I tossed the lost badge in the trash. One more time Margret had helped me out today.

"How are you boys feeling?" They were full of life and energy. The way all children should be. "Nicole, can you get our patients an ice cream for me?"

Once I was certain she couldn't hear me. "Baby, I need for you to listen to me and answer my question carefully."

"Okay, Mommy."

"Since you have been in the hospital. Have you seen any kind of birds? Maybe a black bird?"

"No." Abel's answer put my mind at rest. But what came out of his mouth next didn't. "We saw them when we were with the bad people."

"We?"

"Yeah, we seen them outside our window every day." Cody had now been dragged into this as well. He saw the crows too.

The bond Abel and Cody had between went above the experience they had endured. The more they told me about their time with the crows while they were away proved it.

Nicole came back and gave them their ice cream. I left them alone to eat it. Enjoy it, be happy children like they should be.

"Kyle, I need to talk to you." He was on his way back to the hospital when I called him. If I smoked, I would have smoked a bunch of them today as nervous as I was.

With the book in my hand I paced out in front until he got here. I handed it to him with pieces of paper to mark the pages he needed to read.

"I have a very important question."

"What?"
"At any given time did Thomas touch Abel?"

"Thomas and Tig found the boys. He handed Abel to Jax. Why?"

"I'll tell you after you read all that."

This was the one I would have to convince I wasn't totally insane. I waited for him in my office until he arrived. There wasn't a simple approach to take with the subject.

"Come in, Thomas."

"So, you can't stay away from me, can you, honey?" He was the most persistent male I've ever seen. I'd say he was great at adverting the conversations when he was involved. "Once you admit you want me, we can talk about anything you want to."

"Fine, I want you. You are the greatest man. Now, tell me about your mother."

She was Julia's sister. She passed away a few years back. His father was a soldier too and died in action. There was a lot of substance to what he had to say. I knew enough about his parents. It was time to go on to the next thing.

"Do you have any scars from when you were a kid?"

"Only one. I fell and had stitches. Why?"

"Let me guess, it's on your chest."

"No."

It threw me for a loop for a second. Since he was so young, the scar would have stretched on the skin and went to a different spot when he got older.

"Your stomach."

"Lower." The big grin on his face told me the approximate location. But, it had to be done.

"I need to see it. I need you to show me."

"You show me yours honey and I'll show you mine."

"You know what, I don't need to see your scar to believe. I believe, I believe. Okay, let's approach this from another angle. Will you let me take a sample of your blood?"

"I might be persuaded with a kiss from you to do it."

"Fine, but no tongue and don't touch me or anything."

"Not much for romance. Are you honey?"

This was awkward. Like kissing a brother and the encumbrance of it. The door to my office opened wide. I thought the kiss was awkward before but, oh no. With my head tilted back on the desk. His image was upside standing in the doorway. "Hi."

"After Thomas gets off you, I need to talk to you."

This probably looked bad from his perspective. Thomas had pushed me down to the desk. His body
pinned mine.

"Hi, Kyle."

"Fuck off, Thomas." Then Kyle slammed the door shut.

"I wonder what his problem is?"

"Yeah, can't image what he is upset about. Can I get that blood sample from you now?"

"Well, a deal is a deal. But try to control yourself while I get naked."

"You don't need to be naked to give blood."

"Sure I do, honey."

As soon as the vial was full. I left Thomas naked in my office. I thought perhaps he could figure out on his own he needed to get dressed and leave.

"You said you wanted to talk to me."

"Did you finally get done with Thomas?"

"It's not what you think, Kyle."

"Uh huh."

"So, what do you want to talk about?"

"I gotta go."

Of course, I followed after him talking away, but he just wasn't listening to me. So, I got his attention the best way I knew how. When we got in the elevator I pushed my body in to his. After our lips parted, I had his full attention.

"Here is a sentence I never thought would come out of my mouth. I've kissed three of John Teller's sons."

"What?"

"It's impossible for Cody to see the crows too. How?"

"I don't know."

"You are certain Abel's heart has healed. Did the medicine do it?"

"I don't know."

Kyle and I played many rounds of questions and answers. Most of the time I really didn't know what the answers truly were. Others were much simpler.

"The doctor faked Thomas' death certificate. I will know soon if it is him or not. All I got is the blood type to compare to. There are no records of his genetic makeup or John's available."

As soon as it came out. Both of our reactions were the same. We hustled to my office to search the
backpack from Mexico. The paper was there. We had Gemma's blood break down, everything I needed to know. This would be enough for me to determine if Thomas was her son or not.

"I agree with the doctor. We take this to our graves. You have to promise me, Tara. We never tell Thomas the truth. Look at the lives we have already shattered because of John Teller's secrets and lies."

When we compared notes with each other. There were more secrets than either one of us expected to come out. Also enlightening information came to the surface we might have missed without the other.

"Morrigan is the medium in between good and evil. The transporter of heaven or hell. I found in the book she is the most controversial Goddess ever known. Some tales say King Arthur was taken to Avalon by Morrigan to suffer his fate. That as a transporter she is neither good nor evil; others think she is a particular corrupt spirit. I don't believe that at all, she is not corrupt. She only transports them to the place they are meant to end up at. Like the crow takes the soul to it's final resting place, she is the keeper of the crows. The only one the crows listens to and obeys."

"I think you're reach Kyle, at least a little bit. God is suppose to decide if we go to heaven or hell on our judgement day."

"Just hear me out, girl. God does decide. The bible speaks of the final destination of the spirit or soul after our vessel bodies pass on being heaven or hell. But, how do we really get there? Crows do not make people dead, they eat and transform bodies, they carry the soul. Morrigan is not death itself, she is the keeper of death. The white pure crows defied God's word on Noah's Ark. They were told to scout the area find dry land during the flood and return. They kept flying. After that, their feathers turned black to symbolize death. They only obey her."

The flood of reality was about to wash the town of Charming away with everything we came up with. But one more piece to the puzzle emerged. Kyle was to smart for his own good and maybe my good too.

"This book was written in Ireland and this information dates back to before B.C. time. Odin was the ruler of Germanic people. Before countries were established and he would have ruled over what is Ireland now. John has ties to Ireland."

If I had doubted it all circled around John Teller, there was no shadow of a doubt left for me now. From the beginning to the end of us, he held the keys to the locked doors, the secrets that could save or kill us all.

"So, now what?"

"I pack up Nicole and Cody, then move on. There are no more choices left for me, girl. I only have one regret from this, I have to leave my best friend and the kids behind."

Don't ever shut down your emotions because you stop existing then. They are the internal compression telling you what to do. The one thing you couldn't hide was when you were crippled inside. Yet it was what I done. I just let Kyle walk out the door and my life without a word uttered to him. It was easy to believe he knew what I felt and was thinking or I tried to convince myself of it.

The first place I looked for him was in the boys' room. He wasn't there. "Looking for Kyle?"

"No." The boys were sleeping and I covered them up. Nicole had left with Kyle to do some packing. They left Thomas behind to watch over them.
"Sure honey, you keep telling yourself that. Have you ever heard the expression, tomorrow may never come. So live in today. All the time we have is now. What is right in front of us."

"I've heard something similar before. I'll see you later, Thomas."

"If you change your mind and want to live in the now. See Kyle later, just let me know. I can get you out of here and no one will be the wiser to it. I'm not only sexy, I'm a stealthy bastard too."

It didn't escape me what he had said. I chose to ignore it and go on about my business. Part of it was going to see my children. I worried about them only having the influence of the club around them daily and all the whores who went along with them too.

There was one child who could never be influenced by the club or swayed their way no matter what they did or offered to her. Ellie was a young woman transformed in front of my eyes, really no longer a child. Everything she had experienced in life made me wonder if she was ever a child at all.

She had Thomas in her lap and Kenny by her side. Someday she would be a mother hen as she cared for her young. A strong independent woman. She would accomplish this before the age I had. I felt a proud mommy moment with her.

"You're here early."

"I have to go back to the hospital. I wanted to check on you guys."

There were a bare minim of the club members around. When I found out Jax and some of the others went on a run to patch over another club, I decided I needed to take my stance here and now.

"Tara, you are not allowed to take the kids out of the clubhouse alone."

"Watch me Rat. They are my children and I am taking them with me. Are you going to stop me?"

"I'm calling Jax."

"Call him then. I am taking them to get something to eat. Then to see Abel at the hospital. If you are going to follow after me, you better hurry up."

Rat did what he needed to while he was on his cell. I did the same by strapping the kids in and leaving here. He parked beside me when we stopped for food. I let the kids get what they wanted along with what I was taking to Abel and Cody.

When we went back to the car, I even tossed a bag with a burger in it to Rat. "Thanks, I'm starving."

"Go ahead and eat it. I'll be at the hospital when you get done."

There was no need for him to hurry on my account. It was where we were really headed to. The boys couldn't contain their excitement when they seen the other kids. They had a little reunion of their own. I kept reminding them they were in a hospital and had to keep their voices down.

"Can I hold him?"

"Sure." I handed over my baby to Thomas.

"Thomas is a great name kid. You have all that dark hair like me and blue eyes. A lady's man in the making."

"Yeah, something like that. I have to finish my rounds, can you keep an eye on them for a few
minutes?"

When I held out my hands to take my baby. Thomas told me to go do my doctor thing. He would watch all the kids. I passed Nicole in the hall on her way back. I knew the kids would be fine.

On my desk laid the results. It was time to know the truth. I ripped open the envelope and compared Thomas to Gemma. "It's him." There was no turning back now, he was the son of John Teller. "What other secrets do you have John we don't know about yet?"

After I took a copy of it for my bag, I put the original in a medical book and closed it. But this problem was far from being closed. Far from over.

Once rounds were finished I went back to the boys' room. They pushed the beds together to make it one giant bed. All of them were on it except Thomas. Nicole had him.

"Can we stay with Abel tonight?"

"It's not a good idea, honey."

"Okay." Kenny couldn't hide his disappointment. They all couldn't.

"If you promise to be quiet, we will stay here tonight."

Nicole thanked me, this was all the time Cody would get with the kids. We hadn't told our children they soon would be separated and see each other no longer.

The nurse found some cots to accommodate us all. She was a kind person in general. She even brought in a crib for Thomas. He had been a sleep since I got back. The kids played with him until he was worn out.

We didn't have to ask them what they wanted for dinner. Thomas handled that part for us. "Look what I brought." He carried in four pizzas for them. This was a more serious and softer side of him than I had seen before. Or maybe he just wouldn't allow everyone to witness this about him.

He also brought them a couple of dvds to watch. I was amazed he knew anything about what kids liked. But, he made some good selections. They ate all the pizzas except for one. Found a spot on the bed or a cot to watch movies.

"I'm gonna go flirt with the nurses for a while. I'll be around if you need me. Kyle feels better knowing I'm here with the boys when he's gone."

In most ways I felt better knowing Thomas was near by too. There was also someone else staying close to us that wasn't so welcomed.

The door opened and I knew he would be there. Rat was leaned up against the wall. "The kids are staying here for the night." I opened it wide for him to see them.

"Jax won't like that."

"Jax runs the club and you. The hospital is my domain. You need to get off of hospital property. If you want to hang out here all night to watch me, do it from the park across the street. Or I will call security and you can do it from the police station. The choice is yours."

"Is everything okay, girlfriend?"

"No, it's not okay."
"Why don't you take a break. I will be here tonight with the kids. Ellie is the only one still awake. Get a good nights rest. You haven't had one in a while."

"Thanks."

There was no rest for me. I tried to relax and read some more about Morrigan. It brought more questions than answers. They say when your soul became restless inside you, your heart was dying. It could be just the drumbeat in my chest of madness before a storm swirling of restlessness took me over.

You could feel every bump in the leather book covering. The raised gold letters beneath your finger tips. It made me think more about him. There were moments I was sure I drove Kyle crazy with the answers to questions I gave. Tested his patience with my stubborn ways. It still left the time we shared together as precious to me though.

From here on I wanted to breathe in life, stop second guessing myself in every aspect. Try to relax and live in the moment. It was all we've got to believe in. The future was only a promise that we could change with the weather. Survive the storm of it. The past was just a photo book. Engraved in our minds of what we experienced to get this far in what we call life. All there was in the present was now.

When overcast of sad and rain came, there was still a chance for sunshine left. Fear made me scared to show the fragile feelings we all lived on, fed from. With the frustrations and the high expectations, I took it as it came. I didn't want to look back at the missed chances and have only regrets in my heart. I wasn't a prisoner to my emotions, I was here on my own free will.

"All I have is now."

The book was tossed in my bag to finish later. It was time to live in today and worry about life tomorrow. "Thomas, I need your help. All the time I have is now."

With a smirk on his face, he took out his cell to enlist some help. "Boomer, where are you? Get your ass here, there is a covert operation in progress. The secret operation is driving Miss Tara."

If Thomas used his capabilities to fight the bad guys in the military the way he done this, he truly was a bad ass. He used a napkin to map out the route, planned the distraction and had an alibi already to go too.

"Why are we doing this again?" Boomer had reserves about the plan. Of course, he wasn't as crazy as the rest of them were.

"Just put your damn mask on and do what you're told."

Boomer done just that. He pulled it down over his face. It blended well with the other dark clothes he wore. Revved up the engine on the bike and burned rubber as he took off.

Rat never seen it coming. Boomer pulled up beside his bike in the park across the street from the hospital and fired shots at him. "I bet you can't catch me." Then fired a couple more rounds for effect. Rat would have trouble catching him on a fast street bike.

"Let's go, honey." He pushed my head down in his lap before we existed the garage. To keep me out of sight.

"So, they don't see me."
"Sure, we will go with that." Then Thomas laughed, reached over and cranked up the radio.

When I was certain we had drove miles, I raised up my head. Only for him to shove it back down again.

"Are they following us?"

"No. I just like you being there. While you're down there…"

"Thomas." He laughed even harder when I got as far away from him as I could.

But Kyle wasn't laughing when we pulled in the garage. "What the hell are you doing?"

"The right thing, brother."

"You are going to get Tara hurt. Don't you understand that."

"It's all handled. I will be here in the morning to pick her up. No one will ever know. If Jax comes back early, I will call you. The kids are taken care of and we will watch over them. Your brothers are in position for the secret operation of driving Miss Tara. We got your back."

Kyle finally gave up trying to rationalize with Thomas. More so, Thomas just pulled out of the garage and left. When we went through the kitchen door, the house no longer looked like the happy home it once had. Boxes were stacked around. It would be cold and empty once again.

"I should take you back to St. Thomas."

"If I said, I don't want to go back."

"Why are you doing this to me? You know I gotta leave Charming in a couple of days."

"Do you really love me, Kyle?"

"You know I do. Or you won't be here tonight if there was even a doubt in your mind."

"You're probably right about that." My hands roamed freely over his chest. But he stopped me by taking my hands in his.

"If you stay with me tonight. You know where this will go, girl."

"I am more afraid you will leave and I will never feel again, like I do when I'm with you. Than the consequences I might suffer from being with you, Kyle." I put my arms around his neck. He still wouldn't look into my eyes, denying what we both felt. So, I did it before I lost my nerve. "I love you. I know we can't be together and it's not right. But I do."

"I don't have the strength to stay away from you anymore. I don't want to. Love me tonight, girl."

There were no doubts, no barrier in between us. Only me and him in the moment together, the time was now. After I undressed, Kyle's lustful eyes gazed up and down my body. From across the room, I could feel his passion coming to the surface and mine was running wild for him. Tonight, there was no holding back from each other.

Kyle laced his fingers with mine. Our hands were held together as one. He placed a kiss on the back of my hand before his lips went on mine. When he entered me, I broke our kiss to catch my breath.

With my head thrown back in the pillow. I felt his mouth and tongue on my neck. It wasn't all I felt
at that instance. His cock stretching me and filled me. The stud in it rubbed against my walls on both
sides. Teased me with each movement inside me he made. It was pure pleasure in motion.

It could have been the excitement of being with someone new. The incredible way Kyle moved his
body because he used all of it to love me with. Even his peck muscles flexed against my hands
placed on his chest. When he lifted off me slightly to push himself into me harder. My body just
knew how to respond to his and we moved in perfect rhythm. The rhythm of a beautiful sexy dance
we were tangled up in and I have had with no other before. The kind to leave you completely
breathless and still yearning for more.

Our mouths did the same. His lips pressed to mine which brought out emotions that I couldn't keep
buried any longer. My tongue traced the outline of his lips before he sucked my tongue completely in
his mouth. Both of our movements ceased at the same precise moment. Stared into each other's eyes
until I was lost in his.

"I love you, Tara."

"I love you, Kyle."

It was said, put out there and it couldn't be taken back nor denied now for either one of us. The bond
was there and formed between us. It was felt throughout my body not just my heart. This was where
I belonged as wrong as it was.

The sex became even more intense after. Sensitivity heightened as Kyle's hands roamed over my
body then down to my sides and he lifted my leg up over his hip. Wrapping his arm under my leg, he
brought it up almost to his shoulder. It made me shiver when he pounded into me so hard. His cock
had my wet pussy quivering around it; squeezing it hard, gripping it each time I came on him. Until I
had the orgasm of my dreams.

Moans turned to screams of delight quickly. More so, I fucking needed and wanted more of him. He
held me so close to his hot sweaty body. The warmth we shared with each other and fed from one
another. My nails raked down his back when I met each thrust, moved under him like a second
skin. He most certainly didn't disappoint either. The more I screamed the better he fucked me to
ecstasy.

It was slower but more forceful movements he made inside me. I let go of him to grip the sheets in
the fists I made to hold on. He inched my body across the bed with a rocking motion. Our arms
linked together so he could hold on to me as well. Which made me only feel the excitement of
sensual passion even more. The explosion I felt when we kissed was nothing to when he finally did.

"Fuck girl. I'm gonna cum." Almost breathless Kyle stopped. Pulled out of me for our sweaty bodies
pressed so tightly to continue to move against the others. His warm creamy cum shot all over my
pussy and stomach.

But we were far from being done yet. We laid just kissing and touching for such a long time. Not in
any hurry, just to enjoy the time we shared. Round two was already in progress. If we wanted it to
happen or not. We couldn't get enough of the other. Only this time, he wasn't as passionate and
loving with it. It was needy, raw and one hell of a hard, rough fuck.

The way Kyle took me. I've never been taken that way. With my body pushed up on the back of the
chair in the bedroom. Hands braced on it, waiting and wanting him. My ass wiggling with
anticipation as the length of my hair was pulled slightly wrapped up in his hand. So I followed it until
my head was bent back as far as I could go. Stretching out my body to connect with his any way
possible. A kiss to my forehead before his other hand massaged my throat. Pulled my chin over for a
long, wet kiss from him. It wasn't the only thing wet at this point.

When he let go of my hair his hand slid down the entire front of my body from my throat. The warmth of his chest was felt on my back as I was yanked into it. Strong inhaled breaths but it came out as panting especially as his finger circled over my swollen clit. I rode on his hand when he stuck a finger inside me and used his thumb to please my clit.

His cock was just as swollen as it rubbed through the cheeks of my ass. I couldn't resist rubbing back against him either. Bent back over the chair, the tip of his cock entered me. The sting of his large hand coming down on my cheek over and over. Where he smacked my ass, his fingers tips barely brushed over it. Soothing the burn, yet to satisfy the burning he created inside me. To extinguish the fire of desires growing for both of us.

It didn't take long though. For either one of us with hard, long thrust he made. I was as close as he was. Soaked as I was already, it ran down my leg as I begged him for more. I knew he wasn't going to last much longer when I clamped down hard on him, stroking him with my extreme wetness. I was right as he came on me, shooting his load of warm cum up my back.

Some things were more understood in silence. It was peaceful bliss surrounding us. Speak only when the words were more beautiful than the silence you had. We laid holding on to the moment this way. The time was now for us because tomorrow would come eventually. My eyes were losing the battle to stay open.

We woke up with Kyle's body snuggled up around me. The sun shone so brightly through the window. The slight breeze coming in moved the curtains around. I was laying on his arm when I lifted my head up to see what time it was. It made me smile as our hands were still joined together just the way we went to sleep. The bed moved slightly when he stretched his legs out.

"Good morning." A kiss on my shoulder came from him. He moved my hair out of the way and then laid several more on my neck.

A slight moan escaped my lips when he placed his hand on my hip and I felt him grind his hard cock against my ass. "He wants to say good morning to you too, girl."

After a proper morning greeting to each other. We took a quick shower. Well, it wasn't that quick because it was a hot, soapy, fun one. Kyle went to make us breakfast while I vast in the glow I had going on. When I went to brush my teeth using my finger, the image staring back me in the mirror was different. I couldn't explain how or really, why even. But it was a good kind of different.

I picked out one of his button up dress shirts from the closet and I put it on. Combed my wet hair then applied makeup I had in purse even. I've never been much of a prissy girly kinda girl. Fuck if I wasn't acting like one today and wanted to. From my makeup bag, I took out the bottle. I misted some perfume in the air then walked through it. The smell of it lingered in the bathroom when I shut off the light.

"Here's your coffee, girl." Kyle set the cup down in front of me at the table and wouldn't let me do anything to help out. It was nice for a change. Relaxing without a worry. To be waited on without expectation of giving something back in return. For once to be without a shadow of a doubt in your mind.

Playful is as playful does. I was in a very sexy playful mood too. "Perhaps, this is what we should have for breakfast."

When I got up on the table, unbutton the shirt and covered my breast in syrup. He turned the burner
off on the bacon. "Hell yes."

We were enjoying this sticky treat. So much, we didn't even notice he had joined us. "Morning kids. Can you pass the syrup when you all are through with it?" Thomas nibbled on some bacon. Just staring at us.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"I'm not telling Cody. You are."

Nicole had to take her stance on the issue with Kyle too. The boys were getting released and I couldn't put off the dirty deed any longer.

"Baby, I need to talk to you."

"Okay, Mommy."

"Cody and his mommy are moving away. After today, you probably won't get to see him much."

"Why are they moving away?"

With children, they mostly wanted answers of why. Not the details that led up to the event. I tried to be gentle when I explained to my son several times. He still wasn't getting it or simply didn't want to.

"We can't see each other anymore." Cody had apparently been told the same. I never seen my son be so sad as he was today from the news.

They had to be separated when we got to the car. "You will always be my brother, Abel."

"You will be my brother too."

Kyle finally picked up Cody and carried him screaming to Nicole's car. Abel didn't scream, he didn't make a peep. He crawled in the back seat and looked forward. I think it worried me more that he didn't express his emotions. He was just like me.

"Abel, do you want to stop for ice cream on the way home?"

"No."

"Play at the park?"

"No."

The other kids knew what the score was. They remained quiet for the ride. With four children in the car, this was the most silence I'd ever experienced with them.

"Jax wants the kids at the clubhouse."

"Phil, I want a million dollars. We all have wants. Abel just got out of the hospital. He will be more comfortable here, at home. This is where we are going to stay."

There wasn't an argument about it. Phil of course called Jax and told him. But I didn't care. My concern was my children. The one who worried me the most walked in the house. Went to his room and plopped down on his bed without a word spoken.

Thomas went in his crib, he was tired and needed his nap. Kenny went to the couch to watch
television. Ellie, she seemed out of place. Unsure of where or what she should do now. She roamed around the house. I grabbed my book and sat down beside my son.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"No."

"Okay, when you're ready. I am here baby. Mommy will always be here for you."

Abel leaned against me and I wrapped my arm around him. I put my back against his headboard when he closed his eyes. I missed when he was a baby and laid in my arms. This was as close as I would come to having that moment with him today.

At some point, I must have dozed off too. My neck felt twisted when I woke. I stretched the muscles to relieve the pain. Abel was still sleeping. I covered him up and went to see what the others were doing.

Ellie was reading with her brother engrossed in the movie. Thomas started to stir but wasn't fully awake yet. I set in the chair to get some reading done before he woke up.

"Morrigan is the light. The great Goddess is still powerful, as well as the way of the light." This contradicted what I originally thought.

For hours, I searched through medical books, mythology books and reread Thomas' medical history. Nothing clicked with me. Until I realized something he and Abel had in common.

"Fuck, I'm wrong. It was never Abel, he was always meant to be saved. The bad brother is Thomas, my sweet baby."

Thomas and Abel were both self healed. Thomas was meant to be saved from following the life of his father, just as Abel was. My sweet baby Thomas, just like Jax. Was left behind to suffer.

"Oh shit. The bible."

Since I didn't have one of my own. I went to the one who did. "Ellie, can I use your mother's bible?" She rummaged through her bag and handed it to me.

When I looked up the passage. I got the biggest shock yet. "Where did this come from?"

"Mommy wrote if before she died." The hand written notes in the bible should have stood out to me before. If I had just looked in here. Taken the time to read it like I should have over the years to grasp a better understanding.

Donna had prior knowledge before she died. She stumbled in to the world of chaos and destruction of the club. Was it the real reason she was killed? Did Clay discover she was on to the secret of evil? The answers to those questions, made a difference of the life and death complete circle.

"I am going to ask you to do something for me. I shouldn't ask."

"Cover for you while you're gone. I will watch the boys." That little girl would be a powerhouse when she grew up. Through the door, I heard her yelling at Phil. "Tara, has a headache and doesn't want to be bothered. Now, get my dinner made. Hurry up."

Out the same bedroom window I slipped out. From the same window, I found out many secrets by leaving through it. At the same window, I discovered more of myself. "I still need a better escape
This was the drive that would change it all. The direction of the path taken would change as well. It would conquer the evil or bring hell down upon us. Either way, my boys would still be saved and survive it.

"I hope this works Donna. Because if it doesn't, I am all out of ideas."

With her bible in my hands. I stood over John's grave as I said the words, I believed the words. Everything was coming around full circle again. It all started with him and his children. The circle broadens to capture John's grandchildren now.

"Leviticus 17:7, And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they've gone a whoring. This shall be a statute forever unto them throughout their generations." The bible was laid on the top of his tombstone. I no longer needed it to finish what I came here to do. "I do not offer his grandchildren to be sacrificed like his children were to the evil. John Teller, may your soul finally rest in peace. For the evil will feed no more from you or the generations created by you."

Leaves were rustling in the trees as the wind increased. The howling sound of it blowing was unmistakable. You could not adjust the direction the wind blew but, you could adjust the sails to get you to the destination you wished to arrive at. That was exactly what I was doing. The bible page remained still of movement on the tombstone, untouched and untainted as the wind increased even harder. "If this is not a sign of your presence and you walking this with me, I don't know what is."

The next part was harder, even scarier. But it had to be done. Standing in front of Donna's grave, I opened the mythology book and spoke the words loudly.

"Great Morrigan I call on thee, three times three. Hear the words I ask of thee. Grant me vision, grant me power, cheer me in my darkest hour. As the night overtakes the day, Morrigan light my way. Yours my body, yours my heart. All my trust I place in thee, Morrigan be with me..."

When the winds completely stilled, my heart sank. It didn't work. "You have walked with me many times during this. Don't stop now. Oh, Crow Goddess come. Lady of the reaping, lady of the ravens and crows. Light of darkness, giver of rebirth. She who walks the warrior path. Great Morrigan, Red Queen. If you truly are the light, show yourself to me." Nothing changed, nothing was happening. But then, the lightening lit up the blue skies. Swirls of clouds banged against each other.

"I have a secret that you shall learn..." The rest of what was said, became deafening with the roar of the thunder and the lighting strikes. As quickly as the storm came, it abruptly disappeared. "The secrets and knowledge of the crows will save them. It shall be yours at a price to be paid..."

Her words were repeatedly echoing in my ear. My body was frozen in place, suspended in motion. I tried to move, my muscles paralyzed beyond my control. I was overpowered by her.

"Girl, we are taking this crow thing to a whole another level."

"How did you know I was here?"

"I followed them here." Kyle glanced over to Donna's headstone. The white faced crow, the white crow and the large black crow were perched there together. But, the fourth one wasn't around to be seen. This was the first time they had been in our presence since we returned. "I know who she is." He appeared pale, his breathing increased rapidly as he grabbed a hold of my hand.

"Kyle, who is she?"
"My mother."

"Oh shit..."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

The facts about Morrigan in this story are true. Legends are told she was King Author's most impalpable foe, he was no match going up against her. He set at the head of the round table with his trusted men and only men could set at the table or be heard. She was summoned to bring the King to his knees of surrender. Sounds familiar doesn't it.

We are approaching the grand finale. Thank you for staying with the story and showing your support for it.
Real life was nasty. Just down right cruel at times. It didn't care about heroes and happy endings or the way things should be or end up. In life, bad things happened; people died, fights were lost and evil often won. I just wanted to make it clear to myself before I begun. But when you claimed you would go to hell and back to protect the ones you love, you better mean it.

Abel woke me screaming at the top of his lungs. A bad dream invaded my baby's slumber. His body was shaking, the tears no matter how fast I wiped them away, kept falling. My embrace of him in my arms didn't stop the way he felt. But eased him knowing I would always be here to wrap him in my love. Shield him as much as I could from the bad things in this world.

It must have woken up Ellie as well. She set down with us and held out the familiar trinket I gave her. To help her with the demons chasing her in nightmares. "This is a dream catcher. It takes away all the bad dreams."

"Really?"

"It does. I know so because it took away all of mine. Someone special gave it to me. Now, I am giving it to you."

The maturity level Ellie had grown to was amazing. She hugged Abel back when he thanked her. Then she helped him hang it off the post from his bed. When I looked on at what transpired between the two of them, we had become a family. Dysfunctional at times, yet they were taking care of each other.

It sent my mind thinking what would happen to my children if I was gone. There was a price to be paid for every action. My bill hadn't come due yet. Although, when the time came. I just somehow knew my children would form a tighter bond and care for one another.

"Do you know what we need guys?" They both shook their heads no. "This is a chocolate chip cookie and milk moment." Ellie smiled because it was exactly what she and I had done when she couldn't sleep. Abel wasn't showing enthusiasm about it but he went along with it.

We got everything together we needed to make them. It was two in the morning and we were baking damn cookies. The fact we were doing it together was the important part.

Ellie made a happy face on her cookie. Abel made the same attempt as he got crazy with the chocolate chips on his. He could have used ten bags and I wouldn't have cared. Now, his mind was occupied on something pleasant.

"We don't ever tell Kenny or Thomas we got up in the middle of the night and ate cookies." We clanked our milk glasses against each other's. Then enjoyed our warm gooey snack.

Abel went to grab his dream catcher and brought back his monkey too so he could sleep with it. Gemma was a big influence in his life, she was in his heart. He kept the monkey close to him at all times as she wanted.

"Do you know what Mommy always did with me and Kenny before we went to sleep?"

"What?"

Ellie kneeled along beside my bed and clasped her hands together tightly. Abel did the same with
her. She said it slowly so he could repeat it after her. "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I die before I wake. I pray the Lord my soul to take."

"Amen to that." I could relate to each and every word spoken. "Goodnight, Ellie."

Abel got in bed with me. It wasn't long until he drifted off to dream land once again. I only prayed this time, those dreams wouldn't drag him under and play on his fears.

Although, I couldn't sleep. I had so many things running through my mind to get to the point of a restful slumber. I flipped on the light and Abel didn't move from the spot he laid in.

"I might as well read some."

*The trap was set by Odin and Goddess Morrigan for King Author. She lured Author in to the woods and he took the bait. Odin and his men waited to ambush him. Author had killed Odin's son. Odin never forgave him and in a fit of rage killed Author's father.*

*Author knew once he reached the caves, it was a trap as Morrigan showed herself from her disguise. Author's men were captured by Odin and his men. There was nothing left for Author to do but fight with honor until death. Merlin however, intervened. The great sorcerer was eventually cornered with Author. He had taught his magic to Morrigan too well.*

*Odin instructed his men, he would be the one to kill Author. The sword fight between them was brutal. Arthur eventually had conquered Odin with his sword to Odin's throat. Merlin stops Arthur from killing Odin. "To kill what you hate you must become it. After you kill the monster it does not die. It becomes a part of you. Do not fall to evil, it will accomplish nothing."*

"Jax became the person he hated the most in the process too. When he killed Clay."

The book was slammed shut, it was already the next day. It engrossed me so much, I couldn't put it down. The sun broke through the window. It was early still and I wanted to get started. Abel was asleep and I let him be. Got dressed but left the bedroom door open so I could hear him if he needed me.

Ellie was up already reading her book. Her brother had cartoons on the television with a bowl of cereal in hand.

"I want you guys to go through your clothes. What you can't wear anymore bring to me."

The place to start was Abel's room. I gathered up a couple of arms full of his stuff. In the garage, I found several boxes to pack up the ones he couldn't wear anymore.

Kenny brought me very little while his sister brought over half the stuff she owned in. It wasn't a surprise she out grew them all. She was a young woman now. I hoped she would find her own sense of style, her own way. I didn't have any of that figured out when I was her age.

"What's going on?" Jax had Thomas in his arms. They set down on Abel's bed as I kept packing up their stuff.

"All the kids need new clothes. They can't wear these and I am donating them to charity."

"Go buy them some." He handed Thomas to me and took several hundred dollars out of his pocket. I didn't ask where he got the money. Or maybe I just didn't want to know how he earned it. "I'm gonna take a shower and a nap. If you're off today, take them shopping."
"No thanks, I don't want to drag a babysitter along to watch me with my children."

"Look, I know shit is stressed between us and has been for some time. We will get past this like we always do. Take the kids shopping and go get some lunch. I'll tell the Prospect you don't need him today." He kissed me on the cheek and Thomas on the forehead. Never asked me what I thought about the matter before he left the room.

"You're the boss, Jax."

We got ready to go. The kids seemed happy about getting out, so I tried to be as well. But there was one who just went with the flow. Abel didn't show much emotion one way or the other. It still worried me, he was harboring his fears and would learn to hate from it. It was what I had done as a child and had fleeting moments still as an adult.

"Ellie, I am going to let you shop alone. If you need me I will be in the boy's section."

Honestly, the boys could care less what I bought for them to wear. They got bored fast with clothes shopping. They especially fought me on trying them on. Except Thomas, he went to sleep in his stroller.

"Let's go find Ellie and pay for our stuff. Are you guys hungry?"

"Yes." At least Kenny responded to me. Abel just shrugged his shoulders when I asked again.

After we found Ellie and got her clothes she picked out, I paid for them all. Once I got the bags and kids loaded up in the car we went to get something to eat.

Then, the text came through. The one that would change everything and break my heart. Kyle sent it to me to see if we had a chance to come say goodbye. They were leaving town tonight. He added to it there was a surprise for Abel and he hoped I wasn't going to be mad at him for it.

There was no time like the present. If I wanted to see them before they left, it had to be now. We weren't going to have but a few minutes to drop by. We agreed to meet up at the park. It was a neutral place and I wanted Abel to have closure.

"We are going to the park. Cody is there."

But I had no idea what the surprise was for Abel. It was a huge one for me too. Cody had George on a leash. "He will watch over you since I won't be around. I want you to have him."

Kyle mouthed the words sorry. I wasn't though when I saw Abel's face happy again. It meant a lot to him Cody was willing to give up the dog.

"Can I keep George? Please Mommy."

"You can keep him." Abel didn't know if he should hug me, Kyle or Cody first. So, he made his rounds to all of us.

The kids played with the dog and I kept checking my watch. "Do you need to go?" Kyle quizzed me but I think he already knew the answer.

"I should go."

"I will miss you, girl." He looked around for the kids. They were all still playing but Ellie was paying attention. So he only smiled at me and stepped farther away. I just couldn't let him leave like
"Kyle, I will miss you. I know you come in to my life for a reason. You came at the time I was so weary and felt alone. Even when you could of, you didn't pass judgement on me like others do. I needed someone. I needed a friend. You were always there to cheer me up, accept me and understand me for who I really am. So, before you go away. I just want you to know how thankful I am fate brought you in to my life. I am so glad me met and I wouldn't have done anything differently. You deserve to be with someone who doesn't complicate your life. Someone who you can have a future with. So, no matter how much I will miss you, I want you to be happy."

Sometimes in the battle of love, one must surrender and give way for the other person to go. No matter how much you love the other. Someone, must make the sacrifice and let go. Even if it really hurts. I was trying to but I just clung to him even tighter. Our embrace was our final one and we both wanted to make it last as long as we could. I was actually relieved he broke from me first, I wasn't sure I had the strength to.

"I will always love you girl. I've never met anyone like you and...I… I want you to be happy. I'm just a phone call away if you ever need to talk."

"What about you? You won't call me, will you?"

"No, I won't call. If my leaving restores some balance around here. Then so be it."

"Don't forget me." It was straight from the heart. More emotions than I had let escape me in a long time. My vulnerable side just came out when I was around him.

"Never, girl."

Our hands reached out to the other until only our finger tips could touch. With a sweet smile, he finally let go of me. Once he got in the truck he didn't look my way again. He started it up and drove out of my life forever.

It was amazing when two complete strangers found more than common ground to become best friends. It was truly sad when two best friends were destined to become strangers again. It pained me to watch him go.

"I need to cash in my retirement."

"How much do want to borrow against it?"

"All of it."

Margret lookup from the form she filled out in dismay. "You will lose most of your money by cashing it in now. After fees, penalties and taxes. You will be lucky to get thirty percent of it."

"I know. Just get it for me."

"Tara, it's none of my business…"

"It's my decision. Please just get for me as quickly as you can."

My appointments were canceled for the next week. When they asked me if they should reschedule them for me, I stalled at first. Replied with the obvious finally. "No."
There was nothing remaining inside of it or a drawer I didn't go through in my office. I had to make sure I took what I needed from here. Once I was certain I filled my bag with the necessities. I closed the door and locked it behind me. The name plate on the door was what I used to be; Dr. Knowles. "Maybe again someday."

The rear view mirror shot an image of myself in it when I got in the car. My sunglasses covered my eyes, my heartbreak. But nothing could conceal or hide away the pain I knew. It wore on my face as a distress signal.

"There is no looking back now. No going back on the choices I've made." I was giving pep talks as needed to myself. No one else would do it for me.

The way everyone stared at me as I walked down the street. I felt as out of place as I must have looked. But I didn't care. Forward I went and turning back wasn't any longer an option.

"When a woman wants me to meet them in a dark alley, I get a little nervous."

"Can you get them?"

"I can but, it's not cheap."

"I'll have the money ready. Just let me know when."

"If your old man finds out I helped you, there will be hell to pay."

"Jax won't find out."

"How can you be so certain he won't?"

"A little birdie told me so."

"Tara, I hope you realize the consequences you will suffer from this."

"We all make choices, but in the end our choices make us. Consequences are all I got left in this world. Just get them."

If you build the guts to do something, anything, then you better save enough to face the consequences. Everyone told a story about who they were in their own head. That story defined you, dictated all your actions and all your mistakes. It spoke loudly within your heart, it became your passion and your purpose. And this was a good thing, the best of things. Because it was the very definition of love, nothing less. Life could only be understood when played backwards, as the ending was made by your beginning; but it must be lived in forward mode. "If I'm going down, I'm going down my damn way."

The car was headed in the direction of home. My mind still chased after where my hearts was. But I needed to be with my children. At least Jax hadn't fought me about keeping them at home instead of the clubhouse. Which I was grateful for it.

Nitta watched them for me today and was rounding up her things when I arrived. "You look tired. Would you like for me to stay here tonight?"

"Thanks for the offer. But you go home."

The kids and I decided tonight was a pizza night for sure. We ordered two and broke the rule of eating in the living room in front of the television. I had broken so many rules lately, this was a minor
one.

Fatigue and exhaustion worn on me. For almost a week I hadn't slept other than a few hours at time when I couldn't fight it any longer. The kids seemed to be in same mode. Baths were taken and even they were ready for bed early.

It was a round of kisses for all. "Mommy, you didn't kiss George." The ritual became the dog slept on the floor by Abel's bed. For the most part, the dog had fit in well with our daily routine. It hadn't been as much of an inconvenience as I thought it would be having one. Although, wherever you found Abel, George wasn't far behind.

"Goodnight George." I only gave her a pet on the head. It was enough to make my son happy. That was what made my world go around when they were.

Just about when I was half out, I heard the dog barking at the front door. She was acting oddly by scratching at the floor, she had never done it before. "Stop that. I will take you outside." I couldn't make her sit still long enough to hook the leash in her collar.

"Come back here." She took off like a shot. Barking, growling and snarling in the darkness.
"George." The eerie feeling something was definitely wrong came over me. Goosebumps raised to the top of my skin. "Oh shit." I hurried back to the front door.

The fog started rise from the lawn, it stopped me in my tracks. It was all too familiar to me. The flash of light across the skies lit it up enough so I could see what was taking place before me. "Come, sit with me." The old woman I watched a movie with. She had a large screen in my front yard ready to go with a weathered wooden bench ready for us. Just as she had before.

"This can't be real. Who are you really?"

"I've been with you from the beginning my child. Who do you think I am?"

"I'm not sure. I think..." When I looked over at her again she took the form of Morrigan. Kyle's mother was her human form, she who set there with me. Her long hair hung over her red blood dress. The white faced crow, the white crow and the large black crow rested quietly beside her.

"Just watch the movie. Then maybe you will see things in a different light."

The camera rolled as the grey screen lit up with black and white images. His eyes danced with happiness as his face flashed across the screen. So young, still a boy and not a man yet. The years played on with John Teller. It went from him fighting for his life in Vietnam to more care free years.

His history in the making, I witnessed it before my very eyes. I choked back the tears when I saw him with Thomas and Jax, his sons. He still appeared as a happy person. Each time the screen flashed another image of him, it dissipated away. Mentally unstable, he lived a terrible tortured life.

Jittery with every movement he made, anxiety was what he experienced every day. Fear was what he lived in and fought off but could never conquer. When he finally surrendered to it being his life and always there with every aspect of the club. John met Julia.

His eyes shined once again the brilliant blue he passed on to his sons and grandsons. A smile was worn even in the hard times. He acted more settled down than restless. Until a fiery crash in to the semi-truck ended it all for him. Just like the ending to all mine, fire engulfed your surroundings and it was over.

"The reason we suffer from our emotions is not from the emotion itself. But because of our resistance
to that particular emotion." She handed me a Kleenex because I was a blubbering mess now.

The assumption was the movie was over too. But it wasn't, now it was showing me colors and it was impossible for the screen we looked on at. A beach with the clear white sands, the perfect ocean water color and temperature of the sun lapping up in waves.

Over the hill was a lighthouse. Years of salty air had reduced the once gaily painted walls to a pitted grey and red, like nail varnish mostly worn off. A woman's hand reached out to touch the walls. I could almost feel both the roughness and the softness of what little paint remained on it from sitting here watching it. With each deep breath I took in, I could taste the brine in the air.

"This is impossible."

"Nothing is impossible if you want it badly enough, Tara."

Close by the ocean, the waves pounded rocks as if it wished to scatter them from the uniform shape they had. On top of the lighthouse the sun streaming into the windows when I saw her reflection coming from them. Her long dark hair flowing with a pure innocent white dress on. The smile she had was positively glowing. I gasped out loudly. As I was the woman in the movie.

For only the darkness to find its way to me. In the darkness, the only sign of the lighthouse was the brilliant white light. It even almost failed in the thick air. Between black cloud and black ocean, it gave illumination to the waves, sculptured by the wind, dancing and it was powerful. The light found its way through all of it.

"Until the light is satisfied. None us shall rest." I heard the words she spoke. But I couldn't look away from the screen.

The lighthouse was stark against the sky, newly painted white against ominous clouds of deepest charcoal. From the top came the light, a wide beam that swept across the choppy waters in arcing sweeps, immobile as the briny air lashed the outer walls. The light continued to grow brighter with each pass it made. The glow was stronger. I had to cover my eyes as it was blinding me.

"I think know where that is. I..." She was gone, disappeared like a ghost in the night. When I looked back so was the screen. I was sitting on the front porch watching George run around the yard.

I shot straight up in bed trying to catch my breath. "It was just a dream. It had to be." But was it? There clutched in my hand was the Kleenex. I needed to find the paper. The drawing Kyle had done for me was in my panty drawer.

"Jesus Christ. It is real." I now knew where I thought hadn't been before. Quickly I found my cell and started to dial the numbers before I stopped myself. "I can't drag Kyle back in the web. He won't be alive if I do."

For the rest of the night, I tried to concentrate on anything but what previously happened. Needless to say, it didn't work well.

"The hell with it." The kids were all asleep when I check on them. I hadn't gone through Thomas's stuff yet. As soon as I dumped out his diaper bag, I felt how heavy it was. "It's still here."

The money Nero and Gemma gave me was safely still lining the bottom of the bag. I had to find a good spot to hide it. In our room, I dragged a chair over and unscrewed the vent. I put it in a plastic baggie and stuck it in there for safe keeping for now. There would be a lot of other things tucked away too.
For the rest of the night, I cleaned like a whirlwind. Boxes were stacked up by the front door that I would drop off to charity when I had time. Other things were sorted in piles. Shoved in duff bags and put in the back of the closet.

It broke me when I came across old pictures. A year book and momentums I had saved. "What the hell happened to us?"

Indeed, the past hurts from who you were to who you became. You could run from it or stand firmly and learn the life lesson intended for you. "I'm not running anymore. I will not fail my children."

Letting go doesn't mean that you don't care about or still didn't love someone anymore. It's just realizing the only person you really have control over is yourself. Their devastating actions against you or anyone else were beyond what your needs or wants dictated.

No matter how much suffering you went through. It was the hardest to shake the good memories. These were what a strong foundation was built on. The bad memories were what crushed it with enough weight to make it crumble down around you though.

It also meant they were a part of your history that made you who you are today. But not necessarily a part of your destiny. At some point in your life you had to answer for your role you played in it. Answer for the part where you made mistakes. Answer for the stance you took or didn't take. It made all the difference to your world and those around you.

Ellie held out a Kleenex for me to take. It made me cry even harder she had to witness me be like this. She handled it like a trooper and pro. Me, I was a sad mess. I had slumped down in the middle of the hallway for my mini breakdown. They were tears of sadness, love, remorse, guilt and what happened over the years to get us to this point.

"We need chocolate. It always cheered my mom up."

We even invited Phil from the morning watch to come in for breakfast if he wanted to. Chocolate chip pancake batter filled a bowl and ready to cook.

"You have really cleaned everything up."

"Yeah."

"Tara, do want me to load the boxes in the car for you?"

"Thanks, Phil."

While he did that I made pancakes for the kids. Jax came in before we were done. I set a plate down in front of him too. "Thanks."

"You're welcome."

We set across from one another at the table like normal. Although I had trouble looking Jax directly in the face. I more hung my head and only ate. It made we wonder how he done it so well. Looked me in the eye without an ounce of remorse or guilt. Cheated and it never affected him at all. He acted like it was just a normal part of life.

Guilt was to the soul what pain was to the body. There was a luxury in self reproach. When we blame ourselves, we felt that no one else has a right to blame us or it was theory because it wasn't working for me. It was the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution. If there was such a thing as total absolution given. There were somethings you could never come back from.
"Tara, are you listening to me?"

"What, Jax?"

"I said, are you planning on taking those boxes today? I will be here for a couple of hours if you want to do it."

"Yeah, sounds great. Thanks."

"I'll be here to watch over the boys." Ellie made sure to throw that in there before she excused herself from the table.

"I won't be gone long."

It went smoothly. Two guys came out to the car and had them unloaded in no time for me. "Thanks."

The light shone so brightly through the window it almost blinded me without my sunglasses on. Then her words came back to me.

" Until the light is satisfied. None us shall rest."

You were always free to choose. But were never freed from the consequences of your choices. The choices to make, the chances you took and the changes that came about because of it. You must make a true choice to take the chance or life would never change was you knew it to be.

' Goddess Morrigan also grants monarchs the power of sovereignty. '

"I have to do this. It has to be done." I wish I could call him up and discuss all of this before I done it. Ask him questions of what I discovered. That was no longer possible. Kyle had to get as far away from here as he could and stay away if he was to survive it. I was told to follow my heart, go down the best path at the time and it would keep my children safe. This was it.

The walk on the twisted path of fate got longer each time I took it. But I felt at ease, this was what felt right and I had to go through with it now.

"I want you to know. I will fight just as hard for your children as I will my own. I am sorry for what the club did to you and your family. I know it doesn't change anything but, I am still sorry Opie."

It was only a short walk between where they laid in their final resting places. But it seemed like it took me an eternity to get there to say what I needed to her. Time passed as I searched for the best words to use, what meaning I needed to relay. I knew it could have just as easily been me in her place and my children left motherless from it.

"They miss you so much. Ellie has the hardest time without you, being a girl and the oldest. I can never replace you with her or Kenny. I promise as long as I am alive, they will always have a home with someone who cares for them and loves them."

These were the things I wondered if someone would say and do for my children when I was gone. But who would my children really have? When I was in these very shoes as a lonely little girl without anyone, no one came to my rescue. Would my children find themselves in the same position?

"I think the biggest struggle for me is between doing the right thing verses keeping my family together. I tried, I really did. I'm sure you experienced the same trials and struggles. Everyone judging you without knowing the truths and reasons for what you did."
"I hope I'm not interrupting. I find when I talk to dead people, it's a very one sided conversation." They startled me. My mind was in another place. Bogged down with so much shit, so much I couldn't process it all.

"Thanks for meeting me here. It's the only place anymore, I feel like I can get any peace."

"Sure, hanging out in cemeteries creeps me out. What do you want to talk to me about? You said on the phone you have something important for me."

"This is for you. Page one hundred forty two has some very interesting reading."

"Why would I want to read a medical book for?" When I didn't respond, never said a single word. They finally opened the book. "What the hell is this?"

"The truth. People say they want the truth but they really don't. What you do with this information, is all on you." I put my sunglasses on and I done what I came to do. "Be a believer. You will be blessed because of it. May all of us receive many of god's blessings, we're going to need it."

"I don't understand Lowen, why any court would not grant me custody of Kenny and Ellie. They didn't deny me about Abel."

"It was a different kind of hearing. You were with Jax at the time, the father of Abel. This is a full blown adoption process of both parents. Once they run the background of Jax, a convicted felon. It could send up some red flags is all I am saying. To make the process more difficult. I think I can get the court to grant temporary custody of them to you without a problem. As long as Mary is willing to sign the paperwork."

"She will sign it, she doesn't want them. Get the rest of it done. I need it as soon as possible"

"Tara, what is the urgency on this? It doesn't sound like Mary cares if they continue to live with you."

"I'm protecting my family. I don't want my children torn apart. Your concern is getting it done. Let me know how much I owe you."

There was no one I trusted anymore. No one I could really rely on when it came to loyalty of choosing between me and Jax. No one who would stand in the way of me being with my children or keeping them together as a family.

Had Donna faced the same road blocks when she tried to protect her family? Did she feel like she was all alone in this world? "I bet you did. I wish we would have gotten to know each other better. It could have saved us both a lot of heartache from his shitty world." But then again, would I have believed her then. Most wouldn't if I told them my story.

There was no time like the present. If she could do it, so could I. It went against what I had believed before. Many things I had done recently had gone against it.

In the front pew, I set. The quiet consumed me. There was no one here except me and him. "Forgive me for everything I have done. For what I still have to do."

"God forgives everyone." The preacher had slipped in without me noticing him. He set down and stared at the large cross in the front of his church. "How are you, Tara?"
"I'm okay I guess."

"You don't sound convinced of it."

"I am not convinced of anything, anymore in this life. When I think I'm on the right track. Then I get just as lost again."

"Is Ellie lost too?" He seemed concerned about her. She needed more people in her life like that.

"Actually, no. She has become stronger in the mix of all this."

"So, have you, Tara. Maybe you just don't see it as clearly as I do. The biggest weakness we have, is what we will find our strength from."

"Maybe my little light is my strength. It's because of Ellie, I think it is even possible he exists. The devil, I'm sure exist here on earth. I'm just not sure how to conquer his evil." Donna and I pondered a lot on how to get rid of the evil from our families lives. But neither one of us came up with the right answer yet.

"He was cast out of heaven for his desire to be God instead of serve God. The devil and his followers are the ones who brings evil and temptation to the surface. The ones who lead humanity astray. They are the ones who do his work here on earth."

_I found myself lost in my own club. I trusted few, feared most. Nomad offered escape and exile. I didn't know if leaving would cure or kill this thing we created. I didn't know if it was an act of courage or cowardice. I didn't know so, I stayed._

"John Teller didn't know either."

If the light had lit the path any brighter, it would have blinded me with it. It was why Donna couldn't conquer the evil, she loved the evil one. She didn't know if it would cure or kill it, so, she stayed. Therefore, she feed the evil her goodness it needed to survive and grow just like all the others. "It cast the web on her, captured her and devoured her. She couldn't escape it, the evil entangled her. The crow brought her back because her soul couldn't rest until it is satisfied by the light."

"What?"

"Nothing. What do I need to do so my children can be baptized?"

"Bring them Sunday morning. We will do it at the end of service."

"Thank you for everything."

The outside winds felt good to my hot, sweaty skin. The sun cast the familiar warmth on my face. The smell of a heavenly scent filled the air. The birds chirped a beautiful song they had sung a million times.

"I get it. I finally understand." The four crows set quietly on the fence post behind the church. They let the other birds make the noise for them. Beautiful bell shaped flowers grew wild in the fence lines. They were the reversal of the purple flower. With blue and white patches on them. Symbolic of sincerity and asking the recipient for forgiveness of their sins when given to them. I picked three, then I picked even more of them. I would need a field full for what I was about to do.

"It's time." They gathered themselves up from the post in unison. Flew one after the other to their next destination. I had to head off to mine as well.
"Excuse me, do you have any of these flowers, the same colors?"

They didn't carry them with the strange blue and white pattern. I had to settle for a couple plants of each color combination. "I need a shovel too."

This was a promise I made and would keep. Juice was the only one at the cabin when I arrived. "Do you want some help?"

"That would be great. Thank you, Juice."

We chose a spot near the tree. Not directly where Bobby was but he could still see them sway in the gentle breeze. The fragrances of them in the summer time would still reach him.

"Bobby would have liked these." Juice made idle chatter while he dug the holes to bury the large pots of flowers in.

As I covered them over with the unsettled earth. "Please forgive me as you sacrificed yourself for me. I hope you were forgiven for all your sins. Rest in peace Bobby."

Juice and I went inside to get washed up. He acted lonely as he invited me to stay and have a drink with him. "I can't I need to get back to the kids. Maybe next time."

"Yeah, maybe next time."

"Juice, is something wrong?"

"I've been thinking a lot about Bobby lately. I come out here to see him all the time. The others don't know. I would appreciate it, if you didn't tell them."

"I won't tell. I'll have a cup of tea with you before I go."

Juice had the gentle soul, soft spoken words and a big heart. He didn't fit in most of the time with the other club members or with the bad things they done. I boiled some water in the tea kettle. We waited at the kitchen table for it to finish. Talked about nothing in general really. I understood the need to have someone around who didn't judge you and you could trust.

"I'll follow you back, if you don't mind."

"I'd like that, Juice."

To expect peace from the chaos was more than I should have when we returned. When we got back to the clubhouse, yelling was coming from the inside.

"Tara, I need to tell you something. Jax will be pissed off but I still need to tell you."

"What is it?"

"Juicy, come in here." Chibs called him from the clubhouse door and Juices' demeanor instantly changed back to SAMCRO.

"Never mind."

Maybe I wasn't the only one who was holding on to secrets around here. The agenda seemed to run both ways. We would each do what was needed to survive at this point. Including the fight taking place inside.
"You cocky little son of a bitch. Walk in here like you own my club. I don't give a shit who you say your daddy is. If you are in fact Thomas. Or is this the bullshit Kyle told you to say."

"Make no mistake, Jax. I am just as dangers as I am cocky. The rules of the club are very interesting. Being the blood of John Teller, I am automatically accepted as a member. I will fuck your world as you know it. Every second of the day I will be in your face, challenging you every step of the way. Until eventually, I'll take the gavel from you when you can't lead the club anymore because they will stop believing in you."

"That shit will happen over your dead body." Jax just thought that approach would work on Thomas. But, I had a strong feeling it wouldn't. He didn't disappoint me either.

"Threats mean nothing to me. Do the right thing. Or Kyle and I will take your club. Our mommy says so."

The clock was ticking on Gemma's expiration date and she didn't even realize it. It was only a matter of time before I couldn't protect her any longer. But the evil look on her face and the cold way her eyes stared in her son's. She wouldn't go down without a fight. Just like I wouldn't either.

"I told you, Jackson. You should remember who I really am. I will not allow you to destroy it all. One of John's sons will set at the head of the table. The way it should be."

Thomas put his arm around Gemma. They stood together untied as they went to leave. "Come on Mommy Dearest. We got shit to do."

Gemma held out her other arm for Kyle to join them. Him being back in Charming was going to end badly, the crows warned us. He gave me a smile as he went out the door. "Screw the rules, damn the consequences and just love. Love until it kills you, because there's nothing better worth dying for. Leaving the person, I love behind in danger and continuing to live on is the same as already being dead, girl."

The cold reality was we all had shit to do. This was just the beginning.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

After two parts of Shifting Sands are posted. The remainder of the story will be at once, about 5-7 chapters. An extremely long read ahead. I will miss the characters and writing it but, it's time for the story to be complete and finally put to rest.

King Author just happens to be in Hamlet and he was tied to Odin, Frigg and Morrigan. Along with many other kings, queens, gods and goddess.

Thank you all, you made this fun and exciting for me because you stayed with the story!
Part 1 of 3

Shifting Sands- A situation that changes very often in an unmanageable way. The unexpected continues to happen. Until the crows rest and weep no more.

The world is progressing, ever changing. One man cannot slow it, no matter how determined he is. He is stopped in the path of the storm. You cannot stop the tides from turning or the sands from shifting, dusk always falls as well as you to your destiny. But John tried. Once you love someone, part of you is bound together forever. Perhaps you never see him again. Perhaps your life is better off without him, and it's right to be apart. But once you've loved him, the link is formed, the bond can never be broken. You can ignore it, if you choose to, but you cannot ever sever it.

Life is the sea filled with the tears of the crows. Its tides and currents sometimes takes a man to distant shores that he never dreamed existed. It was always the secrets we held on to that hurt us the most. Not the telling of them. It kills you on the inside to keep them to yourself, I know because I hold on to so many.

Our heartbeats rushed through my body the last time we were together. I remember it as though it were just yesterday. I can still feel every rise and fall from his breaths of life against me. His arms circled around me as a lover, friend, protector, just so he could keep us from falling over the edge. This is one of my most fond memories of him. Half of me is filled with bursting words that need to come out and half of me is painfully riddled with sorrow. I crave solitude yet also still crave the people I love to be around. I want to pour life and love into everything yet he took a piece of me with him. I want to live within the rush of primal, intuitive decisions. At times, I wish to simply sit and contemplate life instead of living it. This is the messiness of life which we all carry multitudes of.

So, we must sit with the shifts of the sands and see it through. We are very complicated creatures, and ultimately, the balance comes from this understanding. Be water; flowing, flexible and soft. Subtly powerful and be an open book instead of hiding in the shadows of life. Find the balance of wild and serene. Able to accept all changes, yet still led by the pull of steady tides. We always shared the pain. Now that you passed, it has doubled for me. But only half so crippling as times passes as well.

What amazes me about the sea as I sit and gaze upon it. Is the tide. It totally transforms in a very short space of time by the arrival or departure of it. Like the gaping hole I have in my chest when I think of you. There is also a tide in the affairs of men. Which is taken at the flood, leads on to their fate and destiny. If omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in the shallows and in miseries. We must take the current head on or lose who we truly are and who we will truly become.

Tides rise and fall under the influence of the gravitational pull of the moon and sun. Even the calmest of seas are constantly moving water, sand. As the crows caw and weeps for the souls they take, like a great rising tide. It will wake you up and help you break free from it. When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it appears you could not hang on for a minute longer. Never give up. Then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn. The sand will not sink while you stand firm again.

Time's stern tide, with the cold oblivion's waves. Shall soon dissolve each fair part of life, each fading charm from it. The time the moon is black, the blood that is in a person does begin to weaken. But when the moon is strong, the blood that moves strong in the same way will rise above it. As the
moon, perfectly lines with the sun; the tides will rise, the sands will shit, life will change you.

The forever evolving circle will be complete. Events will move so quickly. What in one moment seems the impossible, the next moment it is happening in front of you in disbelief. Time and tide waits for no man. When we focus on our gratitude, the tide of disappointment goes out and the tide of love rushes in. As this happens, the crows will finally rest and shed no more tears. John Teller will shed no more tears.

Julia’s words moved me, made me weep and brought me here today. Perhaps the biggest tragedy of our lives was total freedom was possible within our reach. Yet we can pass our years by trapped in the same old patterns never see or even seek a happy ending. Then sometimes, you had to make your own happiness and ending before it was too late.

"You are finally free. I love you, Mom."

The ashes scattered through the sand as I walked along the beach. She had a free spirit and always loved the water. This felt like the best place to let her spirit go. Alexandria's dream held hope for many that true love did exist. For me, it held some unknown mysteries and magical powers I hadn't figured out yet. But I knew for certain they were there, I could almost feel them as a presence with me today. I set down as my mind wander back to the good times between us because I wouldn't have much longer with her.

'Tara, be careful honey, don't fall in the water. You look so pretty in your new dress. Eat your vegetables honey to grow up to be a strong girl. Mommy will rock you to sleep. When you wake up you will feel better.'

While I watched the tide rush in and take her with it back to the sea, it washed away my pain too. I almost felt as safe as I did in her arms as a child. This should have been a sad moment full of despair, the same way I lived my life. But, it wasn't. There were so many things I didn't understand until now. One of them being her need to escape the life she had. Find a way out. Only, she left me behind without a mother when she found her way out.

At times, we became blind to what was around us. Blind to the way life was shaped up. Blinders we wore took us down in the end. I would not allow that to happen to my children no matter the price to be paid. I'd never contemplated my own death. Drew out a sketch of how it would occur or where. When it happened if I'd be young or old. Or thought about if anyone would even miss me when I was gone. But dying to save those you love, seemed like the perfect way to go.

This place brought me serenity for some reason. The calm was here before the storm which was brewing all around us. It would all be out soon with a vengeance. I couldn't let the future effect my moment, my last moment with my mother. The water was perfectly still when I ventured to the edge of it to have one more look before I left. There was a lot of things I was saying farewell to.

Across the long wooden bridge, I went once again. When I reached the middle of it, I had to stop. My breathing was raspy, the pain I felt in my chest was harsh. The sharp stab made me double over and down to my knees I went. It didn't last long. It was completely over within a couple of minutes. I was back to normal again.

Something told me, I had done this exact same thing before in this exact spot. With no indication of what it was or why it happened. I glanced over my shoulder as I continued on the bridge. It was a startling mental event I had experienced before but knew well I hadn't. Perhaps it had to do with the supernatural or a paranormal experience. Or maybe my mind was just playing tricks on me. By the time I made it to the tunnel. I convinced myself it meant nothing. Yet, it still felt like it did.
"It means nothing. I got stuff to do and can't worry about it now." After I repeated it several times, I went on to the next thing. There was an ad for an old beater in the paper. I called about it on my way back to Charming. From what he said not too many were interested once they seen the condition it was in. I already knew a few hundred dollar car wouldn't be much. But, it was perfect for what I wanted it for.

From the directions he gave, I guessed it would be out in the country somewhere. Turn left by the cow statue was ridiculous though. There wasn't but a one lane road in certain areas. It was a path not taken much by many. I hoped I wasn't met by any oncoming traffic because I had nowhere to go. I was already on a collision course to hell on my own and I didn't need further assistance to get there. When I finally found the mail box with the house number on it, I was happy.

It was an old ran down farm house. The flower gardens had been taken over by weeds, nothing had grown in it for a long time. Things died around us before we acted to stop it or noticed what we lost by not neutering it correctly. I knocked on the door several times, no one answered. A loud tractor came around the barn with a bale of hay on it. The man was very old driving it too. He took his time when he got off. The way he made each movement so cautiously to not hurt himself told me he wasn't a threat to me. Even out in here in the middle of nowhere.

"Are you here to see the car?"

"Yes, I am."

"It hasn't been drove in years. My wife loved this car. I held on to it after she passed away. That was ten years ago. The car isn't pretty to look at but it will get you where you want to go." The old faded red Buick convertible had seen better days of glory. He kept it in the barn and the chickens made frequent visits. They left dropping everywhere on it. When it fired up on the first try. This felt right to me.

"I'll take it. It's for my daughter and fine for her first car."

We made out the title to Ellie. He gave me a ride since I had two cars now to drive. I parked it and would worry about the cleanup on it later. Then he took me back to mine. There really wasn't much words spoken between us on the way.

If I asked him a question I only got a brief response out of him. I don't think he had been around many people to socialize with since his wife passed on. When we experienced major loss in our life. We shut out the world. Sometimes to calm the pain but on other occasions to remember those we loved. He was a nice old man and I thanked him before I left the farm. I had a long drive ahead of me.

There was another person on my mind as I drove back. Life seemed to evolve around him; it began with him and it would end with him. I stared up the big hill for a long time before I got out of the car. The road always led back to him somehow.

Except, I wasn't the only one here to see him today. His son was doing some heavy thinking as stood before the man he never knew as his father. "Thomas."

"What do you know about John?"

"Not that much actually." There was so much about the man I hadn't learned yet. The things I knew about him weren't always the most pleasant things either.

"Kyle says you got a book he wrote. I'd like to read it, if you don't mind."
"Sure." I'd make certain Thomas had the opportunity to at least know that much about his father.

"I couldn’t believe it when Kyle told me John Teller is our father. We’ve been like brothers. Now, were blood."

"Kyle told you?"

The fact I gave Nero the information changed nothing. Kyle had already told Thomas by then. Together they made a visit to Gemma. What were the odds of Kyle and I doing the exact same thing within an hour of each other? What were the odds of any of this happening to us? What were the odds we would all survive it?

"Why are you and Kyle doing this?"

"Kyle came back to make shit right. We will do what we need to so you and the kids can be free. If Jax refuses to let you go, Kyle and I, will take over his club. We are John's sons too, he can't stop us. This time, Jax will have to choose what is the most important to him; his family or his club. If he makes the wrong decision, he loses it all."

"You can’t do that. Jax will kill Kyle. You have to stop…"

"I won’t interfere with what needs to be done. Kyle would rather die knowing he tried to set you and the kids free. Rather than live knowing he did nothing to stop it. To stop the cycle from repeating itself. It will take you and Abel under with it."

"He told you about that too?" Kyle broke all the promises he made me make to him and he done for it me.

"I'm not sure I believe in all the mumbo jumbo crows, crickets and goblin shit. But, Kyle does. We all only have so many days on this earth. In the end, there can only be one Teller brother left standing." It was eerie the way Thomas said the last sentence. As though, he already knew what the outcome would be.

"What are talking about; only one brother left standing?"

"It's unimportant." Thomas answered me like the others did, no real answer given. He looked just like Gemma when he did it too.

"Aren't you at least concerned about what will happen to yourself even?"

"Nope." At first, he hummed it. As he walked on, then he sung it. "Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys."

"There is something seriously wrong with that man."

Once Thomas was out of sight. I knelt in front of John's grave and prayed. For the safe outcome of my children. For them to live a long and happy life. For them to know how much their mother has always loved them and sacrificed it all for them. Just so they were given a chance.

In the mist of it, I begged for his guidance. Any help he could lend me. Light my way to the end of the tunnel. Find the right path and stay on it. Along with, some forgiveness for what I was about to do.

"It's time John for you to weep no more."
With my sunglasses pushed back, I wiped my eyes before I started up the car. It wasn't like I was looking forward to being back at the clubhouse. But, that's where my babies were and where I would go.

Thomas and I seemed to be on the same collision course today. Taking the same path. He was outside with Jax and the others when I pulled into the parking lot.

"If you can't ride. You can't be a member." Jax expressed it in loud fashion to Thomas.

"I can ride. I'll be here tomorrow with my posse. They will ride with me because I don't trust you, Jax."

Thomas expressed it back to Jax just as loudly. Then he simply got in his car and drove away.

Thomas didn't give him the fight he was looking for. I couldn't hear what they were saying to Jax afterwards. They were all speaking so low.

"I wanna talk to you." The tone in his voice didn't hide the fact he was pissed off at me.

"Just as soon as I check on the kids."

"Now, Tara."

Apparently, I couldn't put this off any longer. I got up early this morning and we left before he woke up. So, I followed Jax to the chapel. I would take whatever came my way. When the door slammed, I knew what kind of talk this would be.

"You knew, didn't you?"

"Knew about what?" Of course, I already knew what he was referring to. This would be one time, he would have to earn it. Instead of me caving before him to surrender to what he wanted. I'd witnessed him do this to others before. They tried to drag it out of him. Yet he gave them nothing, myself included.

"Don't play with me, Tara."

"Play what?"

"About Thomas. The fact my brother has been alive all these years."

"No, I didn't know until yesterday like everyone else."

Jax was about to lose his patients with the situation. But I didn't care. I had lost mine so many times for nothing to ever change. Welcome to my club; a sad old lady's club.

"Is this how you plan to end it? Do you really think I will give up my family or my club without a fight?"

"What are you talking about, Jax? I have no idea what you mean."

Jax kept rambling on with more things I truly didn't understand the meaning of it. Thomas and Kyle were the focus of many of them. Almost at a stammer at moments when Jax spoke. As his temper would flare, his emotion made him pull back.

"You need to listen to me carefully. I will not let my family go. Or let them take my club from me. I love you, Tara. But if you cross me..."
"You'll do what, Jax?" It was out there and couldn't be taken back now. He refused to go on with our conversation. As loudly as the door slammed behind him. I already knew the answer. I guess, I always knew the real answer.

With my head held high, I went out to the bar. I would not back down any longer. I would not be backed in the corner. I would not give up.

Only, I found myself alone. No one was in here, even my children were gone. My breathing deepened, my heart rate spiked to high levels. When I ran out the door, I saw them. They were playing on the swings with Tig and a couple of crow eaters.

"I'm with my children, I don't need you to be." The two girls didn't pay a bit of attention to what I said.

"Go." Once Tig motioned his head, they walked away. One they got out of eat shot. "Are you okay, doll?"

"I will be." It made me hold Thomas even tighter to me. While I watched my other children play and Ellie read her book. "Are you okay? You don't look so good either." Tig was rather on the pale side. He didn't seem like his usual self.

"I don't know anymore."

"Ellie, can you take the boys over to the picnic table? We will go get something to eat soon." I did the same, waited until they couldn't hear us. "What's wrong, Tig?"

"I used to know who I am, what I am meant to do. Now, I feel lost in my own club. Jax is cutting me out more every day. Not that I don't deserve some of it for the shit I've done. I just don't feel the love of the brotherhood anymore. Even though we do very bad things. There was a time I still felt like we did something right. We were the good guys. Bobby always helped me keep my head straight. Now, he's gone."

"Then, you need to get out. It's not too late…"

"It's been too late for me, for years." He gave me a kiss to the forehead before he walked away.

"Tig." He only waved over his shoulder on his way back inside the clubhouse. "Come with us. We are going to get something to eat." I got nothing from him. Not even a wave this time.

"What's wrong with him?" Ellie took notice of it too.

"I don't know, honey."

We went to eat. I wasn't hungry though. I set with them while they finished their food. Slowly sipped on a cup of coffee until they were ready to go.

When we got home they didn't even argue about taking a bath. Well Abel, didn't tonight. The rest were pretty good about just doing it. They were as tired as I was because they plopped down in the living room. I put in a movie, made small bowls of popcorn for them.

The next thing I knew, the television was turned off. I raised up when I saw Jax in front of it. I woke up all the kids to go to bed except Kenny. I couldn't get him to wake up. I went to lift him off the couch when Jax stopped me.

"I've got him." Jax made carrying Kenny look easy. I gave him a kiss on the forehead and to Abel
before I pulled back his covers for him to jump in bed. We did our nightly routine. I moved to the
door out of the way so Jax could tell him goodnight.

"I love you, little man."

"Love you too, Daddy."

Before Jax made it to the light switch. "Will you stay with me and George until we fall asleep?"

"Yeah." Jax was tucked behind Abel. It gave his son the security he needed so badly. With George
at the foot of the bed laying on their feet and legs.

Pray you had the ability to stand on the outside of your life and see how your decisions effected
those around you. The ones you loved and lived your life for. At other times, you didn't want to see
what effect it had on them but you still had to. When I saw Jax with our son, how happy Abel was
his daddy was with him. It was one of those good moments in time. They came too little though. I
had to walk away from it. I should have been crying but I just couldn't let it show.

A mother's work wasn't what was always the best for herself or the easiest things to face. But it still
had to be done. I felt there was a little life in me yet to live. A lot of strength left for me to fight for
my children. However, it didn't stop plaguing my mind with all the things we should have said but
we didn't. All the things we should have done but we never did. All the things we should have given
but we couldn't. I had to shake off before it over powered me.

"First you want to meet in an alleyway. Now out in public at a park with your children nearby. I
hope you have a plan in place."

"Do you have them?" It wasn't hard for me to ignore his remark. I only had one agenda on my mind.
The plan would fall in place over time. On a crow's wing and a prayer, I had to believed it.

"Yes." He held out the large brown envelope but held on to it as I went to take it from him. "I
suggest you use this far away from Charming." The advice he gave wasn't necessary because I knew
what was at stake. What would happen if I stayed too close by. What I would lose if I got caught.

Before I gave him the money, I checked to make sure it was what I wanted and what we agreed
upon. I had new physician's credentials, identifications for me and my children. "Thank you." I kept
my end of our bargain. Gave him the cash for it. There was nothing left to do here but gather up my
children and do what I had to next.

"Ms. Tara."

"Yes."

"Be safe. If Jax finds you once you leave…"

"I know what I'm doing. You be safe too, Marcus. Thanks again."

The kids never asked who I was talking to or why even. It was better this way. For them to know
nothing. I caught Ellie out of the corner of my eye staring at me as I drove down the road. But she
didn't ask any questions either and I never volunteered any information.

"Why can't we go. Mommy?"
"I'm only going to be gone for a couple of hours baby. You stay here with Ellie and be good. When I get back, we will do something special tonight, okay?"

"Okay." Abel wasn't happy about the situation but he agreed to stay without too much of a fuss.

Thomas was outside at the picnic table waiting for Jax's return. He made himself at home. It didn't bother him if they wanted him here or not. Gemma was also near. She wasn't taking a chance on Thomas being alone with the club. She knew the dangers it could bring.

"You seem to adjust well to the news of being a long lost Teller son."

"I roll with what each day brings. I live life to the full extent and I have no regrets if tomorrow doesn't come around for me. Honestly, it's sort of nice having someone who cares about you, I haven't had that in a very long time. Gemma is great. Watch this." The next part Thomas made sure he said it loud enough she could hear him too. "I am thirsty as hell. I sure could use something to drink."

Gemma was immediately by her son's side. "What do you want baby; water, coffee, tea or a beer? I'll get it for you."

"A glass of ice water would be nice. Maybe add a slice of lemon in it."

"I'll be right back." I'd never witnessed Gemma hustle so fast to do anything. She was taking care of her baby.

Thomas was all smiles when she brought it out to him. But she was too. It made her happy to have him here. Maybe Kyle and I did one thing right out of all of this mess. We reunited a mother with her son.

"I sure could use a sandwich to go with this."

"Let me get you one." Gemma only cared about him and his happiness at this moment in her life. The crappy and chaotic life she lived, she deserved some joy. Honestly, it made me smile at them as well.

The small soft droplets of rain began to fall. I needed to get going. "You should watch your back, Thomas. Just in case."

"I'm like a cat, I got nine lives. Me and Kyle have survived so much shit. It's almost as if you can't kill us. We still have a few lives left to go. Don't you worry about me."

"Wait, you and Kyle exactly what do you mean?"

"Did he ever tell you why he left the military?"

"Yes."

Kyle had run down the basic scenario of why he left but not all the very important details surrounding his departure. He took the place of Thomas on that day in the convoy. Someone or maybe something took him to safety after it was over. He was the only one out of twelve to survive, he was meant to die with the others. They had to pack or drag him for miles to get to the hospital from the dessert. No one including Kyle knew the real story of what truly happened to him. From Thomas' description they experienced many escapes from death when they shouldn't have survived. I had my own theory on it; John Teller.
"Well, I gotta go. See you later."

"Bye, honey."

As I pulled out of the parking lot, I witnessed mommy Gemma wiping off the water from the rain on Thomas' bike seat with a towel. "I'm surprised she isn't wiping his ass and applying powder by now."

Before I made it to the gate, Ellie stopped me. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing." She had a black bag in her hand.

"What's that for?"

She just shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know. In case we take a trip or something."

In fact, Ellie knew exactly why she gave it to me. It was her subtle way of telling me so. I forgot just how perspective this little girl really was. Inside of it held her most precious items; Donna's bible, her diary and a small photo album of the family she once knew. Along with clothes and other things. I zipped it back up and tossed it in the back seat. I had several stops to make. One of them would create a safety net for all of us.

With a deep breath, I knocked on the door. "Come in."

"You said my check is ready."

Margret closed the door and asked me to take a seat. "You're not coming back, are you, Tara?"

"No, I'm not. But no one can know until I'm gone. You've been very kind to me. I don't have many friends, I will miss you a lot." This is where I tried to leave it. Let it go and not bring her in my world any deeper.

"Where are you going?"

"I can't tell you. It's better if you don't know."

The emotions broke through as I tried to keep them concealed. We hugged, cried and spoke of better times to come. She had encouraged me to leave a long time ago. If I had listened I wouldn't be so messed up now. But then again, I wouldn't have all my babies either.

"Will you at least let me know you're safe?"

"I will. Thanks for everything, Margret."

It was on to the next place. On to a brighter future. However, the look on the bank teller's face was priceless. When I told her what I wanted to do with my retirement fund. "I want it all in cash. Please."

She, of course, did not have the authority to do so with such a large amount of money. Her manager was whom I dealt with next.

"Mrs. Teller, it is not advised nor is it safe. To walk around with this kind of money on you. We don't recommend it. Perhaps, we can give you a few thousand dollars today and you can deposit the rest in your account."

"Perhaps, no. I'll just take it in cash, now." I smiled back at her while firmly insisting upon it.
Once I existed the bank, I had to stash the money. I must have looked in my rear view mirror a thousand times in route there. If they found out, I would suffer the consequences of it.

Before I entered the parking garage at the airport, I checked one more time before I pulled inside. At the guard's gate, I added another week's worth of parking fees to my spot. Then carefully climbed up on the concrete barrier. My fingers ran along the ledge of the beam connected to the roof. Until I found the spare set of keys I had put there.

Just as the key hit the trunk lock to Ellie's car, I seen his shadow. "Stalk much?"

"What are you doing, girl? You need to think this through. I know what you're up to already. It won't be long before Jax catches on too."

"Jax isn't as perceptive as you think he is. I haven't worked in weeks and he hasn't even noticed it. If it doesn't affect his world, it doesn't concern him any. Although, I thought, you of all people. Would support my decision to get out."

"I do support it. But, not if you plan to run with the kids. Jax will find you and he will hurt you. Just how long do you think you will last on the run with them?"

"It's a chance I am willing to take to save my children. If I don't get them out soon, I never will. There are no more options left for me."

"Yeah, I figured that's what you'd say. There is one option, the outcome is still going to happen if we leave Charming or not. The sooner you accept it Tara, the easier this will be on both of us."

"I am doing this. Even if I have to do it all alone." With both bags thrown in the trunk. I slammed it shut. I had shut out, shut down and shut up on a lot of things in my life. There was no turning back for me now.

Kyle picked up my hand and squeezed it in his. "You are not alone, girl. Not as long as I'm still alive."

We said our goodbyes and parted ways quickly. We both knew the danger of us being seen together. Besides, I promised Abel we would do something special tonight and I would keep that promise to my baby.

On the drive back, I couldn't get him out of my mind. When I saw the crows fly above me in the sky. I knew it was time.

You never knew where the day would lead to when you woke in the morning. What adventurous ride it would take you on. Not even if you would end up six feet under before it was over or not.

That fateful day when I stood near Donna's casket and held out Jax's leather for him to put it on. I had no idea what I had done or what it set in motion. I welcomed it in and now it was here to collect the toll. It all started here in this cemetery. Time after time it brought me back here. In front of John's tombstone, I stood once again. The uncertainty was still there but no longer fear for me. It doesn't take courage to stand up for the wrong. It takes courage to stand up against the wrong for the right.

"Failure is not an option. I will make you proud. I will finish what you and Donna started. I will save my children."

There was a small amount of emptiness when I left each time. Some of it could be I felt guilty. Or even I felt their emptiness from when they were alive. John and Donna experienced it a lot over their lifetime. I thought about them until I reached the parking lot. Which no one was around except Tig.
"Where is Thomas and Gemma?"

"Thomas left before Jax got back. Gemma is in the chapel talking to Jax."

"You left her alone with Jax?" Panic stricken, I was running to get to her as quickly as I could.

"Was I not supposed to?" Tig had no idea what was about to come. But I did and I would try to stop it.

It wasn't hard to tell where they were. The yelling from the chapel gave it away. "Ellie, take the boys outside and wait for me."

Tig stepped aside for them to pass. He was confused about what was going on. I wasn't certain what I would find when I opened the chapel doors. But it wasn't as bad as I thought, Gemma was up in Jax's face.

"It's not a threat, Jackson. It's a promise."

Gemma wouldn't tell me what happened between them before she left. I kept quizzing her about it with no results. I only knew the line in the sand had been drawn. The one to cross it first, all hell would break loose from there on. A hell like none of the Sons had ever seen or felt before.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"Ah, do I have to take a bath?"

"Yes, Abel you have to take a bath. Now, hurry up we are going to be late."

Kenny was dressed already. Other than he needed help with his tie, he wasn't a problem at all. Of course, Thomas went with the flow when I got him ready.

"Wow. You look so pretty." It seemed Ellie grew up more every day. When I first saw her, all I could do is smile. My little girl wasn't going to be considered little much longer. "I have something for you."

From the dresser drawer, I took out of the box from what Kyle found when he cleaned out Dad's house. Ellie all dressed up in a white cotton dress and white low heels stood in front of the mirror. The two strands of pearls completed her outfit. Once I did the gold claps, I stepped back to just look at her.

"Those were my mother's. She let me wear them in the house to play dress up. I would clunk around in her high heels and I thought I was special. I want you to feel special, Ellie. Because you are. Don't ever forget that."

"I love you, Tara."

"I love you too, honey." It was the first time she spoke those words to me. I hoped to hear them again from her. We both had tears in our eyes when we parted our sweet embrace. "I better make sure Abel is done."

He wasn't of course. He was on his bed in his underwear humming. As though, he had nothing to do today. So, I assisted him with his clothes. It didn't go badly until I put his tie on.

"Ah, Mommy. Do I have to wear it?"
"Yes, Abel."

"It's choking me."

"No, it's not."

"Yes, it is."

Finally, after going back and forth a few times. I gave up and took the clip on tie off him. "I'll put it on when we get to church."

Before I could get them out the door my cell went off. When I saw the name flash across the screen. I knew what it would be about before I answered it.

"Hello."

"I can't make it for the kids. We got some shit going down and..."

"Jax, you promised Abel you will be there."

"Something came up or I would be."

"It doesn't even matter anymore. I forgive for you."

"You forgive me for what?" Jax was on the defensive side. Almost as though he had never done anything wrong to seek forgiveness for. I wasn't sure if he tried to convince me or himself.

"For everything." I pushed the button to end the call and got the kids to the car. Jax would not spoil the day for me or my children. Like he had for so many over the years.

It used to anger me when Jax would only give us just enough to keep us holding on. Holding on to the hope someday we could be a normal family. The hope it would just change one day overnight for the better.

But, it's what he done on a regular basis. It wasn't totally his fault though. It was partially mine for putting up with it to begin with. If he gave you a few precious moments of time today. It had to be enough to last until he was ready to do it again. I no longer carried anger in my heart because of it. I pitied him when he woke up to realize what he missed out on. If he ever did.

"Abel, the tie is going on and that's the last time I am going to say it." I had to practically chase him around the car outside the church. When I gave him my authority voice, he stopped in his tracks. He gave a long sigh and surrendered to it.

Underneath the big shade tree, I lined them up for a picture. With Ellie in the middle and Thomas in her arms. Abel on one side of her and Kenny on the other. Then I did a picture with each of them separately too.

"Get in the picture mom. I'll take it."

Gemma and Nero made it after all. I wasn't certain how it would go over with Jax. So, I told her to about it but left it up to her if she came or not.

"I wasn't sure you would come."

"Nothing keeps me from my grandsons." It was the truest statement Gemma had made in while. Sometimes she was a shitty mother in law. But a good grandma.
"One more picture with grandma and grandpa." I took the camera from her and waited until they were all ready.

"What about me?" He was an unexpected guest. But a welcomed one.

"Are you our family?" My son, always the innocent one to ask everything.

Thomas paused but there was no need. "Yes, he is our family, baby. He is your Uncle Thomas. Go get in the picture with them." After I took pictures of them all. I snapped a few of just Gemma and Uncle Thomas.

"Oh." It was the only thing Abel had to said. He didn't want to know more but later. I would tell him more about his uncle.

"Hi, Little G." We had another guest to witness their day. I'd say he came more today for Ellie, than anyone. Although, she said nothing to Kyle when he did her. "You're right, it's not that complicated. I came back."

"It took you long enough to come back." Ellie went on in the church with Kenny after her brief words were spoken.

"She'll come around. She loves you." Kyle only smiled but didn't reply back to me.

"Is Cody here?" Abel had high hopes he was.

"No, buddy."

"Where is he?"

"With his mommy."

"Oh." The disappointment was clearly heard from my son. He was still too young to understand why it had to be this way.

The sermon was already in progress when we went in. Abel gave a little wave to Gemma when we went by them. She smiled and waved back at him. I set him between me and Ellie to keep an eye on him. Also, to keep him quiet while the preacher was speaking.

"I know it is difficult to do. Sometimes, we must put our own pain aside, our own anger, pride and bitterness. It's what God desires us to do. As said in Luke; to you who are listening. I say love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you. You might even feel numb about the situation. Just know God hears you. I will close with Luke 15:32; But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and now is found. Be found. Find love in your hearts. The rest will fall in place. Now, I ask the Teller family to come down to the front."

In a single file, my children went to the front with me and Thomas. The preacher dipped a gold cup in the large concrete fountain in front of the church. "Ellie, I ask you read John 9:5 out loud for us, please." The preacher gave her a brief smile when he asked.

While I balanced Thomas on my hip, I took my mother's bible out of my purse. Handed it to her with an encouraging nod.

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
"Your mother would be so proud of you." The preacher said it low to her. Then he went on. "Please bow your heads. Bless this family if they ever lose their way. Walk with them in their time of need. Watch over them when the darkness falls and guide them to safety of the light. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

No sooner when the preacher finished the prayer, my world turned white. I no longer saw any shades of grey or even darkness. I no longer felt cold, scared or lonesomeness anymore. There was no more sorrow surrounding me, only the bright white light. Her eyes beamed into mine as she smiled upon my arrival. "Mom." It wasn't possible for me to be face to face with my mother who passed away all those years ago. But I knew every curve of her face, the smile she gave me so many times as a child.

"I love you, Tara. I never meant to hurt you. You are a strong woman, stronger than I ever was. The journey you take now, you are not alone. You have never been alone, I have been with you the entire time. You will do what is necessary to protect your family. What I failed to do."

As quickly as she came, she was gone from me once again. Down the tunnel I spiraled out of control with dangerous twist and turns. Only this time I didn't close my eyes, I wanted to see it, embrace it. This was my sign I was going in the right direction.

"Tara, are you okay?"

"I'm fine. We will all be fine." Ellie took a hold of my hand. She was the child, I should always be the one to console her. I clasped her hand tightly to let her know, I would always be here for her.

The preacher sprinkled water over Thomas' head. It was my choice with them being children if they were totally emerged or not. I felt this was the better way to go. He still batted his little eyes when the droplets ran down his face. "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

When the preacher moved down the line, Gemma came up to the front pew. "Give me the baby." She took Thomas so I could be with the others.

"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Ellie did great. She had a sense of relief like I did. I knew in my heart I was doing the right thing with the kids and everything else in my life.

"Ah, do I gotta take another bath?"

"Abel." I put my finger to my lips for him to quiet down. He wiped his face on the sleeve of his dress shirt as soon as the preacher was done with him. It made me smile at my son.

It just left Kenny. Ellie was on one side of him and me on the other. He didn't seem to mind it nor did it truly phase him any. Actually, he never made much of a fuss, he went with the flow of whatever came.

When it ended, I wanted to speak with the preacher before we left. He was on the step shaking hands of members as they made their exit. "What is the meaning of what Ellie read out loud?"

"Good luck on your endeavors, Tara. May God be with you and your children." The preacher spoke in the same code as everyone else. Not a real answer to my questions.

"Are you going with us?" Gemma caught me off guard. I was in another frame of mind.

"Where are you going?"
They were headed to Thomas' place for a cook out. After I thought about it, I thought better of it. "You know I shouldn't go."

"It's just dinner. It doesn't really matter what Jax wants. He's gone anyway and won't know." There were many times, I thought like her. Jax would never find out only for him to do just that.

"Can we go, Mommy? Please."

It wasn't just Abel, Kenny joined in too. He never asked for anything. "Please, Tara."

"For a little while."

We followed Gemma and Nero. It was in the same direction as Kyle's house. It brought on a whole new set of emotions. Even more so, when we pulled up and he was here as well.

"I want you guys to change out of your nice clothes before you go play." I packed an extra set so if we went to the park or something afterwards they wouldn't get them dirty. When I was done rummaging through the bag. Abel had already started. He pulled off his tie and the vest over his head then threw it on the ground. His pants were pushed down to his ankles. His angry birds' underwear was shown to everyone. "I meant inside in the bathroom."

"Oh." Abel pulled up his pants but didn't button them. He gathered them at the zipper in his hand as went running after Kenny. "Wait for me."

"I think you might have a streakier on your hands." Thomas came out to help me carry in their stuff.

"I think you could be right." Thomas just laughed. I saw Grandma go inside with them. She would keep order until I made it.

"Is this your house?"

"It's my parents. Or who I thought were my parents. I haven't sold it yet but I need to. I usually stay here when I'm on leave."

"What about the horses?" They must have seven of them come up to the fence to see what all the commotion was about.

"I pay the neighbor to feed them and exercise them when I'm gone."

"Do you ride them?"

"Do I ride, hell yes I do. If it has hair on it, I can ride it." I wasn't sure at this point if Thomas was talking about actually riding horses or not. So, I let it go and went to check on my children.

Ellie and Kenny had changed their clothes. Gemma had Thomas in a pair of shorts and t-shirt already. That only left one, my little sweet son. I could hear Abel humming through the door. He was setting on the potty naked. For some reason, he had to be completely naked to take his poop. Once he finished his task, I got him dressed to go outside with the others.

Abel went to play with the kids. I went to join them watch Thomas ride. The sun beat down on his dark hair as he pranced around the corral as he was a performer. It glistened when he moved just right and a ray caught it. Each movement he made showed his tight iron muscles stand at attention. The fiery spirit burst to the outside of him. Yet he processed an elegance to him as well. "He is magnificent."
"Thomas is okay. But I wouldn't call him magnificent." Kyle gave me a giggle because I meant the horse.

Gemma however, felt that way about her son. She adored him from a far. The glow of a mother's love radiated from her. When we stopped watching, she didn't. You could tell she could do this for hours and still want to see more.

Thomas was asleep in Nero's arms. He had a big day without a nap. I took him to find a place I could lay him down at. The couch had a chase lounger at the end of it. I piled pillows around him so he didn't roll off.

The house was decorated nicely inside. You could feel the love the family had in the photographs displayed. Thomas was the center of their universe. I had to stop to think. There wasn't a single photo in my house with all of us in it at one time. It was sad really. We only had reminders of moments we shared. Nothing that dated us together as ever a true family.

Gemma and Thomas came in too so he could start dinner. She wanted the details for each picture. From little league, boy scouts, Halloween outfits he wore to what looked like a rodeo he rode in as a teenager. I understood why. She tried to fill in the blanks of the time she missed out on with her child. But could you ever get it back once it passed by?

It was obvious Thomas was given more opportunities in life to succeed. He wasn't raised in chaos like his brother. Yet, they all were raised in deceit and lies.

It was another monument mark of time for Gemma and Thomas to share. I didn't want to intrude on it so I went outside to let them have it in peace.

The kids were playing loudly with frogs they found in a water hole. They were having a good time. I looked around for Ellie but didn't see her. When I finally found her, she was at the back of the house under a shade tree crying.

"Are you going to tell me what's going on with you?" She was hesitant and didn't want to. "You can talk to me, honey."

"Are you going to leave me and Kenny? Do we have to go back and live with Lyla?"

"What would make you think that? Of course, I'm not."

"You met with that guy in the park yesterday. He's a gang member just like my dad. I saw you give him an envelope for an envelope. Nothing good can come from it. Mommy wouldn't take the envelope the people tried to give her when we were at the police place. She died a couple of days later."

As I dried the tears Ellie shed. I would try to soothe her fears she lived with every day. "I will never leave you or your brother behind. You are both one of my children now. Kenny may not be old enough to understand this but I know you are. You can't tell anyone about it either. I was granted temporary custody of you and him. I still must go through the adoption process to get full custody. I can't replace Donna. But I will give you the best home I can." If I had a daughter, I would want her to be exactly like Ellie. Without the heartbreak and sorrow she had already experienced. She and I set in silence both contemplating our lives, fears and what would come next.

"Is everything okay?" Gemma came later to let us know it was about time to eat. We only smiled and nodded. She certainly didn't need to know what we just talked about.

Although it was a bit premature to say it was time to eat. The grill hadn't even been started yet. Kyle
seemed a little irked at Thomas. "So, you invite us over here. Then give us a horse show. While you expected me to just cook it and do all the work."

"Well, yeah. I don't know why you are so surprised by this, Kyle. I've seen me do it before."

"Oh shit." They went into the kitchen still bickering with each other about who would do what. Apparently, Kyle found it easier to just do it all. While he prepared the grill. Thomas set down in the lawn chair with a beer in his hand to tell us another story about his life. He really loved the attention he was getting.

Someone else had something they needed to say. Ellie finally made her way over to Kyle. "I'm glad you're back."

"Me too, Little G."

She didn't get to close to him but, it was a start. She came back to set down beside me. It was fear of him leaving her again. The fear of being totally alone in this world without anyone who really cared or loved you. If she only knew what he put on the line and was sacrificing for her, for all of us.

When Kyle raised his head up from the grill. He noticed I was completely mesmerized. He gave his sweet smile and it melted me. I had to look away from him.

"Tara." I don't even know how long Gemma had said my name. "It's time to eat, come on."

First, I made Abel's plate. By the time I got to Kenny, he had already done it with Kyle. Kenny was such a forgiving child and he was happy Kyle came back. Kenny had no reservations of what happened in the past. He held no grudges against life. I only hoped he grew up to be the same way.

As I went to clear the table. Kyle did it. "I got it." I couldn't miss the fact he didn't want my help.

"I'll help do the dishes."

"I'll do them." Kyle cut me off again. He went inside and I followed him.

"I noticed you've kept your distance from me today. I guess I did the same with you too. I didn't want…"

"I love you, girl and I always will." Kyle's kiss was sweet filled with passion as he pressed it his lips to mine.

"Whoops, sorry to interrupt." Nero had his hands full of dishes when he came through the sliding glass door.

"It's okay. I got to go anyway." Kyle had said his goodbye to me already. So many times, in so many different ways. He slapped Nero on the back and he was gone.

Quickly, I turned around to the sink to fill a glass of water. More so, to hide what I felt. I had to bury it deep because nothing could get in the way of what I had to do.

"You know, I thought of hundreds of reasons. Of why Gemma and I shouldn't be together and why it wouldn't work out between us. But it always went back to the one reason we should be; I love her and she completes me." Nero set the dishes on the counter but didn't push the issue any farther. "We're leaving too. We'll see you later."

Once I blew my nose and splashed some cold water on face. I went to gather up my children to
Thomas seemed sad his company was all going home. I gave him a hug and thanked him for having us.

It ended up being a good day after all. One that was shared among family as it should be. But it wasn't so good when we got back to the clubhouse. The news Tig had for me, made it turn to shit quickly.

"Roosevelt was here to pick you up for something. He wouldn't tell me what is was about. He told me to call him as soon as you got back. If you want to leave, I'll tell him I never saw you."

"I'll go in on my own. Will you watch the kids for me?" Of course, their father was nowhere around. Just like usual the club came first and that was where he was at, handling club business. There was no telling what they wanted to interrogate me about this time. Although, I was kept in the dark so much. I really didn't know anything to tell them.

It wasn't Roosevelt who wanted to talk to me. It was the same ATF agents again. "I haven't done anything. If you brought me here to find out something about the club or Jax. It's a waste of time. I don't know about club business as I have told you before."

"Mrs. Teller, this for your own protection and your children's as well."

Before the agent would tell me anything further. He laid down a series of photos out on the table. All of them were of me and or my children. Obviously they were taken before my vehicle was blown up because there were several shots of it included.

"We found a folder of these pictures in a car of a person who was shot to death. You were their target. There are only a couple of scenarios that truly apply to this situation. Your husband and the Sons of Anarchy got cross ways with them and they were using you to hurt the club. Or it was your husband and the club calling the shots on the hit. We were monitoring this indvial's criminal activities for a while."

The last photo the agent laid on the table was of Jax standing beside them. It was in a wooded area I wasn't familiar with.

"Son of a bitch." I grabbed my purse and I was done with this shit. One action or event sets off another series of them. The web of lies we spun was about to come down and capture us all. "I gotta get out of here."

"Mrs. Teller, wait." I heard him but I wasn't stopping. He would have to arrest me. The agent didn't catch up until I reached the door to leave. "Please, take my card. If you feel threatened. Call me, I will…"

"You can't help me. No one can."

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

There will be three parts to this instead of only two. I got carried away. As usual, it might not all make sense until I post the other parts of it.

Thank you for staying with the story. We are approaching the end. I wrote the final paragraph today!
Shifting Sands, PART 2 of 3

While I set in my babies’ room with nothing but the dark silence to surround me. As Abel and Kenny slept, I rocked a drowsy Thomas. I couldn't help but to feel I was betraying them to some degree if we left Charming. I was in the position of stuck between a wife and a mother. Also, in the position to tear their little lives apart as they knew them to be. No matter which decision I made, I would hurt someone.

After Thomas fell asleep in my arms, I laid him down in his bed. Wandered in to the living room aimlessly without a sense of direction and seen my other child in a blissful sleep for once. Ellie seemed more secure, calmer and settled now. With the assurance she was my daughter for the better or worse of what came along with it.

With a kiss on her forehead, I covered her up as it was chilly in the house. My hand brushed the hair out of her eyes. "I'll never leave you behind, baby girl. That's a promise."

A restful sleep just wasn't in the cards for me tonight. I had some thoughts that were jumbled up in my mind. I had to put the words in a manageable order to make sense of them all. I got my laptop out and poured my heart out to it. I knew I could trust it not to judge me or tell anyone the secrets I bare. Or try to stop me from the tasks I had to do. It didn't minimize the reality I would face very soon from it either, even when I tried to convince myself.

Since I have no one who I can share my honest feelings, my fears and my secrets with. I come here today, to help you understand the choices I made. As your mother, you come before all else with me. Just know, no matter what happens to me. I did it for you, my children, to have a better life.

I've been stuck somewhere between; who I am, who I want to be and who I should be. Torn myself apart in the process of it all. You can't follow your heart, when it's more confused than your head is.

If your grandfather, John Teller, had succeeded on his plans. You would have a more safe and secure environment to be raised in. There probably wouldn't even be a reason for me to write this. But since he didn't, I hope some day you will understand why I did what I had to do to stop the cycle from reaching you. You are my sons and my daughter, my life and my sunshine.

For another hour I continued on to tell them what I felt they needed to know and things I wasn't proud of I'd done. There were things I might never be able to tell them. Some of what I wrote, they wouldn't understand until they got older. Some of it, they may never understand completely. Because if things went to plan, it would never be a worry or burden to them. My babies would not end up like their fathers. They had suffered under the weight of it their entire lives as children and members of the club. Opie's pain on earth had ended in tragedy and Jax's life was a tragedy still in the making.

When I shut the screen down finally on the laptop. My hands massaged the back of my neck. The stress took its toll on me. I'd played a dangerous game in the past, I didn't realize at the time. Now, I had a deadly game to finish.

One more time I went over everything in mind. A mental check list only I knew about. If I got my children out safely, it would all be worth it. I would stand alone and face the consequences as they came. Just like I had through most of my life.

By the time the sun barley peeked through the night, I was still wide awake. I set in the same rocking chair and only had dozed off a couple of times. But every time I opened my eyes, there was my son before me. So sweet, so innocent. I covered up all my babies before I started the coffee.
When I poured a cup, I heard the front door open. I waited to see if Jax came in the kitchen or went straight to bed. I didn't ask what kept him out all night. The fewer words spoke between us, the better at this point.

"Want some coffee?"

"Yeah, thanks."

We avoided eye contact with each other while we set in silence. I wasn't certain if it was for the same reasons or not. When I heard Thomas stir, I got his bottle ready. It gave me the best excuse to exist the room without an explanation. It's what I felt it came down to; nothing but an empty explanation or promise made between us.

Once he finished about half of it, his eyes were heavy. After I changed his diaper and laid him back down. So I could get ready. Then I heard our bedroom door shut down the hallway. I used the bathroom to change my clothes and comb my hair.

For the first time, I didn't like the person much who stared back at me in the mirror. The face reflected what the world seen without speaking the confession secrets of the heart. If you could make peace with the mirror, your image changed quickly. Even to yourself. I became all the things I never wanted to become. Some day, I would correct those wrongs.

Today, wasn't the time to analyze my life or the path I'd chosen. It was to set in motion my children's path. That's exactly what I was going to do too.

When I got them ready, I made a stop at the clubhouse. To everyone else, it was another routine day. To me, it was the beginning of the end.

"Are you okay, Doc?" Wayne seemed to see through the facade. Not just mine either, most of the bullshit from everyone.

"I'm fine. I appreciate you watching the kids until Gemma gets here."

"I don't mind, I really don't got anything else to do. But, Gemma won't be here."

"What?"

"Jax don't want her here anymore." Wayne spoke the same shit I heard since Jax took over the club. I just smiled and went on my way.

"I'd like to see Jax stop Gemma." As soon as I pulled out of the parking lot, I seen it. It flew so high. The wings were spread wide and it was beautiful while it was in flight. So perfect, so free. If I needed an omen to know I was going in the right direction, the white faced crow gave it to me.

This would give me a chance to cross off another thing from the list. It was my least favorite one. But, I had to let them know how I felt.

The walk up the long hill, my stomach done flip flops inside. With the bright sun, my forehead had beads of sweat already. A couple of times I thought I couldn't make it without a stop to catch my breath. It wasn't any easier when I brushed the dust off his name on the tombstone.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there when you passed away. I'm sorry I wasn't there for you for anything. Mostly, I blamed you for how my life turned out and it wasn't your fault. You could have bailed on me too but you didn't. You stayed and saw it through. I know now, what it takes to do that. I love you, Dad. I hope you can forgive me."
The saint statue set on top of his tombstone. I ripped it off the dash of his old Cutlass before I got rid of the car. He must have believed in it or it gave him comfort in some way. It was there to have someone to watch over him, since I failed to do so when he was still alive. The shame I felt was only out weighed by the guilt from not being there for him. The prayer I said, was someday he might get past the fact his daughter didn't even love him enough to come home to see him. When he was so sick and needed me the most. Get past the fact I abandoned the only true family I had left. See past the pain and sorrow I inflicted on him without mercy.

A good cry was what I had with him. I shed enough tears for the both of us. I didn't want to leave, there was probably a thousand more thing I should say to him. But, I had to go and get back to my babies.

"What are you doing here?" I wasn't expecting to run into Gemma, in all places no less. She had a large bunch of white lilies gathered together with a long yellow ribbon around them. Since, I didn't answer her, she shifted the flowers around waiting.

After I wiped my face off, I still wasn't going to answer this question or any others she might have in future. So, I asked her the same. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to put flowers on John. Noticed you were in front of your father's grave. I'm going to give you a good piece of advise, sweetheart. Nothing good can come out of living in old history. There is no worse crime, than taking a child away from their mother. But, I won't let John or anyone else dictate or ruin my life. It's a choice we all make of how we handle wrongs against us."

"If you could do it all over, would you do it the same way again?"

"Yeah I would, this is the life I have. I don't fantasize about a fairy tale that don't exist. If I hadn't went through hell with John and Clay, I wouldn't have Nero today. By doing so, I know what a good man he truly is."

Gemma made sense. Or maybe she never looked outside of the life she led to see there was another world out there. At least she found some happiness now. I guess, it was what really counted. Although, there was still one secret the queen wasn't privy to.

John just didn't hide their son away from the guilt he felt. As she thought he done. He fully intended to divorce her and take Jax away from all of this. How differently Jax's life and my sons' lives would have turned out if John Teller had succeeded on all his plans.

With a whiff of the bouquet, the wild flowers reminded me instantly of Bobby. This would probably be the last time I got to put flowers on him. For some reason, I had to tell him goodbye. Only, he already had another visitor.

"Juice." I said his name a couple more times. He just continued to rock in a trans on the ground. I didn't believe he even knew I was here with him. Roughly I claps my hands on his shoulders and shook him. "Juice."

It took a couple of minutes for him to get it together enough to speak. His eyes were full of tears but empty in life. "Yeah." After he squeaked it out, I let go of him. I searched his face to see signs if he was high and on a bad trip. But he wasn't.

"Are you okay?"

"No."
"Let's get you inside." Juice leaned on me as I had leaned on others in my time of need. He needed to rest and have time to heal from what whatever he hurt from. When I opened the bedroom door, he was falling. I couldn't hold his body weight up. My arms went around him to help him slide down the wall to the floor.

"Jax made me do it. He made me, I swear I didn't want to."

"What did Jax make you do?" Juice was broken from what was done. When I asked him, I did want to know. I was scared as hell of the answer he would give me. Yet, I still had to know. "Juice, what did he have you do?"

"I killed her, I smothered her. I tried to look away and pretend it was a bad guy I was doing it to. Only I can't pretend anymore. When I close my eyes, I see her face. I just want to die to put an end to it."

"Who was it?"

"Just let me die. I'm a lost cause." Juice laid his head down on the floor. He was clam, way to clam at this point. His desire to die out weighed his desire to live. I couldn't stop it if it was the path he took eventually. But, I could stop it today.

"Shit." My cell rang. If I answered it, I would have to lie. If I didn't answer it, he would come to search for me eventually. It got harder every day to pretend everything was fine, this life was normal. Although, I done the best I could. "Hello."

"Where are you and kids? I just got home, you usually leave a note."

"I am putting stuff in storage. I got a few more boxes together for donations. I would like Juice to help me this afternoon, if that's okay with you?"

"Yeah, that's fine. I gotta go to Stockton, then I'll be back. Love you."

"Me too."

The conversation couldn't end quickly enough with Jax for me. I closed my phone then opened it again. I needed help with Juice. "Hey, are you busy?"

While we waited for them to get here. I got Juice up. This wasn't the room for him to be in. Nor probably the place to keep him at. I got him a glass of water. He took a couple of swallows then set it down on the coffee table.

As the cabin door opened. Juice was on his feet with a gun drawn. He was a wounded, crushed animal. "Relax, he is here to help not hurt you. I give you my word, Juice. I won't say anything to Jax about this." He seemed reluctant at first. I put my hand on his arm that extend out with the gun. "I've been where you are. You have to trust someone or you won't ever survive it. You can trust me." He lowered the gun down. Plopped on the couch as he pulled the hood of his sweatshirt up over his head. Maybe to hide his face or maybe to hide his shame.

"What the hell is going on?"

Kyle deserved an answer because I needed him to help a club member out. More so, I needed to help Juice. To know I did the right thing for him. We went into the kitchen so we could talk.

"Juice wants to die. If the club finds out Juice is suicidal or told me even. I think you know what they will do to him. I don't know all the details of it or who she was. Jax had him kill a woman."
words escaped my lips. The last sentence burned in to my heart, like a scar that couldn't ever heal.

"Jesus Christ. I don't think there is a line Jax won't cross."

Kyle agreed to do it. He would take Juice somewhere safe from Charming for a day or two. I'd cover his alibi with the club and Jax. Was it right for me lie? Probably not. Was it right for me to turn Juice over to the club for a slaughter? Probably not.

The more time passed by; it got harder to tell the sinners from the saints. Those who wanted redemption divided by the death they caused. You couldn't distinguish the angels from the outlaws anymore. Sometimes, they seemed like one and the same.

By the evening, they knew Juice wasn't around. Jax came to me looking for him. "Where's Juice at? Didn't he help you today?"

"Yes, he did. He talked about some girl. I think he went to hookup with her tonight." Jax shrugged off what I said. It was their normal to disappear for the sake of pussy. Even though I lied to him. In my heart, I knew it was the right thing to do. But was it really okay? Probably not. Was it okay when Jax lied to me or didn't come home at night? Probably not.

Tomorrow, I would pick Juice up from Kyle's house out of town. I made sure I deleted my call logs to Kyle and the text he sent me on where he took Juice to. It was a safety precaution, or that's what I told myself at least.

Even though, some of it was the guilt I felt married to one man and being with another. Was it alright to sleep with Kyle even though Jax had many different women? Probably not. Would it change the course my marriage was on? Probably not. Would it change the invariable path to the end of it? Probably not.

It had finally sunk in what Gemma meant by bury that shit down deep and go forward with your life. Only, I couldn't do it or not well like her anyway. The proof was when I knocked on Kyle's door and a busty blonde only in a pair of panties answered it.

"Hi." She had no modesty as she stood before me with her hand on her hip. "Do you want to come in?"

"I'll come back later."

"It's time to make big daddy, a happy daddy." He obviously didn't know I was here either. "Oh, hey, honey." Thomas wore his black cowboy hat cocked on one side of his head. All I could say, was it matched his black cowboy boots. Which was all he had on. He lowered his hat down to cover his privates. It hung there as though he put it on nail. "Did you come to see Kyle? I think he is still asleep."

"I'll come back later." Part of me was afraid I'd interrupt something I didn't want to see. The other part of me, knew I had no right to be upset if I had.

"Tara." He appeared as almost on cue. He had a way of doing that in my life when I needed him the most.

"Tell Juice I'm here, Kyle." This gave him an out. I would wait outside for Juice. He didn't owe me an explanation for anything. Nor would I make him feel like he did either.

"He's out back on the deck. I just made coffee. Do you want a cup?"
"I don't want to bother you and your guests."

"You are never a bother. I don't have a guest, Thomas does." Kyle grabbed Thomas roughly by the arm before he went back inside. "Why did you bring her here instead of taking her to your house?"

"Well, I didn't want that crazy bitch to know where I live."

"So, you brought her here instead. Perfect." Kyle didn't seem happy about the current situation. From the argument they had. I gathered they took Juice out last night. When Thomas got involved, it went to a full drinking binge. He picked up someone from the bar. Came back here after Juice and Kyle passed out.

"Well, I don't know why you are so surprised by this type of behavior. I've seen me do it before, Kyle." Thomas tapped the toe of his boot when he said it. Almost, as though he enticed a reply.

"Get rid of her, now." Thomas put his hat back on his head. Gave me a shot of something I really didn't want to see when he removed it from his dick that stood at a full attention. But Kyle wasn't done with him yet. "And cover your shit up. I mean it Thomas, get rid of her."

"I'm on it." Thomas twisted his bare ass inside. The more time I spent around him. He was definitely his mother's son. "Hey honey, what did you say your name is again?"

She didn't take that well at all he didn't remember it. "You told me last night, you love me. You asked me to move in with you."

"Well, when I'm drinking, I love all women. You're not the first to tell me this either. Just in case you haven't gathered yet, I didn't mean it. But, seriously, what is your name?"

With a slap to Thomas' face. She scrambled to find her clothes after the night of them playing ride the wild pony game. She smacked his face again on her way out. "Asshole."

To no surprise it didn't phase Thomas a bit. Once the door slammed shut. He put his hands on his hips. "So kids, what's for breakfast? I'm starved." Kyle just rolled his eyes and went to the kitchen. I followed after him and got a giggle from Thomas. At least, that Teller brother wasn't my problem to deal with.

"Here, girl." He had already put sugar in my coffee for me.

"Thanks."

"Just so we are clear. I haven't been with anyone since I was with you."

"I didn't ask." I sipped my coffee. Found a chair at the table and set down. I let the conversation go. But, Kyle didn't.

"But, you wanted to. Like I want to ask if you still sleep with Jax. Only, I don't want an answer. I have no right to be upset with you for being with your husband. Even though, I am. That's what happens when you're in love with someone."

"Kyle. I..."

"I said, I don't want an answer. I need to take a shower and get dressed. I'll be back in a minute."

Thomas was leaned on the doorway. I hadn't noticed he was listening to our conversation. At least he had a pair of boxers on now. "Hell, I'll ask. Is Jax not ringing your bell lately? Not making mama
happy in the sack?"

"Thomas, shut up." Kyle shouted it from his room.

"Okay." He poured a cup of coffee for himself and set down with me. "So, Kyle is a little touchy this morning. I've told him he needs to get laid more often. It would do his disposition a world of good. Know anybody that could maybe help him out with that?"

"Thomas, if you don't shut the fuck up. I'm coming in there." Kyle's tone was that of a parent disciplining their child.

"Okay, I'll behave." He took off outside with his coffee and a pack of smokes. I looked out the kitchen window. Juice was out on the deck. He and Thomas seemed to get along well. They were chatting away. Well, mostly Thomas done the talking part.

They invited us to lunch but we couldn't go. I needed to get Juice back to Charming, back to where he belonged. He didn't utter a single word on the long ride. Neither did I though. We both had things to overcome.

Before we got out of the car. There needed to be clarity between us. "I hope, I can count on you to not mention to Jax where you were taken or who you were with."

"I won't." It was the only thing Juice said before he got out. It was a toss up if he would cave under the pressure of Jax and tell him the truth.

Once you've distanced yourself from a situation, you got a clearer and more vivid picture of it. Juice returned to his home, his family. Maybe they couldn't tell he was faking it but, I sure could. He fell back in place with them as though the life he lived was perfect. Not a care in the world. Even though, his world was crushing the life out of him.

When my babies came out to greet me, I focused on them. We had a quick lunch then went outside. It was great to watch them play together. Ellie, just hung out with them. She was too old to play anymore. But, she was still there.

They eventually got up a hot game of hide and go seek and got her involved. Even me and Thomas got in the action. We hid just inside the garage door so I could keep an eye on them. It made me smile when I heard Abel. "1. 2. 3. 12...here I come."

Both Kenny and Ellie got back to the slide, they touched home base before Abel could tag them. We made a break for it across the lot. Thomas was giggling the entire way. Just before I stepped inside the playground, Abel caught up to us.

"You're it, Mommy."

All the fun we had was short lived. Shit got serious, pretty damn quickly. The good time was defiantly over. But then again, they always had a bad ending.

"What's going on?" Tig was the only one who stayed behind at the picnic table. The rest of the club went to meet Gemma, Thomas and Kyle.

"I don't know." He eventually made his way over to the crises circle.

"Will you take the boys inside?" Ellie was such a good girl. She was always a big help to me.

"I can handle it. I don't need your help." Jax insisted upon it to Thomas.
"The fuck you can. They will roll up in here and kill everyone in sight. You need to stop this shit now. The Cartel is not playing around."

"The Cartel is here?" It was a statement and a question. I wasn't even certain anyone heard me. Or cared about what I said. No one had mentioned any of it to me.

"They're not here." Jax responded to me. The others just looked at each other.

"They will be. It's only a matter of time." Jax glanced over his shoulder at me with the revelation I just learned from Thomas.

They were all arguing. I had more important things to focus on. Like how to get the fuck out of here, now.

"The vote has to be unanimous for you not to ride with us. You won't get a single yes vote. My guys won't ever let you be a part of this club. But, let's do it. We'll take a vote right here, then you go the fuck away." Jax smirked on the last part. Lit up a smoke and let out a long exhale.

The only reason it came to this was simple, Gemma. She recited word for word from their bi-laws of what had to happen to stop Thomas and Kyle from becoming a part of it. In some aspects, they would be better off if they never were associated with the club.

Each one of the sons spoke out, gave their vote. It was hell no they couldn't ride with them. All except for one. "Juice?" Jax said his name a couple of times too.

"Let him ride."

Jax was more than pissed off because Juice gave the vote that allowed Thomas to infiltrated the club. It was a vote of defiance and a stand against Jax. Not only that, but it was a clear act of betrayal to their king. Juice would no doubt pay the price for it later on. But then again, he paid the price for it the day he followed Jax's order of kill the woman.

"Fine, you can ride. But, not him." Jax spat the words out because now. The club had spoken and he no longer has a say in it. Only he still insisted, Kyle couldn't be a part of it.

Kyle completely ignored Jax. He went to the garage to pick out a bike with Thomas. "If you ride today, you won't be alive tomorrow to regret it." The other members stood behind Jax. They let him have his say to Kyle.

"Then so be it, Jax. This will end the way it's supposed to. You can't run from it any longer and I won't. It's your club or your family because I'm not going anywhere. Nor will I let you get them killed in the crossfire of this shit."

Thomas was in the middle of the brothers once again. "You don't threaten Kyle anymore. You got a problem, take it up with me. You won't bully me or mow me over. We won't be stopped from being in the club, our mommy said so."

Slowly, I walked away from it all. I didn't know how they ended up settling it. Maybe, I didn't really want to know. I stood by Gemma as the bikes pulled out to follow after Jax.

"Jackson is losing control. Just like Clay did. The animal Clay became, is what my son will become. It's time for new blood at the head of the table. The gavel belongs to Thomas or Kyle now. I will see to it they get it."

Gemma was blinded by Thomas' return. Very delusional to the situation that existed around her. If
she really thought Thomas or Kyle would continue the club on, she was crazy. But then again, she always really had been.

Gemma took her gun out of her purse. Opened the cylinder to check the bullets then flung it shut. Shoved it back in her purse and went towards her car.

"Where are you going?"

"To protect my baby." Again, very delusional if she thought she could. But I understood where Gemma was actually coming from this go around. You would do anything to protect your babies.

"Wait for me." This would be the last adventure Gemma and I would go on together. One last time, one last ride. She had taught me a lot about this life. But it was time for me to leave that shit behind and go in a different direction now.

We had no idea where we were going. We just followed after the trail of bikes. It was the crumb trail that lead us to the Cartel, they could kill us all with ease. They would feel no remorse for what they did to the women or children related to the club either.

It had started off badly. They were already at it when we pulled it. "What the fuck are you doing here? Go home." Jax was not happy to see us tag along.

"Here." Thomas pulled out a gun and handed it to Gemma. "You know what to do with it."

A smirk crossed Gemma's face. "I've got my own."

"That's my mommy."

Jax was so full of hate while he watched Thomas and Gemma together. It was probably ripping Jax apart on the inside. Even though he would never admit it. For the first time, he wasn't her golden child, her favorite. She didn't hold him in the same light anymore and viewed him in a different way.

"We're just gonna talk to them. Send them a message, that's all."

Those were empty words when we went inside. They knew who we were and why we were here. "We will put our guns down, when you do. We just wanna talk." Jax actually tried to handle it in a civil and calm manner. But, that went out the window quickly. When the guy spit in his face.

"Fine, we'll do this shit your way." Jax related with a head but across the bridge of the guy's nose. The fight was on with all of them.

There were a lot firsts that happened today. A muscle bound took Jax on. The way he fought was not the normal street fight the Sons were used to. He used his feet a lot. Just as he had Jax down on the ground, his brother stepped in.

"Jax." Thomas went to his rescue. He caught the guy's leg in mid air. Squared off in a fight stance with the guy in front of Jax.

Juice must have been worn out from what he'd experienced. His solution was to just blow the guy away.

"That works for me." Thomas stepped over the dead body on the floor and it didn't phase him either as he went on the fight the next one.

When the fight was over, there was a lot of bodies laying on the floor. Jax took a wad of cash out of
his pocket and was talking to the bartender outside. He either paid him off or threatened him to keep his mouth shut. Maybe, he even done both.

Thomas made himself at home behind the bar. A bottle of whiskey in his hand, he pulled the cork out with his teeth. Took a long swig from it. He started at the end of the long wooden bar, he poured it out until it was empty. The glass shattered when it hit the wooden floor. He picked up another bottle and did the same routine, then threw it down when it was all gone. "Don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys..." He didn't stop either until he made his way around the room.

"Thomas, don't you do it."

Thomas looked across the bar at Jax when he came back in through the door. He took Jax's words of warning with a smile on his face. Tapped his pack of smokes and put one between his lips. Struck a match to light it up. Locked eyes on Jax once again, then tossed the match on the puddle of liquor.

"Get out."

It caused a chain reaction. Of smoke, fire and chaos among us. From the safe spot we stood, we waited. But, nothing happened other than a small fire inside. Until, the explosion came with shattered glass and the debris flew through the air. It was Tig who covered Gemma and I where it threw us on the ground.

"Well, I think they got the message, Jax." Everyone looked for Jax's reaction to what Thomas had said. Another explosion to come sooner or later.

"We need to get the hell outta here." The sirens were already in progress. The fire department and cops were on their way. "I'll deal with you later." Jax said it in passing to Thomas as we all scattered.

"I'll be around little brother and you know where to find me. I don't want you to bother thanking me for saving your ass back there either." Thomas only laughed as Jax flipped him off on his way out of the parking lot.

Gemma followed after her baby. I wasn't surprised she chose to go in his direction and not the others. She had never been a follower but, for Thomas, she made the exception.

When his bike pulled off the highway, so did we. Kyle waved and went on his way to somewhere else. Thomas calmly went inside the small diner as though nothing had happened at all. He was starving. Me, my hands still shook at what I'd witnessed.

Which, wasn't all that clean when we set down at a corner booth. I took a napkin and wiped off the table. Gemma excused herself for a bathroom break.

"I read John's book. You'll probably not understand this, in some ways I feel like I am meant to be here. To finish what he started. I came home again. Later, I need to get with you and Kyle. I found the final piece of the puzzle in his book. Now, I know why John came back to make this right." Thomas continued on until Gemma came back to the table. It weighed upon him greatly. I didn't get a chance to ask him about it. But, I would later when she wasn't around.

"Where did you learn to fight like that, baby?" Mama Gemma was still intrigued by all aspects of her baby.

"I was stationed in China. They told us it wasn't safe to go out at night to walk the streets alone. I did it anyway. This bunch of young teenagers surrounded this old man and demanded his money. He was so frail, he looked like he was barely able to hold his body up. Let alone fight them off. So, I took it up. They whipped my ass. The old man took them out, one by one. He was so smooth with
his movements and only made a few."

"What can I get for you?" The waitress interrupted his story. They ordered food, I only wanted coffee. My stomach was too upset to eat.

It didn't take Thomas long to continue on when she left the table to get our drinks. "For days I begged the old man to teach me. I followed after him around town for weeks. He always said no. Until one day he asked me; why do you want to learn? He didn't like my answer; I don't want to get my ass whipped again. He basically said a warrior is someone who fights for others, not for themselves. The old man died before I left China. It stuck with me though. He's right, that's how I learned to fight."

Thomas made a come back from a ill, weak child. To be a great warrior among men. Between the three brothers, he was the weakest who became the greatest warrior of them all. Jax only fought for what he wanted and what he had to do to protect the club. With Kyle, you had to push him past his breaking point to get him to fight.

My cell rang and I almost didn't answer it. When I did, I wished I hadn't. "You have to give it to them, I understand. I'll be there."

Gemma drove like the mad women she was. It was my children, her grand children on the line. She wanted to come up with me. Her type help wasn't what I needed at the moment.

This was one time, I didn't bother to knock on her door first. The agent leaned on her desk with my son's medical file in his hand. "Mrs. Teller."

"What do you want?"

The same ATF agents who had questioned me a few times. They served Margret with a warrant. To get access to my son's medical records.

"You wouldn't happen to know about a trip the Sons of Anarchy made to Mexico, would you?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Of course you don't. You gave your son, Abel Teller, medical treatment. Just about the same time the trip was made."

"I'm a doctor, it's what I do."

For every one of his questions, smart ass comments he made. I have a brief and hopefully not an incriminating response. Until the last one. "We know the Sons went to Mexico and we know they blew a Cartel king pin. Here is what I believe happened. They took your son across the boarder on a drug deal that went bad. Which, is how he contracted the so called food poisoning. Then you covered it up. Not only will you loose your license. It is a felony, punishable by a jail sentence." He tossed the file on the desk. He stopped at the door before he made his exist. "We will be in contact soon, Mrs. Teller."

The hell they would be in contact with me. I'd be gone before this progressed to my children. They would use my babies against me. They would use my love for them to take them away.

Gemma took me back to the clubhouse. Then I went and found the one who caused all this shit. Although, I already knew how he would approach it before he even spoke.

"It's just smoke, a scare tactic. They can't prove shit."
"They are not bluffing, Jax. They know everything. We can loose our children because of it."

"Who told you that shit? They can't..."

It didn't take me long to cut Jax off. It was the same crap he always gave me. Then I told him the cold, hard, shitty fact as they were. "Lowen told me. She also said, I can get some serious time for faking documents on the boys health records. Plus be fined, plus loose my license, plus a bunch of other criminal infraction."

"I won't let that happen. We will get through this." Jax was still a convincing man. Only, I could no longer fool myself to believe him. There was no way in hell things would ever get better.

"Please, just stop lying to me, Jax. You can't do anything about it or stop it from happening. I did it because I love our children and I would do it again if I had to. It was to cover up what you fucked up, then you just walked away from it. Just like you always do; left your family to deal with the aftermath of it. Now, none of us are protected from it. What do you think will happen to our boys if I go to jail?"

"I will do what I gotta do to keep my family safe. I will protect you and the boys. I promise, nothing will happen to you or my sons." That was the exact promise I had heard from him repeatably. Only, this time, I couldn't fool myself to believe he would keep it.

"Who in the hell is going to protect them and save them from you, Jax?" It was a rhetorical question, it wasn't meant for him to answer it. Not that he actually could give a rational one anyway. His hand came up to his mouth and brushed downward through his beard. Total silence fell over the room when he lit up a smoke.

When a knock on the door came. I knew it was time for Jax to make his exit with the club as his excuse. It was a sad day when you could map it out and it never changed. Nor would it. Only, I would not fool myself in to a fairy tale world that would not ever exist with us. Where his family was more important to him than the club.

"Jackie, it's time to go." Chibs sensed it was tense between us. He quickly turned around and left.

"I gotta go, club business. We'll talk about it tonight."

"No, we won't ever talk about it again until I bring it up. Or it becomes such a problem you have no other choice but to face it. You lost control over things just like John and Clay did." Jax just shook his head. But didn't rebut what I said was a fact.

John wanted this club dismantled. Torn apart to exist no more. Kill off the evil that grows within it before it couldn't be contained any longer. Put an end to cycle, break it before it killed us all. Just to start all over again with the blood of our sons. If John Teller had succeeded on his plans, what a different kind of life Jax and I would of had together.

A cup of coffee in one hand and a list in my other. I waited for the kids to wake up this morning. I was down to only few more thing to accomplish. From what I learned yesterday, my exit strategy just got sped up. In a couple of days, this place would be just a distant memory.

With the cartel in the area and on the prowl for retaliation, I wanted the boys out of Charming. Once the blood started to spill, it wouldn't end until we were all dead. Jax suggested we stay at the clubhouse and a prospect be with us at all times. I said okay but I wasn't going along with it. If that happened, I would never make it out of here with my babies.
The biggest thing on my list to still complete. I would figure out what I had to do on it. With the number dialed, they finally picked up on the other end. "Hi, I need to see if you have an appointment available. For Abel Teller."

It would be another two days before Abel could see his doctor. Get a prescription for his heart condition. At this point it was just a precaution. But a chance I wouldn't take with the health of my son. This set things back by a day. But it was still accelerated sooner than I had planned to get the hell out of here.

When I glanced out the kitchen window. Two young boys were riding their bikes on the sidewalk. It made me smile to think of mine doing the same when they got older. Side by side, my sons in a happy childhood.

"Mommy, I'm hungry." I felt little hands on my arm. Abel rested his head on my shoulder.

"Okay, baby."

The only one not up yet was Thomas. Ellie brought her book to the table. Kenny had his game boy, he pushed the buttons so fast. If you blinked, you missed it.

"How about chocolate chip pancakes?"

While I mixed the batter up, Thomas was in high chair with toys all around him. The chips were added in the pan to make a smiley face on each one. When I had enough done we sat down as a family to eat.

They were happy this morning. There was no reason for them to not be. As I watched them, a few tears escaped me. I tried to wipe them away so they didn't notice. We all needed something happy to focus on. "After we eat, we are going to buy birthday presents for Lucius."

"Can George go to the birthday party too?"

"I don't see why not."

Abel did better when George was involved or went along with us. If that damn dog brought him some comfort, then I would always bring him when I could.

They each picked out something to give Lucius. It was one time they didn't mind to shop. I wrapped up the presents quickly when we got home. So we wouldn't be late. I grabbed them and kids so we could go to Grandma's house. Abel had the leash already on George and was waiting by the door to leave.

Which Abel couldn't wait to show everyone his dog. Grandma was great about playing along too. She held on to his paw. "Hello, George. You've gotten big. I bet you'd like to meet the birthday boy."

The one thing you could always count on, Gemma went all out on parties. Green and yellow balloons led the way up the stairs. In the center of the dinning room table was a giant green dinosaur pinata. With tons more balloons strung around the house.

She set a place for each child with more dinosaur themed cups and plates. A goodie bag was stuffed to the hilt.

We had to duck under the green and yellow streamers to get into the living room. Gemma and Abel took George to meet the birthday boy.
"Can he fetch?"

"Yep." Abel took out the red rubber ball he had in his jacket pocket. He thought for a minute, almost threw it. But then handed it to Lucius.

George retrieved it but when he went to Abel. My adorable son lead him over to the birthday boy. Lucius threw it again. This time George went back to him and gave him a quick lick on the cheek. They were all giggling and having fun.

"Lucius has never had a real party before." Nero was a little chocked up about it. "Gemma put all this together for him. She even hired a nurse so we could take him away from there for a couple of hours."

"Our children are happy and together now. It's what's important."

"Yeah, it is mama."

Gemma wanted the kids to come to the table. They only had a short amount of time before Lucius had to return to the home. She put a party hat on each of the kids. They put one on George too. I couldn't resist, I had to take a picture of it. They all gathered around with smiling faces when I snapped it.

The giant cake with a bright green T-Rex on it was more than they could eat in a month. But I saw the way his little eyes light up while we sang happy birthday. Then he got to blowout the candles.

Gemma dished out a piece of cake as Lucius opened his presents. "Look Dad, it's dinosaur bones. Will you help me with it?" I bought him a science set, he got to dig out each bone from the sand. Brush it clean, then construct it.

"Of course I will. We will do it tomorrow."

"Thank you." Each present he opened, he gave a more enthusiastic response. When he came to Abel's present. I knew we made him a happy little boy. "Will you play catch with me? I can't run to go get it." My son insisted we buy him a glove and ball. More so, I think he just wanted someone to play with too.

Abel licked icing off his lips. But, he still had a little on his face. "That's okay, I can't throw it very far either. Can we play tomorrow, Mommy?"

"Sure. Maybe we will all go visit him tomorrow." It made all the kids happy.

By the string Gemma held up the pinata. It warmed all our hearts when Lucius wanted Abel to set on his lap and whack it with the baseball bat while he moved his wheel chair around. It was a sweet team effort.

Nero hung it from the ceiling and got the hell out of the way. Not that I blamed him. Abel was wild with the bat swings. Lucius grabbed a hold of it too when they were directly under it. It rained down candy.

They took their loot to the table to play. I noticed Gemma had slipped away to the kitchen. She was vigorously dialing someone.

"Did you get a hold of him?" Nero apparently knew who she was calling.

"No." She shut her phone when she seen me stand there. "We better get back to the party."
"Who does Nero keep calling?" He stood in the kitchen for another ten minutes straight.

At first Gemma wanted to pretend like she hadn't heard me. She glanced over her shoulder to see where the kids went to. They were out of ear shot in the living room. "Kyle. He said he would be here. We haven't heard from him since he went on the ride with the club. Have you talked to him lately?"

"I haven't heard from him either. What about Thomas, maybe he will know where Kyle is?"

"I talked to Thomas this morning. He hasn't seen Kyle since yesterday. Thomas went to search for him. It's why he's not here." After Gemma said that. Now, I was worried about Kyle too. I tried his cell four times.

It went straight to voice mail. So, I sent him a quick text to let us know he was alright. If he hadn't reached out to us by the time the party was over. I would go by his house on the way home to check on him. It would be a long drive to make with the kids but, he'd drive to hell and back for me.

While I had another cup of coffee, I must of checked my phone twenty times. But still got no response from him. I shifted around in my seat, nervous didn't begin to cover it. The strain on my body from it was felt deep in my stomach. Before I could run to the bathroom, I covered my mouth. It was all coming out; the fear of what I was doing and still had to do. The hidden secrets I kept from everyone, the emotions of it hit me hard. Even worse, the harsh consequences that were bound to come with it.

On my knees I recovered from it. The sweat poured from me. My emotions were all over the place and I couldn't get them under control. I crawled to sit up against the wall, I tried to get my breathing to slow down. After the rag was wet under the cold running water. I put it on my face. For it not to soothe anything. It was the noise I heard from the bathroom window that caught my attention. It was so familiar, so deafening. When I raised the shade up, I knew.

From the porch I watched them. They didn't travel the same path of a circle this time, they flew in a straight line, side by side. Made a quick turn then took the same pattern again. But when the crows landed on the branch of the tree in Gemma's front yard. Their heads dropped in unison, as they huddled together, I knew.

"No. The fourth crow." Through the door I went, I had to go find him. For only my fears to be confirmed.

Nero was obviously disturbed by his phone call he received. His dark skin seemed paled by comparison to normal. The breaths he took in were incredibly deep ones. He avoided eye contact with me by any possible means because he looked around me or up at the ceiling. "How am I gonna tell her that? Yeah, we'll be there. We're on our way."

Gemma noticed something wasn't right too. She wiped her wet hands on a dish towel. Then went to where Nero was still braced against the counter. "What's wrong, baby? Who was it?"

"It was Jax. We gotta get to Saint Thomas. They found his body off Interstate 580, almost beaten to death."

If John had succeeded on his plans, the crows would weep no more and finally rest. His sons and grandsons would not have to face the legacy he left behind. Always their lives in danger, the trail of chaos that follows after them, almost taunting them. Constantly trying to drag them in to the lower pits of hell, the torture of them daily until death finally took them. If John Teller had succeeded, I would have to weep no more either.
I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Part 3 will be posted soon. Then the rest of the chapters to follow at once.

Fictional Retreat is now open, a site some friends and I created. It is a social site for readers, writers and artist. All fandoms, original fiction and genres welcome.

If you are a writer, come post your stories. If you like to read, come find some new favorites on there. The link is posted on my profile page if you'd like to join.
The air didn't blow, not a trace of a slight breeze could be caught, it was stiffing. There were no indications of a storm brewing up ahead of us. It was perfectly still, the calm of the sins we committed in the night. Would give no clue to the death that circled around us all.

When we exited the car, the crows landed. Heads hung low, huddled together tightly. There were only two this time. The white faced crow set in silence with another just like him, one I hadn't seen before. No one else but me seemed to even notice as we hurried past them to get to him. But, I already knew the crows were here for him. John came to take his son home. Which, meant he didn't have much time left here on this earth.

"Tara." I was wrong, one did notice. Ellie stood with her feet frozen to the ground. She didn't make another sound as she stared at them.

"Honey, I need you to listen to me. You watch the boys while I go check on him." She fought back her tears because she knew too what was coming. What was the unfortunate end.

Inside these hospital walls I'd witnessed many things. Some were pleasant, the miracle of life had drudged on in victory for the hopeless. Other horrible times, were just a wasted life that didn't have to be that way. Then there were the events that impacted me and life as I once knew it.

"His name is Abel. When I heard you were back, I ran through my head how it would be. It was a sign of a second chance for us. You've always been Abel's mother. I love you, Tara. I'll never give up on us."

When the doors opened, we couldn't get up the elevator fast enough. Only to be too late when we had. I heard them scream out code blue, as the sad sound echoed down the hall. I knew.

Gemma wouldn't listen when they told her she had to wait outside. She never listened to authority over her well. It was hospital policy for family or friends to wait and not be in there. They were trying to save his life and keep her out. Yet, I knew, he was too far gone already.

The waiting area had a huge glass window that replaced half of the hall. Many times, I seen my past and my future when I looked through them. But now, I witnessed the present. The white face crow started flight, the other followed after him. He showed Thomas the way.

Within seconds, all the buzzers went off. The life line to him, it sounded the warning. "Clear." The doctor done his best to revive him, get him to take in another breath of life. When the doors opened up the doctor had called it, I knew it was over for Thomas. Or perhaps his after life just begun.

"I'm sorry, I couldn't save him." The doctor told Gemma first. There was no way in hell you could make her move away from the doors as we waited.

She held on to the wall to steady herself while she went through the set of cold steel doors. She went to face what no mother should ever have to. To fall to her knees before she made it there. Nero
helped her up and no one was going to stop her if she has to crawl to get there. To see her baby one more time.

All the terrible things I had said or thought about Gemma before, weren't important today. She was a grieving mother and I felt completely helpless. I didn't know what to say to her or how to help her even. So, I did the best I could. While I prayed selfishly to never know that kind of pain.

As I went to the doors, something I fought myself to not do. She set on the bed with Thomas' head in her arms, rocking him as if he were still a small child. What I had done with my sons so many times when they were sleepy, ill or needed the comfort of their mother.

The blood gushed from him on to her. His beaten body, his face barley recognizable. "I'm sorry but you have to leave." Gemma didn't listen to a word the nurse said. She was just doing her job. Gemma was just being a broken mother.

"Get away from me." The nurse got a shove when she tried to get Gemma to turn loose of Thomas. A mother never turns loose of their baby.

"I'll handle it."

"Yes, Dr. Knowles. Five more minutes, the morgue is on the way." She understood, we witnessed death all the time. Only this one, it would effect me for a long time to come.

Part of me expected to see Thomas make a miraculous recovery as he had as a child. The nine crows above his bed, they circled while the miracle of life was carried on for him. It was hard for me to believe he was saved back then to only end this way.

Since I hadn't known him for long or that well really. What comforted me the most was a low hum of the damn song he loved so much. It played along in my head while I replayed the day over we visited his house. Thomas' laughter with my children. The beautiful horse he rode on so proudly. The silly jokes he told. The squabble he had with Kyle until he got what he wanted. The way he welcomed me and my children with open arms as his family.

After I wiped my eyes, I glanced over. The clock on the wall registered five more ticking minutes of life for us. Death for Thomas and pure torture for Gemma.

When they knocked on the door, it was time. "Gemma, we need to go." That's the best I could come up with. What do you say to a mother in this type of situation?

"I've lost my baby twice now. I can't do this again."

Nero got her to finally let go of her baby boy. But, she wouldn't leave until she watched them bag his body. Before they went to zip it up. She ran her unsteady hand over his forehead and down his face. She said something in his ear and placed a kiss on his cheek.

Jax and the club were outside the emergency room doors as we came through them. Gemma wouldn't even look his way. But she made her feelings known though. "Your brother's blood is on you. I will never forgive you for it." She held her head high as she passed by them. She was truly stronger than I ever could be if I walked in her shoes.

They weren't the only ones here waiting for the outcome, Kyle and his brothers came too. I was confused, because he had as much blood on him, as Gemma did. "You get those son of a bitches that did this to my baby." Kyle only nodded at her request.

It seemed as though everyone knew exactly what happened to Thomas but me. What occurred up to
the point of his death. In reality, maybe Gemma was just so used to this kind of life, she knew. Or maybe, I was just to blind to see up until now.

Nero had to help Gemma in the car. She had gotten sick a couple of times already. Jax kept his distance from her and me. But he wasn't going to get off that easily this time.

"What the hell happened to Thomas?"

"The Cartel."

"This is relation for what the club did. Jesus Christ, Jax. This could have been one of our children." I was done with it all. I walked away stronger, more determined than I had ever been.

"But it wasn't." When those words were spoken by Jax. My hate took over my heart. He was so nonchalant, as though it were no big deal. Not for my children or his brother who laid dead because of the fucking club.

"Did you seriously just say that shit to me? Do you have any idea what you do to the people around you? I'm not even talking about just your family. Look at what you've done to your club. Half of the members are dead and the other half lives in misery. Yet, you just think of yourself. Some day, you won't have the club or your family anymore."

"Is that a threat, Tara?"

"It's a fucking promise."

There really wasn't anything else to say between us. There was no need to continue to insult the other. Continue to pretend all was well. Or to continue on as we were any longer. When I slammed the door shut on Nero's car. I slammed a lot of things shut forever.

The eerie silence on the way back to Gemma's house were only shadowed by the sobs she tried to hide. As I watched her take one step at time up the stairs. It took all of her strength to take the next one before her. I'd been down this path, it was like watching myself in slow motion. Loosing everything just one step at a time. If I didn't have a wake up call before now, this was it.

"I'll call tomorrow." Were the only words spoken as we made our way to the car. Really what else could I say about it all?

"Mommy."

"Yeah, baby."

"Did Uncle Thomas die?"

"Yes." As much as I wanted to talk to Abel about his uncle and what happened. I couldn't. He didn't bring up anything else on the way home and I was grateful. I would have to tell my sons many facts later on I dreaded.

They were as wore out as I was. There wasn't a peep made from my children as they went straight to bed. After I tucked them in, I tried to sleep. But Thomas' words kept coming back to me, consuming in my head. "I found what you guys missed. The other piece of the puzzle is in John's book."

With a sigh, I flung the covers off me. From the top shelf in the closet, I unwrapped John’s journal from the sweater I had around it.
Page by page I went through it. Some of it I read several times and nothing stood out at me as what Thomas meant or found. There was probably one person who would know instantly. I wouldn't call Kyle though. I had to get used to the fact, I couldn't rely on him any longer. I was truly on my own and all alone once again. In the truth, I hadn't felt this alone since I was a small child.

When I came to the last passage John wrote. Even though I didn't understand its full meaning. All I thought of were his three sons and his grandsons.

You have fought this far and read everything I had to tell you, son. You must believe the future can be brighter. The strong walk forward in it. No matter how dark or uncertain it may be ahead of you. Until now, I wasn't strong enough to face what I had done with the club. To my wife, Gemma and to my sons in the process.

Only those who have not abandoned the hope can turn back the prophecy of doom. Let pure love light your way.

This is the final time I write to you. It's the final time for a lot of things in my life. But, yours can be different. Only if you want it to be. Remember my son, a piece of leather does not make you man. Your heart does.

"Tara, are you still awake?"

With motion of my hand, Ellie joined me. She gently set down on the bed. I waited for her to say something, but she never did.

"Is there something you want to talk about, honey?"

"No."

Ellie laid her head down and pulled the covers up over her. Maybe she just needed the comfort of someone to be there. So, that's what I done. I laid beside her until I finally must have fell asleep as well.

It was my cell that woke me. I stumbled around to find my purse. "Hello."

"I want to let you know. Thomas' service will be tomorrow, closed casket, at the cemetery."

"We will be there. How is Gemma?"

Nero hesitated before he answered. "She's not well. I have to make other calls. I'll talk to you later."

Gemma was deep in sorrow, I was certain. When it consumed your heart, if you looked again. You would see that in the truth you were weeping for the one who brought so much delight to you. They were gone and they took your heart with them.

After I covered Ellie up. I went to each of my boys, to check on them. Thanked god, to have just one more day with them.

There came a time you had to choose to expose your children to death or shelter them from it. I wanted to shelter them as long as I possibly could. They had experienced more death, chaos and heartache than any child ever should know.
Since I had no one else, I asked Margret if the kids could stay with her for an hour or so. She didn't seem to mind. If she did, she hid it well from me anyway.

However, I personally didn't do so well with it when I arrived at the cemetery. It was best my children not witness how I felt.

The casket was already in place with the American flag draped across it. Every now and again, the breeze would lift a corner of it up to expose what was really under it. Why we stood here today before it. Who would be extremely missed as he was laid to rest.

But would Thomas rest now? With the crows in flight just as he passed away. Did his soul make it there or was it still roaming around aimlessly on earth? Would he be destined to repeat what his father had done? Would he too return to earth some day with unfinished business? Would Jax and Kyle follow suit?

The truck pulled up finally, I knew he wouldn't miss this. Kyle was dressed in his uniform just like the other Marines. From the trailer in the back, he brought out the beautiful black horse. He was all dressed up too. A royal blue blanket under the black leather saddle. The same blue colored silk socks on his legs.

As Kyle led him towards us. Thomas' empty cowboy boots hung backwards from the stirrups of the saddle. With the black cowboy hat off the horn of it. To show respect for the rider's death. As though he were taking his final ride, one more time.

All of the Marines stood at attention to salute. They held that position as Kyle led him around the casket to back down the hill again. To put him in the horse trailer.

Cowboy hat in hand, Kyle climbed the long hill at a slow pace. Not in any hurry to reach his destination. It shifted in his hands before he laid it on top of the closed casket. "I love you, brother." With his head hung low, he joined the long line of Marines.

From the rumble they made, it wasn't hard to tell who else was about to appear. It made me smile Jax actually came on his own accord to pay respects to his brother. But, it made my heart hurt in the same breath. If we hadn't brought Thomas into the circle of chaos, he would have never connected to Jax or the club. Would it have made a difference? Would Thomas still be alive? Or would the path of death and destruction taken someone else from me I loved so much?

There was one thing for certain; a chaotic heart could only survive this kind of life. In this midst of movement and chaos, you had to remain perfectly still. Let it pass you by. Or it spread like wildfire and you fell in love with the feeling of the warmth it gave you. Until the flames consumed your very soul.

When the ceremony began, I jumped a little. It brought me out of my thoughts while each shot rang out for the salute they did for Thomas. Rifles held out in front of them. When instructed they aimed, fired and returned to the standing stiff position Pops ordered them too. For the final shot he fired a riffle with them. Then broke down himself. It was the first real emotion I ever seen the man have.

Kyle's aunt was by her husband's side when it was over. We couldn't hear their conversation. But, you could tell she was comforting him. Then as quickly as it happened, it was over. Pops returned to the strong leader the guys had always known. He stood in front of the casket and gave Thomas Teller a final sign of love and respect.

Boomer and Meat stood by the casket, as they removed the flag. Their moves were in unison. Almost robotic as they never got out of step or sync with the other. As they folded it up together. In a
neat, sharp creased corners until they finished.

While Boomer returned to the line of the others. Meat tucked the flag under his arm as his hand went to his forehead for one of his fallen brothers. The closer he moved to Gemma, a single tear ran down his cheek.

He only looked forward, made precise steps to get to her. Ignored his feelings he had. Held out the flag between his hands for her to take. She only shook her head no. She refused it. Just because she didn't take it, didn't make it any less real or stop his death.

No one should never experience as much death as Gemma had in her lifetime. Maybe, John Teller was right. The fact was, he done this to her. He turned her into what she became because of him. It wasn't a good excuse for all the evil Gemma had done. But, today, watching the pain inflicted on her while she buried her baby twice. It was a good enough excuse.

Meat once again tried to get her to take the flag. It didn't happen until Kyle bent down in front of her, whispered something. Along with Thomas' cowboy hat in his hand, he convinced her. Once Gemma finally did accept it, Kyle laid the hat on top of the flag.

"Thomas would want you to have it. He loved you, Gemma. I don't think you realize, what a difference it made in his life to you know you are his mother." Kyle stood with a squeeze to her shoulder before he went back in line. Those kind words he spoke to her seemed to give her some strength to make it through the rest of the service. He always had the calm and gentle persona about him. Like his father, he could reach you with mere words.

When everyone was going back to their vehicles. Kyle's aunt stopped me. "Are you coming to house?"

"I have to pickup the kids. But, thank you for asking me."

"You can bring them if you want. We are having a life celebration for Thomas. It's what he would want. That young man was full of life and lived every minute to the fullest."

"Yeah." It's all I could say while I fought back the tears. It was tears of grievance, guilt and sadness. The boys would never have the chance to know their uncle.

"So, are you coming?" She was very persistent. Almost to concerned if I was or not.

"I doubt it."

"I have a letter for you from Thomas. Do you want me to forward it to you?"

"A letter for me?"

Now, I had to go and know what he wrote about. Thomas had dropped it off with her when he was out looking for Kyle. He made her promise him, she would give it to no one but me personally.

First, I went to pickup the kids. Then I thought about what if Jax asked where I went to afterwards. But then again, I didn't care what he thought about me going. When you reached this point with your husband, it had been over a lot longer than you wished to admit to.

For just a little longer, I needed to keep the facade up. Sometimes, it took all my strength to grin and bare it. If I fought with him about every thing that happened on a daily basis, it would be harder on me to make our escape.
"Kyle is here. Is Cody?" Abel was excited at the site of Kyle and the thought of his little friend. But I had to burst his bubble. His best friend was nowhere to be found. "Oh." You could tell his disappointment.

If you looked from the outside in, you seen a happy gathering. A fun event for all. But, it wasn't. It was particularly hard on one. Kyle set off by himself away from the celebration. With an untouched beer in his hand. I gave a smile and a small wave before we went in the house.

"There's my boy." Kyle's aunt doted over Thomas and wanted to hold him. I almost forgot the horrible reason she kept him for me. Yet, I'd forget. Through the crowd of people, I searched for Abel. He was playing cars with another little boy.

"Would like something to drink?" She was a perfect hostess. She made a point to socialize with everyone she crossed on our way to the kitchen.

"I'm not in the mood to drink. Thanks anyway."

"I have water boiling for vanilla lavender tea. It's my choice of a drink."

"Sounds good." The bar stools were the only empty place to set. The house was full of people. I pulled one out. She placed an envelope on the bar for me before she excused herself. She took off with my son in her arms. I knew she would take great care of him.

With trembling fingers, I opened it. The white piece of notebook paper peeked out of it. It stared me in the face, I couldn't even stare back. Finally, I pulled it out.

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**Being of sound mind and beautiful body. I leave all my possessions and money to Tara Teller. Except for my horse. Kyle gets him.**

Let's face it, I got John Teller's blood. I am a rambling man of my own accord, not to ever be tied down and to die freely on my terms. Kyle is a survivor, a settled man with a huge heart. The crows speak through him for the same reason, he is his father's son. I know he will make sure you and the boys are alright.

There is a reason you saved me and Kyle from going down in a fiery crash on that day. This is it, honey. John knew how it had to be when he led you to Kyle with the crow, it was set in motion then. In case you haven't figured it out yet, you are the archangel. It all started with you and it will end with you too.

Never let anyone take away who you really are. Remember, all the time you have is now.

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Five times, I read his letter. Each time I came to a different conclusion. Of the message Thomas left me.

"Are you okay?" Kyle's aunt set down a cup of tea down in front of me. The sweet smell of vanilla assaulted my nose. With just a hint of flowers.

"I can't believe Thomas left everything to me. He didn't really know me that well." It wasn't a secret I was telling her, she notarized the piece of paper for him.

"Thomas thought of you and the boys as his family." She excused herself when someone came into the kitchen. They were organizing the food to put out.
Again, I read his letter while I waited for her to come back. "What?" I was with the program enough to know someone was talking to me. Just not enough to know what they had said.

"The food is ready. Come make a plate." She was nice and I couldn't remember her name. I recognized her when I came here before with Kyle.

The thought of food made me feel ill. My stomach just couldn't handle it. I sipped my tea until it was gone. The sounds from outside caught my attention. They were loud and arguing.

The guys were out back on the patio. From the back door I heard some of their conversation.

"You can't do this alone, Kyle. Don't be stupid." Meat screamed the loudest about it. All the guys were willing to make the same sacrifice to bring down those who killed Thomas. As they did when they helped rescue my son.

"The fuck I can't." Although, Kyle wasn't listening to them. I'm sure the guilt of Thomas' death weighed as heavily on his mind as well.

So, I gave it a shot. "Please, don't do this." They turned around to see me standing here eves dropping. Most of them walked away without anymore discussion about it.

Not Meat though. He still had a lot more to say. "Thomas was my brother too. I served beside him with honor. His death, will be honored. Don't shut me out, Kyle."

Kyle wouldn't answer him back. Meat strolled by me on his way back in. "Maybe you can talk some sense in to him."

So, again I tried. "It's not your fault. The Cartel will kill you if you go after them. Please, don't do it."

"Did you give this same speech to Jax? I love you, girl. But, there is nothing you can say to me, that will stop me."

"You're not like Jax."

"Yes, I am like him. I just have more control over it than he does. Horror, is just a mirrored image of ourselves at our worst. I will not let Thomas have died in vain. I will not let his death go unanswered. I will not hesitate to kill Jax if he gets in my way. And, I don't give a fuck who I got to kill in the Cartel, to get to the one that killed Thomas."

We kept arguing about it. It got me nowhere with Kyle. So, I switched my approach. I tried to rationalize with him. Usually, it worked well. Only for him to get angry.

"Do you think this is all a coincidence? You and I just randomly met? Thomas just happened to be in the Cartel's path? I was suppose to die. Not him."

Kyle had walked away from me so many times recently. He wasn't going to this time. I grabbed his arm and wasn't letting go. "What are you talking about?"

"Thomas knew good blood and evil blood had to spill first. He made that call on his own. He died in my place. It was supposed to be me, he knew that too. Good only conquers evil when pure love exist. Only one Teller brother will survive in the end, heaven and hell cannot coexist here on earth together. You become the monster to stop the monster. There is no fucking way, I will just let it go."

"Thomas said the exact same thing to me. Only one Teller brother can be left standing in the end. You better tell me, Kyle. What the hell it means."
For hours I watched my children play at the park. The sunshine to start the day gave you the warmth you so desperately needed. The birds chirped a happy song. It was all so misleading. They were normal, just the way children should be. With not a care in the world existed for them. When trouble was taking us over.

A prospect parked his bike a distance away. Yet, I knew why he was here. It would end up making the escape much more difficult. If they followed us around, how in the hell could I leave without being noticed?

But, on the other hand. The Cartel was out for blood. For the blood of their family that spilled, they would spill ten times more. It was the way of the outlaws.

While the kids played, I tried to put the pieces together. Thomas, Kyle, Jax, Gemma, John and all the other shit that went along with it.

When you thought back, some things said to you were just an after thought. They had no significant meaning at the time. Yet, they were devastating later on.

"We all only have so many days on this earth. In the end, there can only be one Teller brother left standing. I live life to the fullest extent. I have no regrets if tomorrow doesn't come around for me. You'll probably not understand this, in some ways. I feel like I am meant to be here. To finish what John started. I came home again. I found the final piece in John's book. Now, I know why he came back to make this right. In case you haven't figured it out yet, you are the archangel. It all started with you and it will end with you too."

Thomas may have known the total secret. But I was confused as hell still. When you looked back, they gave you all the signs and signals. You had to be in tune enough to pick up on them. Put yourself in the scenario to make sense of it all.

From my phone I looked up the term of archangel. "Thought of as the angel of protection and the most powerful of all the angels. Considered a leader within the angelic realm and a patron angel of righteousness, mercy and justice. That doesn't sound like me at all."

Once I decided to let it rest, what Thomas had said to me. I went on down the line. This was the hardest one to swallow.

"Is this how you plan to end it? Do you really think I will give up my club or family without a fight? You need to listen to me carefully. I will not let my family go. Or let them take my club from me. I love you, Tara. But, if you cross me..."

The fight would come soon enough. How far it carried out, depended on Jax. No matter how I ran it through my mind, it always went to a dark place I didn't want.

"You know what you have to do." As Abel ran by me with George, I knew no matter how ugly things got. How badly I hurt someone or got hurt myself. I was saving them.

It wasn't until I remembered what Kyle said to me. I knew I read something similar from John Teller.

"Good only conquers evil when pure love exist. Only one Teller brother will survive in the end, heaven and hell cannot coexist here on earth together. You become the monster to stop the monster."

Frantically I flipped through John's journal when we got home. "Where the hell is it?"
When you fight for something. The conflict you started out to defeat. It overlaps with the initial cause. You lost sight of what you fought for to begin with. What started out in the club as defending our way of life. Became the only way we would except or allow to coexist with us. When blood spilled, at first, we had a cause, a reason.

Then more blood and death was cast by us without a purpose or any remorse. But, when the two were mixed. When the blood ran as one, hell came to Charming. You couldn't tell any longer if it was a good or evil thing we created.

We all have a monster that lurks within; the difference is the degree, not the kind. There is a beast in every man, once it is stirred. It must be stopped, after it makes it through the gates of hell. It will destroy everything in its path, everything you love. The club must be stopped. The only way I have found to stop the monster, is to become it.

We all want to pretend we're innocent, above it all. In reality, we weren't. We were the monster. It fed from me, while it filtered to the others. The light and dark side runs through us. What matters is the part we choose to act on. That's who we really are. Whatever is done for love always goes beyond good and evil.

History always repeated itself. If we broke the cycle, could we truly stop it from happening again? My head pounded after reading that, as I searched for the aspirin bottle. We had to leave for Abel's doctor appointment already. Before I grabbed my purse off the kitchen counter, I took in a deep breath. This was it, the final item to cross off the list.

"Let's go."

Abel wasn't thrilled about a visit to the doctor. He had been poked and prodded on so much in his young life. Although, a sick child had been cured through a miracle. A miracle I couldn't fully understand yet.

"Can I get a three month prescription?"

"I don't believe the insurance will pay for it. They usually on cover a thirty day supply."

"It's okay, I'll pay for it. We are going on a trip, I don't want to run out." The doctor gave me an odd look. But wrote it any way for me. "You can make the appointment for Abel's follow up on your way out."

"Sure." It might of been what I said. It wasn't what I done. I skipped the receptionist desk all together. The pharmacy was my next stop.

The money couldn't come out of my purse fast enough for the medication. I didn't care what it cost. Abel would have them and I wouldn't have to worry about it for another three months. By then, a lot of thing would already be determined.

On our way home, I made another detour. This would be grandma's last chance to see the kids. Nero answered the door. He didn't seem like his normal self.

"It's not a good time for them to see Gemma."

Once Nero explained, I agreed with him. Gemma hadn't moved from the spot she sat after Thomas' service. She would eat nothing, what sleep she got was in the same chair from total exhaustion. If he spoke to her, she might answer him or she might choose not to.
To reach out to Gemma, was something I felt I must do. Or at the least, try to. When I opened the door to the sun porch, I saw what Nero meant. She was still dressed in the same clothes she had on then. Her tear stained face hid nothing. I wanted to try to talk to her before I left even though she wouldn't acknowledge my presences. "I wanted to stop and see how you are doing? If you need anything."

Slowly she turned her head in my direction away from the window she set and looked out of. To return to the same spot. "I used to watch Jackson and Thomas play out this window when they were little. Almost every day they were in front of it. After Thomas died...died the first time. I never saw Jackson through it again. No matter how many times I looked out of it, I couldn't see him."

Gemma had survived more tragedy than most women could ever suffer. This might be the very thing that totally done her in. "If you need anything, call me."

"I hope you never experience the loss of a child. People who haven't don't understand what it does to you on the inside. If I could have taken Thomas' place, I would have." She took in a long inhale of her smoke. The exhale, was even longer. "My life is over anyway. No one really needs me."

"That's not true. Your grandsons love you. I know Nero does too."

"Lets not sugar coat shit. We both know Nero is better off without me. I just complicate his life. Jackson despises me and he will teach the boys to hate me."

"If you need anything, call me." Once more I made the offer to her. Even though she never heard or comprehended a word of it. "I should get going."

When you were in self loathing mode, there was nothing anyone could say to you. There was nothing that would make you feel better in the particular moment. There was nothing I could do to change how Gemma would feel about me when I took her grandsons out of her life either.

"Thanks for coming by. Gemma doesn't have a lot of people that care about her. You know how much she loves the boys."

"Yeah." It was the only thing left to say. I couldn't look Nero in the eyes after he talked about how much Gemma loved the boys. I pulled my sunglasses down and proceeded forward. Forward to then end of this kind of life.

When I pulled the car in the driveway. Instant panic struck when Jax was waiting for us at home. As badly as I shook, I had to get myself together. It had to appear normal, nothing was wrong. Or he would get tipped off. I got Thomas out of his car seat, the others went ahead of us.

"I'm taking the boys, Kenny and Ellie to the clubhouse with me." The more I protested, the more determined Jax was to do it. "You're always saying I need to spend more time with them. Is there a reason you don't wanna let me take them, Tara?"

"I was going to take them to the park to play. You go ahead and have fun with them. I will pickup them up later. We go have dinner together or something." It was said with a smile on my face. Although my heart was about to beat out of my chest. I knew better than to fight Jax on it. What the outcome would be.

"You should come with us. With the Cartel around, it's not safe for you to be on your own. Bad shit can happen." It was the last thing Jax said to me before he took Thomas out of my arms.

"I'll be there soon. I love you guys." Ellie hesitated to go with him. She stopped before they made it to his truck. He wasn't exactly her favorite person. But, I done a small nod to encourage her and only
hoped she understood why this had to be done this way. To keep up the facade until we could get the hell out of this town.

This would not alter my plans from happening tonight, it was just a delay. I went into the house. For the next couple of hours I went through: every closet, drawer and box. To make sure I missed nothing. It would be my last chance to get out. To get my babies out.

The kitchen was my last stop. On the frig there were many drawings Abel had done and the only one Kenny made for me. After I picked out a few, I shoved them in my bag. The last thing I had to grab was George's stuff. I gathered up the arm load and put it in the car. Tucked the keys in my pocket and was ready to go.

By the front door was the leash I still needed. As I went to hook it in the collar, it was interrupted by a knock on the door. I peeped out to see Juice on the other side of the back door in the kitchen.

"Hey. What are you doing here?"

Once the door was shut behind him. "You have to get outta here, now. Jax knows everything..." The rumble of pipes could be heard in the dark of the night. There was no mistaking the sound for who it was. Juice moved the kitchen curtain slightly. "Shit, lets go."

"I'm not going anywhere." When Juice held out his hand, I backed away from him. Could I really trust him?

"You told me, if I didn't trust someone. I will never survive. If you don't leave with me, you won't survive this. Do you think I'd chance Jax cutting my heart because I warned you. If I wanted to hurt you, Tara?"

"I can't leave without Abel's dog."

Juice helped me over the fence in the backyard. Then handed George over it. I could barley support it's weight. Let alone the weight of the world that came crashing down on me.

"You need to get outta town. Leave now."

"I'm not leaving without my children."

"I can't help you anymore." Juice took off running streets over where he parked his bike. Of course I was on my own. But, I couldn't stop now.

George and I waited them out until they left. We hid in the shadows of the neighbor's house on another street. They spent time as they went though the entire house looking for me. When I felt it was safe enough, I put the dog in the car and this was it for me. My keys were already in my pocket. They fumbled in my hand before I started it up and I never looked back. Until I pulled into the parking lot.

Jax was alone with the kids when I arrived at the clubhouse. Only his truck was parked in the front. The cameras would warn him of my arrival. But, I didn't care. I tucked the gun in the back of my pants, just like he always had done. I was ready to do it this way if I had to.

Jax slammed the drink down his throat and snubbed out the smoke in the ashtray when I came through the door. He was obviously expecting me for awhile. Which, he knew I'd never leave without my children. Which, I knew he'd never let me leave freely either.

"I love you more, Tara, than I ever have anyone. That's the truth. Why are doing this to me? To our
family?" In reality, I believed Jax felt he loved me as much as he possibly could. It wasn't a matter any longer of what I was doing to our family but, what I was going to do for them.

"There is nothing you can say or do to change my mind this time. There is only one way to stop me from walking out the door with our children. And you will do it in front of your sons. They will watch you gun down their mother and they will hate you for eternity for doing it."

My chosen path was taken, my stance was known and I waited to know his choice. The line was drawn in the sand between us. When I crossed over it, would he retaliate against me? Would my children be devastated by what they witnessed? Would they ever know how much I truly loved them and was willing to sacrifice for them?

When nothing happened, I picked up Thomas' carrier off the table. I was taking my children and nothing or no one would stop me from it. Before I made my way across the bar, Jax was in front of me to block the way. It was what I expected to happen. But, what came next, I never saw coming.

"Step away from Tara." Jax turned around to see Tig's gun in his face. "Ellie, take the boys outside." I was grateful Tig made the decision to put the children first and get them out of here.

"Tig." Ellie got his attention before she made her way out, my children's only way out. "Mommy wants you to know, she forgives you and so do I." For a moment Tig lost control over his emotions. The tears fell freely. As he regained his composer, leaned his head over and swiped his eyes on the sleeve of his shirt. Then cleared his throat before a hard look crossed his face.

"What the hell are you doing? You know what happens when a member kills another member. Just pulling a gun on a club president is enough for a mayhem vote. You just signed your death warrant."

"It's been signed for a long time, brother. Maybe I just wasn't ready but now, I am. Please don't make me kill you, Jax. But, I will if you don't move the fuck away from Tara."

Jax went to move out of my direction. He slipped his hand inside his leather, I took in a breath, afraid to exhale it. I didn't know if it was for me or Tig. Immediately, I put Thomas down on the floor and stepped away from him to keep him out of harms way. If anything happened, it would be to me. The man I loved for most of my life, stood before me, with my fate in his hands. Like it was most of the time. Only I was to blame because I let him have that power over me. He was always granted a free pass because of my love for him. I became the big push over that made excuses for the things he had done. Those excuses were just a futile attempt to justify it. Maybe, I knew this point would come some day between us. Or maybe I thought I could change him with our love. But his love for the club was stronger and ran deeper than ours ever did. I was only fooling myself, if I thought otherwise.

My eyes took a long blink, I said a quick prayer when they were closed. If God ever heard or listened to me, I hoped it was today. When I opened them, our eyes were locked on each others. The longer I stared into Jax's pretty blue eyes, I realized this wasn't the same person I fell in love with so long ago. He was a boy then, far from innocent, but distant from the man he become. The monster grew inside him until it took over his soul. But once again, he wasn't totally to blame for it. He had so many influences that pushed him down the path of destruction. The same path my boys were destined to take if I stayed with them in Charming.

Tig reacted by his gun barrel in the back of Jax's head so close, it would kill him in an instant. "Give me the gun." Jax hesitated, he didn't move his hand any closer but not away either. After our eye contact broke, he finally pulled his hand away from it and allowed Tig to take it out of his leather.
"You need to go, doll. Go save your children. What I failed to do with my own."

"What about you? You can come with us. It doesn't have to..."

It was the most genuine, sweet smile I seen on Tig's face in a long time. "This is my home. This is where it ends for me. Will you do me one favor?"

"Yes." I tried to hide my emotions, hold back the fear I felt for him and the tears fell anyway.

"Take my dog. I want to make sure Sophia is with someone who will love her and care for her."

The only thing I could do was nod and cry for him. I knew the consequences Tig would face for the help he gave me. The saddest part, he knew and done it anyway. I went to say more as he cut me off this time. "Go."

With four children and two dogs, I sped away. Unsure of where all of this would take us. Unsure how the day would end. Unsure of the destiny ahead of us. But, I knew the path had a light somewhere in it. I just had to find it and believe it was there.

When I felt a warm hand touch mine. Ellie gave me a smile. She knew, bless her heart, she knew it all. About Donna, how the club took her parents away. Yet, she was trying to comfort me. I tried to keep my voice low. "It'll be okay." Maybe those words were for her or maybe, they were for myself.

The spot by the old car was empty in the parking garage where I had left it for a quick get away. I parked quickly and was up on the ledge to get the keys. But, Abel brought me out of the fear and reminded me. This was all for them. Only they still had no idea what was ahead of them.

"Mommy, where are we going?"

Before I could even think of a good response. Ellie handled it. "We are going on vacation. It will be fun."

Abel said no more. He grabbed his backpack and George. He was ready to go. Even Kenny relaxed at the reassurance from his sister.

But there was a long road ahead of us. Just because we made it out of Charming, didn't mean we totally made it out yet. I drove for hours until I thought we were at least safe to stop. The kids had been asleep for a while. "Wake up guys. This is where we will stay tonight. Will you watch the boys until I get us a room?"

They didn't need to witness me pretending to be another person at check in. It was the only safe way for the club to not track me down. Because if they did, god help us all.

It wasn't a cheap place to stay either. The water park inside was a family attraction. It also gave my babies a chance to be just normal kids and have fun. After we got a few hours sleep. Then the sun would come up as just another ordinary day to start.

Sleep never came for me though. I heard every sound nearby, every car that passed and every time one of the kids made a movement. George's head raised when I got up. Then they snuggled back in bed with Abel, Kenny and Sophia.

Thomas hadn't slept long either. I set at the small table with him. With just the glow of the bathroom light in the room. I flipped through the channels on the television. I found it didn't capture my attention enough to take my mind off my worries.
It didn't take long for them to begin to stir. Abel and Kenny didn't want breakfast, they wanted to play. They couldn't wait to change in their swimsuits. I put out a bowl of water and food for the dogs while they got ready. Two dogs wasn't in the plan but we would adjust. They were even playing with George's toys together when we left.

Down the giant slide they went numerous times. Ellie was great with the boys. She swam well and waited at the bottom for them to splash down. Some day, I could see her as a mother, a great mother.

It was under protest we left to get some breakfast. They could have spent the entire day here. Once, I agreed we would come back this afternoon, they were okay with it. I handed each of them a t-shirt to put over their swim trunks. Ellie brought shorts and a tank top to throw over hers.

We walked across the street to eat. They got food and I wanted coffee. A lot of it. For no sleep, I felt wide awake. It could have been a caffeine high or an Adrenalin rush of fear.

For the dogs we got two bacon egg and cheese biscuits to go. Abel unwrapped George's. "Sit down. Good boy." It always made me smile when he referred to George as a boy still. Abel would discover that secret on his own soon enough.

"Do you know how to sit." Sophia plopped down on her back legs. She took each bite I gave her. "Kenny, do you want to feed her?"

He was happy to do it. As Sophia followed him around the room. I could see a bond forming between them. She liked the red ball. Then it became a contest to see if George or Sophia could get to it first when the boys threw it.

When the knock came on the door it was and wasn't a surprise. The good time was over for us. They kept beating on it. "Tara, open the door. I know you're in there."

With gun in hand. "Take the boys in the bathroom. Lock the door and don't open it for anyone but me." Ellie was afraid, but still done as I asked her to.

A simple locked door knob and a chain was all that separated them from me. All that stopped them. There was nowhere to run to. There was no way out of this room. There was no way to get away from them.

"Tara." They got louder and louder. If I didn't address it soon, the hotel would.

With a click, it was unlocked. The chain was still on when I cracked the door open.

"Are you seriously pointing a gun at me?"

"What the hell do you want?"

"I told you. You aren't taking my grandsons anywhere."

It wasn't Gemma that convinced me to open the door. It was Nero. He had always been straight with me and fair. I still didn't let my guard down or the gun.

"How did you find us?"

Gemma picked up the Abel's black monkey from the bed. Pulled it's head off and took out a small black plastic piece from the stuffing. "I knew you wouldn't leave without the boys. Abel takes his monkey everywhere." She had been tracking that fucking monkey since the boys left the hospital.
"I'm not going back to Charming. My children are not going back to Charming."

"I'm not going back to Charming either. I got nothing left there." This was a great switch from Gemma's usual stance. "Once Jax finds out I helped you, we both know what he'll do."

We were all on the lam, us along with an ex biker queen and a retired gangster. After Gemma heard about my disappearance with the boys, Nero said she snapped out of what she was going through. Once Gemma came back in the room with another monkey for Abel, Nero was done telling me anything else about it.

I couldn't forget the two dogs either. George continued to growl while guarding the bathroom door. Sophia joined in, although, I doubted she had a clue as to why. Until I knocked on it and told her it was alright, Ellie wouldn't come out.

"You only got two choices, mama. Come with us and we will keep you safe. Or..."

Gemma interrupted him. She never was accused of having a charming personality. "You don't got any other choices. I know how Jackson thinks and what he will do to you."

"Thanks, I..."

"I'm not doing it for you. I'm doing for my grandsons." It wasn't a pretty picture Gemma painted. Yet, it was a true one.

SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA~SOA

"What about Tig?" Gemma just shook her head. It was the answer I expected and didn't want. Which, meant he was gone. He paid the price for the help he gave me.

She rolled down the window. "Where is your cellphone?"

"I tossed it back in Charming. So they couldn't track it. I got a burner phone."

"I guess you did learn something from me."

"I guess I did."

We kept the conversation to a minimal. I didn't like the idea of dividing us when we left the hotel. Ellie, Thomas, Sophia and I rode with Gemma in her car. Nero took Abel, Kenny and George in the old car I bought. I went along with it because really what other choices did I have?

"Where are we going?" I'd been down this road before. I knew where it led to.

"You'll be safe here."

All roads seemed to connect to him. Connect us in ways I'd never known possible. Connect to the circle being broken.

"Kyle." Abel and George went running to him.

"Hey, buddy." Kyle's hand ran over the top of Abel's head. He also gave George a quick pat before they went to play.

"What happens now?" Nero climbed in the passenger seat when I got out. They were dropping us off and leaving.
"Nero and I go back to Charming like everything is normal. After we get our stuff packed up, we move you and the kids to our house. Until we figure something else out." Gemma was back to the strong, at times uncontrollable woman, I've always known.

"You'll be safe here." Pops reassured me we were safe and welcomed. Yet, the baggage I carried would bring harm to them all eventually. Kyle got our stuff out of the car and this was home. At least for the night.

They were kind people. I still felt out of place. The kids seemed alright here. They had stayed here before with them. All but Abel. He went through his own living hell then. Technically, I was going through hell now and I brought them along with me.

Other Marine brothers came. To help watch over us. A couple of them went to Charming to keep an eye on what went down there. They wouldn't say so but, I knew they were watching Jax. To get a heads up if he came this way.

With all the fire power around here, I should have felt safe and secure. Yet, I didn't. With every hour that passed, the more anxiety attacked me.

The cup teetered on the saucer. So, I set it down, not to spill it. With the spoon in hand, it sounded like a hundred cups were being stirred. Finally, I put the spoon down too. Clasp my hands together and put them in my lap.

"Mommy, what's wrong? You look sad."

"I'm fine, baby."

"Come on kids. I'll start a movie for you." Kyle's aunt pushed the kids along into the living room.

"Tara." My body involuntary jerked when she said my name. "I didn't mean to startle you."

"Everything startles me these days."

"The kids notice something is wrong with you. They can feel it. You haven't slept much. Try to take a nap and maybe you will feel better. Don't worry about the kids, I'll watch them."

She was right. What affected me would soon effect them. In various ways I didn't want to think about it. Hell, I just wanted a break from thinking period. As I laid down, I reminded myself why it got to this point in my life and theirs.

It had been a couple of long days with only a few hours of restless sleep. Only I should have known peaceful rest wouldn't come my way. My dreams haunted me. While they taunted what the future would bring. I died in a fiery rampage. The sand surrounding me engulfed my burnt ashes. It replayed numerous times, until I could get myself completely awake. Completely out of the nightmare.

Since, it was better to be awake and alive. I got up to wash my face. The tears I wept, almost stung my skin. When I looked in the mirror, my eyes were just black hole of emptiness. "I'm a mess. Get yourself together. My children need me."

Just when you thought life couldn't possibly get much worse, it proved you wrong. "Jesus Christ." The news was on when I came in. It wasn't good either. "Is that the clubhouse?"

"What's left of it." Kyle grabbed the remote and with a click, the terrible news was gone.
An explosion had taken out most of the clubhouse and garage. A string of bodies where found executed outside of it. They couldn't identify some of them yet without an autopsy because they were burnt so badly.

If I had stayed, it could have been us who were executed or burned to death. If I had stayed, my children would have never stood a chance. If I had stayed, there would be no tomorrow.

"What about Jax. Did he...?"

"Jax wasn't there at the time. That much we know. We just don't know where he is now."

"We got to get out of here." In a panic, I started to gather up the kids stuff. It was time to run and run fast.

"Girl, where are you going? You had to of known it would come down to this. When you left and took his kids."

Of course, I knew it would. Part of me prayed, Jax would have enough compassion for his sons to do the right thing. Just let us go.

"Mommy, are you sad?" I hadn't noticed Abel came in.

Through the tears, the fear and my love for them. "I'm fine, baby."

His little hands worked quickly to find the makeup bag in my purse. He handed me a tube of lipstick. "Here, I will make you happy again. Lets play the kissing game."

Kiss him I did. I didn't need lipstick to give tons of kisses to my baby. I clung to him with every ounce of my being. "Mommy, I can't breathe." I let go, although, I'd never totally let go of my baby.

"Why don't we go back outside?" Ellie took them back out to play some more. They had witnessed enough of my little break down.

"What?" The look on Kyle's face was a new experience.

"It's what makes everything worth it."

Before I could ask what he meant. Pops wanted him to come outside. It only worried me more, someone had finally made an appearance.

Out the window I watched the kids play happily. The dogs chase after them. The Marines huddle together as they had their discussion. I watched life march on for us.

"We are moving you and the kids." Kyle broke the news without an explanation as to why. In my mind, it only had really one explanation.

"Did they find Jax yet?"

"No, girl. We still don't know where he is."

For three days we were shuffled from place to place. On no specific time schedule to move to the next. No one would come out and say it was because Jax would find me, but it was.

Thomas' house was empty. A sad empty home that once was filled with so much love. It was the latest place to hide us out at. While the other Marines searched for Jax. Pops and Kyle stayed with us.
"There is no food here. We need to go shopping." Kyle's aunt spoke those words, it was the same sad movie played at a later date. Gemma said the same when we were at Kyle's house after we killed Collette.

"Can we go?"

"You need to stay here, baby." The kids were exhausted. They didn't understand was transpiring. Why we had to stay on the move and out of sight. But, I knew.

"Tara, maybe they should go. They are restless and know something is wrong. Pops and I will keep them safe."

"Nobody will get near them. You have my word." It wasn't that I didn't trust Pops and Kyle's aunt. I just worried about them.

"Please, Mommy." I could be a hard ass on a lot of things. When Abel gave me those big baby blue eyes that begged. I was a push over.

"Alright you can go. Behave and mind."

Silence was hard to adjust to. We had always spoke our mind, lent the other a comforting shoulder and talked about everything. Like best friends do. Only, Kyle had went mute. They had been gone an hour and not one single word from him.

He stood outside by the line of trees at the fence. I joined him and still not a word. So, I tried to start the conversation. "Did they find Jax? Juice warned me, you don't think Jax had something to do with it, do you?"

"No, they haven't found him. Jax didn't do that to his own guys. He maybe a little on the crazy side but he isn't insane."

"Kyle." With the sound of his name. Jax's whereabouts were no longer a mystery. He was here to deliver my punishment. I knew, it was about over for me.

Kyle was quick on the draw. While Jax didn't even try to. "It doesn't have to end like this. Just walk away, Jax."

"We both know it does have to end and I'll never walk away." Jax inched closer to us. It was his strong point, face fear and never backed down. I'd witnessed it many times, only this time, it worked against me. "Tara always had a thing for the wounded. I'm not really surprised she took to you. You couldn't keep a hold of your own family, so you took mine. You should've listened when I told you to leave my family alone." He got about half the way, before he stopped. His eyes floated from Kyle to me. "I love you. But, I can't let you leave with my sons or Op's kids either. There is nowhere you can hide from me."

"Go in the house, Tara." I heard Kyle, I still just stood there. With a little shove I started on my way. I looked over my shoulder with each step I took. Behind the screen door, I continued to watch what transpired between them.

"It's time to settle this shit. You're weak Kyle, you always have been." Jax was only a couple of feet from Kyle now. "Do it." His scream was almost a plea from Jax for Kyle to pull the trigger.

As Kyle didn't make a move, Jax smirked. "You really are weak. I win either way. If you kill me, the club will hunt you down, slit your fucking throat while they make Tara watch. Either way, you're dead." Jax threw his gun to the ground. Followed by his knife. Waited out Kyle's next move.
"I'm strong enough to kill you, Jax." Kyle mimicked him. Tossed his gun to the ground. They would settle it the outlaw way. A fight to death.

It was brutal and bloody between. On the inside and what they done to each other. Jax broke off the antenna of the truck. He beat Kyle with it then stuck it deep in his arm.

For Kyle to pull it out like he felt no pain. He wrapped it around Jax's neck and left no gap while Kyle choked him with it.

George was going crazy. The snarls worsened as the loud growls became prominent. She clawed a hole in the screen door. I tried to stop her from going out there. I wasn't sure she would survive it. It was too late, she made her way out.

Sophia done the same. Only they went in a different direction than Kyle and Jax were. In the moment I realized that our traumas never really go away. They lived inside of us, in the deepest darkest pits of our own tiny hell. Cocked and loaded, waiting for someone to come along and pull the trigger. It was going on before me, now.

So rapidly, the sky seemed to split, it chose a side. The white puffy clouds couldn't hold on any longer, couldn't outshine it. They were swept silently away. From the porch it was infinite shades of gray we were in the middle of. The same ghostly color flickered around through the air. It was a final curtain of gauzy gray that took completely over.

The wind rushed in anger across the field. Swirled the grass in different directions, it was followed by a faint violet pallet across the horizon. Veiled in a haze. Lightening struck hard as it lit up the quickly darken sky, black as ink. Jagged spears came down in patterns that were staged around us.

It plunged us in to a blanket of darkness we hadn't known yet. We became prisoners to the storm. When the crows commanded, the captive must obey. Kyle and Jax didn't pause from their fight or even notice. But, I knew.

With the crows in route, on their way to us. They flew on wings of change coming. I looked up to witness it. Only this time, I was awake. It wasn't a dream. When the wind shifted, so did the temperature. Chest crushing heat went to a cold chill, it made my spine tingle. The fog rose up from the ground until it made the green disappear around my feet.

The course the crows took, one after another landed to lead the way. A formation of the hundred was built as far as you could see across the field. It was a maddening chorus of squawking from them. They were mediating the soul.

It approached through the path of crows with a trail of fading light behind it. Bathed in ritual smoke of hell. It proved even outlaws and demons could be saturated in hope and prayers as the angels were.

"Enough." It was a roar of a lion. His command made the ground quack. You could feel it down to your inner core.

The biggest disbeliever was Jax. "JT?"

However, I was a true believer. I knew why John Teller returned, to right his wrongs. He started with his sons. His spirit might not elaborate on the purgatory he spent his life in. Or the tribulations he couldn't conquer with the sadness and gloom while his heart broke. But, I bet he could help guide them to the righteousness of the light. He was their bridge to the past. Today was a map of the presences.
My children were the salvation to our future.

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

The rest of the chapters will be posted at once to finish it. In a week or so after, I will post the story key for it too. I want to hear your opinions on a lot of things from it. The good and what you don't agree with as well. The only way to see things differently is to see it through someone’s eyes.

Thank you for staying with the story. You have made it fun for me to write!
Chapter 37
Angels and Outlaws

Part 1 of 14

Author's Note:

The ending became a lot of chapters. I never intended for it to be over a 100,000 words to close out the story. It is extremely a long read for you guys but I don't want to shorten it to just finish. I have invested a lot of time in it, you have as well.

So, I am posting about half of it now and the rest will follow. I hope you will stay with me because there is a lot of story left to tell. With the final chapter, I think it will all make sense.

Each character has been on their own journey throughout the story. Some made their own outcome of what would happen to them; Tig, Bobby, Thomas and others. If you stop and think about it, each of them have created what is in store for the future by what they done in the past. When it was time for the good to surface and when it was time to be evil; yes, both Jackson and Kyle done this. What will happen to another character; Gemma and Tara made a lot of those decisions. Why is was all nessacary; John, Jackson, Kyle, Thomas, Able and baby Thomas determined most of it.

Once I post the story key. I would love to hear from you with your opinions. You don't have to leave it in a review, you can send a PM. Different views is what makes this great.

Chapter 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 have been posted. Make sure to read them all. This isn't the end yet. We still have another 6 or 7 chapters to go.

A lot of shit had changed since that fateful day we stood before him. We were judged on a whole new level. Yet, still a lot of things stayed the same and even some became better. My children were the center of the universe for me and always would be. What I done on that day to get them out, ended up saving us all to some degree.

If the cause you fought for was important enough to you, you gave everything you had until you drew your last breath. Somethings, were just a lost cause in the fight. You had to be smart enough to know the difference. We all got hurt in life, crushed until we had nothing left to give. You just had to figure out what was worth suffering for.

There were so many uncertainties of life for us. Although, I embraced them as they came much as I did the ones I loved. As it altered the path I took, I learned a lot. Not only about others but, about myself. Some of the most beautiful chapters of our lives, couldn't be given an appropriate title until later on. When we seen where those uncertainties led us to, how modification played out and why adjustments were nessacary.

Kyle wouldn't ever talk about it with me. It was the only big block between us. There was something he wouldn't say, information he withheld from me. I could never figure out what happened with John, Jax and Kyle. What I knew for certain, the chaos passed us by. It went in one direction and we
Through the living room big picture window, I watched my sons, Abel and Kenny, throw a baseball to each other. Most of the time, Abel was chasing it around the yard. While Thomas done his best not to fall down as he walked around in the grass in his new shoes. He was getting to be a big boy now. My sweet Ellie, she had her feet propped up on the rail of the wrap around front porch. Her toes were painted blood red. They hadn't dried yet because she was fanning them with her magazine.

My family wasn't perfect. This moment sure felt like they were though. I brought the cup up to my lips as I continued to watch them through it. It was something I enjoyed to do. Daily, I seen them pass by the same window. Or I looked out of it to check on them. Even the occasional yell from them came through it, they were hungry and got my attention.

Ellie was in the same place when I went out. I joined her in the rocking chair beside her. This was my favorite spot on the property. We exchanged wild drunken nights out, jumping out of airplanes and chaos. For sipping ice tea on the porch in the evenings while we rocked babies.

"Where is he?"

"I think they are in the barn." Ellie continued to fan away. In a few short months, she had blossomed to a beautiful young lady. It wouldn't be long until a line of boys formed around her. We wouldn't be able to keep them away.

With Thomas' hand in mine. We took a walk. Everything was a new adventure and exciting to him at this age. He loved to do this with me. It became a ritual for us. If we saw one of god's little creatures I would tell him what it was. Or we would pick flowers and apples together.

"Bunny. Mommy, Bunny." His vocabulary expanded with more new words every day. We had scads of bunnies around. Yet, he always pointed it out to me when he saw one.

"The car looks great."

"It's staring to."

Boomer and Kyle fixed up the old car I bought for Ellie. Once it was restored, you would have never guessed it to be so broken down before. You could make a lot of thing brand new again when they were polished and shined. Human were the same.

Everyone assumed Kyle and I were a couple. Even though we weren't. It was just a speculation because we lived under the same roof and raised the kids together. The one I thought would fight it the most, didn't at all. Jax just walked away and left me in peace. Deep down, I knew it had something to do with John Teller. But, I never knew what for certain.

For a couple of months, I took time off. Down time with my children. To get them settled in a new house, a new school. A new way of life. They adjusted well to it quickly. The only one who worried me at times was Abel. There was a constant nagging feeling which was unexplained. I had to protect him above and beyond the other children. My motherly instincts kicked in on overdrive when it came to my son.

"Are you sure Cody won't be too much trouble?" A pregnant Nicole waddled her way from the car to the barn. She and David were taking a vacation for a week. Their only time to celebrate a honeymoon before he had to deploy out again.

"He will be fine. Abel will love having him here."
Abel and Cody were closer than ever. They were truly brothers from different mothers. Since they only lived a few miles away, the boys saw each other almost every day.

After Kyle bought this house, they bought theirs and we were neighbors. He sold his others to help pay for it. I used some of my money to buy furniture and other household items we needed. But, not working and taking on new expenses had taken its toll on the pocket.

Even my career went in a brand new direction. It scared the hell out of me to do it to take the plunge. The thought of failing was not an option. So, I took the risk anyway with encouragement from Kyle. I bought an old building along with medical equipment with the money Thomas left me and most of my retirement. I started my own practice and sunk everything I had in it along with my heart. Sure, it was a very risky move. But, most moves I had made in life were.

As I stated before, life wasn't perfect for us. The bitch coming up the driveway reminded me so. "Kyle, you have company."

He wiped his greasy hands on a towel and peeked out the barn door. His face fell as soon as he seen the car. "What the fuck does she want?" I could have answered his question, money. Yet, I didn't because I knew his ex-wife would hassle him enough.

She got paid when he sold their house. About once a month she made an appearance for more. She used their son as a pawn in her game. Who didn't like to have nice things and excess money. I bought myself stuff when I could. But never done it at the expense of my children.

Her hands immediately went to her hips when she existed the car. He got the sob story to start with just like she always done it. When it didn't work, she got real nasty about it.

"No." Kyle stood his ground with her and didn't falter away from his stance. She didn't care for the new non pushover he became much.

"You are worthless as a father. Just like you were as a husband."

"I've already told you, no more money until I get visitations for my son. If Zach needs something, I will buy it for him. But not another dime to you."

She caved and left finally. I knew she wouldn't give up this easily and would be back soon. Sometimes, it was just easier to give them what they wanted to get them out of your life.

The way Kyle beat on shit in the barn, I would say, he was still pissed off. Zach was his son. When I thought about it, even I caved. "Maybe she does need the money for Zach."

"If my son needs something, I will pay for it. I have four other children to think about now and their well being. I'm not giving her anymore money." He snatched up his t-shirt off the car to go shower. So we could go to town.

"It's about time." It seemed to please Nicole, what her brother had done.

Part of me was pleased as well. They were our children in his eyes, all four of them. The other part, probably the mother part, wanted to feel at least a little bad for his ex-wife. But I couldn't bring myself to because I felt she had ulterior motives with Kyle.

"Have a great time and don't worry about Cody." Thomas and I saw the honeymooners off. They were anxious to get their vacation started.

"Are you ready, girl?" The kids sure were. They had already piled in the car while they waited for us.
to get there.

The long drive to town gave me time to reflect. I actually didn't mind it. Sometimes, it was the only alone time I had. Other times, I enjoyed listening to the kids interact with each other. Then, there were those long rides when all they done were bicker with each other. Even those moments I treasured. They truly acted like brothers and a sister.

When we got to Wal-Mart the boys went with Kyle. Ellie usually stayed with me. She was old enough to wander off if she wanted to go look at something on her own.

The long grocery list unfolded when I pulled it out of my purse. We would be here for an hour for sure to get this done. When you fed six people every meal, it got expensive fast. When I turned around to talk to Ellie, I didn't even bother. She was busy checking out two teenage boys. They were staring back at her too.

"Young love." I went on to get what we needed. She would catch up with me soon.

Before I got half of the list checked off even. The cart was almost full. With a long sigh. "Ellie, will you go get another cart?"

Ellie hadn't made it back yet before I seen the boys. They had fishing poles, tackle boxes, lawn chairs and worms in their hands for all the kids. Two tents and other various camping equipment as well. Then each kid dropped off an arm load of snacks in the cart.

"What is all this?" We talked about our spending habits on the way here. Food alone for the six of us cost a small fortune a month. "Kyle, you can't keep giving them whatever they want."

"I'm taking the kids camping and fishing down by our pond. They're little once, girl."

"Please, Tara."

"Please, Mommy."

"Please, Tara."

"Peaz, Mommy."

Thomas was the last one to get in on the chain of pleads. He had his Snoopy pole clutched in his hands. Their little faces crowed around the shopping cart. As they waited for my answer.

"Please, girl." Kyle stuck out his bottom lip after he said it.

"Okay. But just this time. We have to get on a budget and stick to it." Sure, Kyle agreed with what I said now. But, when the kids wanted something or to do something. He would forget all about this conversation.

A big smiled crossed my face as I watched them all excited about the trip to the pond they were taking. They were only little once. However, I didn't smile much at the check out lane. When she said the total came to eight hundred dollars. Although, Kyle paid for most of it.

The tattoo shop he bought was only a couple of blocks from my building. He had already got some business from it. I never knew just how much money people spent on them until now. He made hundreds of dollars for a couple hours of work. Which, he probably spent most of what he made this week today.
After we went home and put everything away. I got the kids dressed in old clothes. It was a work day for me. I wanted to get most of the inside painted today in the office. My grand opening was only a couple of weeks away. It would be my break it or make it time.

The kids, they had other ideas. Cody and Abel put more paint on each other than the walls. Kenny played his game in the corner. Little Thomas curled up on the floor and fell asleep.

"Come on boys. You can go with me." Kyle took them with him when it was time to do a tattoo. It just left me and Ellie. Actually, it went quicker. I cranked up the radio while we worked. When a certain song came on, it took me to the past. One of the good days from it. Before long, we were both singing along with it.

"If you like pina coladas and get caught in the rain..."

We painted to the rhythm of what came on radio. We giggled sometimes too. But, she and I got a lot done by the time the boys got back.

"Looks good, girl. Are you excited about the grand opening?"

"Yes...no." I had mixed emotions about it. Yet, I knew this was the right decision. Thomas would stay in my office with a nanny, at least until he got older or the office got extremely busy. I would always be around to make sure he was taken care of. Once my practice got off the ground, I had the opportunity to make more money than ever before. It would take a lot of hard work and long hours before any of that happened.

"Are we there yet?" Abel must of asked twenty times on the way home. He wanted to get down to the pond. Once Kyle parked my car. The boys took off running. They were on a mission. "Have fun and be careful." Of course, I mostly talked to myself because they didn't hear a damn word I said to them.

Thomas came inside with me and Ellie. He played with the juice boxes while we put the food away. The cabinets were stocked to the hilt. By the end of the week my cupboards would be empty again.

We didn't have a huge mortgage to pay, the house was paid for. Which, I was grateful. If we had a another large monthly payment to make, it would make life a lot harder. Thomas was largely responsible for us not being financially strapped. As generous as he was with me, I never understood why.

After we were done. Ellie fed my baby. While I went to care for his uncle's baby.

He trotted around the coral when I called for him. Kyle made sure he had a home too. There was acreage he could run on and a barn to relax in at night and to get out of the weather when he wanted.

"You miss Thomas don't you." I bought him a bag of carrots at the store. It was Apollo's favorite treat. He nudged me with his large head while he downed a couple more carrots. He wanted petted. He wanted to feel the love of his master again. He wanted to know someone cared. "I miss him too."

"Horsie." Thomas held up by Ellie to the top of the wooden slat of the fence. Ran his little hand over Apollo.

A whinny came from Apollo as Ellie lowered Thomas down to the ground. The horse's eyes peeped through the break in the fence to watch my son's every movement.
Ellie went back in the house. But I noticed something I never had before. The horse moved when Thomas had. He never strayed far from my baby. "Apollo." I struck a carrot through the fence to attract him back to me. With no prevail, he didn't come.

When I picked up my son, the horse followed in every direction we went. So, I done it in the opposite. I set Thomas down under the tree. Apollo was fixated on him. I broke my own rule. I went inside where the large horse was.

As I grabbed a hold of his bridle, his head shot in the direction to where Thomas still set. A unsubscribed feeling came over me. I let go immediately and closed the gate.

"We're setting up camp." The boys breezed by me on their way inside.

"What's wrong, girl?"

"Nothing." Before I went through the door, I glanced over my shoulder to Apollo. "Everything is right."

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You can't change what is going on around you. Until you change what is going on within you.

Unknown Author

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It is not the stars to hold our destiny but within ourselves.

William Shakespeare

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Therefore, we do not loose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away,

yet inwardly, we are being renewed day by day.

Corinthians 4:16

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"This mad dog. Ellie's uncle. He just got out of prison." The boy gulped when Kyle slapped Boomer on his muscular bare chest.

"Are you eying me boy?" Boomer towered over this young man. His muscles rippled when he gritted his teeth.

"No, sir." This poor child was petrified of them. If I didn't stop this shit soon, he would leave and break Ellie's heart.

"Hi. I'm Tara, won't you come in." I escorted him personally past the assholes to the living room. "Have a seat. Ellie is almost ready."

Boomer set on one side of the boy and Kyle on the other. The poor boy scooted his butt to the edge of the seat cushion. He was ready to run.

But, they didn't let up on him either. Boomer laid his pistol on the coffee table. With bugged out eyes
the boy glanced in his direction. Kyle didn't let him of that easily even. He pulled back the slide and let go when the bullet loaded in the chamber of his gun.

"I never miss." The coy smile Kyle gave the boy was almost a smirk.

"Can I see you in the kitchen for a moment?" When he wouldn't budge from the couch. Or stop torturing the boy. "Now, Kyle."

Once I could tear him away. So the boy couldn't hear our conversation. "What the hell are you doing? They are just going to get something to eat and come right back. I trust Ellie."

"Do you remember how it all started with us, girl? We just went for a cup of coffee."

"Damn. Good point. Okay, only scare him a little. Not enough to chase him off."

Kyle didn't get the chance to do anything else when we returned to our guest. Our daughter made a grand entrance in her blue and white tank dress. All eyes were on her and she handled it well. She made me a proud mama. Of course, she did ignore Kyle and Boomer all the way out the door.

They only made it halfway down the sidewalk when Kyle wanted to talk to her before she left.

"Kyle." Ellie was irritated with a roll of her eyes. Whatever Kyle pressed in her hand, she shoved in her purse quickly. Although, she was all smiles and couldn't get to the car fast enough. The boy even held the door open for her to get in.

We watched our little girl, now almost a woman. Pull away on her first date. "What did you give Ellie?" He shrugged and tried to play it off. "Kyle."

"Mace." The shocked look on my face must have said it all. "It was just a little." Now, I had to roll my eyes like my daughter had done.

For the next hour. He must have checked his watch fifty times and paced the floor. I tried going on with my normal evening routine. I had to admit, it was strange to set down at dinner time and Ellie's spot to be empty. This was when we all came together as a family at the end of the day. With her gone, it didn't seem right.

"She's late."

"Only by five minutes. Will you relax, Kyle."

"Nope." He swung the front door open to find Ellie on the front porch in the rocking chair.

"Did you have fun?" Since Kyle didn't say anything to her, I done it.

"I did. We are going out again Friday night."

Kyle took off towards the barn. He didn't want to hear the details of our daughter's night out. But it was the first of many to come.

"I'm going to bed." My daughter had stars in her eyes and smile that could light up the night on her face. "Thanks for the new dress."

"You're welcome, honey. Goodnight."

Now to address the one who wasn't having such a pleasant evening. Kyle kept himself busy with doing absolutely nothing in the barn. "We have to let her grow up." This too was a conversation of
many to come. So I got it out now.

"She's just a little girl."

"No. Kyle, she is not a little girl. Ellie is becoming a woman."

"It's not how I see her. I just want to protect her and I want them to have more than you and I did. You know what falling in love with the wrong person does to you."

"I also know what falling in love with the right person does to you as well."

Kyle's hand came up to my face. His thumb ran gentle over my cheek bone. "Yeah. I know too, girl." He cleared his throat and broke away from me. "We have to address that issue sooner or later."

"Yes we do. But, not tonight." Arm and arm we walked slowly back to the house. I looked up at the stars on occasion and it made me smile like my daughter had.

We checked in on the kids before we called it a night. "Goodnight, girl."

He gave me a kiss on the forehead before he went to his room and I went to mine. I grabbed a blanket ad curled up in the chair by my bed. Darkness had become my friend over time. I could sit for hours in it; not afraid, not bitter, not with the feeling of being alone. Just pondering life. The way it had been, the way it was and the way I wanted it to become.

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Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only the light can. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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There isn't enough darkness to snuff out the light of one little candle.

William Shakespeare

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The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 1:5

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"This is bullshit. I take care of them and love them as they are my children."

"Mrs. Teller, it doesn't matter. You are not living within the guidelines to adopt the children. You are married to one man and live with another. Your husband is a convicted felon. Unfit for the children to be around in law's eyes."

"But we do not live together. So Jax shouldn't matter and why was he notified of the court hearing?"

"Because, it is state law. A married couple must agree to any adoption. You could always reconcile with your husband and always go back to him. Then, what will happen to the children? The court will do what is in the best interest of Ellie and Kenny."
"What is in their best interest, is to be with someone who loves and cares about them."

"Mrs Teller, I will warn you. They will probe your current living arrangement. They could possibly deem it unfit for your children as well."

"So, you're saying, I could loose my sons because of it?"

"As your attorney, it is my job, to give you all the possibilities."

Loss was like a wind, it either carried you to a new destination or it trapped you in an ocean of stagnation to drown. There was no worse fear for a parent then your child being ripped away from you. It didn't matter how or why. The pain I felt was incomparable. The days until our court hearing was filled with sorrow and sadness. When we got ready to leave I hugged each of my children to me and told them how much I loved them. I just hoped it was enough to get us through this bump in the road of life.

"You don't think Jax will show up today, do you?"

"I doubt it. He hasn't fought you on the boys. I seriously doubt he will fight you over Kenny and Ellie." Out of the corner of his eye, Kyle continued to watch me. "Are you nervous you'll see Jax?"

"Yes. Aren't you?"

"Nope."

Then those fears turned to reality. "Son of a bitch." The people in front of us turned around to look at me. I said it rather on the loud side. When I seen him, I couldn't help myself. "He's here."

It was the first time I had seen him. We had no other communication since I left Charming. To be perfectly honest, I liked that way too. Since, this was the path I'd chosen I had no choice except walk down it. To finish what I'd started.

Jax set on the wooden bench outside the judge's chambers. He looked straight forward at the wall so intensely. I only caught a brief side view of him before I headed back down the hall out of sight. His appearance wasn't the same though. This short period of time had changed him. He had lost weight and looked on the withered tired side. He appeared older than I remembered him.

The back of my head rested on the wall in the long hallway. There was no way in hell I was going around him. All the thoughts were bouncing in and out of my direct view. I didn't let out a clean breath until I heard them call his name.

But then again, what Jax would say to the judge left me shivering with fear. I had already been painted as a terrible mother, a whore who sinned in front of her children. The lawyer warned me I put Abel and Thomas in the cross hairs by proceeding forward with this. Yet, I still had to. Who would fight for Kenny and Ellie if I bailed on them? The court could split them up in different foster homes. Then they wouldn't even have each other anymore.

With Donna's cross clutched in my hand. "I promise I won't let them go. I'm really trying to keep us all together." When I opened my eyes. I was startled to see him before me.

"I wanna see the boys, Tara. If you don't let me, you won't like how I handle it." When he spoke he brought me out of the fog of thoughts that ran through my mind. The tone in Jax's voice turned colder when he spoke to Kyle instead of me. "If I catch you in Charming again, that agreement, is off the table."
It wasn't enough I had to deal with this. Now, I had Jax back in the boy's lives. Thomas and Abel had done so well, progressed so much. For this to take them a step backwards. If I didn't let Jax see the boys, it would be hell on. It could make it worse on my sons. If I allowed it, it could still make it worse on my sons.

"What agreement?" A few minutes had passed by before I caught what Jax actually had said to Kyle.

"I don't know what Jax is talking about." Kyle brought his arms tightly around my waist.
"Everything will okay."

"Are you sure?"

"If I have to, I will move out so you can keep Ellie and Kenny. They belong with you. You can stay at the house with them."

"Where will you go?"

"I'll rent a place or something. I'm not leaving, girl. I'll still be there for you and the kids. Okay?"

Out of all the sins I committed. Love was what I was punished for. No matter how I tried to justify Kyle and I in my own head, I couldn't to a judge of the court of laws and rules. I couldn't loose Kenny and Ellie either, no matter the cost. No mother could choose a man over her children, no matter how much she loved him. You couldn't let your children pay for your sins, no matter how much it would destroy you to let go.

"Tara?"

"Okay. You will move out if you have to."

We knew what we had to do to keep the family together and safe.

Where there is love there is no sin.

Unknown Author

Love, love madly, love more than you can and if they say that it's sin. Love your sin and you'll be innocent.

William Shakespeare

Above all love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Peter 4:8

I hope you have enjoyed reading me!
Please forward to the next chapter posted...
Life changed before our eyes. Today was a big one. I had locked down my future and what it held in time to come. With a pair of scissors in hand, I cut through the long red ribbon that hung on the door. The kids and Kyle put it on there for me to feel special and show their support for my dreams.

"The clinic is officially open."

We went out for a family celebration afterwards. The kids loved pizza and that's the place we found. A place they could have fun and we could just sit down to relax while they done so. Even though tomorrow was brand new day. The fear of failure still stoked the anxiety. If I failed at my practice, it wasn't just myself on the line. My family's well being was too.

Fear to change was the enemy of success. We all liked a cozy, neatly wrapped life. Where we knew where we were going to, the safe route to take to get there. Especially, what to expect once we arrived at our desired destination. Surprises were great in life as long as they were the good ones. The bad ones, not so much.

Growth was impossible without change. Just as growth and comfort cannot coexist with one another. If you were never allowed to change your mind on things. You never learned anything new nor progressed in life to new perspectives. However, it also meant plenty of risk involved as well.

It was the one thing Gemma, Jax or the club never excepted or understood, change from their way of life. She pushed everyone to stay in the realm of a comfortable surrounding. Kill it if it disagrees with you, causes a problem or fuck it up if it gets in your way. I fell in the trap as well when I became more like her.

But, no more. I wanted my children to explore all their options and determine for themselves the best path in life to take. Not that I wouldn't disagree with them from time to time. It was impossible for them to grow without making their life their own. No matter what though, I would always be there to catch them when they fell from grace or fell on hard times.

From Thomas' room, I watched my baby sleep in blissful rest. I rocked my way throughout the dark night. I sipped hot tea until I finally got drowsy enough to lay down.

The knowing of yourself was just the beginning of wisdom. Tonight, I lay my head with the wisdom of letting all the stress and worries go for a few hours. To let the comfortable sleep and positive thoughts of the future take them over. I would worry about tomorrow when it came. I looked at the clock once more before I finally drifted off.

Once I got up to stop the alarm from blaring and showered, the morning started. So did the next chapter in life and my future. Was I ready for it? I honestly wasn't sure.
Yet it was too late to back out now. As most things I had done in the past were, it was too late to reverse it. Today forward would write itself. The story of the history I made or how I should have done things differently.

Although, I spent the entire day pacing the floor waiting on someone, anyone to stop in. But, they didn't. You had to build a practice over time and I knew that going in to it. It still didn't make the day any better.

"They will come." We were watching The Field of Dreams on television. After I put in an exhausting day of doing absolutely nothing at my new job behind me.

"You built the clinic, they will come, girl."

"Yeah, they will." Sure I spoke those words with confidence. It didn't change the outcome though. After one week went by and not a single patient. I started to doubt my decisions. Then out of nowhere. I heard a voice ask the receptionist if we had an appointment available.

It was only a simple cold she had. But, she got the royal treatment from me. As I would give all my patients. This was solved with antibiotics, a smile and the love of healing people. Now, I only hoped I would see another person before two more weeks ticked on. Not to mention I had racked up a pile of bills to pay.

The necessary evil came of figuring out how much I owed and had to payout. Which, it killed off the afternoon easily. Before I went home I wrote a check to the receptionist.

As an older person who was retired. She welcomed the small salary to do the job. After I heard her story, it was more about getting out of the house and have a social life than the money. That was good for me at least. This job wouldn't pay much at first and I couldn't offer her any benefits at the moment. Yet, she didn't mind it.

After I locked the door behind her. I couldn't wait to reach the sanction of my four walls at home. A place where I wasn't judged, I could relax and most of all see the ones I loved.

Kyle had the kids doing their choirs when I arrived. He believed disciplined children were better behaved children. They all had jobs to do daily, then weekly. I had to admit, he was fair with them but stern as well. He brought the right balance to their lives.

If you watched my children, they worked together to get things done. At times, I didn't even need to say help out the other. They just done it on their own.

"Hi, Mommy." Abel gave me a quick greeting on his way out the door behind Kyle and Kenny.

"Hi, baby."

Once the work was done, it was play time. The boys threw a baseball around or football. Tonight, they were working on Kenny's swing. We signed him up on a youth league and he loved it. It gave him a sense of belonging to something outside of home. There he was just a common little boy with no past for anyone to judge. It was the best part about the move, no one knew anything about us.

Since they would be awhile I went to start dinner. But it was already done for me. The table was set and a huge pot of chili along with a big pan of hotdogs was on the stove.

It left laundry on my to-do list. Only Ellie was on top of that. The washer was going and so was the dryer. She had a folded basket of clothes ready to be put away. It was a task I would complete. With
as many people we had living here. There was a ton of clothes, towels and blankets to do daily.

The house looked good and smelled amazing when I took one final inspection of what was left to do. This was a new concept for me. I didn't have full responsibility anymore for everything. It was shared between us. With the hours I had put in at the clinic, I leaned on Kyle even more I found.

With my hair up in a ponytail I put on a t-shirt and pair of short. The summer was coming to an end. Soon it would be cooler, get dark earlier and we wouldn't spend so much time outside. But, for now I enjoyed watching the boys play from the front porch in my rocking chair. From the chair I took a different view. I was the queen of my castle.

For me, when I done something, I usually done it all the way or nothing. It included good things and bad as well. Since we started the tradition of setting out here in the evening just to enjoy the time we spent together. From this spot, it was anything you wanted it to be; the past, the present or the future. It began here with us and it would end here too. I would rather rock in my old age and only regret a few things. Than I would to regret never trying.

Our relationship was something still up in the air with no definite path to take or direction to go in. For now, it was enough just the way it was.

Thomas was tired already of running around as he took his time getting up the stairs. He crawled up in my lap. It was a pleasant time with my baby in my arms and to see my others so happy today.

"Tara, they just called you." The message Ellie handed me ended that great feeling I just had. The lawyer wanted me to call. It was the decision I dreaded to hear and paced the floor at night to finally get. My trembling fingers dialed the number.

"The judge has reached their decision. Can you and Mr. Brandon be in their chambers in the morning?"

"Yes."

We search every single avenue we could take to keep our family together. To not lose our babies. The night couldn't pass quickly enough.

Yet, I must have checked on my children so many times throughout it. I knew it wouldn't change the outcome. I knew they wouldn't come in the middle of the night and tear them away from me. I knew I had to keep my family together at all cost.

"What do you think the judge will say?"

"I don't know, girl."

"Do you think they will allow you to adopt them?"

"I don't know, girl."

The questions we had were about to be answered. The attorney came to get us. She did offer words of advise before we went through the justice doors.

"Be yourselves. Answer the questions honestly." I hated to tell her honesty sometimes was over fucking rated. It only put you in a worse situation than you started out in.

"Before we begin. I would like to show you something." The judge picked up a remote from her
Poor Kenny looked scared while she asked him questions. He only spoke when spoken to. His answers were most of the time only yes or no. But it was at the end. It made me cry.

"Please don't take us from Kyle and Tara. Other than Mommy and Grandpa they are the ones that loves us." It also amazed me Kenny spoke of Piney. He must still have thoughts of his grandpa and missed him so much. With them was the only time I seen Piney become gentler, he cared for them. He loved them the only way he knew how. Maybe it was true what they said, you can correct the mistakes you made with your children when you had grand children.

Kenny would suffer the most from this. His sister would soon be old enough to make her own decisions. But, he was just a child. Persons in dysfunctional families characteristically learned from a young age that not feeling was necessary for psychic survival and they become damaged for life. It was what I learned from my own family growing up.

His mother sacrificed her life, so they could have a better one. I would do everything in my power to make it happen. Donna would not have died in vain.

It was my daughter's turn, my very outspoken daughter. That melted my heart. "Tara is like the sun. She is always there for us. We feel her warmth she passes on. Mommy wants us to be with her." I had brief moment of a relapse from the past. I couldn't breathe, I felt the weight of the world on my chest just baring the worry down on it. If I lost them, it would crush me.

When Kyle touched my hand. I tried to go back to watching Ellie and to wait on my own internal melt down for later. "Kyle treats us like his children. I've never felt as protected and stable as I do with them. Not even when my father was around, when he wasn't in jail." I wasn't certain which child made me cry the hardest. Yet, I was a blubbering mess.

"Mrs. Teller, are you alright to continue?" I only nodded to the judge. "It is my job to determine what is in the best interest of the children. What is the most suitable. It's not always an easy task."

The judge gave us the same speech we already expected. She would not allow Kyle to adopt them on his own either. Without going through due process which could take months or years for that matter. It would end up a legal court battle to keep them with us.

"I have served my country, I pay my bills, I have no record of anything bad and I love those kids. This is bullshit..."

"Mr. Brandon, no one is saying you haven't served your country. It is the only reason I am allowing this hearing. Your record is impeccable. But, that doesn't make you in a suitable living condition for the children."

"What if Tara and I were married? Can we adopt them then?" My head shot directly at Kyle. The look on my face should have said it all.

"It is not the situation today you are in and that is what I will rule on. I am however extending the temporary custody to Mrs. Teller for three more months. In those months; there will be mandate home inspections, court check ins for the children and constant contact with updates to the court." She banged her gavel. Her words were the law of what would happen. "We will meet again in three months."

Even with these new details. It still left us on the confused side. Our attorney just shrugged when we asked her.
"Your honor, may I ask a question?"

"Go ahead, Mrs. Teller?"

"Was I granted the extension because of the children's testimony?"

"It is due to Mr. Teller's testimony. Which, is why I granted it. If you will excuse me, I am due in court now."

We received no farther explanation from the judge. We weren't given details of what Jax had done or said to her. We weren't told why mercy had been cast for this family. We weren't going to be ripped apart. At least not today.

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Never judge others. You both know good and well how unexpected events can change who a person is.

Always keep that in mind. You never know what someone else is experiencing within their own life.

Collen Hoover

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A turn or two I'll walk. To still my beating mind.

William Shakespeare

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When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority,

but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

John 16:13

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Just when you thought you had a grip on where life would take you next, you really didn't know. At some point, the same universe touched the past, present and it connected to your future. The past gave you an identity which you proudly displayed or totally changed what it once was. The future held the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Both were just illusions.

There were times in our lives when we had to realize our past was precisely what it was, and we couldn't change it or ex sponge it from our memory. But we could change the story told about it. By doing so we changed how the future was formed. The future depended upon what you done today. Life could only be understood backwards; but you had to live it forward to see how it would all turn out. It was the hardest part; should of, could of, would of but didn't.

The light knock came upon my door. After I slipped my robe on, I went to answer. I expected one of the kids who couldn't sleep, needed a drink or got frightened in the dark night. Only I found him, with his bare chest rising and falling with each breath he took in as it pressed against me.
"I don't have the strength to stay away from you anymore, girl."

"Then don't."

While I was in his arms there was no past or future before us, only now. There was no fear or anxiety. There was only two people melting into each other in bliss for hours.

When I try to pinpoint the exact feeling of it I couldn't. It was like a sense of urgency coming over you, taking control of you. But knowing you had all the time in the world with no rush. It was hands, mouths, bodies and souls with no real destination or motive but to be one while together.

It wasn't rushed though, but I was excited to rush into it. We were covered in sweat, but it never even crossed our minds. There was no self-consciousness; just pure, in the moment of ecstasy. It gave me back to myself. A homecoming, into my own body. It unraveled all of my insecurities while it made me more aware of my own sexual being.

Most of those feelings came from feeling safe with him. I could surrender so deeply with him that I would just melt into nothingness. Yet still feel totally loved, adored and wanted by him. He led me where he wanted to go. There was an art to being able to lead and allowing me to follow and vise versa. Sometimes there was a push and pull in our energies.

The guidance from me he excepted allowed my first orgasm to come in a slow vibrating wave. Starting at my ankles, arching into my back and flowing out of the top of my head. It felt like the best drug known to a woman. Until you were both consumed by it, the burning sensation of pleasure. Until your bodies were unable to give the other anything else. Until the next time they met.

Or Perhaps until the sun came up and I felt him move off the bed. Quietly Kyle put his clothes on but not before another knock came. It was Abel, he was hungry.

"I'll stay in the bathroom until you get Abel in the kitchen or something." Kyle had concern for all the children. In most cases, he shown it on a regular bases for Abel. More so than the other children but never would discuss why with me. I pressed him again to see if he would give me an answer this time.

"Thomas is too young, he won't remember all the bad things. Kenny and Ellie they've always seen us as Kyle and Tara. But Abel, he knows who Jax is and still remembers. I..." Kyle was interrupted with little hands knocking on the door again.

"I'm coming, baby."

The rest of them followed after Abel. They were awake, hungry and started their day. We gathered at the table as a family to enjoy some Sunday morning pancakes. Along with the conversations that took place around the table.

With the sticky sweet syrup dripping off them, cinnamon sugar to heighten your senses, topped with a creamy scoop of whip cream to tie it all together. Each bite of this sinful treat was thoroughly enjoyed too.

What I enjoyed in the night time, was just as sweet and sinful. We would slip into the others room after the kids were asleep. Careful to not get caught. While we pleased the other to the early morning hours. We were having an affair in our house and no one cared but us.

Kyle flipped on the new television he bought for his room. The news was on, I could tell before I opened my eyes. When I rolled over, I felt the remote poke me in the back. He was quick to recover it before I could reach it. I thought it was sort of strange. The remote was resting on his chest as I
went to reach for it again.

"No, girl." The more I tried to get it, the higher he held it up in the air.

"Are you serious, I can't touch it."

"Yep. If I leave this house, it's going with me." Then I understood what he meant. He had given up everything in this past relationship and for some reason. This television was what he chose to hold on to for himself.

"You will have sex with me but I can't touch your remote."

"That's right girl, but I got something else you can touch."

It became a fun wrestling match. But then again, they all were in one form or another. We had several rendezvous weekly. It was our little secret. No one was the wiser.

That was until one Saturday morning. We forgot to lock the bedroom door. The kids came through it without knocking. I dove under the covers in Kyle's bed. He kept piling pillows around me in hopes they wouldn't notice the big lump in the middle of it.

"Do you know where Mommy is?"

"Maybe she's is in the kitchen making breakfast."

"I already looked there."

"Maybe she went to town."

"Her car is here."

For everything, reason or excuse Kyle came up with. Abel had a counter for it. It was hot as hell with the covers over my head but I held perfectly still in hopes they were going to leave the room soon.

"Maybe she went to see the dogs."

"Let's go look."

When the little heard of children went down the hallway and the door closed. I quickly shoved down the covers to take in a cool breath.

"Good morning, Tara." To my surprise, there stood Ellie with her arms crossed standing in front of the door. I wasn't certain what to say, we got busted. Although, my daughter had a lot to say still. "You are both adults. You have sex, so what. Get over yourselves. Behave like adults and stop sneaking around about it. You'd ground me if I pulled anything close to this crap and kept it from you."

Once I knew for certain the door closed behind her this time, I got up to get dressed. "I guess she told us."

"I guess she did, girl."

For the rest of the morning, we kept our distance from each other. It wasn't that hard to do. I had a list of things I needed to get done today and so did he. Kyle enlisted Boomer's help on the basement. We had to provide each child with their own room. We had already converted the small study as a
nursery for Thomas. It was next to my room anyway. There still was a problem to be solved by dividing Abel and Kenny up with their own. So, once they finished the basement, Kyle would move downstairs. Then Kenny would take his.

When I walked in from the store, I heard loud noises, banging on stuff and the occasional curse words from downstairs. The guys were still at it. I had spent most of the day doing errands. After I put the groceries away I went to see what was going on.

"You got a lot done today."

"We're getting there, girl."

"How's Nicole?"

"Pregnant, bitchy." Boomer gave a simple explanation. He was home on leave to be here for the birth. Which, she was already overdue a few days.

We took in Cody. Most of the time we had five children so Nicole could rest. It really wasn't any trouble since she had been on her own. Cody was well behaved and spent most of his time with Abel and Kenny.

"What is that noise?" There was a loud buzz that kept passing by the basement window. I heard it several times but never seen anything.

"About that, girl."

Kyle didn't need to explain further as Kenny accelerated at a high speed on his go-cart past me. Then came Abel and Cody around the house in a motorized jeep. A shiny black new toy for them. Complete with light up roll bar on top of it. They weren't going as fast as Kenny but still fast enough.

"I can't believe you bought that. They will get hurt."

"You're a doctor, if they do, you will fix it. You told me I had to let Ellie grow up, you have to let the boys too. Getting hurt is a part of life, bumps and bruises will heal."

My children were the reason I got up every morning. Most smiles, they put on my face. You never comprehended a parent's love until you became one. Or what it must have been like for your own parents to let go. You should never worry when you thought a child wasn't listening well. But you should fear the fact they were always watching you.

Although parents could only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands. Along with what they remembered seeing throughout their childhood. You either influenced their decisions or they made changes to be nothing like you.

"Abel's has a bolt so the accelerator can't go very fast. I should have talked to you first, girl. They get board out here."

"I need to start dinner."

While I chopped potatoes I got out most of my aggression. I had to face it, Kyle was better with the boys about somethings as I was with Ellie on somethings. In the end, we done our children no favors by not allowing them to grow.

"Mommy, are you there? We want to place an order. Mommy." Abel and Cody used the walkie takies like a speaker for a drive through. Before I could get my hands wiped, I was summoned again.
"Mommy."

"Yes, baby."

"We want two juice boxes, please."

"Okay, I'll be right there."

He pulled the jeep as close to the bottom step as he could get. I handed him the juice and they took off once again to play with their new toy. The way they laughed and were so carefree. It was a happy moment he would probably remember when he grew up, I knew I would. I set on the porch in the chair and just watched for a long time. Until I had to get back to dinner.

Kenny needed help with his math and Kyle was there for him. They came in the kitchen and sat at the table so they could spread out his homework. This was another way we helped them grow and expand their minds.

"I'm sorry." Kyle mouthed the words to me. I smiled back because I wasn't angry anymore.

From the frig I took the pitcher of lemonade and poured them a glass. I squeezed Kyle's hand when I set his down. He knew the meaning but kept his focus on Kenny. Just like he should of.

As they worked together on the math problems, I went on doing what was needed to so I could finish dinner. Until I heard something that made me gasp for air.

"If a hooker cost five hundred dollars and condoms cost twenty dollars. If you only have five hundred dollars, what do you do? You go for the blowjob."

"Kyle."

He was right behind me when I turned around to yell at him. With a coy smile on his face. Kenny had already left the room and he was joking around, thankfully.

"By the way, I'm out of condoms girl, so guess what?"

"Oh, I see. You think I should give you a blowjob to please you."

"Everything you do pleases me, girl."

Kyle had the Teller charm for sure from his smile, down to his actions. He never asked me for much in this relationship. Don't skimp on his favorite ice cream with the cheap brand, don't touch his damn remote, if I wanted out tell him first and make time for just us. I would always respect those things. Not because he asked me to because he gave me so much respect back.

The link of a bond was not just one of blood only. Some of the strongest, withstanding bonds of time were from love, respect and the joy you brought each other.

If we lose love and self respect for each other, this is how we finally die.

Maya Angelou

For you, in my respect, are all the world.
The spring storm was coming ahead on the horizon. Another secret of the universe. Sometimes the pain was like a storm that came out of nowhere. The clearest summer could end in an unexpected downpour. It could end in lightning and thunder or move on to another location. The rain drops came down quickly. The shift in the air gave me goosebumps. It was time to go inside. On the steadier rain showers, I loved to sit in my rocking chair and just watch.

Kyle was rummaging through the kitchen drawers for flash lights. It wasn't uncommon out here to have an outage when the damaging winds came. We made sure each child had their own just in case they needed them. Thomas was put in my bed once he fell asleep. He was still little and didn't understand the loud booms of thunder and flashes of light.

He would jump and jerk in his sleep. "Shh baby, mommy is here." My touch would calm him down until the next set of noises came. Before I knew it, I had four babies and two dogs in my bed with me. But I didn't mind.

Once the storm subsided it brought a calming effect over us all. I went outside on the front porch to assess the damage it had done. Even in the dark you could see it uprooted trees, limbs everywhere and we would probably need a new roof with the shingles strung around on the front yard.

The end of a storm also brought on a new beginning of something else. In the middle of the darkness, the rain and the panic mode it sent some in when the warning sirens went off. It brought a new life. Boomer and Nicole's daughter was born, baby Molly. We got a phone call the next morning to let us know.

We went to see the little miracle. She was so tiny wrapped up in a pink blanket with the other babies in the nursery. Through the window nothing compared to the hidden universe of their stare. To see how magical life was through a newborn's wondrous eyes.

Of course, it could have been we looked like freaks to Molly Grace as we made faces through the window at her. It took me back to when my boys were just born. "She is beautiful."

"Yes she is. I'm just glad she doesn't look like her ugly dad." Boomer laughed off what Kyle said as a joke. Yet you could tell they were both a proud dad and uncle of the newest baby girl added to the family.

We offered to take Cody home with us. He slept in chair last night and wasn't that thrilled about being at a hospital. He was however excited about his new sister. He told us all about it on the way home.

Poor Nicole had a rough birth. The doctor had no choice when Molly went in distress but to perform a cesarean. She would need time to heal. It was bad enough on a new mom to care for the newborn. Let alone have a active little boy and her husband had to leave.

Boomer was granted an extension of his leave by a week. We already decided Nicole and the kids
could stay with us until she was ready to do it on her own. What was three more people at the house. Besides, we were now her godparents. Not to mention she had my middle name something her mother insisted upon.

The day passed by quickly, it was the inevitable time to go back to work. I always looked forward to go to the office. Although my business wasn't booming as much as I hoped by now. But, it was headed in the right direction. A few new patients were added daily and I was very grateful for it. When you treated people as people instead of a paycheck, they felt it. It was my goal to triple it in a couple of months.

There was always a lag time during the day with nothing to do. From my desk I stared out the window, it was a beautiful sunny day. The kind that gave you spring fever when you were a child. The flowers started to bloom and the weather was perfect. Since business had picked up, and Thomas became a lot more active, I enrolled him in daycare. He used to fill the void in the day. Now, I mostly took in life from my office window.

"Doctor." My receptionist announced her presence at the door before she entered. She set a large vase of red roses down then went back to her work station.

Happy Birthday, girl. Was all the card said. I gave Kyle a call to tell him thank you. It went to his voicemail. Now, I truly wanted to play hooky and go home early. Unfortunately, I couldn't.

Also, I couldn't wait until the end of the day came. I locked the door about forty five minutes early. Drove like hell to get home then I would change and we could go out to eat tonight, my treat.

The house was dark inside when I pulled up yet his truck was in the driveway. Before I even made it up the stairs, the front porch light flipped on. My sweet Ellie dressed in a black dress with her hair neatly put up in a bun came out to greet me.

"Welcome to Kyle's Play Palace." She was enthusiastic and very energetic with the smiling face and arm gestures. Vanna White had nothing on her at this moment.

"Hi, honey. What's going on?"

"Welcome to Kyle's..."

"I got that part."

Ellie made sure to open the door for me. She stood in front of it as though something was wrong. "Okay, you can go in now."

There stood my son, looking all adorable. In black dress pants and a white button down shirt. The bow tie just completed his outfit. "Hi, Mommy." Then he slapped his forehead. "I mean, hello, my damn." When he gave me a little bow with it and I just wanted to hug him tightly to me. It was truly cute as hell.

"Hello, baby."

"Follow me." Abel held his hand up for me take it. We followed along the rose petal path to the kitchen. The floating candles in jars on the carpet gave a shadow of light on the way.

Then I was greeted by someone else. Cody was dressed exactly like Abel. You couldn't tell from looking at them, that they weren't brothers. "Come on Tara. Uncle Kyle wants us to do this." Cody was more direct than my son about it. But he was adorable too. He even had me close my eyes when he opened the door to patio.
There was no surprise more magical than the surprised of how loved you really were. To my astonishment, my family had planned a surprise birthday party for me. It wasn't something I expected but I had to admit, I loved all of it. The poured so much time into it and love. Just for me.

Joy filled my heart and it wasn't anything I experienced often. With the pure white twinkle lights strung through the trees, they covered the patio as well. Yet it was the more prominent lights my eyes went straight to. They were wrapped around the gazebo. Kyle and the kids had worked on that thing for a month.

Of course, the handsome man leaned against the rail of it hadn't escaped me either. Twirling a long stem rose between his fingers. The twinkle in his eyes almost shown brighter than the lights. His beautiful smile lit up my face with one to match.

Kyle had taught me a lot about love. Any man can love a thousand women and make no commitment. But a good man, loves one woman a thousand different ways and holds no one or thing above her. He was never afraid to show me those either every day. Even we were angry, it didn't last long. He always wanted to make it better, make me happy. Happiness was a state of mind along with what happened around you. If my heart had anymore happiness thrust on me today, it would explode in glee.

Kenny in the same attire as the boys held his arm out to escort me on the bed of rose petals across the yard to Kyle.

"Can I have this dance, girl?"

It was Nicole's cue to turn on the music. She set out on the activities with Thomas and Molly. When Crazy Love started to play. The rest of the kids took a chair around Nicole. They were spectators to all this. Normally a crowd made me nervous, this one, was my peeps and didn't bother me at all.

"Happy Birthday."

Hand in hand we swayed to the music. It was a hidden language of the heart and soul. I could expose mine to him without fear of it being shattered. The dance of love was more than just a motion of intent or the dialogue. One dictated a step and the other carried it out. One determined the direction, the other determined the distance traveled to meet them. One set the pace, the other revealed the grace. One understood the language of the other and knew what was coming next. The one leads with love and respect; never seeing the follower as being weak or inferior to them. And in the same manner, the one following with trust and submission without submitting. There was a blind assurance he would always be there to catch me if I ever fell during this and everything else in life.

When it ended, the song and dance was over. Kyle slowly dipped me and lingered at my neck before he placed a kiss on it.

"Abel, go get mom's present." My son went inside as fast as his legs would take him.

"Happy Birthday, Mommy." I let out a gasp when he held up a plate with a cupcake on it. Around the single candle was a diamond ring.

When Kyle took it off the cupcake and dropped down to one knee, I was speechless. "Will you marry?"

"You know I can't. I'm still legally married to Jax."

"I don't need a piece of paper to tell me you love me and you are my wife. All I need is your heart, girl, beating close to mine forever. Once you put the ring on your finger, I can die a happy man."
Between Kyle and the kids my eyes diverted. Everyone held their breath waiting for my answer. His warm hand traced the outline of my face. "Look at their little faces. They want you to marry me. Abel and I had a talk, he gave me his permission."

"Marry him, Tara." Ellie was the biggest cheerleader in the kids section on the porch.

"Yes." The golden circle of trust was slipped on my finger by Kyle.

We were draped in children surrounding us. They made loud noises, even Thomas. Although I wasn't certain he never knew what was really going on around him.

"Wait, what did she say?" Bless Abel's heart. He didn't know either but he was still excited.

"Mommy said yes, buddy. She will marry me."

"Yay." Abel clapped his hands in approval. Kyle hoisted him up in his arm so we could both hold on to my baby between us. I felt love from my son, a happy love. Which had disappeared from Abel, from all of them, for a while but was glowing brighter than ever. As he hugged both of us to him.

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret.

It is only with the heart one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Now join hands, and with your hands your hearts'.

William Shakespeare

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

Matthew 6:21

Life changed again around us quickly. Just when you thought you had it all figured out and a grasp on it. It took a turn so rapidly it made your head spin.

When I heard the bike coming up our long drive. My stomach shouted out in pain. You could see my heartbeat through the rise and lowering of my shirt; he knew where we lived. I scooped up Thomas in my arms and yelled for the boys to go inside. I handed off Thomas to Kenny so the children wouldn't have to witness this.

"What do you want?"

He looked around me as Kyle came through the door to stand with me on the front porch. Jax lit up a smoke calmly and let out a long breath of smoke. "I came to talk to him."

"No. Don't." I tried to stop Kyle from going down the stairs. Only to find it a futile attempt.
"It's okay, girl. Go inside." Once more I grasped a hold of his shirt and pleaded with him. "We both knew this day would come. Please, go inside."

Even though I done it and locked the door behind me. I watched through the same big window I had on so many joyous occasions. This time was far from it. Every time it became covered with dust or the destruction abandoned by a storm. I cleaned it made it shiny and clean again. It was almost myself I needed to cleanse by doing it. So I could see the world through it.

It wasn't always easy to tell if I was deep in thought process or simply looking out the window at the world with starry eyes. I've felt it was healthier to view it through the window than a mirror. Otherwise, you only saw yourself and whatever you left behind you. This way you could deem and foresee a better future to come in the world. Today, I saw the past come back and slap me in the face through it.

"What the hell can they be talking about?" From the chair by the window I checked my watch again. Over two hours had passed by. Neither one of them appeared angry or mad at the other. But still, something wasn't right. I could feel it.

"I used to watch Jackson and Thomas play out this window when they were little. Almost every day they were in front of it. After Thomas died...died the first time. I never saw Jackson through it again. No matter how many times I looked out of it, I couldn't see him."

When Gemma spoke those words to me, it meant nothing. I didn't understand remotely what she was talking. Somethings, I would never understand what she told me. But, those words of Jax and Thomas had a more significant meaning than I could have ever known at the time. "Sometimes, I would give anything to be as strong as you are, Gemma." Of course she couldn't hear. Nor would she even speak to me. For the most part she pretended I was dead, at least dead to her.

After we put Charming far behind us. Gemma and Nero decided to try the normal life, it's what he craved and needed. In the country house they bought. She didn't exactly fair well raising tomatoes instead of hell.

Although, it wasn't what drove the stake between us. Or the one in her heart. She found out about John Teller. The fact he was going to divorce her and take Jax away. But the biggest kick in the tits, John loved Julia more than her. Or perhaps it was the fact, she and Clay didn't have to plot to kill him or carry it out like they had. John wanted out of their relationship as much as her, maybe even more.

It sent her into a downward spiral. She wasn't only betrayed by her husband she once loved but by me. She would have to admit for there to be betrayal, there would have to have been trust and a bond between us first. Or perhaps, she only seen me as meek and weak. Everything she found out about John Teller and losing her son again was the path to ruination of the last part left of the biker queen.

Gemma called me everything but a woman and vowed to never speak to me again. I just took it because I felt I had earned it and deserved it to some degree. But, I also felt it was exactly what she would have done in the situation. I always thought she would cave to see the boys later on down the road. To this date, she hadn't.

When the front door closed quietly. I was up out of the chair in a flash to find out what transpired between them. Only to be told nothing really.

"He just wanted to talk."

"Talk about what? Come on, Kyle. You were out there for hours."
"This." Kyle placed folded up papers in my hand. "The conditions Jax wants as well."

Jax had signed the divorce papers I filed months ago. My attorney called him numerous times without a return call back. She even visited Charming, for the club to chase her off the property. The fear she felt was all too familiar to me when she stated she would not contact him anymore about it. "What conditions?" This was where I proceeded with caution. Waited for the other shoe to drop on top of me.

"Jax wants to see Abel and Thomas."

To me it was not a justified demand and it would never be met. "No. Absolutely not."

"He is their father, girl."

"Why are you taking Jax's side on this? What is wrong with you?" I was getting past irritated about the entire thing.

"I'm not taking his side. It's the right thing to do and you know it. It's no different than me not getting to see my son." Kyle just wanted to walk away from this conversation. Well, he wasn't going to.

"You said conditions. What are the rest of them?"

"That's between me and Jax."

"The hell it is, Kyle."

We both needed a cool off period. He went to his room and I went to the rocking chair. I rocked my way through my problems. Or until I could have a rational and calm discussion with him.

"Will you tell me what you and Jax talked about, please?"

"I can't tell you what we said, Tara. It is between me and Jax. He just listened to everything I had to say, like I did him." It was a rarity Kyle called me by my name. At this point, I knew in my heart he would give me no further information. No matter how many times I asked. But what he said next, I never expected. "Jax still loves you. You need to be sure its what you want before you file the papers."

"Why would you say that to me?"

"I love you, girl. With all my heart. I just want you to be sure." With a kiss on my forehead he left me sitting alone in the rocking chairs. It felt off for him not to be by my side. It also took my mind to places I didn't like very much. I had to make some decisions that would effect my children either way.

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*It's how we embrace uncertainty in our lives. That leads to great transformation of our soul.*

*Brandon A. Trean*

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*Our doubts our traitors, and make us loose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt.*

*William Shakespeare*
You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 26:3

I hope you have enjoyed reading me!

Please forward to the next chapter posted...
Chapter 39

Angels and Outlaws

Part 3 of 14

Chapter 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 have been posted. Make sure to read them all. This isn't the end yet. We still have another 6 or 7 chapters to go.

The seasons changed around us. When fall came. I truly liked everything about it. The crisp air in the mornings to how the leaves crunched under my feet. While I sipped a cup of hot apple cider, I waited on the kids to get dressed.

"Are you excited, baby?"

"Yep." Abel bounced around as though he was on a sugar high. Although, I knew he hadn't had any yet.

The rest seemed in slow mode while he was in hyper drive. On his own he got two bowls of dog food ready before we left. From the front porch he stood and yelled at the top of his lungs. "George, Sophia, it's time to eat." He was changing before my eyes as well.

Once I got everyone gathered up, we took off for our family outing. The train ride to get there wasn't a long one but I still enjoyed it. So did the kids. With the sun rising, it brought warmth. Although, I liked to inhale a clean breath of stouter weather to come. When I exhaled, your breath left a trail of steamy vapor behind. That's exactly how I viewed it now too; inhale love, exhale hate.

My family couldn't wait to climb on board the train. Me, I could have set for hours as I took in the beauty of the day. The blanket of orange, yellow and red leafs laid on the ground before us. The squirrels scurried from tree to tree to build up their winter supply of nuts. The rays of light peaked through the branches as a beacon of gleams just for me. When you felt focused, positive and happy with everything around you, you shouldn't waste it.

Kyle gave each of them their ticket. Kenny and Abel were making train noises. Ellie read a book in a seat alone. Kyle and I set together with Thomas on my lap. The smile on my face continued to grow. And then, he gave me a smile which seemed so genuinely sweet with just the right touch of shyness that an unexpected warmth rushed through me. It reminded me; sometimes your joy was the source of your smile. Other times, they were your source of joy. It just made you smile automatically.

The ride came to a halt and it was time to make our exit. This wasn't something I thought Ellie would care much about. She led the boys to the pumpkin patch. I watched as she wanted to pick out the perfect pumpkin, at least perfect to her. The boys found more of them than we would buy for them. I got Thomas a smaller one so he could hold it. He and I would share the large pumpkin we would carve later.

They buzzed with excitement, even Ellie. About what design they would put on their pumpkins to make them their very own creation. If we experienced everything like a child, it would all be filled with magic and extraordinary feelings. As an adult, you didn't get that luxury. But there were occasions you got to experience it as much as they did.
"Are you okay, girl?"

"I couldn't be better."

"I'll carry him."

Kyle took Thomas because he was becoming a load to haul around. Also I could hold on to his small ice cream cone so he could lick it. He thought it was cool to use his tongue to get the frosty treat.

"Ice cream kiss."

It became our thing. We would bump our cones together with whatever flavor we got to share with the other. Although, he always got strawberry and I always got salted caramel swirl when I could find it. Abel and Kenny done it so much you couldn't tell which one had chocolate and which had chocolate chip. Ellie thought it was gross and wouldn't let the boys do it to hers.

After we finished our ice cream, we paid for the pumpkins. They would hold them for us until we got back on the train. Kyle wanted to make sure we done everything available. He seemed on a high about today as much as the kids were. He wanted the kids to have fun as much I did.

The petting zoo was a good experience for them. Ellie chose to set that one out as she went back to reading her book. Not Abel and Kenny. We purchased food at each corral so they could feed them. Kyle helped Thomas with the goats. He laughed every time the goat's long tongue touched his little hand.

From a distance I captured it all on film. A picture was a way to hold on to memories you didn't want to forget, the ones you loved, the things you were and never wanted to lose.

"Do we have to go?"

"Yes, Abel. It's time to go home, baby." We spent hours as the kids played in the corn mazes with the other children. Then took a wagon ride. Yet, it had to come to end.

Their enthusiasm hadn't subsided when we reached the house. Kenny couldn't remember ever doing a jack-o-lantern before. He was so young when Donna died, his memories with her could of faded. I wanted to hold him close to me, tell him everything was alright. Instead, I done something completely different. Through each book I went through, I pulled out photos to show him. Ellie had kept several photo albums of her family.

Once the kids finished their pumpkins and I cleaned up the mess, I asked Kenny to come in the kitchen with me. "This is you, when you were a baby." His eyes filled up while he stared at a picture of his sister in her costume and Donna held a baby pumpkin in her lap. "Your mom done a pumpkin with you." I laid down another with Donna on the floor with her son scooping out pumpkin seeds. "Your dad, he loved this holiday." A picture from my past too; Opie, Jax and I as teenagers just before we went out on Halloween night together or to just raise hell as we done.

The last one hit home with Kenny. Piney with him and his sister after his mother passed. It was the only one I could find of his grandfather. "He was proud of you and your sister. He talked about you all the time."

In some small way I hoped it helped my son get through the rough patch, missing his mother and to know he was loved by them all. Yet, he still had us to love him everyday.

"I think it's time for a family photo."
We piled on the steps leading up to our house with our pumpkins in the background. I set the timer for a two minute delay so all of us could be in it. Once it went off. I plugged it into my computer. I printed off several of them I had taken today. Along with many from the past in my hand.

On Kenny's side of the dresser. I set up different photo frames with Donna, Opie and Piney for him to see. For Abel, I put one of Jax with him. Then one of him with his baby brother. In the center of them was the photo of their family today; all of us on the steps.

"You're a good mom, girl." Kyle studied the photos with a smile.

"What are we going to tell them about us and all of this?" It was something Kyle and I didn't really discuss before. How we would handle the kids in the future when they got older and started to ask questions.

"We tell them the truth. You know the damage it does to kids by not telling them, we are living proof of it. By then, it won't matter anyway. They love us for who we are, not who we were. Just like we do them."

Kyle made it sound simple without a doubt of how our children would see us in the future. I guess, I had to forget who I once was, put my main focus on who I really was. He was right about one thing; secrets killed relationships and trust. The main secret of life; all that was worth doing was done in the acts for others. I had to hold to that faith. Someday, when the day came. I had to tell my children. They would forgive the secrets I've held from them, or I hoped so.

When I called them for dinner, it was another part of the day I truly appreciated. It allowed us to come together as a family after the day was about over. Around the table were the faces I loved and held close to the heart. Our family was a circle of the strength of love with everyone contributing an attribute for it.

A family wasn't always from the same blood. Thomas was my only blood here, yet, I loved them all equally. The people in your life who wanted you in theirs became the most dearest to you. The ones who accepted you for who you were. The ones who would do anything to see you smile, and who loved you no matter what unconditionally. The circle only grew the closer we became as a family.

"Since you and Tara are adopting us, are we suppose to call you mom and dad?" Thankfully, Kenny didn't direct his question to me. He directed it at Kyle.

"You can call us whatever you want. We have Tellers, Winstons and a Brandon at the table. We are all a part of this family. You are a part of your mother and father's family as well and always will be."

"I think I'll stay with Kyle and Tara."

Out of the mouth of a babe. My son made me chock on the ice tea I took a drink from. "Are you my new daddy?"

"You know who your daddy is. We're buddies, remember?"

"Oh, yeah." Abel was distracted easily still. The day would come when this conversation would take place again down the road.

The transition of fall to the holidays weren't as easy however. Kyle wanted to decorate everything, celebrate every little things and wanted to revel in the days up to it. He was child like, almost precious to watch. He even had some derived pleasure from picking out the turkey himself. The biggest bird he could find. Along with another one to make certain we had enough.
We both came from a small family with no large dinners with tons of people around in households when we were growing up. Our children would not say the same. There was total of thirty people invited to celebrate the day with us. Where the hell we were going to put everyone, I had no idea.

In honor of the holiday, I shut the clinic down so I could spend time at home to get ready for it. The kids were out of school and they slept in. I had a shit load of things to accomplish. When the alarm went off I got up. I thought I would be the first in the house awake but I wasn't.

He was waiting in the kitchen with a cup of coffee in hand for me. "Morning, girl." Along with a kiss to start this off with.

"Morning."

We finished off the pot one cup at a time while we read the newspaper together. It became a ritual for us. Granted, it was a small thing but it was our thing. The quiet time we had before the world moved swiftly in the day. I knew once I got up from the table, it was all work until night time.

Kyle welcomed it in. He was already banging pots and pans around and kicking off his day. When I wanted to purchase something that was already finished for the dinner. He insisted it needed to be homemade instead. I've never witnessed a man who enjoyed making pies so much. He turned on the radio in the kitchen and occupied himself for hours on end. Since there was still a lot to do, I went to clean house.

By the evening, we both were exhausted. The long buffet tables were setup. Along with several more for our guest. There wasn't much left to do now except wait until the morning came and start in again.

That was exactly what we done. Enjoyed our coffee and newspaper together before we stuck the birds in the ovens. When we bought the house I never thought we would use the built in double ovens so much. Today they were worked on overtime. Although the incredible smells floated around in the house. Every time I opened the turkey to baste it, it made me hungry.

The kids were starving. Instead of a big breakfast they had doughnuts and milk while they watched the Macy's day parade. In my memory I searched long and hard. Never once could I remember a Thanksgiving morning with my mother. Nor could I think of a happy thought of the holiday, at my age that was truly sad. But each of my children were having a great time and I didn't want to let this moment go.

"We need some centerpieces."

All of these people would be in here in a few hours. But, I didn't care if it made dinner late. My children and I went on a scavenger hunt for items to put on the table. They needed to remember back when they were older to some joy on this day with their mother. I needed to look back when I was older to some joy I had with them.

There was a large vase of flowers on each table. When we cleaned out Thomas' house, his mother had these beautiful brown glass blown bowls with flex of orange. They were too nice to toss out. With all the antiques and wealth they had, this was what I kept. In some ways each time I passed them, I thought of Thomas Teller and all he had done for my family.

I set the four of them on a farm table that match the kitchen furniture in the dinning room. I put cheap wooden decorative balls in them I bought at Hobby Lobby. Today, they would serve as our new tradition.
We walked around the property in search of items. After an hour we found; various colored leaves, nuts, pine cones and a few odd shaped rocks. Thomas added his baby pumpkin which was starting to wither away. I would put it in the bowl on the kiddie table.

"Who put the Doritos bag in here?" There was a snack size baggie stuck down in the bottom of the basket.

Abel giggled before he answered. "You said put what we like in there. I like Doritos."

It went on the bottom of the pile under the treasures we found. Technically, it was what I said. Technically, Abel seemed to have his own interpretation of our conversations. But, I made sure it was in there too.

Of course it put me behind on getting everything ready before the guest arrived. While I flew around the house doing a little of this and a whole lot of that. A glass of wine magically appeared in front of me. The smile he wore had the calm effect on me I much needed.

"This is about fun. We get it done when it get it done."

"I don't have time to drink wine."

"Yes you do, girl. Today I am thankful I have you and the kids."

After a much needed small breather. We done it together, well, most of it anyway. I still had to push Kenny and Abel to get dressed in their nice clothes for dinner. Myself, I no more than got dressed and my hair dried before the first guest arrival. Even though I should have been there to greet them, I done a few curls and put my makeup on.

By the time I came out, a small gathering was in my living room. Most already had a drink of some sort in their hands and their kids were running around with mine outside. They would all probably be dirty in five minutes.

The receptionist I hired, Sarah, didn't have anywhere to go today. She planned to stay home and get dinner somewhere on her way to church. So, I decided what was one more person at our tables and extended an invitation to her. When she actually came, I was pleased she had.

Most of the women were in the kitchen with me helping out. When you an army of women to assist you, it progressed rather quickly. Nicole was bossing them around with what needed to be done next. She was pretty good at it really. By the time we added all the dishes everyone brought along with what we cooked, it was a feast for a king.

Kyle's aunt made her famous rolls. She wanted to heat them up in the oven. Once I tasted the buttery goodness, I understood why hey raved about them. All the ladies helped make this meal what it was, along with him.

Before I announced dinner was ready, I stood and watched how happy this made Kyle with some of his brothers, their family and us here. The football game was on while they talked and had a beer. But it wasn't until I went to call the kids in. They were in bliss with so many new little friends to play with.

Thomas went in his highchair as I made his plate. Ellie helped Abel and Kenny done it on his own. The other mom's and women helped out the other kids. Once we got them situated I went to tell the others, it was time.

The doorbell went off just before I told them. Everyone we had invited was already here. When I
opened the door I was face to face with the past. Someone from it who was bitter with me. I couldn't think of anything to say that would ease the tension.

"I bought this for the kids."

They were no farther words spoken between us. The bag was placed in front of the door and they couldn't think of anything else that could or should be said either.

Kyle took a different approach. He went outside to greet our guests. "You guys should stay for dinner. Your grandsons miss you, Gemma." Kyle went to hand off Thomas to her. She took a couple steps back then looked over to Nero. He nodded at her but she wouldn't budge until I offered too.

"They do miss you. We love to have you stay for dinner."

"Yeah, okay."

It didn't don on me until I watched Gemma with the boys. How closely she held them to her and didn't want to let go. How she held back the same kind of tears I had this morning with them. How much she swallowed her crazy kind of pride to be here. She looked back today on the family she once had and needed that connection again.

But it wasn't until she seen Apollo I knew for certain who she missed the most, her own children. As strong as Gemma always was, your children could make you do things you sworn you'd never do. They could bring you to your knees of mercy. They could also bring the most joy you've ever known in your life. They could also bring you a pain you couldn't imagine.

Kyle and Nero went with her. They would make sure she was alright. I felt it best to keep quiet and keep my distance from her, at least for now. Besides, I was the hostess. I had to make my rounds to everyone.

When Kyle came in with them, I had added two more place settings and chairs for them to sit with us. It was sort of like old times. They guys embraced Gemma especially. Meat had already hugged her. Nicole wanted her chair to be next to Gemma.

"I am happy you all came to celebrate this day with us." Kyle looked over at the empty place setting I had done. We talked about Thomas this morning and he had remained on my mind along on his. "We are missing someone today. But I know he is here in spirit with us."

Meat stood with his beer bottle held up. "To Thomas, nuns and goats. Wherever he is, I know he is having fun and giving them hell. I love you, brother."

"To Thomas, nuns and goats." We all held up or glasses or bottles in his memory.

It was obviously an inside joke about what Thomas had done in Mexico with the nuns that involved goats. But it brought a smile to his mother's face. Along with some others. It even gave my receptionist a slight laugh. She was one tough cookie to crack too.

It was what today was all about. Join at the table to celebrate your family, your friends, your loved ones. To celebrate a good memory of the holiday and make new memories for the years to come. To celebrate those in your life that made a difference. To celebrate your life because they were the light in it.

Family is not the most important thing, it's every thing.
Micheal J Fox

When I way at home. I way at a better place.

William Shakespeare

(15) She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.

(16) She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

(17) She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

Proverbs 31: 15-17

"I have a little boy too. I don't get to see him but it doesn't mean I don't love him or think about him everyday. Just like it doesn't mean your daddy doesn't think of you all the time. I know he loves you, Abel."

"You do?" Abel wiped his own tears away. He was becoming my big boy.

"Yeah, I do. Your dad told me he loves you. My son's name is Zach. Do you want to see a picture of him?"

Kyle and Abel rocked in the chair while they talked about a million things. I watched my son through the big window. Still not an adult but no longer a baby either. He took in what they discussed. At least for the moment, he seemed alright with what was going on.

"You'll understand more when you grow up, buddy."

"Like what?" My son had inquisitive mind. He always had questions he needed answers for.

"Like you always look after your mom and sister. If I'm not around."

"I will, Kyle. I promise."

The world came crashing down on Abel today. He felt it in the vise of love he had for his father. After he was satisfied or least soothed he went back to just being a kid. A happy kid.

Then once again, rolled around another visitation day from his father. We waited on the porch at the time Jax was suppose to show up. I had no hope he would make it to see his sons. Abel still held that faith as he set quietly on the step as he waited for another disappointment to come.

They say a person needed just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for. My son had all those things. My hope was he didn't get destroyed in the process. As long as he held on to the most important one; love. He would alright.

From the distance I heard it. The familiar sound of the pipes rumbling as it came up the drive. It made me hold Thomas even tighter. "I don't trust, Jax."
"He will be fine."

"What if Jax takes them?"

"He won't."

"How can you be so sure?"

"I have to believe Jax has good in him when it comes to the kids, girl. I know you don't agree he should see them. But it's wrong to keep Jax from his sons. I made him that promise, I plan on keeping it." Kyle waited until I would let go of Thomas. It took everything I had inside me to do so. "What if Jax does something to them? Then what?" Only a concerned and cautious mother thought ill of their children's father. Or maybe it was because I knew all the horrible thing he could do. I also knew of the hate he still harbored for me. The quickest way to hurt me was through my children.

"Then, I'll kill him myself. Jax gets no second chances with them. I've made it perfectly clear to him." I had to restrain myself from not yelling at Kyle here on the spot. They had a safeguarded agreement in place or conversation at the least, I just knew it. It came from the shielded way Kyle spoke about Jax.

Kyle took my son to meet Jax, which he didn't even attempt to come close to the house. He waited out in the drive by his bike. I wanted to scream when Kyle gave him my baby. But I couldn't, I knew his visitations were part of our divorce agreement. Jax didn't contest anything, he didn't even show up for court. He gave me full custody as long as he got to see them once a month with supervision. Everything else for our children, was up to my discretion.

Abel, however, wasn't so certain he wanted to go to his dad. With some encouragement from Kyle. Abel decided to try. "I'll do it with you, buddy." Kyle held Abel's hand until they reached his father. "Maybe your dad wants to see the puppies. Maybe, you can show him?"

"I'd like that. If you want to." Jax's took the gentle approach with his son. He totally left it up to Abel. Which, really surprised me.

"Come on, Daddy. George has six puppies. You won't believe how big they are." Children were forgiving more so than adults. They lived for today and mostly didn't worry about tomorrow until it came around.

Through the big window in the living room I watched my sons with Jax. At the edge of the trees, he set with them on a log. The truth was, I knew in my heart he loved them the best he could, the only way he knew how. Which, was the same way he loved me once upon a time. The truth was, unless you let go, unless you forgave yourself, unless you forgave others. The situation that put a wedge between you, you had to forgive as well. Once you realized it was over, you could move past it.

But, then again, Gemma's wisdom rang loud while I watched them. "When someone hurts your baby, you never forget." There was so little Gemma and I could come to terms with. This was one, I was in full kindheartedly.

It was time for him to go. Kyle went out to get the boys. I stayed back at the door. The less I was around him the better.

"Will you come back to see me, Daddy?"

"I promise. I will. I love you, son."
It was a promise made, then a promise broken. Words could be twisted into any shape you wanted them to become. Promises could be made to lull the heart and seduce the soul. In my final analysis, words honestly meant nothing. The wisest man was the silent one when he knew couldn't fulfill or didn't mean what he spoke. If you examined his actions, judged him upon them, it was still the same results.

"Abel, do you want to go get pizza for dinner?"

"No." He headed for the barn to see the puppies. It wouldn't be long before they were weened and then given away. He liked to spend time with them. Or maybe, it was the last thing he remembered doing with his father.

"He'll be alright." Kyle was certain Abel would bounce back from his father not coming as promises today.

But, I wasn't sure of it. You couldn't plant a garden with no sun light. You had to care for it, give it nutrient and love or it died. It was just like love in a weird way. If you never put any effort in to it, you didn't nurture it and gave love back, it died as well.

As I watched my son through the window, George and her line of puppies came rushing out of the barn to meet my son. They jumped around and followed him. Poor George, she had so many babies she laid down while Abel played with them. It was the only break she got from her rambunctious puppies.

For some reason, when I came to this window, I heard and thought of Gemma a lot. "When someone hurts your baby, you never forget."

"I agree with that."

Unless you completely understood where someone was coming from. You couldn't begin to understand why they were like they were. As a mother, I fully was aware why she harbored ill feelings towards John Teller. As an outsider looking in, I knew in my heart why he tried to save his sons from Gemma and the club.

Then again, we all took the path at that precise moment we felt it was best. Sometimes, you were right but not always. Other instants you must follow no direct path, you made a new trail to take. The journey you took from it, could either be the most wonderful experience in your life or the most devastating.

I've often contemplated if we chose the path, or if indeed it chose us. It was certain I hadn't always went down the safest one. I had made mistakes, plenty of them. When it led me to Jax and away from him. Yet, I had suffered the consequences many times from it. But, I also basted in the glory. My family together with me, safe, maybe not always happy all the time. We still shared a love that couldn't be broken.

Today was a day, I knew I had done the right things without doubts. Today, marked another monument moment in time. Today, would be just another one passed by tomorrow we made it through. Today would lead us to our next journey.

When I took his hand I felt his uncertainties, the fear he had. If could have soothed it away, I would have. When love still smoldered in the wake of emotional breakdowns, the regret and remorse may endlessly linger on with you in the path of life. We held the power to change and move forward. Even when we faced the uncertainties. A sudden change in a situation could alter your whole life. A forever change of the road ahead.
We stepped on the last of the stone path, we came to the end of it. The choice left was proceed forward or retreat now. I hoped he chose the right one for him as I waited to see which way he went from here. One step at a time we climbed up for him to face his past. He clinched my hand tighter in his. Once I pushed the doorbell it was too late to go back now.

"What am I going to say to him?"

"What's in your heart." I gave his hand a final squeeze before I let go. I went back down the stone path to the truck. It was all on him now.

This was the first time Kyle was allowed to see his son since he was a baby. His ex-wife was desperate for money. She got it too, only, she had to make compromises for it. I made sure of it. Allowed visitations by his father. I guess, we had both grown from making deals for our sons.

When Zach came outside to meet Kyle, he didn't have much to say at first. He didn't even know the man before him. It was another love not nourished which had wilted.

Around thirty minutes later, Kyle came to the truck. We were going to get a weekend visitation. We would have five children to care for unless we had Cody, then six kids. I didn't mind at all. What was one more child to love?

Their relationship didn't automatically bloom either. Neither did it with the other kids. Sure, we had problems. But we handled them as they came. Eventually, Zach became comfortable with his father and siblings. He called Kyle by his name instead of dad. Although, I really didn't think it bothered his father. This was the most he had been in his son's life.

You never knew though where life would lead you to. Or what would happen from one day to the next. I was standing in the kitchen when Zach wanted a snack before dinner. "Dad, can I have a pudding pop?"

"Yeah." It was all Kyle replied. I watched him grab the counter with both hands, keep his back to his son while he cried what I assumed were tears of joy.

"Take some to the other for me." I gathered up a handful, carefully to make sure they each got one.

"Okay, Tara." Zach never really gave us any trouble. It just took a transition period for him and us. Love never came instantly, today, I was a firm believer the more you cared for it, the stronger it got. Even if you had experienced resistant.

"Are you okay?" I ripped off a paper towel to hand Kyle. I've shed numerous tears he wiped away for me.

"I never thought I would ever hear Zach, call me dad."

Everything turned in circles and spirals with the cosmic heart until infinity. Life was a full circle, widening until it joined the circle motions of the infinite too. At intervals, you knew who you really were, what it took to make you happy. Other occurrences, love was that single condition in which the happiness of another person was essential to your own.

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It's not flesh and blood but the heart that makes us fathers and sons.

Johann Schiller
When a father gives to his son, both laugh; when a son gives to his father, both cry.

William Shakespeare

Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from father and son, in truth and love.

John 1:3

Kyle could have cared less about the specifics of our wedding. If I wanted it, he loved it. Choose whatever I wanted for it. Tell him what to wear and he would. Pick the place and time, he would be there. Then we came to the one thing he expressed his opinion on.

"Are you ready, girl."

"I am."

The needle began to prick my finger. The throbbing sensation only made me smile. It should of hurt like hell. Tomorrow it would be sore and on the tender side. But, I loved the design Kyle came up with. He sketched out our wedding band tattoos we would have for eternity under our rings.

It was our circle of trust between us. It was such a fragile thing, the circle was so easily broken. So easy to break with just one action. So easy to lose and never recapture.

It was strange how we learned to not trust anyone fully by the one we once trusted with our everything. Sometimes, it boiled down to the not the absences of it, but purely the heartbreak you knew was attached to it.

The needle again had my full attention. With the tiny details, it took forever to get done. He wrapped a clear bandage around it and place a kiss on my finger. "I'll put the name in when this heals." In the center of it, the others name would be proudly displayed.

Now, it was his turn. He had another artist do his. It seemed to make him just as happy to have it tattooed as it done me. His theory was he wanted me to know his ring, our circle of trust, would never leave him. Even if he took off his gold band, he would have another band on his finger that said I was the love of his life. He left it up to me if I wanted to do it or not. It wasn't even a question, I wanted it. When I asked him what made him think of this design, his answer was always the same.

"So you don't forget me, girl. Just like you know I won't forget you. Or how much I love you."

"That, is some beautiful shit, man." The huge burly bald man with too many tattoos and piercing to count. Thought we were cute together. Yes, he actually used the word cute.

Once his was done. He called Nicole to see if she could be there when the kids got off the school bus. Since she was just down the road, it made it convenient when the other was running late.

"Where are we going?"

"It's a surprise."
When we came to the arrival place, it wasn't that much of a surprise. This was the place we would run to from time to time. Alexandria's Dream became our lovers spot. Hand in hand we took the long walk across the wooden bridge.

"When I tried to let you go, I couldn't. When I tried to stop dreaming about you, I couldn't. When you weren't with me, I came here and it felt like you were with me. You've had a hard time finding a place. How about we get married here, girl? It's your decision."

Since we weren't super religious and were a member of a church. A ceremony in one was hard to come by. I even contemplated holding it in our backyard. A simple thing with just a few people. But, I loved this idea. He had already called and we could rent banquet area and have a small part of the beach area to have it at.

"I hear you need a preacher?" It was voice I recognized. Someone from our past who I knew cared.

Nero, of course, couldn't be a real preacher. But, he became an online ordain minister, just for us. Actually, I couldn't think of anyone who would have been better to do it.

"What about Gemma?"

"She'll come around."

Nero immediately changed the subject. Which, told me all I needed to know. She didn't approve of him doing it and he was willing to anyway. No matter how hard I tried to patch the rift between us, she wasn't having it. There would be a wedge there forever. Every few months, she stopped by to see Abel and Thomas. It was as close to forgiveness as I was going to get at this point.

"I want you to be happy, girl. It's your day. If you don't like this, we'll keep searching until we find something you do."

"It's perfect."

At least some of the details had been nailed down. I still needed to find a dress. I wasn't exactly, a young blushing bride to be. There was no needed to get an expensive white gown. Not at this stage in my life.

"What about this one, girlfriend?"

Nicole and Ellie both loved it. It was a simple white cotton halter dress. What I liked about it the most was, it was delicate, showed the crow tattoo with my babies names in it and was simple just like me. The side slit was up the leg a little more than I wanted. Once I tried it on, it was the one. We found a similar red one for them that was strapless. With the warm summer night, on the beach, these were fitting for the occasion.

Next we picked out flowers. My bouquet had one red rose in he middle with two dozed white ones surrounding it. Theirs were smaller with white in the center and tinier red roses.

"We should put your hair up with these." Ellie held a few packages of pearl tipped bobby pins.

Since any kind of heel would sink in the sand, we went with coordinated sandals. The ankle strap was a row of pearls. I still searched for the boys attire. For now, I had shopped enough for the day.

"How about a bachelorette party?"

"No."
"What about a girl's night out?"

"I have a better idea."

Nicole wanted to make a fun and special night for me. What I chose to do the night before my big day, was better than a drunken girls night out. I took a couple of days off to get everything ready. Our small wedding party had rooms reserved on the beach. The car was packed to the hilt with bags, children and dogs.

We girls would stay in the adjoining room with the kids. It was a giant sleepover party for them. It was the beginning of the rest of my life for me. Across the hall from us, was my future. Kyle would stay with Boomer. He couldn't understand why we just couldn't be together tonight. Nothing else was traditional about us, I needed this one thing to be. Once I explained it to him, he honored my wishes just like I expected from him.

Before the guys arrived, we took the kids and dogs for a walk on the beach. George and Sophia was so well behaved. They ran along the side of the kids. Abel was George's best friend and she was complete loyal to him, always by his side. Then I thought of Sophia's best friend. What Tig had sacrificed for me and my children. If he hadn't been there for us, how differently this story could have ended.

"Girlfriend, are you alright?"

"I'm fine." As I wiped the tears away that ran down my cheek. Truth was, I thought of Tig often and hoped he finally found some peace. Especially when Sophia was loving with me. She was a part of our family now and she would have a home until her last day on earth.

"Stay out of the water." The boys couldn't resist the waves that washed up the the shore. They were mesmerizing at times, even for someone at my age.

They were starving by the time the guys arrived. It was just a quick burger and fries for dinner. The guys took the kids with them to roam around while Nicole and I turned our focus to the banquet hall. It was a waste of money how big this place was compared to the amount of guest we would have. Yet, Kyle insisted I was a princess for a day, or at least, his princess.

We layered long red table clothes under shorter white ones. The flowers were kept in the kitchen refrigerator so they could stay fresh until tomorrow. The arrangements were also in place now. I bought cheap replica place settings at the party store along with pretty flutes for each table. Even the kids would have sparkling cider to toast with.

"I'm not sure how it worked out, but, I like it." Our table was at the head of the giant circle the other tables ended up at.

On my way out, I flipped off the light switch. The next time I entered this room, the next chapter of my life would begin. Again, the tears came. But not sad ones this time. I used to dream about having a normal, happy life. Escape the ordinary and find something extraordinary in it. Until now, I simply failed to notice how extraordinary it had already been. They say second chances in anything were hard to find. I had been given an abundance of them I should be grateful for.

We joined the others on the beach. This was our spot for the night until bedtime. It took hours for the kids to start to even begin to slow down. They finally plopped down on blankets with us. We just hung out, enjoyed the time we spent together. Until I felt my phone buzz in my back pocket. As I replied, Kyle's went off too. Then all the adult's phones follows suit.
"Get a room." Boomer was kidding as he sent back his response. They were alright with the plan and would watch the kids for us.

Across the long wooden bridge we took a walk hand in hand. The sunset was gorgeous along the horizon. From the lighthouse Kyle texted me to meet him at, you could see for miles as we climbed the ladder. What I found was another surprise.

"When did you do this?"

"While you and Nicole were decorating."

A blanket was spread out for us. My favorite ice tea bottles was chilled in a bucket of ice. He lit the candles strung around everywhere. Took my hand as I set down on the ledge with him. I've never reached a point with someone when silence was a comfortable position, until now.

We set silently beside each other and took in the world around us. The strength of it was incredible. If you opened up your eyes and ears. You could finally hear things you never noticed before, saw the beauty of what surrounded you. The last thing I heard was a boat's horn. Before he had something to say.

"This is for you. Your something new." A charm bracelet with four boy charms, one girl and two dogs. Between each was a pearl stopper.

"It's beautiful, thank you."

"I have a couple more, I didn't get added yet. Every princess needs a crown." In my hand he laid a tiny crown and a diamond ring to add to my collection. Once I had those added to the collection he fastened it around my wrist.

We stayed later than I had planned to. There were still things I had to get done before I went to bed. It was more of a stroll on the way back to the room. Both not wanting this night to end. But still wanted tomorrow to come. At my door he gave me a kiss goodnight.

"I'll be the one in white."

"I'll be the one at the alter with a smile on my face waiting for you."

"I'll be the one puking if you two don't shut up already." Boomer was at his door drinking a beer. I could hear him still razzing Kyle when I closed the door.

Nicole had kept order of the children. She had Holly and Thomas on the bed with her, they were passed out already. The boys were in the other room watching a movie but still going strong. My sweet Ellie had blocked out everything as she read. She was good at tuning out what she needed to.

"You need your beauty sleep, girlfriend."

As much as I wanted to sleep, I tossed and turned through out the night. Maybe I was anxious for tomorrow to come. Maybe I missed him laying by me in bed. Maybe I was just to damn happy. The smile on my face could have lit up the room on its own. Once I turned off the television, made sure all the kids were covered up, I could rest.

Although, it seemed like a short night when I felt Abel and Cody move on the bed. They made their rounds from Nicole to me to make certain we knew it was already time to get up and get on the move if I wanted to get everything done on time.
The guys took the boys to get breakfast. We had a light one, fruit, bagels and coffee. Ellie had her favorite, chocolate milk with a bacon, egg and cheese biscuit. Quickly I got dressed to meet the bakery to deliver our cake. This was something I wanted to do myself even though Nicole offered numerous times. She had to make sure the guys and kids were ready on time, Nero was in place and the caterers setup for dinner in the hall. She had been great about helping out.

When they wheeled in the massive box on a cart and broke it down, I loved it. The cake was our first compromise, he didn't ask for. I liked vanilla, he liked chocolate. A basic vanilla and dark chocolate were marbled together to represent us both. Pretty much as most of my life had marbled together, sometimes so much it blurred the lines of when it crossed over; love and hate, good and evil, life and death and sadness and happiness.

It was layered with separate tiers. Each was held up with a glass column that lit up. Ours was larger, sat on a glass cube to be lifted higher than the rest. It was centered with the other five scattered out in front of it. One for each of our children. The handcrafted roses was the cherry on top for me. There also was a sheet cake to serve to the guest.

They left boxes so I could take the leftover cakes home. It seemed like a waste of money to buy cakes we wouldn't eat because we wouldn't eat all of them today. Yet, it was just as much of their big day as it was ours. We would now official be a family in every way possible.

By the time I arrived back to the room. Nicole had Ellie's facial done. Complete with mask in place and a hair treatment to give it shine. My little girl felt like a princess too. She was wrapped in a fluffy robe with a towel on her head, seaweed on her face while she sipped chocolate milk with one hand. While Nicole painted her nails because she had already done her toes. "You're next, girlfriend." This wasn't anything I normally wanted to do, but, I was all in on it for this occasion.

As I waited for the nail polish to dry I must of have dozed off. Nicole, or should I say baby drill sargent, had me up on my feet ready to shower. I heard her in the hallway going down the list with Boomer and Kyle, what they needed to do next. "Bless her." She had it under control. So, I went on about my business.

It was amazing, how rapidly time escaped you. Once I got my hair dried, dressed and helped Nicole chase the boys around the room. It was almost time for me to take the walk. When Ellie came in, I was in awe with her. If I hadn't know better, I would put her in the early twenty year old range. She looked so beautiful, so grown up.

Nicole done my makeup first. Then my hair. Just when she put the last pin in it. A knock came on the door. I wasn't expecting them come.

"I am going to check on the guys. I won't be gone long. Ellie come help me." Nicole excused herself but also made it clear she wouldn't be far away, just in case.

"I thought you might want this back." Gemma set the old stained box down I was so familiar with. I carried it with me for years. It went wherever I had, it went on the journey to my hell and my redemption . From it, I took out my mother's blue satin garter belt she wore on her day with Nero.

"Thank you, Gemma."

"Do you have something borrowed yet?" This was as cordial as Gemma had been with me since we left Charming. I didn't want to get a false hope from it.

"I have a hanky stuffed in my bouquet."
From Gemma's purse she took out the most beautiful sterling hair comb with diamond accents. Three pearls in a perfect line. "It was Rose's." To this day she refused to call her mom or even refer to her in any form of a mother.

"I couldn't..."

"You got shit to work out with your mother and I got shit I'll never forgive Rose for. You should wear it." She placed the comb in the center of the low bun in my hair. The tiny pearl bobby pins made a complete circled around it. "Well, I should go."

There was obviously something else she wanted to say as she lingered around. I figured it would be bad and she needed to get it off her chest. So, I waited for the hammer to come down from her. "Just so you know. Jackson did love you, more than he ever loved any woman. I know he didn't always do right by you or the boys. It's not all his fault. Some it, is mine."

"I want you to stay, Gemma. It means a lot to me you came here. Just so you know, I have thought of you as a mother in the past." While I completely ignored her other comments, sometimes, you had to surrender and make the first move.

"You look very pretty and happy for once. We all deserve to be happy." She never implied she would or wouldn't stay. Either way, I made an effort with Gemma. She would come around or she wouldn't.

"Everything okay?" Nicole gave us privacy. She knew the score of it all. I just nodded as I applied lipstick and covered it in gloss. "Lets get's your married, girlfriend."

The nervousness I felt was eased when I saw my baby in his white linen shirt and dress slacks. He had a warm smile when he seen me too. His little hand came up to meet mine. Abel would give me away and take the walk down the aisle with me. So did all the things everyone had done to make this day special for me helped too.

Outside laid the red carpet with white rose petals for me to walk on. My fur babies stood guard adorning collars of flowers at a large wooden arch covered in so many flowers you could count them all. It began our starting point. It matched the ending with a wooden platform along with even a larger arch where he waited for me accompanied by Boomer, Kenny, Zach and Cody. All I had done was some chairs put out for the guest.

Nicole and Ellie were in place to make their entrance. Before they went before me and I couldn't say anything then. "You could have kept this simple. Thank you."

"Not on my watch, girlfriend. You are a kind person and my sister now. Besides, simple isn't in my vocabulary."

As the music began my two bridesmaids went down the aisle. Kyle handed off Thomas to Boomer because he had fell asleep. It made me smile as Gemma took her grandson and held him close to her. She stayed no matter the differences we had in the past. Just like I was there for her when no one else believed in her marriage.

At first, Abel looked out at everyone staring at us and he froze. "It's okay, baby." With a smile at him of reassurance he regained his step with me as we made our way.

Nero wore the same black dress shirt he married Gemma in. At my request. He stood with a bible in his hand and asked the traditional question. "Who gives this woman away?"

"Me." Abel said it so loudly people down the beach could hear him as well.
"Come here, sweetheart." Gemma called for him while I took the first step on the platform, the first step to my future.

"I want my mommy back when your done." Abel had taken giving me away meant literally. It was my bad because I never thought about explaining it to him. Children had a pure thought process. What you said, was exactly how they took it.

"Come here, buddy." Kyle stopped the ceremony to address the issues. I couldn't have loved him more for it. "She will always be your mommy and I promise to never come between you. Today, when I marry your mommy, you are my stepson. But I already thought of you as my son. Just like Kenny, Thomas and Ellie are my children and you guys are my world." Abel clung to us both. Until I was certain he was happy and understood what was just talked about.

Nero shuffled his bible from one side to his other. He said low for not everyone to hear. "You two are going to be great together. Never forget how much you love each other today." He opened it and turned it to the page he sough out and was ready to begin.

"Today, we are here to join two people heart's as one beat. Join them in life and in matrimony. They kept love alive as they believe in each other..." Kyle and I heard every word as we lived it's meaning in our world as man and wife. Nero done an incredible job of delivering the love between us. When he came to the end. He gave the sweetest smile to Gemma before he delivered the last part of it.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. Do not fail each other."

Nero had us join our hands in unusual way. Our right hands joined together then our lefts with a circle in the opening. Then his covered over ours. He spoke in Spanish with his head dropped, I couldn't understand the words but I felt the love he said them with. "May you always endure all things. Love you, both." When he finished I wasn't certain if what he spoke at the end was the same thing he had said before or not.

"I present to you, Mr. and Mrs. Brandon."

The dance was what came next between my husband and I. The song Crazy Love played on while the guest watched us. Usually, I felt uncomfortable in a crowd of people. Especially when all eyes was on me. Today, I just felt the happiness I longed for.

"Do you care if I ask Gemma to dance?"

"Not at all."

Kyle semi had a re pore with her I couldn't any longer reach. She hesitated at first when he asked. But, she came around. It warmed my heart what she said next. "You're good to my grandsons. Always watch over them for me." It was as much approval he would receive from Gemma. Probably more than she would give me these days.

The liquor began to flow. We had ate, were toasted best wishes. When my husband took my hand to go with him. Once we hit the door, I was curious. "Where are we going?"

On the beach was a small wooden raft filled with candles. "They light up the night, the way you light my world, girl. They wipe out darkness and brighten, as you brighten my life. In order for a candle to fulfill itself, it must be lit. You have given me a purpose in life and your love fulfills me. They unify us as one."
It was a private moment we shared together. There were special times marked when the world moved at a slow enough pace you could feel yourself shift like the tides, like the sand. When no matter what else happened in your life you would remember every detail, every minute of it. This was it.

Something had vanished completely that once took over my life, my thoughts. When I took my shoes off and stepped in the water with him and sent that raft to sail on the water into the night. Or maybe we had a small experience that pulled us out of ourselves, if only briefly. When we saw certain trends emerge from our recollection and certain voices emerged that spoke through us. It was those moments that took your breathe away, they breathed purpose and love back into your life.

"I love you, girl."

"I love you, boy."

Most of our guest hadn't noticed we disappeared for almost an hour when we returned. We made our rounds to visit with everyone and thank them for coming and said goodbye to some others. There was an awkward silence when Nero and Gemma went to go. Nero, I had no problems with. He was always the same guy but, her, it was a little rough sometimes.

"Am I allowed to still come around and see the boys?"

"You can come see them anytime you want to. I've never tried to keep them from you."

By the time we saw our last guest out. It was late and I was exhausted. Yet, there was still one thing left to do before we went home.

We didn't have a fancy honeymoon planned out ahead of us. We did however, have the stars above us, the moonlight and each other. The final dance with bare feet in the sand. The waves sounded tranquil throughout the song. Each spoke to my heart.

"All I need in this life is your crazy love, girl. We don't have to travel to another destination. You're my escape, I get totally lost in you. With your hand in mine, I can die a happy man."

As my husband held me we had; one love, one heart, one destiny. To love in the time of trouble, to express daily how much the other meant and to never be to busy to stop and dance under the stars. No matter who thought we were crazy for doing so.

With Thomas at our feet playing in the sand. Kenny, Abel and Zach chasing each other around us. The loud conversation Ellie was having on her phone with someone, probably a boy. We had it all, all we would ever need. Love never fails...

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A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, with the same person.

Mignon McLaughlin

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My bounty, is as boundless as the sea. My love as deep; the more I give to thee.

The more I have, for both are infinite.

William Shakespeare
Be completely humble and gentle; be patient. Bearing with one another in love.

*Ephesians 4:2, 4:3*

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Please forward to the next chapter...
No matter what life experiences you had, there were those that stuck with you forever. They changed your thought process for the good and bad of things. You tried to shake off the bad ones and get your head straight. Yet, they always resurfaced and sometimes haunted you as well. You told yourself it was ridiculous and there wasn't anything there to worry about. Then, you just got worse about it.

It became an obsession to me because I couldn't understand why Jax sabotaged our future. Just to fuck some skank. Just as we had finally put our lives together, had children and were happy. Or it was possible I was the only happy one. The more I surrender to his way of life, the less he cared about mine.

By the time he went to show interest or tell me once again the same shit, I was done. No more crying. Even my tears had given up on him. I'd already moved on, his cheating was simply the key left in the mailbox. The key to my freedom to do whatever I wanted, with who I wanted. Our story became eight words; he was only sorry when he got caught. The other times I never knew about them for certain if he had or hadn't, or exactly how many there were. It really didn't matter anymore by then.

Not that I was much better because I was with Kyle before we official ended our relationship. The biggest difference was, I begged Jax to stay home so he could be with me and it still wasn't enough for him to be there. I wasn't with someone else until I had given up on Jax. Perhaps, he never believed in us enough to give up anything from the start.

Mostly, I kept the shit buried as deep as I could. Without success I might add. I couldn't explain why the old feelings I had in the past kept coming to the surface. Kyle never gave me one reason to doubt him in any way. As a matter of fact, I could set my watch by the time he told me he would be home. If he was running late he always called or texted.

As far as other women went, he didn't seem to pay them much mind. He made me his center of the universe. Never once had I felt inadequate with him either. Still, here we were and I was pissed.

When I heard her giggle from the back it all began. Those fleeting moments of doubt; what was he doing and who in the fuck was he doing it with. The curtain separated us, I almost turned around and walked out of the tattoo shop. Of course, a trusting wife would have. As I should have but I didn't. With it pulled back I saw her naked ass planted directly in front of his face.

"Tara." Kyle followed me down the street because I left in a huff and wasn't going to stop. "Tara." With his long legs he finally caught up with me. "What is wrong with you?"

"Nice stars on her ass which she was shaking in front of you."
"It's how I earn money. You know this." Those were basically the same words I repeatedly heard in the past as well. It's just business, get over it.

We accepted the love we thought we deserved. We didn't question it, expect more from it. Now, I knew I deserved to be loved and respected in the same manner in which I gave it. I would not under any circumstance accept less than.

There was no way in hell I would tarnish my dignity to chase after anyone any longer. If they wanted another woman, I would hold the door open for them so it wouldn't hit them in the ass on their way out. It took me a long fucking time to get there but I realized at the end of the day you could either live and focus on what tore you a part or on what held you together.

Virtually all women would silently carry the scars from a deep sense of loss of something they truly couldn't comprehend and grievousness of the betrayal when they were cheated on. Whether a woman has stayed, left, or been left behind by him, it was always there to weigh on her mind and every fucking relationship she would have forward. Unless you broke the cycle. After you faced the demon and slayed it, only then would you be free from it. When old patterns were broken, a new world appeared before your eyes.

"You are it for me, girl. There will never be anyone else but you. Don't let what he done to you take away from what we have. Just like I tell myself you are not her and you won't hurt me either. At times, I get jealous too and try hard to keep in check. To not take out on you the things she's done. I keep telling myself you will always come home to me." There was the reminder I needed. It wasn't just my heart in a second chance survival mode, it was his as well. He had his own demons to face and conquer on the subject. "I'm almost finished. Go back with me and then we can go out to dinner tonight. Just you and me."

"What about the kids?"

"I'll call Nicole and see if she will stay with them."

We returned to the shop together. Together he finished up her tattoo. I set in a chair and flipped through a magazine while he done his thing.

"You pick it and I'll stick it...anywhere you want." My head shot up immediately. Only to find his attention locked on me. "My wife." He added that part with a beam of light on his face.

Truly I started to feel bad for my actions from before. With her skinny, young, tight ass in his face and his attention still on me. I guess, there really wasn't anything to worry about unless things changed in the future and I had a reason to.

Although, it wasn't the last time the subject came up and it had to be addressed. Only this time, Kyle was the one a little upset with me. He didn't meet my new intern under the best circumstances.

We had been working with a patient's case file. I wanted to show him how to do a test on the blood in the office, expand his mind when it came to figuring out what was wrong and what needed to be cured. He would still have to send a sample to the lab to confirm our findings. It was learning experience for Dean. We waited until the office was closed down for the day so we wouldn't be interrupted.

The small blood spinner I had was nothing compared to a real lab. When he loaded the blood, he pushed the button before he made certain the lock on it was snapped in place. Blood not only covered him but me as well. It was a rookie mistake and it was a hazard to ourselves now.
"Go shower, use the bathroom in my office. Try not to touch anything. Use a clean towel to open the door and the shower door."

The report would have to be filled out after I took care of the room. It mostly was on the counter and floor. I put on gloves and followed bio hazard protocol, a blood splatter could carry some distance. I left him a plastic bag on the door knob to put his clothes in once he finished.

Quickly I stripped down once he was through. I scrubbed my skin with the special soap I had from the kit, several times. Now I was comfortable with getting dressed. But I was uncomfortable as hell when I came out of the bathroom. To see my husband with the horrified look he had on his face with Dean in my office in nothing but a towel wrapped around him and me freshly showered.

At first I thought of explaining what had took place and go from there. Then I thought of how I would have felt if the roles were revered at this particular moment and would have I believed it anyway. "This is my husband Kyle. This is my new intern Dean."

"It's nice to meet you, sir."

"I'd get the fuck away from me. If I were you." Kyle declined to shake his hand and Dean acknowledged the anger my husband had. He excused himself pretty damn quickly from the room too.

"I know how this looks. We were doing..."

"I'm only going to ask once, Tara. Is there something going on between you two? If so, just tell me." Kyle was defeated at the moment with the way he said it. His hopes, dreams and heart were deflated. Just like mine had been when I stood before him and thought the same things.

"Of course not. I love you and only you."

Sometimes words weren't enough. After I showed Kyle the room and the bloody clothes he had a more remorseful tone in his voice. I could tell he was sorry for his actions and doubting me too. So, I handled it with as much grace as possible.

"Don't let her shit on what we have because of what she's done to you in the past. I promise, I will talk to you when I get that old feeling and can't control my emotions. If you promise to do the same."

"I promise, girl."

A knock interrupted my tender moment but it was alright. "Doctor Knowles, I'm sorry to bother you guys. Where do you want the bloody items?"

"Leave them in the bathroom and I will dispose of them properly." Once again, Dean excused himself quickly after he put the baggie where I told him to.

"Doesn't he own another shirt." Kyle might have noticed Dean's shirtless body. Me, he seemed more like a boy than a man. Hell, I was getting old when I looked of him and thought of a playmate for my child.

"He doesn't have a great body like you do."

"Don't lie to me, girl. That fucker is built like a brick shit house."

We were all vulnerable at some point. We were even more exposed when we showed it for certain. It was a risky emotion to have but not nearly as dangerous as giving up all together. The shame, blame,
disrespect, betrayal, and the withholding of affection damaged the roots from which love grew. Love could only survive these injuries if they were acknowledged and healed. The strongest love was the love that could demonstrate its fragility.

So, I knew this cycle of crazy jealousy and doubts had to come to an end. Not just for him but for me as well. If one emotion totally broke us, another had to heal us. Or at least set us on the path too. It wasn't what you said sometimes but how you said it. Maybe not what you had done to express love, but the way you expressed it.

Kyle waited on me as I gathered everything up. I got a fresh, clean doctors coat from the closet for tomorrow and thought of the possibilities. From the door of my office I twisted my butt to his chair. Propped the toe of my heels between his legs. Pulled back my white coat and placed my hand on my hip. When I was naked, I was the most vulnerable and the coat was all I wore for this. But not today, I had to trust and believe in him if I wanted a happy marriage.

"Mr. Brandon, it's time for your exam." I even adjusted the glasses on my face. Then took them off and sucked on a ear piece. "It's an oral exam, baby."

We went home in the best mood. After we put the kids to bed we talked for hours, freely expressed our feelings without judgement. Not only the regrets but where we wanted to be in the future. I felt we made progress too. Until the next day at lunch. When my husband made a surprise visit. The first thought was he came to check up on me and make sure no hanky panky was going on. Then I noticed he had something with him.

"Did you bring me a present?"

"Nope." From the bag under Kyle's arm, he pulled out three brand new shirts. "Now Dean will always have a shirt available here."

My husband bought me lunch. Then we squeezed in a sexy snack in my office before he left. He didn't make any other surprise visits because deep down he knew he could trust me as much as I could trust him. We had definitely made some progress between the two of us one step at a time.

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A boy makes his girl jealous of other women. A man makes other women jealous of his girl.

_Golfan_

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Don't waste your love on someone who doesn't value it.

_William Shakespeare_

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Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire.

_Song of Solomon 8:6_
As I watched my family flutter around me to get ready for the day, I lacked something; involvement and interaction with them. Since I worked all the time to build the practice, life had carried on without me in it. I left early in the morning and worked until late at night. Sure, I made the goal in mind of a successful business, I built what most could only dream of in a short period of time. But somewhere in the process I lost out too. If I hadn't been late to leave, I wouldn't have even known.

The seminars, speaking engagements to get my name out there, state audits and training the new intern had taken it's toll on my family. Or perhaps, it took a toll on me I didn't notice until now. To flourish in any relationship you must be somewhat fused to them through the mind and heart. Participate in everyday life and perform the simple task together. Happiness was a measure of how thickly the unconscious parts of our minds were intertwined with other people and with activities. The question was how much had they forgotten about me? How could I get it back?

Thomas walked past me directly to Kyle for help to tie his shoes. It wasn't just that though. The rest of it smacked me in the face and I knew I deserved every bit of it.

"Where are you going with those?"

"To put them in the mailbox. We do this every morning." Ellie had an arm load of poptarts, small juice bottles, napkins and lunch sacks to put it. On the way out of the driveway, it was a breakfast drive through for the kids. It was a ritual they began months ago. Something else I had missed.

The least I could do was help out with their lunches. He used a cookie cutter to make shapes out of sandwiches. When I put one in Kenny's lunchbox, Kyle corrected me. "He doesn't like it. Put a lunchable, chips and drink in his." The special sandwiches were for Abel and Cody only. When I copied the action for Ellie with what Kenny liked, Kyle once again corrected me. "She takes a salad, fruit and a water. It's already made in the frig."

"Son of bitch." It was said with my head in the frig getting out the items for her. It was said because I turned in to what I used to complain and bitch about. I knew the signs, no one had had to explain it to me.

"I need to be home more with you guys. So, I think..."

"I'm glad you brought it up, I want to talk to you about it actually tonight. I love you, girl. We got to go or we're going to be late." They each told me goodbye as they piled in the truck to be delivered to their destination.

"Bye babies. I love you more than anything."

Maybe they hadn't even noticed it yet. Maybe it wasn't on the same level I personally had experienced it. Maybe I was making more out of it than was necessary. But it was enough to seek change before it spun out of control beyond repair.

Throughout the day I began cutting extra activities. There would be no more late nights at the office unless absolutely necessary. I even made certain I was home early. We could have dinner together as a family and have time before bed to spend with one another.

Only I was alone when I got home. Tonight would be a simple grilled burger dinner. By the time I got everything done, I looked at the clock on the wall. It was getting late and no one was here yet. I decided to call to find out where they were.

"Where are you guys?"

Since they weren't expecting me until later, they bought dinner in town. Kyle had a tattoo scheduled
as well. So after he picked up the kids, he fed them. He said it would only be a couple of hours until they were home.

With all the time I had on my hands, I went to do something else I had missed lately. From the front porch I witnessed nothing before me but peace and quiet. George and Sophia ate with me. They got a couple of burgers too. Then laid down beside my rocking chair. They were enjoying the night with me.

The silence gave the body a chance to reboot and refresh itself. To have thoughts when you were busy never came to mind. It actually allowed the heart to empty of the turmoil or what was pulling on the strings. It also gave you the time to think of how to say you're sorry for not being there for them.

Which, that was what I was ready to do as soon as they pulled up the driveway. I meet them at the truck and couldn't wait for them to get out. "There's my big boy." Thomas had his little arms around my neck. His little smile made me do so too.

After Nicole came to take Cody home, I ran Abel's bath. This was his least favorite thing to do. He complained as normal and I loved every minute of it. I should have my ass kicked for not being home more and not correcting it sooner.

Then came the one who had kept everything going on his own and never complained once. "I already know what you want to talk to me about."

"You do?"

"I'm so sorry, Kyle. I put the burden of the kids, the house and everything else on you. From now on..."

"That's what you think I want to talk about. You were building a career and I knew you would spend long hours away from us. I'm not upset at all about it. We take care of each other, help each other and when one is busy, the other picks up the slack. It's what a relationship is, girl."

We talked it through. I put more guilt and blame on myself than he ever could. Then we went on to what he actually wanted to discuss. "I know you don't like where I tattoo some of them. If they are willing to pay me hundreds of dollars for putting blue stars on their ass, then it's what I do. I went and talked to the community college. They have an opening for a professor. For the first semester it is night classes only. I would still have to give tattoos for awhile until I can go full time at the college. So, you will have to be here for the kids. I didn't want to do anything until I talk to you first."

"I think it's great. We will work it out."

There was an immense power and dynamics when two people worked towards the same goal. As long as you stood united you could literally accomplish anything. Love would conquer all if you just gave it a chance and stood strong. It wasn't easy either to accomplish. But nothing worthy ever was.

When chaos got thrown in the mix of life, it interrupted the flow of harmony. The ability to get past it with your soul intact. Once you were divided, you usually remained that way.

The only thing that divide Kyle and I, was time. We strive to succeed in our relationship and everything else that came our way. It was hard to adjust to the new schedule we kept. In the long run though, it meant a better life for us and our children.

You could tell he was nervous for his first class. He never showed this emotion much. Just to get his tie straight was a struggle. "You'll do great." I felt his body relax as I pulled him by his tie to me. I set on the counter of the sink in the bathroom and watched him for the last thirty minutes, so, I decided
to help him out a bit. I folded his collar back down once I made sure his tie was perfect.

"I love you, girl."

"I love you, boy."

His family sent him off on his way from the front porch. With Kyle being gone, it would give me a chance to spend time with just the kids. George and Sophia followed behind the truck to the end of the drive. They were always there to greet us when we came home too. While the boys played, I threw their ball with them around the yard until it was time for me to start dinner.

The grill got hot quickly. Since we were having hotdogs, it didn't take long to finish. They wanted potato salad and chips with it. Kenny’s appetite had increased. He finally started to put on a little weight. Not long after, he would have another growth spurt. I felt he would take after Opie, tall and lean. Where Ellie was on the petite side like her mother.

As soon as the table and kitchen was cleaned up it was time to address it. "What homework do you have?" Kenny required more attention in this area than the others. He didn't care for school much and you had to stay on him. His school agenda book had to be signed off on daily. It was the system we worked out with his teacher so we knew what he hadn't finished for the day. They thought he had a learning disability, we thought he just didn't like it.

"Good job." He caught on fast when you worked with him. In between his questions, I folded up laundry. We went over his spelling words for the week and we would tackle those again tomorrow night.

"Can I go now?"

"Yes."

Ellie bounced in the kitchen with her cell planted firmly in her ear. Her long brown hair pinned back on the top of her head. Soon, she would be applying to college and leave home. It wasn't a thought I wanted to have, at least not now. "Tara, can I go to a sleepover this weekend?"

"Yes."

Ellie had found her own way. She made a couple of friends since we moved here. It was good for her to act like a child while she still could. It was another thing I hadn't done when I was young.

"Abel, do you know what time it is?"

"I'm asleep, Mommy." It made me giggle he thought of it one all on his own. It wouldn't save him from his bath. But cute none the less.

Once I had the kids in bed, I turned my attention to the other one I had neglect the last few months. I was ready for him when he got home. His eyes widen when he came through the door. I stood in a plaid shirt and white blouse without a bra on. The sucker made my lips as red as it was when I ran it across them. With one last suck on it, I approached my husband. Took his tie in my hand and lead him to the bedroom with it.

"I've been a very bad girl. Maybe you should tie me up with your tie and spank me."

"Damn, girl."

"Wait until you see what I plan to do with the sucker."
There were moments you knew you were truly blessed in life and love. I was one of the lucky ones. It picked up automatically where I left off with my family. I never knew this kind of life existed before. Or how much being loved unconditionally meant. Now that I had the experience, I would never let go of it. Time I spent with the kids was precious, not to be taken for granted, they were growing so quickly. But there was one more thing I still wanted to do.

I had always been an astute student. Once Kyle enriched his life and our finances with education. I wanted to try as well. So I made arrangements with Nicole. She and Molly stayed with the kids one night a week while I attended class. In return, I watched Molly and Cody so she could run errands, clean house or just sleep when she wanted. A new mother was worn out. I would have done it anyway for her, because she truly was my sister.

It took a lot for a person of my age to walk in a room with basically nothing surrounding me but children. Girls were gabbing in the corner seats with each other. They passed around a magazine with new fashion. It wasn't something high up on my priority list. As I was dressed in jeans, a button down shirt and a blazer.

Since, I had absolutely nothing in common with them except being around the same age as their parents. I chose to sit alone with no one surrounding me. Until three boys came in. They weren't excited about being here like I was. To them this was just a requirement they had to complete in order to get their degree. It was what I needed to complete me.

The professor was already five minutes late. If we had been, the door would have been locked and we wouldn't get to attend this class. The jock tossed his football slightly up in air and caught it several times from boredom. The boys beside him ogled over the girls.

"Okay, quiet down. Lets begin. My name is Professor Brandon."

The boys weren't as impressed with him as the girls were. They oohed and awed over my husband, he made them swoon. It made me smile because he done the same thing to me.

"I hear he's gay." The football jock said just above a whisper to his buddies. They were consumed by that idea. As they discussed it farther between them.

"He's not gay."

"How do you know?"

"He's my husband."

The boys no longer had anything to say. They turned around to face the front with nothing but learning on their minds. Other than the fact, they hoped I wouldn't repeat the conversation to the professor. Which, I wouldn't.

"Lets dive onto the world of Mythology. They didn't believe in heaven or hell during those times. They relayed the the myths of Greece and Rome in his Metamorphoses, the gap which all the universe sprung from. Chaos represented the disorder before the gods; eventually, chaos begot the beginning of it..."

For two hours straight the professor told us tales of the gods, what history had taught us from those times and what had my complete attention; the crows.

"Crows and ravens have been mentioned in scripture, holy texts, and mythology for centuries. Incredibly intelligent birds, they're often portrayed as mischievous tricksters, but they're also often associated with death and the transition to the afterlife. Perhaps most popular is the depiction of the
ravens often seen in the company of, or representing, the Morrigan—the Celtic goddess of war and death..."

Kyle stopped the lecture with thirty minutes of class left. To answer any questions and to give us an outline of the term paper each of us had to complete. The football jock raised his hand.

"Do you really believe in this magical crow crap?"

With a slight grin that escaped his expression, Kyle's eyes danced when they met mine. "Actually, I do. It is up to each and everyone in here to determine the same. You need to have ready the basic information for your term paper when we meet next week. Do your research."

Once the professor packed up his things from the desk they began to exist out of the room. I waited behind for him so we could walk out together. Only, another professor had the same idea. "Professor Brandon, I was wondering if you could give me a jump. My car won't start."

"Sure." He put his arm around me as we walked out of the school.

"You're very friendly with your students."

"This is my wife, Tara." She seemed a little surprised. I wasn't when we found there really wasn't anything wrong with her car. It fired right up when Kyle tried to start it. But she still thanked him profusely until he finally walked away from her.

"We both know what she really wants you jump."

"We both know I am always going to come home to my wife. Other women can't compare to you. In beauty, kindness and intelligence. My attraction to you has never been just physical. It's like we have a mental connection, it's so rare to find. To me you are perfect you stimulate my body and mind. I will never do anything to screw that up."

"Do you want to take the long way home?" I never thought about why he and I were close. Maybe he was on to something. Now, I wanted to be on something too, him.

By the time we made it home, it was early morning. Nicole was stretched out on the couch with Molly in Thomas' crib. He was a big boy now in a toddler bed. Cody was out in Abel's bed with him. Kyle covered his sister up and just let her sleep. We checked on each of them before we turned in too.

When I woke the next morning, something had come over me during the dark of the night. I had reached a new level of life and peace. It sounded dramatic and instant, maybe it was. Whether you chose to move on from your struggles and enjoy life or waddle in your misery, life continued on, how happy it was you had to decide. You tried to convenience yourself you deserved more and always wanted more. For the first time, I knew I had it all.

Before they got out of bed I started to write my term paper. The name was the easiest part; Circling the Crow. I typed as fast as my fingers would allow. I could always go back and edit it later. Through three cups of coffee I wrote about life's cycle, how it all comes full circle back to you. Until I was interrupted. They were up and they were hungry.

Every chance I got, I worked on my paper. After I put the kids in bed I wrote my heart out until Kyle came home. A couple of weeks had passed and I was stuck on what else to put in it. I had another class and I hoped it gave me some ideas. I loved to listen to Kyle teach, he done it with such passion. Just as he done everything else in life.
"The most power you ever posses, is knowledge. No one can ever take it away from you and how you expand on it, is totally up to you." There was a lesson in the words he expressed to these students. Being older, I already understood it. Most in here wouldn't even begin to get it until later on. "You don't have to be in a classroom to gain it either. There is a library full of it you can access daily. It's what we are going to talk about today. The Library of Alexandria. It was built on the muses of nine goddesses. In B.C. before books were invented. They collected any and all written words on scrolls. Some them were no more than symbols to relate their writings..."

The lecture was fascinating and I took in every word he spoke. Until he came to the part that didn't require just my attention, I had lived it already. There were pauses he made and looked directly at me. As though it was he and I alone in this room. It wasn't a hard code to crack but the others had no idea what he meant. "Son of a bitch."

"The church in the Dark and Middle Ages took the earth centered view of the universe. Man was the center of everything and all things evolved around only the man. I'm here to tell you, they were wrong. Alexander the Great knew there was more and he went on a journey to find it. He built the library on the muses of the nine goddess which inspired artist and still do today. They were the daughters of Zeus and Apollo. Zeus was the king of gods. Until it shifted and transferred over time to Apollo. Why? All because the love of one woman, they battled for the hand of the beautiful maiden. Alexander figured it out way back then. A man was not made a king by just his own strengths. He was made a king by the strength of the woman beside him. Look at this diagram and give me a minim of five hundred words on your take of it."

In my hand I felt I held another piece to the puzzle I never knew existed. The diagram was a complete, perfect circle with a tinier version of it in the middle. In the center were three names written. The three that determined the outcome of many lives. Or I guess she had. With nine equal pieces of the circle, one dedicated to each goddess. They all brought something to the table to make it complete.

As I began to write I looked up to see him at his desk. With his gaze fixated on just me. Only I couldn't figure out the expression on his face and exactly what it meant. But I felt nothing but love radiate from him. The type of love I had never felt before him. Eventually, his eyes wander around the room to the others and I went back to the task at hand.

Before class was over I wrote the front and back of a piece of notebook paper. It wasn't due to be turned in. Yet, I had already completed my assignment except for the ending which came to me the more I thought back.

_The maiden could have made a choice between them based on not who was the better man for her. But who made her a better woman._

When the last sentence was written, I read over it a couple of times. Printed my name on the piece of paper and was ready to turn it in on my way out. Everyone began to gather up their belongings and were ready to go. Kyle hadn't his stuff yet and leaned back on the edge of his desk. Checked his watch a couple of times. As he smiled because he knew they wanted as he checked his watch again.

"Go on, get out of here. Don't forget your assignment next class."

"Excuse me, Professor, can we discuss tonight's lecture over a cup of coffee?"

"Yes, we can. Now, come over here and sexually harass your teacher with a kiss."

It was almost a deja vu moment. Kyle opened the door for me, pulled out my chair and we talked for hours over coffee.
"Why didn't tell me this before?"

"Because you're smart, girl. I don't have to tell you, I never have. You figure out things all on your own. Someday, remember this conversation and remember how much I love you. When I wrote your name in ink on my finger, it was already on my heart and will stay there forever."

I wrote your name in the sand...but the waves washed it away.

I wrote your name in the sky...but the wind blew it away.

I wrote your name on my heart...and forever it will stay.

Quotes Gram

Make me a willow cabin at your gate, and call upon my soul within the house;

write loyal canton of contemned love and sing them loud even in the dead of the night.

William Shakespeare

Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book.

Jeremiah 30:2

"Where are the kids?"

"Gemma and Nero took them to the zoo. Ellie went with her friends. We are all alone."

"Damn. We can have pizza, sex and a nap."

We had time for sex and a nap. But we never got a pizza. We were still asleep when they brought the kids home. They were exhausted, sweaty and happy with the time spent with grandma.

"We would like to take them again. If that's okay?"

"You can anytime." She only nodded and went to leave. "Gemma, they love you and I know you love them." She gave a slight smile on her way back to the car.

"Thanks, Tara. Gemma really needed this today." Nero never elaborated on what he meant. But it was start to repair the relationship with the kids. She was one crazy bitch, it would never change. Neither would her love for them.

It certainly didn't fix the problems Gemma and I had with one another. But it started to ease the pain of it the more she came around my sons. They melted her heart as much as mine. Before long, she would get healed by it. Over the years, I had and I held the faith she would too. If you found something to fill that gaping hole in your chest, you could master a lot of things.
In the long run she and I had similarities perhaps I hadn't noticed until now. We both grew up without a mother to show us love and compassion. From it we wanted to be even better mothers because of it. The man we loved had other women while we pretended it wasn't going on and tried to forgive and forget about it. It was why we knew the importance of a man who loved and adored us. This trip down memory lane got me nowhere to the place I wanted to be.

"Do you want to help me?" Ellie and I began the spring cleanup in the yard. It was time to pick up what the winter left behind and start over. In a few weeks I would be ready to plant flowers so they could blume and refresh the season. We done that while the boys mowed, raked up leaves and swept the sidewalk.

The spring brought an effect over you. It was a new beginning, a fresh slate to start over. The fever had already hit the kids. They wanted to be outside more and school seemed to be the last thing on their minds. I even had a hard time focusing the next day when I was at work.

Through my office window, I felt the warmth the sun had to offer. I raised it up and caught the slight breeze blow through it. Along with the smell of the magnolia tree and the scent filled the room. There were no problems that couldn't be solved for me at the moment. Except, I wanted to be a kid again and shirk my responsibilities today.

"Doctor, your next patient is here."

It wasn't in the cards for me to stop and smell the roses. So I went back to work. After I saw the last patient I couldn't wait to get out of here. While I drove home I took in all the earth had to offer in amazement with the window rolled down. You would have thought I was a child but maybe I just appreciated the day.

Until the night came. When the phone rang in the middle of the it, it was never usually good news. I could barely get awake enough for it to register my cell was indeed going off. Just as I went to get up to answer it, it stopped. For only Kyle's phone to start in.

"We'll be there." He was already getting his pants on and fumbled around to find his keys.

"Who was it?"

"Nero. Gemma had a stroke."

We woke up Ellie enough she knew we were leaving and to watch the boys. Kyle tried to reach Nero several times on the way to the hospital and couldn't. His cell went straight to voicemail.

It was too late by the time we arrived. Gemma was already gone. Nero was still alive and had to continue to live with the outcome of it. He was on the bench outside of the hospital, still in shock, still in love with the woman he lost.

"I'm nothing without her." He labored for every breath he took in. It was as much pain for him to even utter those words.

The tears and pain came to me as well. I never got to say goodbye to Gemma. Or repair the relationship back to what we once had. She had missed out on so much time with the boys. It was as much as my fault as it was hers. Now, I wouldn't be given the chance to.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" The voice behind me, I knew so well. I didn't even need to turn around and see who it was.

"I don't mean any disrespect, Jax. I'm here because I liked Gemma and to support Nero."
"Leave, now. While I still allow you to."

Kyle didn't argue with Jax, it was his mother after all. He done as Jax wished, he went to the truck to wait on me.

This was where I had to make a decision. Even though I felt I had done the right thing. It still didn't turn out that way. When a relationship doesn't work out, in a time like this. You should express symphony and have compassion. "I'm sorry about Gemma."

"She was already dead to me. Just like anyone who betrays me."

Jax obviously hadn't worked out his anger at me yet. He didn't except my condolences and couldn't resist throwing a little dig in there just for me. Since he wanted it to be this way. There was one person I was concerned for to make it through the loss of a loved one, Nero.

We turned our complete focus to him. When I went over the next day to see him, Nero was in bad shape. The whisky bottle in his grip didn't begin to numb the pain he felt. He hadn't taken a drink in years. With her gone, he felt like the world had nothing left to offer him.

He asked if I'd accompany him to make arraignments for the service. I drove because he wasn't in any shape to drive or even really walk as much as he stumbled around. I didn't think he was going to make it through this, how was he going to make it through tomorrow when he had to say his final goodbye to her.

On the way home he got sick and I had to pull over. I held on to him as he released all the liquor from his body he had consumed. Once I finally got him back in the car, the goal was to get him home and in bed.

"Thank you, mama." His hand blindly searched for mine until he found it.

"I'm here for you."

It wasn't just an empty promise made. I'd do anything for Nero. He had always been there for me and treated me with nothing but respect. Only I didn't have the strength it took to get a passed out man from the car. I called Kyle and he came to take of him.

"The kids will be home soon. You go and I'll stay with Nero until he wakes up."

There was still a conversation I needed to have with Abel. Thomas was too little to understand any of this. I waited at the end of the drive for them to get off the bus.

It was difficult where to begin and what to say or not say to him. "Grandma is in heaven now."

Children looked to us for answers. Even ones we really didn't have. "Will the angels take care of her?"

"Yes, baby."

It didn't seem to soothe Abel's pain. When he disappeared, I went to search for him. He was the one out of all the kids most effected by her death. I found him on his bed with his monkey clutched to him. It was what he had to hold on to grandma with. I held him as tightly as I could and let him cry.

Most taught boys they weren't suppose to have emotions. As they got older it made them weak to express them. I wanted him to know in my presences he could. It wasn't long before he cried until he couldn't anymore. I laid down with him in my arms. After he dozed off I covered him up. I wouldn't
wake him until he was ready to get up.

When the rest of kids where in bed I went to my rocking chair and just contemplated life. What it held for us and how it would come to an end. If I wanted to admit it or not Gemma had been an influence in my life. Not always a good influence but she was there when no one else was.

"How is Nero?"

"Sad and confused."

There was no need to discuss the state of his condition. We both knew this would send him over the edge as much as he truly loved her. We set in the night air while we rocked together in silence. Death had a way of making you think about your own life.

There was debate if I should let Abel go to the funeral or not. Ellie and Kenny made their own decision to not go and Thomas wouldn't know what was going on anyway. So, I left it up to Abel. This was the first decision of many my son would make in his lifetime.

The morning came when it was time for him to decide. He still couldn't. "How about you and I will go put flowers on grandma later on?"

"Grandma loves flowers. She grows a garden on her porch. I like..." It gave my son a way to relate to the situation and deal with the loss. He continued to talk about his grandma and other things she loved. Once more before we left, I asked him if he wanted to go. He wanted tomorrow to go buy the flowers for her. I would make certain it happened too.

Ellie watched the kids for us. She planned to do stuff with them to keep them busy. More so, she wanted to keep Abel busy so he wouldn't think about it. She was going to make a great mom someday.

The drive was long and I dreaded it. As much as I dreaded the reason. Nero was here already. The dark glasses covered his face to hide it. Nothing could hide his broken heart though.

"Can I talk to you, Tara?"

"Sure."

He handed me a thick brown envelope. As I went to open it. "Please wait until you get home."

"What's in it?"

"I trust you, mama. Don't open it until you get home." It gave me a uneasy feeling with the way Nero spoke. But I gave him my word and I would do as he wished.

It was time to take another walk up that long hill to lay another person to their final resting place. It was Nero I worried about. He never left the casket. He stayed as close to it and her as he could. I went to talk to him but he began our conversation before I could.

"It hurt Gemma worse to not be with you and the boys. Than it did with Jax and club."

"I honestly didn't think it bothered her at all to not be around me. But I know it did she wasn't around my sons."

"There are very few people in this world we open up ourselves to, I mean full honest truth. You and I are the only ones she ever done it with I know of. She loved the club and her son. But she was
never honest with them. When it came down to her choosing who would live on and survival. She chose you and the boys over herself. She thought Jax would make it quick and kill her. She knew the risk she was taking. He didn't but he done something worse, he exiled her from his life and told her how much he hated her. She had no family, no sense of belonging. It was a slow torturous death to her."

Nero's words hit me like a truck. It ran over me, backed up and done it again. Not that I didn't deserve it. I knew almost everything he said already. Yet, we all had a humbling moment when we were reminded of how we got where we were. Without Gemma, I probably wouldn't still be alive. As much as I felt hated by her when I was with her son because we hadn't done what she wanted. I also felt she loved me as much as she could as a daughter. The only way she knew how.

The tension was on high alert during the entire ceremony. Not from myself, this wasn't exactly the place or time for it. I too could have played the blame game and told him how much he ruined my life. But what would it truly accomplish for either one of us. Then again, it wasn't me Jax chose to direct his anger at today. Which, made no sense.

They had reached a point of civil conversation between them until now. Something changed I wasn't aware of. They kept staring at each other. Not a single word spoken between them though. Jax wouldn't budge on his stance of whatever in the hell it was and Kyle wouldn't back down on it. I wanted to pay my final respects to her and get the hell out of here. I let go of Kyle's hand and went to place the flowers I had in my hand since they had already helped Nero make it to the car.

"It was time for a change, Gemma. I couldn't be you no matter how hard I tried to. I know I wouldn't have survived this life without you. Or got my family out alive. For that, I will be always grateful."

Gemma was a force to be reckoned with. She knew how to work the room to her advantage. You felt like she was your best friend until she shoved the knife up your ass. There were times, I knew in my heart she had done the right thing even though she sacrificed what she had with her son and the club life she helped build. Other times, she fucked you over with a smile and made you believe she had done you favor.

When she let her guard down, you seen a completely different person. I got a glimpse into the outlaw queen and the life she had endured. It was one of a heartbreaking level. She never felt loved by her mother, men in her world used and abused her and the glamorous life she wanted in the streets turned to crime and chaos.

Although, there were many occasions I wished I had her confidence and strength she had. Gemma just never learned how to turn it off, get past it. If she loved she was all in, when she hated it was the same result. There was even once in the middle of all the shit, she felt like a mother to me. She done it for me and my sons even though she always insisted she didn't. It would be what I would hold on to about her.

Through the grief I could almost see her standing before me with a smoke between her lips. Looking down upon us all today, this service. "You know what you need to do, sweetheart. Don't let the bastards grind you down. You keep your shit together, hold your head up high. No one can hurt you without you allowing it. Never let Abel or Thomas forget how much grandma loves them."

"Yeah."

As my hands let go of the lilies, they laid on her casket in a neat pile. You had to keep what brought you peace and release what brought the suffering. In the misting rain, it looked like tear drops ran off the flowers, in her time spent on earth she had shed many. In the afterlife, I truly wished Gemma some final peace.
When someone you love, becomes a memory. The memory, becomes a treasure.

Quotes Gram

Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers o’er fraught heart and bids it break.

William Shakespeare

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live.

John 11:25

Abel and I made our rounds once a month. We put flowers on those we loved. His main reason for coming was Gemma. We planted peace lilies between her and Nero. We also brought fresh flowers for her too.

The doctors claimed Nero died of heart complications. I felt he died of a broken heart. He had no desire to live once she was gone and just gave up on life. His son had passed a few years before they had. His request was to be buried between the two people he loved most in this world. I was left specific instructions on what he wanted done along with the money to pay for it all.

After we left the cemetery we stopped at a little dinner on the way home to get breakfast. As time went on Abel wasn't as sad to visit there anymore. He made sure the lilies were taken care of for grandma. It was his way of remembering her and their time together. It was a sad reminder that everyone experienced death of someone they loved.

But for ever death a new life came. A new cycle brought on a brand new beginning of the another day. It was a slate wiped clean to start over. To do things in a better way than had been done before. It was where I was at the next morning as I contemplated what a new life meant. When I climbed out of bed I went to do it. I had to know for certain.

"Tara, is everything okay?" Usually I never locked our bathroom door. This morning was an exception to the rule.

"I'll be out in a minute." I said a minute, more like five or so. I pulled out the stick and done my morning business.

Kyle again knocked on the door. I unlocked it and waited for him to pass out when he seen what I was doing. He picked it up from the counter and examined it closely. A smile crossed his face as he set it back down.

"I know we don't need more children. I..."

"I'm not upset. We have a lot of love to give. What's one more."

"A mini bus." He laughed at my response but I was serious.
We watched the clock tick by. Each second was a past memory. Until it was time to see what the results were. "I'm not pregnant." Every indication I had told me I was. My body felt it too.

"Okay." He seemed disappointed but blew it off like everything was fine. "I'll drop Thomas at daycare. It's on my way. Are you sure you don't want me to take the kids to school?"

"I'll take them."

"I'll see you tonight. I love you, girl."

"I love you, boy."

With a kiss for my two boys to send them off to their day. I went to get ready so the kids and I could get breakfast before they went to school. It made me think back to when the boys were babies as I threw it all in the trash when I cleaned off the bathroom counter.

All I had left to do was put my makeup on and we could leave. I started the warm water and wet my face with it. As I lifted up to the mirror I saw his reflection in it. "Shit."

We brawled around the bathroom and bedroom. He was too powerful for me. I ended up with my wrist bound and gagged with a rag. When the black fabric hood went over my head I freaked out. More so when I couldn't see the kids or hear them when I was thrown in the back of a vehicle. I was being taken against my will and I could do nothing about it.

Every bump in the road was felt by me. The sounds echoed in my head louder than they had ever before from the surroundings. Only their langue was foreign, a thick accent and I couldn't understand them when they spoke.

It seemed like hours had passed by. My hair was stuck to my face from the sweat of the fabric, it stifled my breath. My arms numb from the ropes that bound my wrist behind my back. When I tried to move around, I couldn't.

When the vehicle came to a halt. Two doors shut and then I felt them drag me out of it. I fought blindly against whatever was there but I couldn't escape them. As I was shoved down in chair, the hood came off my head.

All of their eyes were on me. I didn't recognize any of them. Or have a clue with what they wanted from me.

They all took a step back from as man in a suit came in. He immediately took off his jacket and loosened up his tie. "Do you know who I am?" Since I couldn't speak with the gag in my mouth. I shook my head no.

"You knew my father and brother. Your husband killed them."

Through the rag I struggled to get the words out to come through. Finally he had them cut it off me. "Where are my children?"

"They are safe. For now." He picked up a cellphone and called a number. How he got it I have no idea. "Tell your husband we have you. If he wants to see you alive again he needs to come and make it right."

So many questions ran through my mind to ask him. But the only thing came out had nothing to do with it. "I'm not married to Jax anymore. I don't know anything or have anything to do with what he does."
"You were in Mexico when he slaughtered my family." He was up in my face as he screamed at me. Then as the picture came in plain sight I knew I was fucked.

As clear as day a photo of myself at the laundry with Kyle in Mexico as we searched for the boys. When they held us there until the others came to save us. "You have the wrong one. He was never part of the club. Please, where are my..." A piece of stiff thick tape was pressed across my lips to shut me up.

The damage was done and couldn't be corrected now no matter how much I plead with them. Through the tape I coughed and gagged because I felt so sick I could barely hold it back. This was the end of the line and the train was about to run me over. My children would pay the price for all of it. Every sin committed by their father and the club.

"If you want to see your family alive again. You better do exactly as I say." He made the call. There was no turning back now. There was no repentance that could save us now. There was no way out.

They forced me up on my feet and pushed my body to move through the old abandon warehouse. I was literally thrown in a room on the floor. The dirty concrete felt cold as my face touched it. I just laid there with no fight left. The only light was a dim light bulb that flickered.

The noise behind me made me try to set up. Only to see my terrified children hoovered together in the corner of the room. Their hands tied in front of them with a gag in their mouths. Ellie set in the middle of Kenny and Abel. The boys were so close to her from fear there was no gap between them.

With my feet and butt, I scooted until I reached them. At least I knew they were still alive and with me. This was a terrible situation for all of them. But Abel, he had been here so many times already.

We couldn't communicate by words but we did by love. They all hugged me as much as they could with tied hands. My demeanor had to calm them so I had to remain calm for them. My heart raced by what felt like a thousand beats a minute. Yet, I tried to stay sane for them.

The door creaked when it was swung open. Two of them came in while one of them had a large knife in his hand and the other a sack. I wondered if this would be the last time I saw my babies sweet faces. As he came towards us, I pushed my back up against the wall. I stood in front of my children unsure what I could really do to protect them. Yet, I had to try.

He dumped the sack on the floor. Bottled water and food fell to it. He didn't speak perfect English but it was enough I could understand he was going to cut us free. When he finished. The locked door slammed behind them.

Water was pleasant on my throat as I swallowed it down quickly. The kids ate after I helped them get the gags off. Then came the hard part. They wanted to know why we were here, when we could go home.

"Soon." I kept all my replies simple and vague. The reality was I didn't have an answer that was truthful or good news for them.

As time passed by so had my life before my eyes. As I held on to Abel and Kenny while they slept. All the things I still wanted to do. All the things I wished I had done. All the things I done to get myself here today.

Again the door creaked when it came open. I braced myself for what was about to come next. They brought more water and food to us.

"How long have we been here?"
"He's running out of time. You better hope he's here soon." Once again the door closed behind him.

It wasn't long until I heard the creak. "Get up." The more I resisted. The rougher he got with me. My hands were bound and I was gagged.

Although I stopped fighting as soon as I seen him. The eyes were the gateway to the soul. We had a conversion and I couldn't utter a word. Bu he had to break away and deal with what was before him.

"It's my cellphone." Kyle stopped when he immediately had a gun shoved in his face when he moved. Then, he slowly and cautiously continued on. "There is something you need to see."

"You son of bitch, you took my wife and son." I couldn't see what the video was playing on the phone. But I knew those desperate pleas of a desperate mother with the determination to protect her young. He threw the phone against the concrete wall. While it shattered, my thought was all of this bullshit had shattered many people's lives in the process.

"You didn't think I would walk in here without some insurance my family will get out. The bloodshed between our families needs to end. Ends here now with you and me. You let my family go, they let yours go."

"They?"

"There is an army waiting past those gates. If you kill my family, they kill yours. Please, don't force me to hurt your wife and son." This was a constant nightmare in Kyle's life. The last thing he wanted to do was ever hurt a mother and children. He lost brothers because of it and still lived that pain. Only now, the stakes were so high because it was his children.

As they dragged me away once again. Kyle mouthed the words to me. "I love you, girl."

The exchange was arraigned already. We would be let go at the gate and the same with his family. Only no arraignments were made on Kyle's behalf. I had no way to reach him, to get to him. We were kept in the locked room away from him.

The struggle really began when they came to get us. There was no way in hell I was leaving here without him. As they took Abel from our group as we walked out the door, I kicked them, screamed at the top of my lungs. Only for the rag in my mouth to muffle my sounds. Only for two of the men to pick me up and throw me in the car.

My hands banged against the glass. My feet pushed and kicked on the seat in front of me. My heart was broken. My eyes then seen them. They were in flight to their destination. It had been years since the crows appeared in our life. It wasn't a good sign either.

The car came to abrupt halt as it threw me forward. On the other side of the gate they all stood. Kyle's brothers armed along with Jax and the club. As soon as she existed the car, I knew it was his wife they held captive. She fought them to get to her child still in the car. A mother's love wasn't hard to tell even from a distance.

But she and I had no choices left and were given no alternative ending. Maybe we never really had with the kind of life we chose to live. That life was coming around full circle now to swallow us whole.

It was in the process and it was going down if I wanted it to or not. We were shoved through the gate at the same time. Exchanged for the past crimes of love we committed. She and I fought with everything we had to stay with our child left behind. Only to be defeated.
"I have to go back. Abel and Kyle are still in there." I tried to argue with Boomer, I tried to reason with him. It didn't work though. Meat overpowered me in the escape car.

"Please, Boomer."

"We will get them both out. You can't go back."

Just as we rounded the curve on the road, we were bombarded by them. They were scattered all over, the side of it and in the trees. Boomer swerved to miss them because they wouldn't budge. Only it wasn't until I seen it, then I knew exactly what was going to happen, what was about to take place.

The white faced crow landed on the hood with it's head dropped as it meant to send me sympathy and was sorry for what it had to do. Although it made such a perfect landing for such a horrible event to come. Boomer chose to slam on the brakes this time to get rid of it. But it wasn't going away, it was here for a purpose. Once the other four joined by its side and dropped their heads in unison, the tears had just began to fall from me. As quickly as they arrived they departed together in flight.

When I lifted the handle it wouldn't open, it was locked. "I need out. I have to go back." I was panic stricken to get out of this damn car. Come hell or hell of the crows, I was getting out.

"You can't go back." Boomer had no clue what was about to transpire. He had a job to do; get us to safety. But he didn't understand what was about to happen like I did.

The sky turned ghostly grey in color, then went dark, a cold black, as the night would and it was day time. The lighting flashed around and the storm was brewing. Only this storm was coming for me head on this time in a hard and furiously manner. Perhaps more so than the one up in the sky. There were a hundred crows covering the ground as the car flashed by them at high speed.

"No. Please god..no."

Today was the unmistakable moment in time, which it stood still. Perfectly still. As I rode to safety and freedom, my son was wrapped in the arms of danger. But, today also marked the moment of the crows.

They had warned me, told me their secrets and shown me many times what today would bring. The headstone in my dreams, or the nightmares, which was what they really were. Was my son's grave, Abel. His death came today. He died at the same age he was today. My world would no longer be whole after today.

"You have to stop this damn car." Boomer never expected me to leap over the seat and attack him. But, it was exactly what I had done. Once it slowed down I let go, I let go of everything but my family. Out the door I went while it was still in motion. The harsh reality of how hard the ground was when I tumbled to it, was nothing in comparison of the reality I must face.

The brakes came to a screeching halt while I ran to save my baby. Boomer was a good loyal man. He knew he couldn't risk the children's' lives to go after me. He performed what training had taught him, as I done what a mother would do. After it sped off, I sped up the pace to get back to where I was a captive against my will. My strong will was to bring my family home now.

The white faced crow flew up above from tree to tree waiting for me to reach the end and his final destination. Now everything went dark surrounding me. Piercing high pitched birds making their call at the same time were making me scream in pain. I covered my ears to block the noise as I kept running to get to them. The fog rose slowly from the ground. It swirlled around my moving legs. This
was an evil replay of déjà vu.

The pings of bullets flying, the sounds of bombs exploding, the screams of pain and the death at my doorstep would not stop me. The smell of gun powder vaporized through the cloud of smoke it had engulfed us all in. What would not become clouted was what I had to do. Save my son even if it meant I would no longer live myself. Through him, I would live on forever in his heart and the rest of my children.

Four of them were flying in unison in a circle above me with the white faced crow hovering in the middle. He effortlessly hovered in the center of their circle where he waited to take the soul. Show them the way home. Death held many faces while it succumb what was around it. Even though I knew why they were here, their loud caws, told what their hearts were screaming out in a painful way to me. I followed them, they were my guide to find my son. As I no longer could see with my eyes in this haze, I had to follow my true heart to find to my son and husband.

A devoted husband who would die to protect me and our children. He didn't just stop at telling me he loved me, I was shown first hand by him daily. With ever action he took, no matter if it was large or small, he took a piece of my heart in awe. When I stopped to finally catch my breath. I said it, as though they could magically hear me. "I love you, Abel. I love you, Kyle. More than all the ants on the sidewalk and the leaves on the trees."

No sooner than I spoke those words, I heard him. "Mommy." Blindly I went in the direction of his voice. "Stop you're hurting me."

There was no known pain as when your child suffered and you couldn't do anything about it. Your child was an unignorable part of you, Abel was one of the better parts of me. You protected them to the best of your ability. You cherished them the moment you hold them in your arms to eternity. You were never the same without them.

When the last gunshot rang out. The fog began to lift up high to the sky. So did the five crows through what was once darkness that surrounded us. They flew to the light that shown through today's darkness. John Teller came to take him home, to take him to the afterlife.

"No." I cursed the sky on my knees of mercy. Although no mercy was shown by the crows.

When I must leave for a little while
Please don’t grieve and shed wild tears
And hug your sorrow to you through the years
But start but bravely with a gallant smile
And for my sake and in my name
Live on and do all the things the same
Feed not your loneliness on empty days
But fill each waking hour in useful ways
Reach out your hand in comfort and in cheer
And I in turn will comfort you and hold you near
And never, never be afraid to die
For I am waiting for you beyond the sky..

Helen Steiner Rice
When you depart from me sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

William Shakespeare

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 5:24

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

The library and the nine goddess are true facts. Indeed they were a perfect circle of harmony. If one of them was out of sync...the circle was array. Melpomene is the goddess of tragedy. Her parents too had had a love story very similar to what we have talked about. History repeats itself throughout time. I've often thought of whom it refers to now in our time of life.

Please forward to the next chapter.
Chapter 41

Angels and Outlaws

Part 5 of 14

Chapter 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 have been posted. Make sure to read them all. This isn't the end yet. We still have another 6 or 7 chapters to go.

The ground was kissed by the morning dew. It wet my shoes as I walked through it. The heels sunk deep in the ground just like the stake that struck through my heart. It made the deepest pain I couldn't imagine before now. Those moments we shared in happiness were now divided by death and chaos. We were divided by a different place.

The sun beat down upon us already so early. Every trickle of sweat made my nerves stand on edge. It would be a scorcher today no doubt. Just like no doubt today would leaving a scorching mark on my soul forever.

It left me completely breathless as I took the same long walk I had so many times lately. But, this one was like no other I've ever known. For different reasons though. I could hear them making their uniformed sound off in the distance. The closer I got, the further my heart disappeared in sorrow. This was one walk, I would take alone. Just as I would every day from here forward.

…..and the bugles played on.

When the door opened to the back of the car. I closed my eyes to gather myself from completely falling apart here on the spot. If I hadn't constantly reminded myself to just breathe, there would have been no indication I had any life in me left. I hadn't even made it there yet and I was devastated, left alone as a shell of person. Left by the one I loved.

The American flag draped proudly across his casket to the honor the faithful and loyal man he truly was. Each soldier, his brothers, took their positions to carry him to his final resting place. There would be no rest or peace for me without him.

It stopped me in my tracks when the coffin was carried past me. Meat and Boomer both offered their arms in support. I couldn't take them or the thought of being close to his lifeless body as they started up the long hill. I couldn't even move from the spot I was in. I couldn't picture life without him. Without the love he so freely gave me.

…..and the bugles played on.

Their commanding officer, his uncle, took the lead out in front of them. Leading the band of soldiers to honor their fallen brother. "Left, right, left, right." In perfect step and rhythm they moved each time. Never wavering with how connected they were together.

It only served as a reminder of how he was with me. When I moved, he'd move. If I was happy he was an ecstatic goofball. When something was wrong with me, he done all in his power to make it right, make it better for me. We were always in perfect sync with one another in every possible way. When you truly loved someone, they became a part of you. He was a major part, the better part of
"Tara. We need to take our seats."

Nicole gave me all the support of loving family member, sister and friend. Maybe, I thought if I prolonged it, it would give me just a few more minutes of precious time with him. But, I knew it wouldn't. I knew he wasn't coming back to me. He was gone forever now.

Slowly, I nodded to acknowledge her. The ceremony was decorated with so many flowers gathered around. One caught my eye; it was the same type of blue I planted on Bobby. With no card of whom they were from. As I approached the chairs they set out. I seen another; the same purple flowers Donna loved so much. With no clue who sent them. The same white peace lilies I planted in between Nero and Gemma then on John's grave. In hopes they were brought to some peace in the after life. I didn't even bother to look where they were from. Because there was no need to. I went and surrendered to my chair, it was time.

"Ready, aim, fire." The first shot rang in a deafening tone. It took direct aim at me, it should have been my firing squad as dead as I already felt inside.

"Ready, aim, fire." The second shot in the air didn't even reach my numbness. I wasn't certain without him if anything could reach me anymore.

"Ready, aim, fire." The third shot was the final blow to shatter what was left of my heart into a million pieces. Cutting me with each piece that shard of it. The pain was the only thing I had left to know I even was alive still.

They folded up the flag with perfect creases and handed it to me. Boomer gave me a grasp on the shoulder before he went and stood behind where Nicole sat. But it was Meat that delivered a staggering message he whispered in my ear. "Kyle loves you more than he ever loved before. You meant more to him than his own life. He would want you to go on and be happy. You remember that. You are our family. We are here for whatever you and the kids need."

While I focused on the meaning of his words. Meat gave Nicole a kiss on the cheek and said something to her as well.

With the flag clutched to my chest I tried to breathe, I tried to get past it. But he was no longer here to do it with me. It rushed me all at once, the things he done for me, for our children. All the little things in this world that made it worth living were gone now.

"We are reminded that death is not the end. We can see our love ones again. Today, Kyle Alex Brandon, went home and was welcomed by his love ones with open arms."

The rest of what the preacher said went right past me. I thought of Kyle's final minutes on this earth. He died a hero to save our family, to save me. Abel had already ran past me by the time I got to him.

A final shot rang out and the last bad guy fell. I seen Kyle coming towards me in the haze of gray smoke, in the smell of death surrounding us, he made it out. Or so I believed until he went to the ground on his knees. He was choking to take in a breath. There was nothing I could do for him. Or to save him like he had me.

"I love you, girl."

Kyle died in my arms with those last words whispered. Before his body went into shock and he made one more long gasp. He took in his final breath of life with the person he loved and love on his lips as much as in his heart. As he lived it with me in our life we had together. At that precise
moment, everything good vanished before my eyes.

My screams, pleading with him; please don't leave me. Went unanswered. I cursed the sky, I cursed the love I lost. No one answered them as well.

"Tara, the car is waiting. It's time to go." I understood what Nicole said. But I had to look around me twice. It was already over. Which, I wasn't present for it even though I was right here.

"You go ahead."

"Kyle is gone. I don't want to let go of him either. But we don't have a choice."

"I'll never let him go." A piece of me died when he did, I might as well have been in the box with him. They tried to run me off so they could bury him. But I wasn't leaving, I had to see it through for his sake and mine. I sent my children with Nicole. They didn't need to see this part, me loosing it.

With every scoop of unsettled dirt they took out of the ground. Another reason I missed him, came to mind. It was always the little things you remembered that tore you completely a part.

A few pats of the shovels, they were done. My hell just begun. "I'll do it." They picked up the flowers to put on top of him. I couldn't let them.

"We can get in to really big trouble for letting you." They were just trying to do their jobs. I was just trying to bury my husband.

"We didn't see anything. Come on." The oldest gentlemen of the group pulled the others away. He must have understood.

The flowers laid on the disturbed earth. The lump of dirt they decorated. I hadn't got them all there yet, I couldn't take it any longer. "How could you leave me?" The tears fell with the sorrow that took me over.

I had to cover my ears with their abrupt arrival, their sounds were deafening. On the ground the crows landed one by one. Until the fourth ended their flight. "Why?" I screamed it out, but it went unanswered too.

Their heads shot off all in the same direction. So did mine. It was the most beautiful sight. It soared so high, so freely. It's landing was near. It was near me. On the ground the crow laid a pink ribbon on top of the dirt. It was so close, I could almost reach out to touch it. As I did attempt to, it flew away to join the others.

The white faced crow led them on their journey. They didn't fly in the circle pattern as they had in the past or back and forth together as warning of what was to come. Each one followed it straight up in the sky.

With the ribbon in hand. I laid down next to him on the ground, one final time. Watched them until they were a small dot on this earth on their way up to heaven. My eyes refocused several times, until I couldn't see them anymore.

When I opened my hand. I cried like I had never before. Like a child cries for their mother. Like a wife cries for her husband. The pink ribbon, in gold print; Girl.

For hours, I laid in the same spot. Unable to show any emotion. Unable to move past where I was. Unable to see tomorrow in my sights.
"Tara."

His voice brought me to my feet quickly. "What do you want? Did you come here to marvel in my misery?" Jax lit up a smoke before he answered. The time lapse of the past between us made it even worse to try to communicate with one another. My response to him being near me wasn't what I should of said but today, it would be the best he would get from me.

"I made Kyle a promise. I'm here to keep it."

Jax mentioning Kyle's name sent me into a tizzy fit. I screamed at Jax, my fist beat on his chest of leather. Until my tears altered the words so much he probably didn't understand me anyway. Only, he took it all from me. He didn't lash out or back away. He just held me tighter until I stopped crying.

"I'll give you ride."

"Get the hell away from me."

"Tara, just let me give you a ride. I'll take you anywhere you wanna go. Then, you'll never have to speak to me again. I'll give up my visitation rights for the kids. You can take them wherever you want to. You're right on a lot of things about me. I'm a shitty father, save our boys."

You are mine, woman, and I am yours. Until you, my life was desolate.

I existed but I didn't truly live. Now I live, even in my death...

Gena Showalter

For now they kill me with a living death. I shall carry on for her.

William Shakespeare

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Corinthians 13:7-8

The ground was kissed by the morning dew. It wet my shoes as I walked through it. The heels of them sunk deep in the ground just like the stake that shot through my heart every time I visited here. The sun beat down upon us already so early. It would be a scorcher today no doubt.

"Let's go see daddy."

"Okay, Mommy."

It was a couple of months after Kyle passed away, I found out I was pregnant. Our little girl, Alexandria, looked just like him with flowing long blonde hair and big blue eyes. Her sweet disposition along with her smile, reminded me of him every time she done it.
Every effort was made to keep Kyle alive in Alex's heart. This was a ritual we done together every few months. We visited his grave. I stood back and let her have her moment with him. She rambled on about the new dollies she got on her birthday. Also, how mad she was when Thomas pulled her hair.

"It's time to go, baby."

Alex's little hand went up to her mouth. She placed a kiss on it, then touched his head stone. "I love you, Daddy."

With a kiss to mine, I done the same. "I love you, boy."

A couple glances over my shoulder were made on the way back to the car. I hated to come here, I hated even more to leave him.

"Tell me a story." This was another thing we shared. I would tell her a story on the way home.

"Once upon a time. There was a princess and she fell in love with a handsome prince. He saved her from a life of chaos. He showed her what it felt like to be loved the right way for the first time. They had a love of a life time..."

It didn't take long until Alex fell asleep. The long ride was bad for me because it gave my mind time to wander. It always went me back to the same place, thinking of Kyle and the time we shared together.

After Kyle died, everything changed for me and about me. There were no doubts, no remorse, no fear and no emotions left except for sorrow. I packed up my children and got them as far away from Charming as possible. Along with the kind of life it offered. The very small house I found to rent in a hurry. Left us tripping over each other. But it was home to us.

Once he was gone, it made me realize just how empty my life had really become until he was in it. It completely destroyed me from the inside out. Everything was fine when I was all alone. When I didn't have to feel how loved I was. Sure, I was sad mostly and broken apart. But I was still alright. Now, I was anything but without him.

It didn't worry me be about being alone for the rest of my life as long as my children were happy and safe. No one could possibly ever measure up to him or take his place. When you've experienced that kind of love, you would never settle for anything less than.

I tried my hardest to make a new life for my children. When the real estate agent showed me a fixer upper, it felt like home. The double doors from the kitchen allowed a long walk to the beach. Of course, the house was a wreak. It would take months to fix everything and then some.

When the waves were lapping up to the sand. You could smell the salt in the sea water. It was when the boat horn honked. I knew this was the one, it was our new home. Our fresh start.

"I'll take it."

The agent couldn't whip out the contract quickly enough. She had shown the house a hundred times with no interest in buying it.

With the money Kyle left me, I paid cash for the house. I would still need a lot more for the repairs to fix it up. But, I didn't care. I'd already sold my practice to Dean. He covered for me more than I worked anyway. Once I got the money from it, I would make more decisions. I had to just focus on one day at a time. After I got through that one, I would work on how to survive the next day.
The house took up the void in my life when I wasn't doing something with the kids. On most sleepless nights, I spent it working on the fixer upper. Actually, I got pretty good at it. It was better than crying all night long.

The first room I tackled was the living room. I scrapped wall paper for days while the kids were in school. The paper was old and barely left attached to the wall. Most of it peeled off in sheets. The sea air broke it down over time. Since, it hadn't been occupied for years, it would take a lot to turn it around. In only a week though, I was ready to paint it and have new carpet put in at least in that room.

Unfortunately, it became the time in the afternoon I dreaded the most. Before I left, I raised the window up to let some fresh air in. I inhaled it deep in my lungs. The smell was so refreshing. It calmed me and seemed so familiar, a more stable time in my life.

There was no shame in admitting you needed help. Yet, I was past the point of it. I had no other options left. One night, the bad night, it became obvious I couldn't handle this on my own. Shortly, after I purchased the house. I took the long walk alone to the beach. Every ounce of my being wanted to be with him so badly. I selfishly thought of nothing else.

For hours the moonlight showed me the way. The waves grew higher until they finally reached me. I welcomed the chilly feel of it in. How the wet sand clung to my body. Slowly, I stood and saw the path to take. Each step deep in the sea I went, it just drew me in even deeper.

Your eyes didn't need to be open to see what you wanted to. Mine were tightly shut. The bubbles came out of me until I was completely covered by water. As I sank down to no return, reality sank in. Nothing was more important than my babies faces. I couldn't stop the flashes of them in my mind. I coughed and sputtered water out on the beach for my lungs to clear.

"I'll be with you another day. My children need me." As always, my children had been my salvation. Then was no different either. They were the reason I had to live. Carry on even when I felt like I couldn't anymore. On those occasions when I couldn't drag myself out of bed or the funk I was in. They were the reason, the only reason.

At first, I didn't want to see a psychologist. It was believed it was for only crazy people. But then again, I was on the crazed side of love. I couldn't even look at his pictures without breaking down. When I put them on display, I ended up turning them over out of sight. But I couldn't get him out of my mind.

Within a few visits, I had made some progress. I went to see her daily until I could get my head and heart straight. There were still those times, I clung the pictures tightly to my chest and cried my eyes out. But, I left them up to see them daily now. It was a small step made in the right direction.

"Mrs. Brandon." The doctor came to the door. It was my turn. "How are you feeling? Did you do the exercises I suggested?" She was different than I expected. It wasn't I was crazy and needed to be locked away. She understood what I was going through. We talked for hours and I could have talked for hours more.

The day finally came, when I didn't need her help anymore. I got past it. Then I found out I was pregnant with our daughter, Alex. A piece of Kyle would always be with me. Just another reason for me to get stronger for my children.

It made me sad when I thought of our daughter Kyle would never get to hold, see her grow up or walk her down the aisle on her special day. Alex would never know what her father sacrificed for us or how much of wonderful man he truly was.
In the rear view mirror, I seen her little eyes bat a few times. "Where are we?"

"We're going to do something special today, baby." From the entrance I read her the poem.

"What is this, Mommy?"

"Alexandria's Dream."

"That's my name."

"Yes, it is, baby."

The long bridge brought back so many memories. Alex was already tired. We stopped about halfway. I set down and she set beside me. It was a hard conversation to have with her but nessacary. I spun my wedding ring on my finger. Where to begin and how much would she actually comprehend?

"Do you ever see crows?"

"I saw one in a book."

"Other than that. Have you seen them?"

"No."

The crows had completely disappeared from our lives after Kyle passed away. Ellie never saw them again either, they stopped haunting her dreams. There wasn't a distant glimpse caught of them. When Alex was born, I feared she would bring them back to us. Or worse, they would come for her someday.

At four years old. She wouldn't understand it if I explained it to her. As a mother, I need to make sure it didn't happen. If it did, I needed to know it and do everything in my power to stop it.

"Can I get a sea shell?"

"Yeah, baby."

The sun caught the ring on my hand as they rested on the rail. It reflected a bright gold ray. With a twist of it between my fingers, I took it off. Only to see the real golden circle of our love tattooed on my finger.

"It's so you don't ever forget me, girl."

As quickly as it came off, I put it back on. "I know I have to let you go. I'm just not ready yet." Every time I came here, I felt close to him. Closer today than I had since he'd been gone.

"Mommy, who are you talking to?"

"No one. We need to get going."

The long drive back put Alex out like a light. She might not sleep much tonight. It was okay though, I probably wouldn't either.

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She was a genius of sadness, immersing herself in it, separating its numerous strands,
appreciating its subtle nuances.

She was a prism through which sadness could be divided into its infinite spectrum.

Jonathan Safran Foer

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Death lies on her like an untimely frost. Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

William Shakespeare

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Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Mathew 5:4

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It wasn't as though I hadn't tried to move on with life, become normal again. I had made a lot of progress with it. The annual doctor's ball was coming up. We were recognized for accomplishments in it. I was to be honored at it for the article I wrote for effects to the blood when it encounters contaminated water.

It was very simple and straightforward, I saw it as a night out. One of my colleagues had asked if I was going. At first I said no, then thought what the hell. I might as well.

"Will you go as my date?"

"Um...I...um..."

"It's okay, Tara."

"You know what, I would really like that. But, it will just be as friends."

The thought of a date didn't truly appeal to me. While most of the socializing done was with my children. It would be nice to have another adult to have a conversation with.

Ellie helped me get ready for it. "You look great." I only smiled at her because I didn't feel great. But the smile went to shit with what she said next to me. "Just breathe."

When he came to the door, I grabbed my purse. There was no need for him to come in and meet my children. He wouldn't be asked back after tonight.

"You better behave young lady. Don't be out to late." My son opened the door for me. Abel hugged me to let me know it was okay with it before I left. He done his best to be the man of the house.

Kenny followed me outside on the porch. He didn't say anything much like normal. Ellie called the boys back inside. I took another look at them before I got in the car.

As we went to back out of the drive. I saw all of their faces pressed up against the window to get a glimpse of my date. Abel held up Alex so she could see too. Ellie's arm was wrapped around Thomas. Kenny stood in the center of them and gave a wave. It was another moment I looked at my family through the same window and knew how lucky I really was.
Tom made small talk on the way. I tried to be responsive and pleasant. But, my heart was still with those five little faces at the window.

He opened my car door as the valet would take it away to park it. It had been so long since someone made that simple gesture for me. I missed it so.

When I felt Tom's hand on the small of my back as we went up the stairs. My body stiffened at this foreign person here. Then, once again, he acted like a gentlemen and opened the door. After I reminded myself several times this was only a one time date and I shouldn't blame him for the way I felt. Slightly, I relaxed and thanked him. Although my heart kept screaming; it would be over soon just endure it.

"Would you like a drink?"

"White wine please."

While Tom went to the bar, I had a look around. The others who would be the main focus tonight had a bio up for all to see. When I came to mine, I ran my hand over it; Doctor Brandon. "I miss you so much." The article was credited to my married name and husband.

"I miss my wife too."

Once I let the shield down around me, Tom and I had a lot in common. We were both trying to put our lives back together after a tragedy of life. He lost his wife to cancer. I lost my husband to evil.

For the rest of the evening we discussed our children, the impact of losing our spouses and everything else that had been thrown at us because of it.

Until they called my name to come up on stage. People applauded for my work and research. Little did they know, it was my life on those pages. When my son's life was in jeopardy. It was personal for me with a hope it would spare another parent from a loss of a child.

"Thank you for tonight. I wouldn't have went without you asking me."

"I should be thanking you. This is really the first time I've gotten out of my house, other than work, in about a year. It gets lonely going out by yourself. Goodnight, Tara."

"Goodnight, Tom."

We both had a reason to go out. But, we also both knew we really weren't ready to get on with life yet. We exchanged a brief hug before I got out of the car.

When I looked up there was only three little faces in the window to greet me. The house was dark in the living room except the flickers from the television that showed their shadows.

"Did you have fun?" Ellie was the first to ask.

"It was okay."

"Don't hold out on us. Did you get any?" It was my son's voice I heard from the hallway on the way to my room.

"Abel Teller." Even though I was stern when I said his name. I took it in the joking context he meant it. I threw my purse on the chair in my room. The heels were the first thing to come off.

As I got ready for bed, I looked over at the picture I kept on the night stand. "I love you, Kyle."
When I laid my head on the pillow. I didn't cry tonight. I only thought about the good times.

All healing is first a healing of the heart.

Carl Townsend

How poor are they that they not have patients! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

William Shakespeare

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
Psalm 147:3

The rumble of the pipes, the roar of the engine. I heard it before I seen him. "Go in the house, Alex." She listened when I told her to do something. Her little legs carried her up the stairs as fast as they could go.

Before he could get off his bike, I made it up the steps too. "What do you want, Jax? You have no business being here. I have custody of the kids. How the hell did you find out where I live?"

"I just wanna talk to you. The lawyer that handled the custody case for me, said this is the last known address for you."

"You need to leave. I have nothing to say to you." Ellie heard what was going on as she came out on the porch. In her hand was my pistol. "Now." I pushed her behind my back before I gave him his last warning. I would protect her from everything bad in this world as long as I could. I took the gun from her and held it down at my leg. He couldn't make it up the stairs to us before I could get him, if it had to go down that way.

"I'm not here to hurt you. I've done enough of that over the years." When Jax went to get in his saddle bag, the pistol came up aimed at him. An involuntary reflex from fear. "Relax Tara, I have something for you."

With each step he made towards us, we made one step closer to the door. Until we reached it and put something between him and us. I latched the lock on the screen. Not that it would stop him if he really wanted inside. But it gave me time to do what was necessary if need be.

"A lot of shit has changed, Tara…I…"

"A lot of shit is still the same. You need to leave."

"Please, just promise me, you will at least read it." When he seen I wouldn't budge. He let out a long sigh before he laid a notebook down at the door and backed down the steps away from me.

"Sure Jax, I promise." Before I slammed the door in his face, I threw it in the trash and I wanted him to see me do it. In fact, I know he saw it because I held the small trash can up high so he couldn't miss it. When I tossed it away like it meant nothing to me. See, all the broken promises he made to
me and his family, just like the one I had to him now.

Unfortunately, before Jax left. Abel came home. He didn't get any warmer of a welcome from his son. Jax only said hello to him. But Abel, had a terrible response for it. "Who are you and why are you here?"

"I'm your old man. Don't you remember me?"

"You are not my father. He died years ago." Abel never elaborated if he meant Kyle was considered his father. Or if Jax died in his heart long ago. Which would be his own fault for never having time for his sons because he always put the club before them.

Jax got on his bike and just rode away. He never looked back or attempted to communicate with us anymore. Not that it would have done him any good to.

"What did he want?"

"I don't know, baby. I need to start dinner. Do you want to help me?"

"Yeah."

Arm in arm with my son we went to the kitchen together. I could always tell when the kids missed Kyle. They needed those family moments he instilled in them. Dinner together was our unity time. Since they've gotten older, they were going in different directions. But, those rare and precious moments when we were all at home were still a strong foundation. They would crank up the radio and helped me in the kitchen. Then we would set down at the table as a family. As it was supposed to be. Just as we done when he was still alive.

As soon as the kitchen was clean and the kids were out of sight. I knew what had to be done. The notebook in the trash taunted me when I passed by it. If Jax thought a few words on a page could bare repentance for him. He was sadly mistaken.

With lighter fluid and match in hand. I took it out to the barbecue grill. Saturated it and went to strike the match. To see a steady hand reach out with a lighter and lit it before I could. Abel put his arm around my shoulder. We stood together as a mother and a son. Both needing to get over the past and the heartache it gave us.

Ellie even joined us. Abel's arm went around her too. Sometimes, what broke you down until you have nothing left to give. Sometimes, was what made you stronger and whole again. The love I felt for my children. Along with their love for each other, was proof of it.

However, it wasn't the last I seen of Jax or heard from him. Or the last time I had the past come back around to deal with. Although, I knew when he promised to give me custody and never bother us. He would break it just like all the others he had.

"Don't come back here again." As many times as I slammed the door in his face. You would have thought he could have taken the hint I didn't want to see him.

Just another knock on the door came shortly afterwards. This time, I showed him how I really felt about it. "Get the fuck front off my front porch asshole."

"Is now a bad time? I can come back later."

"Sorry, Nicole. Come in. I thought it was Jax again."
Nicole wanted to talk about him. I didn't and would not. "Please pick another topic. I'm not in the mood to rehash old history. Let's go in the kitchen for some coffee."

"Girlfriend, haven't you even asked yourself why Jax is here? Hanging out around town." Quickly I turned faced her. When she saw I meant what I said. She took a couple of steps back from me. "I'm just saying."

"I do not want to hear his name mentioned in this house again. And I'm not just saying that."

Nicole change the conversation to Holly's birthday party. We could at least have a civil conversation now. I knew my daughter was excited about it.

"I'll come by around noon tomorrow to help out."

Nicole left to go somewhere. I had to get around and go pick up Thomas and Alex. They liked it when I was off of work if I picked them up. Abel and Cody rode together as they caught a ride with Kenny on his way to work. While Ellie drove herself to the local community college. They didn't rely on me much for transportation anymore.

Thomas was in a different school and got out before Alex. I got in the long pick up lane and waited. We would sneak off to get ice cream sometimes. Other times we would visit the library. He loved to read. But today, I had a surprise for my son.

"How was your day?"

"Good." Thomas was a passive child. He done well in school and never gave me a minutes trouble with anything really.

"Guess where we are going?"

"Where?"

"You know the video game you want? I reserved it and it's in today." His eyes lit up and a sweet smile crossed his face. He couldn't wait to pickup his little sister and get home. When the car came to a stop, Thomas was already up the stairs to play. Alex went running for Abel.

"Hey, Squirt." She adored her big brother. In a lot ways Abel had became the man of the house. Or he tried to watch after us all even me. After Alex went on to play. "I think she needs a dog."

"Maybe."

There were many things I wasn't ready for in life. A new dog was one of them. Sophia had passed away just after we moved here. Poor George, she was heartbroken. Her best friend left her. I could sympathize. But when she got sick, it took a toll on all of us. She was our last baby and we held on even tighter to her after Sophia was gone. It hit Abel the hardest. They were a member of our family in our eyes, they couldn't be replaced. It shocked me a little he brought up a dog for Sissy. Maybe Abel had gotten past his loss enough to move on from it. He was right, Sissy would love a puppy but it wouldn't be today though.

"I'm starving." Since dinner would not cook itself, I went to start it.

A long sigh came from me when someone knocked on the door. I pushed my chair away from the table and told the kids to finish eating. When I pulled it open I was ready, only it wasn't him.

"Girlfriend, there is something you need to see. Go get ready, David will watch Alex and Thomas
for you." David blew past me with a wave. He got a plate out of the cabinet for him and Holly. Then helped himself.

Nicole wouldn't accept no for an answer or tell me where were going. I didn't feel like doing anything. Most days, I was doing well to get out of bed, put on a happy face for my children and function as a normal person. It took me years of practice to master the task.

"Why are we here?"

"Just watch." She parked the car at the end of the street. There wasn't anything around for us to see or do. It made no sense to me.

It wasn't long until I seen a line began to form at the homeless shelter. They were all trying to get a bed and spot for the night. Along with a warm meal the shelter provided them daily.

My eyes must have deceived me. I seen him, get in the line with everyone else. "What is this shit?"

"The other day I passed by the shelter. Jax was in line with the others. He tried to play it off as if he wasn't. So, I followed him after he left here. He is homeless, Tara. Living in the woods, in a tent just outside of town."

"That's impossible. He is probably on some club mission."

"Girlfriend, open your eyes. Look past the hate you have in your heart for Jax. I haven't seen him wear his leather in the last three days."

When I stopped and thought about it, Jax didn't have it on when he came to the house the other day either. It was a permanent fixture in his life, I just assumed he was wearing it. "That doesn't prove anything. Maybe the club went under the radar and that's why he isn't wearing it."

"Jax applied for a job as the night janitor at the school. I don't think he is in the club anymore. He needs some help and we should help him."

"Do you think it's what your brother would want? For us to help Jax? With everything he has done."

"Yes, I do think he would want us to help Jax. Don't shit on Kyle's memory and all he's done because of your hate you still feel."

"I am ready to go. I don't want anything to do with Jax. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever." Nicole went to say something but I cut that shit off quickly. "This is none of your business and I am done with this conversation. Take me home."

On the couch I stewed at Nicole for getting involved with this. She didn't know Jax like I did. All the shit he was truly capable of doing and had done. Or maybe she was right and I was letting the hate blind me, shitting on Kyle's memory because of it.

"The hate is poisoning me, I guess." A few more sips of coffee while I processed the information. " Nope, I am still bitter as hell."

A bitter woman says "All men are the same." A wise woman decides to stop choosing the same kind of man.
He who has injured thee was either stronger or weaker than thee.

If weaker; spare him. If stronger; spare thyself.

William Shakespeare

When they kept questioning him, he straightened up and said.

"If anyone one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

John8:17

NINE:

Odin slayed the dragon and it broke in nine pieces.

Odin sacrificed himself to gain power over the runes and learn the secrets of mankind. He hung himself in a tree, he swung for nine days and nine nights and still lived.

New rings every nine days, the golden circles. Two dwarfs named Brokk and Sindri made a beautiful gold ring for Odin. This was a magic ring. Every ninth day the ring would reproduce eight new rings of equal quality of the original ring. The original nine continued the cycle.

Odin watched over the nine worlds from his throne.

As the serpent dies, Oden walks nine steps. As he takes his ninth step, the serpent falls dead to the ground.

The nine goddess of The Library of Alexandria.

The nine daughter of Aegir and Ran.

The nine daughters became the nine mothers of Heimdall, one child.

The failed marriage of Skadi, the god of mountains and Njord, the goddess of seas. After spending nine days in the mountains and nine days by the sea, the couple agreed to separate.

Morrigan had nine sisters. She gave the number nine signification to the completion of the life cycle. Nine establishes universal love and the brotherhood of man.

Numbers rule all things. Pythagoras 580 – 500 B.C., Plato called the study of number symbolism the highest level of knowledge. Pythagoras believed numbers had souls, as well as magical powers. The Pythagorean divided the numbers into groups: odd and even, male and female, light and dark. Nine is the number of magic. Nine is a sacred number. Nine is the number of completion and fulfillment. Nine is a symbol of wisdom and good leadership. Nine is the number of heaven.

Nine men were afflicted with blindness in the bible. Nine men were stoned to their death. Nine men who were resurrected from the dead. Nine days for Lucifer and the other dark angels to fall from heaven. Nine circles of heaven. Nine circles of hell.
Kyle had become obsessed with this research. Which, I never knew about it, none of it and he shared everything with me. Notebook after notebook full of this type of behavior. Or perhaps, I was the one who became obsessed. I tried to make more out of it than it was. As I set on the cold concrete floor going through his boxes. In search for answers. In search for a way to heal my heart.

Numerous times I would come across a page with something wrote on it and I would remember him saying it or expressing it to me. I missed the signs and its meaning then. Now, it meant the difference of what my world changed to without him.

It took forever for me to figure out the web we were all tangled up in. It was half the nine circles from heaven; the inconstant, the ambitious, the lovers, the wise, the warriors of the faith, the just rulers, the contemplatives, the fixed stars of faith, hope and love and the angels. The other half was the nine circles from hell; the limbo, the lust, the gluttony, the greed, the anger, the non conformant murders, the violence, the fraud and the treachery. It captured the good and evil while it spun them together. We as a whole were the ones who continued the cycle of it. The circle rotated through history from good and evil colliding against one another. The children fed it new souls to take so it could continue on.

If it weren't for Tara, her bravery and love of the children. We all would have went straight to hell, the web would have made certain of it. God gave the archangels the most important jobs here on earth and in heaven. She has no idea of the power she holds. But Thomas knew she had to live before it took her blood as sacrifice and he sacrificed himself. John Teller knew too, he counted on her to make it right. He also knew she would save his grandsons from the same fate.

Jax caught on to his part, I'd give him, he is smart. But, what he never understood it was love that conquered it in the end. A pure love of the same amount given and received on the same level. I'd never tell him I knew the truth of how to stop it; only John Teller, Thomas and I knew the secret. The secret of the crows. The showed us the path to take to peace. Its not something you can tell someone, they must feel it in their heart. What I feel for her.

Once I found forgiveness in my heart for Jax on that day when he listened to me, all I seen was love. Over time I forgave my mother for the secrets she held to protect me. As I hold secrets to protect the ones I love. With the same hope someday they understand and can forgive me as well.

Even John, though I never met him when he was alive. Had my forgiveness in the end. Until I met Tara I never knew what it was like to love someone so much nothing else in the world mattered to you. It didn't matter to John either when he loved my mother.

Mathew 18:15- Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault. Between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

John 2:9, John 2:10, John 2:11- (9) Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. (10) Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. (11) But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

Luke 1:79- To shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

Peace is all I wish to come for my family. For Tara and my children to live on in happiness.
Through three pots of coffee and the darkness of the night. I finally brought myself to continue to read it. Sometimes through tears shed so fast I had to stop because I couldn't see anymore. At others, I cursed the night, how my life took the turn from complete happiness to sorrow.

There were boxes of his writing. No one could read it all in one night. He began shortly after he met me. It might take me months or years even to bring myself to read it all. I would eventually get there. But, for now. There was only one thing I was trying to find.

When I located his last and final notebook he wrote in. I came to the final entry Kyle had made. In the final days of his life. In the final days I knew what it was like to be loved above all else.

There is no time to be wayward and no time to become unwound. With the darkness at my doorstep, I'm trying to maintain and keep my head straight. There are times of injustice still that cannot be explained. More times I am lost than found. Those down times mixed with days I wonder if I did the right thing. What I've done, I did for her and Abel.

With my back against the wall, I had no choices left, no one else could suffer the pain I still had to come. The devil stood before me, he summoned me with his words. No matter the fight I put up I still succumb to him. He offered me a way out and I took it for her.

With life spinning out of control, it will all soon be revealed. The deal I made with Satan's son, or what I call him while he still walks this earth freely. Will come out eventually, the twisted truths. I only pray he holds up his end of the bargain. Which he swore to me on the lives of the ones who mattered; Abel and Thomas. For I know he can't be trusted, not with his real father still whispering evil in his ear. His back is against the same wall, with no way out just like me. It's the only consolation I have.

The sirens will sound when its time for the spirits to fall. I hear the words of the crows. They tell me to follow the signs, they will serve as my guide. Keep my head held high, go the distance through the darkness and the light. When I reach the end, they will be waiting for me. My father, my will be a constant fixture until then.

I can never tell her the truth, the crows spoke to me for a long time now. I just thought I was crazy because of it until I meet her, they chose her and then they spoke even louder. There was nothing I hadn't learned about them, read or researched about one truth I can't ever share with her and it kills me. It was the only way to truly save Abel from his fate of darkness. It is only my blood that courses through that boy's veins, we are family, he is the same as my son now. The evil no longer exist in him. The evil will no longer have a soul to take to continue the cycle.

All the signs say pick up the pieces. The signs say make our stand as one. We have become stronger with our love and it can't ever be undone. I experienced true love for the first time with her, as John did with my mother. Our love is stronger than evil, it broke the circle, the cycle has ran it's course. She and the children will be set free .I will be set free just like John is now and his father before him. Zach will never know our curse.

With every smile I see from her with them, I still become weak in the knees and have to catch my breath. It's when I am reassured, I did the right thing. There will be peace when I am done. She is loved, she was loved, she will always be loved by me even when I'm gone and that love is what will set her free.

The search began through box after box in the garage of Kyle's things. I found my divorce papers, the day Jax signed them was the same day Kyle started writing in this notebook. The next day he
bought insurance policies for all of us. Mine was a huge one, the children divided one of the same amount equally. He signed over everything he owned and his retirement to me the very next day.

"I can't tell you what we said, Tara. It is between me and Jax. He just listened to everything I had to say, like I did him." Those simple words Kyle spoke at the time had no significant meaning then.

Neither did the fact my son was instantly healed. Abel had gone on to be strong and a healthy child. Just like his uncle had. An overnight miracle. All the signs of the heart he suffered, my son suffered no more. Was this what was necessary to save my son from his fate and sickness? Was it the blood that healed him? Was this the same that had happened when Thomas was a child and John Teller left this earth? Was this why Thomas gave up his own life so my children could live on?

The story Donna's preacher had told me so long ago about demons, blood and the sins of a father. There was another thing I came across tonight, I hadn't in so long. With my mother's bible in hand I searched for it.

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*Leviticus 17:11- For the life of the flesh in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it the blood maketh an atonement for the soul.*

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*It was the only way to truly save Abel from his fate of darkness. It is only my blood that courses through that boy's veins, we are family, he is the same as my son now. The evil no longer exist in him. The evil will no longer have a soul to take to continue the cycle.*

Over and over I read it. Then the bible verse again. Unfortunately, I wasn't as religious as I should have been. There were still things I didn't understand. But the more I read about it, the more I had to know and find the truth.

The word atonement held the key. It was the reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. For Roman Catholics reconciliation was sacrament of penance.

"Jesus Christ, Kyle knew the entire time. He sacrificed himself, he did it all for love."

There would be no rest or anything else tonight. I kept busy throughout it. The sun had barley come up when Ellie startled me. "Tara, what are you doing?"

"This is our wall of the family circle. What do you think?"

"It's okay, I guess."

It took me the rest of the night. To find them all. I started with a large picture of Kyle and I. We were the center of the circle. Alexandria, Abel and Thomas were the beginning of the next one. Jax and Wendy was what I went with to build another. Their picture together was the creation of my son, Abel. Kyle Jenny, I could only find the small picture he had in his mother's bible, they represented Zach and his father was proud of him.

The pictures of Kyle with his son and him with all the other children in the memories we built as a family. I didn't forget Opie and Donna either, Kenny and Ellie were my children too. I even found a couple of young Kyle and Thomas together as they served in the military. Thomas with Jax when they were small children at the beach, it was Gemma's prize possession. The end of it was Gemma with John, also her and Nero. With the final one hung of Gemma in the center of Jax, Thomas and Kyle. After I counted the circles, there were only eight.
"The last circle hasn’t been determined yet. It's because of you, Kyle, my family lives on. I will eventually find the forgiveness you had in my heart. I love you and always will."

It was time for me to find my own way. It was time I made a visit to Charming to find out what really happened. Nicole took the kids for the weekend. Maybe a break from life was what I actually needed.

What I expected to find was nothing like what I found though. How you wanted things to become wasn't how it always ended up either. What you once believed changed as you lived on. You either grew from those changes or they done you in.

The town was a stranger to me. Main street had been demolished, completely knocked down and replaced. Charming was far from the big city lights yet. But, it was definitely on its way to a more modern style of living.

A pit stop was in order after all the miles I drove. After I used the restroom I stood in the long line to get a drink. The girl who waited on me was a friendly McDonald's employee.

Small towns were deceptively quiet and offered you a beautiful quaint life. Of course they only just seemed this way. There were many emotions bubbling under the surface and always a sub plot to the real story. Feelings ran deeper in a small community because everything seemed personal on every level.

It was something the Sons were especially good at. "We take care of our own." slogan while they stoked fear until you believed it. They made you believe it because they held the power to. When you had that kind of mentality. Eventually it was the inevitable insularity would overcome them. The ignorance of or lack of interest in cultures, ideas, or peoples outside one's own experience would cause a war the club couldn't contain anymore. The possible conflict with people from outside the town and the club. From the looks of things now, the people must have won.

While I looked around. Somewhere along the lines, the towns people stopped believing the Sons could protect them and they got pushed out. As new housing additions were built, franchises came, a new set of people moved in and took over control. Time just caught up with the outlaws.

It wasn't just the new stores and houses here. It was all the secrets bared of the town and what the Sons were built upon. When those secrets became public, there were stiff repercussions to be paid. It only amplified your problems. Soon your indiscretions were put in context to be judged on your weaknesses. There was a comfort knowing everyone around you, but it was also a doubled-edged sword you would fall on eventually.

Then, I came in front of it and stood. The top secrets of the town, matriarchies' old house. Gemma knew all the old classified information only she held. The knowledge of the lies and deceit died when she had.

When I was a small child everyone envied this house and wanted on the inside. Gemma was the most feared and admired female to ever live in Charming. You gained wealth and power from being associated with her or the club. Until they let you in their circle of trust because there was no way out. Other than the inevitable, death. But, there was one secret even the queen was never privy to. One secret she couldn't spin or control. Like she had done to everything else.

One secret that ended up killing off everything she loved and had left. I was the one who told Gemma the truth. It was an internal struggle with myself of right and wrong. I left those divorce papers on her doorstep along with what John had wrote to Kyle's mother. There were three things that couldn't ever be hidden forever; the sun, the moon and the truth. It was wise not to seek a secret
and more honorable to never reveal it. I still had a lot to learn in life back then. But, I should have known honesty when it hurt someone else was over fucking rated.

It ended up costing my children their relationship with their grandmother. I alone held complete responsibility for Gemma’s life ending without her love ones constantly by her side and all the times she could have had with them. If I had the choice of doing it all over again. I would let the guilt of the secret eat away at me and me alone. I would let it run its course throughout my life time. But most of all, I would never let it affect hers. The truth would set your soul free while it claimed another.

There was always the old right or wrong choice to make. But, sometimes when you thought the right thing made the future set straight by clearing up the past. All you had done was destroy someone else to make yourself feel better about it. In the end it was all you accomplished, made yourself just feel better about not carrying the lie to your grave. Gemma took many to hers.

"I'm sorry, Gemma. I never intended for it to work out the way it did." Those weren't just empty words I spoke. Those were the same words that I left this town by. Those were the silent words I said on so many occasions as well to my children. It would be some secrets and guilt I carried to my own grave.

This was where I walked away without looking back just like I had all those years ago. It was suppose to be out of sight, out of mind. Only it worked in reverse for me. It was a constant pain in my heart.

Tight nit communities were friendly to newcomers. But I knew all to well, there were expectations set for them. They toed the line and blended in with the fabric of the town or you didn't survive long in it. On the walk back to the car they waved, smiled or gave me a greeting. Even though I acknowledged them back, I knew to keep my distance. When I lived here I became isolated from the rest of society and perhaps from myself to a certain degree.

Once I made it out the first time. You would've thought I was smart enough to never come back here. Then again, it was my destiny. I wouldn't have my beautiful children if I hadn't. I also wouldn't have been taught about real love either and all the things that goes along with it.

There wasn't really much else I needed to see to know what had happened. Blue collar crimes passed by the need of outlaw justices. As things changed and evolved so did the need for the Sons to be here. Those who weren't killed in the process by other gang bangers, were no longer welcomed. It didn't explain in detail what took place for Jax to leave. Although it screamed out the reason too.

It took me a bit to find the old street I used to live on. The town was so built up now, so many new roads and avenues added. Our old house, we made a home, was now abandoned. A foreclosure letter still taped in the window. When Jax had a cash flow problem, the bank never once reported the payment as late before. They gave him and all the club members all the time they needed to make their house loan current. The banker knew what the club would do to him or his family if he ever crossed them.

As I looked on the inside, through the window. Everything was still in place just as I left it; the furniture, clothes on the floor and child toys that got left behind. It appeared nothing had been touched after all these years. The most important thing was missing, a happy family who called it home.

On the walk around the house, I seen the same holes George had dug. The spot I planted flowers when I moved in, a happier time. Where my son played, he grew as a child and I grew as a parent. No matter what happened in your life, it still made you feel like you lost something. Even though
you gave it up on your own.

A sweet sound caught my attention. They made a unison song when the slight breeze blew around them. I remembered the day Thomas and I hung the wind chime. It made me smile, it survived as well all this time. It would have a new home with me as I took it down from the house.

There was only one more stop to make before Charming became a permanent distant memory in my mind. Why I even thought it would be recognizable was beyond me. The old clubhouse was gone as it was blown to rubble. An office had replaced it. The old wooden fence was knocked down. Cars filled the parking lot now. The car dealership used the garage as a part of their business. Today, it was business as normal, in a normal town with average people.

From the rear view mirror; Welcome to Charming sign got smaller and smaller. It was behind me now by miles. It's exactly where it would be left too, behind me. Where I could finally forget the past and learn to forgive in the future.

You must forgive others to earn your own forgiveness.
Jonathan Romain

Pray you now, forget and forgive.
William Shakespeare

Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and
you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven.
Luke 6:37

The hotel I stayed overnight didn't give me any better sleep or much comfort. Actually, it only made it worse. I stuffed all the pillows I had around me. I missed my children, I missed my family. "I might as well get up and drive home."

In the middle of the night I made my way back to those I loved. But, I still wasn't ready to face the day yet. It was the only place I had left to run to for serenity. The sun came up just enough to cast those beautiful rays across the calm water.

On the long bridge I was alone. But in my mind I relived those days when I wasn't. All the good and not so good memories I had at this place. It was a calmer time in my life like the current in the water.

"I know what you want me to do. I'm...I'm just not sure I can." Of course, I wasn't certain Kyle heard me. But I had to hold the faith he had.

With a handful of sand I watched it slip through my fingers. Just like I watched everything else do the same. After I checked my watch, I had to get moving if I was going to get it done.
The path you took sometimes looked bleak. Around me people had no homes, no one who cared and mostly no hope of a good tomorrow to come. As I made my way past them. Perhaps, I had forgotten how fortunate I truly was.

Tents strung in a line where families tried to survive for just one more day. All they had was the fact they were still together.

"I'm just…." He began to pick up what few belongs he had scattered around on the ground. When he seen me approach.

"Jax, I know you have nowhere to go. So lets not waste time pretending otherwise. I took a trip to Charming. The club is gone. No family left to lean on. You have probably ran out of money by now too. There is a small guest house behind my house. It's not much, just one room with a bathroom. I was going to turn it into a play place for my kids. You can stay there if you want to until you can get back on your feet. But they're rules you will follow or you are out on your ass. Do not mistake this act of kindness for anymore than what it is. If you cause any problems for me or my children, you are gone."

He swallowed the lump in his throat. It pained him to speak the words. "Thank you, Tara."

"Don't thank me. Thank Kyle, because if it weren't for him. You would not come near me or my children."

"Understood."

Someday, everything will make perfect sense. So for now, laugh at the confusion, smile through the tears and remind yourself that everything happens for a reason.

Unknown Author

God controls everything, as it happens for a reason. Everything will work out as it is destined.

William Shakespeare

Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.

He has set the right time for everything. He has given us a desire to know the future, but never gives us the satisfaction of fully understanding what it does.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Please forward to the next chapter posted...
Chapter 42

Angels and Outlaws

Part 6 of 14

Chapter 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 have been posted. Make sure to read them all. This isn't the end yet. We still have another 6 or 7 chapters to go.

It was hard enough to blend different families together as one to live in blissful peace among each other. It was even harder to put a family back together from what it once was. To pickup where you left off and pretend it wasn't torn a part and you grew away from one another. Second chances at anything were rare. But Jax, he had been given so many chances he didn't take already or just dismissed them all together without a second thought. My children were really confused by it come the next morning when they woke up and he was a welcomed guest at their home.

Abel just shook his head with disapproval when he seen Jax cleaning out the guest house. Abel went back inside with nothing more to say about it but a loud slam of the door told it all. Poor Ellie, she left for school without as much as a word spoken to me and she didn't even try to hide the fact Jax's presence angered her. She wore her emotions on her face and I didn't have to ask what she thought about it either. I don't think Thomas could have cared either way really because he didn't even acknowledge his father was here.

To Thomas, Jax wasn't someone who was ever a part of his life so no harm done. It took more than just being called a father to be one. Sissy set with me on the step, just watched it all take place. The only helpful one was Kenny. He offered to assist Jax to move stuff around.

Yes, Kenny was my problem child at times. He was very similar to Opie in a lot of ways. So much Kenny worried me, he would go down the familiar evil path of ruination. Especially with the influence of Jax around. It was the constant concern with all this. It thrust my children back to the same place we ran from.

It was pure torment for me. If I done nothing to help Jax I lost grace and my compassion for another human being. But, since I had, it was the anxiety it would send my children back in time to choose the same path I would have died to keep them safe from.

But today, I watched Kenny be a grownup. No judgement passed on the past history of his father, the club or Jax. My son just wanted to lend a helping hand. As much as I wanted to find fault in it, I couldn't. So, I just watched in silence and let them be.

"Maybe I am making progress too. Come on Sissy, lets make something to drink for Kenny. He looks pretty hot."

The glasses were up to high for her to reach them. She liked to help me out. The fact was she stuck like glue to me most of the time. I got down a glass and her plastic one. While I got the pitcher of lemonade out of the frig. I let her push the ice button to fill up the glasses. For some reason it made her day. She thought it was magical for the cubes to appear.

"What about Jax? Doesn't he get one?"
"No."

"Why?"

"He's not thirsty."

"Why?"

"Because."

"I'll go ask him."

"Sissy, wait for me." She was already at the front door before I got the pitcher set down on the table.

This was where it got murky with Jax staying here. Alex was Kyle's daughter after all. I wasn't certain how Jax would react to her, what he might actually do. If his hate would be passed down to her. If he done anything to our daughter. God help him, because I'd rip his fucking head off.

"Do you want some lemonade?" Her little arms twirled around at her side as she waited for Jax to answer her.

Jax just stood there with a confused look on his face at first. He stared a long time at her. I'm sure it was hard on him looking in the face of his brother. She was just like Kyle in looks and personality. "Sure." Was all Jax would say.

"See Mommy, he is thirsty."

However, Sissy and Thomas was the easy ones to deal with on the situation. By the time evening rolled around I had others angered by it was well. I excepted Nicole to have a fit. But she didn't. Boomer exploded when he learned about Jax staying with us.

Boomer displayed no emotions that surprised me or I hadn't already had myself on the topic. I understood where he was coming from. It still didn't change it, but I understood. Even Nicole tried to get him to ease up about it.

"Jax needs help. I'm the one who told Tara."

"You told Tara what?" It was a loaded question from her husband she answered to the best of her ability. But, this was my decision so I would answer him.

"I went to Charming. Everything is gone and changed from what it was. Jax is homeless, no money and nowhere to stay. Kyle taught me, to be kind to others. Even ones who have wronged you. That's what I'm doing for Jax. He is my childrens' father." Boomer may not have liked my explanation but it was what it was. I would feel terrible to loose him as a friend and brother in law over it. He had been wonderful to me and the kids. Especially since Kyle had been gone. But again, it was what it was.

"He will get over it. I'll call you tomorrow, girlfriend."

Nicole left shortly after her husband. Boomer didn't get over it though. Neither did my children. They expressed their disapproval every chance they got. Ellie refused to acknowledge Jax was here. She made every attempt she could to make sure he had no doubts how she felt about him. While Abel, took a completely different approach, very direct about it.

"I can help if you want." Abel was working on the old car in the driveway with Cody. Jax offered
his services to the boys, a peace offering. Although, they didn't have time for him. The same way he treated his sons when they were small and longed for his attention.

"No thanks."

Jax picked up the wrench anyway from where it lay on the engine. It only angered my son even more. "I don't need your help. I didn't need you growing up and I don't need you now either."

Jax laid the wrench back where it was. He nodded to his son as he understood exactly what and why Abel said what he had. With a close of the door to the guest house, Jax shut out his past as well. Shut off the bridge he opened for his son to crossover to.

Sissy was playing with Molly in the front yard while I watched them from the front porch. I tried to ignore Cody and Abel's conversation. Although I couldn't.

"I hate him. He is not my father."

The conversation only got worse from there too. I tuned it out and continued to watch the girls play. Not long after Jax left on his bike. He didn't say where he was going and no one asked didn't ask.

Nicole came and picked up Molly. The boys finally fixed what they were working on then took it for a drive. Boomer took Thomas to Boy Scouts and Ellie was out on a date. It only left me and Sissy at home.

"How about we go get pizza?" She was all for it. When we went out she liked to get her little purse. Wrap up one of her baby dolls to take on the ride.

After we ate I let her play in the tunnels with the other kids. She would have stayed all night if I let her. But it was close to her bed time and mine. On the way home I couldn't believe what was weaving in front of me.

The bike swerved over the line numerous times. I was surprised he didn't lay it on the ground as unsteady as it was. When it hit the driveway, the rider couldn't walk any better than he rode. He didn't get very far until he fell to the ground. It would be where he stayed for the night too.

"Mommy, is Jax okay?" It scared Sissy, what she witnessed.

"He's fine." You couldn't exactly explain to a child he was drunk and or high. My answer was the simplest to give. I flipped the light off when we went inside.

Alex crawled up on the couch and moved the curtain. "Won't he get cold?"

"He's fine." It was the same response to a series of questions my daughter asked me.

If the situation had been different, I would have been proud of how persistent my daughter was. However, I couldn't teach her to not be concerned for others. So, when she wanted to cover him up, I went along with it.

Sissy spread the pink knit dolly blanket over Jax's back. As he laid face down in the wet grass. It really wouldn't do anything to keep him warm. But, in her eyes, she was done the right thing for another person. The way it made her happy and smile. It only made me think of her father.

"It's time for bed."

It wasn't the last time my children had to watch and witness Jax falling from grace. His drinking
problem only became worse. When he got jittery or restless. I already knew it was time for another
fix, a bender to make himself feel better. He would lock himself in the guest house for days until he
came down off of it. He fooled no one, especially me.

It finally got to the point I said something to him about it. Even though he wasn't a direct influence
on my children. It still effected them too. "Jax, you need to get some help. I know a good support
group you can..."

"I'm sorry I'm such a disappointment to you." I wasn't certain if this was a sarcastic comment or if he
truly had any remorse. But, it didn't really matter either way.

"This is not about me and you. If you don't get help soon, you will not live to see fifty. I'm trying to
help you, Jax. I really am."

"What do you care if I live or die?" Before Jax made his exist from my home. He had more to say
about it. "It is always about me and you. Even if you won't admit it. Besides, what the fuck do I have
to live for? You got no idea what it's like to pray you were the one they took. Instead, I get to live
with the shit everyday."

It wasn't uncommon for someone with an addiction to lash out when confronted with the problem.
But until Jax decided he wanted some help and actually had a problem, it was a futile attempt on my
part. I locked the door and flipped off the front porch light. "Fine, do it your way. You always have."

In only two weeks from the time we last talked. Everything fell to shit. "Tara, something is wrong
with Jax." From what Kenny described to me. Jax was extremely ill. I grabbed my medical bag and
instructed the kids to stay there. Wait for me to come back to the house.

Since I wasn't sure what I would walk into. I used caution with my children. But, Kenny didn't know
the signs as well as I did. Jax was on the floor, laying in his own sweat. His boxer briefs wet and
stuck to his body while he shook furiously.

A swipe of my hand on his forehead indicated a boiling temperature. The redness around his eyes
wasn't as bad as how they were bleeding from his heart when he opened them up to look at me. "Are
you having withdraws from drugs or alcohol?"

"Probably a little of both."

It took all Jax's strength along with mine to get him up on the couch. The wet cloth I placed on him
ran under cold water until it was saturated. It wasn't enough to sop up the poison he was trying to get
out of his body. The towel on the bathroom floor may not have been clean, but it helped with what
he needed. Under the faucet in the bathtub I soaked it. Then laid it across his chest.

What helped Jax in one way, only made his body hurt and cramp in another. His knees came up to
his chest and the chills took his body over. The only thing I could find to use was the old comforter
on the floor I gave him. After I doubled it up, I tucked it around him. Once his legs moved to
straighten out, I set down on the edge of the couch to think what to do next.

The envelope that came to the house for Jax was on the coffee table in plain sight. With a wadded up
rejection letter from a company he applied at. Sure, maybe I was extending a boundary by reading it.
With what I was doing for him, it pushed my boundaries as well.

The reason they wouldn't hire Jax, he failed the drug test. They found high traces of alcohol in his
system as well from the drunken night he had before. There was no way in the condition he was in,
he could even get a minimum wage job at this point.
"I'll be back." Really I spoke to myself. He wasn't coherent enough to probably even hear me. Or knew I left him.

From the kitchen table I grabbed my keys. The drug to soothe the bends, I didn't have in my bag at home. It would take a trip to the office.

"You're going to help him." It was the way Ellie said it. With disappointment in her voice and hate on her lips.

"Yes, I am. It's the right thing to do."

"Well, that's debatable." Her snarky comment didn't defer my decision I made. I understood her position, but it still didn't change mine.

On the way, I reflected upon many things. Jax was almost child like, he had to learn a new way of life on everything. Be taught how to conduct himself in every aspect of life on every level. Each day brought a new challenge for him to conquer. Then my daughter's words were thrown back in my face. Was I helping him to get better? Or was I truly enabling him by excuses I made as I had so many times before?

"You are so fucking stupid." Yet, I still took the bottle of pills home to help him.

For the rest of the night, I remained by Jax's side. He had no one in this world who cared any longer if he lived or died. He was no longer put up on a pedestal of admiration, no one cared who he was or the past power he once obtained. But, he no longer had power over anyone who was consider beneath him, no one cared of his demands. He no longer controlled mine or my children's lives either, I cared greatly about that.

The hair was matted to Jax's face when he lifted up his head up. I threw the blanket off me I grabbed from the closet at home and made him get up on his feet. In the brown bag I found last night, was an upper pill for the morning. To make him feel alive with no pain. One to level him off that brought him down from his high in the afternoon. The final one to put him out in the evenings. Those combined, badly conflicted his body so he didn't know where he was or how he felt most of the time from the drugs. Along with some weed I kept. "Is this your only stash?" To the bathroom I went with it in hand.

"Are you gonna flush it?"

"I'm not going to flush it, you are. If you want my help, you have to help yourself first, Jax."

He made the first step towards recovery. Each little baggie contained something to make him high, feel good for a while and forget about real life. With several flushes, he gave up the temptation to do them again. Not that he couldn't go get more. I just hoped for his sake, he wouldn't.

The deal we had in place was he would take a pill in the morning to help with the bends he continued to have. In the evening he took another one and along with a different pill so if he drank, he would become deathly ill. But he had to take them in front of me so I knew he made the effort to get his life straightened out.

Jax was extremely thin, he never was a big eater. Mostly because he stopped eating but once a day if that much. That all changed too, a healthy fresh start for him. We started slowly with a piece of toast and fresh fruit along with all the coffee, milk or juice I could get down him. For lunch he either had a half of a sandwich, a small bowl of soup or sometimes I would bring him fast food on my lunch break. Dinner was the hardest meal for him. I invited him to set down with us at the table to eat.
Another event he had to learn about normal every day life in a social type setting.

He was fidgety and pushed his food around on the plate. If one of the kids said anything to him, he would answer and remained quiet the rest of the time. His eyes gazed around the table when he looked up. For the most part his head stayed down.

"Thanks for dinner. I'm not really hungry." Jax only made it about five minutes before he bailed out the door. This wouldn't be the last time he was in this same situation of every day life. It was something he had to cope with and eventually overcome.

"His dinner is booze anyway."

"Abel." When I said his name, he knew to say no more. He let the subject go and so did I.

We didn't discuss Jax for the rest of the meal. When I cleared the dishes though, Ellie had something to say about it. "Jax doesn't belong here."

"You're right, he doesn't. He has nowhere to go. It's only temporary until he can get back on his feet and take care of himself."

"Well, that's a big assumption he ever will be capable to take care of himself. Because we both know he will never take of a family." She slammed the plates down on the counter beside me and left before I could address it with her. All of her anger wasn't just towards Jax. It was for Opie too. Along with what her father taught her about his kind of life, the kind of life that destroyed their family.

Ellie wasn't the only one who harbored ill feelings from the past. Most of the time when I looked at Jax. All I seen was how broken he made me and our children when we were together. Today, all I saw was a man who was broken without any family left or purpose in life. Perhaps, if I hadn't had the kids with me I wouldn't have done as well as I had. I tried to give him that benefit of a doubt, if he had custody of our children. If I never got to spend time with them. If I hadn't gotten to watch them grow up. I probably wouldn't be alive today.

"I'll deal with it later." After Ellie had a chance to calm down I would have a talk with her.

"Deal with what, Mommy?"

"Nothing, baby. Eat your cake." Sissy still set at the table with her desert in front of her.

"Maybe Jax wants some cake?"

"Sissy, not now."

Alex was head strong when she wanted something. I didn't think Jax would answer the door when we went over. I held her hand across the yard, then the plate while she knocked.

"Here." She held up the plate as high as she could. "A piece of cake or ice cream is what me and Mommy have when we're sad. We're out of ice cream. I saved my cake for you."

"This is your cake, kid? Why would you give it to me?" It seemed out of Jax's comprehension, someone could do something nice without wanting anything in return for it. He just missed it when his sons were little. Because they were the same way. Back then Abel would have given anything to spend time with his father and never wanted anything except his father's love in return.

"Because." Alex skipped back to the house. It was her answer for a lot of things.
"Goodnight, Jax." I excused myself because it was an awkward situation for everyone involved. Unusual turn of events. If someone told me he would stay at my home, I would have claimed they were crazy. Or perhaps, I was the crazy one for allowing him to stay here.

Nothing in life came easily or free for that matter. It was just a fact. Over the next couple of weeks. I kept Jax, his demons, contained and away from any reminders of that kind of life. When he got on edge and was about to go over the cliff; I found something for him to do. The key was to keep his mind and hands occupied enough to get past the desire. Until the next one came on, then you switched him up to something different.

For the kids when they were small, I bought paint by numbers kits. There were still several left in the closet. This was what he always relied on. It was his stand by to stop the demon from taking over the progress he made. If the truth were known, I kept the first painting he actually finished. After I fished it out of the trash. On the back I wrote the date, the date Jackson Teller became a man who wanted a better life for himself.

He got the tough program of recovery from me though. I cut him no slack on anything but still showed him I could be someone he could reply on in his time of need. We weened him off the shit by the occasional joint and a lot of smokes. Some cursing and a lot of tantrums. The booze didn't seem to make a difference to him at the moment. I'm sure the temptation to drink was still there. But other threats to his system, were more prominent. They were declared the biggest problem to overcome.

You always expect some set backs when you detox. Today was one of them. "I'm gonna go out. I'll be back."

"No." My head shook slowly. Even after I stopped talking to him.

"Fine, I'm gonna go get a pack of smokes. I'll be back."

"You have no reason to go anywhere." From my purse I took out a pack of smokes. Tossed them on the table for him.

"I gotta get outta here. I feel like the walls are closing in on me. I'll just go for a ride." Jax was out the door and on his bike before I could protest it. Since he wasn't going to do as he pleased anymore and stay here. I went behind him outside.

Jax exploded on me. He obviously needed to lash out at someone and I allowed him to ramble on. "You don't know how hard this shit is on me. I don't fit in here. So, why don't you just get the fuck off me."

"Actually, I do understand, Jax. I never fitted in your world, was accepted or understood it. So, get over yourself." Willpower was a muscle. The more you trained, the stronger you become. I spent many years in training to get this far.

"I never forced you to be part of my world."

"I'm not forcing you to be here either." Again I shook my head my head no. "If you leave, take your shit with you and don't come back." On the porch I stood with my arms crossed. If he decided to cross the line back to the old life he once knew, he was gone. No questions asked. No mercury shown. No more chances to be around his children.

The key turned to kill the motor on his bike. He was slow to exit off it. It wasn't a pretty sight but he worked it out for himself. "Fuck." He screamed other profanity out as he beat the side of the garage.
with his fist. The empty shattered beer bottles bounced off the walls inside the guest house. At least he made it back inside safely. The bottles, which, I refused to pick up for him since he didn't clean the guest house himself, came in handy for something.

"Goodnight, Mr. Teller. There may be hope for you yet." I flipped the light off on the front porch. Checked on the kids before I went to bed.

We would see in the morning if Jax made it through the night and made the right choice. Or if he couldn't live as a normal man, he didn't stand a prayer to make it in this kind of life. We would see if he was or wasn't willing to give up the booze and junk for his children. As a father who wanted to still be in his children's lives would. I would not baby him or tell him again either.

The alarm rang out cruelly the next morning. It was time already to get up. I could hear the television in the living room. The kids were on Cartoon Network. As I headed to the kitchen for coffee, I also heard loud banging that only got louder.

When I peeked past the curtain through the window, Jax had fixed the steps on the back deck. As I examined farther, hell he had painted half of the garage. I would assume he found a way in the night to keep himself busy.

With two coffee cups in hand, I went out to see all he had done. I offered one to him. "Thanks. I ran outta paint I found in the garage. If you'll get more, I'll finish it."

"Will do."

"Mom, I'm hungry." Thomas let me know it was breakfast time. When I turned back around, Jax was gone.

Maybe it was better this way. I didn't make a big deal about Jax painting the garage. But I also, didn't make a big deal about what happened last night either. This could benefit the both of us. If Jax continued to help me fix things up, I would pay him. Then, he could earn some money of his own again.

It actually surprised me he made it through it on his own. Now, I would take a step back and let him have some breathing room.

Just like everything else though. When you let your guard down. Was when you received the most disappointment. "That son of a bitch." In the middle of the street, I flipped a u-turn. Jax's bike was parked in front of the seedy bar he liked to hang out at. I was already late getting home and now this shit to deal with. Pissed off, I stomped all the way there after I parked the car. He'd been clean for a couple of months. All that hard work was down the shitter. Perhaps, he didn't heed my warning from last time.

What I found inside wasn't what I thought at all, it shocked me tremulously. Three full shot glasses set in front of him on the bar. Intensely he wrapped a stir stick around his finger then unwound it. To repeat the process again.

Jax licked his lips, he wanted it so badly. He didn't look at the glasses, he looked through them. Whatever he seen on the other side was blocked by the demon he saw before him.

As I went to back out of the bar, I stumbled in to a guy. I wore half his beer and he wore the rest of it. So much for a quiet exit without anyone noticing me. Everyone in the bar looked at us, including Jax.

Since, he knew I was here. I took the bar stool beside him. I didn't really know how to start the
conversation with him. Although, I didn't have to, he done it.

"I've caused so much pain for you, Abel and Thomas. I had the bartender pour a shot for each of you. You don't know how bad I want to get wasted so I don't feel that pain." Jax's eyes closed tightly, he breathed in as much as he could before he let it out. "I don't need it. I'm gonna stay clean like I promised. Get a job and get my shit together." He tossed money on the bar, then headed to the door.

This was where I could have ended it. Let the shit go and never spoke to him again about it. But, I didn't. I'd been so hard on Jax. I felt like he needed to hear it from me. "I'm sorry. I owe you an apologize. Honestly, I thought I would find you falling down drunk or worse."

"It's okay. I've never given you a reason to not doubt me. I should be the one to apologize. I know what I've done to you over the years, Tara. If I could take it back, I would. But, I can't." Jax fired up his bike and drove away. Left me standing on the street cursing myself for once instead of him.

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If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts;  
but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.  

Francis Bacon

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Doubt thou stars are fire.  
Doubt that the sun doth move.  
Doubt truth to be a liar.  
But never doubt I love you...

William Shakespeare

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Jesus said. "Blessed are those that believe without seeing."

John 20:29

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I hope you enjoyed reading me!  

Please forward to the next chapter posted...
Chapter 43

Angels and Outlaws

Part 7 of 14

Chapter 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 have been posted. Make sure to read them all. This isn't the end yet. We still have another 6 or 7 chapters to go.

Tension increased the more time Jax spent with us. The kids went on with their lives around him. He moved on with his and hoped someday to be included in theirs. He refused to give the specific omission out loud as he took every opportunity to give it another shot with them. Although, they just kept refusing it. Sometimes as we aged we obtained more compassion and understanding. As our children aged they had less.

Believe it or not, it was Sissy who loved Jax the most. She couldn't wait until she got to see him every morning. Once he got a job at a garage, she missed him being around.

"Will Jax be there when we get home?"

"I don't know, baby."

"Look, Mommy. Jax is here."

He was but he was asleep under the tree. His body propped up on the trunk with his head thrown back snoring. Since Jax started his new job as mechanic, he didn't have a lot of time on his hands.

The daily grind kicked his ass, up early and he worked until late evening. For above a minimal wage job that didn't allow a large cash flow. He had to earn his spot with them and every dime he made. There were no given freebies due to who he was in this new way of life. This was where he joined the rest of the world and just tried to survive.

His sandwich was squished by the grip of his hand. The lunch box was opened beside him, he must not have finished it. A thermos turned over on the ground with the spilled coffee cup he dropped at some point.

"Shhh... Jax is tired." It came of out of my little girl at a whisper. She spread her doll blanket on him once again.

"Let him sleep. Come on, Sissy."

We went in and had our dinner. Alex looked out the window to check on Jax before she went to bed. He was still in the same spot. Out like a light.

What amazed me was the next morning. The doll blanket was folded neatly on the porch. The last time she covered Jax up with it, I had to recover the blanket from the yard where he left it lay and washed it for her.

In some ways we had all made progress. In others, we regressed more often than not. When I seen Kenny leaving with Jax early on a Saturday morning, I started to wonder what progress my son had
made. Or just how much he regressed with Jax around.

"Do you know where they are going?"

"Nope." Abel almost always knew where Kenny was. "They have been meeting up almost daily at the tattoo shop."

"What?"

"Kenny hangs out a lot with Jax now." How had I missed it? Had I worked so many hours I wasn't in tuned with my family? Had my son made bad choices I was unaware of?

Kenny followed in Kyle's footsteps. He was a good artist and loved ink. When he turned sixteen I remembered him coming home late one night. As his arm moved at the kitchen table to get a piece of chicken, I noticed it peeking out of his sleeve.

"What is that?" Kenny immediately pulled his sleeve down. "You don't have to hide it. I have one too." I pulled my sweater off my shoulder. So I could show him the mama crow watching over her babies; Abel, Alex, Ellie, Kenny and Thomas. Kyle had added Kenny and his sister shortly after we adopted them. Alex was my last and final baby in the nest in a lot of ways.

From that day forward Kenny and I got closer. We found some stable ground to bond on. He never actually said much. We didn't have long lengthy conversations but he was always open when I asked him something.

"I think I'll take a drive. Can you keep an eye on Alex for me? She is still asleep."

"I'll watch Squirt."

Abel never questioned why I wanted him to watch his sister. However, Kenny sure was surprised to see me and it was the first thing he said to me. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to see my son. I noticed Jax's bike out front. What are you guys up to?"

"We...well...I..."

"What's going on?" Jax made certain to pull the curtain to the back closed when I moved to look.

"Nothing. I stopped to see my son. What's going on here with you two?"

"Not much. Right, Kenny?"

"Yeah." Kenny agreed with Jax but refused to look at me. Then I knew.

There was something off about this whole thing. I didn't know what it was exactly, but I'd find out soon enough.

When Kenny was younger, I would build his favorite sundae just for him. It became our bonding moment we would steal together. We hadn't done it in a long time. Maybe he and I needed a little alone time. I made a special stop at the grocery store before I headed back.

The front door closed and I knew Kenny made it home. "Can you come in the kitchen for a minute?"

In a bowl I dipped his favorite ice cream, lots of snickers bar cut up on top of it. Followed by a puffy cloud of cool whip. "Here you go, honey."
Kenny looked around the kitchen in search of something. Then hesitated to sit down. "Am I in trouble or something?"

"Of course not. If there is something you want to tell me. Or there is something going on in your life, I am always here to listen."

"There isn't anything going on." My son devoured the ice cream. But had nothing at all to say further on the subject.

"Not even with Jax?" It was when Kenny halted the spoon in mid bite. He thought long and hard before he would answer my question.

"No."

Kenny finished up quickly. He wouldn't look at me and I knew he was lying. It only brought my worse fears to the surface. As a mother you wanted more for your children then you had. You wanted a better life for them.

"Well, if something does come up. You know I love you and I am always here when you need me."

"I know." He couldn't wait to race out of the kitchen to get away from me.

Alone I set at the table. Sipped a couple cups of coffee and thought about how to approach the situation. Which, it wasn't a true situation yet and I didn't really want it to become one either.

"Tara." Ellie said my name a couple of times before I even noticed her. "Tara, are busy tomorrow night?"

"No, why?"

"I thought maybe we can go have dinner together. There is also a art exhibit I want to stop at. If you want to go?"

"That sounds like fun. I'll call Nicole and see if she will watch the kids for me."

It made me happy Ellie wanted to do something with me. We had no alone time as we did when she was younger. Her life was busy with school, work and her new boyfriend. He wasn't someone I would exactly have chosen for my daughter. But she liked him so I kept my mouth shut.

When I thought back to how my father protested the boy I spent all my time with. How he told me Jax would ruin my life. How much he disliked the choices I made. It wasn't the type of parent I wanted to be. Mostly, I knew the wedge it would drive between me and my daughter if I spoke out against him. If she asked me though, I would definitely give my opinion on the boy.

Once Nicole agreed to keep Thomas and Alex for a few hours. I tried to come up something special for Ellie. She would graduate from college soon then begin her own life. I didn't have much time left with her.

Although she was doing everything she should by living life now while she was still young. Something I missed out on. I didn't want my daughter to find out later how much she missed with no outside life other than school and work.

When I was in college, I still had a hard time making friends. I had none. With really no personal life to extend beyond four walls. I dated once and found him to be another asshole I could add to my short list of men. He asked me out a few time and I reluctantly excepted. After a couple of dates, and
I didn’t put out, he was done with me.

A laugh came out of me. “I still have no personal life beyond work and my children.” Hell I didn’t care though. I already knew how empty it would become once my baby birds all grew up and left the nest. They had to spread their wings and find their own way. Make their own mistakes, my only wish for them was to not make the same ones I had.

What I did care about however, was when I shifted the clothes around in my closet. I had nothing nice in it for a night out. Then it came to me what I would do for myself and Ellie. Get as much mother, daughter, time out of this as possible.

We agreed to meet up after she was done with class. I spent the morning at work, after I shuffled around a few appointments, I would get out of here early. Several times I checked my watch until I could leave to meet my daughter. It was the first time, in a long time, I was excited about something. I had something to look forward to. It was always the little things in life that meant so much.

We hadn’t done this together since Ellie graduated high school. She no longer required my assistance. It made me proud of her and sad she didn’t really need me anymore. Every indication she gave, she had matured in to the young independent woman I wanted to her to be.

The couple of hours we both had didn’t allow us much time to find a dress and shoes to match. The dress Ellie picked out for me, wasn’t really my style. A red formal dress, shoulder less, it hit me at about my calves and clung to my body. But I loved the silk feeling against my skin, it brought back some good memories. I didn’t love the price as much. For only one night out, for only clothes. I spent a fortune. When I hugged my daughter goodbye so she could go to her next class, it was all worth it.

From there I went home. I still had to get ready and get the kids ready too. Of course they loved Aunt Nicole and Uncle David's house. David was child like most of the time and played with them. More so Thomas because Alex had Holly to play with.

"I like it. You look pretty." At least my youngest thought so anyway. She set with her dollies on the bed while I done my hair. When it came to the makeup, I already knew what she wanted.

Lightly I swiped the large makeup brush across her face. Gave a little squirt of perfume she pranced through, as seen me do before. With only lip gloss applied she rubbed them together.

She had a pair of play dress up heels. Today was the first time I allowed her to clank around the house in mine. Today was also filled will so many emotions from my past and it brought back the good times I had shared with my mother.

When it became time to go, she wasn’t convinced she couldn't wear my shoes but, I was. After a bit of a power struggle; I was the parent and she was the child. She finally got ready.

In a hurry I dropped them off so I wouldn't be late. Before they called us for our reserved table. We set at the bar. I ordered a glass of wine, which I had looked forward to all day long. Ellie got a coke to drink. Even though she was old enough, I’d never seen her have any kind of alcohol beverage. It was a decision I say she made from the past experiences of life.

They pulled out our chairs after they escorted us to the table. It had been so long since I had that kind of treatment. Where I felt special by those little actions in life that meant so much.

While I gazed at the menu, I tried to get my emotions in check. I'd done so well most of the time. Others, I just couldn't get myself under control. When my hand wiped under my eyes, I tried to be casual about it. Not to let this ruin the evening for us.
"I miss Kyle too. I think about him a lot. He was really the only father I had."

With a smile to my daughter I only nodded at what she said. If we continued this conversation, I would end up a blubbering mess and I didn't what that to happen tonight. We ate our dinner and discussed her future. A happy future was what I wanted for her. After I paid the check we left to attend the gala.

We spent almost a half an hour in line with the others. Waiting for the art gallery to open up. They were dressed in the finest clothes around us. You could tell they had money to burn.

"I didn't know you had an interest in art?"

"I really don't. There is only one I want to see." Ellie seemed distant since we arrived for some reason. When I tried to speak to her, she only gave me short answers.

Once the doors opened up, they only had the most expensive wine, Champagne and horderves to serve as well. You were given a catalog of the paintings available. Then I seen the price of the painting we stood in front of, fifteen thousand dollars. This place was too rich for my blood.

"Tara." Ellie got my attention through the crowd. She motioned for me to join her in the upcoming artist section. "There is a painting I want to show you."

It left me speechless. The artist put it all on the line to tell a story with it. There was so much to tell too. The colors mesmerized me. Along with the accelerated heart rate of a runner, it gave me seeing it before me.

"I'll wait for you outside. I just thought you should know. This is what Jax and Kenny kept from you. Kenny helped him on the graphics." I nodded to let Ellie know I heard her. I couldn't really say anything else. As all my focus was on the the woman in it.

In the center of the painting was a dark haired woman with fair skin. Her face was slightly obscured on one side, I still recognized myself though. What circled around my face, was my life.

The red dress stood out in contrast against the black and white that divided the canvas, she was stuck in the middle of a very gray area. Her eyes leaked the tears of what surrounded her. Four angels in the corner she focused on with just one tinier angel that flew past her down in the darkness. With the darkest shadow lurking at the bottom behind her, taunting her, tempting her. It faded across the canvas. Once it almost reached the tiny angel, it completely disappeared. She was divided in the gray area, by the good and the evil, she had to choose.

It was all my eyes could see, I almost missed the distant family in the background she never had or grew up to know. Her mother was only painted in a portion who stood with a father who stayed until the end.

"Darkest Night. Love all, trust a few, do no wrongcs towards others. By Jackson Teller." The gold card engraved with the information was placed beside the painting. I tucked one of the plain white cards in my purse from the display.

"Interesting piece isn't it?" My long fog of thoughts ended when a woman spoke to me.

"Yes."

"So conflicted."

"Yes, the woman seems to be in the painting." It wasn't a statement. It was a true life experience.
"I wasn't referring to the woman, I meant the artist. They poured their heart out on the canvas. Made it come to life through their pain." A young man needed her assistance. She must of worked here. "Excuse me. I hope you enjoy the exhibit."

It always took an outsider with nothing at stake to show you the obvious. Jax must have labored hard when he painted it. Broke down the events in his life and mine that made the biggest impact on us. They brought us to where we were today.

The more I thought it through, the more I realized Jax was punishing himself in a way. Perhaps he couldn't bring out the words to express it. But he sure done a great job with what he painted. From experience, I punished myself more than anyone else ever could. I thought he done the same.

Since, this wasn't an event I was suppose to attend or even know about. I left. There was no need for Jax to see me here. I saw more than he could ever know or say to me even. Ellie waited outside by the cars for me. What she had to tell me left me in more of a shocked faze.

"I'm moving out."

"What? Why?"

"We both know why. It's time for me to start my life now. Justin said I can move in with him. I'll be able to finish the last six months of school and get a good job then. Besides, I need to give an honest effort to our relationship. I can't get him out of my heart, so I am going to follow it." I couldn't get a sentence together. One to form how I felt with my baby moving out. "I want your support on this, Tara. You mean a lot to me."

"I support you, honey. If you can't get someone out of your heart. Maybe they are suppose to be there."

"Maybe." Ellie never learned to trust men. The only one she had, left her life. Left her sad and broken when he died to save us. Part of the blame fell on me. I never trusted most men either. If I had instilled a different perspective for her, things could have been different now for her.

"She is her mother's daughter." As much as I wanted to stop Ellie from leaving, I wouldn't. She had to spread her wings and fly though. Find her own happiness and way. If she ever fell, I'd be there to catch her. When she walked away from me to start her new life, I only saw that young girl from years ago. I just didn't want to let her go.

"What are you doing here?" Tonight had been full of shocking moments. This was another, I was busted by the person who didn't want me here.

"I..."

"Did Kenny tell you?"

"No, he didn't. Ellie did. The painting is beautiful, Jax. I didn't know you are so talented. You look really nice too."

"I feel like an uptight asshole in this." He tugged the buttons on his shirt close to the collar. When he nervously shoved his hands in his pockets of the dress pants, Jax reminded me so much of Abel. Or perhaps, it was the other way around.

There was an awkward silence. Neither one of us knew what to say or do next. His weight shifted from foot to foot and I knew he was uncomfortable with my being here.
"I need to get home to the kids."

"Yeah, I need to get back in there. The painting sold."

"That's great, Jax. You should do another one."

"Nah, I'm not that guy and won't ever be." Jax took a couple more quick drags from his cigarette. When I drove by the art gallery he stomped it out on the sidewalk and went back inside.

When I walked through my front door. Something felt instantly different. It was a subtle nag of the heart strings. But, I couldn't shake it. After I got the kids to bed, I knocked on her door.

Before Ellie answered I promised myself, I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't behave that way. I wouldn't make her feel guilty for her decision. I wouldn't show her how heartbroken I was. Yet, as soon as seen her face. All I could do was those things as I hugged my daughter close. I became a blubbing mother. "I am going to miss you so much."

"I'll just be across town. Don't think I am not grateful for all you done for me and Kenny, because I am. You took us in when no one wanted us. I...I guess that's what you are doing for Jax now. Or if you can't get someone out of your heart, maybe they are suppose to be there."

My daughter had left me speechless several times this evening. This was another one of those moments. Nothing I could say would change her mind from leaving. Nothing I would say would change her mind of how she truly felt about Jax, Opie and the club. Nothing I could say would make her my little girl again.

"I'm always here for you. You can always come home if you want to." Those were always the hardest words for a mother say. Always said in love. Always said in loss of their baby.

"I want you to have this. When it's time make sure Alexandria gets them." She pressed Kyle's dog tags on the gold chain in my hand. "I love you, Mom." It was the first and only time Ellie came out and called me her mother. It might be the only time I ever heard her say it. But, it was enough to last me for a lifetime.

There was a need for reflection upon tonight's events. I put on a pot of coffee. I also pulled out my best friend from the freezer, salted caramel ice cream. Those marvelous swirls through the vanilla always made me feel better for some reason.

The knock on the backdoor stopped the thoughts running in my mind. I peeked out the curtain before I opened it. "Would you like a cup of coffee?" I made my way to the pot and waited for his answer.

"Here's some money to help out. Thanks, Tara." Jax tossed ten one hundred dollars on the table and headed back to his place. When I called his name out, he grasp the door handle hard. "Yeah."

"Why did you paint it? I know it's me."

Jax refused to face me. He let go of the knob to claps it back in his hand again. As the screen was pushed open, I figured I'd get no answer. Before he took the step through it, he finally gave me one. "It took me a long time to realize. The club didn't kill Op. He died inside the day he lost Donna. The same way I died when you left me and took my sons away. It was my darkest night." With a close of the door, it was over between us . He had no more to say and I wouldn't ever ask again about it.

There was still one thing left for me do. With my coffee cup in hand, I plopped down on the bed. The brown paper crumpled as I pulled it off. "What the hell am I going to do with a three thousand dollar painting?"
If we never experience the chill of the darkness. It is very unlikely we will cherish the warmth of the light.

Unknown Author

Love all, trust a few, do no wrong to none. Thou stopped loving me for the curse of wrongs, my darkest night.

William Shakespeare

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

A sudden sound startled me from a deep sleep. It woke up my internal alarm. The goosebumps stood up until the hair on my arms tingled. It was hard for me to catch my breath even. Something bad was about to transpire and I didn't know who had invaded my home yet. From the night stand, I pulled out my gun. There was a lock for safety reasons and only I knew the code to it.

Quickly after I released it from the chamber, I held it close to me as I went towards the noise. Towards what the darkness held. As I passed Thomas and Sissy's rooms, I knew they were in bed safe and sound. I still proceeded with caution just in case Abel or Kenny came in late.

"Ellie?" I turned on the light in the kitchen to see it was her at the table. "What are you doing here, honey?" It had been months since she came to visit even though I constantly asked her to. I would get the occasional phone call from her if I called and left a messages as a reminder.

The closer I got to her, I didn't any farther explanation. The tears mixed with blood on the towel she held on her face was enough.

"I don't have any where else to go."

"You always have a place to go." My tears fell with my daughters. "What happened?"

"Justin and I got in to an argument. Then he hit me...then he hit me again." Her lip was split open. The bruises weren't at the worst yet. A black eye would take over the left side of her face tomorrow.

"It's okay, honey. I'm here." After I hugged her tightly to me. I got my medical bag to clean up her face. The sting from the antiseptic hit the wounds. She made a small noise but endured most of it without notice. I'd say that pain couldn't compare to what she had already endured tonight.

"Did Justin hit you?" Abel and Kenny were both up now too. Ellie wouldn't look them in the eyes. She nodded before she dropped her head. "That son of a bitch."

Abel lead the charge out the door. I knew all to well where they were going and what they would do. "Don't do this." The car went in reverse out the drive anyway. "Come back here."
"What's going on?" Jax was woke by my screaming at them.

"Justin hit Ellie. Abel and Kenny went to find him. I got to stop them before they do something stupid. He needs to pay for what he done to her but not at the expenses of my sons." My cellphone was opened and I was ready to make the call.

"Don't call the cops." Jax took my phone from me and closed it. "I'll handle it."

With just sweats on and a pair of shoes, Jax left on his bike too. "Come back here." It didn't stop him either. "Doesn't anybody ever fucking listen to me?"

With keys in hand, I headed out the door. "Watch Thomas and Alex." Of course I knew I didn't need to say it to Ellie. In her condition, I wasn't certain if she would hear me anyway.

By the time I pulled up to the little house Justin and Ellie rented together. An unexpected fight had broke out. As well as another in the front yard when Jax tried to get Abel and Kenny to stop beating on Justin.

"I hate you. Don't touch me." The raw emotions poured freely from my son. It was the most horrible thing for a parent to ever hear or witness on my end. Let alone on his father's because my son said it to his face and left no doubts.

"Good. Then don't become what I am." Jax handled the complete situation better than I ever could. He never raised his voice to his son even though his child had screamed in his face.

From the distance you could hear them coming. The sirens were the alert they would be here soon. With the blue and red lights cycling through the darkness they would come and take my sons away for what they had done.

"Get outta here." Jax's words only seemed to enrage Abel. He squared off with his father, only Jax didn't back down this time. "Don't try me. Go."

My son had no idea how much of a bad ass his father really could be. In the face of death and danger; Jackson Teller wouldn't flinch or think twice about the sure violence to follow. But Abel and Kenny finally left as asked to without any farther altercations.

"You rat on Abel or Kenny. I'll come back and you'll get more than a beat down next time. You better say I did this or when I get outta jail. There will be holy hell to pay." The kid had no clue what evil things Jax would do to him and how much he meant every word he said too.

For good measure, one more punch to the face. Just like Justin had done to Ellie was delivered to him by Jax for all to witness. The police existed their cars with guns drawn. Jax put his hands high in the air. Laid face down on the ground then laced his hands behind his back. He assumed the position without even being told so, he had assumed it so many times in his life.

First, I called home to make sure that's where the boys went. Then hit the ATM and waited for the cops to process him through.

"Thanks for the bail. I'll get you the money back when I can." Jax opened the envelope of his personal belongings they confiscated. He slipped all his rings back on as though nothing at all had happened tonight.

Except for the gold band that was once our circle of trust and love. He put it in his pocket as though it was where he carried it all the time. After all these years, he still had it. Of course, it belonged to John Teller once upon a time. A happier time in his life as well probably.
"I'll take you back to your bike." We didn't talk at all on the way to Justin's house. Yet it had to be said before Jax got out. "What happens now?"

"I ride my bike back to the house."

"No. I mean with Abel and Kenny?"

Jax lit up a smoke as soon as he was outside my car. "Nothing happens to them. I take the wrap for it."

"Jax, you have priors. You can do some serious time for this."

"Then so be it." The engine of his bike drowned out any comments he made afterwards.

It wasn't the first time I'd seen Jax have no fear for the outcome of the future. Show no fear of what came his way. Show no fear of a destined life in prison.

By the time I made it home. Everyone was up. Ellie set in the middle of Abel and Kenny on the couch. With Sissy and Thomas on the floor in front of them. They were all my babies. Some just had grownup problems right now.

A quiet tap on the door came. I flipped on the porch light to see. "Can I grab a cup of coffee? I need to buy some tomorrow."

"Sure." I let Jax in so he could get what he needed. They didn't have a warm welcome for him. Especially Abel.

"Everything was fine until he came."

"Your father went to jail for you tonight. You both should be grateful to him for it."

"It's okay." Jax was behind me and he must have heard it all. "Thanks for the coffee."

"This isn't over. We are going to talk about a lot of things." It was a warning to Abel and Kenny. But first I followed Jax outside. "Jax..."

"The kid is right. Chaos will always follow me. Only this time, I will be around to cleanup my own mess. Not burden you and them to do it."

"Jax, this isn't your fault. But I...I would really like to believe that you will too. Be around for them."

"Maybe some day you will believe, Tara." Jax went down the stairs with cup in hand. "You did a great job raising the kids. You should be proud of it."

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A strength in a family, like strength in an army, relies on it's loyalty to each other.

Mario Puzo

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Love me or hate me, both are in my favor... If you love me,

I will always be in your heart... If you hate me, I will always be in your mind.
William Shakespeare

A house divided against itself cannot stand.

Mathew 12:25

The day of reckoning came for us all. You could hide from it and possibly prolong it. But it comes at you full force where you couldn't escape it. The sins of your past, present comes to the surface and you pay for them in the future, somewhere down the line.

Today, was Jackson Teller's day. His past would effect the present situation. His future would serve as a reminder of it. More than likely, he would serve a minim of ten years for his actions. A judge would determine his outcome.

Only, this time Jax was innocent. He chose to take the consequences for our son and Ellie without wavering. Many times I asked Jax if he was certain this was what he wanted to do. He faced a sentence for the love of his child and never thought twice about it.

As I glanced over at Abel, who set quietly beside me, on a bench of a court room. He looked stressed, pale and fearful. I could only imagine what he would have been like if his father hadn't taken the blame for him.

My hand went on top of his, a mother's comforting touch. I gave him a smile to tell him all would be alright. Although, I wasn't certain of it myself.

However, I would have some strong and harsh words for my other son. Who failed to show up here as we discussed. It wasn't like Kenny to not do what he said he would. He and Abel needed to see this, experience the freight from it. Hopefully, it would scare them down the straight and narrow path to never stray from it.

My arrest came about the same age as my son. It put so much fear in me, I changed my ways. The path I took went in the opposite direction of Charming. It was my savior looking back. The only reason I went on with life and tried to make something of myself. I could only hope this done the same for my sons.

"All rise." The bailiff announced the judge's presence. His long black robe flowed as he went straight to his throne. He was king of this court room. He was judge, jury and executioner. He was the one to determine how much punishment and pain would be inflicted. As Jax had determined about so many others in his lifetime.

It went pretty much as expected. The lawyer I hired suggested that Jax take the plea deal. It was the best he was going to get from the judge. If Jax plead guilty. He would get three years, possible parole with good behavior after one year. The judge had no mercy on him after reviewing his long rap sheet. Although, there was a time in Jax's life he showed no mercy on others either.

Jax never seemed upset or scared of what was before him. He looked back at his son and locked eyes with Abel. When Jax nodded to lawyer, it was almost over. As the lawyer stood to announce their acceptance, their surrender.

Just when you thought hope was lost, all was gone. Sometimes, a miracle happened you didn't see
coming. When my son and daughter came through the set of doors. It was exactly that.

Kenny held Ellie's hand until he had to let go of her. He took the bench behind where Jax set. She whispered something to the lawyer.

"Your honor, we have a witness to present in the defense of Jackson Teller." I thought Jax was just as surprised as I was about what just transpired. Ellie came to face the one person she feared the most at the moment and help defend the other one she feared as a child.

Ellie had already stated there was no way in hell she would push charges against Justin. She feared what would come if she had. She saw enough when she was only a small girl to know how this really worked. If you ratted out someone with the cops. You had no protection from the police. You had no safe place to run to get away from them. You had no peace in a future life.

She watched what happened as a small frightened girl when the club thought Opie had ratted them out. They killed her mother. She had lived with it since. There was not anyone who could change her mind. Yet, some how, Kenny had.

Today would mark a turning point for Ellie in life. Her battered face would heal a long time before her battered heart. She never trusted men and when she allowed one in. He had hurt her, abused her and sent her back to the fearful child she once was.

There were only two ways she could go from here. Forward as a loner which would not trust another man. A life of sorrow, fear and never belonging. Or she would only become a stronger woman from this day on because of it. When she found her love of a lifetime, she would hold on and never let go. If I had anything to say about it, she would move forward and become the woman I should have years ago.

Ellie was still a prisoner of her childhood; attempting to create a new life, she re-encountered the trauma repeatedly. You had to cling to the hope that growing up would bring escape and freedom. Some day, she would be before her own children and then she would know for certain what all this meant.

While I watched my daughter on the stand. I broke down along with her. She raised her head up so everyone had a good look at her face, what that boy had done to her. She looked him in the eyes and told her story, her truth. The truth that would set her free from his clutches.

Once Ellie set down with us from the long detailed testimony she gave, we waited for the verdict the judge would deliver. I held my daughter close to me. Not only to protect her but to let her know, her mother would always be here for her. She could always count on me. She would always be a part of our family no matter what happened.

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God often uses our deepest pain as a launching pad for our greatest calling.

Spiritual Inspiration

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Truth is truth to the end of reckoning.

William Shakespeare
For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

If you are wondering why each section has the quotes. The bible, William Shakespeare and mythology all tie together. If you will notice most of those quotes are always similar.

The same way Kurt Sutter used them to create; The Sons of Anarchy. He contends it's mostly Hamlet but I call foul on it. Look at the ending of the last season. Nine crows are shown on the screen in the final scene. The crow caws just before he embarks on his last journey, last act. With Jax's arms extended out just like when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

I believe its a reference to the Last Supper. When the homeless woman gave him the blanket, the camera switched to a bottle. Which looked like it contained blood, along with bread. These two items are given to his disciples, Jesus, when he knows what Judas had done to him, along with his likely end. Which, I did point out in this story and those similarities.

In the final scene, we see the crows eating the bread, and Jax's blood come onto the screen. Wine; blood and bread; body. Which, is them taking a soul to carry. It is also the same way the story started, with crows and bread. The same as when Jax rode to Opie's house after Donna died.

This being after his sacrifice to remove the "original sin" from his sons and we discussed this through out the story numerous times. If he had stayed alive, they would have continued into the club life. This was an extremely religious moment for Jax. He took the burden of his sins from his sons.

However, we were led to believe JT done the same for his son. But, the cycle continued on. Why?

We also discussed the nine circles of heaven and the nine circles of hell variations in each chapter.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this as well. Perhaps you seen something I missed.

Stay with me on the story, we are almost at the end...
Chapter 44

Angels and Outlaws

Part 8 of 14

Well, my lovelies, we are finally at the end of the story. I broke it up and posting two chapters now. I know they take you guys forever to read.

If you have ever seen the Marvel characters of Thor. You already have been exposed to mythology to some degree. Even though the creator of the comics changed it around a little. You still have been.

Thor's father, Odin, is the same Odin you have read about in this story. Odin, the wise, peace loving father of Thor and the adopted father of Loki, tries to rule over Asgard justly and peacefully in the comics. If this Odin ever met the Odin of Norse myth, Marvel-Odin would get his ass kicked. The original Odin was a war god who didn't give two shits for justice, law, or peace. Does that sound like another person we know in this story? Yep, Jackson Teller.

The same with the movie The Crow and the comic version has been around for about forty years. The Crow is a supernatural bird that serves as the protagonist's link between the living world and the realm of beyond. The magical crow is capable of resurrecting people who have been murdered, so that the victims may be able to seek justice on the person or people responsible for their death. The crow serves as a guide, helping the individual tap into his or her potential and assisting in tracking down the wrongdoers. Other people do not see the crow, only the reborn, unless he wants it. The chosen one, the crow reveals itself as a person. (I took this definition directly from the movie description. All the things we talked about.)

Chapters 44, and 45 have been posted. Make sure to read them both.

"Thanks."

Ellie walked past Jax down the isles of justice and the life she didn't want to acknowledge or remember. Just as she refused to speak to him when he spoke to her. Abel and Kenny was there for their sister as she hugged them tightly to her. It comforted me they would always help each other make it through anything, even after I was long gone. If I had done nothing else right in my life, the way I raised them to love each other was the way it should be done.

The kids went on out because there was nothing else to do here and she never looked back. When I pushed the elevator button to go down. Jax excused himself. "I'll be back in a minute."

We waited in the lobby of the courthouse for him but he never came. So the kids went to the car and I went to mine. Then the one person who hurt my daughter came through those doors. I definitely noticed the prick.

As much as I wanted to run the boy over with my car, I let him walk on. "When someone hurts your baby, you never forget." Perhaps Gemma was still with me in spirit with the thoughts I had.
From the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of him. The caged animal had once again sprung freely from his cage. He was stalking his prey and I knew what was about to come around next. The need of blood or retaliation of some sort.

"Jax." Once I said his name through the window of the car. He sort of shook it off and came out of the fog he was in. "It's time to go."

"Yeah." He flicked the cigarette across the parking lot before he got in. Perhaps Jax and I harbored the same thoughts of the one who hurt Ellie. Maybe we even wanted to do the same things to him. Or we had separate evilness of how to make him feel her pain. The difference was, I wouldn't carry through on mine and Jax was capable of it.

This was a turning point for Jax as well as Ellie. From here on they had to determine how to proceed forward from it. Mostly Ellie wanted to put it behind her, forget about how the boy had wronged her. Jax however, when someone had wronged him, vengeance and violence was all that was left.

It served as sober reminder of the man he once was. I thought he had made such progress on the new kind of life he led. Or maybe I was just blindly fooled and he would never truly change from it, never got past it and wouldn't ever.

"You should be grateful the judge didn't throw the book at you today. It's over and it ends now." Of course Jax agreed with me on the subject but deep down I felt he didn't really mean it.

Although I didn't completely trust the new man Jax had become. I knew the one thing that seemed to make the beast more of a mellow fellow, it was my daughter. When I watched them together, I trusted him. Now if he could reach that same point with his sons, then he made true progress. It didn't make sense how another child was more comfortable with you than your own. Then again, a lot of mysteries in life really didn't.

Sissy grabbed her strawberry poptarts. She held them in one arm as she climb up on the couch. Every time Jax looked over at her, she smiled while she continued to munch on them. Finally she offered him one.

"What the hell. Thanks."

"Ohm. You said a bad word."

"It's not a bad word."

"Yes it is."

They had this argument until Jax got tired of it. For it to only turn in to a different one. When he threw his plastic water bottle in the regular trash. "It goes in the recycle bin." She took it out for him and put it where it belonged.

"You're just a kid. How do you know?"

"You're the adult. How do you not?"

"You ware me out, kid."

"You ware me out."

"Do you even know what that means?"
"Do you?"

There was something Jax didn't realize. Sissy could do this all day and still keep up with him. She had words for everything, just like her father. As much as she soothed him, she annoyed him as well. Or maybe it was because he never had anyone challenged him as much as she had, almost constantly in the sweetest and innocent ways possible. "I'm going home. I'll come back and fix the bathroom later." As Jax approached the door she gave him a little wave from it.

"Sissy, stay here." Ellie must not have known this was their normal routine because she stopped her little sister from going out the door. Even though there was no need to as she picked up her little sister and packed her to the living room.

"Alex, why don't you go play, baby. I need to talk to Ellie."

This wouldn't be an easy conversation for either one of us to have. Her because the wound was still fresh and me because I had my own old scars I still carried. "I think you need to talk to someone about your problems, honey."

"I'm fine."

"Ellie, I know you are not fine. It's been months already and you're afraid to leave the house at times. You are shutting yourself off from the world. I want to help you."

"I'm fine."

You really couldn't help someone who didn't want it or accept it. I done my best to there when she cried herself to sleep to hold her and tell her everything would be alright. I supported her choice to drop out of the semester of college because everyone stared at her face and asked her questions about what happened. I had to figure out a way to reach my daughter and get her the help she needed.

From my favorite spot, my rocking chair. I rocked through the thoughts of how I could help her. What I could do to get her past it. Until I was interrupted. "Are you okay?"

"I am but Ellie isn't. Thank you for fixing the bathroom for me." Jax done a lot around here. Actually it was what he and I communicated the most about. I knew money was slim for him. So, we exchanged his labor for rent. It worked out for the both of us.

In mid rock I made up my mind what I had to do. There always came a moment of truth as a mother. You had to choose to share your truths or not. The more a daughter knew of details of her mother's life; the stronger the daughter. Although, you had to face your child with the wrongs you had done in the past and weak moments you had. But I had to keep the faith in the long run it would some how help her. I also had to believe he was correct and she would still see me the same when I was done. Or at least not make the same mistakes I had.

"We tell them the truth. You know the damage it does to kids by not telling them, we are living proof of it. By then, it won't matter anyway. They love us for who we are, not who we were. Just like we do them."

Kyle was still a major influence in my life. His words came to me a lot, especially during the hard times I faced. I took in a couple of quick deep breaths before I told my daughter some of my failures, some of my dark secrets and some things that broke my heart to tell her about me. I shook as I knocked on her door. "Can I come in?" She nodded and went back to sit in the middle of her bed. I paced while I got out what I had to tell her.

"I had an abusive relationship. He became violent with me several times before I got out. I know the
scars it leaves and how it can make you inverted from the world. Only if you allow it to. You are still young and have so much love to give others. Don't let Justin take your life away from you. You are stronger than you think you are, a lot stronger than I was back then. You stopped it the first time it happened when I didn't have the courage to."

Ellie listened intently to my story. There was one last truth I had to tell my baby girl before I ended this conversation. "I had an abortion when I became pregnant with his baby. I never told anyone else that either and have lived with what I did. Everyday I was in fear because I was afraid he would find me. Then he did..."

"Is it Jax? Is he the one who hurt you?" I could understand why Ellie would immediately jump to the conclusion as much as she hated him.

"No it..." I looked up to see him leaned against the door. "It wasn't Jax. He is the one who saved me actually. He even asked me if I went back to Charming knowing he would take care of it for me. I said no back then because maybe I wasn't mature enough to understand it all. If I had to answer the same question today. I probably did know Jax would never let the man hurt me and I probably went back to Charming for that reason." When I looked up again, Jax was gone. I confessed a lot more than I had intended too.

They say if you told the truth it would set you free, it just made me sick to my stomach. "How about some tea?"

Before I made it out of her room. Jax came back while he wiped his hands on a towel. "There are somethings you need to know about Opie and Donna. I was there the night you were born." Ellie grabbed her pillow from the bed and held it in front of her when Jax approached her. "I'll leave if you want me to."

Ellie shook her head no and Jax proceeded with caution as he should have. This would either help her understand her mom and dad more. Or send her in the other direction. Either one could be a savor or push her even farther away.

"I'll make you some tea, honey."

Although, I had reservation of leaving her alone with Jax. I also had to let her handle it on her own. She was a young woman now and this would not be the last time she had to make decisions in her life. Stand on her own and stand for what she believed in.

When I went back to deliver her some comfort in a cup. The door was closed. My first instinct, the mother part of me, was to swing the door open to make certain she was alright. But I had to keep reminding myself she was not a child anymore. Decisions came to both of us today. So, instead I knocked first and wait until she said to enter.

She didn't act upset when she opened it. But both of them had tears in their eyes though. It was obviously intense what they talked about. I set the cup down on the nightstand and left the room. I figured if she needed me she would let me know. I felt the same if she wanted Jax to leave her room, she would let him know.

For what seemed liked hours I rocked away on the front porch as Alex played. Jax finally came out of the house. "The sink works."

"Thanks." We didn't exchange anything else. There was no need to.

At least Sissy was happy and excited. She ran to Abel when he got home. He played with her and
always made time for just her. He was all teenage boy until it came to his little sister. Then he was a gentle giant as big as he had grown to be. When he stood beside his father, his son had out grown him. He had out grown Jax in many different ways.

"I thought maybe you can earn some extra money. If you wanna help?" Jax had a bike project in progress. He cleaned out the garage so he could do it on the inside. It kept his mind and hands busy. It was good for him.

"No thanks." Apparently it wasn't considered to be by Abel. Once Jax tried to talk to him, Abel went in the house.

"I'll help." Alex volunteered her services immediately. It was so she could probably be close to Jax more than anything.

"You're too little, kid."

"Are you going to paint it that color?" She crinkled up her little nose in disapproval.

"You got a better idea?"

She came back from the garage with a lighter blue bottle and handed it to him. "This one."

"No."

"Why?"

"Because."

"Because why?"

"Because it is time for dinner. Come help me, Sissy."

It was easier if I ended their argument and she came inside with me. They ate all the tacos I fixed but they usually devoured them. I cleaned up the kitchen and made sure she and Thomas got cleaned up before bed time.

Once I had the kids in bed it was the loneliest time for me. The house was completely quite and it allowed my mind to wander off. I flipped through every channel and nothing captured my attention enough to captivate me.

With the blanket wrapped around my shoulders I went to my favorite place. From my rocking chair I could find some peace most of the time. The lighting bugs would make their presences known for just a few seconds before their light went out. The other bugs made those familiar sounds of summer as they sang their songs in the darkness. I watched the sky and stars. I heard a college professor say; Are we human because we gaze at the stars or do we gaze at them because we are human?

Kyle always made me think. He had been gone for years now and he still had that effect on me. Along with many other things that still touched my life. It had been a while since I was sad when I thought of him. I wiped away the tears and watched the stars dance through the sky as we had danced with happiness shared between us.

"Are you okay?" Jax startled me a little. I was off in my own world, a happy one.

"Yeah. You're up late?"

"I'm working on the bike. Come take a look at it and tell me what you think?"
It made me smile at the color Jax chose for it. "Alex will love it."

"I think I need to redo it. I can't get flames to go with this light blue. Orange looks like shit."

"How about white flames?"

Jax sort of laughed. "Flames are yellow and orange."

"Says who? Use white and the dark blue. Think outside the box Jax, throw out your date planner and live a little. I'm going to bed, goodnight."

"Goodnight."

From my chair I watched Jax from a distance work on the bike in the garage as though nothing else had ever been as important to him. It wasn't a protruding trait of his. The meticulous work he had done took a steady hand and determination to finish it. He had concentration of steel while he painted the details.

"I am working on forgiveness, Kyle." The blanket came up to my shoulders as I watched him for hours work on the bike.

Forgiveness does not change the past but it does enlarge the future.

Paul Lewis Boese

All the world a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.

William Shakespeare

(29) He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
(30) Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;
(31) but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:29-31

Jax had tapped into another realm he was completely unfamiliar with. The yuppie biker wanna be
group. They had money to burn and wanted to act the part without being held to it. For a few hours
they could ride around and be a badass as a feel good. Then go home to their families as a normal
man. Something he hadn't discovered yet.

"I'll take it." The bike Jax painted didn't last a week parked in front of the house with a for sale sign
on it.

Even a couple of his buddies wanted Jax to do a bike for them. They were willing to pay top dollar
for it. Only he scoffed at them and said no at first. To them it was just a toy to play with. For him, it
was life. But the green was good, good enough he decided to take on the challenge.

Then there was another little group he was unfamiliar with also. "I told you so." The female who
knew she was right and didn't mind expressing it to him. Afterwards Sissy went to play with Holly
and left Jax alone.

But he was anxious to start on the next one. "Hey kid. Come here." I almost choked on my ice tea
when he asked my daughter what she thought. You had to be pretty desperate to make decisions
based on a five year old. Although, I found it to be kind of endearing as well.

"I like it."

"I like it too."

Well, now he had both Alex and Holly's approval. It was actually kind of pretty. A deep charcoal
gray with specks of sparkle to it. The hard part would be the dagger Jax planned to super impose on
the gas tank.

Kenny actually showed Jax how to do it in layers with color contrast. I wouldn't tell Jax the truth.
Kyle had taught Kenny the way to do a three dimensional tattoo, it was the same thing. It would be a
secret best kept to myself. I sat quietly and watch until Jax had to go.

"It's time for a bath and to get ready for bed."

It made me think back to Abel. How much he hated bath time when he was little. Now, he spent
hours in the bathroom to look good for the girls. He was in shower when we went in and he would
be a while.

"How about some milk and chocolate chip cookies?"

They didn't have to be asked twice either. While Alex rambled on about, well, a little of everything.
Thomas was quiet and ate his cookies. Her excitement was hard for her to hide. But tonight was
nothing compared to the next morning.

As we were going out the door. Her squeal scared the shit out of me. I thought something was wrong
and dropped everything in my hands because of it. Only to find a pink bike with white daisies
painted on it. The basket was woven white with a pink daisy in the middle.

"From the bike fairy." Was all the note said taped to the front of the basket.

"Can I ride it, Mommy?"

"You can tonight. We have to go now."

It delighted my daughter she got it but not so much she had to leave it and go. All the way to car she
looked back at it. Jax was leaving for work too. When I had Alex buckled in I went to talk with him.
"Alex loves the bike. Why didn't you tell her it's from you? She adores you."

"The kid earned it. She only adores me because I haven't pissed her off yet but give it time."

"Jax." Alex's head popped out of the window. "A fairy brought me a bike."

"Wow, it's pretty cool." He rode off after he stopped to talk with Alex.

"Maybe there is hope for you yet Mr. Teller." Jax had for once put his hate for Kyle aside to show something for his daughter. Jax had done a kind act without needing recognition for it. Or perhaps, he had already found the forgiveness in his heart I still searched for. It was something hard for me to think about let alone admit.

Of course it was the first thing my daughter wanted to do when we got home too. I bought training wheels and a helmet so she could ride safely on it.

"What are you doing?"

"I need a wrench so I can put the training wheels on."

"No." Jax took them from me and I assumed he was going to put them on for her. But it wasn't what he had in mind at all. He was going to help her learn to ride in his mind the right way from the start. I was so shocked at first, I just stood there. In complete awe he took over to help my daughter.

"Hey, put on your helmet." She didn't mind it and done it immediately. Jax just rolled his eyes at me. As her mother, I didn't want her to get hurt. I always wanted to provide the safety net so she wouldn't.

From my rocking chair I watched a far cry from the outlaw I once knew. He was never had this much patience or been as involved with his sons when they were little. I didn't know if I should be grateful for it or leery because of it.

"We gotta stop, kid. I need to go." He picked up the bike and put it on the porch for her. She bounced inside the house to tell anyone who would listen to her about what she had just done.

"Are you almost finished?"

"I've got another eight hours to go."

Jax was lucky and only got community service from the judge. He couldn't have chosen a better place to serve it than at the homeless shelter. Not that he liked it much but he done it just the same. Ellie, she got a much longer sentence from it.

Months had passed and yet she was stuck in the nightmare still. I noticed she jumped a lot with a sudden noise or with a quick movement. She did enroll to get the few credited hours she still needed. My sweet Ellie was about to graduate and get her degree. It was hard for her to be among other people afterwards. She done it to make something of herself an couldn't be prouder of her for it. Yet, she wasn't past it enough to truly live life once again.

But I tried to let it all go and let Ellie progress as she needed to. Until I got a call from the college. A professor who saw in my daughter what I had. "I don't understand."

"We asked Ellie to speak at graduation and she declined. Since she... she had an accident she doesn't participate in our group discussions anymore. She of course will pass but her grades have fell too. It's
like she here but I just can't reach her anymore." The lady chose her words carefully about my daughter. But I already knew Ellie had changed since the horrible night.

"Thank you for calling me."

It was an honor she wouldn't receive again in the future. This chapter would close in her life and leave her behind. I tried to talk it out with her and I even expressed to her how much I wanted her to do it. Along with all the reasons why. To no prevail, she shut me out.

The night before graduation, Ellie decided she would have her diploma mailed to her. She didn't even want to attend the ceremony. I decided it was time for tough love. Hours before it was time to leave. I had made my decision of how this would go down as well.

"It's time to get out of this bed and join the rest of the world. You can take all the time to heal you need to, but you can do it out of bed." The curtain hid the bright, sunny beautiful day it was. But not anymore as I pulled them back for the sun to shine on her. "I laid out your dress, cap and gown. I will be waiting for you downstairs."

While I stood over Ellie in her bed, I wanted there to be no doubt she understood every word I had to say. "I love you with all my heart. You have two choices in life. Lay down so they can run you over, let them rule your life and the way it goes. Or get up and fight until you can't anymore. Now, get up and get dressed do not make me come back up here. You won't like it if I do." This was the first time I was ever harsh with Ellie. She had always been such a good girl. She never got in to trouble or caused it.

Sure, I wasn't as effective as Gemma was at it when she had done to me many times and she would never let me quit. She would never allow me to roll over and just give up. I wouldn't let Ellie do it either. When I heard the shower start I set in the rocking chair in my room and waited patiently for my daughter to get ready.

"You look pretty." She barely gave me a smile back. All the way there she said nothing and directed her attention out the window. Even Abel couldn't cheer her up which usually he could.

We took our seats as Ellie went to join the other graduates. When they called her name to come up to the podium. It took her forever to make it there.

"I don't have a speech written. I'm only here because someone made me come. I am also here because they love me and raised me as their own child. If it weren't for my mother and my mother who raised me, I probably wouldn't have made this far." There was nothing but utter silence from Ellie now. She stared out to the crowd of people watching her in a panic. The microphone made a squall as the wind had brushed across it.

When she finally looked at me in the eyes. "Just breathe, honey. You can do this."

Ellie took in a couple of deep breaths and went back to her speech. "It has always been said behind every great man, there is a good woman. Times have changed. We don't have to be behind them or hidden behind them anymore. A woman can be anything she wants to as long as she is willing to work hard towards her goal, make sacrifices as necessary and never let anyone decide how your life goes but you..."

Eventually my daughter would be just fine and move on from the traumatic experience she had. Today, my daughter made me so proud. Maybe tomorrow she would take on the world again because I knew she would make a difference in it.
When you are a mother, you are never alone in your thoughts.

A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and then again for her child.

Sophia Loren

The voice of parents is the voice of gods, for to their children they are heaven's lieutenants.

William Shakespeare

She is clothed in strength and dignity, and laughs without fear of the future.

Proverbs 31:25

When he asked me, how far will you go to reach peace? What will you do to stop the evil? What are you willing to sacrifice for those you love? My answer to John Teller was simple.

I will do whatever it takes to make sure Abel, Thomas, Kenny, Ellie and Zach lives the right kind of life. I am nothing without the ones I love, I will give my life for theirs and never think twice about it. John only gave a brief smile before he disappeared before my eyes. It is the first time and the last time I saw my father.

It always made me feel close to Kyle when I read his notebooks, I couldn't handle doing it all the time. When I missed him the most, I took one out. Set in his rocker in absolute quiet. Then enjoyed the time I could still spend with him.

Although, I was all over the place emotionally when I done it. This one however, only left me with more questions than answers and more determined to find them than ever. I've let everything go and never pushed the issue with Jax. When I had, he ignored me or pretended he had no idea what I was talking about. Even though I knew better. Well, not today. I would take my stand with him.

With Kyle's clearly written words in my hand. I stood at the door and knocked. A quick spin or two of the ring on my finger, while I waited patently or impatiently as it really was.

"Hey."

There wasn't time for friendly greetings back to him. I went straight to the topic at hand. "What happened the night you and Kyle saw John Teller?"

"Nothing."

"Bullshit. It changed everything and you know it." I pushed the notebook into his chest and waited for an answer. I would wait as long as it took to get it.

After Jax read it. It got tossed causally down on the coffee table. He set quietly with a blank
expression on his face. Lit up a smoke and just shook his head. As though he couldn't believe what Kyle had written. "Nothing happened."

"Seriously, Jax. Are you going to stick with that story? After everything I have done for you, I think you owe me that much. No, you owe Kyle that much for what he did."

Jax was the calmest I had ever seen him in a long time, almost as though he was at inner peace with himself finally. When he went towards the door and opened it for me to leave. He never raised his voice or changed the tone of it. "I did what I had to do to save my sons. I gave up every fucking thing in this life that meant anything to me. Just so you and my sons could live on. Now, get out and don't ever ask me about it or him again."

Jax never elaborated if he meant John or Kyle. But, it didn't matter. I would honor Jax's request from here forward. When you wallowed in self pity and played the blame game. You sometimes missed the pain you brought on others. What they had to sacrifice. Only this time, it all fell on me.

Until now, I was blind to what Jax had done for our children and why he set me free so easily. Kyle died a hero to save us. But, his pain ended when his life had. Jax, he lived with the pain and all the torture he was going through because of it. Even though some of it may have been self inflicted, he was still living with it.

Quietly on the front porch alone, I reflected back to the boy I once knew. The man I loved more than life itself. The tears of sorry and sorrow came as I tried to choke them back.

"Did he make you cry? What did he do?" Abel immediately jumped to the conclusion it was his father's fault. Maybe I was to blame for that too. Or maybe it was a combination of mine and Jax's actions.

"He didn't do anything. I have something to show you."

It was time to step up and take my blame in all of this. My son was old enough now to know. Perhaps, he wouldn't understand it all or he might not even forgive me for what I had done in the past. But, he needed to know the truth.

With shaken hands I laid it all out for Abel, laid it all on the line. My son was the only person I had allowed to read it or probably would ever allow to; Life of an old lady inside SAMCRO... By Tara Grace Teller.

"I'm not proud of everything I've done. It wasn't just your father who done wrong or bad things. Don't make the same mistakes I have." Then I put John Teller's journal beside mine. Along with pictures of the club members, his father with myself and his grandfather. Of course, I had to include one of the main influence I had, Gemma. I knew this day would come at some point. Now, I had to see it through.

Never had my son reminded me of Jax's so much. His hat turned around on his head. With his blonde hair poking out of it. He gathered it all up and went out the back door. I had taken the same long walk to the beach so many times myself. As his mother, I wanted to shelter my baby. But, as his mother, I had to do the right thing for him as well.

From the kitchen window, I watched Abel turn page after page. I set and pondered what emotions he had while he read it. How he would perceive it all in the end. If he would find forgiveness in his heart because I took him away from his father. If the possibility was there he would trust me like he had before.
Once we left Charming, I watched each of my children through the window. It was them playing with each other, they argued at other times. Defend one another and shown the love of a true family. Most of all, I watched them grow into the person they were today.

With all my heart, I had to believe the truth would set me free. The truth would set them free as well. My son would seek and see his own truth, in his own way. He would choose his path with all the knowledge I gave him. It was what scared me the most.

When hours passed by, I went back to the window once again. Abel was still in the same spot, doing the same thing. It was time for me own my place in his life. Find out if the outcome was good or bad from what I gave him.

The beach was my spot when I didn't want to think anymore. I spent as much time on it as possible. When I sank down in the sand beside my son. My ring spun like top as I waited for him to say something to me, anything. But, he didn't. "Are you alright?"

"I'm good." Abel never looked up from the book at me when he said it.

"Is there anything you want to ask me?"

"Yeah." I held my breath until he asked the question. I feared what it might be. "I never pictured you as an outlaw woman before. Were you and Grandma Gemma one of the first?"

With all the things Abel could have asked me, I was relieved it was only this. Although to some degree, I thought my son glamorized the idea of it. But, I didn't, I didn't want that. I told him the truth and how it tore my life apart. Then came the hardest part of what I had to still confess.

"I plotted and planned our escape from your father and that kind of life behind his back. I lied to him and ran with you, Thomas, Ellie and Kenny. To some degree, I felt as though I had no choices left but to get you guys out of there. Or we would have never made it out alive. I really believe, Jax let us go in the end to save us. I also, had an affair with Kyle while I was still married to your father. I'm not proud of how it all went down but, I'm not sorry either."

The cute Teller smirk crossed his face. "Mom, I never believed Sissy came from the stork. I remember a lot about when we left. How you cried almost all the time before we could get out. The constant turmoil we lived in with him before we finally got out. Kyle always treated me like I was his own kid. You did what you had to do and you did it for us."

"There's more I need to tell you. I..." The brief pause I took, to collect my thoughts of how to explain it to my son. I'm surprised my finger was intact as much as I played with my ring.

"You're my mom and have always been there for me. It's all I need to know."

Abel and I set in silence to watch the calm waves wash up on the sand. They washed the sand clean. Today, washed some of my soul cleaner too. It hurt to hear my son remembered all the heartache from when he was a child. It also gave me hope, he would never want anything to do with that kind of life.

When I heard all my son remembered about when he was young, it tore my heart out. If I had left Charming sooner, I could have spared him the heartache he has held on to all these years.

It wasn't long until the rest of my babies came to join us. Of course, it was dinner time and they were probably hungry. "How about we grill some burgers out here?"

The few shade trees in the back of the house, offered refuge from the sunny days. I put a couple of
picnic tables, lawn chairs and a grill beneath them. We used it frequently as a family.

Everyone helped carry the food and the miscellaneous items we needed to have a good meal. It made me happy Abel stayed by my side while I prepped everything. Before he went to throw the football with Kenny and Thomas, I got his attention.

"Don't make the same mistakes I have. My dad passed away and we hadn't spoke in years. I'm not even sure he knew how much I loved him. Your father is still here and all the time you have is now. Don't waste it." The wise words Thomas had once told me, I passed on to his nephew.

While the boys played, we girls got the food ready. I got busy and hadn't noticed my son had disappeared. "Kenny, where is Abel?"

"He went to ask Jax to come eat with us."

Everything was already on the table waiting on them. But they never came. I went to get them for dinner. As I came close to the guest house. I heard yelling coming from it.

"Don't put this off on Kyle. You weren't around way before he came along. You don't think I remember waiting up to see if you came home. All those nights I wondered why you didn't love us enough to be there. You put it all on Mom to raise us and take care of us."

"Abel, I tried to do the right thing."

"I'm done with this shit." Abel breezed out the door just before I got to it.

"Abel." Jax was meet by me instead of his son outside.

"He remembers everything, Jax. All the kidnappings, going to Mexico with Cody. Us being locked in a room. Kyle getting killed to save his life. Those wounds will not go away overnight. No matter what you feel you sacrificed already. We all make sacrifices for those we love. Love forgives a multitude of sin. Don't give up on your son."

The greatest sacrifice is when you sacrifice your own happiness for someone else.

Anonymous

Love is a sacrifice.

William Shakespeare

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served. But to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45

I hope you enjoyed reading me!
I plan to post a one shot of Jax and Tara after I finish this one. It will be a sweet and short love story of just them. It's for a reader who loves them together and I promised I would.

Also, in the last set of chapters posted. Did you notice how much of a switch in roles Tara and Jax had? She was the one in total control of his future and she didn't care what he thought about it. She made him the same type of promise, one they both knew was a blatant lie. She made him take pills in front of her as she had to if she wanted to be around the kids.

Keep this in mind as you read on...

Please forward to the next chapter...
Chapter 45

Angels and Outlaws

Part 9 of 14

Chapters 44 and 45 have been posted. Make sure to read them both.

A conversation with a reader got me to thinking and she is awesome by the way. How many times do you think a crow appeared in The Sons of Anarchy? I'm not counting the words said such as SAMCRO or crow eater either. This is for Season 1, Episode 1.

1) In the very beginning the black crow is seen on the highway with what looks like bread. As Jax rides down the highway.

2) Gemma is feeding her black crow when she is in the bedroom with Clay. They were talking about John Teller.

3) Tara's crow tattoo when Gemma lifts up her scrub at the hospital.

4) The wrist tattoo of Jax. In honor of John Teller with the crows in flight. It was when he is in the storage unit and began to read about John.

5) The crow caws when Jax is at Opie's house. After Donna freak out in the garage about the fact Opie is back with the club.

The crows caw throughout the other episodes as well. You just have to listen for them. Episode 2; Half Sac in the graveyard digging up the body. And so on...

They caw when a character is struggling with a right or wrong decision. Family or club. Coincidence?

The crow caws to remind us to follow our true heart.

The crow has always been there. Pretty wild huh...

Life had calmed down a lot in the last few months. I loved my boring life. While people sought a thrill, I shied away from excitement. Some might say I just don't know how to live. I just wanted to be normal. As I was thankful every day to have my family together along with being happy and healthy children.

This was a start to a beautiful weekend. Once I caught up on reports and paperwork I intended to veg out at home maybe even do a little yard work. But other than that I didn't have to much planned out yet. As I exited the car I thought I heard a noise. When I listened closer, I heard nothing. Just as I passed the ally by the office I definitely heard a whimper.

At first I thought it was an animal possibly hurt or trapped in something. When I approached the dumpster I saw a leg stretch out and the distressed sound got louder. I kept my hand on the gun in
my purse. Just as a precaution. As I have learned over time, you can never be too damn cautious about what was coming at you around the corner.

Even when you tried to help someone you didn't know, you still put yourself at risk. I didn't get the chance to even ask if he was alright before he held the gun up at me. He had been shot and was bleeding profusely.

"I'm a doctor. If you don't put the gun down, I can't help you." When he finally lowered the gun down, I took my hand off mine. "I would feel more comfortable if you laid it on the ground and push it away from you." I stood firm on the position until he done as i requested too.

Immediately I went in doctor mode to save his life. He wasn't a man yet, still far from a child. Nor with his actions of a gang member was he innocent by any means. He clearly wore their brand in tattoos all over his arms. "I can't care for you here. My office is down the street."

"No. You will report it to the cops."

"I won't. You must trust someone or you won't survive. If you don't come to my office with me, you will bleed out and die. The choice is yours."

This wasn't the first time I had a choice to make either. Honor my oath to fight with everything inside me to save a life. While I dishonored the rest of it by not doing my duty and follow the rules. The first thing I should have done was picked up the phone and informed the police. I felt the boy had enough problems without my creating more.

But, the reality was you couldn't help someone who didn't want it either. They had to take the first step. As I walked away from the boy, I truly hoped he made the right decision. As I prayed every damn day my children done the same.

Through the big display window, I watched and waited for him. The big scrolled letters ran in perfect unison across it. There were times to this day Kyle was still with me. Still in presences of spirit and the love he gave in my heart. I picked the same script for this office as he had airbrushed for me when I first decided to go out on my own and open my practice. As he taught me, it was always the little things which mattered so much.

Other times, I felt some of my memories of him faded away. It was like loosing him all over again. But for now my problems had to be put on hold. I had a another one to deal with.

The boy barley was able to drag his weak body to the door. My doctor and motherly instinct took over from there. The wheelchair was ready for him and so was I. But, I still needed assistance. So, I called the one person I knew would understand all to well.

"Jax, I need your help."

He came without asking for any details. Of course, it would have once upon a time, been exactly what he would have expected me to have done as well. It was in his DNA just like the kid I wanted to help.

"Do I need to call anyone for you?" I knew the drill. Exactly what to do to keep it private. Only family got informed when a gang member or outlaw was shot.

"No."

"What about your family? Won't they worry about you?"
"I don't got any."

It explained a lot. The gang took him in and became his family. A lost child on the streets would welcome in anyone who offered them shelter. It also meant his loyalty and his life belonged to them. Until death finally took him or prison became his home for the rest of his life. It was the only two ways for this kid to get out.

"You bitch, you called the cops." He freaked out when Jax knocked on the door so I could let him in.

"I need to remove the bullet. I can't do it alone or you will bleed out and die."

When you lost belief in humanity and just order. You became a savage caged animal. He didn't believe me either and started to act like one. When we returned to the examining room. The boy had managed to get himself off the table. He was slouched down against the wall with a gun pointed at us. I should have known better and expected it to come.

Jax stepped up to handle it though. He stood in front of me as a shield. "We're trying to help you." He unbuttoned his work shirt and slipped off his t-shirt to show proof of the man he he once was. He let his tattoos, stab wounds and scars do his talking.

Although the boy still wasn't convinced. When Jax moved closer he held the gun steady while he tried to hold pressure on his belly. By the tone of Jax's voice he had enough and was done playing with the kid. "Put the fucking gun down dumb ass or I will walk outta here and let you bleed out. Don't think I won't burn your body to get rid of the fact you were ever here. No one will miss you or care."

That would have never been what I would have said to the boy but it worked. With a local shot, it would be a few minutes before it made him numb enough for me to get the bullet out. While we waited, I prepped him as much as possible.

The gaping hole in his stomach was as wide open as my heart. Most of the time my hands done work for me, they just knew what needed to be done. Today, they were clumsy with no sense of direction to go in.

With a private practice I didn't operate or remove bullets anymore. There was one who I couldn't save when he had been shot. It was my nerves or the guilt I felt because I couldn't save Kyle's life. I shook furiously. I was all over the fucking place.

While Jax held the gauze steady to sop up the blood. Hell, I was about to kill the boy myself by accident when I nicked him. Finally, I had to stop and take a minute to get my shit together.

"Tara." With Jax's free hand he gave mine a squeeze.

When I went back at it. So had Jax. "Shit." I only got out the first piece.

"Maybe you need a break."

"I need to get the rest of it out and sew him up." It took me almost forty five minutes to accomplish the task. It was what I once could have done in my sleep. At least we saved him up to this point.

"What are you gonna do with him?" Jax asked me a great question. Unfortunately I didn't have a great answer to give him back.

"Patch him up and hope he makes it."
"And?"

"I can't make him want a different kind of life. When he walks out in a couple of days, it's all on him." Jax only nodded back to me. There was really no need for us to discuss things any farther.

We spent the rest of the afternoon moving around the furniture in my office. As we moved in everything I would need to care for him the best I could. This wasn't only the boy's secret, it was now mine as well. Other patients or anyone else didn't need to know what illegal things I had done to help him.

The exam table had wheels thankfully. We rolled him in my office and I setup a drip for the night. At this point I had done everything in my power to save his life. The rest came from the man upstairs to decide how it all played out and what happened next.

With a quick call to Nicole, the kids were safe for the night with her. "You can go, I'll stay." Jax looked exhausted anyway. This wasn't his problem, he hadn't created the situation, I had.

"Hungry?" Since Jax offered, I took him up on it. We hadn't ate all day. He went to get food and I got settled in for the night.

While I watched the boy breathe in and out. I thought of how upset his mother somewhere would be if she knew about her child. Or on the other hand, would she be or even care at all? Was he truly alone without the love of someone? Had the one person in this cold world gave up on him?

It sent me to thoughts of my babies, then again, most things had. "Hey, I'm just checking on you. Everything alright at home?"

"Yes, Mom." Abel gave his normal; don't worry about me, of course it is and I'll take care of everything.

"Let me talk to your brother." Kenny only spoke when I asked him something. Nothing uncommon about that.

Next, I sent Ellie a text since she wasn't at home yet and within a few minutes. She responded with one back. I had to tell my younger babies goodnight as well.

They got a joint call on speaker. "I love you guys and I'll be home in the morning." Thomas and Sissy both said they loved me too.

It made me feel better when I was away from them to do so. I also felt better after I ate. The burger and fries filled me up and as I tired as I was. I would be out soon.

"You should go home. I'll stay with him." The leather couch in my office would be home for the night for me.

"I'll hang around."

"You really don't have to, Jax. There isn't anywhere for you to sleep."

"The floor is fine. It won't be the first time I slept on it." Not much ever seemed to bother or get to Jax. I've seen more regrets from him in the last few months than ever before. This wasn't one of those times, however. It didn't bother him to roll up his shirt for a pillow and lay on the hard floor. So, I let him.

Throughout the night I woke frequently. There was a uneasy feeling in the air. I couldn't ever decide
what it actually was. Yet, it had me on edge. Every time I checked on the boy he was out and still breathing. I found when I set on the couch and just watched him, it made me feel better. Until today he was a stranger, now it felt more as if I watched over one of my own babies.

"I think we both could use some encouragement and cheering up." My mother's bible was in my bag. I kept it with me anymore with no particular reason in mind. I read to him some of my favorite verses from it until the sun came up. "I know what it feels like to be all alone. I can't do anything about when you leave here. But you're not alone now. When I was your age, I would have done anything just to know someone was there for me, even for a day."

His bandages needed to be changed. I gave him a shot of antibiotics and a cleaning dressing. I was rather loud clanking around the room when Jax started to stir.

"Are you up already?" Jax moved slowly off the floor. He tried to stretch out his aching muscles. Neither one of us were as young as we once were.

"I never really slept much."

We went home to shower, change clothes, check on the kids and grab some more food. I was certain the boy would be fine while we were gone. But I was sure was surprised when we arrived back. He was gone. There was no trace of the him except for the bloody sheets left.

Something deep down told me this boy would resurface again in my life. Without a particular reason for it either.

It's easier to build a strong displaced child than repair a broken man.
Fredrick Douglass

She is broken because she believed...he is okay because he lied.
William Shakespeare

God can restore what is broken and change it into something amazing. All you need is faith.
Joel 2:25

There was a bag of oranges on the counter to cut up before Thomas soccer game. I put the juice boxes and bottled waters in a cooler with some ice. It sure was a scorcher out today. We would need some refreshments to keep us cool. In my bag I made sure I also had some sunscreen since we would be outside all afternoon.

"Are you guys ready?"

"Is he coming?"

"He said he would, baby."

Jax had promised he would be there to see Thomas play, we agreed he would meet us on the soccer
field. This game would determine which teams made it to the playoff. I really hoped he kept his promise to his son.

Thomas was old enough now to remember those little things that meant so much to him. It wasn't like his father had to go out of his way to do something other than be on the sideline to cheer him on.

On the way there Thomas leaned his head against the window. He was quiet and the excitement he had this morning was no longer there. "Maybe we can go out for pizza after the game."

"Okay." He went back to his stare at nothing. I went back to figuring out ways to keep him busy later in case his dad failed to come.

"Kick some butt." Abel gave his little brother a fist bump before he took the field.

As the coach was directing them to their positions on the field. Kenny was about Thomas age when he came into our lives. When I thought of one, it brought on another thought of one of my other children. They molded themselves together as a family somewhere along the way.

Then, I let out a sigh of relief to see Jax walking from the parking lot. I knew how it tormented Abel all these years and I didn't want it to be the same for Thomas. But it wasn't really up to me at this point.

Those boys ran all over the place to chase down the ball. I truly enjoyed watching him play. He was growing up too damn fast. He was such a passive child until you set a soccer ball in front of him.

The first half went by quickly. They called the boys over to side for a break. I noticed Thomas stopped a couple of times on the field and bent over. As though he couldn't catch his breath.

"Something isn't right."

No more than those words came out of my mouth, my son went in slow motion with coach yelling it was time to come over where he was. Just as I stood up, Thomas collapsed to the ground.

It was a race for Jax and I to get to him. He was faster because he jumped from bleacher to bleacher while I took the stairs. As soon as I reached Thomas, I could tell his heart fell, he was burning up and he wasn't breathing.

"Call 9-1-1." I started CPR on him.

There was no way in hell the ambulance was leaving without me. I rode along even when they protested. While they done their job. I tried to soothe my son. "Mommy is here, baby. You're going to be alright." I had to keep the faith he would be too.

When they wheeled him into the hospital I stayed by his side. "You have to wait out here."

"I'm his mother and a doctor."

"That's the point. As a doctor you know the importance of what we do to save a life."

"I love you more than all the ants on the sidewalk and the leaves on the trees." I couldn't force myself to let go of his hand and believe me I tried.

"Tara." Jax and the others were here now. "You did great out there and you saved our son. Now let them treat him." With a nod to Jax I let go. It ripped my heart out to but I still done it.

The pile of paperwork occupied my mind for the first twenty minutes. Then with the clock on the
wall, I watched every minute of it tick by. The crazy shit you thought of at a time like this. When I heard a low whisper it brought me far from my thoughts but not from my son. "He will be okay." I smiled at Jax but I felt like I could get sick.

"Mrs. Brandon?"

"Yes."

As a family we followed after the nurse. We were took into a doctor's office. With it being a private setting, I already knew how serious this was. If everything was fine, they would have told me in the waiting room.

The doctor came in with a file, my son wasn't coming home with me tonight. She had already started paperwork to admit him. If everything was fine he would be ready to leave already.

"This can be a difficult time for families. We will..."

"Please doctor, will a due respect, just give me the bottom line diagnoses."

Only, I wasn't ready to receive it either. Thomas had chronic kidney failure. One was barely functioning. By tomorrow he would have been jaundices and of course I would have noticed. But today, he just acted sluggish until he passed out. He exerted his body and his little body couldn't take it.

"After he receives dialyses, it should stabilize him."

He would have to receive dialyses almost daily to simply live. Unless his other kidney finally gave out too. I didn't want to have any thoughts of what hell that would bring.

"Can't he have a transplant?"

"Yes, Mr. Teller he can have one. When we find a suitable donor who is a match. The process can be very lengthy."

"If at all." It was said out loud to myself but everyone heard me.

"Unfortunately, it is true. Some patients don't receive a donor in enough time. We will have to test each family member to see if any match before we put Thomas on the donor list." The doctor picked up a pen ready to write down names. Only I would save her a shit load of time. My other son was in the same exact position and I already knew the answer.

"I don't have any family, only my children. It's Alexandria. She is the match."

"Mrs. Brandon, you are a doctor. You know we cannot go off speculation. We need to perform all the test. I will send something to the lab so we can begin."

"I'm not speculating, it's her." Kyle had touched our lives so much and he still was. He was still with me. He saved my son by giving me a beautiful daughter.

The kids were very quiet while we waited to have myself, Abel and Alex tested. Ellie was on her way to the hospital. While Kenny and Jax went first. Each of them reflected on the situation in their own way. But Abel, he took it the hardest. He had stepped up to be the man of the house and tried to take care of us. Some day, he would have his own family and he would take excellent care of them.

When they called our name, I took Sissy by the hand. I wasn't sure how to explain it to her, how we
all connected as a family. A mother had tough choices in life to make. She was Thomas' only hope and I knew it before we done the test. "Don't be afraid. They are going to draw some blood, it will be just a little prick with a needle."

"I'm not afraid. Don't be afraid, Abel. I'll hold your hand."

"Okay, Squirt." Abel took his little sister's hand too. Together we went to save Thomas. I just prayed we could.

Abel was great at keeping her distracted like he had been as child when something bad happened. She knew Thomas was sick but she didn't comprehend how severely.

Her brother read Alex every poster in the room and grabbed a magazine and started on it before the doctor came in.

"Are you ready." Sissy nodded to the doctor but I could see the fear in her eyes the closer the needle came to her skin. "Hold my hand." I went to her although she meant it towards her brother. Abel let her squeeze his hand for the pain. Then I wiped the tears away for her.

Ellie arrived after we finished up. Is was her turn to do the test. The kids stayed with her while Jax and I went to Thomas.

When I entered his room, I had to hold back the flood of emotions which overtook me. He seemed so small in comparison to the bed, still a baby, my baby. There wasn't a single movement made by him. The white gown clung to his body with the fever he ran. I checked the bags they had already setup to flow in his veins. I even went through the chart they had in the computer by his bed as well. There wasn't anything I didn't want to know about his condition.

"What does it say?" Jax was just as concerned about his son.

"They are going to do dialyses to stabilize him. He was given medicine to sleep and he will be out for a few hours."

"Will it work?"

"Let's pray it does." As a doctor I had all the confidence in the world it would work. As his mother, I was fucking terrified.

We went with our son when they performed it. It wasn't like I could do anything. Yet, they would have played hell to got me out of there. To some degree I'm certain the doctor felt like I was second guessing her every move. Well, she was correct I was. It was my son's life at stake.

"Tara." Above a whisper came from behind me. Ellie was going to take the kids home and watch Sissy. I gave her money to buy them some pizza for dinner. I wasn't going to leave Thomas and Jax wanted to stay too.

Once Thomas was put back in his room. I went to get us a vending machine dinner and coffee. It was going to be a long night. There was nothing but chairs for us to sleep in. A nurse was kind enough to bring in some pillows and blankets.

A couple hours later the doctor came to check on him before her shift ended. "We received the test results back. Alexandria is a perfect match."

With those mere words spoken, I knew my son had a chance at survival. I would semi put my daughter at risk in the process but I felt her father was up there watching out for us. Maybe, it was a
false security on my part and the after life really didn't exist. Yet, I still had to keep the faith it did exist and he was there.

Throughout the night I thought of ways to explain all this to Sissy. She was still very young and might not understand how important she truly was to this family, to her brother's life.

Although, my thought process wasn't continuous. Every time a machine went off I was up to check it before the staff done it. Any information a nurse logged in about my baby I reviewed too.

Then there was Jax. He was restless and kept saying no to something. Perhaps, it was just a bad dream. I went to cover him up with a blanket. It surprised me when he grabbed my hand. "Get the fuck away from him." When he looked around the room, he finally realized it was me. "Sorry."

There was no sleep for the both of us the rest of the night. It didn't matter though. My main focus was on my son as he laid before me ill and weak. I pulled a chair beside him and just held his hand.

Just when you thought you had a grip on what was plaguing your life, your were threw a curve ball of another problem. "Thomas has health insurance."

"This is the cost after we applied the insurance. Unfortunately both of your children are covered under the same policy. The family cap will not cover the surgeries. We can postpone it if it is better for you, Mrs. Brandon."

"I'll get the money."

To cover all of it, I would have to come up with almost two hundred thousand dollars. It was a drop in the bucket what the grand total would end up. If I mortgaged the house I would be close to it and drained my savings. Later I would figure out how to pay it off again.

"Will you stay with Thomas while I go to the bank?"

"Sure. I got around five thousand from selling the bike. You can have it too."

"Thanks, Jax."

But what I was told by the bank sent me in panic mode. To mortgage the house it was all a process. About a month to a month and a half process. By the time they ran the loan papers, done an official home appraisal, checked the house title and then if approved the loan would go to underwriting. Would my son even be alive by then?

A mortgage company I went to was even worse than the bank. I had no history with them. First they wanted income history, tax returns and proof it was my primary residence before they would even discuss a loan. This one wasn't an option.

When you had a road block placed in front of you, you had to decide how to maneuver around it. I went to the investment group where I invested the kids money Kyle left them. I could cash out Abel and Thomas' money. Once I had time to get a mortgage in place, I would put it back. Only if I actually cashed it out now, it paid out fifty percent because they were not eighteen years old. It still wasn't enough. Yet, I could have it now. So, I done the unthinkable, I done it anyway.

Next I went by the house to check the business account. If I drained it, my savings and the kids money. It still wasn't enough. So, I done it anyway.

With a bag of cash in hand I went back to the hospital. I made a payment with what I had. "There is still a balance due."
"I will have the rest of it by Friday."

"Would you like a receipt, Mrs. Brandon?"

"Please."

It was time for Jax to take a break. I relieved him so he could stretch his legs, get something to eat and smoke. I left with Thomas for another dialyses treatment. They wheeled his bed to the room.

While I watched the technician hook him up to the machine. It made my heart sick with worry. Would this be what he had to complete daily just to stay alive? Would he ever touch green grass to chase around the soccer ball he loved again? Would he ever be the same happy and healthy child he once was?

As the machine done it's job. I tried to remember everything about Thomas Teller, his uncle. He beat all the odds no one thought he could either. He went from deaths doorstep to a survivor. The sickly child outgrew all his brothers in size.

"Tara."

Jax was shacking my shoulder because I apparently went to sleep at some point. Thomas was already finished and it was time to go back to his room. On the walk back my body felt numb. It could have been from the lack of sleep. Or the pressure from the race of the clock to save my baby. How in the hell could I raise all the money?

Now, I knew exact how Todd's mother felt. The system had failed her and her child. Money drove everything in this world. Where was the hookers when I needed them to have a benefit car wash for my son?

My emotions got the better of me. I tried to hide it but the tears flowed anyway. Jax was cautious when he brought me to him. But it wasn't nessacary. I needed a shoulder to lean on, cry on and someone who understood exactly how I felt. Thomas was his son too. So I knew he was at the same place in sorrow I was.

"Go home and get some sleep. I'll stay here with him."

It wasn't as if the offer wasn't appreciated. But at home it would have been worse for me. Then I would have been a basket case because I had no idea what was happening to my son. My other children were being taken care of.

Nicole and David were both wonderful. David had prepared meals and took them over for the kids. So I knew they had food to eat. My older three kept the little one safe and busy. It was another thing I hadn't done yet. Explained to Sissy what was about to happen to her.

"How's Thomas?"

"He needs a transplant. Sissy is going to give him one of her kidneys."

Nicole came to visit while David took care of my children at home. Jax's biggest need was a smoke break. After he had it we went to get the food to bring back.

Her compassion and sweet personality reminded me of her brother. Maybe it's why I broke down and told her the truth. I lied to Jax about the money. I told him it was covered. He would have given me every penny he had. Although it still wasn't enough.
"Won't they do payments?"

"It's a kidney not a car loan. I need to pay every cent of it before they will do it."

"What are you going to do, girlfriend?"

There were no more options left. I couldn't raise enough money and my son had no more time. A desperate mother done desperate things when it came down to it. "I'm going write a bad check and hope for a fifty thousand dollar miracle by Friday."

"Then we might as well rob a bank, girlfriend. Both are felonies."

"Maybe not a bank. They have to much security."

Mother's love is the fuel for a normal person to do the impossible.

Marion C. Garretty

I love thee with a love that shall not die, till the sun goes cold and the stars grows old.

William Shakespeare

A Mother's love reaches beyond circumstances and feelings...

It see past flaws and imperfections...

And celebrates God's gift of love, sent from heaven in the form of a child...

Proverb 31:28

The horn honked as their notice I was here and ready to go. "Holly looks so cute in her jumper."

"Alex looks adorable in her dress."

We gave them a ride this morning since Nicole and I were going to the same place. After we dropped off the girls I found a parking place.

"Well, we better get our shopping done."

Through the doors we went, in pink knitted ski masks and matching gloves. Our hair tucked neatly under it so they couldn't see what color it was, no identifying marks showing either. The only color they could become a witness to was the all black we wore and our pink accessories.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a robbery. As long as you corporate, nobody gets hurt." Nicole went first. She was calm and collected for committing a crime. "Cellphones laid out in front of you. Hands where I can see them."
The plan, my plan, was to borrow the money from the grocery store. It would save my baby's life. Then when I could get my financing in place, I would put it back with interest. No harm, no felony. No one would be the wiser to what we done and technically it was paid back plus a little extra for their inconvenience. Or that was what I convinced myself to get up the nerve to pull this off.

We scoped out the store for the last two days. It wasn't uncommon for me to visit daily to buy food on the way home. We were always out of something. Which, I needed to remind myself to get some milk, somewhere else though.

Today was Friday, the store always had extra money on hand to cash paychecks. The guards of the armor truck had made its delivery of two large bags of it just before we made our entrance. We also knew the early morning was the best time to hit it. Less flow of people, less problems they caused for us and less likelihood of us getting caught. The police officers made their shift change about now too. By calculation, this was the safest time for us to do this.

The first thing was to make sure the the thumb drive in the security camera was gone. No footage for the police to review later. I done it while Nicole herded everyone to the middle of the store.

"Put your heads down." Nicole was scary how well she handled herself. "No more like this, like nap time." She even showed them what she wanted them to do.

It was my turn, I was up to perform the tasks we agreed to. "Are you the manager?" I pointed the toy gun at them. I used a black sharpie to color the orange tip of the fake barrel. It technically was not a weapon that way or armed robbery either. She shook her head no. I went down the line, no one confessed to being the manager. When I walked by a mother who held her daughter to her in fear I was sick, I had been there with my own children so many times before. Those feelings had to be choke down because if I took off my mask, I was busted. But when I seen the fear in the little girl's eyes, I froze up. It could have been my daughters in this shitty situation. Instead I was inflicting the pain on someone else, a child. It was an unforgivable sin to me.

"The manager better get up here right now or I will start capping people. I'm not fucking kidding around anymore." Nicole kicked over a display of can goods which made a lot of noise and scattered all over the floor. It got their attention and they narked him out as they all pointed to him. "Get up. You're going to put on your big boy panties and open the vault. Or I will stick this gun in your ass and pull the trigger. Move. Now, now, now." That bitch had lost her mind or I had for doing this. But thankfully she took over for me, what I couldn't bring myself to get done.

The sweat poured from me, the knit mask was stuck to my face as I paced around and waited for her to come back. Our kidnap victims were getting nervous and so was I. Every few seconds I checked my watch. We only had approximately two minutes before the cops got here. "Come on." Nicole was still in the back with him. We were down to one minute left. The ding noise of the entry doors got my attention quickly. I had locked it personally.

"Oh shit." The security guard came back from break early and used his key. "We got to go." I screamed it across the store as a warning to Nicole. She met me as we both were hauling ass for the exit in the back of the store. With one bag of money in her hand and one in mine. We accomplished what we came to do and ran for our lives, for our freedom.

Until we went to where we planned to go next we did not stop. Or the same place we agreed to meet up at if we got separated from one another during the heist. On my desk laid a pile of money we stole. My office was a safe place to do this.

"I robbed a grocery store. I robbed a fucking grocery store. We robbed a fucking grocery store." I think I kept repeating it so it would finally sink in what bad shit I had done.
"Yes we did, girlfriend. Like smooth criminals and we got away with it." Nicole continued to count the cash as I went in the bathroom to splash some cold water on my face. It was so red as though I had a high fever. The water didn't seem to touch the heat I felt in it.

When I came out she rested her head in hands and something wasn't right. "What's wrong? There's not fifty thousand dollars is there?" What we had done was all for nothing. The face of the little frightened girl from the store would haunt me.

"There is five hundred thousand dollars here."

"There can't be. What grocery store has that kind of cash on hand?"

"There is and this shit is not good, girlfriend."

"Count it again." I stood over her as she done it. Our totals matched, we had half a million dollars in cash. Then I really wanted to throw up.

The knock on the door freaked us both out. "Yes."

"Doctor Knowles, I didn't realize you were here already. I have your morning coffee for you."

Nicole cleared off the desk while I distracted her. "It's alright. Nicole and I have been here about an hour so I could examine her before she went to work. Can you bring in a another cup please, with cream and sugar?"

This was our alibi. She was a witness to us both being in the office early at the exact time of the robbery and I was treating Nicole. Even though we sneaked past her in the back door just a few minutes ago. Since my nurse came in later, she couldn't dispute it either. To make it look official I wrote on Nicole's patient chart with the date and time and then my receptionist would bill the insurance. Just another piece of evidence to corroborate our story.

When I rounded the corner I came face to face with my nurse. "Hi."

"Is Nicole okay? I thought you would be with Thomas."

Ellie was an excellent nurse and fucking early today. She didn't expect any special treatment and she worked hard. Although, it put her and I close to this situation as a family. "She's fine." Ellie took Nicole's file and went to do her job.

Involving my receptionist in our scheme was one thing. But my daughter was a whole another game. She had her life ahead of her. She may even become a doctor someday.

"I'll pick you up later, girlfriend." This too was planned out carefully. She dropped her car off at the garage the night before so she had an excuse as to why we rode together.

"Make sure to get a doctor's excuse on your way out. Since you're late."

"You know it, girlfriend."

For the rest of the day I felt like I floated through it. I just went through the motions without much thought process. This was my last day of work too. With Thomas going in for surgery I wouldn't be good at my job anyway. I owed my patients that much as well. The receptionist would still answer the phones to make future appointments and direct those who needed immediate attention to another couple of doctors I spoke with.
If I had a future come tomorrow that was. I could be locked away in a jail cell for a very long time. But I knew in my heart, my children would live on, take care of each other and still had a shot at a good future of their own. It was what made the deed I done worth it. No matter how all of this turned out. I had to be strong for them.

Part of any mothers love meant you made whatever sacrifices you had to for the well being of your children. I would give up anything for them including my life if nessacary. Just in case it was the way this all went down. I had a plan for it too. I signed everything I had left over to Nicole, David and Jax. Between the three of them I knew my children would be fine. They needed a relationship with their father more than ever.

Now it was on to the child who needed me the most. When they asked me which one of them I loved the most; my answer was always which one who needed me the most at the time had my attention while I loved them all equally. Today, it was Thomas and he had my complete attention. Nicole dropped me off at the hospital while she went to carpool those who needed a ride.

"Mrs. Brandon, do you want a receipt?"

"Please."

"I will have everything scheduled for first thing Monday morning. Don't worry, the doctors will give excellent care to your children." The payment was made and the date was set for the surgery. I saved my baby but I couldn't save my soul in the process. For every evil deed done you paid the price for it some how. Even when you done wrong things for the right reasons.

When I was on my way to Thomas room, I passed by a chapel. It was empty as I felt on the inside. At the doorway I struggled with myself. Could I just ask for forgiveness and be forgiven? Could I confess my sins and them be overlooked? Was it truly that simple?

"Maybe another day."

When you felt confession was pointless, there was no point in doing it. Or perhaps I hadn't reached the worthiness of redemption in my own heart yet. I never looked back as I proceeded forward to my son.

Apparently I was not the only person searching for answers. Jax was in the waiting room staring at a blank screen of the television. He finally noticed I was in the chair next to him. "Thomas is asleep."

"Want a cup of coffee?"

"We need to talk, Tara. I should have never came here. I caused this."

"What are you talking about, Jax?"

"I lied to you. The lawyer didn't tell me where you lived. I followed it here to you."

"Followed what here? Then how did you find us?" He closed his eyes to pretend like he couldn't see me. But I wasn't going away until he answered me. "Jax, tell me."

"The crow."

"Son of bitch. Everything is about to change."

The crow was in our lives once again. You never knew what the future held until it took a hold of you.
When the crow arrives unexpectedly, you are receiving a message that things are about to change.

The energy of the magic is awakening. Your true self is being revealed.

Brenda Pharach

So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows.

(*** Contrast; black and white, night and day, good and evil***)

William Shakespeare

Like a bird that wanders from its nest is a man wanders from his place.

Proverb 27:8

From Thomas' hospital room window. I watched and waited for it. Any sign to show me it was here. It was in our lives as a presences from beyond. That it was here to collect a soul. That it would show no mercy on my family this time. It would show no mercy on my son in his weak state. I never saw anything not even a single bird fly in front of his window.

So many times I stood before one and was happy. I seen my children play through it and watched them grow. I seen a future of my family. Today, all I saw was a gloomy past which had came around full circle. A storm was coming right at me and I couldn't stop it no matter how hard I tried to.

"Do you want some coffee, Tara?"

"You know what I want, Jax."

For the last couple of days it was an argument only I participated in. Every time I brought up the crow to get the rest of the story, Jax went mute. He had nothing farther to say on the subject. Or he tried to play it off as though he was mistaken. In a weak moment he confessed something he never intended to. It was amazing what the fear of losing a child could do to you. It had effected me in ways I didn't know existed until now. I would guess the same of him.

"I hope you never experience the loss of a child. People who haven't don't understand what it does to you on the inside. If I could have taken Thomas' place, I would have."

It was one way I hoped to not be like Gemma. To know the kind of sorrow and pain she felt. She experienced it above an imaginable level. She lost her son not only once but twice. The same son no less.

The way I couldn't let my mind rest. Every other second went back to the same thing. I felt ill in the pit of my stomach, the crow was coming, coming for my son. Just like it had hers.

Jax held out a cup to me without uttering a word. As a peace offering, only I wouldn't have any peace until my child was back up on his feet again, happy and healthy. Then all the other reasons I
had to lived came in to see their brother.

"Mommy." Alex clung to me like she hadn't seen me in a month. "I woke up and you were gone again."

As my other babies were almost grown other than her and Thomas. I had forgotten they needed me more than the others. I had spent most of my time with him at the hospital rather than Alex. I helped her climb up in my lap to cuddle her to me. "It probably scares you when I'm not there. But there is something you need to know about mommies. Even if we have to leave for a while. We always come back. If I have to go away for awhile just know I will always come back and find you. Mommy is sorry, baby. I wasn't there."

There was part of me which knew I would get caught and pay the price for what I had done. But when I looked at my son with his brothers and sisters. I had done the right thing no matter happened to me for it. "I need some coffee." Really I just needed a moment to pull myself together. So they wouldn't see me because my break down was about to be a dozy.

"What is really going on, Tara?"

"I'm just worried about the surgery."

"You know, I used to lie to you with a straight face because I was so good at it. Most of the time without any remorse of what I said. So, I kinda know when I'm being bullshitted."

"It's not bullshit, Jax. I have two babies who are going through a lot right now. I need to get back to them."

He step in front of me before I could make it out of the snack area to block the exit. "When Abel was first born. I used to wake up every day sick to my stomach because I wondered what else could happen or what other bad shit was coming that day. Then, the feeling went away and I pretty much no longer felt anything. I woke up with the same sick feeling this morning. You're going down the same path, Tara. I can see it."

"I have to go to get their bags and get some clothes for me so I can stay with them after surgery in the morning. When I get back, I'll have Alex checked in. Can you stay here with them?"

"Sure." Jax walked away but agreed to stay with them without asking me anything else. It was what I really needed him to do at this moment.

My coffee was company and comfort on the way home. But my mind was my enemy. I looked for those fucking crows everywhere until I hit the driveway. They wasn't one single bird to be found.

Once I walked through the front door, pots and pans were clanking around in the kitchen. But I just left the kids and Jax at the hospital. I blew if off though as I figured it was David cooking or cleaning up. As I approached closer, it was too late to turn back. I gasped a little loud when I seen them.

"This shit is dope. What is it?"

"Who the hell are you?" These three guys had made there selves at home in my house. One was at the table with a plate of the dinner Nicole and David dropped off to us. He had a cold beer opened and poured in a wine glass. The other two were standing behind him like body guards. Obviously they weren't here to rob me because they had plenty of time for it already. "I'm calling the cops."

"Go ahead, then you can tell them how much of my money you stole from me too. It was my money, I want it now."
It stopped me in my tracks, he knew what we had done. Sure, I could have stood before him and denied it all. The fact he didn't tell the cops to involve them told me a lot, all I needed to know about what kind of man he was. Not to mention the matching gang tattoos they all wore. The one that stood out to me was his throat tattoo, it was an eagle with his wings span out in flight. "So, you own the grocery store?" It was time for me to pretend I was dumb and had no idea what he was.

"Do I look a business entrepreneur to you? I want my money back and if I don't get it. Some bad shit is gonna happen."

"I've got most of it." They had already found the bag. The guy unzipped it then set it on the table in front of his boss. They were smart enough they knew it was short before I said a word to them. The criminals were all great at one thing, counting money. If I argued with him, it would only enrage him worse. So, I owned what I had done. "My child is ill and I just need time to get the rest of it. I will make sure you get every penny of it."

The other two left with the bag of money with just a simple gesture of his head. They were obedient to him, they never questioned him, they were his followers. I had witnessed this behavior so many times with Jax and the club before. I waited for the worst to still come, was this my final day on earth? If so, I died for the ones I loved. The saddest part, I wasn't even scared anymore.

As I stood my ground while he stared at me. I stood firm in the spot I was in and where this position in life took me to. This was just as good of a spot to die in as any other. He studied me for a bit before he got up from the table and headed towards the door. "I'll give you two days and then I start killing shit. Have it all plus sixty percent interest."

"Sixty percent?" When he was about ready to come back at me once again because I questioned him, his authority. "I'll get it." A fifty two thousand dollar problem just turned into a hundred thousand dollar problem. But if were dead because I acted out now, I had no chance to resolve the problem. I knew enough of how this shit worked to keep my mouth shut and go with the flow of things.

Immediately once they were gone, I locked the front door out of habit. It wouldn't stop them from coming back or protect me or my children even. The fact was we had no protection anymore. But I still done it to make myself feel better. Then I went to clean up the mess from where they busted through the back door. I would have to buy a new pane of glass tomorrow to fix it.

"What happened?" Jax startled me from behind as I was picking up shards of glass.

"You're suppose to be with the kids at the hospital."

"Abel, Ellie and Kenny are going to stay there until we get back. What happened?"

"It was an accident."

"Who is the guy with the tatts that was just here?"

"Just a friend." There was no way in hell I would ever tell anyone else what I had done. Let alone confess my sins to Jax. The old Tara would have ran to him, the damsel in distress, for him to save me because I was so fearful. I was no longer fearful.

"You're hanging out with gang bangers now."

"It's really none of your business, Jax."

"Maybe it's not my business. But I know a piece of shit when I see one."
We're not punished for our sins. We're punished by them.

Jennifer Donnelly,

Some rise by sin, some fall by virtue.

William Shakespeare

The evil deed of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins holds them fast.

Proverb 5:22

I hope you enjoyed reading me!

Who do you think the crow is that visits Jax?

Some of what was wrote in this chapter and some in the next few is from Good Girls. If you haven't watched it, I love Beth. She reminds me of Tara a lot. Her husband is a cheater and lost all their money. She does some bad things, but it's all for her family.

More will be posted soon...

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!